

Defender



“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

Volume XXVI

1997

January

April

July

October

February

May

August

November

March

June

September

Defender



“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

Volume XXVI

January 1997

Number 1

FACTS OF FRUSTRATION AND ACTS OF ABASEMENT

Graham Cain

The church of our Lord and Master has regressed to a point of being at the lowest ebb of spiritual strength in more than a hundred years. Every false doctrine imaginable is being propounded in awesome profusion. Those perpetrating these destructive indignities against Deity are ministers who serve (whether knowingly or unknowingly), “the god of this world” (2 Cor. 4:4). Some are also serving Satan being “transformed as the ministers of righteousness” (2 Cor. 11:15), they easily deceive “the hearts of the simple” (Rom. 16:18). This avalanche of error has gained such overwhelming progress that it is a challenge to all Christians who love God, Christ and Truth.

LOOK AT SOME FACTS AND ACTS

1. The number of larger congregations having deteriorated into a state of endeavoring to assuage and satisfy all the “felt needs” of the members is appalling. This necessitates the placement of all scriptural prerequisites on the “back burner,” if not “plumb” off the stove.

2. Preachers, elders and members are increasing who aver that salvation is attainable in denominational churches.

3. The damnable teaching that salvation is bestowed through grace alone or by faith only is increasing rapidly.

4. In general, the church is becoming a haven of rest for fornicators and those living in adultery. Just about every false theory known on the subject of divorce and remarriage is being taught.

5. The “new hermeneutic” is a system of Bible interpretation being put forth by the ones claiming to be

“Christian” scholars. It is a system that is purely subjective and resolves down to where every individual is free to interpret Scripture to suit one’s own desire. This list could continue on and on!

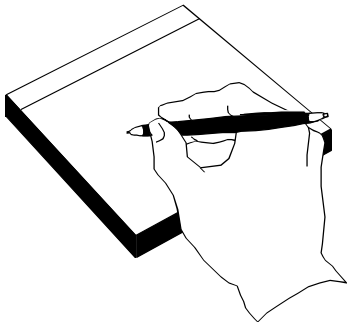
WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Increased efforts should be made that would extend the knowledge of these dreadful teachings to where the homes and hearts of all of God’s children can be fully warned. The extent of ignorance regarding these destructive methods and misleading the unsuspecting souls into sin is amazing. Consider some ways this can be circumvented:

(1) **Attention all faithful gospel preachers:** Proclaiming truth (and only truth) is not enough. The true servant of God must now explain and expose the false doctrine that is literally tearing down the body of Christ. The time has come where good men who serve as preachers and elders must assert themselves and come to the front. You are needed to help stem the tide of satanic devastation that is crushing truth. This cannot be done in a timid, namby-pamby insipid manner. It must be according to the clear order of God as set forth in Romans 16:17. Just mentioning the error is not enough. To refrain from identifying the false teacher(s) is not enough. It is not fair to the hearers and is a deliberate refusal to do what the Bible says to do. Read it again. The instruction is to “mark them...and avoid them.”

(2) **Sound brotherhood publishing efforts** should be expanded and increased investigation of facts that need to be published to enlighten their readers of

(Continued on Page 3)



Notes From The Editor

**Michael
Hatcher**

Email address:
whatcher@sprynet.com

Sufficiency And The Spirit

In the November editorial we considered the work of the Holy Spirit, to convict, reprove, the world of sin, righteousness and judgment. We noticed that He accomplishes that work today by the Scriptures. "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17). Thus, the only way the Spirit leads, guides, directs man to become a Christian or how to remain a Christian is by the Word of God. Until recently all faithful brethren were united in this view (whether they believed in a personal indwelling or held to a representative indwelling). However, now some are saying that the Spirit does things in conjunction with, or in addition to, or apart from the Word of God. The Calvinist have always held that the Spirit must do certain things for both the alien and the Christian apart from God's Word. If the Spirit directly does things for either the alien sinner or the child of God, then the Word of God is not sufficient in that area. This we emphatically deny, whether it is by a Calvinist or one of our brethren. We affirm that in the area of conviction, conversion and sanctification, the Spirit works only by means of the Word of God, the Bible. Thus, the Bible is all-sufficient to convict, convert, and sanctify, or to lead us to heaven.

John wrote, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:30-31). John, by inspiration, affirms that the things written are to produce belief in man that Jesus is God's Son, and through that belief we might have life, both abundant life in the here and now and eternal life in the hereafter. Thus, all I need to give me that life is that which is written.

Paul shows us the all-sufficiency of the Word by writing, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17). The Scriptures came from God, not from man. Notice also that Peter said that "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1:21). This is the Spirit doing His work by revealing to man God's will (1 Cor. 2). There is a fourfold purpose of the Spirit revealed Scriptures. (1) **Doctrine**. This is a word which means teaching. That which we are to teach is God's Word. I do not need to teach anything else, because they are complete and all-sufficient. (2) **Reproof**. This word has to do with establishing what is right or wrong. We establish what is right or wrong upon the basis of the Bible. I do not need anything other than the Scriptures to know what is ethical. (3) **Correction**. This deals with restoring to an upright state. When a person goes astray from what is right, then we use the Bible to bring them back to a right relationship with God. (4) **Instruction in righteousness**. This deals with the whole of training and education of the individual. The threefold result shows that the Scriptures are all-sufficient. (1) **A man of God**. We are not children of the devil, but children of God (by being led by the Spirit; Rom. 8:14). (2) **Perfect**. This means complete, full, mature and shows that this is one who lacking nothing spiritually. (3) **Thoroughly furnished unto all good works**. We are given everything we need for accomplishing God's will in our lives; for doing everything that God has ordained (good works). When I use the Scriptures for the purpose God intended, I have everything I need to please God in my life and attain heaven's home.

Peter gives us additional evidence by writing, "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Pet. 1:3-4). God, by His divine power, has given to us His Word, revealed by the Spirit (see John 14:25-26; 16:12-13). Through that revealed Will He as given us **all** things that pertain to life and godliness. This is not just some things, but everything anyone needs to become a Christian and live the Christian life leading us to heaven. By this revealed

Will we can escape the corruption that is in this world (cf., 1 John 2:15-17) and be a partaker of God's divine nature. When we allow God's Word to work in us and we put on the Christian graces (2 Pet. 1:5-7), then an "entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 1:11). God's Word is all-sufficient for me to attain a home with God in heaven.

One last passage, John writes, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1). The emphasis of this verse is that John wrote, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that we would not ever commit sin, not even one isolated act of sin. Notice that Jesus overcame sin within His life by use of the written Word of God (Mat. 4). When we, like Jesus, put God's Word in our lives, we also can overcome sin. "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psa. 119:11). John adds, because He knows our nature and that we will commit sin, that when we do sin we have an advocate (someone to plead our case) with the Father.

No one needs the Spirit working directly upon their heart today to convict, convert or sanctify them. The Spirit has given us the Word of God to accomplish those things. He has given us everything we need to become a Christian and live the Christian life so heaven will be our home. When someone advocates that we need the Spirit operating directly upon the heart of man separate and apart from the Bible, they deny the all-sufficiency of the Word of God. *MH*

(Continued from Page 1)

the things being proclaimed by pseudo-preachers and upheld by ignorant and/or cowardly elders.

(3) Increased efforts and emphasis should be placed upon serious Bible study. The child of God who is not alert; who is not properly versed in the Scriptures to recognize error, is easy prey to the subtle devices of Satan.

ONE OF SATAN'S GREATEST TOOLS

It has long been considered that the greatest tool that Satan uses is denominational churches. There is another one now, which has become even more destructive insofar as the children of God are concerned. It is the higher learning institutions claiming connections with churches of Christ and parading under the guise of being "Christian" universities.

The one in Abilene, Texas has earned and received the title of "The Worldly University." A whole book has been written and published which does a complete job of explaining, proving and documenting the correctness of this title of ugly distinction.

However, A.C.U. does not stand alone in this matter. Most of the other so-called "Christian" universities are maligning the word Christian by their using false teachers in their classrooms, in seminars, lectureships and various workshops. They also publish, recommend and promote the works of men who write books that are totally and drastically false in their message.

Abilene Christian University has a president who is totally false in his insistence that the faculty they have is totally right. I have a letter from the president, Royce Money, which says this: "Please know that neither the university nor I would tolerate a faculty member who teaches in contravention of the Scriptures." I don't know what he means by that statement because Carroll D. Osburn and Andre' Resner are included in the faculty. Andre' Resner became famous in the November 1992, issue of *Wineskins* magazine when he wrote the article on "Christmas at Matthew's House," in which he ridiculed the virgin birth of Jesus. So far as I know, he has never denied the things he wrote in that terrible article. Evidently, Mr. Money and "the university" believe that our Lord's Mother was just "another sexually questionable woman." This is just a sample of the falsehoods and faculty of A.C.U.

In addition we have the "sound preachers" who cannot resist the invitation to speak on the various programs these people promote. They insist they are just "preaching the gospel" but refuse to see the need to replace their names beside the names of those who preach falsehood. Have they also forgotten what Ephesians 5:11 says? "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*."

CONCLUSION

The hope of successfully dispelling the terrible pall of darkness settling over God's kingdom is severely hindered by the weak, vacillating, self-concerned preachers, or elders who are too weak to stand firm and defend the truth. If all who claim to be on the side of righteousness would come out from behind the shrubbery and declare themselves, this matter would be greatly helped. All efforts must be clearly defined and sincerely pushed forward, yet in hope of reconciliation and with a spirit of love.

2244 Mountain View Drive; Hurst, TX 76054

When is the Spirit Received?

by *Tim Nichols*

We can state without fear of successful contradiction that the Holy Spirit dwells in and otherwise acts upon the Christian by means of His inspired Word. He is received by the hearing of faith (Gal. 3:2,14; Rom. 10:17). Objections to our positions are sometimes helpful because they force us to go back to the Bible with a mind that is willing to change if the objections can be substantiated by Holy Writ. When we do this we will either reject the objections or alter our thinking so as to be in harmony with Divine Truth. An objection that we sometimes hear concerning the idea that the Holy Spirit dwells in us by means of His Word goes something like this: "If the Holy Spirit is in us when the Word is in us, then one who has heard the Word, having not yet obeyed the gospel, is a Christian and has the Holy Spirit dwelling within him." This, in my judgment, is among the strongest objections that can be offered concerning this matter. Even this, however, vanishes when it is carefully examined in the light of Divine Truth.

One can "hear" the word, in a loose sense, without receiving it, believing it, or obeying it (Acts 5:29-33; 7:54; 17:32; 19:10; 24:24-25; Rom. 10:14-21; Heb. 4:2; 12:19-20). Those who truly HEAR the Word of God are those who fully accept it, believe it, and obey it (Acts 13:48; 16:14-15; 19:5; Eph. 4:17-24; Phi. 4:9; Col. 1:5-8; 1 The. 2:13). The Holy Spirit is "given" to those whose hearing leads them to obey (Acts 5:32). There is both an initial and a continuous hearing of faith. Those who begin the journey of faith have a continuous need to hear and receive the Divine Word by which the Holy Spirit continues to guide them (Col. 1:23; 2 Tim. 1:13; Heb. 2:1-3; 3:12-16; 4:1; 12:18-29; 1 John 2:24; 2 John 6; Rev. 3:3). The Holy Spirit can only be said to dwell in the hearts of those who have truly received the Word. He obviously enters, then, at the point in time at which the Word is received (believed, accepted, and obeyed). "[I]n whom ye also, having heard the word of the truth, the gospel of your salvation,—in whom, having also believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is an earnest of our inheritance, unto the redemption of God's own possession, unto the praise of his glory" (Eph. 1:13).

All of those present on Pentecost "heard" the word (Acts 2:6) but only those who "gladly received" it were baptized and added to the Lord's church (Acts 2:41).

One cannot truly be said to have completely received the truth when his life is yet out of harmony with it. One might hear and "believe" that Jesus has died for his sins and that he must repent, confess Christ, and be baptized for the remission of his sins, but such a person cannot be said to have fully received the truth until he has complied with it. A man can accept a thing as being undeniably true and still act in ways directly contrary to what he "believes" (Acts 4:16). He does not have a saving faith until he has acted in accordance with what he has learned to be true. If someone loudly knocks on my door in the middle of the night and tells me that my house is on fire, I cannot be said to have "received" his word until I awaken my family and leave the house. I might stand there and listen while the message "sinks in," but I have not fully accepted it until the "light in my head" comes on and I act upon what I have learned. When one "believes" the Gospel prior to acting upon it, it condemns him. When one fully believes it and, as a result, acts upon it, it pardons him. When one's life comes into alignment with the truth, he has received the truth. The Holy Spirit cannot be said to have dominion over a man or to "dwell" in him simply because his ears have heard His message and his mind has assented to the truthfulness of His message. There is a point of surrender at which one's will is subdued and he freely obeys. Only at that point can it be said that the Holy Spirit dwells within the heart of a man by means of His Word. Baptism is the point at which one changes from being a noncompliant "hearer" to a yielding HEARER of the Spirit. It is at this point that the Spirit is received "by the hearing of faith" (Gal. 3:2,14).

Route 1, Box 206a; Burlington, West Virginia 26710
email: tnichols@mail.miworld.net

Your help is needed! If you are planning a move or have an address change, please send us your change of address prior to moving. When we receive a returned paper it costs us additional money for postage, either 32 or 50 cents. We then delete your name from our mailing list. Thus, if you wish to continue to receive the paper after your move or address change, inform us prior to the change. Your help will be greatly appreciated.

Michael Hatcher - Editor

TRADITION OR TRUTH???

Michael Light

In recent years there has been a consistent charge leveled against the churches of Christ that we have been too “traditional.” The charge implies that what we have taught and are still in many places teaching is simply our tradition and not necessarily based on scriptural truth. It need also be said that most of our accusers are themselves members of the church. Men like Max Lucado, Rubel Shelly, Marvin Phillips, Jeff Walling and a host of others bemoan the fact that we will not turn from our traditional teachings on a number of subjects.

They say that we are too traditional in our worship. The men who level these charges would like to introduce innovations in the worship and refashion it along the lines of more spontaneous or “Pentecostal” styles. Is their criticism warranted? Have we in the church become too traditional in our worship?

The Greek word, *paradosis*, translated “tradition,” means literally “a handing down or passing on” (W. E. Vines). It refers to anything (teaching or ordinance) that is handed down from generation to generation. The New Testament refers to two kinds of traditions. The first is the traditions of men, which if taught as doctrine will keep men from heaven and render their worship vain (Mat. 15:9). Jesus strongly condemned the false religious leaders of His day for this very thing (Mat. 15:1-9). The second, is the traditions of God, which are to be believed, taught practiced and held on to (2 The. 2:15; 1 Cor. 11:12).

If the charge has reference to the traditions of men, the answer is no. In fact, the church of Christ (as set forth in the New Testament) is the only church in the world that does not believe, teach and practice the traditions of men in worship. There is New Testament authority for every act of worship one finds in the Lord’s church (Col. 3:17). In fact, the faithfulness in adhering to the pattern set forth in the Scriptures is one of the distinguishing characteristics of the followers of Christ (John 14:15; Mat. 7:20). The **change agents**, those who encourage us to leave the Scripture’s way for some other (non-scriptural) way must be vehemently opposed. They would become the very thing they say they oppose. They would leave the traditions of God for the traditions of mere men. If we follow their Godless lead (2 John 9-11) our worship will become vain (Mat. 15:9).

If their charge has reference to following the apostolic traditions, the answer is still no. How could the church be guilty of being too faithful to God’s divine form/pattern (2 Tim. 1:13). The Bible teaches us that those who do not abide (remain) in the doctrine of Christ are without God (2 John 9). Living without God is precisely what the denominational world has done for years and now many who once were of us have forsaken the truth and are now also living without God.

In First John 2:19, we have some great insight into what we now see of our digressive brethren (those who want to change the nature—the acts themselves—of our worship). The passage says, “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.” Until we see these people for what they are (false teachers, who have left the ways of God) we will never understand why they do what they do. When a man no longer views the Bible as anything but a “love letter,” (and as such not authoritative) the door is wide open for him to go far afield on any or every subject, including worship. God said in the above passage that their going out from us is a result of their leaving the truth. Mark it down, one who is pushing for change, or mocking the **old way** (God’s way is as old as man) has lost his/her conviction for the truth and is moving toward traditions of men.

It is true that many in the church are simply going through the motions (correct form but wrong attitude) of worship. But this is not an indictment against the prescribed form of worship, it is a problem of the heart. The acts of worship as God gave them are perfect for the expression of love, devotion and gratitude the human heart can possess. For our worship to be acceptable it must be done both in spirit (proper motivation and with a sincere heart) and in truth (according to the divine record, the Bible). It is impossible for our worship to be acceptable if we have the proper form but our hearts are not in it. And, likewise it is impossible for our worship to be in the proper spirit if we do not follow the directive of God (Mat. 7:21; Lev. 10:1-2). Many today are more interested with pleasing the worshiper than the God we are supposed to be worshipping. God has clearly told us what He wants. It is simply a matter of us deciding to whom we will submit: God or men (Jos. 24:15).

P.O. Box 41; Bangs, TX 76823

22nd Annual Bellview Lectures Planned

The Bellview Church Of Christ in Pensacola, FL, has planned their **22nd Annual Bellview Lectures** for June 7-11, 1997. The theme for this years study will be *Leadership*. The aim of this series of lectures will be to provide fundamental lessons all can profit from on the vital theme. A variety of material will be covered by the 30 lessons presented by 28 great gospel preachers from all over the nation. There will also be three open forums to discuss issues relating to this subject. All lessons will be both video and audio taped so the messages will reach the greatest amount of souls possible. These tapes can be ordered from the Bellview Church Of Christ. As in the past nine years a book of the lectures is being prepared. The previous books covered such topics as: *Are We Moving Away From the Cross of Christ?*, *In Hope of Eternal Life*, *What Does God Authorize In Worship*, *The Church Triumphant*, *Current Crises Challenging the Church*, *God's Pattern for Christian Living*, *Changes in the Church Of Christ*, *The Doctrine of Christ Verses the Doctrines of Men*, and last years book *Preaching God Demands*. These books may be ordered from the Bellview Church Of Christ.

This years speakers include: Billy Bland, David Brown, Curtis Cates, B. J. Clarke, Wayne Coats, Harrell Davidson, Buster Dobbs, Bobby Duncan, Garland Elkins, Steve Ellis, Guss Eoff, Joe Galloway, Joe Gilmore, Noah Hackworth, Michael Hatcher, Bobby Liddell, Jerry Martin, Dub McClish, Joe Meador, Jerry Moffitt, Clifford Newell, Flavil Nichols, Ira Y. Rice Jr., James Rogers, Stanley Ryan, Gary Summers, Joel Wheeler, and Eddie Whitten. They will be speaking on the topics: "Qualifications Of Elders And Deacons," "Exposition of 1 Peter 5:1-4," "Elder—Elder, Deacon, Preacher Relations," "Elders Duty To Members," "Members Duty To Elders," "Work Of Deacons," "Re-evaluation of Elders?," "Moses—Great Example Of Leadership," "Joshua—Great Example Of Leadership," "David—Great Example Of Leadership," "Nehemiah—Great Example Of Leadership," "Jesus—Great Leader Of Men," "Authority Of Elders," "Lording It Over The Flock," "Qualities Of A Leader," "Decision Making In Leadership," "History Of Departure In Leadership," "Women As Elders And Deacons," "Goal Setting In Leadership," "How To Handle Criticism," "Inspiring Brethren To Good Works," "Elders As Watchmen," "Elders And The Stewardship Of

Souls," "Tending The Flock," "Congregations Without Elders," "Eldership And Old Testament Concepts," "Elders And Church Discipline," and "The Spirit of Obedience." These additional topics will be covered in the book: "Selection Of Elders and Deacons," "Elders And Money," "Conflict Resolution," "Stopping Their Mouths," and "Elders And The Hiring Of Preachers." The men writing these chapters will be Gary Grizzell, David Hester, Terry Hightower, Keith Mosher, and Fred Stancliff.

Exhibit space is available for subject to approval of the Bellview elders. A motel nearby has extended a special lecturership rate for individuals who attend the lectures. You may contact them directly: Hospitality Inn (4910 Mobile Highway; Pensacola, FL 32506; or call 904/453-3333). There are a few hookups available for travel trailers and motor homes on the building grounds. Please contact the office to reserve a space.

All people are invited to attend this special uplifting event. For further information please contact the Bellview Church Of Christ at 4850 Saufley Field Rd., Pensacola, FL 32526, or call 904/455-7595. We look forward to seeing you at that time.

Defender is a work of the Bellview Church Of Christ. They have, for many years, taken on the financial responsibility of publishing the paper so you (in the United States) can have it free of charge. These good brethren also put in their time and effort in preparing the paper for mailing. The church here is glad to do this to help advance the cause of Christ. While it is the elders and congregations intent to keep this publication free of charge, any contributions to help defray the thousands of dollars expended will be greatly appreciated. While we have not made a practice of placing the names of the financial supporters in the paper, we do want all to know how much we deeply appreciate your help. We pray your continued fellowship in this great work, especially as costs continue to rise. We also solicit your prayers as we work together for the Lord and His church; knowing that "the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (Jam. 5:16).

Michael Hatcher - Editor

WHAT IS WISDOM?

Shan Jackson

The wise man said, "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom and the man that getteth understanding." I suppose one of the most beloved characters of the Old Testament is King Solomon. We are all thrilled to read of Solomon, son of David, and his power and might. However, we are also all quick to point out that his power and might were a result of a direct blessing from God. When God offered to bless Solomon with any blessing his heart desired Solomon asked for an understanding heart of wisdom.

But what is wisdom anyway? Is it intellectual ability derived from years of research and study? Is it the accumulation of philosophy? Or does wisdom come from God? James says that "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally" (Jam. 1:5).

Wisdom comes from God and not man. Man's thinking does not insure peace of mind, health of spirit, or the elimination of problems. Certainly we are to study (2 Tim. 2:5) to attain knowledge, but wisdom is the God-given ability to use the knowledge we have attained. Therefore, wisdom was aptly named, an understanding heart. This fact is born out in the life of our Savior. During His life there were rumors being bantered about concerning His true identity. On one occasion He asked, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" (Mat. 16:3). Various responses were: John the Baptist, Elias, Jeremias, or one of the other prophets. Jesus asked more personally of them, "But whom say ye that I am?" (Mat. 16:15). It was Peter that responded for the rest, and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Mat. 16:16). Jesus' first question was designed to test the wisdom of the world; however, His personal question to the disciples was to test theirs. And, with the help of the Father, they passed

the test. Flesh and blood, man's intellectual thought process, did not supply the answer to His question, God did (Mat. 16:17-20).

Many people today have a perception of truth. They are ready to admit that God is the giver of all blessings. They are even ready to wear, at least casually, the name of the Savior. However, their devotion is not based on spiritual understanding, but on convenience. They do not understand that God is not only the supplier of all spiritual gifts, but that He is a gift. He, His divine love, sustains us. He, His awesome power, gives us strength. He, His precious Word, teaches us. And He, His saving plan, His saving grace, redeems us. The perception, through spiritual understanding, of the purpose of God, is true wisdom. "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom."

The plan of Christ was two-fold. One, He came to present a message that would change man from a creature of habit to a creature of love. He said, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Once the lost is found and redeemed He told His apostles to continue to teach "them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded" (Mat. 28:20). However, Jesus also taught the importance of obedience. Just as He was in all ways obedient to His Father He wants His followers to be likewise obedient to Him. "If ye love me, keep my commandments" is His charge (John 14:15).

Jesus, the Master Teacher, shows us the perfect method of effective teaching. He used law, love, and reason with equal fervor. He told the woman that "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24). Such is, and must be, the attitude of all followers of Christ.

P.O. Box 904; Palacios, TX 77465

Defender is published monthly (except December) under the oversight of the elders of the Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526. (904) 455-7595. *Subscription is free to addresses in the United States.* All contributions shall be used for operational expenses.

MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

**Write For Your
Free Bible Correspondence
Course
4850 Saufley Field Road
Pensacola, FL 32526**

Defender



“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

Volume XXVI

February 1997

Number 2

HONOR THY FATHER AND MOTHER

Tracy Dugger

We live in a society today that often shows little regard for parents. It has been my unfortunate experience to witness acts of unkindness and disrespect of others towards their own parents. It has saddened me to have seen neglect and a lack of reverence shown to mothers and fathers. When you note the sacrifice and love that mothers and fathers have demonstrated toward their offspring it is even more despicable to contemplate. Who was it that woke in the middle of the night to subside their fears or comfort during illness? Who picked you up when you stumbled? Who was it that unconditionally loved you even when you may not have deserved it? Who was always there to support you when all others seemed to have forsaken you?

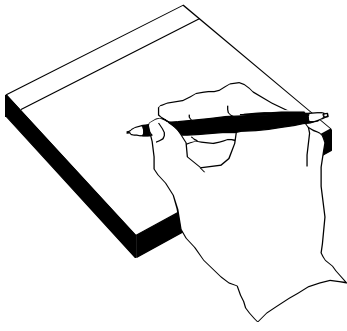
Paul stated in Ephesians 6:1-3, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.” Respect for one’s mother and father is essential to the prosperity and success of our nation. This is evident when we remember that the unit of society is the family. Verse 2 lists one of the Ten Commandments given on Mount Sinai to Israel. It was intended to emphasize the proper attitude due parents. Children owe their parents a great deal! They owe them obedience during childhood. They owe them respect, kindness, and love always. Parents are due our support and care in old age. Listen to the wise man in Proverbs 23:22-26,

Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old. Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding. The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice: and he that begetteth a wise *child* shall have joy of

him. Thy father and thy mother shall be glad, and she that bare thee shall rejoice. My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.

Even our spouse’s parents (our in-laws) are to be shown proper honor and respect. Consider an example in the life of the great servant and prophet of God, Moses. In Exodus 18, Moses had already led Israel out of Egyptian bondage, crossed the Red Sea, and performed many mighty signs and wonders. Moses was God’s special servant to bring His special people out of oppression that they might dwell in the land of milk and honey, the Land of Promise. On the occasion of Exodus 18, Jethro came to visit his son-in-law. As great a man as was Moses, he still exhibited a deep respect for his wife’s father, Jethro. We read the following words: “And Moses went out to meet his father in law, and did obeisance, and kissed him; and they asked each other of *their* welfare; and they came into the tent” (Exo. 18:7). Although Jethro was no Israelite, he was worthy of respect. We learn an additional lesson in Exodus 18 regarding the mature in age. Beginning in verse 14, we learn of the great mental and physical burden Moses was enduring as he advised and counseled the many problems and trials of the twelve tribes. Jethro offered some sage advice in setting up others to consider these matters. This gave Moses much needed freedom from such cares. Let us see the value of the sage counsel of those who have trodden through life before us. We can gain much from their wisdom.

In the life of Jesus we find another example. Not only was Jesus Savior of the world, He was also a son
(Continued on Page 3)



Notes From The Editor

**Michael
Hatcher**

Email address:
whatcher@sprynet.com

Peace

When Peter proclaimed the first gospel message (Acts 2), he convicted his hearers of their sin in crucifying the Son of God. They were cut through the heart and cried out, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37). Peter gave them God’s plan of salvation—their need to repent and be baptized for the remission of their sin (Acts 2:38). “Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:41). Part of the reason they could rejoice at receiving the word was because of the salvation they had received. We see the same principle at work in the conversion of the Ethiopian (Acts 8) and the Philippian jailor (Acts 16).

Another integral part of that rejoicing was the peace that these now had with God. Prior to their conversion, they were at enmity with God (Rom. 5:10). They now had peace with Him. “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1). Paul describes that peace as a peace that passes understanding. “And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phi. 4:7). This is a type of peace that the world does not understand and has no participation in. The world has a view of peace that is simply the absence of alarm. When the world is not in fear of some evil (war, crime, etc.), then they think they have peace. True peace only comes from Christ Jesus our Lord. “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27). The highest concept of peace is a harmonious relationship with God. Some have ex-

pressed it that peace is not the absence of alarm but the presence of God. However, many Christians do not feel like they have peace within their lives. Let us notice a few of the reasons this might exist.

One of the reasons a Christian might not feel like he has peace is because of sin in his life. God has revealed His will for mankind. Since God is the Creator of man, He knows what is best for man within his life. When man does not live up to that ideal, then he will not and should not feel peace. Sin separates man from God (Isa. 59:1-2). If peace is the presence of God and Jesus is the giver of that peace, then sin within one’s life will cause the person to not have peace. When he takes care of his sin in the scripturally appointed way, then he will once again enjoy the presence of God in his life or the peace of God.

Another reason many do not have peace in their lives is because of a lack of prayer in their life. God has given Christians the opportunity to talk things over with Him. Peter said, “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you” (1 Pet. 5:7). Christians are urged to “Pray without ceasing” (1 The. 5:17). Yet, many Christians simply do not take advantage of this great opportunity. The result is that they do not enjoy the peace that comes by turning things over to God.

Some do not have peace because they are too self-centered. We recognize that Jesus taught that we are to love ourselves when He said, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Mat. 22:39). However, many expend all their affection upon themselves. They forget one of the great purposes of Christianity by forgetting others. Jesus taught that we are to minister to others. Jesus said, “whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister” (Mat. 20:26). They are too busy thinking about themselves to concern themselves with others and their needs. The result is they do not have peace in their lives.

A great problem in our society is that people have become too busy. People have crowded their lives with so many things they do not have time for God. These people run from one event to another all day long. They might have to take the children from school to extra-curricular activities until late at night. They have no time for God or anything else. They do not pray or read and study God’s Word—they do not have time. They need to take time out of their busy schedules for God and find the peace that God offers. They need to learn what

God said through the Psalmist to “be still, and know that I am God” (Psa. 46:10). They are so busy that they do not have time to meditate upon God. “When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches” (Psa. 63:6).

Peace is a great advantage for the Christian over the non-Christian. The Christian should portray peace within his life. This type of life should be a drawing power to the gospel. “Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things” (Tit. 2:10). If your life does not show “the peace of God, which passeth all understanding” then correct your life and bring it into harmony with God’s Word. MH

(Continued from Page 1)

who had great respect for what the law said regarding parents. His love and honor for His mother can be observed in John 19:25-27:

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the *wife* of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own *home*.

We notice in His last hour, in His hour of agony, that He was concerned for the welfare of His mother. When Jesus stated, “Woman, behold thy son!” He was not referring to Himself by the use of the word “son.” Rather, He wanted John to become a son to Mary and that she might be well cared for following His exit from this earth.

Many of the Jews had become so corrupted by pride and misplaced values that by the first century they had dismissed the very clear and precise fourth commandment (Exo. 20:12). Our Lord witnessed this and confronted them in Mark 7. In this chapter (see also Mat. 15) we find that the Jews had invented a law which freed them of their parental obligations. A Jew could say that part of his estate, by which his parents might be taken care of, would be given to the temple as a gift of God when he died. This would free the Jew from that responsibility. The word “Corban” is found in Mark’s account. It was a word meaning they had previously dedicated and thus laid aside a gift to God instead.

Corban means “given to God.” It essentially allowed one to declare a part of his estate to be dedicated to God, thereby releasing him from the responsibility to provide for aged and needy parents.

Jesus stated that they were guilty of setting aside divine law to make way for their traditions. He also called them hypocrites! They had proposed to honor God by vowing to Him what should go to their needy parents but had really been guilty of covetousness. The *Corban* pronouncement was used for withdrawing items from use by others when the offerer merely wanted to keep these possessions for his own benefit.

The Jews used “*Corban*” as an excuse for neglecting their aged and needy parents. What excuses do we offer today? I am not against nursing homes and other such care facilities. I realize that at times they can provide much needed medical service which perhaps would be impossible in other situations. I realize that some are unable to care for parents due to extenuating circumstances. However, these facilities can become abused by children and often are. I have visited many care facilities and nursing homes and found that many of the patients have children who rarely visit. In fact, many children were glad to get rid of them—to be released of their responsibility. However, all the excuses in the world do not rid us of such passages as Ephesians 6:2-3. Paul tells us more of the obligation to our family in the fifth chapter of his first epistle to Timothy:

Honour widows that are widows indeed. But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God.... But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.... If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed (1 Tim. 5:3-4, 8, 16).

These verses clearly point out the parental and family responsibility. In fact, Paul states that the condition of one who refuses and neglects their duty in this area is in worse condition than an unbeliever. This is very serious and ought especially to gain our attention.

We want to be cautious in not neglecting and rejecting our obligation in honoring our parents. Let us be the kind of son or daughter that Jesus was. Let us honour our father and mother in all that we do.

4604 Nelms Lane; Roanoke, VA 24019

THE LIFE OF GROWTH AND MATURITY

Shan Jackson

Our Lord made many assuring statements during His ministry but none is any more assuring than His promise of John 10:10. Jesus said, "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly." Brethren, this promise of abundant life thrills the heart of every sincere child of God. With it we build dreams that reach far beyond this mortal existence. Dreams that prompt us. Dreams that help us. Dreams that comfort us in this present world. However, where there are dreams there must be life and growth. Jesus said, "I come that you may have life" but where there is life there must be growth.

Just as a gardener plants seed with an anticipation of growth, so does the heavenly Gardener expect growth from the seed He plants in His children. Jesus illustrated this fact time and time again in His teaching. In Matthew 6:28, Jesus calls on us to "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow." Also, He gives a power-filled illustration using a mustard seed in Matthew 13. Obviously, God has a progression of plans for His people and those plans include growth and maturity. We are to grow individually, and as a brotherhood we are told to grow collectively. Individually, we develop to become an indispensable part of the body. Collectively, we sincerely try to emulate Him more and more every day.

Now, I hope the obvious intent of this article is recognizable. My intent is to show that the Bible promises an abundant life. But more than that, I also want to show that the abundant life is a life of growth and maturity. I would like for us to begin in 2 Peter 3:18. Here the inspired penman writes, "But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen."

With these beautiful words our beloved brother ends his last great epistle. It appears that the last thing on his heart is to encourage these brethren to grow in grace and knowledge. With a command to grow he encourages and exhorts these persecuted brethren. And friends, if the growth experienced in the early church is to be captured today, growth in "spirit and in truth," then we must be consistent in our desire and in our development.

When Christians accept this command, when we

make this our desire, there will be growth, individual growth and collective growth as well. Growth in faith, growth in maturity, growth in service, and with this growth we see the borders of God's kingdom being enlarged and lost souls being converted. However, where and when this command is ignored there always seems to be a lacking. A lacking of qualified leadership, zealous membership, and enthusiastic preachingship. Where and when this command is ignored these "ships" always spring leaks and sometimes sink completely out of sight.

As if often the case, perhaps the best approach to this article is the most obvious. The Bible gives us the perfect picture of growth when it says that Jesus "increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2:52). Until we complete this growth cycle we can never be satisfied. This process of growth and maturity begins with our "new birth" into Christ. Peter speaks of the purifying of our souls of "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God" (1 Pet. 1:22-23). When one hears the truth of God's Word, believes it with all their heart, is willing to turn from their sins, and acknowledge Jesus as God's Son, when a person is willing to submit to the watery grave called baptism; he becomes a babe in Christ. And, as Paul says, "all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). At that time God expects him to begin to grow. At that time God expects us to begin to mature and not stop until his days are over. Jesus reminds us that we must be "faithful unto death" (Rev. 2:10).

However, we could own half the land in Texas and still be a spiritual pauper. We could have PhD's from every college in the land and still be spiritually ignorant. Because acceptable growth must be growth according to the pattern. And if there is a crying need in the brotherhood today it is for sound biblical growth.

Paul speaks of physical man's weakness, but he says our spiritual man is "renewed day by day" (2 Cor. 4:16). With this day by day renewal we can press on toward spiritual maturity. "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Pet. 2:3). And, babes in Christ also need to begin on God's spiritual milk.

Now, brethren, please do not think that I am a negative cynic, because I am not. I am simply trying to

get all of us to the biblical understanding of God's will. The abundant life that Jesus promises in John 10 is a life of growth toward maturity.

There are, however, things that hinder growth and maturity. The devil will make sure of that. But, for everything the devil uses against us to hinder us, God gives 100-fold things to help. Jesus said, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Mat. 5:6). Christian growth and maturity is essential.

But, Christian growth and maturity is dependent on several factors. It is dependent on the fact that God's Word must be its foundation. Unless our spiritual building is on God's Word, our building will fail. Only the wise man, who built his house on "the rock" was able to stand.

Another dependent factor is that we preach, and insist on true gospel preaching. Paul wrote to the Romans with these words, "For I am not ashamed of the

gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Rom. 1:16). Jesus also insisted that it was the "truth [that] shall make you free" (John 8:32). He told us that it is God's Word that is truth (John 17:17).

Another dependent factor to Christian growth is biblical leadership. Our selected leaders lead and they must be qualified biblically. They must be filled with desire and be grounded in God's truth.

Brethren, our desire must be to develop our lives and our congregations to the extent that they are what God wants. Our desire must be to dedicate our lives as a "living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1). Brethren, let us be steadfast in our growth. So steadfast that we are unmovable. So steadfast and unmovable that we are always abounding in the work of the Lord. Then we will know that our labor is not in vain in the Lord.

P.O. Box 904; Palacios, TX 77465

Mark your calendars!!!

Make plans to attend!!!

22nd Annual Bellview Lectures

June 7-11, 1997

Theme: Leadership

ELDERS

Earl Trimble

There are numerous Old Testament references to the term "elders" who were older men looked upon as leaders among God's people (e.g., Num. 11:16-17; Deu. 27:1). The concept for the leadership of God's people in the New Testament era is based on that in the Old Testament. Today, God's elders in the church are chosen from among men with years of exemplary Christian living who meet biblically specified qualifications (1 Tim. 3; Tit. 1; 1 Pet. 5).

Other terms are used for "elders" in the New Testament indicating different aspects of their duties: pastors (Eph. 4:11; 1 Pet. 5:1-2, to feed or tend), bishops (Acts 20:28; Phi. 1:1; 1 Tim. 3:1; to oversee). The term "elder" (*presbuteros*) indicates "the mature

spiritual experience and understanding of those described" as pastors and bishops (*W. E. Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*, p. 120).

Men who serve congregations as elders, in too many instances, seem not to grasp the seriousness and immenseness of their charge. Elders must give an account at judgment of their stewardship as leaders of God's people (1 Cor. 4:2; Tit. 1:7; Heb. 13:17). God has placed elders in the church to be "watchmen" against the danger of false teachers and error creeping in and destroying souls that are misled (Acts 20:28-31; Heb. 13:17).

The current widespread digression and outright apostasy within the brotherhood would not be occurring

presently if the elders in those congregations would have carried out their responsibilities as watchmen of their flocks. Today, elders are to be serving in the role of God's watchmen of old; and, therefore, should heed the warnings of the prophet Ezekiel to purge the membership of every sin (Eze. 3:17-21). The apostle Paul put it this way: "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).

Too many elderships see themselves as a board of directors meeting behind closed doors and handing down edicts to be adhered to by the congregation. They fail to take the time to be intimately sociable with the membership. They sociably isolate themselves from the members, and thus they are ineffective at knowing their flocks and cannot "tend" to the many real needs of individuals. Busy secular lives prevent too many elders from deep and intense study of the Book, and they are ill prepared to "feed" the flock and to "exhort and convince the gainsayers" (Tit. 1:9). Therefore, pulpits are being filled with false brethren who are leading whole congregations down the primrose path into apostasy.

Having been an elder several years, this writer learned that the most significant aspect of the servitude as an elder is that of pastor, i.e., shepherd. If every man who serves a congregation as one of its elders would

emphasize the role of a good shepherd who knows the flock and who is known by them, he would find his efforts to be of optimum effectiveness. When an elder is hospitable and continually has families in his home and likewise is regularly in their homes, he finds that most all other aspects of the "work" pretty well falls in line. By adopting the attributes of the good shepherd, as pictured by Jesus in John chapter 10, his service as an elder is greatly enhanced.

A man must meet the God ordained specifications in order to be Holy Spirit "made," or qualified, to serve as an elder (Acts 20:28). Too, one must continue meeting the qualifications in order to remain a Holy Spirit made overseer. Some falsely hold the view that "once an elder, always an elder." When a man no longer meets the God-ordained qualifications, he then ceases to be God's elder. It is his meeting the qualifications presently, that determines his being approved by God to serve as an elder: not that he once met them.

No greater need exists today in the church than that of qualified elders sacrificing themselves in serving congregations of the Lord's people. May God "raise up" men to serve His people as dedicated, sacrificing servants to shepherd His church in these troubling times.

4620 King Arthur Court; El Paso, TX 79903

THE MORMONS ARE STILL HERE

J. L. Davidson

There is quite a large Mormon settlement in Conroe, Texas, and they are very active. Their "missionaries" visited our home until they learned better. They also use the newspapers when they can. This article consists of a Mormon letter which appeared in *The Bulletin*, a weekly Conroe paper and my reply.

The Mormon says:

The Book of Mormon. Another Testament of Jesus Christ, will be the subject of a devotional to be held Sunday night at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Since the organization of the Church in 1830, Mormons have claimed this other book, along with the Bible, to be scripture. While the Old and New Testaments of the Bible are witnesses of Jesus Christ from the Old World, there is yet another testament, a record from Ancient America, the Book of Mormon, explains Bishop David Kershnik, leader of the local congregation. It joins with the Bible for the convincing of the Jew and the Gentile that Jesus is the Christ the eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations. [*Book of Mormon*, Title page]

The value of the Book of Mormon, they believe, is that it shows that God speaks today as he did in Biblical times, through men called to be prophets and apostles. The beneficiaries of this leadership are families that receive strength and guidance to problems that are unique to our day. What a message what a claim!!, says the Bishop, adding that anyone can know of the truth of this by studying the Bible and the Book of Mormon, which the Church calls evidence of these truths, by asking in prayer, for conformation through the Holy Ghost.

Copies of the Book of Mormon: another Testament of Jesus Christ, are available in the library, from local missionaries, or members of the Church.

The Bible says: Everyone should know...That there is only one God (1 Cor. 8:4). That God is a Spirit (John 4:24). That a spirit hath not flesh and bones (Luke 24:39). Adam is not God but God created Adam (Gen. 5:1-2). That Eve was created from Adam's rib (Gen 2:21-25). That Jesus Christ is the Son of God (John 3:16). That He lived with God as a spirit being from all

eternity (John 1:1). That He became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14). That the Holy Spirit is a person (John 16:13). That Jesus was begotten of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin (Mat. 1:18-25). That the nature of God is a mystery that no man fully understands (Deu. 29:29). That in Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2:9). That Christ died for sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Cor. 15:1-4). That the fleshly body of Christ that went into the tomb is the body that came out of it (John 20:27; Luke 24:39). That this same body was taken up into heaven (Acts 1:9). That Jesus performed miracles that men might believe, but after His departure the Bible was written that men might believe (John 20:30-31). That Jesus personally called twelve apostles to carry on His work after His departure (Mat. 10:1-5). There are no apostles today. That this is seen by the fact that an apostle must literally have seen Jesus before and after His resurrection (Acts 1:21-22). Jesus praised the church at Ephesus because they tried those who said they were apostles and were not and found them to be liars (Rev. 2:12). There are no prophets today (1 Cor. 13:8; Heb. 1:1-2). That before His departure, Jesus promised to send the Holy Spirit to guide the apostles into all truth (John 16:13). The Word of God is truth (John 17:17). That the Holy Spirit revealed all truth to the apostles and there is no more truth than all truth. That all Scripture is given by inspiration of God and makes man complete (2 Tim. 3:16-17). That Paul wrote fourteen books of the New Testament and he said even if an angel preached something different from what he preached; he was cursed of God (Gal. 1:8). All Christians are priests (Rev. 1:6). An elder must be a married man with believing children (Tit. 1:5-6). That the Bible is the complete full and final revelation of God's will to man (John 14:26). That it is the once for all delivered

truth (Jude 3). That in the Bible, God has given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3). That men are given strict instructions not to add to or take away from this revelation (Rev. 22:18-19). Anything that claims to be another testament of Jesus Christ is a fraud.

13832 Bert Brown Road; Conroe, Texas 77302

Press Release:

The Southwest Church of Christ is pleased to announce that the 16th Annual Southwest Lectureship will be held April 13-16, 1997. The theme for this year's lectureship is "The churches of Christ Salute You." Speakers from several states have been invited to come and lecture to an expected record number of brethren who will gather in Austin from across the nation to attend this year's lectureship series.

During the lectureship, exhibits of various brotherhood publishers, mission efforts, and works from around the country will be on display (upon prior approval). In addition, the sermons and lessons delivered during this series will be published in hard-back book form and will be available during the lectureship along with audio and video tapes of this year's, as well as past, Southwest Lectureships. The annual Southwest School of Bible Studies Supporters' Dinner will also be held on lectureship Tuesday. For further information regarding this dinner, please contact Joseph D. Meador. R.V. and camper spaces are available at the Southwest building. For additional information and accommodations, you may contact: Gary Colley, Lectureship Director at Southwest Church of Christ, 8900 Manchaca Road, Austin, Texas 78748-5399. Phone (512) 282-2438 or Fax (512) 282-2486.

Defender is published monthly (except December) under the oversight of the elders of the Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526. (904) 455-7595. *Subscription is free to addresses in the United States.* All contributions shall be used for operational expenses.

MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

**Write For Your
Free Bible Correspondence
Course
4850 Saufley Field Road
Pensacola, FL 32526**

Defender



“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

Volume XXVI

March 1997

Number 3

EVANGELIZING THE YOUTH OF AMERICA

Mark McWhorter

Between 1992 and 1995, illegal drug use among minors soared 78 percent. The percentage of young people of the ages of 12-17 who admitted using illegal drugs in the month before this particular survey was taken doubled from 5.3% in 1992 to 10.9% in 1995. Monthly marijuana use is up 105% since 1992 and monthly hallucinogenic drug use is up 183% in the same time period.

Monthly cocaine use went up 166% from 1994 to 1995. Emergency room visits increased by 96% between 1992 and 1995 for those using marijuana, while those related to heroin jumped 58% in the same time period. Twenty-five percent of 12-17-year-olds admit experimenting with marijuana.

Ten million children now drink alcohol. Thirty-five percent of young people in their teens have over five drinks every two weeks. Three thousand children take up smoking each day. And 2.2 million teens now smoke.

The Children's Defense Fund and the authors of *13th Generation* give some impressive figures (these are not conservative organizations nor individuals and the figures may be altered to support political motives, but this author believes the figures to be close enough to warrant scrutiny). Every day in America—1,000 unwed girls in their teens become mothers; 1,100 girls in their teens have abortions; 4,219 young people contract a sexually transmitted disease; 500 young people begin using drugs; 1,000 young people begin drinking alcohol; 6 young people commit suicide; 80 young people are raped; 135,000 young people bring guns or other weapons to school; and 3,610 young people are as-

saulted.

From these statistics it is evident that there are major problems among the young people of this nation. Many of these young people are looking for direction in their lives, but either never find it or go in the wrong direction. Even those reared in the confines of a “Christian” home are not immune to these terrible problems.

What can we do? What must we do to stem the tide of this ocean of immorality? I will give a short list of ways we can evangelize the young people of this nation. In this small space it is impossible to be comprehensive.

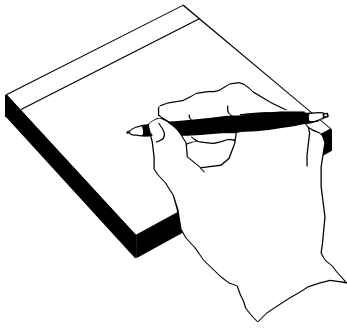
1. Pray for the wisdom to make the right approach. This means giving God the glory for any success seen (Jam. 1:5; 1 The. 5:17; Rom. 16:27).

2. Learn something about the background of the young people. Different backgrounds lead to different approaches. It does not mean you change truth. Instead, it means you have different starting points. Use their interests as a jumping point for teaching (1 Cor. 9:19-23).

3. Begin with your own children. Young people are quick to see hypocrisy. If your own children are unruly and have little respect for your words, you can be assured others will not either (1 Tim. 3:4-5).

4. Forget about catchy slogans, phrases, and promise notes. Young people are inundated with these every day from every direction. They see slogans come and go with the change in the wind. Young people need solid moorings and anchors that will hold in the worst storms of life. Teach them Bible verses. God's Word

(Continued on Page 3)



Notes From The Editor

**Michael
Hatcher**

Email address:
whatcher@sprynet.com

Softening of Fundamentals

Fundamentals are important if not vital to ones success. We observe this in many different areas. In our educational system today, schools have gotten away from the three r's, "readin, writin, and rithmetic." As a result, test scores have plummeted. Students in our schools do not receive the education that other nations students receive, while formerly ours was the envy of all nations. What happened is that we became soft on fundamentals. Sports teams who forget the fundamentals will soon be toward the bottom of their divisions, no matter how much talent they might possess. Businesses that forget the basics will soon be out of business. This same principle applies to the Lord's church. Yet, sadly, we have softened the fundamentals dealing with the church of Christ.

We have gotten away from book chapter and verse. Isaiah encouraged the Israelites to go back to the fundamentals of God's Word. "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, *it is because there is no light in them*" (Isa. 8:20). Again he writes, "Seek ye out of the book of the LORD, and read: no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate: for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit it hath gathered them" (Isa. 34:16). It is no wonder that we are called to God's Word. The gospel is God's power to save men. "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). Paul tells the Corinthians they would be saved by the gospel. "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain" (1 Cor. 15:1-2). James also reminds us of this when he

writes, "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls" (Jam. 1:21).

It is no wonder, seeing that the gospel is God's power to save, that God instructs us to preach His Word. "If any man speak, *let him speak* as the oracles of God; if any man minister, *let him do it* as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (1 Pet. 4:11). Paul told the young preacher, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:2). Paul continues by informing Timothy why he is to preach God's Word. "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Tim. 4:3-4). Those days came and they are still with us today, and many think they are worse today than ever before. However, we have softened our practice of preaching the Word. As one considers the preaching of both the prophets of the Old Testament and the apostles of the New Testament, it was always bold, plain, uncompromising preaching. Sad to say, in many pulpits across our nation, that is not the case. We have left the fundamentals of bold, plain, uncompromising preaching of God's Word. What we have in many pulpits are men who are so cowardly, they would never oppose and expose anything. They are great "after-dinner speakers" who will tell us how to win friends and influence people and give us the pop-psychology of feel-goodism, but will not boldly proclaim God's message. They will not "reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." Many have abandoned the fundamental of preaching and the church is suffering the effects of it.

Knowing that the gospel is God's power to save, individual Christians should learn the Word. This again is a basic fundamental that many in the Lord's church have forsaken. Paul instructed Timothy 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). We are to "grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18). It is by a knowledge of God and His Son, Jesus Christ, as revealed within the pages of the Bible that we will be saved. "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3). At one time we were

known as a Bible knowing people: that is no longer the case. The church is apostatizing because we no longer know God's Word. Only by returning to an individual study and learning of the Scriptures, will we be able to stop the apostasy.

There are many fundamentals that we as a people have left concerning the church: the distinctiveness, the worship, organization, terms of entrance, name, etc. If we want the church today to grow and prosper, we must return to the fundamentals, all the fundamentals. The two basic fundamentals discussed above would be a great starting point. Let us return to the preaching as revealed in the Bible and individually study God's inspired Truths. *MH*

(Continued from Page 1)

is what will keep them from sin—not a catchy phrase (Rom. 1:16-17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).

5. If possible, begin when the children are young. Obviously this again means that your own children must be given priority. Some of your children's first words should be Bible, God, and Jesus. The fact that God created the world and loves them should be some of the first concepts their minds comprehend. You then constantly build upon those teachings to help insure strong convictions when they reach the teen years (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14-15).

6. Let teaching them the Bible be your priority. By this, I mean that they must understand that the reason for your interaction with them, is to save their souls. In too many instances this message is watered down and garbled by the adults trying too hard to be a friend or buddy. While you do want to be their friend, it accomplishes nothing to be their pal at a game or at Six Flags, but have created little interest in studying the Bible. Teach them the truth, save their soul, and you will be the best kind of friend they will ever have (Pro. 27:6, 9, 17; John 15:15).

7. Make sure that an older adult with older children (perhaps grown children) is involved with the work. One of the major downfalls today is the youth minister concept. While I am not totally against youth ministers, we have unfortunately, in most situations, made the title mean just that—the minister is a youth. The wisdom of having reared children cannot be displaced by “teaching” in a classroom at a college/university (Tit. 2:2-7; 1 Tim. 3:5).

8. Proper leadership must be evident in the church. Young people must see that the chain of command is

strong and as God would have it. They must see that everything is done according to God's will. The elders must then be visible as the shepherds of the flock, not lording over, but in command. The fathers will be seen as the leaders in the home and mothers will be seen as the authority figure in the absence of the father. The young people will understand, in a proper sense, that they are at the bottom of the chain of command (Psa. 2:10-11; 2 Pet. 2:10; Mark 7:10-13).

9. Closely tied with the above, the young person must be given a sense of stewardship. They must understand that all that they have, including their lives, belong to God. They need to be given the opportunities to learn the joys of serving others. Have them visit nursing homes. Organize a group to clean up an elderly individuals home and yard. These activities will help take their minds off of “my rights” and “my wants and needs” to “what can I do for others?” and “what do others need?” (Mat. 20:26-28; Mat. 25:40; John 4:36).

10. Do not underestimate young people. This means at all ages. We have become convinced that they are “only children.” Somehow we have interpreted this to mean that we should not expect much from them. We develop leaders only by exercising the faculties necessary for leading. Give them responsibilities, expect something, stretch their capabilities—while maintaining control of the situation (1 Tim. 4:7-8; 2 Kin. 22:1-2; 2 Chr. 34:1-7, 33).

11. Instill in them a missionary mindset. This of course begins with the young people of your congregation. Have them write letters to missionary families. Have them obtain a few correspondence students. Encourage them to bring visitors to services. Offer to help them teach a one on one study with a friend. Let them see the adults active in mission work. As new young people are converted they will see missions/evangelism as a part of the Christian life—not as church “work” (John 15:2; Pro. 11:30).

12. Teach and encourage them to have the appropriate companions. I include in “companions” other young people, music, radio, television programs, movies, and books/magazines. These are highly controversial areas but it is an assurity that all of them have tremendous influence on the mind.

What an individual constantly feeds his mind, is what that individual will be. Most young people understand this concept. It is just that they must be encouraged in the right direction.

This point necessitates the adults having knowledge of the contents of the music, programs, and

books/magazines (including school books). It also means that the adults must know the other young people associating with the ones they are teaching or rearing.

Put the young peoples' names on mailing lists of some of the free brotherhood mailings. Give gift subscriptions to good brotherhood journals. Buy good materials for birthdays and holidays (Pro. 13:20; 1 Tim. 4:13).

13. Present appropriate youth functions with spiritual basis. Do not plan to "entertain" but to "educate." Choose sound speakers and topics of interest (not just ear ticklers, but those of need). Topics such as evolution/creation, drugs/alcohol, and "How Can I Serve God" are ones that they need and that have their interest.

Do not confuse the young people by mixing entertainment with a spiritual emphasis day. There are plenty of opportunities for entertainment in today's society. Let them know and expect them to understand that it is possible and good to set aside times for spiritual renewal. While congregational worship on Sunday is the God-appointed time for such, it is good and healthy for the soul to have other such times (1 Cor. 11:21-22, 34).

14. Teach them to read. Parents need to assure that their children can read. Otherwise, how will they study the Bible on their own? How will they teach others? Most people are aware of the growing illiteracy rates in the United States. The average American today reads at the 5th grade level. The simple English correspondence courses, once used exclusively overseas, are now being used by necessity in the United States. This increasing illiteracy is contributing to the biblical illiteracy we see all around us.

Perhaps we should consider offering tutoring classes in reading to youth (and adults) using Bible correspondence courses and the Bible. This has worked well in foreign countries toward converting souls—why not try it here? (1 Tim.4:13; Acts 8:30; look in a concordance at the times the words "read, readeth, and reading" are associated with God's Word).

15. Let the youth see that spiritual events are as of much interest as a ball game. Attend gospel meetings and lectureships. Invite local youth to go with you. Attempt to teach your children about today's heroes of the faith. By association with these older men and women, they create close friendship bonds that bridge the so-called "generation gap." It is wonderful to see a young person get as excited about seeing a man or woman of the faith as they would meeting a secular celebrity. Children should be able to make a modern list such as the eleventh chapter of Hebrews (Acts 15:3; 2 John 12).

There might be those who would say that I did not truly address the title of this article. However, I believe that before we can address specific modes of evangelism we must get the basics right. We have allowed the glitz, hype, and pop-psychology to blind us to the simple gospel message. The youth of the first century were accustomed to the world of the gladiatorial fights, of the theater, of rampant sexual promiscuity and perversion, of drugs, and most any other deviant and immoral behavior. Yet, the first century Christians were able to succeed in their mission by preaching and teaching the simple gospel without gimmicks, slogans, or entertainment.

420 Chula Vista Mtn. Road; Pell City, AL 35125

1st Madisonville Bible Lectures

Theme:

Angels, Demons, and Other Spirit Beings

Date: April 26-27, 1997

Hear these men: Jeff Archey, Curtis Cates, Glenn Colley, Keith Mosher, Paul Sain, and William Woodson.

Topics include: "The Nature of Angels," "The Nature of Demons," "What About Demon Possession and Exorcism?" "Do You Have a Guardian Angel?" "Was Jesus the First Angel?" "Satan: His Origin, Mission and Destiny," "Famous Angels of the Bible," "The Demons Also Believe."

For further information contact: Madisonville Church of Christ, 1035 N. Main St.; Madisonville, KY 42431. Phone: 502-821-3544.

3rd N. E. Oklahoma Lectures

Theme:

Into What Were You Baptized?

Date: April 4-6, 1997

Here these men: Tom Bright, Ron Cosby, Dub McClish, Stephen Wiggins, Jack Williams, Mike Wyatt, Larry Yarber, Jay Yeager.

Topics include: "Jimmy Allen & Rebaptism," "Various Bible Baptism," "John's Baptism & Apollos," "Remission of Sins' And Cults," "What is 'The Baptism of Fire'?" "Baptism and Unrepented Sin," "Baptism in the Holy Spirit," "A Baptism of Suffering," "The Christian Church & Baptism," "Into What Were YOU Baptized?"

For further information call: 918-224-2024 or 918-224-4376.

THIRTY-FIRST ANNUAL LECTURESHIP MEMPHIS SCHOOL OF PREACHING

4400 Knight Arnold Road; Memphis, TN 38118

MARCH 30 - APRIL 3, 1997

“EZEKIEL AND LAMENTATIONS:

LESSONS FOR GOD’S PEOPLE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE”

Sunday, March 30

9:30-10:20 AM Introduction To Ezekiel Keith A. Mosher, Sr.
10:30-11:30 AM They Shall Know There Hath Been A Prophet Among Them—2:5 Steve Ellis
6:00- 7:00 PM Ezekiel, A Hard-Headed Preacher—3:8-9 Joe Gilmore

Monday, March 31

9:00- 9:50 AM Ezekiel’s Vision Of God’s Glory—1:1-28 Curtis A. Cates
10:00-10:50 AM The New Testament Church Adron Doran
10:00-10:50 AM Two Women, The Daughters Of One Mother—Ch. 23 (Women’s Class) Corinne Elkins
11:00-11:50 AM Ezekiel’s Call And Commission—2:1-3:27 Gary Summers
11:00-11:50 AM Class 1: Introduction To Lamentations Phil Davis
Class 2: Ezekiel And Christ Terry Hightower
Class 3: Let Us Search And Try Our Ways, And Turn—Lam. 3:40 Tommy Stacks
Class 4: The Anointed Cherub: Satan?—28:11-19 David B. Jones
11:50- 1:10 PM LUNCH Joseph D. Meador
1:10- 2:00 PM Judgment On Israel Symbolized—4:1-5:17 Eddie Whitten
1:10- 2:00 PM Class 1: Jerusalem Mourns—Lam. 1:1-22 Fred House
Class 2: Unanswered Prayer—Lam. 3:44
Class 3: God’s Woman: Her Scriptural Role (Women’s Class) Jane McWhorter
2:10- 3:00 PM Punishment For Idolatry And False Worship—6:1-7:27 Kenneth Gossett
3:10- 4:00 PM Open Forum Garland Elkins
4:00- 7:00 PM INTERMISSION
7:00- 7:30 PM CONGREGATION SINGING
7:30- 8:30 PM I Sat Where They Sat—3:15 Harrell Davidson

Tuesday, April 1

9:00- 9:50 AM Visions Of Judgment Upon Jerusalem—8:1-11:25 Dub McClish
10:00-10:00 AM Restoration Movement Adron Doran
10:00-10:50 AM There Sat The Women For Tammuz—8:14-15 (Women’s Class) Carol Mangrum
11:00-11:50 AM Signs And Messages—12:14-23 Michael Hatcher
11:00-11:50 AM Class 1: The Lord Punishes Jerusalem—Lam. 2:1-22 Clarence Lavender
Class 2: Ezekiel As A Preacher M. H. Tucker
Class 3: False Teachers, Then And Now—13:1-16 Glenn Colley
Class 4: God’s Holy Name And Attitudes Toward It—36:21 Mark Mosher
11:50- 1:10 PM LUNCH Daniel Denham
1:00- 2:00 PM Judah Described In Parables—15:1-17:24 Jimmy Ferguson
1:10- 2:00 PM Class 1: Godly Sorrow Brings Hope—Lam. 3:1-66 Dave Dugan
Class 2: They Hear Thy Words But Do Them Not—33:31
Class 3: God’s Woman: Her Triumph In Adversity (Women’s Class) Jane McWhorter
2:10- 3:00 PM God’s Righteous Judgments; Weeping Over Jerusalem—18:1-19:14 Mack Lyon
PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS AND SUPPORTERS SEMINAR
3:10- 4:00 PM Open Forum Garland Elkins
4:00- 7:00 PM INTERMISSION
7:00- 7:30 PM CONGREGATION SINGING
7:30- 8:30 PM Valley Of Dry Bones Jerry Moffitt

Wednesday, April 2

9:00- 9:50 AM Jehovah’s Past Dealings And Future Retribution—20:1-21:32 Noah Hackworth
10:00-10:50 AM Difficulties Encountered By The Restorers With The Restoration Plea Adron Doran
10:00-10:50 AM Thou Didst Trust In Thy Beauty—16:15 Helen Andrews
11:00-11:50 AM Sin, Spiritual Adultery, And Destruction—22:1-24:27 Bobby Liddell
11:00-11:50 AM Class 1: Punishment Caused By Wickedness—Lam. 4:1-22 David McElwain
Class 2: Christ On David’s Throne Now?—37:24-28 Mark Bass
Class 3: I Sought For A Man—22:30 Robert R. Taylor, Jr.
Class 4: Things Necessary For God To Dwell In Man’s Midst James Boyd
11:50- 1:10 PM LUNCH
1:10- 2:00 PM Prophecies Against The Nations—25:1-28:26 H. A. “Buster” Dobbs
1:10- 2:00 PM Class 1: Earnest Prayer To God—Lam. 5:1-22 Kenneth Jones
Class 2: God’s House Has Law—43:12 Bill Lockwood
Class 3: God’s Woman: Her Service To Others (Women’s Class) Jane McWhorter
2:10- 3:00 PM Prophecies Against Egypt—29:1-32:32 Wayne Coats
3:10- 4:00 PM Open Forum Garland Elkins
4:00- 7:00 PM INTERMISSION
7:00- 7:30 PM CONGREGATION SINGING
7:30- 8:30 PM I Have Made Thee A Watchman—3:17 Don McWhorter

Thursday, April 3

9:00- 9:50 AM Ezekiel’s Call Renewed; Israel To Be Restored—33:1-35:15 Mike Brandt
10:00-10:50 AM Barton Warren Stone And The Cane Ridge Church Adron Doran
10:00-10:50 AM The Role Of Women In Maintaining Morality And Spirituality (Women’s Class) Irene Taylor
11:00-11:50 AM Land Restored; nation Resurrected As One—36:1-37:28 Billy Bland
11:00-11:50 AM Class 1: Is It Nothing to You, All Ye That Pass By?—Lam. 1:12 Ira Y. Rice, Jr.
Class 2: It Is Good To Bear The Yoke In Youth—Lam. 3:27 Barry Grider
Class 3: God’s All-Seeing Eye—8:12 Tim Nichols
Class 4: We Unto The Shepherds Of Israel—34:2 Eddie Smith
11:50- 1:10 PM LUNCH
1:10- 2:00 PM Final Triumph And Deliverance—38:1-39:28 John West
1:10- 2:00 PM Class 1: God’s Blessings Are New Every Morning—Lam. 3:2 Paul Sain
Class 2: They Have Committed Lewdness And Shed Blood—22:6-12 Robert Williams
Class 3: God’s Women: Her Spirituality (Women’s Class) Jane McWhorter
2:10- 3:00 PM Vision Of The Future Temple Described—40:1-43:12 Roy J. Hearn
3:10- 4:00 PM Open Forum Garland Elkins
4:00- 7:00 PM INTERMISSION
7:00- 7:30 PM CONGREGATIONAL SINGING
7:30- 8:30 PM Vision Of Future Worship And Future Land—43:13-48:35 Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

NOTE: An attended nursery shall be provided for all lectures. There will be classes and activities for pre-school children daily, and also for the evening classes.

WATER/ELECTRICAL HOOKUPS PROVIDED

22nd Annual Bellview Lectures Planned

The Bellview Church Of Christ in Pensacola, FL, has planned their **22nd Annual Bellview Lectures** for June 7-11, 1997. The theme for this years study will be *Leadership*. The aim of this series of lectures will be to provide fundamental lessons all can profit from on the vital theme. A variety of material will be covered by the 30 lessons presented by 28 great gospel preachers from all over the nation. There will also be three open forums to discuss issues relating to this subject. All lessons will be both video and audio taped so the messages will reach the greatest amount of souls possible. These tapes can be ordered from the Bellview Church Of Christ. As in the past nine years a book of the lectures is being prepared. The previous books covered such topics as: *Are We Moving Away From the Cross of Christ?, In Hope of Eternal Life, What Does God Authorize In Worship, The Church Triumphant, Current Crises Challenging the Church, God's Pattern for Christian Living, Changes in the Church Of Christ, The Doctrine of Christ Verses the Doctrines of Men*, and last years book, *Preaching God Demands*. These books may be ordered from the Bellview Church Of Christ.

This years speakers include: Billy Bland, David Brown, Curtis Cates, B. J. Clarke, Wayne Coats, Harrell Davidson, Buster Dobbs, Bobby Duncan, Garland Elkins, Steve Ellis, Guss Eoff, Joe Galloway, Joe Gilmore, Noah Hackworth, Michael Hatcher, Bobby Liddell, Jerry Martin, Dub McClish, Joeseoph D. Meador, Jerry Moffitt, Clifford Newell, Flavil Nichols, Ira Y. Rice Jr., James Rogers, Stanley Ryan, Gary Summers, Joel Wheeler, and Eddie Whitten. They will be speaking on the topics: "Qualifications Of Elders And Deacons," "Exposition of 1 Peter 5:1-4," "El-

der—Elder, Deacon, Preacher Relations," "Elders Duty To Members," "Members Duty To Elders," "Work Of Deacons," "Re-evaluation of Elders?," "Moses—Great Example Of Leadership," "Joshua—Great Example Of Leadership," "David—Great Example Of Leadership," "Nehemiah—Great Example Of Leadership," "Jesus—Great Leader Of Men," "Authority Of Elders," "Lording It Over The Flock," "Qualities Of A Leader," "Decision Making In Leadership," "History Of Departure In Leadership," "Women As Elders And Deacons," "Goal Setting In Leadership," "How To Handle Criticism," "Inspiring Brethren To Good Works," "Elders As Watchmen," "Elders And The Stewardship Of Souls," "Tending The Flock," "Congregations Without Elders," "Eldership And Old Testament Concepts," "Elders And Church Discipline," and "The Spirit of Obedience." These additional topics will be covered in the book: "Selection Of Elders and Deacons," "Elders And Money," "Conflict Resolution," "Stopping Their Mouths," and "Elders And The Hiring Of Preachers."

Exhibit space is available for subject to approval of the Bellview elders. A motel nearby has extended a special lectureship rate for individuals who attend the lectures. You may contact them directly: Hospitality Inn (4910 Mobile Highway; Pensacola, FL 32506; or call 904/453-3333). There are a few hookups available for travel trailers and motor homes on the building grounds. Please contact the office to reserve a space.

All people are invited to attend this special uplifting event. For further information please contact the Bellview Church Of Christ at 4850 Saufley Field Rd., Pensacola, FL 32526, or call 904/455-7595. We look forward to seeing you at that time.

AN AGE OUT OF BREATH (OR, HOW TO KNOW GOD)

Shan Jackson

We live in an exceeding busy age. An age in which we find people who appear to not have time for God. An age that does not follow the norm of the past when men were anxious to know God's truth. An age when we do not hear men say, "my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God" (Psa. 84:2) or, "Oh that I knew where I might find him" (Job 23:3). This is, as it appears, an age

out of breath. An age that displays little faith for the Bible says, "he that believeth shall not make haste." An age out of breath is an age that shows apathy toward God and His will. An age that dreams materialistic dreams but Jesus said, "ye cannot serve God and mammon." It is more emphatically true now than ever, "Surely every man walketh in a vain shew: surely they are disquieted

in vain: he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them” (Psa. 39:6). Our sales people go early and stay late. Our business men and women must give it their all in order to survive. Our men work, and even extra, our women too, and this rush and hurry is encouraged, yea, demanded. Yet people continue to suffer from heart-hunger. These are those who do not know God. But failure is sure because they are caught in the rapids of time. The torrents of trade are sweeping them onward but away. They fail because they refuse to use their means to come to a knowledge of God. The first condition for knowing God is:

THOUGHT

It is a law of life that man apprehends only that upon which he fixes attention. That is a condition of knowing—attention. In our hurried age, however, man seldom finds the time to pay attention to anything save his particular set of immediate needs. We simply do not give ourselves the time needed to dig out the thoughts that would enrich our lives with truth and free them from error. If we would “buy the truth” we must pay the price of attention, of thought. It is true that we would know God better if we thought more about Him, if we “meditate on these things and give ourselves wholly to them.” Reading the Bible is not the same as studying it. Remember, the condition of knowing is attention. Study, meditation, learning spiritual truth, these help us know God and the first condition of knowing God is thought. The second condition for knowing God is:

PRAYER

To know about God and to know God are two very different things. You may read about someone or something but it is something else to know them personally. People may know a lot about God from sermons they hear or books they read but, do they really know Him as Lord and Creator? It is in prayer that we come to know God. To know Him personally as Lord and God. It is in prayer that we fellowship with Him and fortify our association and communion. In study we learn about God, in prayer we learn to know God. Prayer, lifting

high our humble petitions, these bring us closer to God and the second condition of knowing God is prayer. The third condition for knowing God is:

ACTION

Many people we know have no small degree of learning and spiritual knowledge. And, they also possess a large capacity for feeling. When they listen to His truth their hearts are stirred. They hear His message and their feelings are touched and they leave the assembly with high emotions of resolve. However, this emotion too often vanishes before the application is set in motion. The following week they return to the assembly. Their hearts are stirred again, their feelings are touched again, and they leave, again, with more emotions of resolve, but again, they do nothing. If we would really know God we must add to thought and learning and feeling, actual doing.

The well used illustration of the man who was met by an acquaintance as he left the services early and was asked, “Is the sermon over?” His answer came back, “No, the preaching is over, but the sermon remains to be done.” What we hear, and learn, and resolve, remains to be done, and it must be done before we can really know God.

Action! This is how a man becomes the image of God. There is no other way. Acts react upon the soul. Good actions make good men. Kind actions make kind men. Divine actions make men in God’s image. “The end of man,” said the poet, “is in action, not in thought.” Thought alone will accomplish nothing, but thought, followed by action, will see the will of God done in a person’s life. Thought and prayer coupled with action is the key to a knowledge of God. Therefore, let us study but not be satisfied with thinking, pray, but not be satisfied with feeling. Let us follow our thoughts and prayers with resolve to action and with this we will certainly come to a knowledge of God.

P.O. Box 904 Palacios, TX 77465

Defender is published monthly (except December) under the oversight of the elders of the Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526. (904) 455-7595. *Subscription is free to addresses in the United States.* All contributions shall be used for operational expenses.

MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

**Write For Your
Free Bible Correspondence
Course
4850 Saufley Field Road
Pensacola, FL 32526**

Defender



“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

Volume XXVI

April 1997

Number 4

The NIV Examined

Alexander Nesterkin

Since the first century A. D. we have the complete revelation of God to man, through His Word—The Bible. “All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

The wisdom of God is so wonderful and is seen in the giving and the preservation of His Word. Today, when we read it in the English, Russian, or any other language, we have to be sure about faithful, accurate, respectful translation.

Translators are not inspired; yet, if a translation reproduces the complete, perfect revelation of God, accurately and faithfully, this will be the Bible which God gave to us, to everyone in order to understand His will and His character and that we may do according to it. “Therefore thou shalt love the LORD thy God, and keep his charge, and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments, alway” (Deu. 11:1). Jesus Christ read from the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament) and called it “scripture” (Luke 4:17-21). Thus, we have the inspired Word of God through translation.

Any translation as a work of men can have mistakes made by ignorance or willingly. Our task is to discern errors and hold to the truth. “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 The. 5:21).

The NIV and the Russian Living New Testament (RLNT), which now is circulated in Russia, are both products of the International Bible Society, and have to be identified either as the Word of Truth or as the word

of error. There is no middle ground. These two translations are very similar and it seems to me that the RLNT was made after, and from the NIV. The errors of the RLNT are almost identical to the NIV.

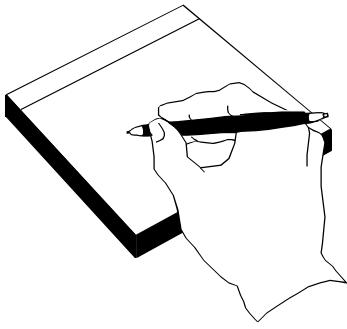
The committee of translators claimed that the fact that many denominations took part in this work, helped to safeguard the translation from sectarian bias. A cow, a horse and an ass could eat the same straw, but the cow produces milk, the horse fertilizer and the ass only a bray.

The Word of God is spiritual bread and it produces only Christians, but many people use this bread to support their own doctrines by changing, omitting, replacing, transposing, modifying etc., so even the bray of the wild ass becomes more pleasant to our ears than their speeches. The NIV translators changed the Word of God and twisted it so that white can be seen as black and black as white.

Let us look at some of man’s doctrines which have found support in this translation:

1. **The doctrine of salvation by faith only.** “For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: ‘The righteous will live by faith’” (Rom. 1:17; NIV). The Greek does not say that it is by faith “from first to last.” “For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved” (Rom. 10:10; NIV). This is false since it teaches that the sinner is saved before he puts Christ on in baptism. “And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel

(Continued on Page 3)



Notes From The Editor

**Michael
Hatcher**

Email address:
whatcher@sprynet.com

Amenability

Amenable as is used here means “liable to be called to account; answerable, responsible.” Some have raised the question as to who is amenable to God’s law. E. C. Fuqua was the first that I know that denied that some individuals today are not amenable to all of God’s law. Later James Bales and Dan Billingsly have likewise argued that only Christians are amenable to God’s law. They argue that only the Christian is subject to God’s law (the New Testament); the non-Christian is subject to some other law (civil law, moral law, or a law on the heart). Notice some teachings that all men are amenable to all the Law of Christ.

Sin is a transgression of the law. “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4). Only those under the law commit sin. “Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God....Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, *there is* no transgression” (Rom. 3:19; 4:15). If the non-Christian is not amenable to the law of Christ, then he has not transgressed. If he has not transgressed, then he has not committed sin. However, the Scriptures affirm that all men have sinned. “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23). “But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe” (Gal. 3:22). Since all men have sinned, all men are accountable to the Law of Christ.

We also note that if a person is subject to any part of a law, then he is subject to all that law. This is Paul’s argument concerning the binding of any part of the Law of Moses (circumcision) upon the Christian. “For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is

a debtor to do the whole law” (Gal. 5:3). Likewise, James adds, “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all” (Jam. 2:10). If we can find any command within the New Testament (the Law of Christ) that is given to the non-Christian, then the non-Christian is amenable to the entire New Testament. In Acts 17 we find Paul in Athens. Some philosophers took him to the Areopagus where he preached to those who were non-Christians. Toward the conclusion of that sermon Paul said, “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent” (Acts 17:30). Here is one command that was given to non-Christians (see also Acts 2:38), to which they were subject, thus the non-Christian is amenable to the whole Law of Christ.

Jesus giving a world-wide commission shows that He considers all men are accountable to His law. Jesus told the apostles to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature in every nation (Mat. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47; Acts 1:8). In that great commission they were instructed to teach all things that he had commanded, including our responsibility to go into all the world. However, if all men are not subject to the Law of Christ, then it is useless, because they cannot obey a law to which they are not subject. Thus, they must be amenable to Christ’s law for Christ to give a world-wide commission.

When we consider the nature of Christ, we come to understand that He is over all, thus His law is over all. The Scriptures describe Jesus as being King of kings and Lord of Lords. “Which in his times he shall shew, *who is* the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords” (1 Tim. 6:15). John also uses this phraseology in Revelation 17:14; and 19:15. John also writes, “And from Jesus Christ, *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood” (Rev. 1:5). “Prince” is from the Greek word *archon* meaning a ruler, commander or chief. Thus, John is affirming that Jesus is “the ruler of the kings of the earth” (ASV).

The Bible also describes Him as being Lord. Notice specifically Peter’s statement, “The word which *God* sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ: (he is Lord of all:)” (Acts 10:36). This does not affirm that Jesus is simply Lord over those who decide to submit to Him, but Lord over all. Paul shows both aspects, that He is Lord over the entire world and head of the church, in writing to the Ephesians. Jesus is “Far above all principality, and power,

and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1:21-23).

As King of kings and Lord, He is the one with authority. “Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing *that is* not put under him” (Heb. 2:8). All are subject to or amenable to Him or His law. He stated, “All power [authority—ASV] is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Mat. 28:18). He has all authority in earth, even over those who have not become Christians (submitted to His will). We recognize this is other aspects. If I were speeding in a state that I do not live in, and a policeman pulled me over, what do you think would happen if I told him that I do not live in this state, I live in Florida, therefore I am not amenable to the laws of this state? He might laugh as he writes me a ticket. We all know that we are subject to the laws of states (or nations) when we are in them even though we do not live there. Christ has all power or authority in the earth, thus all people in the earth are amenable to His laws.

Last, we notice that we will be judged by the Law of Christ. After Paul told the Athenians that all men everywhere must repent, He gives the reason. “Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead” (Acts 17:31). He will judge in righteousness. God’s righteousness is revealed in the New Testament. “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. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith” (Rom. 1:16-17). This corresponds to what Jesus said was the basis of judgment—His words. “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). This is also what Paul taught: “In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel” (Rom. 2:16). If a man is going to be judged by the Gospel, New Testament, or Law of Christ, then he must be amenable to that gospel.

The ones who have argued that all men are not amenable to all of God’s law are those who have a desire to change God’s law of divorce and remarriage. They will teach that the person in the world is not

subject to Matthew 19:9. However, if they are not subject to Christ’s law on divorce and remarriage, then he is not subject to any of Christ’s law, including His plan of salvation. However, if he is not subject to Christ’s law, then he has not committed sin and needs no plan of salvation. This false doctrine reduces everything about the Bible to the ridiculous. The truth is that all men are subject to all of Christ’s law (the New Testament). Let us always submit ourselves to it.

MH

(Continued from Page 1)

of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit” (Eph. 1:13; NIV). Are we in Christ when we hear the Word, and sealed when we believe?

2. **The doctrine of the original sin.** “Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me” (Psa. 51:5; NIV). This is a perverted interpretation to fit the false doctrine, “for sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4). The idea is that after the sin of Adam something was changed in his nature, and all acts of his descendants are determined by inheriting his “sinful nature.” To affirm the idea of “Adamic” or “inherited” sin, the NIV renders “flesh” as “sinful nature” in Romans 7:18, 25; 8:2-3, 5, 8, 12; 13:14; 1 Corinthians 5:5; Galatians 5:13, 16, 19, 24; 6:8; Ephesians 2:3; and Colossians 2:11, 13.

3. **The doctrine of “impossibility of apostasy,” or “once saved always saved.”** In John 3:16 (NIV), “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life;” they changed only one word: “should” a subjunctive to “shall” an absolute.

4. **The doctrine of the direct operation of the Spirit.** “The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Cor. 2:14; NIV). Where they have inserted the words “the man without the Spirit,” the Greek actually means “the natural man” or the “physical man.” In 1 Corinthians 2:12-13, the word “know” becomes “understand” so the meaning is changed, teaching that we cannot understand the Scripture without the direct operation of the Spirit.

What shall we say about the NIV after searching the Scriptures?

1. Their sources of translation, the Vaticanus and the Sinaiticus manuscripts are two of the most corrupted and unreliable manuscripts in existence.

2. There is no accuracy, faithfulness, exactitude, knowledge of truth, or honesty in accomplishing the translation.

3. Many doctrines of men can find support in the NIV, but man's doctrine leads to destruction.

4. Therefore the NIV cannot be accepted as the inspired Word of God, and should be rejected by Christians.

3210 Boxdale; Memphis, TN 38118

GOD SET THE GROUNDWORK

Shan Jackson

Our Lord spoke not in vagueness or doubt. He descended from heaven to reveal a message not to obscure one. His mission was to show man what was needful in life and to display a better path for him to follow. Indeed, his words were not his own, but were given to him from the Father (John 7:16). Concerning that message Paul would later write, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Tim. 4:16).

In setting the groundwork for the church Jesus taught that proper attitude would be expected of its members. In what we refer to as the "Sermon on the Mount," Jesus outlined these thoughts. He mentioned their traditions but followed that with, "But I say unto you," thereby leaving no room for doubt that His way was based on God's love for mankind (a love that would have to be seen in the lives of His followers). From these listeners He chose disciples who would become apostles and, as God's plan was, they would in turn teach others His divine message. So effective was their teaching of Christ's plan that in the first century and today we refer to this as the "apostle's doctrine." While they lived, they verified the message of the Master from pulpit and pen.

Today, we should be as committed to the New Testament as our rule and faith as were these so long ago. Our joy is made full when we realize that His plain and simple message has been preserved by God for all generations. Therefore, Paul's admonition for Timothy, for instance, is as timely for us as it was for him. "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine."

Today, we see the philosophies of men abounding more and more. No time in history have so many tried to alter God's simple plan as taught by the Man of Nazareth. We see many trying to strengthen their case by trying to weaken God's, but God's Words are unchanging and cannot be thrown down or aside. How sad when we see finite man challenging an eternal God. As was the case in the beginning, today, there is an ever

increasing need for sound preaching and teaching. Shallow messages that lean toward the emotions fall far short of God's challenge to "preach the word." In light of such a brotherhood wide case of spiritual immaturity, we need to return to teaching what the apostle's taught, which is also what Jesus taught, which was given to Him by the almighty Father. We have a sound faith for which we make no apology, but our faith must be declared boldly and from house to house. Jude assures us that this faith was "once and for all delivered" (Jude 3), and thereby must not be altered, abandoned, or abused.

Is it possible that we have taken too much for granted? Is it possible that we do not know the Bible as well as we think? Do we no longer qualify as "Bible-toting, Bible-quoting" people?

"Preach the word" (2 Tim. 4:2). The Word is our only message. It is not for us to determine what we think the congregation wants to hear, else "men pleasers" might again be in vogue. If Jesus had preached to those of His day what they wanted to hear there would be no New Testament.

His message must be our message. Some turned back then (John 6) and some will turn back today, but for the true believers who hunger and thirst after righteousness there must be only His truth. However, to preach convincingly, the preacher must be convinced. It is not enough to simply repeat those all too familiar phrases we must preach the Word, we must be instant in season and out, we must reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time has come when some will not endure sound doctrine and have brought in some to sooth their itching ears. Some have turned away their ears from the truth and have turned them instead to fables.

Still, the key is love. Love wrought God's plan. Love caused Jesus to come. And love must be central in our relating of His message.

P.O. Box 904; Palacios, TX 77465

Leadership

Twenty-second Annual Bellview Lectures

June 7 - 11, 1997

Saturday, June 7

7:00 P.M. Tending The Flock James Rogers
8:00 P.M. The Spirit Of Obedience Joe Galloway

Sunday, June 8

9:00 A.M. Elders' Duty To Members David Brown
10:00 A.M. Members' Duty To Elders Eddie Whitten
11:00 A.M. Lunch Break
2:00 P.M. Moses—Great Example Of Leadership
Michael Hatcher
3:00 P.M. Exposition Of 1 Peter 5:1-4 Stanley Ryan
4:00 P.M. Elder—Elder, Deacon, Preacher Relations
Billy Bland
5:00 P.M. Dinner Break
7:00 P.M. Work Of Deacons B. J. Clarke
8:00 P.M. How To Handle Criticism Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

Monday, June 9

9:00 A.M. Elders As Watchmen Joel Wheeler
10:00 A.M. Qualifications Of Elders And Deacons
Wayne Coats
11:00 A.M. Eldership And Old Testament Concepts
Joseph D. Meador
12:00 P.M. Lunch Break
1:30 P.M. Lording It Over The Flock Buster Dobbs
2:30 P.M. Authority Of Elders Bobby Duncan
3:15 P.M. Open Forum: Authority & Lording
Buster Dobbs, Bobby Duncan
4:00 P.M. Dinner Break

7:00 P.M. Elders And Church Discipline Garland Elkins
8:00 P.M. History Of Departure In Leadership Bobby Liddell

Tuesday, June 10

9:00 A.M. David—Great Example Of Leadership Steve Ellis
10:00 A.M. Qualifications Of Elders And Deacons Wayne Coats
11:00 A.M. Joshua—Great Example Of Leadership
Noah Hackworth
12:00 P.M. Lunch Break
1:30 P.M. Goal Setting In Leadership Gary Summers
2:30 P.M. Women As Elders And Deacons? Flavil Nichols
3:15 P.M. Open Forum: Women's Role Flavil Nichols
4:00 P.M. Dinner Break
7:00 P.M. Qualities Of A Leader Harrell Davidson
8:00 P.M. Nehemiah—Great Example Of Leadership
Clifford Newell

Wednesday, June 11

9:00 A.M. Congregations Without Elders Jerry Martin
10:00 A.M. Qualifications Of Elders And Deacons Wayne Coats
11:00 A.M. Reevaluation/Reaffirmation Of Elders? Dub McClish
12:00 P.M. Lunch Break
1:30 P.M. Jesus—Great Example Of Leadership Joe Gilmore
2:30 P.M. Decision Making In Leadership Curtis Cates
3:15 P.M. Open Forum: Qualifications Wayne Coats
4:00 P.M. Dinner Break
7:00 P.M. Elders And The Stewardship Of Souls Jerry Moffitt
8:00 P.M. Inspiring Brethren To Good Works Guss Eoff

Bellview Lectures Information

HOUSING

Free housing in the homes of Christians will be provided on a "first come, first served" basis (call our office at: 904/455-7595, or write at: 4850 Saufley Road, Pensacola, FL 32526). The following motel is available nearby and is providing a *special rate* for individuals attending the *Bellview Lectures*. Hospitality Inn (4910 Mobile Highway.) offers the following price (tax not included) \$45—1 to 4 people per room; a restaurant is located in the motel. Their phone number is 904/453-3333. When calling for reservations, be sure to tell them you are with the *Bellview Lectures*. For those who have R.V.s, hook-ups are available on the grounds of the building. Contact the office to reserve a space.

AUDIO AND VIDEO TAPES

All lectures will be recorded on cassette audio tapes and video tapes. These tapes may be purchased during the *Bellview Lectures* or by mail order afterwards. Order blanks and price information will be available during the *Bellview Lectures* or by mail upon request. (We request the cooperation of all who attend the *Bellview Lectures* in keeping the pulpit area free of recorders and microphones.) If you would like to make your own recordings, please see one of our sound technicians, *Richard Parker* or *Bill Crowe*, in the recording room.

BOOKS

The Lectureship book, "*Leadership*" will be available during the *Bellview Lectures* and afterwards by mail. It will contain thirty-three chapters and approximately 440 pages. Everyone who attends the *Bellview Lectures* will want to purchase a personal copy and perhaps additional copies for gifts.

EXHIBITS

Limited reservations will be accepted subject to approval of the *Bellview elders* and available space. Exhibits are expected from schools, children's homes, book stores, publications, and other projects of general interest to the brotherhood.

MEALS

The women of the *Bellview Church of Christ* will provide a free lunch from Monday through Wednesday. For all other meals, a list of restaurants and a map will be available at the registration table in the foyer.

TRANSPORTATION

If you will be flying to the Pensacola Regional Airport and will need transportation, please call or write our office. We will arrange to meet you at no charge if we know when, where, airline, flight number, and the number in your party.

GOD EXISTS!

Darrell Broking

“Any account of nature should pass the tests of scientific evidence; in our judgment, the dogmas and myths of traditional religions do not do so” (*Humanist Manifesto II*, 1973). Considering the stronghold maintained by the backers of Humanism in both public and private education, it is not surprising to hear their ideology parroted in some brotherhood circles. Humanistic faith is a blind leap in the dark, a blind run in the night, a ploy of Satan.

Because “that which is perfect” came (1 Cor. 13:10), we can be led by the same “Spirit of God” (Rom. 8:14) as the inspired writers of the Bible. Paul wrote, “So belief *cometh* of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ” (Rom. 10:17). Therefore “we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Cor. 5:7). Walking by faith is the only way to move beyond Humanism or any other “ism” employed by Satan. Basically it is a matter of first principles: “knowing this first, that no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet. 1:20-21). Until one builds upon first principles it is impossible to be “well-pleasing *unto him*” (Heb. 11:6). Knowing this fact, with his pen dipped in inspiration, Peter powerfully proclaimed, “And we have the word of prophecy *made* more sure; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts” (2 Pet. 1:19).

Completely opposite from the “faith which was once for all delivered” (Jude 3) is the created system of humanistic faith. “As non-theists, we begin with humans not God, nature not deity” (*Humanist Manifesto II*, 1973). Attempts to merge these two completely opposite systems is nauseating at best. Jesus said to the Laodiceans, “So because thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spew thee out of my mouth” (Rev. 3:16). John Clayton enjoys such a diversified brand of faith. In his opinion we should agree on two basic points concerning the creation record. “1. That God created the creation. 2. That man is uniquely created in the image of God” (*Does God Exist?*, March/ April 1992, p. 9). The problem with Clayton’s opinion is that it violates the faith.

For years faithful brethren have been warning the church about the error espoused by brother Clayton.

Yet we hear the voice of the people calling for the Clayton theology at their encampments. With some the voice of the people and a cool wind of change is becoming the voice of God. “For the word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved it is the power of God” (1 Cor. 1:18). Those enjoying the cool wave of diversity will go with the flow, others who might have fallen prey to John’s word games open your eyes and let God’s Word illuminate his position. After John’s latest blunder who will deny the fact that brother Clayton mingles evolution with creation history?

Brother Clayton never has nor will he ever be able to back up his position with Scripture. Possibly he has the idea that the church is a movement committed to men. The church is the bride of Christ owing complete allegiance to Him and Him alone. We will answer to God by His standard (John 12:48; Rev. 20:12), not Lipscomb, Campbell, Stone, Lard, nor any man or man-made opinion. On page 13 of his March/April issue of *Does God Exist?*, John states: “I have always thought that some of my understandings were unique and exciting in my study of the Hebrew in Genesis 1. Recently, I was sent a copy of a series of articles by David Lipscomb in the *Gospel Advocate*, Vol. 41, 1899. It seems Lipscomb was way ahead of me. I hope you enjoy this discussion.”

In Lipscomb’s article “Evolution and the Bible” reprinted by brother Clayton the following statement is made:

I could go over every argument presented to definitely fix the years of the earth and show that data are unreliable and the conclusion uncertain; yet it can be said with much certainty the time since the heavens and the earth were created has been long. I believe life had existed on the earth previous to the six days’ work of Genesis 1. The Bible nowhere contradicts this. Man and the higher order of animals and plants did not exist before this. Whether by some disturbance of the earth or by cold or heat, all life, all order, had been destroyed, so “the earth was without form, and void,” and a higher order was introduced and a new arrangement of the forces of nature was correlated, we cannot tell.

Much more could be sighted yet this will suffice, as it speaks for itself, it speaks for brother Clayton.

Note the standard: “He that rejecteth me, and

receiveth 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 delivered this truth after His prophecy given by Isaiah was fulfilled as seen in the thirty-seventh verse, “But though he had done so many signs before them, yet they believed not on him.” You see, according to the simplicity of the faith we must always take Jesus at His Word. Jesus was the agent through which the creation took place (John 1:1ff; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2). When He said, “But from the beginning of the creation, Male and female made he them” (Mark 10:6), and one takes Him to task over this truth, in effect he has denied the Christ of God. We have several

scriptural references which support the fact that mankind was created at the beginning of the creation (Rom. 1:20; Exo. 20:11; Mat. 19:4) are a few examples.

I can agree with Lipscomb, and any one who agrees with Paul, Peter, James, John, Jude, or any other inspired writer. But when one builds on the lie, parrots the Humanists, mingles truth with error, openly and unashamedly as John Clayton, by faith I must “mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling” (Rom. 16:17). If brother Clayton would spend more time reading his Bible he would know that God does exist.

5098 Bowie; Memphis, TN 38109-6048

CANNIBALS AND CHRISTIANS

Steve Gunter

Leo Straus once defined “nihilism” as the extreme humanism which is incapable of taking a stand **for** civilization **against** cannibalism. Liberal papers published within our brotherhood often complain of “negative, rigid minds who watch-dog the brethren.” In this they do err, not knowing the Scriptures nor the first principles of right reason. Positive good follows a firm stand **for** truth **against** error.

Paul chastised the Christians of Galatia: “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ” (Gal. 1:6-7). Notice the grace of Christ does not admit “pluralism,” “unity-in-diversity,” or other forms of “relativism.” The grace of Christ **includes** the **doctrine** of Christ (2 John 9).

A host of modern members have succumbed to the spirit of modern rationalist philosophy (Col. 2:8). A tremendous vacuum exists at the doctrinal heart of the church. The no-doctrine brethren have pandered to the

desires of this carnal age. Isaiah well-described that spirit which says, “Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things” (Isa. 30:10).

Speaking the truth in love has never pleased the religious relativists and social liberals who creep into the church. Liberalism expresses a misleading sympathy for false doctrine (which they term, “opinion”) and religious error. The Bible teaches men to value truth more highly than consensus. “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove *them*” (Eph. 5:11).

True love speaks truth, in love. Flattering those whose worship is in vain or is in the will of men and not that of the Heavenly Father brings social approval but in the judgment only condemnation. Any way other than the way of truth is a false and evil way. The rot of relativism must not mar the church of Jesus Christ and its forthright stand for timeless truth.

1202 Royal Drive; Bentonville, AR 72712

Defender is published monthly (except December) under the oversight of the elders of the Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526. (904) 455-7595. *Subscription is free to addresses in the United States.* All contributions shall be used for operational expenses.

MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

**Write For Your
Free Bible Correspondence
Course
4850 Saufley Field Road
Pensacola, FL 32526**

Defender



“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

Volume XXVI

May 1997

Number 5

LESSONS FROM THE FIRST GOSPEL SERMON

Ian McPherson

Acts chapter 2 is a pivot point in the Bible. The Holy Spirit was poured out upon the apostles in accordance with Old Testament prophecies, and in accordance with the promise that Christ gave to the apostles (John 7:37-38; 16:7-15; Acts 1:5, 8). With this outpouring of the Holy Spirit came the revelation of the New Testament message, that was previously unknown to man and hidden in the mind of God (Eph. 3:1-5). The gospel that we are to preach today is a result of this miraculous revelation of God's will. It is impossible for anyone to know God's will without being taught it through words written in the Bible. Through the preaching of the gospel, the church of Christ came into existence. The day of Pentecost in Acts 2 is the point in history that the church was established and the gospel in its simplicity and completeness was first fully preached.

Let us notice some important facets of this first gospel sermon that must be followed by all faithful gospel preachers in the Lord's church today.

It Was A Scriptural Sermon

“And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the **Spirit gave them utterance**” (Acts 2:4). The source of Peter's words was the **Spirit of God**. Although we cannot speak by direct revelation today as the apostles did, we must still speak only what is revealed to us by the Spirit in His Word. Although the method of **imparting** truth has changed, the **message itself** has not changed. It is up to each preacher to study the text (2 Tim. 2:15) and relay accurately to man the message of God. **Scriptures do not have their source in the mind of man, but in**

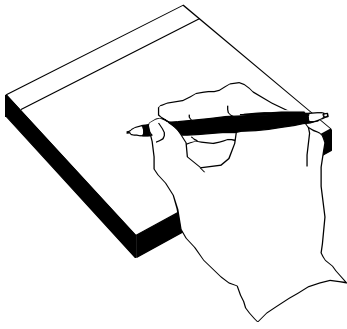
the mind of God (1 Cor. 2:11). Preaching must **never** present the opinions of men, but must **always** contain a “thus saith the Lord” for everything that is taught.

It Was A Christ Centered Sermon

Christ's death on the cross was no accident. Peter preached, “Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain” (Acts 2:23). God planned the crucifixion of Christ from before the creation of the world, and knew that the cross would have a very strong drawing power. An account is told of a missionary preaching about the crucifixion of Christ to a crowd in India. A Hindu priest was in the crowd becoming very restless. He suddenly sprang to his feet and pleaded with the missionary to stop. When the preacher inquired as to why, the Hindu admitted that they had no one like the crucified Christ in the Hindu religion and he was afraid that the people would forsake their Hindu temples and follow Jesus.

Peter's sermon not only contained the emotion of the cross, but also the powerful and indisputable evidence of the resurrection of Christ from the grave (Acts 2:24) and His glorious exaltation to the right hand of God (Acts 2:33-35). In fact his entire sermon was centered around Christ. When Paul came to Corinth he said that he was “determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2). The gospel cannot be preached without having Christ at its very center. Faithful preaching must exalt Christ.

(Continued on Page 3)



Notes From The Editor

**Michael
Hatcher**

Email address:
whatcher@sprynet.com

The Church

Jesus prayed for unity that the world would believe. "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:21). Yet, as one looks at the religious world, no one could accuse it of being one when there are over a thousand religious groups all claiming to be of Christ. However, Christ established just one. "*There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling*" (Eph. 4:4). Paul also teaches that one body is the church (Eph. 1:22-23). How in the world could a person come to know which one, out of the thousand plus, is the one Christ established? The way is the same way one would identify a person he does not know. There are certain identifying marks or characteristics that will set the one church the Lord built apart from all others.

There will be certain traits that all will have. When one identifies a person, there are characteristics that just about all people possess. Just about all people have two eyes, ears, arms, hands, legs, and feet, and a nose and mouth. If we stopped with just those characteristics in trying to identify one certain person as opposed to a thousand others, we would be unsuccessful. There are some traits that will set us apart from others: color of hair, eyes, and skin. These traits begin limiting the choices. Then there are those traits that narrow our choices down to the one particular individual we might be trying to identify: possibly scars or birthmarks, fingerprints, and name. In trying to identify the Lord's church, there will be characteristics that are almost universal with all religious groups. There will be some characteristics that some groups have that distinguish them from others. However, for the group to be the Lord's church, we must have all the identifying marks.

In trying to identify a person, we would naturally

ask the person their name. Likewise, the church cannot be the Lord's church without wearing His name. While the Lord's church was never given a specific name; there are many terms used within the Bible to identify the Lord's people. The Bible uses terms that shows that the church belongs to Christ: church of Christ (Rom. 16:16), bride of Christ (Eph. 5), body of Christ (Eph. 4:12), kingdom of Christ (Col. 1:13), church of God (since Jesus is God; Acts 20:28), house of God (1 Tim. 3:15), kingdom of God (John 3:3). Certainly no group can be the church which Christ built, if it wears some name not identifying itself as being of Christ. However, simply because some group wears a correct name, does not mean that it is the one church of the Bible. There are other essential items necessary to be the Lord's church.

There must be the recognition that Jesus is the head of the church. "And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church" (Eph. 1:22). Jesus ascended to heaven after His resurrection and is ruling now in heaven (Acts 2). As such, there are no earthly headquarters. Any organization that has an earthly headquarter or that claims some person (other than Jesus) is head of the church, is not the church which the Lord built (including the Roman Catholic church with its pope as its head). However, Jesus did authorize local congregations of His people. Thus, the church is spoken of in the universal sense (Mat. 16:18; Acts 2:47), in a geographical area (2 Cor. 8:1; Gal. 1:2), and in the local sense (Acts 14:23; 1 Cor. 1:1).

Within the local congregation (church) God has established organization. This, of course, is necessary to provide an efficient and orderly functioning local congregation. God shows us that organization as He begins the book of Philippians. "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons" (Phi. 1:1). Thus, the organization within the local congregation consists of elders (also called bishops, pastors, shepherds, overseers) deacons and all saints (members). Some would add to that list preachers (evangelists) and teachers (Eph. 4:11-12). The elders of the congregation have the oversight of the congregation. They have the responsibility of seeing that things done are done right (meaning of the *bishop*). They make the decisions concerning expedient matters within the local congregation. As such they must be good leaders. The Twenty-second Bellview Lectures are on the theme of "Leadership." It is a vital subject that all need. We encourage all to come and study with us.

There are many other areas in identifying the church Jesus built and that He will save (Eph. 5:23-25). We need to identify the worship, work, plan of salvation or terms of entrance into the church, along with many other doctrinal matters. It is also important to identify the type of life of its commands for its members. We encourage you in this study. *MH*

It Was A Scripture Filled Sermon

Peter quoted Scriptures and applied them properly. He quoted Joel 2:28-32 and from it proved that what they were observing was the fulfilment of that prophecy (Acts 2:14-21). Many today are preaching very eloquent sermons, with wonderful illustrations but very few Bible references. It reminds me of the woman that went to the preacher after his sermon, shook his hand and said, "you needed a sermon with your illustrations"!! Although well placed illustrations are needed and can be powerful and interesting, we must remember that unless we quote Scripture we are taking away the convicting power from our sermons. Peter did not simply **refer** to these Scriptures, but **quoted them word for word**. It was that Word of God that convicted the 3,000 Jews to repent and be baptized (Acts 2:38-42). When Jesus was tempted in the wilderness, He defeated Satan by accurately quoting Scripture to him (Mat. 4:4, 6, 10). In the early church, many Jews were wanting to go back into the old covenant, Paul settled the argument once and for all by quoting and applying the Scripture. He said in Galatians 4:30, "Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman." As New Testament Christians who love the Word of God, disputes can be settled with a "nevertheless what saith the scripture?"

When Scripture is read in sermons it needs to be the **very Word of God** that is quoted. Preachers must not read from a paraphrased version of the Bible or from a version that follows the concept of "thought inspiration." Only accurate versions presenting word for word translation should ever be used in the pulpit. In Matthew 22:32, Christ quoted Exodus 3:6, which says: "**I am** the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living." In this argument he used the tense of a verb to prove that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were still living. By this powerful argument Christ silenced the Sadducees who did not believe in life after death, and the resurrection of the dead. Every word and every syllable of the Bible is verbally inspired, and if the

message is going to convict and teach accurately, then our sermons need to be **Scripture filled** messages like Peter's on the day of Pentecost.

It Was A Clear and Logical Sermon

Notice the logical arguments that Peter used to prove a point. In verse 15, he proved that the disciples were not drunk because it was "the third hour of the day." In verses 22-23, he presented undeniable and logical evidence to convince his hearers that Jesus was the Christ, and in verse 29 his simple application to Scripture proved beyond doubt that Christ, not David was the one spoken of by the prophet. Our preaching must be clear, presenting arguments that hearers can understand. Speculation should never be a part of preaching. Long words and fancy philosophical arguments should be avoided. The Lord's pulpit needs sermons that will convict the gainsayer, and that will silence the mouths of speculators and false teachers. We must "prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 The. 5:21).

It Was A Heart Convicting and Life Changing Sermon

"Now when they heard *this*, **they were pricked in their heart**, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). Thayer's Lexicon says that this means "they were smitten in the heart with poignant sorrow." Unfortunately there is sometimes a tendency today to have sermons simply aimed at making people "feel good about themselves." It is said that preaching about specific sins is too negative and will only "turn people off." Although we must edify the righteous in our preaching, we must also convict the sinners. The purpose of the Holy Spirit coming was to bring the message of truth that would. "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:8). There are many like those in Jeremiah's time who were crying "Peace, peace; when *there is no peace*" (Jer. 6:13-14).

Before Peter baptized the penitent believers on the Day of Pentecost we must remember that he spent some time with them talking about sin and its consequences. "And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation" (Acts 2:40). We do not have these "many other words" of Peter recorded here, but by reading through Acts and seeing what was taught on other occasions we have a good idea of what he was saying. Three thousand repentant souls responded to the gospel and were baptized that day. However, we can have little doubt

that there were many like the rich man who went away sorrowful because they were not willing to surrender worldly pursuits that were hindering their following Jesus (Mat. 19:22); and also many like the Jews in Acts 7:54 who “gnashed on him [Stephen] with *their* teeth;” and like Felix who **trembled at the preaching** of “righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come” (Acts 24:24-25) but refused the great invitation. The aim of gospel preaching is to convict hearts, change lives, and edify hearers who have good and honest hearts. If people reject the message of Christ, it is their fault—not the preacher’s. But if sin and righteousness are not clearly taught it is the preacher’s fault (Eze. 3:17-21).

It Was A Motivating Sermon With An Invitation

“Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the

Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38). After giving the terms of pardon, Peter then urges the people to obey (Acts 2:38-40). It is becoming more and more prevalent for the invitation to be left off sermons. An invitation clearly giving the conditions of pardon should be a part of every sermon. Although most of the listening audience may be faithful Christians, there may be someone who needs to obey the gospel or repent of sins. Also young children who constantly hear it will more easily come to obedience when they reach the age of accountability because they are continually admonished to repent and be baptized.

The first gospel sermon was a great and powerful lesson that convicted the hearts and brought about the baptism of 3,000 souls. We must take a lesson from Peter, so we too can convict souls through the preaching of the gospel.

32 King Street; Bellerive Tasmania, Australia 7018

THE VALUE OF SOUND LECTURESHIPS

Eddie Whitten

Good, biblically sound lectureships are proving to be worth their weight in gold. Waves of liberalism have swept many formerly faithful congregations away into the abyss of apostasy. Ignorance of the peril of liberalism must take its place among the leading reasons for this tragedy. Most, if not all, of the blame for letting apostasy occur lies at the feet of uninformed elders, or elders who just don’t care. Some elders have an isolationist complex that says, “If a liberal practice is not going on in this congregation, it is none of our concern.” Let it be known that if it is not in your congregation now, it will be if it is not prepared for and taught against.

The college and university lectureships once provided a great spiritual feast for all who attended. For the past 25 years, they are the very ones who took the lead in undermining the faith of thousands of members including many elders. The value of the lectureships not only decreased, but became a destructive force in the church.

Wise men recognized the need for some means of combating the influence of liberalism. Preacher Training Schools and individual congregations who were genuinely concerned with truth began to have lectureships across the land. The benefit and value of these brotherhood lectureships cannot be overstated. They have served to stem the tide of liberalism in many places and in many ways.

1. They have strengthened the faith of brethren.

So many people who could never have received the teaching set forth in these lectureship programs otherwise are able to hear the pure, powerful gospel proclaimed. The “old Jerusalem gospel” is sounded out loud and forceful again. The politics of social, academic, and theological acceptance is non-existent. The intellectual and philosophical jargon so often found is unnecessary. Only the Word of God is important. There is no fear of offending prospective attendees who might elect to go elsewhere, thereby affecting the monetary income of the university. One goes away from brotherhood lectureships with the warm glow of spiritual assurance that God is in His heaven and His promises of salvation are sure.

2. They have spawned a new generation of sound preachers.

Young men are developing into a viable force of strong, faithful gospel preachers unafraid to stand fast in the truth of God’s Word. Many young preachers are ready to take the mantle of responsibility and carry the torch of the Lord into the darkest recesses of the liberal camp. Armed with the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17), they are ready to cut a swath in the front lines of liberalism. Protected by the breastplate of righteousness (Eph. 6:14), they are willing to challenge the wiles of the devil. They are holding fast the faithful Word. They believe that the truth will make men free

(John 8:32), and they are willing to let the truth be known. It is so encouraging to see the fervor and faith of another generation who is aware of the dangers that beset the church and are able to accept the challenge to fight the good fight of faith. The halls of learning are spewing out emissaries of their liberal professors. Let them come! They are going to be surprised to find that the cesspools of academic heresy will meet with the sharp two-edged sword of the gospel. The very tenets of their liberalism prohibits the defense of their positions. The young preachers taught, strengthened by our lectureships will unashamedly and effectively contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints. They will stand in the **old paths** and remain steadfast and unmoveable behind the very God the Bible so forcefully

proclaims.

3. **They give hope for the future of the church.** The history of the Lord's church has always been affected by human weakness. The faithful have had to "start over" many times. The same prospect confronts the church today. However, the impact of the change agents and the ravages of humanism, liberalism, materialism, and open fellowship will be greatly mollified by the effect of our lectureship programs. The church has a bright future due to the faithful proclamation of God's Word in the areas that are relevant to the spiritual needs of an interested, informed and determined membership. Our good, sound lectureships have greatly contributed to this determination.

3616 Brown Trail; Bedford, TX 76021

BUT FOR THE GRACE OF GOD

Shan Jackson

One of the most emotional subjects one can discuss is abortion. To me, all Christians must stand in one voice against this horrendous crime. However, such a stand is not the case in the world and especially not in the United States. Every 20 minutes in America an unborn child is aborted. Admittedly, reasons vary and not all abortions should be seen through the same eyes, but the attitude of some concerning the lives of innocent children is appalling. It should, and does, make us angry.

However, within the body of Christ we find a far, far more horrifying occurrence than the ending of physical life and that is spiritual abortion. Literally hundreds of new births are being aborted every year, every month, every day by religious salesmen and con-artists. Men who shipwreck the faith of others, men who divide the body of Christ, men who lead others into apostasy, aborting the spiritual babes of the brotherhood. Let us look at a couple of examples.

A brother is conducting a very successful cottage study with an entire family. All are receptive and all but one obey the principles of obedience—all except the father. The prospects were bright for him as well. One day he met one of the members of that congregation in town. Following several minutes of listening to that brother's harsh and bitter words of condemnation toward the elders, preacher, and members the man decides not to attend anymore as a visitor and not continue the cottage class either. Why, because the member was more concerned with airing his bitterness than recognizing the harm he was bringing. That man's

potential spiritual birth was aborted.

A young couple is interested in learning more about the church. They had visited several times and seemed to like what they saw and heard. They were received well and had agreed to stay for a few fellowship get-togethers when one of the members found out that the young husband was a former drug user and that his wife was a member of A.A. When that information was voiced among the members the couple became aware that they were being treated differently. The ones that had been so warm and caring were now cold and indifferent. Why, because the members failed to realize the worth of those souls. Rather than seeing two possible converts they only saw two young people that had problems in their past. Feeling this coldness the couple decided to visit a denomination down the street. Two more potential spiritual births aborted.

Other examples could be sighted but all with the same outcome. Souls looking for the truth, on the brink of opening their hearts and accepting Jesus, find the door of the church slammed in their religious faces. Why, because the members could not see beyond their own self-righteous lives and accept others. What is the price tag we place on a soul?

Brethren, may we never develop an attitude like the Pharisees. May we always consider the fact that "there but for the grace of God go I." God has given all men everywhere the right to become his child and has given no man the right to refuse it to others.

P.O. Box 904; Palacios TX 77465

Leadership

Twenty-second Annual Bellview Lectures

June 7 - 11, 1997

Saturday, June 7

7:00 P.M. Tending The Flock James Rogers
8:00 P.M. The Spirit Of Obedience Joe Galloway

Sunday, June 8

9:00 A.M. Elders' Duty To Members David Brown
10:00 A.M. Members' Duty To Elders Eddie Whitten
11:00 A.M. Lunch Break
2:00 P.M. Moses—Great Example Of Leadership
Michael Hatcher
3:00 P.M. Exposition Of 1 Peter 5:1-4 Stanley Ryan
4:00 P.M. Elder—Elder, Deacon, Preacher Relations
Billy Bland
5:00 P.M. Dinner Break
7:00 P.M. Work Of Deacons B. J. Clarke
8:00 P.M. How To Handle Criticism Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

Monday, June 9

9:00 A.M. Elders As Watchmen Joel Wheeler
10:00 A.M. Qualifications Of Elders And Deacons
Wayne Coats
11:00 A.M. Eldership And Old Testament Concepts
Joseph D. Meador
12:00 P.M. Lunch Break
1:30 P.M. Lording It Over The Flock Buster Dobbs
2:30 P.M. Authority Of Elders Bobby Duncan
3:15 P.M. Open Forum: Authority & Lording
Buster Dobbs, Bobby Duncan
4:00 P.M. Dinner Break

7:00 P.M. Elders And Church Discipline Garland Elkins
8:00 P.M. History Of Departure In Leadership Bobby Liddell

Tuesday, June 10

9:00 A.M. David—Great Example Of Leadership Steve Ellis
10:00 A.M. Qualifications Of Elders And Deacons Wayne Coats
11:00 A.M. Joshua—Great Example Of Leadership
Noah Hackworth
12:00 P.M. Lunch Break
1:30 P.M. Goal Setting In Leadership Gary Summers
2:30 P.M. Women As Elders And Deacons? Flavil Nichols
3:15 P.M. Open Forum: Women's Role Flavil Nichols
4:00 P.M. Dinner Break
7:00 P.M. Qualities Of A Leader Harrell Davidson
8:00 P.M. Nehemiah—Great Example Of Leadership
Clifford Newell

Wednesday, June 11

9:00 A.M. Congregations Without Elders Jerry Martin
10:00 A.M. Qualifications Of Elders And Deacons Wayne Coats
11:00 A.M. Reevaluation/Reaffirmation Of Elders? Dub McClish
12:00 P.M. Lunch Break
1:30 P.M. Jesus—Great Example Of Leadership Joe Gilmore
2:30 P.M. Decision Making In Leadership Curtis Cates
3:15 P.M. Open Forum: Qualifications Wayne Coats
4:00 P.M. Dinner Break
7:00 P.M. Elders And The Stewardship Of Souls Jerry Moffitt
8:00 P.M. Inspiring Brethren To Good Works Guss Eoff

Bellview Lectures Information

HOUSING

Free housing in the homes of Christians will be provided on a "first come, first served" basis (call our office at: 904/455-7595, or write at: 4850 Saufley Road, Pensacola, FL 32526). The following motel is available nearby and is providing a *special rate* for individuals attending the *Bellview Lectures*. Hospitality Inn (4910 Mobile Highway.) offers the following price (tax not included) \$45—1 to 4 people per room; a restaurant is located in the motel. Their phone number is 904/453-3333. When calling for reservations, be sure to tell them you are with the *Bellview Lectures*. For those who have R.V.s, hook-ups are available on the grounds of the building. Contact the office to reserve a space.

AUDIO AND VIDEO TAPES

All lectures will be recorded on cassette audio tapes and video tapes. These tapes may be purchased during the *Bellview Lectures* or by mail order afterwards. Order blanks and price information will be available during the *Bellview Lectures* or by mail upon request. (We request the cooperation of all who attend the *Bellview Lectures* in keeping the pulpit area free of recorders and microphones.) If you would like to make your own recordings, please see one of our sound technicians, *Richard Parker* or *Bill Crowe*, in the recording room.

BOOKS

The Lectureship book, "*Leadership*" will be available during the *Bellview Lectures* and afterwards by mail. It will contain thirty-three chapters and approximately 440 pages. Everyone who attends the *Bellview Lectures* will want to purchase a personal copy and perhaps additional copies for gifts.

EXHIBITS

Limited reservations will be accepted subject to approval of the *Bellview elders* and available space. Exhibits are expected from schools, children's homes, book stores, publications, and other projects of general interest to the brotherhood.

MEALS

The women of the *Bellview Church of Christ* will provide a free lunch from Monday through Wednesday. For all other meals, a list of restaurants and a map will be available at the registration table in the foyer.

TRANSPORTATION

If you will be flying to the Pensacola Regional Airport and will need transportation, please call or write our office. We will arrange to meet you at no charge if we know when, where, airline, flight number, and the number in your party.

ALL THINGS I HAVE I GIVE

Shan Jackson

In Exodus 3 we find Moses tending to Jethro's flocks and God appearing to him in the burning bush calling on him to go to Egypt and demand that Pharaoh release the children from bondage. And Moses said, "Who am I?" (Exo. 3:11). From that point Moses sought ways to convince God that he could not serve God as His messenger to Pharaoh. He mentioned shortcoming after shortcoming, problem after problem, difficulty after difficulty as to why God should excuse him from entering this task. But when Moses seized the serpent and it became his rod again he was taught that what was weak faith had now become power in the hands of God's child. What had been an humble shepherd's crook had now become the rod of God. This rod that had fended wolves and steadied steps was now to be used for the Lord. Opportunities used become blessings multiplied, but opportunities wasted become disadvantages to the cause. What is that in thine hand, Moses? Only a shepherd's rod but a rod that will show the power of God and the glory of His name.

What is that in thine hand, David? Only a sling but a sling held in the hand of a soldier of the Lord is a mighty weapon indeed. It was mightier at a distance than was Goliath's sword. "In the name of the Lord" was his motto whether tending his sheep, slaying the lion, or defying the Philistine. "In the name of the Lord" was his call to victory. What is that in thine hand, David? Only a sling to be used for God.

What is that in thine hand, Joshua? Only a spear but a spear to be held aloft in obedience of God's commands. When the second attack was made on Ai and the Lord said, "Stretch out thy spear," Joshua was obedient to the Lord's command and the victory was secure.

And happy was he to be used as an obedient servant of the Father. What is that in thine hand, Joshua? Only a spear but a spear to be used in the army of God.

What is that in thine hand, Gideon? Only a handful of soldiers in the face of thousands. But armed with pitchers, lamps, and trumpets they defeated the mighty Midianites. By following God this 300 turned an embarrassing defeat into a glorious victory. For God could take a few and make them mighty under His banner and for His purpose. What is that in thine hand, Gideon? Only 300 soldiers, only a few but a few with God is worth more than many without Him.

What is that in thine hand, Peter? Only a casting net to be used in the sea. But Christ called him for a more useful and lasting purpose in fishing for the souls of men. No instrument is too small, no instrument too insignificant to be used for the cause of the Master. Anything we have, anything we are, must be to the glory of God. What is that in thine hand, Peter? Only a casting net to be set to God's purpose.

What is that in thine hand, young boy? Only a few loaves and fishes but what are they among so many? Nothing is impossible with God. What is that in thine hand, Mary? Only a box of precious ointment. What is that in thine hand, Dorcus? Only a needle.

My friend, what is that in thine hand that cannot be used for the kingdom and glory of God? An axe, a shovel, a hammer and nails? Can you not see the things that can be done? A pen or pencil to write God's truth for readers? All things I have I give. What is that in thine hand, my brother? That is what we give to God.

P.O. Box 904; Palacios TX 77465

Defender is published monthly (except December) under the oversight of the elders of the Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526. (904) 455-7595. *Subscription is free to addresses in the United States.* All contributions shall be used for operational expenses.

MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

**Write For Your
Free Bible Correspondence
Course
4850 Saufley Field Road
Pensacola, FL 32526**

Defender



“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

Volume XXVI

June 1997

Number 6

NOT GUILTY—BY REASON OF INSANITY!

Burt Jones

“Yes, I mutilated my husband as he slept, but it was because of his constant abuse. I just went nuts for a few minutes.”

“Did we kill our mom and dad? Sure! But we were abused children and I don’t see how **we** could be guilty if that kind of torture caused us to lose it **temporarily**.”

“We pulled the dude out of the truck and whopped up on him, but you gotta remember what was happenin’ all over town. We just kind of got caught up in it, went crazy, but we was sorry after we done it.”

“I killed those girls but it’s no worse than what I’ve seen on TV for years. Besides, I had eaten about twenty ‘Twinkies’ and I was sort of *wired* for awhile because of all the sugar in my system. **Now** I want to apologize to the children’s parents.”

These excerpts from recent news articles should be familiar to us all. It appears as though those having had the need for something on which to hand their guilt had discovered a gold mine—TEMPORARY INSANITY!

Post-traumatic stress has found it’s niche as a valid disorder which produces measurable results in human behavior for which there is no apparent responsibility on the part of the individual. We are, indeed, living “in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation” (Phi. 2:15). “The foolishness of man perverteth his way” (Pro. 19:3). We are becoming extremely hard in what we **say** we are going to do to combat crime on the one hand, but very soft on people who claim victimization. These individuals espousing a fault-free society where nothing is wrong and there **are** no consequences for wrongdoing, render it difficult in our system of justice to find anyone willing to stand and take responsibility for their

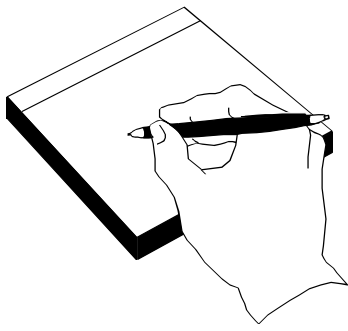
actions. I have it on good authority that George Washington cut down the cherry tree as a result of repressive behavior stemming from a puritanistic upbringing. **But he did not even have to admit guilt!** He simply had to place the blame for his deferred conduct on overly-strict parents.

For every action taken by us, whether good or bad, somewhere a record is left. This record will become either a blessing (Pro. 28:20) or a curse (Mal. 2:2). Responsibility has to be taken for these actions. But, somewhere, amidst the debris of a gentler time, lay the broken and bleeding corpses of accountability and allegiance and answerability.

I was recently discussing this current wave of “passing the buck” and scapegoating with a business executive who is active in the congregation where I labor. He mentioned a recent meeting in the corporate boardroom where he is employed. He stated that after an hour or so of listening to his associates adroitly sidestep issues and place responsibility for mistakes made on lower management personnel, he felt a tremendous, almost uncontrollable urge to leap to his feet and scream, “It is **MY** fault! Every mistake discussed during this meeting is **MY** error!” My friend and brother in Christ remarked that it had been years since he remembered hearing anyone openly take responsibility for anything.

What has brought us to this abominable predicament?

Sadly, it is nothing new. We have but to examine the third chapter of the book of Genesis to learn that
(Continued on Page 3)



Notes From The Editor

**Michael
Hatcher**

Email address:
whatcher@sprynet.com

Language

When God created Adam and Eve and placed them in the Garden, there was only one language upon the earth. As men multiplied upon the earth, this condition remained. Because of the wickedness of man, it repented God that He had made man (Gen. 6:6). God determined to destroy man from the earth; however, Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord (Gen. 6:8) because of His faithfulness to God. After the flood, man again began to multiply upon the earth. During this time there was still just one universal language of man. "And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech" (Gen. 11:1). Men decided to build a tower and city to reach unto heaven for to make a name for themselves (Gen. 11:4). Notice the statement by God about these men. "And the LORD came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded. And the LORD said, Behold, the people *is* one, and **they have all one language**; and this they begin to do: and now **nothing will be restrained from them, which they have imagined to do**" (Gen. 11:5-6). God said they had the power to do anything they imagined to do because they all had one language. As a result, God confounded their language.

With this background, it is no surprise that God tells us today to speak the same thing. "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" (1 Cor. 1:10). For years the churches of Christ spoke the same thing. At that time we became the fastest growing religious body in America. While I do not believe that the only reason is because we all spoke the same thing, it must be considered a major factor. When we have one language, we have great power. There

arose a group that opposed certain authorized actions. We, for identity sake, referred to these as "Antis." While they opposed authorized acts, we still basically spoke the same things. There was still a basic respect for God's Word, the church and Christian living. However, slowly things began to change.

In a reaction to anti-ism, liberalism reared its ugly head. With liberalism there was a basic change. No longer was there a respect for the Scriptures. Liberals have denied that the Bible is a pattern or blueprint. Rubel Shelley and Randall Harris wrote, "We reject a rigid 'pattern theology'" and "It [Scripture - mh] certainly does not present an absolute blueprint for building a church." James Woodroof showed his disrespect for the Bible when he wrote, "Plugging into any part of the scriptures, except the Gospels, expecting there to find power, is like plugging an electric motor into a reflection of a power outlet." They also denied the distinctive nature of the church. They teach that the Lord's church is nothing more than a denomination among the denominations. They tell us that we just need to admit to ourselves and others that we are just like them. This is why liberals will fellowship denominational groups; something that was unheard of a few years ago.

Liberals also changed the worship of the church. They have brought in choral groups to entertain, sing for us. They have taught and practiced the partaking of the Lord's Supper on any day of the week, instead of just the first day of the week. Soon some will change the elements of the Supper to something other than unleaven bread and fruit of the vine. The preaching is no longer distinctive in nature. Instead of using the Bible and preaching the Word (2 Tim. 4:2), and "prove all things" (1 The. 5:21), now there is an aversion to book, chapter, and verse preaching. Liberals have also drastically changed in the work of the church. Formerly, we all understood that the work of the church was spiritual in nature, the saving of souls (John 18:36; Luke 19:10). Liberals have changed that spiritual work to trying to meet man's felt needs. Rubel Shelley says "We are at a juncture in history where the church should listen to the un-church about what they're telling us about us." We should realize that the "un-churched" does not even know what they truly need.

The result of all this is that we no longer speak the same thing. We do not have one language. If we want to get back much of the power we once had, we must get back to God's Word and speaking the same thing. The liberals among us must return to the old paths (Jer. 6:16), or get out. At present you are no longer of us.

Please clearly identify yourselves with others who have previously gone out from us because they were not of us (1 John 2:19), clearly identify yourself with the denominations. Take the sign down that says “church of Christ” so those in the world will know that you are not of us. Allow us to get back to doing the work of God and speaking the same thing. We will then have great power to accomplish great things for God. *MH*

(Continued from page 1)

Adam blamed “The woman whom thou gavest to be with me” (v. 12) for his sin, followed closely by Eve blaming the serpent that bequiled her for her sin (v. 13). The prophet Jeremiah spoke of the Babylonians’ land being that of graven images, “they are mad upon *their* idols” (Jer. 50:38). You see, it was not the fault of the Babylonians that the judgment of Jehovah God fell upon them—THEY WERE NOT GUILTY—BY REASON OF INSANITY! Their idols had been the cause of their demise.

David was extremely afraid of Achish, the king of Gath. One of the servants of Achish asked the king, “Is not this David the king of the land? did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands? And David laid up these words in his heart, and was sore afraid of Achish the king of Gath. And he changed his behaviour before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scrabbled on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard” (1 Sam. 21:11-13). Now, to be fair, David appeared to be using this feigned madness to escape the clutches of Achish, but are we not guilty of the same tactics today in attempting to steer criticism and reprisal away from us by pleading NOT GUILTY—BY REASON OF INSANITY?

In a recent presidential campaign both political parties bolstered their rhetoric by using a liberal number of quotes from certain giants in American history who, unlike them, possessed the imagination to formulate **original** statements. One quotation, drummed into my head from childhood, was that of Harry Truman—“THE BUCK STOPS HERE.” **He** did not plead insanity. **He** did not consistently state that he was not guilty of some action, even though it had the possibility of wrecking his personal and political life if he were proved wrong. **He** was accountable. **He** shouldered the blame. **He** stepped in front of his accusers, looked them in the eye and said, “It was **MY** decision—can you do any better? If so, what is your plan?” Truman in a lot of ways personified the profile of an American pioneer and

our independent spirit. Sadly, today, to hear most people tell it, nothing is the fault of **anybody**. The church failed; their parents failed; society failed, but certainly **THEY** didn’t fail. A man can drink a case of Budweiser and then drive his car into a tree. The bartender is at fault and the **tree** is co-defendant. You can smoke three packs of cigarettes a day for forty years and then sue the cigarette company because the warning disclaimer on the side of the package was not printed large enough. We have no-fault divorces. We have co-dependency. We have incorrigible behavior as a result of bad toilet training. We will attach our failings to anyone or anybody rather than take the personal responsibility for our actions.

Few in the Bible and throughout history could simply say, “I have sinned,” or, “I have done wrong,” from King Saul to the politicians of today.

If we ask any U. S. manufacturer or builder or auto worker today, our country has not built merchandise of questionable quality—the American public FOR SOME REASON simply decided to help out that tiny country, Japan, by buying **their** products. Our prisons are running over and the non-violent prisoners are being routinely released because *there is no room in the pen*. But, no matter, none of the prisoners should have been incarcerated anyway—they were products of a society that had done them wrong. Someone contracted AIDS via a dirty needle, but....“I’m not to blame. It isn’t my fault. Someone should do something to find a cure. I have a right to live the way I want to live.”

But, listen to General Robert E. Lee after Gettysburg. “All of this has been my fault. It is I that have lost this fight and you must help me out of it the best that you can.” HOW REFRESHING! When was the last time that you heard a politician or a preacher or a police official or someone within the Lord’s church simply say, “I did it. It is my fault”?

Confession is still good for the soul. This does not mean that you are to establish a pattern of going here and there saying that something is your fault, but it does mean that when the responsibility is ours, we must accept the consequences, good or bad!

We will all meet that Righteous Judge on the last day. Who will **YOU** blame for those things done in the flesh? Will you accept responsibility or will you, with a quivering and fearful voice utter those words becoming so fashionable today—“NOT GUILTY—BY REASON OF INSANITY”?

Brethren, **THE BUCK STOPS THERE!**

P.O. Box 985; Moundsville, WV 26041

The Holy Spirit—The Only “Expert” Witness

Tim Nichols

When I was a teenager and a member of the “Independent Christian Church,” a number of us were trying to find answers to our questions concerning how long a boy’s hair could be without being in the wrong. Some felt that it was long and wrong if it covered the collar. Others felt that it was short and safe if it remained above the ear without touching it. In our attempt to find the answer we agreed to consult with various adults who we thought would know more about it. When we came back together, we discovered that most of the adults did not quite know what to say. However, several of the young people had gone to one of the deacons whose occupation seemed to give more credibility to his answer. He felt that hair touching the collar was too long, that hair could touch the ear as long as it did not present an unkempt appearance, and that the hair should be trimmed at least once every two weeks at the most: He was a barber. He seemed to be the closest thing that we had to an expert. Many of those who heard his expert testimony considered the matter closed.

Some years later, after I had repented of the wrongs in which I had participated as a member of the “Independent Christian Church,” I was involved in a discussion with several of my fellow college students concerning instrumental music and “special music” in worship. We agreed to explore the matters further and renew our discussion at a later date. When we returned to the discussion we found that several had consulted the Bible, lexicons, history books, and various professors. One, however, felt that she had gone to the only true experts on this particular topic. She had polled a number of music majors and discovered that they were nearly unanimous in saying that we ought not use instrumental music in public worship and that it would be acceptable to use “special music” in worship. For her, this expert testimony had settled the matter. After all, music is their field!

Last week, Carroll and Shirely Miller drew my attention to an article that shows us that some of our more educated liberal brethren follow this same procedure in their search for expert testimony. Those who are going out from among us have, for some time, made the claim that our brethren have been mistaken in simply going back to the Bible for our authority concerning all that we believe, teach, and practice. They have claimed

we have been in error concerning how one becomes a Christian and a member of God’s flock. They have suggested that we have been mistaken in our belief that we must have biblical authority for what we do to express our worship to God. They have not, however, been able to substantiate their claims by appealing to the Bible. Every time they have made the attempt to do so, someone has gone and spoiled it all by quoting a verse that teaches what they are opposing. They have apparently been searching for expert testimony that will prove them to be in the right. Finally, they have found the definitive answer.

Waylon Jennings has been quoted as having written, in a recent autobiography that “Of all the religions I’ve run into, the Church of Christ has probably got it wronger than anybody.” He went on to write, “They’re self-righteous, narrow-minded, and truly believe they’re the only ones going to Heaven. If you don’t believe the way we do, they say, you are going straight to hellfire and damnation. With a side order of brimstone.” Well, so much for Waylon and Willie and the boys. Rubel Shelly, a preacher who use to be among us, was quick to glory in the fact that his conclusions had been validated by this expert testimony. Here is what he wrote to the Nashville Tennessean concerning Waylon’s comments: “Thanks for the quote. It will serve me well in trying to teach against what I inherited and have had to come to terms with.”

Hopefully, you are already anticipating the conclusion of this brief article: It is in the title. Expert testimony concerning spiritual matters cannot be obtained from the mouth of the barber, the music major, the country singer, the preacher, the butcher, the baker, or the candlestick maker. Any one of these might be able to open his Bible and show us what God has inspired men to write, but none of them can become the standard by which any matter can be rightly judged. “If any man speak, *let him speak* as the oracles of God;... that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen” (1 Peter 4:11). To whom do you turn for expert testimony? Your mother? Your father? Some relative? Some preacher? Your own mind? Some sect with peculiar views or some particular group of people? As good and kind and otherwise reliable as these sources may be, they have no expert testimony to offer

beyond the Divine teaching of the Scriptures. I genuinely loved the barber. I assume that the music majors were all good people. And Waylon,...Waylon is considered to be a good singer by some. But truth is found

only in that Book that was penned by men who were moved by the Holy Spirit.

Route 1, Box 206a; Burlington, WV 26710
email: tnichols@mail.miworld.net

MARCHING ONWARD!

Darrell Broking

The Querist is often bewildered by the Bible believing Christians loyalty to his Master. As worldly minds yearn for the vain glory of life they treasure an unfathomable knowledge of truth. Modern Theology postulates various positions with one course in mind, transitional truth. Transitional truth must be the answer, they theorize, to the world's black flag of infidelity. Sadly enough, many professed Bible believers have been exposed to a chronic amount of modernism, absorbing Barth and Bultmann at a rate beyond the threshold limit values. Although kerygma is advanced within the ranks of some, the faithful Bible believer looks beyond these broken cisterns of intrusion, marching faithfully onward.

Elasticity expansion flourishes within evanescent dimensions. Rock solid truth repeals the forceful flow seeking to undercurrent the doctrine of Christ. Therefore, rigid adherence to God threatens this entire sphere of obscure schism. Listen for yourselves as one such dissident declared:

Our teens are being raised in a heritage that comes busting out of the bars of traditionalism, if you'll allow me that metaphor. To say we're gonna speak where the Bible speaks and be silent where the Bible is silent. And it doesn't take a sociologist to tell you that they are marching right back into that same prison, scared of truth, afraid of new study. Afraid of opening God's Word and saying "what about this," although some of them are not afraid. But what they're afraid of is not finding something new but afraid of the fact they're gonna give up there heritage. The cement is still wet in the Lord's church, and it's not too late for us to change. (Jeff Walling, *Teaching The Bible So People Will Listen*, taped lesson from the 1986 Youth Ministers Seminar; Lubbock, Texas).

The careful reader will observe several dangerous points from the aforementioned statement. As you read these words of elasticity did you notice the barrier threatening their continued growth? Lo and behold the traditionalism of "speaking where the Bible speaks and being silent where the Bible is silent" sterilizes this mentality. Naturally Mr. Walling quotes no Bible here! I must stand with Peter who said, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11). The only way I can do so is by following the tradition of the apostles who followed Christ. Paul wrote, "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" (1 The. 3:6). Therefore book, chapter, and verse dedication is a must if one desires to hear these words: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Mat. 25:34).

Does Bible study breed affrightment, thus relinquishing the continuity of Christ's heritage? A thousand times **yes!** If, our leader of fashion's definition of Bible teaching is under consideration. Bible teaching: "The process of communicating from your heart to the hearts of your listeners. Please note that's not your minds to their minds, but heart to heart." (Walling, *Teaching The Bible So People Will Listen*). So many of our brethren have defected from the faith because of the chloroform flowing from the hearts of these modern pioneers. Numbed to truth offered freedom (John 8:32) by the supposition of an imaginative theorist heralding his "wet cement" theology. "Deceit is in the heart of them that imagine evil" (Pro. 12:20). This heritage he despises is found in the "pattern of sound words" (2 Tim. 1:13), wherein God desires our minds to pass these sound words to other minds of a like kindred spirit (2 Tim. 2:2). Some call this cloning, but I for one would rather be found cloned in the firm foundation of God (2 Tim. 2:19) than wobbling in Walling's wet cement.

Where is the phobia? Within the remnant or within these modern helmsmen of the New Hermeneutic? For every false teacher there is a faithful man of God extending the invitation for public discussion. For every Shelly there is a Elkins, for every Waldron there is a Coats, and for every Walling there is a Music. Polemophobia, the fear of being exposed by the wall of truth. These pompous windbags of the "puke/buzzard" mentality need to realize that the Christ of God said, "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth" (Rev. 3:16). They might wonder why the faithful Bible believer is so loyal to the truth, but we know: "If we have only hoped in Christ in this life, we are of all men most pitiable" (1 Cor. 15:19).

5098 Bowie; Memphis, TN 38109-6048

Leadership

Twenty-second Annual Bellview Lectures

June 7 - 11, 1997

Saturday, June 7

7:00 P.M. Tending The Flock James Rogers
8:00 P.M. The Spirit Of Obedience Joe Galloway

Sunday, June 8

9:00 A.M. Elders' Duty To Members David Brown
10:00 A.M. Members' Duty To Elders Eddie Whitten
11:00 A.M. Lunch Break
2:00 P.M. Moses—Great Example Of Leadership Michael Hatcher
3:00 P.M. Exposition Of 1 Peter 5:1-4 Stanley Ryan
4:00 P.M. Elder—Elder, Deacon, Preacher Relations Billy Bland
5:00 P.M. Dinner Break
7:00 P.M. Work Of Deacons B. J. Clarke
8:00 P.M. How To Handle Criticism Ira Y. Rice, Jr.

Monday, June 9

9:00 A.M. Elders As Watchmen Joel Wheeler
10:00 A.M. Qualifications Of Elders And Deacons Wayne Coats
11:00 A.M. Eldership And Old Testament Concepts Joseph D. Meador
12:00 P.M. Lunch Break
1:30 P.M. Lording It Over The Flock Buster Dobbs
2:30 P.M. Authority Of Elders Bobby Duncan
3:15 P.M. Open Forum: Authority & Lording Buster Dobbs, Bobby Duncan
4:00 P.M. Dinner Break

7:00 P.M. Elders And Church Discipline Garland Elkins
8:00 P.M. History Of Departure In Leadership Bobby Liddell

Tuesday, June 10

9:00 A.M. David—Great Example Of Leadership Steve Ellis
10:00 A.M. Qualifications Of Elders And Deacons Wayne Coats
11:00 A.M. Joshua—Great Example Of Leadership Noah Hackworth
12:00 P.M. Lunch Break
1:30 P.M. Goal Setting In Leadership Gary Summers
2:30 P.M. Women As Elders And Deacons? Flavil Nichols
3:15 P.M. Open Forum: Women's Role Flavil Nichols
4:00 P.M. Dinner Break
7:00 P.M. Qualities Of A Leader Harrell Davidson
8:00 P.M. Nehemiah—Great Example Of Leadership Clifford Newell

Wednesday, June 11

9:00 A.M. Congregations Without Elders Jerry Martin
10:00 A.M. Qualifications Of Elders And Deacons Wayne Coats
11:00 A.M. Reevaluation/Reaffirmation Of Elders? Dub McClish
12:00 P.M. Lunch Break
1:30 P.M. Jesus—Great Example Of Leadership Joe Gilmore
2:30 P.M. Decision Making In Leadership Curtis Cates
3:15 P.M. Open Forum: Qualifications Wayne Coats
4:00 P.M. Dinner Break
7:00 P.M. Elders And The Stewardship Of Souls Daniel Denham
8:00 P.M. Inspiring Brethren To Good Works Guss Eoff

Bellview Lectures Information

HOUSING

Free housing in the homes of Christians will be provided on a "first come, first served" basis (call our office at: 904/455-7595, or write at: 4850 Sauffley Road, Pensacola, FL 32526). The following motel is available nearby and is providing a *special rate* for individuals attending the *Bellview Lectures*. Hospitality Inn (4910 Mobile Highway.) offers the following price (tax not included) \$45—1 to 4 people per room; a restaurant is located in the motel. Their phone number is 904/453-3333. When calling for reservations, be sure to tell them you are with the *Bellview Lectures*. For those who have R.V.s, hook-ups are available on the grounds of the building. Contact the office to reserve a space.

AUDIO AND VIDEO TAPES

All lectures will be recorded on cassette audio tapes and video tapes. These tapes may be purchased during the *Bellview Lectures* or by mail order afterwards. Order blanks and price information will be available during the *Bellview Lectures* or by mail upon request. (We request the cooperation of all who attend the *Bellview Lectures* in keeping the pulpit area free of recorders and microphones.) If you would like to make your own recordings, please see one of our sound technicians, *Richard Parker* or *Bill Crowe*, in the recording room.

BOOKS

The Lectureship book, "*Leadership*" will be available during the *Bellview Lectures* and afterwards by mail. It will contain thirty-three chapters and approximately 440 pages. Everyone who attends the *Bellview Lectures* will want to purchase a personal copy and perhaps additional copies for gifts.

EXHIBITS

Limited reservations will be accepted subject to approval of the *Bellview elders* and available space. Exhibits are expected from schools, children's homes, book stores, publications, and other projects of general interest to the brotherhood.

MEALS

The women of the *Bellview Church of Christ* will provide a free lunch from Monday through Wednesday. For all other meals, a list of restaurants and a map will be available at the registration table in the foyer.

TRANSPORTATION

If you will be flying to the Pensacola Regional Airport and will need transportation, please call or write our office. We will arrange to meet you at no charge if we know when, where, airline, flight number, and the number in your party.

IT SURVIVES STILL!

Jesse Whitlock

In 1 Peter 1:25 the Record reveals, “But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.” As a young preacher I preached a lesson called “3 Reasons Why I Believe The Bible” and later changed it to “7 Reasons Why I Believe The Bible.” Now as a not so young preacher it is “12 Reasons.” In each outline my final point has remained the same. I believe the Bible to be God’s inspired, inerrant, and infallible Word because of its **indestructibility**! The Bible has been subject to attack from without and within. A book written by mere men alone could not have undergone the attacks the Bible has sustained, and still survive!

Consider the persecution of the early Christians for believing the Gospel message. Some were burned alive, others were delivered to the lions, still others were crucified, some were placed into leather bags with scorpions and snakes—then thrown into a body of water. The listing could go on. The first translators of the English Bible were persecuted and some martyred for their efforts.

Contemplate the efforts of modernism and liberalism toward the destruction of the Bible. One of their most vicious attacks has been through the modern versions (perversion) of Scripture; whereby they have denied the deity of Christ, the existence of hell, the virgin birth of our Lord, the resurrection, the truth that one day this earth will be burned up, Jesus’ teaching on the subject of divorce, that there is but one church, ad infinitum.

Call to mind the efforts of denominationalism to “kill” the Bible. Both the state and the corrupted church tried to stamp out its influence during the Middle Ages by openly burning copies of the Bible and subjecting those who owned a copy to severe persecution and sometimes even death. Yet, in spite of all these attacks

across the ages—the Bible lives on!

Continually the Bible is attacked from without and within. The Bible still survives! Ingersoll held up a copy of the Bible and said, “In 15 years I’ll have this book in the morgue.” Fifteen years rolled by and Ingersoll was in the morgue—the Grand Old Book lives on. Voltaire said that in one hundred years the Bible would be an outmoded and forgotten book. At the end of that century, Voltaire had died and his house was used by the Geneva Bible Society to print, store, and distribute the Bible. Recently in a pulpit in this area a preacher (?) held up a copy of the King James Version and a copy of the New International Version. He adored and praised the NIV—then referring to the KJV he stated the world would be better off if all the copies of it (KJV) could be gathered up and cast into a giant fire. Nobody came to the defense of God’s precious Word that day. BUT, to this day the Bible remains the #1 best seller and the KJV of the Bible outsells all the others (NIV included) combined! The Bible lives on!

Clifford’s poem, “The Hammer and The Anvil” says it...

Last eve I passed beside a blacksmith’s door
And heard the anvil ring the vesper chime;
When looking in, I saw upon the floor,
Old hammers worn with beating years of time.
“How many anvils have you had,” said I,
“To wear and batter all these hammers so?”
“Just one,” said he, then said with twinkling eye,
“The anvil wears the hammers out you know.”
And so, I thought, the anvil of God’s Word
For ages skeptic’s blows have beat upon;
Yet, though the noise of falling blows was heard,
The anvil is unharmed—the hammers are gone!
“BUT THE WORD OF THE LORD ABIDETH FOREVER.”

607 McLish; Ardmore, OK 73401

Defender is published monthly (except December) under the oversight of the elders of the Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526. (904) 455-7595. *Subscription is free to addresses in the United States.* All contributions shall be used for operational expenses.

MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

**Write For Your
Free Bible Correspondence
Course
4850 Saufley Field Road
Pensacola, FL 32526**

Defender



“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

Volume XXVI

July 1997

Number 7

Recommended reading: *Leadership*

Gary W. Summers

At last, a book has been published that deals with one of the most crucial areas affecting the church. That leadership has been lacking in the churches of Christ is all too painfully obvious; a book on this subject like the one produced for the 1997 Bellview lectures is long overdue. The 431 pages it contains are well worth the \$14 pricetag. (It may be ordered from Bellview Church of Christ, Valid Publications, Bible Resource Publications, or other brotherhood dealers.)

There are 33 chapters beginning with one entitled “The Spirit of Obedience,” which is foundational to fellowship. “Qualities of a Leader” comes next and then a treatment of the “Authority of Elders,” which among other things treats the erroneous idea that the only authority elders have is to lead by example. Many of the studies in this book are very fundamental; the writers were not reluctant to check the definitions with Greek lexicons and other authorities.

1 Peter 5:1-4 has an entire chapter devoted to it with related material also presented, such as the fact that no authority was ever established for the church to rule from Rome (or for Peter’s being the first pope). Peter merely calls himself a fellow-elder, not ruler over all the church. Twenty abuses of the eldership are listed (pp. 36-37).

In preparation for his 30-page chapter on “Qualifications of Elders and Deacons” Wayne Coats studied several years’ worth of Gospel Advocates in addition to using the usual sources. What he presents is an interesting synthesis of information, which somehow possesses a sense of freshness.

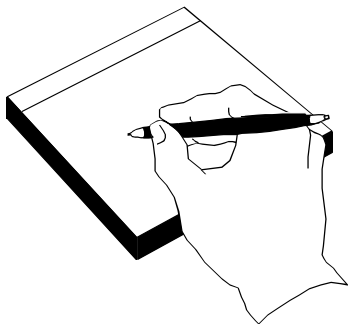
The chapter on “Selection of Elders and Deacons”

contains charts to help members of a congregation evaluate those being considered for these roles (pp. 80-81). It is followed by thoroughly documented material which critiques the idea of “reevaluation” or “reaffirmation” of elders, a rather recent concept usually used in liberal congregations but not entirely unknown in conservative ones. This practice gives authority (manmade, not scriptural) to the congregation for determining who will and who will not remain as elders.

The next two chapters describe the “Elders’ Duty to the Members” and the “Members’ Duty to Elders.” The first of these devotes space to the general subject of “ascertaining Bible authority”; the application is then made concerning elders. Rounding out this theme is a consideration of an elder’s relationship with other elders, deacons, and preachers (with some practical suggestions). The next three topics are: “Eldership and Old Testament Concepts,” “Elders as Watchmen,” and “Elders and the Stewardship of Souls.”

Garland Elkins (perhaps by virtue of his defense of it on the Donahue program), was assigned “Elders and Church Discipline.” (In the Open Forum related to this subject there was further discussion of how to go about withdrawing fellowship from wayward members. Churches can still obey the command God has given to them regarding discipline, but there are ways to do so which will protect them legally.) Never one to shy away from controversial issues, brother Elkins also deals briefly with the question, “Can a church withdraw fellowship from another church?” (p. 189).

(Continued on Page 3)



Notes From The Editor

**Michael
Hatcher**

Email address:
whatcher@sprynet.com

Proper Spiritual Values

There is only one thing in this world that is important. Everything else is subservient to this one thing. Paul expounds upon this in writing to the Philippians. “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” (Phi. 3:13-14). Both Solomon and Jesus also inform us what that one thing is. “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man” (Ecc. 12:13). “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Mat. 6:33). These three statements are saying the same thing in different words: living as God would have us to live, doing His will in our life, so we may obtain a home in heaven with God is that one thing that is more important than anything else. Every thing in our life **must** center upon that one thing. Solomon additionally explains why this one thing is important. “For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil.” (Ecc. 12:14). One day each one of us will stand before God and be judged by what we have done. “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” (2 Cor. 5:10). Based upon what we have done in our body, we will either be rewarded with heaven or hell. Thus, pleasing God is the only thing in life that is important.

It is obvious that many do not have the proper spiritual values. Their attendance at services screams that they do not realize that only one thing is important.

If they have so little regard for doing the only thing that is important and so little regard for God, they will never receive the blessings of God. While it is obvious that these individuals do not have the proper spiritual values, there are many other areas where we need to apply this principle.

Do we put God first in our home life? As we make plans for a home are we putting God in our lives? So many young people date and then marry a person based upon just about anything other than the only thing that is important. It has been shown many times that a Christian who marries someone who is not a Christian, more often than not, falls away. (Yes, I do know that some will convert their unbelieving mate, but that is the exception, not the rule.) Thus, if a person is putting God first, have the proper spiritual values, then why would they enter into the closest relationship on this earth with someone who will not help them attain heaven? The only person someone who has the proper spiritual values is going to marry is another person who also has those values. Within the home, do we exhibit the proper values? Do we place children, parents, spouse or anyone else above our love for God? Jesus said, “He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me” (Mat. 10:37). Sometimes a person will tell me that they had to miss services because of a family member coming to town or because of a family reunion. While these things are important, our relationship and love for God must take preeminence over them. Additionally, parents do your children see you putting God first in your life? Do they see you reading and studying God’s Word, attending all the worship services of the church? Do they see you praying to God, doing the good works of Christianity? Parents, only when your children see Christ in you, will they grow up to be dedicated Christians.

Do we consider our relationship to God in our business? Often we become so involved in our work, that we forget what is really important. We go into work early, leave late, and barely have time for anything else, including God. Spiritual matters slowly become secondary within our lives simply because we are too busy. Others become lazy in their work. Paul taught that we should be “not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord” (Rom. 12:11). This type of action does not promote Christianity, but instead pushes others away from God. A Christian should be the best worker an employer has. Paul established the Christian’s attitude toward his job. “Not with eyeservice, as

menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free” (Eph. 6:6-8). Others steal directly (instead of indirectly by being lazy) from their employer. It is impossible to lead others to Christ when we are living ungodly ourselves.

We also must have the proper spiritual attitudes regarding our recreational pursuits. Some individuals become so involved with sports that they cannot do the work of the Lord. Often leagues will schedule games on a Sunday or a Wednesday that will conflict with services. We, not wanting to hurt the team, will then miss services and allow our children to do so. We, unknowingly, taught them an important lesson—but not the kind that we should. Some become involved with so many different sporting events and recreational activities that God is crowded out of their lives. Often, during these activities we act in an ungodly manner. Instead of drawing others to Christ, the way some professed Christians act, they are pushed away from Him. “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Mat. 5:16).

We must once again learn the importance of putting God first in our lives. In whatever area of our life we might be dealing with, God must take priority. This is the only thing that is important in our life. If we make all the money in the world, become the most popular person in the world, become the most powerful person in the world, or anything else, and lose our soul; we have lost. In the parable of the rich fool, Jesus put it this way: “But God said unto him, *Thou* fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So *is* he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God” (Luke 12:20-21). He also asks the rhetorical question: “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Mat. 16:26). Make sure that you save your soul. MH

(Continued from Page 1)

Would elders cut a preacher’s salary when some wealthy members threatened to withhold their contributions? (Do snakes slither?) This and other questions are dealt with in “Elders and Money.” In addition to stressing the fiscal responsibilities (and proper handling of contributions) that elders have, emphasis is also placed

upon “unscriptural fund-raising” schemes.

Himself an elder of the Bellview congregation, brother Fred Stancliff writes on “Elders and the Hiring of Preachers.” Included are sections covering the biblical authority that elders have to hire a preacher, the qualities such a man should have, where an appropriate man may be found, ideas concerning the process of preacher selection, as well as how much he should be paid, and informing him of what he will be expected to do.

An excellent chapter devoted to Titus 1:9-16 is entitled “Stopping Their Mouths.” Two helpful charts are included (pp. 220 and 223) as is an example of the types of mouths that should be stopped. Analyzed is an article by Mike Cope, “Is It an Identity Crisis?” (which appeared in the March/April edition of *Wineskins*, a publication devoted to trampling the sacred truths of the Scriptures).

“Tending the Flock” and “Inspiring Brethren to Good Works” follow next. Then the reader is treated to an outstanding scholarly and practical treatment of “Decision Making in the Church” by Curtis Cates. This chapter alone would be worth the price of the book; all elders and preachers should study and apply the principles contained herein. “Goal Setting in Leadership” makes a good companion chapter. Some brethren have wondered how the writer could so accurately describe their business meetings (pp. 273-74).

“Conflict Resolution” contains much-needed wisdom unless one is a member of a congregation without any problems (in which case someone should check for a pulse). And who better to write on the subject of “How to Handle Criticism” than Ira Y. Rice, Jr.? He looks especially at Jesus, Peter, and Paul as he demonstrates that every righteous person must deal with critics. He concludes with a summary of twenty suggestions for handling criticism (pp. 305-306).

One chapter is devoted to “Congregations Without Elders,” of which there are several. Included is a call to imitate the biblical pattern of starting and growing churches, which we have not followed perfectly.

What book on leadership would be complete without a treatment of the “Work of Deacons”? Not only is there a thorough consideration of the qualifications and duties, but there is also a serious look at some of the deviations from the biblical concepts that brethren have invented over the years (pp. 328-29).

The next five chapters look at Jesus, Moses, Joshua, David, and Nehemiah as great leaders. These are men who accomplished great things. How did they

do so? What were their methods? The lives of these men not only inspire us; they show the way to success. (These chapters also make excellent sermons.)

Next is a "History of Departure in Leadership," a historical survey of the ways in which leadership went awry just a few decades after the last New Testament letter was written. Completing this book are "Lording It Over the Flock" and "Women as Elders and Deacons?" Of course, the role of women in the church has

become an item of great controversy in the past ten years; brother Flavil Nichols presents solid, sound, scriptural material on this now-controversial subject.

Because of the thorough treatment of so many aspects of leadership, it is the author's conviction that each congregation of the Lord's church ought to have a copy of this book, as well as individual men who may aspire to be (or already are) leaders.

312 Pearl Street; Denton, TX 76201

1997 Bellview Lectureship—A Classic!

Joe E. Galloway

A description heard several times during the Twenty-second Annual Bellview Lectures regarding the quality of both the lectures and the book was "A Classic!" Since "classic" is defined as "a work of the highest class and of acknowledged excellence" I believe this well applies. My wife and I were privileged to hear all thirty lectures, plus the three *Open Forum* sessions. Without exception, each lecture was well prepared and contained valuable material on the overall topic of *Leadership* in the Lord's church. Not only does the 431-page book contain these lectures (each chapter containing even more material than the speaker had time to present), but it contains some additional chapters on topics which were not included in the actual lectureship.

A Vital Theme Was Presented—Leadership

Good leadership is important in every phase of the Lord's work. It is essential to our reaching the lost with the gospel, to the maturing of individual Christians, and to the proper functioning of each local congregation. Without proper leadership a congregation not only will not reach its potential in "holding forth the word of life" to a lost world (Phi. 2:16), but it may be "tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine" (Eph. 4:14). Undoubtedly almost all of the present apostasy that properly concerns all who love the Lord and His church would have been stopped "dead in its tracks" if the elders of all local congregations had properly functioned as watchmen (Acts 20:28-30; Tit. 1:9).

The Lessons Were Bible-Based

It was evident that each speaker believed that God's Word furnishes us completely in all that we need to save ourselves and others. Each spoken lecture (as well as each in the book) gave book, chapter, and verse for what was taught. Not a single instance of "uncertain sounds" was to be heard. The church was not berated,

faithful preachers of the past were not scoffed, nor was the truth of God's Word minimized in any way—as sadly is the case in many gatherings of those claiming to be God's people today. Instead, the truth of the gospel was upheld, and appreciation was expressed many times for those who have faithfully taught and defended the truth in years past. Although some personal (and even humorous) things were related a few times to illustrate some truth or to lift our spirits, such never crowded out what God has said in His Word.

All Was Overseen by a Fine Eldership

It is fitting that a lectureship on the important topic of *leadership* is presented by a congregation with exemplary leadership, and such is the case with the Bellview church! Brothers Paul Brantley, Bill Gallaher, and Fred Stancliff are known far and wide for their soundness in the faith, for their interest in the spreading of the gospel world-wide, for their defense of the truth, and for the fine work they do in shepherding the flock at Bellview. They not only were behind the planning of the topics and speakers, but were also present at each of the lectures.

The Book Was Dedicated to Their Eight Deacons

These men are not "deacons" in name only, but each has been assigned works for which they are responsible. Particularly evident was the work some of them did during the lectureship in the video and audio taping and in caring for the PA system. The dedication of this important book on *Leadership* to them suggests the gratitude and high regard the elders have for them and for their works.

Bellview Hospitality Is Among the Best!

When we "dropped in" on the congregation during regular services one Lord's Day morning back in 1993, we were unknown to them. We were much impressed at that time with the number of members who greeted us

and who made us feel welcome. We have found that this same friendly spirit is shown by local members at each lectureship. Each weekday the ladies of the congregation provide a very fine lunch for all to enjoy. Although many things the members do to make the lectureship a success are evident, many other things not seen by most of us also are done before, during, and after the lectureship. We certainly appreciate all these things that are done to make us feel welcome, and to assist us in enjoying the lectures!

Appreciation is due the elders and to Michael Hatcher for their part in having provided this fine

lectureship. This lectureship on *Leadership* can continue to benefit the Lord's church for years to come through the use of the well-prepared 431-page book and through the audio and video tapes of each lecture which are available. Be sure to order some for your use soon!

We look forward to the 1998 Bellview Lectureship on the subject of *Christian Fellowship*. You would do well to plan to attend! It will most certainly be well-prepared, and it will be on a topic that is important for the Lord's people.

218 Pinecrest Drive; Greenville, TN 37743

THE CHURCH THAT FELLOWSHIPS THE FORNICATOR

Mel Futrell

Our title does not reflect an imaginary situation, but rather an actual incident in the first century church as recorded in Holy Scripture. Also, and unfortunately, it reflects what has become common practice in some churches of Christ. The problem we face in the local church over the issue of fornication/adultery has been poignantly stated by one brother in the following two paragraphs:

Our people have picked up the habits of the world. Unscriptural divorce and remarriage have a way of life in the church. In recent years there has been a massive migration of adulterous marriages into the fellowship of the saints. Weak preachers have frequently ignored the problem and have danced to the tunes piped by adulterers. Unqualified elderships, who have been more concerned for buildings and budgets than souls, have winked at the sin and thus let this evil snuggle down within our churches.

The claim is increasingly being made that the issue of divorce and remarriage is so fraught with emotion, sensitivity, and an a mixture of opinions, that we ought to simply leave the matter alone and let each person work it out to his own satisfaction. It is argued that this is an issue upon which we can disagree but still maintain a sweetness of unity. Every man has made his own bed (be it adulterous or not) and it is his responsibility to lie in it; we are not to judge the situations of others. These passionate pleas for unity have all been characterized by a common element—an almost total lack of appeal to the text of the Bible and a disregard of the plain scriptural teaching concerning how adulterers are to be dealt with and how Christians are to view those

who promote adultery! (Wayne Jackson, *Divorce and Remarriage, A Study Discussion*, 1983, pp. 92-93).

Thus the problem we seek to address is that of the local church remaining in fellowship with those among them (1 Cor. 5:1) who are living in adultery. Do not let anyone fool you, one can live in adultery. Jesus said so in Matthew 19:9 when using the Greek present tense rendered in the KJV, “**committeth** adultery.” The present tense form suggests a continuous action. We add to that the testimony of the apostle Paul from Colossians 3:5-7. In verse 5 Paul catalogs five sins one of which is “fornication”. Then in verse 7 he says that these people before becoming Christians had “lived in them.” Lived in what? Lived in fornication! Now, since all adultery is fornication it is clear that one can, and many do, live in adultery.

After considering the above, the obvious question is: “What responsibility does the local church have when confronted with the situation of adultery?” Put as briefly and simply as possible, the adulterer should **first** be given, “space to repent” (Rev. 2:21) while corrective teaching goes on. This is all with the hope that he or she will sever this adulterous relationship. If he fails to repent the course of action to be taken by the congregation is set by Scripture, namely that indicated by Paul in 1 Corinthians 5:1-13. The brethren must “withdraw” (2 The. 3:6) fellowship from this impenitent and immoral person. Right here we should take the time to examine the contents of 1 Corinthians 5 that bear on this matter of withdrawal of fellowship.

The fact of the matter is that seven of the thirteen verses of 1 Corinthians 5 admonish the church, in one form of language or another, to withdraw fellowship from the immoral individual.

1. "Be taken away from you" (v. 2).
2. "Deliver such an one unto Satan" (v. 5).
3. "Purge out" (v. 7).
4. "Not to company with fornicators" (v. 9).
5. "With such an one no not to eat" (v. 11).
6. "Judge them" (v. 12).
7. "Put away from among yourselves" (v. 13).

Brethren, I venture to say, "How much clearer could Paul have been?"

The situation found in the church at Corinth is one the local church today would definitely want to avoid. The attitude of the Corinthian church was such that it was tolerating immoral behavior rather than dealing with the situation. Notice the language of the text that describes their attitude: "ye are puffed up" (v. 2), and "your glorying" (v. 6). Their failure to enforce discipline

was endangering not only the immoral offender, but also the whole Corinthian church. Paul admonished, "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened" (1 Cor. 5:6-7).

Brethren, this action of withdrawing fellowship is to be accomplished by the entire church in its assembled capacity (1 Cor. 5:4). And its purpose is to shame the immoral person to the point that they will repent of their work of the flesh and thus secure salvation in the day of the Lord Jesus (1 Cor. 5:5).

The Lord's required action in the case of those committing fornication/adultery is based upon love of and for the souls of men. With this motivation and with the knowledge that spiritual fellowship is restricted to those who walk in the light (1 John 1:7), let us determine to "shine as lights in the world, Holding forth the word of life" (Phi. 2:15-16). To do anything less is inexcusable.

450 Harleston Road; Irmo, SC 29063

AM I MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?

Shan Jackson

"And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: *Am I my brother's keeper?*" (Gen. 4:9). This question, "Am I my brother's keeper?" was the first question ever asked by man that we have on record. It was first asked by Cain, but Cain was certainly not the last to ask it. In fact, it appears that Cain simply introduces a question that continues to be an almost daily occurrence. And, like Cain, man seems not to care what he does until the consequences are known. Then we surmise, "Our punishment is greater than we can bear" (Gen. 4:13).

Another ancient who asked this question was Abraham, then known as Abram (Gen. 13). It seems that a conflict had arisen between his herdmen and the herdmen of his nephew, Lot. Abraham sought peace within the family and he sought out Lot and said, "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we *be* brethren" (Gen. 13:8). Abraham realized that he was "his brother's keeper." He realized that he needed to do something to keep the peace. He offered Lot the opportunity to choose the land on the left or right and he would take the other. Abraham was more interested in pleasing Lot and pleasing the Lord than he was in his own selfish desires. With those two incidents as a foundation let us determine why we are our brother's

keeper. We are our brother's keeper because we are required to:

LOVE ONE ANOTHER

The apostle John states emphatically that "this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another" (1 John 3:11). Another apostle, Peter, says the same thing in these words: "*be ye* all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren" (1 Pet. 3:8). Brethren, we are to love one another. Paul mentions "brotherly love" in Romans 12:10 and Christ says, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another" (John 13:34). With great authority He said in John 15:12, "This is my commandment, That ye love one another." Brethren, we are our brother's keeper because we are to love one another. We are also our brother's keeper because we are to:

GIVE OURSELVES TO OTHERS

In Matthew 25 Jesus gives us a partial picture of the great judgment scene. In the judgment a division will be made between those who complied with Jesus' commands and those who did not. Those who accepted the responsibility of keeping their brothers: fed the hungry, gave drink to the thirsty, took in strangers, etc. Likewise, those who were not concerned with their brothers did not. Brethren, it is our God-given charge to

give ourselves to others. These words of Christ cannot be ignored. Paul offers further proof of this when he writes to the brethren in Galatia saying, "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). Am I my brother's keeper? Yes, because I am to give myself to others. Also, we are our brother's keeper because we:

TAKE NO ACCOUNT OF EVIL

From the writings of Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:5 to the writing of James in James 5:20 the Bible is most consistent saying that Christians do not hunt faults, we cover them. Peter also addresses this need by saying, "above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins" (1 Pet. 4:8). Fervent love, as Peter mentions, is a love that seeks the betterment of others over the fulfillment of self. This love counteracts human nature which magnifies the sin of others in order to minimize the sins of self. You see, we are our brother's keeper even when he stumbles and falls. As our brother's keeper we will help

him regain his balance and repent of his indiscretion. The attitude Paul mentions in Galatians 6:1 must serve us as Christians. He says, "considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." Another reason why we are to be our brother's keeper is because we are commanded:

TO BE FORGIVING

Jesus was the Master Teacher. And one of His most masterful illustrations dealt with forgiveness. Peter asked Him, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" (Mat. 18:21). Jesus' answer should put to shame any Christian who has difficulty in forgiving another. He said in the next verse: "I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven" (v. 22). Brethren, His teaching here is that as long as a brother seeks our forgiveness we are to forgive—no exceptions are accepted. As long as a brother seeks forgiveness we are to forgive. Christians are to cherish a meek and contrite spirit; therefore, we will be our brother's keeper.

P.O. Box 904; Palacios, TX 77465

QUICK FIX RELIGION

Kevin P. Joy

One might be able to fix a flat tire temporarily with a can of "Quick Fix Puncture Seal," but will that temporary solution suffice indefinitely? NO WAY. One might be able to temporarily ease the pain or give a quick fix to an abscessed tooth, but will that temporary solution be sufficient forever? NO WAY! The tire must be fixed and the tooth must be fixed.

In our religious world today many "in the name of Christianity" are saying, "Expect a miracle, and you upon believing in Jesus can have a quick fix to your problem." Why has the easy way out become so appealing today? Did Christ expect a quick fix when He was dying on Calvary? Did Stephen expect a quick fix when he was giving up his life in defense of the Gospel? NO WAY.

Paul gives no indication of a quick fix religion. He

said in 2 Timothy 4:7, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith." Paul is saying, "I've fought, struggled, and scraped, yet I've remained faithful to God." In Philippians, as Paul is bound in prison, he addresses the brethren at Philippi about a quick fix. He says, NO, by writing, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phi. 3:14). Paul knew that the power to overcome was in the power of the gospel (Rom. 1:16).

Yet many today teach a **quick fix** or expect a miracle, but the Bible teaches with blood, sweat, and tears the path has been cleared for us to walk that narrow way. God, help us be true to HIM and willing to accept suffering, pain and sorrow for HIM. Let us be proud to do it without a Quick Fix.

P.O. Box 1630; Interlachen, FL 32148

Defender is published monthly (except December) under the oversight of the elders of the Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526. (850) 455-7595. *Subscription is free to addresses in the United States.* All contributions shall be used for operational expenses.
MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

**Write For Your
Free Bible Correspondence
Course
4850 Saufley Field Road
Pensacola, FL 32526**

Defender



“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

Volume XXVI

August 1997

Number 8

“EARNESTLY CONTEND FOR THE FAITH”

JUDE 3

Tim Smith

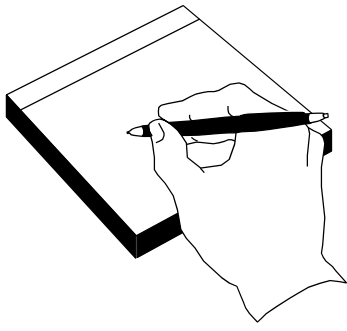
As Jude “the servant of Jesus Christ” addressed the words of our text “to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ,” so we would do well to consider the things he had to say and apply them to our lives in order that we might be pleasing unto “him with whom we have to do.” Jude wrote, “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort *you* that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3).

The people to whom he wrote agreed with him on many points, or so it would seem, as he desired to address the “common salvation,” or that which was shared or agreed on between them. However, due to their lack of faithfulness, Jude found it necessary to change his sermon outline and address their need to contend for the faith. Men of our time need this as well. We are living in a time when preachers, elders, and Christians in general are more content turning a deaf ear to error than opposing it. Complacency is seemingly at every turn. There are many errors in the world that need opposing, and there is much truth going “unpreached.” Why is this so? We need to be reminded, as did they, that it is up to the members of the Lord’s church to uphold righteousness and oppose unrighteousness. Have we forgotten that the Lord instructed through His apostles that we are to “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season” (2 Tim. 4:2)? Let us take a few minutes to notice some of the areas wherein

many of our day stand amiss with respect to preaching for the right and against the wrong.

We find in our day that many in the church would like to treat the church like a denomination. It seems as though they see no difference between that institution for which Jesus bled and died and some imposter who has set itself up in competition with the one of the Bible. We read of brethren setting up “missionary societies” like those that divided the brotherhood in the 1800s. We hear of “our preachers” joining “ministerial alliances” and speaking at and attending denominational gatherings. We read of the church (?) building gymnasiums and ball fields and joining sectarian sports leagues as though this were the work of the church. Have we reached a point where we really think that the precious blood of Jesus poured forth from His veins at Golgotha so that we may play games and have a big old time? Even if there were no lost souls in the world, and even if there were no Christians who needed strengthening, we still could not do what many have done in the name of teaching or fellowship with the approval of God. The Scriptures specifically authorize the church to engage in evangelism (Mat. 28:19-20; 2 Tim. 4:1-4), benevolence (Jam. 1:27; Gal. 6:10), and edification (Acts 20:32; 2 Tim. 2:1-2). It was never given to the church to rear children (that was given to the parents—Eph. 6:1ff), it was never given to the church to fit in with society by compromising truth, and it was never given to the church to be an institution of entertainment

(Continued on Page 3)



Notes From The Editor

**Michael
Hatcher**

Email address:
whatcher@sprynet.com

“Another Testament”?

The Mormon church has a slick advertizing blitz to market their cult. Of those advertisements they have offered what they refer to as another testament of Jesus Christ. That supposed other testament is *The Book of Mormon*. Is the book of Mormon another testament of Jesus Christ? or is it another fraud upon people in the name of religion?

The Mormons make the claim to believe the Bible as God’s Word. With this in mind, let us see what the Bible teaches. Peter writes, “According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue” (2 Pet. 1:3). God, by His power, gave unto the apostles **ALL** things that pertain to life and godliness. The apostles wrote these things down (Eph. 3:3-5) so we can have the same understanding as they. Thus, in the Bible, we have all that we need. We do not need another testament, *The Book Of Mormon*.

Paul writes, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Paul makes two claims about the Bible which are important in this study. God, through Paul, states that through the proper use of the Bible an individual can be perfect. The word *perfect* is from the Greek word ἄριστος (*artios*) which means complete or fitted. Is *The Book Of Mormon* or another testament needed if the Bible alone makes us perfect? The answer is **NO!** The other point is that the Bible furnishes us to all good works. If the Bible furnishes us to all good works, then what good works can *The Book Of Mormon* reveal to us that is in addition to what the Bible gives? The answer is, **NOTHING!** Again, we see that we do not need another

testament of Jesus Christ, *The Book Of Mormon*, we have everything we need.

We must also consider the apostles and Christians during the first century. Did they have access to *The Book Of Mormon*? They did not! According to *The Book Of Mormon*, “the last of the Nephite historians, sealed the sacred record, and hid it up unto the Lord, to be brought forth in the latter days, as predicted by the voice of God through his ancient prophets. In A. D. 1827, this same Moroni, then a resurrected personage, delivered the engraved plates to Joseph Smith.” Thus, before 1827 *The Book Of Mormon* was unknown to man. The question naturally arises: Were the apostles and early Christians saved? If they were saved then we do not need *The Book Of Mormon* to be saved today. Those in the New Testament period were saved, they did not have *The Book Of Mormon*, therefore we do not need *The Book Of Mormon*. It is not a book that no one needs today, it did not come from Christ.

Another important aspect in considering whether *The Book Of Mormon* is another testament of Jesus Christ is to look at the book itself. The Mormons today claim that the book is inspired of God. Yet, *The Book Of Mormon* claims that the writers wrote from their own knowledge, not God’s knowledge. “Yea, I make a record in the language of my father, which consists of the learning of the Jews and the language of the Egyptians. And I know that the record which I make is true; and I make it with mine own hand; and I make it according to my knowledge.” (1 Nephi 1:2-3; see also 1 Nephi 19:6; Jacob 1:2; 7:26; Mormon 9:31-33). It is so filled with mistakes that it finally gives a blessing upon those who “shall not condemn it because of the imperfections which are in it” (Mormon 8:12). Surely, we cannot seriously consider this the work of God and God-inspired men. Consider the difference between that and God’s Word recorded in the Bible. “If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord” (1 Cor. 14:37). “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Pet. 1:20-21). Quite a contrast!

There are also absurdities within the book, such as absurdities that would not come from an all-knowing, all-wise being as God. We find one such absurdity in Ether 2:16-25. Here God instructs Jared to build a boat or barge. They were to build these barges “according to

the instructions of the Lord.” The bottom, sides, top, and when the door was shut, were all “tight like unto a dish.” Jared has to remind God that the people need air or they would die, and they will need light to steer the barge. To provide the air in this barge God instructs Jared to make a hole in the top and bottom of the barge and when they need air to unstop the hole. When water starts coming in the hole they are to stop it up so they would not die in the flood. Compare this with God’s instructions to Noah in the building the ark (Gen. 6:14-16). The author of one (the Bible) is obvious not the simpleton of the other so-called testament of Jesus Christ.

If this book is from God, it would be free of mistakes. When one studies *The Book Of Mormon*, he finds many mistakes. One glaring mistake is the birthplace of Jesus. Alma 7:10 declares, “And behold, he shall be born of Mary, at Jerusalem which is the land of our forefathers, she being a virgin, a precious and chosen vessel, who shall be overshadowed and conceive by the power of the Holy Ghost, and bring forth a son, yea, even the Son of God.” This has Jesus being born in Jerusalem. All who know the Bible know that Jesus was born of the virgin Mary in Bethlehem (Mat. 2:1), not Jerusalem. Surely, a book from God would not and could not make such an obvious mistake.

We find another glaring mistake in Alma. Because of these individuals belief in Christ, “And those who did belong to the church were faithful; yea, all those who were true believers in Christ took upon them, gladly, the name of Christ, or Christians as they were called, because of their belief in Christ who should come” (Alma 46:15). *The Book of Mormon* has this taking place at 73 B. C. in America. Notice that he speaks of people belonging to the church and being called Christians. Yet the Bible teaches that Jesus had not established the church at this time. Jesus taught that He would build (future tense) the church (Mat. 16:18). Luke records that *Christian* was first used in Antioch (Acts 11:26). Another of the many of *The Book Of Mormon* blunders. This book is not from God. It is an addition to God’s Word (Rev. 22:18; Gal. 1:6-9; 2 John 9). It must be rejected by man if we are to be pleasing to God. MH

(Continued from Page 1)

or recreation. All such efforts to change and corrupt the work of the church, while they may put a few bodies in the pews so long as the entertainment or recreation lasts, fall miserably short of producing new Christians,

and will ultimately lead to our ruin.

Let us hear the admonition of Paul, given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to the church at Corinth, “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 believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God... Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you” (2 Cor. 6:14-17). How much we need to hear and heed these words in our day! I would put the same questions to the liberal element in the Lord’s church today that Paul put to those in error at Corinth in the long ago. We might even shorten it a bit and ask, “What business does the church of our Lord have masquerading as a denomination of men, hiding itself in every organization and club and group men come up with?” The answer is simple—none. We need to remember that we are not a proverbial piece of the pie, competing with “other” denominations. Jesus promised to build His church—singular (Mat. 16:18). Paul said that the church is the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23), and he also said that there is one body (Eph. 4:4). Now if there is one body, and that body is the church, how many churches are there? There is one church spoken of with the approval of God in the New Testament. That being the case, and clearly it is, all other “churches” are institutions which exist without the approval of God and as such will not bring salvation to the members therein (Mat. 15:13), and indeed will preclude them from the number of the saved based on the error in which they walk (2 John 9-11; 1 Cor. 1:10). That being the case, what business do we have hiding among the denominations, as though we were but one of them? Our preachers need to quit pretending that every church of man is as good as the church of the Lord and “come out from among them.”

May we have fellowship with the sectarian denominations of our day with the approval of God? Not according to the Scriptures. We are told that unity is based on speaking the same things (Amos 3:3; 1 Cor. 1:10). We do not speak the same things as those human organizations who place salvation before and without immersion; we do not speak the same things as those denominations who add the mechanical instrument of music to the worship of the New Testament church; we do not speak the same things as those institutions who

teach that church membership is non-essential to salvation; we do not teach the same things as those religions who teach that one way of salvation is just as good as another. Now, seeing that we teach differently, it is incumbent upon us to determine who is right. If we are right, and I contend that we are, they are not walking in nor teaching the doctrine of Christ. Hear John, "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. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds" (2 John 9-11). When we join the organizations of those who "abide not in the doctrine of Christ," we are guilty with them of the error in which they walk, so said John.

It is time that the Lord's church reminds some of our "own" that we are not here for the entertainment and recreation of the membership or the world, but that

our purpose is to preach and edify and engage in scriptural benevolence. Let us use our "gym" money to preach the Word to the lost; let us call our preachers out of the unscriptural "alliances" and "lodges" and put them to work writing and preaching the sweetest story ever told; let us call our members from the sectarian "leagues" and "clubs" and busy them in the work God gave us to do. We need to speak where the Bible speaks, and remain silent where it is silent. We need to call Bible things by Bible names. We need to call for unity in matters of faith, liberty in matters of opinion, and charity in all matters. It is time that we quit "coddling" people along and start calling them back to the Bible in all things. Let the smoldering fires of Hell be recalled to the minds of those who so often forget or ignore the teachings of the Scriptures with respect to the work God has given us to do. Let us patch the holes in the old ship of Zion that she may go sailing onward to the glory of God.

1272 Enon Road; Webb, AL 36376

DIVIDING THE INHERITANCE

Shan Jackson

"And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" How true it is that history repeats itself. Take this incident recorded in Luke 12:13-14 and we can match it with scores of similar ones today. There are countless men today seeking Jesus to divide His inheritance in their favor. The answer, however, remains the same: "Man, who made me a judge or divider over you?" And with that reply we shall have to be satisfied. Jesus had good reasons for refusing to take sides in this domestic controversy between brothers, and those reasons hold good now as then.

Now, the nature of the quarrel is unknown to us, but the obscurity of the original dispute does not lessen the force or dim the crystal clarity of our Lord's reply. To all such requests He gives this flat refusal. He will not judge in other men's matters. He will not lower Himself to the position of a civil magistrate. That is not His responsibility. Instead He simply established the principles of just dealing among men, to give them assistance in discernment, but the practical working out of those things He leaves to them. My impression of the man who sought Jesus to intervene did so to overawe his brother. Possibly he felt that Jesus would be listened

to more seriously, and that he would win the verdict because of Jesus' reputation. I feel he would have shown much less confidence if he felt Jesus was not going to respond in his favor. In other words, he thought Jesus would take sides, and naturally, his side. However, he is not alone in this assessment or in the attitude he emptied. Man has often sought such to back up his own particular case. History records that Constantine deliberately used his personal commentary of God's Word to bolster his imperial schemes. Jesus saw the duty of religion not to deal itself with disputes as if religion were a civil court of law, rather, to stress eternal principles in the light of which all men can shape their conduct.

Dear reader, Jesus knew what was in man. I feel that He was not, as is the common conception, an idealist. An idealist loses all sense of proportion in his zeal for the main objective. Jesus was a realist. Jesus knew what was in man. He knows perfectly well that the average man is a mixture of motives and all are shaded by his perspective. The Pharisees of His day were men who, according to their own teaching, lived lives exemplary, yet that did not stop them from joining in the hue and cry after Jesus, or even leading it with acid bitterness. In fact, all the opponents of Jesus had, at times, some good points, but they were always

trampled under foot when vested interest was allowed. It was divine wisdom that lay behind His refusal to interfere in this quarrel among brothers. Why should He interpose when both may be morally wrong? True, the one may be no better than a common thief, holding back his brother's just portion, but the plaintiff may be no better. His motive for seeking redress may be jealousy, envy, or spite, and if our Lord had made a decision they would have been the same afterward. Thievery or mean spirit would not have been forever changed in His deciding. Also, He would have made the winner a friend and the loser an enemy and His challenge was always to be friend of all.

After His refusal to take sides the Master enunciates a principle which cuts to the very core of the matter. "And he said unto them, Take heed, and keep

yourselves from all covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15). The principle applies equally to each. In this Jesus establishes a pattern for all religious authority. Many will be asked to "divide the inheritance" and all parties will clamor for sanction. And if this many are wise they also, as did Jesus, resist. And if they do speak it should be to condemn the mean, grasping spirit which leads to most conflicts. "Take heed and keep yourselves from all covetousness."

If the church keeps alive the love of truth and goodness and teaches men to live for something more than mere physical desires, she will have justified herself. She will not only keep her own spirit alive but also the spirit of her children.

P.O. Box 904; Palacios, TX 77465

WHY I AM CONVINCED THAT THE DAYS OF GENESIS ONE WERE ORDINARY TWENTY-FOUR-HOUR, SOLAR DAYS

Mark Bass

Were the days of Genesis one literal, twenty-four-hour, solar days? Why would anyone choose to believe otherwise? Generally speaking, those who subscribe to the "long-day" view of creation fall into one of two categories: (1) Progressive creationist (i.e., those who believe the earth is billions of years old and want to fit that belief into Genesis one); (2) Theistic evolutionist (i.e., those who want to make the biblical account of creating conform to the theory of evolution). The "long-day" interpretation allows both of these groups to have their cake (i.e., the Genesis account of creation) and eat it too. These are the only two groups who would take such a position.

The paper entitled *Why It Is A Sin And A Heresy To Teach That It Is A Fact And A Scriptural Doctrine That The Seven Days Of The Genesis Creation Week Were Twenty-four Hour Solar Days* contains a great deal of information—much of which we certainly believe and endorse. At the same time much of it is irrelevant and had no bearing on the question at hand. Without trying to deal specifically with everything in this paper, we will reply to its basic theme.

The Word *Yom*

It is a known fact that the Hebrew word *yom* (translated "day") can refer to long periods of time or to a twenty-four-hour solar day. However, in Scripture, when *yom* is connected with an ordinal numeral **in a non-prophetic context**, it always refers to a twenty-

four-hour day. Daniel 12:11-12 and Revelation 2:10 are examples of the word *yom* being used with an ordinal numeral in a prophetic passage and referring to something other than a twenty-four-hour day. Consistency in interpretation demands that the days of creation (used with an ordinal numeral in a non-prophetic context) be interpreted as twenty-four-hour, solar days.

One of the basic rules of hermeneutics says that we interpret a word according to its literal meaning unless something within the context demands a figurative interpretation. Genesis 1:5 is one example of the word "day" (*yom*) being used in a non-literal way. This context obviously demands that another meaning be assigned the word "day" *yom* (I know of no one who would argue other wise). Notice that the word *yom* is not connected with an ordinal numeral. We frequently use the word "day" in such a way (i.e., referring to daylight as opposed to darkness). However, there is nothing in Genesis one or two (vv. 5b, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31; 2:2) to demand (or even hint at) a figurative usage of the word *yom*. There is absolutely nothing in the text to indicate that these days were long geological periods or epochs of time.

Several Passages Indicate Immediate Creative Action

The language of Genesis one indicates immediate creative action. Notice Genesis 1:3: "And God said,

Let there be light: and there was light.” Five times in Genesis one we are told, “God said...and it was so” (vv. 6-7, 9, 11, 14-15, 24). If that doesn’t indicate immediate action, what would? Furthermore, Psalm 33:6, 9 also indicates immediate action. “By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth...For **he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast.**” Again, there is absolutely nothing in the text of Genesis one (or any other inspired book) that even hints at delayed or prolonged action in the creation process.

God’s Day Of Rest And The Jewish Sabbath

“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day *is* the sabbath of the LORD thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates: For *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it” (Exo. 20:8-11). The days of creation are here viewed as the same kind of days as the Jewish sabbath, hence ordinary days. There is nothing to indicate that the day on which God rested was any different from the other six. If the seventh day was an ordinary twenty-four-hour day, why were the other six any different? In giving the sabbath commandment to the Israelites, inspiration used the six days of Genesis one as a measure of time for man to work, and the day God rested is set forth as a type of the sabbath day, man’s day of rest under the law of Moses. If the seventh day of creation week was actually eons of time, this comparison would have meant very little to the Jews.

It is claimed that the seventh day of creation week, is still in progress; hence a long period of time. Says who? Such cannot be substantiated by the Scriptures. Genesis 2:2 says, “And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.” When Moses tells us that “God ended his work...and he rested” he is only referring to the cessation of His creative work. God was not resting as we use the term; He was not weary or tired. Furthermore, **God is not still “resting”** as some claim. Jesus clearly stated, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work” (John 5:17). It can’t be both ways—God cannot be working and resting simultaneously. To use Hebrews 4:1-11 to teach

otherwise is a total misapplication of this passage.

The Bible Speaks Of Man As Existing From “The Beginning”

Evolutionist would have us believe that the earth is approximately 4.5 billion years old. Man is alleged to have come on the scene some 3.6 million years ago. To put that in perspective, allow me to quote from the book, *Creation, Evolution, and the Age of the Earth* (Wayne Jackson, Courier Publications, 1989, p. 23). “If one drew a horizontal line one hundred feet long, and at the right end, directly underneath, he drew another line only *one inch* long, he could vividly see the difference in the alleged respective ages of the earth and man, from the evolutionary perspective. If evolutionist and ‘day-age’ theorist are correct...humanity is but a speck on the panorama of history” (Ibid., p. 23).

“The evolutionary theory (and compromising views which accommodate it) does not allow that man originated at the commencement of creation history. Anyone, therefore, who accepts the evolutionary chronology of geo-human history, cannot possibly believe that humanity has existed from *the beginning of creation*. Yet, this is what the Bible affirms repeatedly” (Ibid., p. 24). We will notice only three of many passages that could be cited. This material comes from Wayne Jackson’s book *Creation, Evolution, and the Age of the Earth*. This book should be read by all those interested in this subject.

“When Isaiah was contrasting the greatness of Jehovah with the impotence of idols, he asked: ‘Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you **from the beginning?** have ye not understood **from the foundations of the earth?**’ (Isa. 40:21). Note how the prophet parallels the expressions ‘*from the beginning*’ and ‘*from the foundations of the earth,*’ and suggests that man had known of God’s nature since that time” (Ibid., p. 25). Isaiah’s statement is absurd if the evolutionary chronology is true.

In Mark 10:6 Jesus said, “But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.” “This clearly dates the first human couple from the creation week. ‘Beginning’ (*arche*) here is used to mean ‘absolute, denoting the beginning of creation.’ And ‘*creation*’ (*ktiseos*) involves ‘sum total of what God has created.’...Unquestionably, this language puts mankind back at the very dawn of time. To reject this clear truth, one must either contend that: (a) Christ knew the universe was in existence billions of years prior to man,

but accommodating himself to the ignorance of his generation, deliberately misrepresented the situation; or, (b) The Lord, living in pre-scientific times, was uninformed about the matter (despite the fact that he was there as Creator—John 1:3; Colossians 1:16). Either of these allegations is a reflection upon the Son of God and is blasphemous!” (Ibid., pp. 25-26).

“Though Genesis does not declare how long Adam and Eve were in the garden of Eden prior to the event of their fall, it obviously was not very long. This is revealed by the fact that Christ, referring to the curse of death upon the human family (Cf. Romans 5:12), said that the devil ‘*was a murderer from the beginning*’ (John 8:44). Again, the implication is clear—human-kind extends back to the beginning” (Ibid., p. 27).

Problems For the “Day-Age” Theorist

Those who contend that the days of Genesis one were long eons of time face numerous difficulties, as do all evolutionists. Sadly, in both cases, these difficulties are usually “laughed off” or ignored. I will only mention a couple of them for your consideration.

Plant Life Survival: According to Genesis one plant life was brought into existence on the third day of creation week—other living things (including those which pollinate plants) were not created until the fifth and sixth day. It is a known fact that certain plants are pollinated solely by insects. How could these plants have survived these eons of time without the insects necessary for their pollination? The answer is obvious to the open-minded individual.

In this same connection how could these plants have survived eons of darkness? Most green plants require sunlight in order for photosynthesis to occur. On the other hand, perhaps these eons of time were daylight rather than darkness. However, that doesn’t solve the problem. Too much sunlight is just as bad as not enough.

Adam’s Age: According to Genesis 1:26-31 Adam was created on the sixth day. In Genesis 2:2 we find that God “**rested**” (i.e., ceased His creative work). Sometime following the events of the sixth and seventh days, Adam and Eve were expelled from their garden home. How long he lived beyond his expulsion from Eden is not revealed. Think about it, Adam lived through part of the sixth day, all of the seventh day plus some years beyond that. If the days of creation were actually eons (millions of years, according to most evolutionists) how old would Adam have been? He would have been several thousand years old just living through the sixth day of the creation week. However, Genesis 5:5 says that Adam only lived to be 930 years old! The “long-day” theorist cannot explain this problem away.

There are a multitude of other problems that face the “day-age” theorist; but these are sufficient to illustrate our point—the “long-day” theory of creation cannot be harmonized with the Scriptures.

Conclusion

For years denominationalist have contended that the word “**water**” does not mean water in John 3:3-5. In reply to this feeble argument we have asked them what word Jesus would/could have used had He meant to convey the idea of literal water in this text John 3:3-5. I think the same type question is in order here. If God had intended to convey the idea of twenty-four-hour, solar days, what word would/could he have used? He could easily used the Hebrew word *olam* which means a long period of time, but He did not. Why? If this question is applicable to the Baptists, it’s applicable to the “long-day” adherents. If not, why not?

Beloved, there is absolutely no sound reason for trying to fit eons of time into the creation week of Genesis one; the evidence for such is simply not there.

2781 Alkire Road; Grove City, OH 43123

Defender is published monthly (except December) under the oversight of the elders of the Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526. (850) 455-7595. *Subscription is free to addresses in the United States.* All contributions shall be used for operational expenses.

MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

**Write For Your
Free Bible Correspondence
Course
4850 Saufley Field Road
Pensacola, FL 32526**

Defender



“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

Volume XXVI

September 1997

Number 9

IT'S ABOUT TIME

Burt Jones

Have you ever considered just how much *time* is consumed in the most mundane tasks each day? How much *time* spent each week simply going to and from the grocery store, or as a chauffeur for family errands, or having to do **again** what you messed up the **first** time in an effort to short-cut the system? It's about **TIME!**

Someone used a good deal of their *time* to calculate just how we slice up this freely-given gift from God called *time* during our lives:

A ten minute coffee break, five days per week amounts to forty-three hours per year!

Twenty years sleeping!

Five years dressing!

One year on the phone!

Three years smoking or chewing!

Three years waiting on people, red lights, etc.

Six months putting on and taking off belts, shoes, ties and other accessories.

And finally, three years for “less important things” including one-and-a-half years of worship, beginning the day of your birth, spending five minutes each morning—five minutes each evening in prayer, and three hours per week in common worship. It is ALL about TIME!

“See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Eph. 5:15-16). “Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise” (Pro. 6:6).

How would you make use of a bank account that, each morning, credited your account with eighty-six thousand four-hundred dollars, and it allowed you to

keep no cash in your account balance at the end of the day? At the end of every day this account would cancel whatever portion of that balance which you had failed to use. What would you do? I would draw out and spend, **every cent, every day!**

Brethren, we have a bank such as this! It is a TIME bank. It is an account that was opened concurrently with the first flicker of your earthly life by our heavenly Father.

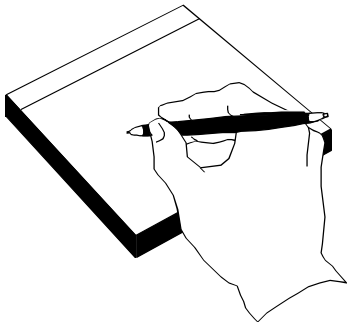
Every morning it credits you with eighty-six thousand four-hundred seconds. Every night it checks off as LOST whatever you have failed to invest of that daily amount. It carries no balance—it allows no overdraft. Each day this TIME bank opens a brand new account with you. Each night it destroys the records of that day. If you do not use what has been deposited for you, the total loss is yours!

We have peculiar ideas regarding time. For some reason we call it “RUSH” hour and notice all the automobiles just sitting there. We say that we're going to “catch up” on our sleep, knowing that it is impossible to do. We ask someone to “wait a minute” and then catch up to them in two hours.

As Christians, we must learn to be faithful stewards of this precious commodity. If we were to ask what is one of the most crucial ingredients in our march from the cradle to the grave, we would be safe in saying that IT IS ABOUT TIME!

I am originally from Alabama. “Bear” Bryant, the great coach and athletic director of the university was asked by an alumnus of the school if the university

(Continued on Page 3)



Notes From The Editor

**Michael
Hatcher**

Email address:
whatcher@sprynet.com

Calling On The Name Of The Lord

We have had to fight the denominational concept of calling on the name of the Lord as being just a verbalizing of Jesus as our “personal” Savior, but it is surprising that we are now having to fight the same battle within our ranks. However, Max Lucado, while not stating it like the denominations, taught the same thing on his radio program in December of 1996.

Joel prophesied, “And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call” (Joel 2:32). Peter, in his sermon on Pentecost recorded in Acts 2 stated, “But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;” (Acts 2:16). He then quotes Joel’s prophecy and concludes with “And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Acts 2:21). Paul makes the same statement in writing to the Romans. “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Rom. 10:13). Does this mean that all a person must do is to verbalize the name of the Lord and God will save him? This is what Max Lucado taught in his radio lesson. This is also what many religious groups are now teaching as their plan of salvation. Why should we not teach it? The Bible clearly makes the statement.

One rule of coming to a correct understanding of the teaching of the Bible is that you must take all the Bible says on a given subject before coming to a conclusion and the conclusion must be harmonious with the whole of the Bible. The conclusion drawn cannot contradict other passages of Scripture relating to the subject. Jesus taught as recorded by Matthew, “Not

every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Mat. 7:21). In taking the statements above and this statement one might say we have a contradiction within the Bible. However, as one studies further and studies things in their context, he learns there is no contradiction and the Scriptures harmonize perfectly.

In Acts 2 after quoting Joel’s prophecy, Peter continues and proves that Jesus is both Lord and Christ (Acts 2:22-36). He also convicts his hearers of their sin: “ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain” (Acts 2:23) this one whom God raised from the dead. After being convicted in such a way, they cry out, “Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37). They realized that to call on the name of the Lord and have God save them, they must **do** something. Why did not Peter tell them what Max Lucado said? “All you have to do is to call him Father. Just call him Father. Just turn your heart to him right now as I am speaking. Call him your Father. And your Father will respond. Why don’t you do that?” Then why did not Peter instruct them to pray with him as he prayed: “Father, I give my heart to you. I give you my sins, I give you my tears, I give you my fears, I give you my whole life. I accept the gift of your Son on the cross for my sins. And I ask you, Father, to receive me as your child. Through Jesus I pray. Amen” as Max prayed on his radio program? We all know the answer. Peter was speaking by inspiration of God, and Max Lucado is a false teacher, a perverter of the faith. Peter understood, as did the Jews, that they must do something. Thus, he told them by inspiration, “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38). Peter was telling them what he had already told them. He was instructing them to call on the name of the Lord to be saved. “What shall we do?” “Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” Yes, but what shall we do? “Repent, and be baptized...for the remission of sins” Notice again the parallel. Call on the name of the Lord = Repent and be baptized: to be saved = for the remission of sins.

Notice now how this parallels what Ananias instructed Saul concerning calling on the Lord’s name. “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16). Saul should not wait any longer. Why? He was now a penitent believer, but was still in sin. He still needed to be saved by God. What did he need to do? Call on the name of the Lord! How was Saul to call on

the name of the Lord? Was it to be done by an audible statement or by a prayer, like Max Lucado prayed? **No!** The way to call on the name of the Lord was by being baptized. In that act of baptism, Saul's sins would be taken away, he would be saved.

With this understanding we return to what Jesus stated concerning simply audibly calling His name. "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). Those whom God will save are those who do the will of the Father as revealed in the New Testament. What is revealed in the New Testament? Simply an audible statement of calling on Jesus' name, or "just call him Father" will not save anyone. The way to be saved and the way to call on the name of the Lord is through our faith, repenting of our sins, and being baptized in water for the purpose God ordained (the remission of sins).

MH

(Continued from Page 1)

could include in its curriculum the great European sport of rowing. Coach Bryant looked down at him, and in his characteristic, deep, throaty drawl replied, "We ain't gonna have nothin' here where you sit down and go backwards!"

God gave to everyone according to their several abilities. Everyone has some ability in some area. That one-talent man in Matthew twenty-five had to account for only one talent, but he did not even TAKE THE TIME to use it!

Somebody says, "He can do it better than I can." Brother, nobody can do what you do as well as you can do it, because only you can do it the way you can do it.

Paul recorded that "if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not" (2 Cor. 8:12).

What will be the difference for the balance of 1997 in what you accomplish for the Lord's church at New Philadelphia or Moundsville or Dover than in what you have done thus far? Will you **deny** yourself? Most people think of denial only as a river in Egypt.

It makes no difference how much a fellow knows about the Gospel if he takes no TIME to tell it—if he takes no time to live it—it does no good whatsoever.

God has entrusted us as stewards of this time. Time management requires discipline. If you master this

elusive thing, you will notice that, surprisingly, you will appear to have MORE time than before! So many of those eighty-six thousand four-hundred seconds per day are wasted through pure disorganization, and since we are stewards of this TIME we will be held accountable for it on that last day.

Most of us go through life without "emergency brakes" on. Good people, this life is not a dress rehearsal for some future earthly existence. To be a proper steward of this precious time, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4).

A distinguished older gentleman stopped to worship with a congregation in Missouri a few years ago at which I was conducting a Gospel meeting. He mentioned to me that, as a boy, he and his family used to visit that area quite a bit. He said that it was a day's round trip by horse and buggy. He stated that he could now make the same trip in an hour, BUT HE DIDN'T NOW HAVE THE TIME! What a sad commentary on our changing priorities.

People will find time to **go** to the places they want to **go**—and they will **do** the things that they want to **do**. And you will find the TIME to "present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is your reasonable service*" (Rom. 12:1) **IF YOU WANT TO**. This is all about TIME!

Many congregations simply do not organize their TIME each week. They, to a degree, know that they are going to have worship services with somebody preaching for awhile, and then FLASH, "who is leading the singing; who is making the announcements; who has the opening and closing prayer; who is assigned to greet visitors; and to conduct the Lord's Supper, etc.?"

Brethren, if worldly businesses are concerned with TIME management and doing things "decently and in order" (1 Cor. 14:40) shouldn't we be?

Finally, there are one-hundred sixty-eight hours in a week. You do not offer your body as a living sacrifice with God receiving only one of those hours on what many consider the Lord's HOUR rather than the Lord's DAY.

May I humbly suggest that IT IS ABOUT TIME we "give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward" (Luke 16:2).

May God bless you in your efforts!

P.O. Box 985; Moundsville, WV 26041

A CHALLENGE TO THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Jess Whitlock

Just recently I finished teaching a class showing the myriad contradictions between *The Book of Mormon* (hereafter abbreviated *TBOM*) and the *Holy Bible*. During that time I was having a discussion with two “elders” from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I also took advantage of the moment to study from *Doctrine and Covenant* and *The Pearl of Great Price*. The “elders” told me that all three of these volumes are inspired of God. It does not take long to realize that such cannot be the case. Reflect on just a few of our discussions together:

1. The Bible states that Christ was born in Bethlehem (Mat. 2:5; Luke 2:4-7); *TBOM* says He was born in Jerusalem (Almah 7:10); BUT it also says He was born in Nazareth (1 Nephi 11:13-20). How could Christ be born in three cities? And, how could Mary be in three cities at the same time?

2. The Bible declares that when Christ was crucified the darkness lasted for three hours (Luke 23:44). *TBOM* states that the darkness lasted for three days (Helaman 14:20, 27; 1 Nephi 19:10). *TBOM* contradicts itself on where darkness lasted for three days; i.e., Helaman 14:20 says, “there shall be no light on the face of this land [America—JLW]” but 14:27 says, “darkness should cover the face of the whole earth” *TBOM* contradicts not only the Bible, but itself!

3. The Bible claims to be all-sufficient (John 14:26; 2 Pet. 1:3; Jude 3; etc.). *TBOM* claims the Bible is **NOT** all-sufficient (2 Nephi 29:1-4). Furthermore, 1 Nephi 13:26ff states the Bible is incomplete, missing many “plain and precious parts of the Gospel” which were “kept back by that abominable church.” I ask any Mormon member to name any “plain and precious parts of the Gospel” that are missing that would prevent one from obeying God and being saved? I humbly submit that no part of the Gospel of Christ is missing, nor is any part restored in this “other testament”!!!

4. The Bible clearly shows the establishment of the church in A.D. 33 (Acts 2). *TBOM* goofed again when it speaks of some added to the church 147 years before Christ (Mosiah 18:7-17). Christ stated, “**I will build my church**” (Mat. 16:18). Did you notice the future tense? Also, He stated it would be His church; not the church of Joseph Smith!!!

5. The Bible states “disciples were called Christians **first** in Antioch.” (Acts 11:26). *TBOM* has some wearing the name Christian **first** in America 73 years before Christ (Almah 46:13-16). Is the Bible correct in its use of “first” first, or is *TBOM* correct in using “first” second? The Bible states, “yea, let God be true, **but every man a liar**” (Rom. 3:4). That includes “Another Testament of...” (Joseph Smith). Even the angel Moroni is not exempt. “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed” (Gal. 1:8).

6. The Bible states that “it is appointed unto men once to die” (Heb. 9:27). *TBOM* has an account about three men who are told they will live until the final return of Christ (3 Nephi 28:4-9). These three men are told they will “never endure the pains of death.” Christ has not returned. Where are these three men? Nobody seems to know: the “elders” told me they had not seen nor talked with these men and they did not know of any who had including their so-called “apostles” or “the 70” or their “president-prophet.” Deuteronomy 18:20-22 gives the test of a true prophet and Joseph Smith has failed miserably here!

7. The Bible tells of the institution of the Lord’s supper; i.e., unleavened bread and fruit of the vine as emblems of the Lord’s body and blood (Mat. 26:26-29; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:24-29). However, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints incorrectly calls it “sacrament” and then perverts the elements to WATER AND LIGHT BREAD!!! *TBOM* states “bread and wine” repeatedly (3 Nephi 18:1-3; 5-9, 13). Joseph Smith apparently “forgot what he wrote” for in *Doctrine and Covenants* 27:2 he writes, “I say unto you that it mattereth not what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink when ye partake of the sacrament.” I asked my two visitors, “Could I use iced tea and cookies?” They said, “yes.” I asked, “How about cake and ice cream?” They said, “yes.” One of them offered, “You could use beer and pizza, if that’s all you have!” I was shocked beyond belief—we then moved into a discussion of the silence of the Scripture which they could not quite comprehend.

Time would fail me to go through the remaining

seven pages of notes that were taken during those discussions. After all is said and done I still keep coming back to the words of Christ to His only chosen apostles, who were apostles indeed—“Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into **all truth**: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come” (John 16:13). Yet, the Holy Spirit in guiding them into **ALL TRUTH** and showing them things to come did not guide them into one word concerning the conflicting doctrines of Mormonism, Moroni or Joseph Smith! I wonder why???

There are myriad contradictions between the **Holy Bible** and *The Book of Mormon*. *The Book of Mormon* even contradicts itself numerous times. *The Book of Mormon* contradicts the *Doctrine and Covenants*. The *Doctrine and Covenants* also contradicts the **Holy Bible**. *The Pearl of Great Price* contains contradictions with all the others. The numerous failed prophecies of Joseph Smith’s writings speak eloquently of his identity as that of a false prophet.

They claim inspiration for *Doctrine and Covenants*, and I assume that includes 71:7 which reads, “Wherefore confound your enemies; call upon them to meet you both in public and in private; and inasmuch as ye are faithful their shame shall be made manifest.” In light of what I have written, I assume that I am an enemy of the man-made denomination known as the Church of Jesus

Christ of Latter-day Saints. I have now challenged about a dozen sets of elders to meet with me in a public debate on the inspiration of *The Book of Mormon*.

Once again, my challenge to meet these matters in public debate was refused. That seems to be a flagrant refusal on their part to obey *Doctrine and Covenants* 71:7, and if not, why not? Therefore, taking their advice, I offer this public challenge to any so-called “elder,” “apostle,” “priest,” the “president—prophet” or one of “the 70.” I will go so far as to offer this challenge to any one of the three men mentioned in 3 Nephi 28 who are said to be somewhere on earth today, to do what they have been commanded to do!

Proposition For Public Discussion

“Resolved: *The Book of Mormon* contradicts the **Holy Bible** and other doctrines of Mormonism; and therefore is not another testament of Jesus Christ.”

AFFIRM: (signed) Jess Whitlock

DENY:

“Resolved: *The Book of Mormon* agrees in every detail with the **Holy Bible** and other documents of Mormonism; and therefore is another testament of Jesus Christ.”

AFFIRM:

DENY: (signed) Jess Whitlock

(This challenge was sent to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in March, 1997).

809 East Pershing Drive; Ardmore, OK 73401

TRUTH VERSUS RELATIVITY

Gary W. Summers

One thing our “intellectual betters” never lack is passionate belief. “There are as many truths as there are people,” these ardent intellectuals preach. “Follow your feelings. Believe what seems right to you. Do as you please” (p. 78). The above paragraph may be found in November 1994, *Reader’s Digest*, in an article written by Michael Novak. To be sure, he is discussing a political, social, economic subject rather than a spiritual one, but some of what he writes is also true religiously.

Morally speaking, the quotes from our “intellectual betters” cited above have been accepted as “gospel” for the last thirty years. Beginning with Joseph Fletcher’s theory of “situation ethics” in the mid 1960s, many have shied away from absolutes.

In a nutshell, Fletcher argued that even biblical statements concerning morality could not always be relied upon; only the situation an individual found himself in could determine whether it was permissible to

lie, steal, commit adultery, etc. Citing a multitude of examples in his book, he concluded that in certain circumstances it would be all right to commit adultery (to get released from a Nazi prison camp, for example).

Musically (although barely), this was expressed as: “It’s your thing. Do whatcha wanna do. I can’t tell ya who to sock it to.” In terms of drama it was *The Rainmaker*, the title character of which seduces the dowdy daughter of a farmer to raise her self-esteem (“Let us do evil, that good may come”; Rom. 3:8). Philosophically, literature professors have insisted that everyone brings his own truth to the text—which is highfalutin terminology for subjectivism. However the student perceives what the author has written is wonderful and marvelous—until exam time when every teacher resorts to the use of an objective standard to grade their pupils.

Spiritually, Fletcher’s philosophy results in a cacophonous chorus of whiners who (although they

probably don't know another Scripture in the whole Bible) cite: "Judge not, that ye be not judged" (Mat. 7:1). The religious version of "situation ethics" has resulted in: "You're judging me," "That's just your opinion," and "We're all trying to go to the same place."

This is an odorless, deadly gas that is now polluting every free society on earth. It is neither political nor economic, but the poisoning corrupting culture of relativism.

Believe it or not, many in religion in general and in the church in particular have been echoing the philosophy of relativism. No, they didn't get it from Joseph Fletcher; they got it from the same source Fletcher did: Barth and other theologians. (Despite its original definition, a theologian in this century refers to someone who studies about God from the ideas of men rather than the Bible.)

Relativism has resulted in a refutation of the idea that **truth** exists. If it does exist, not everyone can know it. If we can know it, we can't all agree upon it. Of course, John 8:31-32 states that we can know the truth, if we continue in the teachings of Christ. Paul says we can understand the "mystery" (Eph. 3:3-4). Paul exhorted that we "be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10). John says it is possible for the followers of Jesus to "walk in the truth" (3 John 3; NKJV).

Most people would find Scriptures like these pretty persuasive, but theologians are not like most people; they possess a "higher" knowledge.

How has the denial of truth affected people? Some, it has been noted, create their own truth practically every day. Rubel Shelly, for instance, can say in one state, "If instrumental music were introduced where I preach, I wouldn't mount the pulpit to oppose it." In the next state, however, he avers, "Brethren, I'll never be a party to introducing instrumental music into the church."

Now some people would consider those statements contradictory, but they just do not understand what it means to be a theologian or what relativism is. Shelly also told an audience, "I don't think you have a case for using musical instruments. History is against you. But for all I know, I may be wrong."

Now that's a theologian! As philosophers, they're never really sure about anything. In fact, although referring to other individuals, the Scriptures provide an excellent definition equally applicable to theologians/relativists: "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Tim. 3:7).

Some have been known to practice this in a political way. For years they will vote pro-life and then affirm that they are pro-choice. Not only will they flip-flop in this manner, they will further claim that they have always been pro-choice. Many people would call this lying, but it just shows that they don't understand politicians any better than theologians.

Hope For the Future of the Church?

First, truth matters. One single truth, as Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn said upon receiving his 1970 Nobel Prize in literature, is more powerful than all the weapons in the world. The martyrs of our time—victims of fascism and communism—have shown again and again that in fidelity to truth lies true human dignity (p.79).

Is the world prepared to learn that truth is important in a political sense? If so, would it be too much to wish that there might just be some fallout into religion?

Oh, that people would search the Scriptures daily as the noble Bereans did instead of listening to their "pastor" or "priest"! Imagine people following the philosophy of proving all things (1 The. 5:21-22)! How interesting it would be if there would once again be religious debates so that people could compare truth with error!

In the final analysis, it is only truth that matters. It is so valuable that Solomon wrote that we should buy it and never sell it (Pro. 23:23). Those who have been advocating the relativistic view in the church know better. Once faithful brethren who now fellowship just about anything and everyone know it, too.

Would that a love of the truth would sweep through the church again so that brethren everywhere would stand up and be counted! Oh, that those who persist in fellowshiping error were refused platforms from which they lead and deceive! Oh, that brethren would grow strong in the Lord and move once again as the mighty army of God, sweeping into foreign countries with the everlasting gospel, while standing firm at home!

It could happen—if once again we committed ourselves to the precious truths of the New Testament: that there is one and only one plan of salvation, which includes (besides faith and repentance) baptism **for** the remission of sins; that there is **one** and only **one** church (Eph. 4:4); and that we have a divine purpose—to save souls from sin (Mat. 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-16).

Wallowing around in the mud of "For-all-I-know-I-may-be-mistaken"-ism will convert no one. We must not only obey the truth, but we must stand upon it, and proclaim it to the glory of God.

920 Imperial; Denton, TX 76201

SIXTEENTH ANNUAL DENTON LECTURES PLANNED

Pearl Street Church of Christ in Denton, Texas, will host its sixteenth major annual lectureship November 9-13, 1997. The **SIXTEENTH ANNUAL DENTON LECTURES** will be devoted to a study of the book of Ephesians. A wide variety of material will be covered by 35 outstanding speakers from all parts of the nation, delivering 35 lectures. The aim of this lecture series is to provide fundamental, sound biblical teaching to edify all who attend and those who will have access to the audio and video tapes and the book of the lectures. Another major aim is to help combat and expose religious error both within and without the church. The lectureship book (cir. 500 pages) will be a fitting companion to those of previous years (in order of their occurrence): *Studies in 1 Corinthians*; *Studies in Hebrews*; *Studies in the Revelation*; *Studies in Acts*; *Studies in Galatians*; *Studies in 1, 2, 3 John*; *Studies in 1, 2 Thessalonians and Philemon*; *Studies in 2 Corinthians*; *Studies in James*; *Studies in 1, 2 Samuel*; *Studies in Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther*; *Studies in 1, 2 Kings and 1, 2 Chronicles*; *Studies in Joshua, Judges, and Ruth*; *Studies in Matthew*; and *Studies in Romans*.

A daily "Discussion Forum" (Monday-Thursday) will feature controversial subjects. This year's subjects will be "Does Truth Exist? Is Truth Dead?"; "Who Are and What Is the Church?"; "Does God Command or Authorize Religious Unity for the Sake of Unity?"; "What Kind of Music Does God Authorize in Worship?" After a lecture on each of these subjects on their respective days, questions from the audience will be encouraged. This year's speakers will be Tim Ayers, Bob Berard, David Brown, Gene Burgett, Curtis Cates, B. J. Clarke, Ted Clarke, Wayne Coats, Gary Colley, Darrell Conley, Daniel Denham, Robert Dodson,

Garland Elkins, Carl Garner, Noah Hackworth, Michael Hatcher, Tommy Hicks, Terry Hightower, Lester Kamp, Bobby Liddell, Dub McClish, James Meadows, Richard Melson, Lindell Mitchell, John Moore, Goebel Music, Tim Nichols, Jackie Stearsman, Gary Summers, Don Tarbet, Robert R. Taylor, Don Walker, Marvin Weir, Jesse Whitlock, and Eddie Whitten.

Exhibit space is available for both commercial and non-commercial interests, subject to invitation and/or approval by the Pearl Street elders. Housing in the homes of local Christians will be provided as long as it lasts. Several major motels are located in Denton. Hookups (including a dump station) for travel trailers and motor homes are available at no charge on the church parking lot by advance registration. For further information, you may write or call the Church of Christ, 312 Pearl Street, Denton, TX 76201, 940/387-3531, or contact Dub or Lavonne McClish at 908 Imperial Drive, Denton, TX 76201, 940/387-1429. E-Mail address: valpubinc@pearlstreet.org.

New Sermon Outline Book

Howell Bigham has written a new sermon outline book entitled *Walking Down Bible Halls* containing 25 outlines on various Bible characters. The book can be purchased for \$5.00 plus \$1.25 postage/handling from Howell at the address below. Other sermon outline books that Howell has written are: *Footsteps Of A Firm Faith* (20 sermon outlines on the book of James) and *I Speak Concerning Christ and the Church* (40 sermon outlines on various topics). They can be purchased for \$3.00 and \$4.00 respectively plus \$1.25 postage/handling. Please send orders to: Howell Bigham, 6677 Co. Rd. 236, Town Creek, AL 35672.

Defender is published monthly (except December) under the oversight of the elders of the Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526. (850) 455-7595. *Subscription is free to addresses in the United States.* All contributions shall be used for operational expenses.

MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

**Write For Your
Free Bible Correspondence
Course
4850 Saufley Field Road
Pensacola, FL 32526**

Defender



“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

Volume XXVI

October 1997

Number 10

REAL HEROES

Gary W. Summers

Political Correctness/Secular Humanism has made tremendous inroads against Christian ethics and morality during the past three decades. Many may be unaware of what these concepts mean, and while it is profitable to define and discuss them, for the purposes of this brief article it will suffice to refer to them simply as worldly wisdom, apart from the knowledge of God.

Paul commented on the futility of wisdom that is based on worldly thinking alone.

For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where *is* the wise? where *is* the scribe? where *is* the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe (1 Cor. 1:19-21).

Man's struggle to find out all the answers to life and to develop a philosophy of living after first rejecting God and His Word has proven to be both futile and pathetic. One of the most recent efforts of the biased news and entertainment media has been their blatant attempt to exalt the homosexual, one whose "lifestyle" is diametrically opposed throughout the Bible.

They have portrayed these individuals as helpless souls who were "born that way" while at the same time condemning as bigots anyone who dared to condemn the practice as sinful. That means that Moses, Paul, and God Himself who destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah are all prejudiced bigots, according to these fair-minded, loving, liberal champions of humanism.

Not satisfied with praising homosexuals for their honesty and castigating those who believe the Bible,

now they have decided to make heroes out of those suffering with AIDS. This past Monday's *News-Sentinel* was disgusting in its slavish support of homosexuality. Practically every page of the "Features" section of the paper oozed with political correctness.

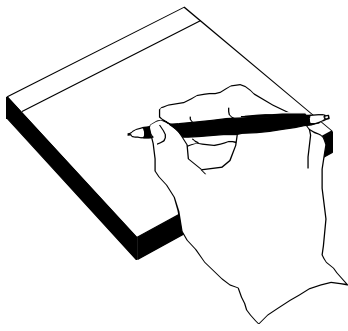
The lead letter in Ann Lander's column was from a man whose brother died with AIDS, and he was PROUD OF IT. "Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush" (Jer. 6:15).

Receiving criticism from some family members for including in the obituary that AIDS was the cause of death, both mother and brother stated that they were proud of the fact and that it was the truth. Vance Walker of Los Angeles, CA, bristled at the idea that his brother might have received forgiveness for the sin of homosexuality. He writes: "He had a disease not a curse or an embarrassment! I was appalled; my mother was devastated. Never mind the insensitivity; what year are these people living in? What decade?" (6F).

Apparently, Mr. Walker thinks that the passage of time somehow turns sin into righteousness? God has always condemned homosexuality as vile, shameful, and against nature. No amount of decades or centuries will change this fact.

Mr. Walker cannot prove that AIDS is not a curse or a judgment of God against sin. He might as well also take on the challenge of proving that the fire and brimstone which God rained down upon Sodom was just an accident—something not at all related to the sin of homosexuality.

(Continued on Page 3)



Notes From The Editor

**Michael
Hatcher**

Email address:
whatcher@sprynet.com

Great Commission

After Jesus' death upon the cross and resurrection from the grave, He appeared to His apostles and gave them a commission to go into the world with the gospel. The inspired writers recorded this five different times (Mat. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47; John 20:21-23; Acts 1:4-8). We should see the importance of this commission just from the number of times God recorded it for us. However, if this does not impress us with its importance, the purpose should. The preaching of the gospel is God's power to save. "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). "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God...For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1:18, 21). Thus, Jesus told His apostles, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15-16).

The apostles and early church took this commission seriously. We find the apostles teaching God's Word from Pentecost, the beginning of the church, on. "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). The result of their continued teaching is seen when Luke records, "And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women" (Acts 5:14). Then later he states, "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7). After the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, there are again statements that

many were obedient (Acts 9:31, 35, 42). After the death of Stephen, a great persecution arose against the church. Christians fled Jerusalem for their safety but they went preaching the gospel as Jesus taught in the great commission. "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). The rest of that chapter the beloved physician records the deeds of Philip and his preaching Christ. The result of his preaching in Samaria is seen in Acts 8:12. "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." The apostles and early church worked unceasingly to carry out the gospel to the lost. Paul shows how effective their work was by informing the Colossians that everyone had heard the Word. "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister" (Col. 1:23). Within about thirty years they had fulfilled the commission of Christ.

We need to realize that God has given us the same commission as He gave the apostles and early church. Jesus taught the apostles (the ones to whom He first gave the great commission) to teach the disciples to observe all things He commanded. "Go ye therefore, and teach [make disciples—ASV] all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen" (Mat. 28:19-20). That which Jesus had just taught them was to go into all the world and preach the gospel. Thus, each one of us has just as much responsibility of carrying out the great commission as did the apostles.

We have modern transportation, communication, etc., yet we have not fulfilled the commission Christ has given us. There are many reasons why we have not accomplished Jesus' command. I want to notice just one of those reasons—persistence. We give up too easily. Notice some statistics concerning salesmen. 40% of all salesmen make one call and quit, 25% will make two calls and quit, 12% will make three calls and quit. Most salesmen, obviously believe that just one or two calls will do the job, and if the person has not shown an interest to the point of buying by the third call, then it is hopeless. Yet, according to the sales industry 80% of all sales are made after the **fifth** call. Most salesmen simply

give up too easily, they need to be more persistent.

This should tell us something as we try to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost and dying world. We will invite someone to services, talk to a person about the Bible and when they do not respond immediately, then we quit. Often, before a person will ever respond in any way, there must be a repetitive work with him. It is no wonder that the Bible encourages us to be persistent. “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Gal. 6:9). “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Cor. 15:58). If you have been tempted to give up working with someone, give it a few more tries.

MH

(Continued from Page 1)

Before long, all of us will stand before the judgment seat of Christ—Mr. Walker, his brother, and his mother included. Years and decades will mean nothing; righteousness will mean everything. No wonder one of his relatives thought that repentance was important. It's essential!

The AIDS Quilt

Two other stories about AIDS found their way into this section of the newspaper that lists movies and television shows and includes the comics. One of them proposes that DNA research might help cure AIDS (1F); the other advertises a Symposium on AIDS, whose goal is to “avoid losing a generation to AIDS” (4F), a statement reminiscent of the hysterics of Jocelyn Elders.

But the premiere article features the history and purpose of the AIDS quilt, entitled “Sewn in Sorrow” (1F, 4F). The idea for this quilt (which now covers the equivalent of eleven football fields came out of San Francisco (where else?). Its purpose was to stitch the panels together to serve “as reminders of the 1,000 San Franciscans who died of AIDS between 1980 and 1987” (1F). The mammoth quilt serves to “preserve the memories of those who have died” (1F). How grotesque.

The more one reads this article the more maudlin it becomes. The reader is treated to how uncomplaining, cheerful, and pleasant one woman's son was during his last fifty days. He is termed as “courageous,” and it is obvious that this homosexual who died of AIDS is being treated as some sort of hero.

At the risk of sounding insensitive, not to mention

politically **incorrect**, “Balderdash.” Why should a 36-year-old man be given credit for facing the consequences of his own actions? A person who was exposed to AIDS through a blood transfusion, as tennis player Arthur Ashe was, is worthy of the term **courageous**. On what basis should someone be admired because he engaged in ungodly behavior, knowing the possibility of contracting AIDS?

So now there is a memorial quilt to all the “heroes” who stubbornly rejected the Word of God and refused to repent of their wicked ways. This is exactly what humanism does. It exalts mankind in his rebellion against God. Such is the wisdom of the world.

Needless to say, all of this is presented in the newspaper in a favorable (non-judgmental) way, as though this is a wonderful thing. Can you imagine a newspaper taking a stand **against** homosexuality? Certainly you won't find it here in supposedly conservative Fort Wayne. (Do you ever wonder if the Egyptian news media praised Pharaoh's hard-heartedness by lauding him as a man who stuck to his principles? Do you suppose anybody sewed together a quilt to commemorate the firstborn sons who died in the tenth plague? “They met their death so courageously.”)

If the news and entertainment media **really** wanted to do something about AIDS, they would set forth as examples for others homosexuals who have **repented**, given up the lifestyle, and become heterosexuals. There are several individuals and religious groups working with those who have the desire to give up that sin.

The Bible affirms that homosexuality is a chosen behavior; some brethren in Corinth had once been such (1 Cor. 6:9-11). Today many are leaving the “gay” lifestyle because if there is one thing it is not, that's it—gay. Some who have repented had even bought into the lie that they were born that way, but now they are happily married.

These are real heroes and truly wise—because they have given up a way of life to embrace the truth. And they do so despite Ann Landers, the news media, and the entertainment media telling them that they are fine and normal and within their rights to be homosexuals. Satan sees to it that his own are honored. What's next—a plaque honoring courageous abortion doctors?

902 Imperial Drive; Denton TX 76201

Editor's note: This article was written in October 1994 when the author lived in Columbia City, Indiana. However, it is still just as applicable today, if not more so, as it was then.

MEETING “FELT NEEDS”

Joe E. Galloway

We continue to hear and read of our needing to preach to the **felt needs** of the audience, and of churches needing to minister to the **felt needs** of the community. On the surface this may sound good to many. We certainly want our preaching and service to be effective in meeting people’s needs. Also, we would like for people to see and appreciate the need of what we teach. However, on closer scrutiny this idea presents some problems.

What people **feel** that they **need** may not be what is best for them at all. Feelings are highly subjective, differing from person to person. They may be based on popular belief, on selfish and even sensual desires, or on simply the whim of the moment. The sinful world in general that has ignored and rejected God has gone after what they **felt** to be their **needs**. In the latter part of Romans 1, we read of some whom God **gave up**. These people had become “vain in their imaginations” and they “professed themselves to be wise.” They were meeting their **felt needs**, but they were hopelessly lost!

The God who made us surely knows our **real need**. He has given us the Bible to show us this need and to show us how to obtain it. The greatest need of every human being is to be forgiven of God now, so that we may live with God in heaven in the life to come! John 3:16 shows that God sent His Son to fulfill this need. The Scriptures given by God’s inspiration are designed “to make thee [us] wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus” and they completely furnish us “unto all good works” (2 Tim. 3:15-17). By this means God has “given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness” (2 Pet. 1:3). Yet, very few around us are interested in hearing the plain, saving gospel of God’s Son. This is not one of their **felt needs**!

What do the majority of the people of today’s society **feel** that they **need**? The answer is evident by considering their emphasis: PLEASURE and MATERIAL PROSPERITY! It should not be surprising, then, that they look for a church that can best **entertain** them and that can help them in their quest for more material things. Many churches have catered to these **felt needs** by building “family life centers” (entertainment centers), by having classes on financial management, and by trying to make their services more entertaining.

We can pretty well judge what many people **feel** are their **needs** in religion by viewing some of the popular

religious TV programs. Some are veritable entertainment variety shows with acts of juggling, gymnastics, and magic intertwined with music, acts, and interviews of interesting personalities. Most all religious programs rely heavily on “mood” music from bands and orchestras to choirs and quartets. Drama may be used in lieu of preaching, and what preaching is done may be that which plays heavily on the sensational as the speaker supposedly relates Bible prophecy to various political and social events in today’s news. (We have heard of some congregations “among us” who are resorting to these same tactics as they seek to provide what people want!) Some of these current religious programs give much emphasis to the social issues of the day: ecology, racial equality, physical fitness, the changing relationships among the sexes and in today’s families, theories on how to reduce crime, etc.

That the Bible has something to say on many of these social concerns we would not deny. Clear Bible teaching on God’s will for homes, and concerning the Christian’s proper response to other such societal problems is needed. Yet, we can spend most of our time on these **felt-needs** issues and never get around to converting lost souls to Christ! Souls will never be saved unless they learn that they are lost (and what it means to be lost), that Christ has freely provided a way of salvation, and that we must follow the Lord’s instructions to be saved. We much teach them of God’s provision for our salvation through Christ and His church. We must teach on faith, repentance, and baptism. We must also teach God’s truth on acceptable worship and on faithful Christian living.

“But,” someone may object, “most people do not **want** to hear these things!” We readily agree that this may be true, **but they need to hear them!** It does little good to speak on people’s **felt needs** while remaining silent on topics vital to their eternal salvation.

When Jesus taught the “woes” coming to the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 23 we can be sure that these were not their **felt needs**. John’s saying to Herod, “It is not lawful for thee to have her” was so far from what he and Herodias **felt they needed** that they had him beheaded (Mat. 14). Stephen’s statement in Acts 7:51-53 was so extremely different from the **felt needs** of the Jewish council that he was stoned to death. Yet in each instance the message was **exactly** what God knew they needed to hear!

Let us be less concerned about meeting the expectations of our lost friends and neighbors and more concerned about seeing that they are plainly and completely taught the saving, essential message of the New Testament. True, we may drive away some whose **felt needs** are slighted, whose feelings are hurt. But we will

have done our best to teach what the Lord revealed that they need. In teaching what the lost need to know, we will have freed ourselves from their blood (Acts 20:26-27), and we will find that there are some who are honest and who will believe and obey the truth!

218 Pinecrest Drive; Greeneville, TN 37743

RESTORING THE YEARS THE LOCUST HAVE EATEN

Shan Jackson

The prophet Joel had much to say about the armies of locust that invaded the land of Palestine during his days. These pests had caused extensive damage to the land and the people. We may be inclined to think that Joel has slightly exaggerated the situation but students of history and nature will readily confirm that his descriptions accurately depict the havoc wrought by these incessant insects.

Biblically, these destructive creatures are often viewed as a judgment agent of God, and, in this light, the prophet is calling the people to repent and turn again to the Almighty. If they will but turn back to God as a nation God promises to “restore to you the years the locust hath eaten” (Joel 2:25). The message of God which was brought to Israel in Joel’s day is a message of comfort and hope. In proportion to the people’s seeking of God, so shall it be granted unto them. This indeed was a glimpse of the gospel’s “good news” that would later be brought to spiritual Israel. Then, as now, God’s people could rely upon the faithfulness of God and His Word. And following repentance came the blessing of restoration.

This passage tells that one particular work of the Father is restoration. We see this in His physical creation as well as in the spiritual realm. It is a view and demonstration of the awesome power of divinity. How noticeable is the restorative power of nature? As children we carve names into the bark of a tree only to find them repaired by nature itself. However, the restorative power of God is even more evidenced in the sphere of the soul. In that matchless chapter, Luke 15, we learn how great is the concern of the Father about this work of restoration. The coin was restored, as well as the sheep and one son, and we that hear His voice “go after that which is lost, until he find it” (Luke 15:4).

Brethren, there are times when all of us feel a need for this restoring power. Physically we extend energy, we tire, but with a night’s rest we arise with strength restored. We feel this need in the spiritual as well.

Spiritually we tire, we extend energy in the vineyard, and when this is so, it frequently happens as if our soul is invaded by, what might easily be described as, locust. In the Christian life, locust stand for all that invade and waste. There are some things that waste even the very core of life itself. There are such things as worry, fear, anxiety, anger, envy, jealousy, and if we harbor these, or if we allow them to invade our lives, like locust, they can destroy our vitality and lower our life in God. The effect of these harmful traits is seen in physical and spiritual alike.

My brethren, is it possible that we have allowed these beasts to invade our inner lives as well? It may be that they are lurking within and sapping the very strength we possess and the love we have toward God. Perhaps they have shown themselves in lessening our desire to study God’s Word and assemble ourselves as “living sacrifices” before Him. Yet you alone know what particular trait is attacking you.

Therefore, the natural question is “What is to be done?” Or rather, “What are we going to let God do to rectify it?” We ourselves can do little, but with God’s help we can do “all things.” Lives that have been damaged by the locust can be restored by God.

Now is the time for the restoring. For years we have complained of the apathy and lack of commitment we see around us. For years we have seen locust eat and devour, and the result is a growing spiritual barrenness. History is again repeating itself. Yet God has always taken the initiative to restore, He is always seeking to strengthen and encourage those who are diligently seeking His favor. Therefore, let us avail ourselves of God’s encouragement. Let us pray for strength and use the strength as He furnishes. It is always true that God only blesses in proportion to the seeking, therefore, let us “seek first his kingdom and his righteousness” (Mat. 6:33). Let us “seek God, if haply they might feel after him and find him” (Acts 17:27).

P.O. Box 904; Palacios, TX 77465

SIXTEENTH ANNUAL DENTON LECTURES

NOVEMBER 9 - 13, 1997

“STUDIES IN EPHESIANS”

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 9

9:00 AM	Tim Nichols	The Book of Ephesians—An Introduction
10:00 AM	Dub McClish	The One Faith (4:5)
12:00 PM	LUNCH BREAK	
2:00 PM	Jesse Whitlock	The Christian Soldier's Warfare, Armament, and Weapon (6:10-24)
3:00 PM	Daniel Denham	Answering False Doctrines: Does God arbitrarily, unconditionally foreordain individuals to salvation or damnation (1:3-12)? Are humans totally depraved, inherently and innately evil (2:3)? Are we saved by grace without contributing “one whit” to our salvation (2:5b, 8-9)? Could no Gentile be saved during the Mosaical dispensation (2:11-12)?
4:00 PM	Eddie Whitten	Christ, the Remover of the Jew—Gentile Distinction (2:14-22)
5:00 PM	DINNER BREAK	
7:00 PM	Goebel Music	The Scriptural Concept of Foreordination and Predestination
8:00 PM	James Meadows	The Purpose and Duration of Spiritual Gifts (4:7-16)

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 10

9:00 AM	Michael Hatcher	Answering False Doctrines: Is there a “Pauline Gospel” (for Gentiles), as distinguished from a “Petrine Gospel” (for Jews) (3:8)? Are present-day Christians strengthened inwardly by the Holy Spirit in some direct way (in addition to His Word) (3:16)? Is the “one body” the “church universal” which encompasses all of the denominations (4:4)? Does the “one faith” refer merely to the atonement of Christ (4:5)?
10:00 AM	Marvin Weir	Instructions for Parents and Children, Slaves and Masters (6:1-9)
11:00 AM	Jackie Stearsman	Difficult Passages: In what sense is every family in Heaven and Earth named by God (3:15)? How does the Holy Spirit strengthen us with power in the inward man, and what is the “power” that works in us (3:16, 20)? What is the meaning of “filled unto all the fullness of God” (3:20)? What is the meaning of the statement that Christ “led captivity captive” when He ascended (4:8)?
12:00 PM	LUNCH BREAK	
2:00 PM	Gary Colley	Wise and Foolish Living Contrasted (5:15-21)
3:00 PM	Discussion Forum Curtis A. Cates	Does God Command or Authorize Religious Unity for the Sake of Unity?
3:45 PM	Curtis A. Cates	Questions from the floor on Discussion Forum topic
5:00 PM	DINNER BREAK	
7:00 PM	Terry Hightower	Paul's Prayer to and Praise of God (3:14-21)
8:00 PM	Lester Kamp	Christ, the Power Behind the Spiritual Life (2:1-7)

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 11

9:00 AM	Tim Ayers	Christ, in Whom Is Every Spiritual Blessing (1:1-8)
10:00 AM	Tom Hicks	Difficult Passages: To what does “jesting” refer (5:4)? Does “unfruitful works of darkness” apply only to immoral practices or to doctrinal error and false teachers as well (5:11)? What is meant by the phrase, “in the Lord” (6:1)? To what do the “principalities,” “powers,” “world-rulers of darkness,” and “spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” refer (6:12; cf., 2:2; 3:10; Col. 1:16; 2:10)?
11:00 AM	Bob Berard	Christ, the Head Over All Things (1:15-23)
12:00 PM	LUNCH BREAK	
2:00 PM	Noah Hackworth	The Old and the New Contrasted (4:17-24)

3:00 PM	Discussion Forum Robert R. Taylor, Jr.	What Kind of Music Does God Authorize in Worship?
3:45 PM	Robert R. Taylor, Jr.	Questions from the floor on Discussion Forum topic
5:00 PM	DINNER BREAK	
7:00 PM	Garland Elkins	God's Eternal Purpose Through Christ and the Church (3:8-13)
8:00 PM	B. J. Clarke	The One Baptism (4:5)

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12

9:00 AM	Don Walker	Rules of Living for the New Life (4:25-32)
10:00 AM	Carl Garner	Difficult Passages: What are the “lower parts of the earth” (4:9)? To what does “the unity of the faith” refer (4:14)? Explain how one can be angry and not sin (4:26)? What does it mean to “grieve” the Holy Spirit and how does one do it (4:30)?
11:00 AM	Gene Burgett	Christ, in Whom All Things Are Summed Up (1:9-14)
12:00 PM	LUNCH BREAK	
2:00 PM	Don Tarbet	Difficult Passages: What are the “heavenly places” (1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12)? What does it mean to be “sealed with the Holy Spirit of Promise” (1:13; 4:30b)? How is the “seal” of the Holy Spirit an “earnest of our inheritance” (1:14)? To what do the words, “prince of the powers of the air” refer (2:2)?
3:00 PM	Discussion Form Wayne Coats	Who Are and What Is the Church?
3:45 PM	Wayne Coats	Questions from the floor on Discussion Forum topic
5:00 PM	DINNER BREAK	
7:00 PM	Bobby Liddell	Paul's Plea and Plan for Unity (4:1-6)
8:00 PM	John Moore	Instructions for Wives and Husbands (5:22-23)

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13

9:00 AM	Robert Dodson	Light and Darkness Contrasted (5:1-14)
10:00 AM	Lindell Mitchell	Difficult Passages: In what sense were the Ephesians “by nature children of wrath” (2:3)? Is “faith” our faith in Christ (subjective) or “the faith” (objective) (2:8)? How can Paul's statement that the church is built upon the apostles and prophets be reconciled with the declaration that Christ is its foundation (2:19-20; Mat. 16:16, 18; cf., 1 Cor. 3:11)? In what sense is the wisdom of God made known through the church (3:10)?
11:00 AM	Richard Melson	Paul, God's Minister of the Gospel to the Gentiles (3:1-7)
12:00 PM	LUNCH BREAK	
2:00 PM	Ted Clarke	Christ, the Channel of God's Saving Grace (2:8-13)
3:00 PM	Discussion Forum Gary Summers	Does Truth Exist? Is Truth Dead?
3:45 PM	Gary Summers	Questions from the floor on Discussion Forum topic
5:00 PM	DINNER BREAK	
7:00 PM	David Brown	Answering False Doctrines: Since the New Testament does not explicitly forbid the use of mechanical instruments and various forms of “special music” in our worship, are they, along with congregational singing, acceptable to God (5:19)? Since Christians are to subject themselves to one another, does this mean that elderships have no authority in and over their respective local congregations (i.e., they can “rule” only by example) (5:21)? Since Paul condemned the <i>abuse</i> of slavery, rather than slavery itself, was it acceptable to God as an institution (6:5-9)? Is every Christian, like Paul, an “ambassador” of Christ (6:20)?
8:00 PM	Darrell Conley	The Book of Ephesians—A Summary

BOOK AND TAPES
OF LECTURES
AVAILABLE

PRESENTED BY
CHURCH OF CHRIST

312 PEARL ST.
DENTON, TX 87201

DAILY DISCUSSION FORUMS ON CONTROVERSIAL SUBJECTS

WHEN A CHRISTIAN SINS

Benny W. Hester

In his book, *A Nation Of Victims*, Charles J. Sykes relates the following:

An F. B. I. agent embezzles two thousand dollars from the government and then loses all of it in an afternoon of gambling in Atlantic City. He is fired but wins reinstatement after a court rules that his affinity for gambling with other people's money is a "handicap" and thus protected under federal law. (The court, of course, should have described him as "differently abled.")

Fired for consistently showing up late at work, a former school district employee sues his former employers, arguing that he is a victim of what his lawyer calls "chronic lateness syndrome."

In Framingham, Massachusetts, a young man steals a car from a parking lot and is killed while driving it. His family sues the proprietor of the parking lot for failing to take steps to prevent such thefts. (Sykes, p. 3)

According to the philosophy of our day, nothing "wrong" is ever **our** fault. There is no longer anything called **sin**. Whatever we do, whatever we say, is someone else's fault. Our parents may have withheld something we wanted as a child. Our parents may have been too strict in rearing us. The kids in our class at school may not have liked us. Then, when we became adults, our sins and mistakes are **never our own**. We are just victims of our rearing.

Actually, this is nothing new. Remember Adam and Eve in the beautiful Garden of Eden? They had everything they could possibly have needed. Yet, when the devil tempted Eve, she submitted to the temptation. She then gave her husband to eat of the fruit. **They had sinned**. God had told them they could eat of every tree in the garden with the exception of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. They were warned what would happen if they did eat of it. Of course, the devil

said in Genesis 3:4, "ye shall not surely die." (Sounds like some psychiatrists today, doesn't it?) The advice seems to be, "Do what you want to do. Nothing is wrong, in and of itself."

Genesis 3:8 reads, "And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden." After talking with them, God asked in verse eleven, "And he said, Who told thee that thou *wast* naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?" Now, listen carefully to their response. Verse twelve states, "And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest *to be* with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." God then said to the woman in the next verse, "What *is* this *that* thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat."

When you read the passage, you will find Adam and Eve making this excuse to God: "I am a victim." Consider: "The **serpent** caused it." And, "the **woman** caused it." Then finally, "The woman that **thou** gavest to be with me caused it." You see, they finally blamed God with all the trouble they had brought upon themselves.

Let us be willing to admit sin when it rears its ugly head in our lives. God has made it possible for us to receive forgiveness of our sins when we do what He says. 1 John 1:9 reads, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The following verse says, "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." As Christians, we sometimes sin. Let us be willing always to turn to God and not excuses.

4540 Highway 5; Jasper, AL 35503

Defender is published monthly (except December) under the oversight of the elders of the Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526. (850) 455-7595. *Subscription is free to addresses in the United States.* All contributions shall be used for operational expenses.

MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

**Write For Your
Free Bible Correspondence
Course
4850 Saufley Field Road
Pensacola, FL 32526**

Defender



“I am set for the defense of the gospel”

Volume XXVI

November 1997

Number 11

To All the Elders, Sunset Church of Christ

% Mr. Cline R. Paden

Cline and other Sunset Elders:

Back on June 27, 1997, I wrote a letter to brother Paden. In it I specifically requested information relative to Sunset's participation in the so-called, "Gulf Coast Spiritual Growth Workshop," scheduled for November 6-8, with such men as Joe Beam and Gayle Napier (Beam is just a little "Max Lucado" and Napier has publicly alleged that a great percentage of Christian families who hold "conservative" values are incestuous). I begged for a reply. To this date, I have received none. Why not? Are you ashamed of what you are doing and those with whom you are associating? Do you feel that doctrinal stances being taken by those affiliated with Sunset and the School there are indefensible? Do you feel that it is "Christian" to refuse to respond to legitimate inquiries from a brother in Christ, an alumnus of the Sunset School of Preaching?

Because my previous and latest correspondence (to Cline Paden, a man for whom I once had the highest respect) goes unanswered, I feel that I have no choice but to begin communicating by means of "OPEN LETTERS" (open for "all brethren" to read), but addressed to Sunset (her elders, various ministers, and faculty members in the School). I feel that these matters should be conducted "in writing" because "oral" discussions can be forgotten, denied, and/or otherwise flawed. Furthermore, if it is in print, one cannot deny that he said something that he did say, or say that he said something he did not say. Truth, integrity, and moral conviction have nothing to fear when exposed to the light. The same cannot be said for false doctrines, unethical dealings, and immoral behavior. Rather than to

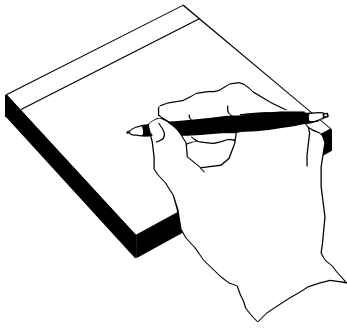
retreat into darkness, Sunset needs to "shed some light" in answer to questions that fall into all three of these categories.

Over the past 28 years, Sunset has changed—not for the better, but for the worse. I once was very proud of the Certificate of Graduation you granted me upon completion of my work as a student of the Sunset School of Preaching. That Certificate of Graduation no longer hangs on my wall. I have considered sending it back to you as a means of letting you know how sad that I am that Sunset has forsaken the truth of God's Word. Sunset's motto used to be, "Preach The Word." Today, you brethren may give lip service to that motto, but it does not truly express what Sunset stands for now. Brethren, it is an understatement to say that "THE LIGHT GROWS DIM AT SUNSET!"

Because of Sunset's reputation for soundness in the past, many brethren who now send students and financial support to the School are unaware of the false doctrines, unethical actions, and immoral deeds where Sunset, in the light of truth, needs to answer some questions. Through a series of "OPEN LETTERS" to you, I am going to ask questions that need answers. It will be up to you to provide the answers—answers not to me only, but to all brethren.

Here is an example of the change Sunset has undergone in the realm of doctrine and morality. I have in my hand a letter dealing with the Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage issue, dated March 6, 1973, addressed "TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN," and signed by Cline Paden. In that letter, Cline said, "Therefore,

(Continued on Page 3)



Notes From The Editor

**Michael
Hatcher**

Email address:
whatcher@sprynet.com

Misinterpreted?

In the religious section of *USA Weekend* (October 3-5, 1997, pp. 8-10) there is an article reviewing “The debate over what the Bible says.” One of the two individuals reviewed was Peter Gomes. He is a Republican, homosexual, professor of Divinity at Harvard. Notice a couple of his statements. He refers to the Bible as “a book built to be misinterpreted.” Concerning homosexuality, Gomes says, “Homosexuality is an abomination in Leviticus not because it is inherently evil but because the Gentiles do it and it is therefore ritually impure.” Then regarding Paul’s statements recorded in Romans he says, “All Paul knew of homosexuality was the debauched pagan expression of it. He cannot be condemned for that ignorance, but neither should his ignorance be an excuse for our own.”

For an individual to teach that the Bible was built to be misinterpreted is an affront to God. This implies that God is so evil that He gave man a book that man could not properly interpret, or God could not give man a book that man could properly interpret. If the first is true, then God is not omnibenevolent. If the second is true, then God is not omnipotent. Either way, God’s nature is attacked, which is what Gomes has done. However, it is obvious from the last quote that Gomes does not believe that the Bible is from God. He believes that Paul was writing from his own knowledge, not being guided by the Holy Spirit.

The Bible claims to be the Word of God. Paul commended the Thessalonians in the way they received his message. “For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe” (1 The. 2:13). Paul would not and could not laud Gomes in this

way. Paul also said, “All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16). Peter explained, “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Pet. 1:21). Paul explains in 1 Corinthians 2:9-16 that God had revealed His will to man by the Spirit, thus the words they spoke (also the words they wrote) were the words of the Spirit. While it is not the intent of this article to prove that the Bible is from God and not man, there are many evidences that the Bible is not the work of man, but the work of one superior to man—God.

Was the Bible given to be misinterpreted? **NO!** A thousand times, no. Can the Bible be misinterpreted? Only by **misusing** the Bible can it be misinterpreted. That does not mean that the Bible is always easy to understand. Peter speaking of Paul’s letters writes, “As also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, *as they do* also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction” (2 Pet. 3:16). Peter did not say that it was impossible to understand. But there are some things that are difficult to understand. It takes a lot of work, study, to come to a proper understanding of what the Bible teaches. There are many things that are very simple to understand. However, there are those who do not love the truth. “And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved” (2 The. 2:10). They will misuse the Scriptures and bring confusion to others. Gomes does not love the truth of God’s Word. Thus, he will do anything to counteract the clear teachings of the Bible.

God’s desire is that man be saved. “Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4). Peter adds, “The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Pet. 3:9). God’s saves man by the gospel. “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). James puts it in this way: “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls” (Jam. 1:21). It only stands to reason that since it is God’s desire to save man, and man is

going to be saved by the Scriptures (and his obedience to it), that God would give us His Word in a way man can understand.

God's Word is understandable. Paul states, "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord *is*" (Eph. 5:17). Jesus taught that we can know the truth. "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32). There is truth, as revealed by Jesus the Christ. That truth revealed by Jesus is objective, it is outside of what I or you might think. The truth is knowable; man is able to understand it. Since the truth is both objective and knowable; then if a man understands it, he understands it just like everyone else. While there are levels of understanding or maturity, one has a greater understanding than another, it cannot say one thing to one person and something else to another.

It is our duty to study God's Word to come to a proper understanding of God's will for us. "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). Upon coming to a knowledge of what God says, it is then our duty to obey the Scriptures. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:8-9). *MH*

(Continued from Page 1)

Sunset School of Preaching does not, and will not teach that the guilty party may remarry." If that statement was ever true, it is not true today. Informed brethren know the radical position on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage that is advocated by Ted Stewart, Truman Scott, Richard Rogers, et. al. It is my understanding that the only two people affiliated with the School in a teaching capacity who hold the Scriptural view (the view expressed above in Cline Paden's concluding paragraph in his 1973 letter) on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage are Gipson and Wharton. The debate on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage that your faculty member, Truman Scott, had with Wayne Jackson is in print. That debate not only revealed what Scott teaches regarding the Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage issue, it shows brother Scott's lack of intellectual integrity. (PLEASE ASK ME TO PROVE THIS!) To prove me wrong about what is actually being taught at Sunset on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage, how about providing

me with copies of the audio tapes made in classes taught by Stewart, Scott, and Rogers when they have taught lessons on Matthew 5:32; 19:9; Mark 10:2-10; Luke 16:18; 1 Corinthians 7. I will pay for the tapes. By the way, I already have one audio tape of Richard Rogers teaching (in a private home in Clovis, N.M.) on 1 Corinthians 7—and I have an exchange of two letters (one from me to him and his reply to my letter). I seriously doubt that you will provide me with the requested tapes. Brethren, it is ludicrous to say, "Sunset School of Preaching does not, and will not teach that the guilty party may remarry." Will you brethren put in print Sunset's position on the Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage issue? Will you brethren instruct Sunset teachers not to teach anything that conflicts with that view?

Recently, one of Sunset's elders (Dr. Sneed) announced to the congregation that "hand clapping" (applause) is alright and that those who object to it must keep quiet about it. Brethren, I have in my possession an audio tape recording of Cline Paden, and another of Sunset's elders, meeting with a Sunset member who objected to this decision by Sunset's elders (to allow "hand clapping"). It reveals Sunset's elders' position on "hand clapping" and it also demonstrates how Sunset's elders deal with those who disagree with them. Now, would you be so kind as to give me the Scriptures which authorize "hand clapping" in worship? When it comes to dealing with the members at Sunset, are Sunset's elders always as dictatorial—do they always attempt to intimidate—as they did in the case in question? If you can adamantly insist, in intimidating ways (implying a withdrawal of fellowship) that members of the Sunset congregation not speak out in opposition to "hand clapping," why can you not insist that teachers in the Bible classes and in the preacher training school refrain from teaching those things contrary to the Scriptures relative to Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage?

I have no desire to hurt Sunset. It is my honest conviction that you brethren are hurting Sunset. I pray that you will return to the old paths. My desire is for you to turn away from the ways of error, for you to uphold that which is right, and for you to defeat that which is wrong.

Awaiting your reply

Tommy J. Hicks

PO Box 64430; Lubbock, TX 79424

Editor's Note: This issue of the "Defender" is being sent to all members including elders and preachers of

the Sunset Church of Christ in Lubbock, TX. I have a personal history with this congregation. On May 20, 1964, I was baptized into Christ by my father (William C. Hatcher) at the Sunset building. My father was a teacher at the School of Preaching (1963-1968). During those years I looked forward to attending Sunset after my schooling—something that never took place. The first time I spoke publically was at the Sunset congregation (along with two other young men on the same night). Cline Paden and my father were the closest of friends through the years. Cline performed the marriage ceremony for my parents and my dad for

the Padens. Cline and my father were missionaries together to Italy. When the school of preaching started, Cline asked my father to teach. That close relationship was damaged later, although they still remained friends. Thus, it is not out of animosity that I print these letters. It is my desire that Sunset turn from the ways it has been going and get back to faithfulness to God's Word. I want to personally plead with Cline, the Sunset elders (as a whole and/or individually), the preachers, or the instructors in the school to answer the open letters written by Tommy Hicks. If you will answer and send me the response, I will print them.

THE FIFTH SEASON

GALATIANS 6:9

Burt Jones

Spring is a beautiful season of the year. We take pleasure in new growth and in the sounds of the earth awakening after a long hibernation. We are vitalized once again with the sound of the robins and bees and the winds of March.

Summer cannot be held back as it engulfs us with a warm, impatient fervor, reinforcing the omnipotence of God. Things which had died are alive again and the season is literally charged with the grandeur of God.

Autumn arrives where green grass had grown and the enticing currents of the warming winds caress us, offering a brilliant kaleidoscope of reds and browns and yellows and golds.

Winter comes forth as the red sun grows old and the day grows short, to exhibit a wonderland of white and pristine beauty unmatched in any other time of year.

Each of the seasons thus far has had its own charm and fascination for us all. However, there is another season, often overlooked and hardly ever considered. This season will ultimately hold more allure, more appeal, more attraction for us than did any of the seasons earlier described.

The season which will in God's good time beckon all those who are His children, is the **DUE** season. "Let us not be weary in well-doing: for in DUE season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9).

Motivation has always been the key to any successful undertaking. As someone said, "If we would 'climb the highest mountain,' we must first desire to ascend that formidable tower!" If children of God lack incentives they are no more than salt "which hath lost its

savour," and a candle which hath surrendered its' illumination to the surrounding darkness (Mat. 5:13, 15).

For some, the only stimulus to running with patience this race that is set before us (Heb. 12:1), is fear and dread. To others it is habitual routine which, like a stream tenaciously carving its way through the surface of the earth, has formed a rut so frequently used, that, to get out of it would require almost superhuman effort.

You see, this season is not the "convenient season" of Acts 24:25, nor is it the season for the pleasures of sin recorded in Hebrews 11:25. It is not even the "season to rejoice" in the light of John the immerser, mentioned in John 5:35. This season is the culmination of all the efforts of a faithful Christian who has sowed to the Spirit, and, as a result, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting (Gal. 6:8).

If we are to reap the rewards of having sown to the Spirit, there must be spiritual endurance and stamina. Paul calls this quality longsuffering, that which is defined as endurance in all situations. Christ said, "But he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved" (Mat. 24:13).

Some claim that we who stand before audiences as gospel preachers say that being a Christian is easy, while others reply that Christ Himself said that His burden is light His yoke easy (Mat. 11:29).

Little things drive us to despair. Unresolved frustration, so insignificant that it seems silly, mounts until we are blinded to the path before us. We all have days when things simply just do not seem to go the way we want

them to. Even as Christians we are not exempt from trial and hardships and chastening, because where there is no contention there can be neither victory nor defeat.

Due season. The more one studies this and the Word of God, the more he will discover that our Lord's favorite prefix is "RE"—Restore, Rejoice, Regain, Redeem. And, in one of those profound paradoxes so often found in the Records while man seeks always to go forward, he soon learns that, in order to progress, he must RE-turn to the old paths.

Be not weary in well-doing. Sometimes life may not seem fair to you—and, it isn't! Life is neither fair, nor unfair. Life—is—life. Some seem to be blessed in going about their tasks bathed in adulation. Others go quietly with a great sense of purpose. "As we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of the faith" (Gal. 6:10).

This due season will be reached by the faithful child of God when they have learned, as did the early disci-

ples, that when they find themselves in circumstances involving great stress, when they experienced hardship, with everything and everyone turning against them so that it seemed that they could endure no longer, they never gave up, because that is the precise place and time that the tide turned in their favor.

Just when is the **due** season due for the Christian? It is due when he fully understands that he is to "Fear not the things which thou art about to suffer: behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life" (Rev. 2:10).

May God assist us as faithful children of His in remembering that we have this assurance: "Henceforth, let no man trouble me; for I bear branded on my body the marks of Jesus" (Gal. 6:17).

PO Box 985; Moundsville, WV 26041

OUR CLERGY-LAITY SYSTEM

Graham Cain

Heinz advertises the "57 varieties" of their food products. We are reaching toward that figure in the increasing variety and number of "ministers" that we boast. These are all borrowed from the great enemy of truth, Satan, through his man-made institutions—denominational churches. The New Testament shows that in the first-century church certain men who were doing various aspects of God's work were called by definitive names. We read of apostles, prophets, preachers, evangelists, teachers, ministers, elders, and deacons. The first two, apostles and prophets, are no longer with us. A few of the others remain except that "ministers" are just about as profuse as small stones in a gravel pit.

Some of the so-called Christian colleges are turning out assorted varieties, professionalized to perform in their specialty field with amazing precision. They do not know a great deal about the Scriptures, but they certainly do know how to "minister" in their chosen field. The field is also quite extensive. There are junior high ministers, youth ministers, singles ministers, and then the field becomes somewhat blurred as the other special interest groups begin to line up demanding attention for **their** "felt needs."

This great galaxy of ministers is always headed by

THE minister. This is the one who is generally in charge and the one to whom, in some cases, the elders report. Following then, in rapid succession, is the associate minister, the family life minister, the single-again minister, the involvement minister, the outreach minister, the one who provides for "the 39'ers," the young marrieds, those in need of "counseling"—and the list goes on. This type of activity results in a group of weak, self-centered souls who are turned "INWARD," seeking their own gratification, and in most instances completely unaware of the fact! Their highly skilled "ministers" keep them busy doing things. However, these "things" are, for the most part, what they **like** to do, yet with a sheen of spiritual worth skillfully veneered into place that enables one to feel good about it.

We all need to read and meditate upon the plight of the deceived, pitiful, lukewarm Christians in Laodicea. They felt good about themselves also. Their true condition, however, is defined as being, "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind" (Rev. 3:17).

HOLD TO INSTRUCTIONS AND PATTERNS

When instructions and examples found in the New Testament for serving Christ in His church are cast aside, the road to apostasy descends and steepens rapidly. When we look at "all the nations" about us and begin to follow their ways, we must renounce the staid

and true principle of having Bible authority in all that we say and do. With the first departure from this principle the whole panoramic view of human preference opens up with no rules of limitation. Bible authority can be ascertained in only three ways: (1) direct statement (said), (2) example (seen), and (3) by implication (signified). When we examine God's revealed will to determine if any contemplated action is acceptable to Him, we must do so carefully. We must understand that if it is neither SAID, SEEN, nor SIGNIFIED it just is not lawful. And then, before jumping to the much abused word of "expediency," we must be aware that for a matter to be expedient, it must first be lawful.

CONCLUSION

The mounting wave of ecclesiasticism today, with the offices and dignities involved, is causing great harm to the church that Jesus died to bring into existence. The willful authority that these false ministers assume to themselves appears to be without end. Many of them now go openly and brazenly into having fellowship with these satanic bodies. Their aim is to teach and train the leaders of these avowed enemies of truth how to

improve and increase their unholy objectives. Amazement and shock with all their synonyms are inadequate to describe the outraged feelings of faithful brethren everywhere. In many local assemblies, with the approval of their slothful, wicked shepherds, the Lord's church is on a run-away train with no brakes. They are going down a steep grade and gaining momentum into the quagmire of utter, total denominationalism. In too many assemblies the train has already hit bottom.

Brethren, it is time to carefully weigh these sad events in light of God's clear instructions relative to those in the kingdom who deliberately defy all scriptural rules of conduct. All such men are "occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine" of Christ Jesus. Paul commanded that we "mark them" and "avoid them" (Rom. 16:17-18). These highly personable, charismatic ministers are identified in 2 Corinthians 11:14-15 as being in the service of Satan. We are commanded to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness" (Eph. 5:11).

The time is later than some of us realize.

2244 Mountain View Drive; Hurst, TX 76054

"WONDERFUL WORDS OF LIFE"

Harold Blevins

It is written that the church of our Lord shall never be destroyed (Heb. 12:28; Dan. 2:44). Also, it is written that the Words of Him called Wonderful shall not pass away (Mark 13:31; Isa. 9:6; 55:11). Truth is the ensign of Emmanuel (John 17:17; Rev. 5:5). Written upon that banner is this inspired inscription: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Col. 3:17). However, the Word of God and the church of Christ is being questioned today as never before in her history.

Nevertheless, the questioning world is governed by set rules of weights and measurements. We see them in our everyday lives. For example, there are state stickers on the gasoline pumps from which we fuel our automobiles. Inspection stickers on the scales that weigh our meats and other food items. To clarify this, please note the following:

The State Department of Agriculture weights and measures Division is regulated by the Federal Agency of the same name. One of the ongoing responsibilities is checking various retail and wholesale users of electronic and

mechanical scales for adherence to predetermined standards.

When a scale is found to be "short" or "overweight", it is properly tagged by the state inspector as "short" or "overweight". The end user then has the responsibility of securing a qualified individual to effect the necessary repairs or calibrations.

The one qualified has passed a state examination and carries credentials to that effect. Generally they are tested for qualification every two years which may vary state to state.

The scale technician places weighs of 2, 5, 20, or 30 pounds on the surface of the scale top plates. The scale is calibrated to the 5 pound weight and checked as the other weights. The weighs are placed in the center of the plate, and then checked at the left and right hand upper and lower corners of the scale plate. Calibrations are effected by electronic adjustments of the internal mechanisms of the unit.

Failure to follow procures can result in revocation of credentials of the scale technician.

Failure of the end user to have scales repaired and/or calibrated could result in a fine.

Signed

Les Culpepper (AT&T, GISR)

There are many examples in the Bible that teach and illustrate such laws of weights and measures. Having deprived and defamed the Deity of heaven by drinking wine from golden and silver vessels stolen from the holy House of God, bewildered and baffled Belshazzar saw the handwriting on the wall: "Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting." (Dan. 5:1-27). God loves a just weight (Deu. 25:15); but hates a false balance (Pro. 11:1). The prophets of God warned about not giving the proper balance from a "bag of deceitful weights" (Mic. 6:11). Jesus put a "woe" on them who "omitted the weightier matters of the law" (Mat. 23:23). The letters of the apostle Paul were "weighty and powerful" (2 Cor. 10:10). Christians are to set things in proper weight and measures (Tit. 1:5; 3:15). Followers of the Father are to take heed, and not wait too long in doing so (Jam. 1:4). In this day and age we have such an instrument by which we may set a standard of weights and balances for all men to adhere. It is named the Holy Bible. Would it be well with us to examine this book? Surely we ought, since even a common criminal has the constitutional right to testify on his own behalf. If we grant the Word of God this opportunity, we learn that:

1. The Book claims to be the inspired written Word of God (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
2. The Book claims to be given unto us via the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 2:21).
3. The Book claims to be of no human origin, but from the hollowed halls of high and holy Heaven (Gal. 1:6-12; et al.).
4. The Book claims that it takes revelation to know God; that it must be written in words; and that the writing is from the inspired pen of inspired men (2 Cor. 2:8-18; et al.).
5. The Book claims that it will always be alive and available (1 Pet. 1:23).

Defender is published monthly (except December) under the oversight of the elders of the Bellview Church of Christ, 4850 Saufley Field Road, Pensacola, FL 32526. (850) 455-7595. *Subscription is free to addresses in the United States.* All contributions shall be used for operational expenses.
MICHAEL HATCHER, EDITOR

These and many others also bring great delight into the lives of men; indeed, they are words by which God measures and balances (John 12:48). All must obey the standard of weights and balances in order to gain the approval of the Almighty in all things (Col. 3:17; John 8:31-32, 36; et al.). Having lived on this earth faithfully, they find themselves entering into the gates of the city wherein is found the tree of life (2 Pet. 3:9; Rev. 22:15).

No wonder we gladly sing the beautiful hymn:

Sweetly echo the gospel call,
 Wonderful words of life;
 Offer pardon and peace to all,
 Wonderful words of life.
 Beautiful words, wonderful words,
 Wonderful words of life;
 Beautiful words, wonderful words,
 Wonderful words of life.

by P. P. Bliss

Dear reader, let us begin at once to study the Scriptures for we are well able to do, and we are also able to overcome all temptations (2 Tim. 2: 15; John 5:39; Num. 13:30; 2 Cor. 11:13-15; Eph. 4:27; Jam. 4:7).

535 Clearwater Road; Belvedere, SC 29841

Books by Ector R. Watson

Ector Watson has been preaching the gospel for over 80 years (he recently turned 93). He is still preaching using a high-stool and portable pulpit. He has written several books which are very affordable in price (most under \$2.00). I would encourage you to write him and get the list of books now in print. His address is: 502 South Drive; Cleveland, OK 74020.

**Write For Your
 Free Bible Correspondence
 Course
 4850 Saufley Field Road
 Pensacola, FL 32526**