

IF WE REALLY BELIEVED

By

DEMAR ELAM

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INTRODUCTION

Demar Elam and his family have served as missionaries in New Zealand and have worked with several well known congregations of the Church of Christ in the U.S.A., including the Forest Park Church of Christ in Atlanta, GA and the Church of Christ in Madison, AL. Brother Elam is presently working with the Southern Christian University in Montgomery, AL, taking groups of brethren to Russia where they teach the Bible in a number of universities.

I have been personally acquainted with Bro. Elam since the days he lived in New Zealand and have followed his work up to the present time. Recently I asked him to provide some of his articles for the work in India. He has graciously responded, and we are delighted to be able to present a volume of his writings to you and to readers throughout India.

J.C. Choate
Church of Christ
New Delhi-110049
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BEHOLD HOW PLEASANT TO DWELL TOGETHER IN UNITY

The Psalmist in the long ago said, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" It has well been said that, "Unity is that PRICE-LESS ingredient". Brethren, we must not allow any man or woman to destroy the unity of the Lord's people. Paul instructed the saints at Ephesus, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love. Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Endeavoring demands a positive effort on the part of each Christian. Division in the religious world at large or division in the local congregation is condemned as contrary to the spirit and will of God. Division is destructive to the church and the souls of men. Unity needs to be the prayer and effort of every individual who wears the name of Christ. Endeavoring demands action, not just talk. Are you working in behalf of unity? Christians must put forth strenuous efforts to promote and maintain peace, harmony and true unity among the members of the family of God.

Division within the church is a sin. God hates it! (Prov. 6:19). To sow discord is to trouble the peace of a family or church by lies, misrepresentations, to strive to poison men's minds about the truths of God or the brethren. There is a need for peace today if we are to win the lost for Christ. Peace is a requisite of unity. "So the church throughout all Judea, Galilee and Samaria had peace, being edified, and walking in the fear of the Lord and comfort of the Holy Spirit was multiplied (Acts

9:31). The results of the peace that prevailed was that the church was "Edified and multiplied." In Acts 4:32 we read, "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul." In order to have such today we must, ". . . follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another" (Rom. 14:19).

One who "soweth discord among brethren" creates the soil that produces division from whence springs infidelity and unbelief in the world. Division is carnal (I Cor. 3:1-4). Division is a work of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-20) Please envision yourself standing before God in Judgment having been a sower of discord amongst the family of God, having caused a division within the church that Jesus shed His blood and died to unite. Surely, the thoughts of such should be horrifying to anyone wanting to follow after righteousness and be eternally saved.

Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Mt. 5:9). Every Christian should spend their time promoting unity. Are you a peace maker or a divisive element within the church? Let each true child of God endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Be careful to never allow yourself to become a part of any element that sows discord. God HATES, ".....he that soweth discord among brethren" (Prov. 6:19). Yes, it is even an ABOMINATION to Him!

WISE MEN COME TO WORSHIP CHRIST

"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judaea in the days of Herod the King, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, where is he that

is born king of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him." These men from the east were indeed wise in coming to Bethlehem to worship Jesus. Wise men from that time down through the annals of history have continued to worship the Christ.

My family and I have been privileged to travel to the city of Bethlehem. We were shown a particular place where it was said that Jesus was born. We all doubted the validity of that particular spot but all agreed that it was exhilarating being in the birthplace of Jesus the Son of God. What great things had transpired in this little city of Bethlehem! Though, Bethlehem was a little place, Micah has this to say about it, "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to rule in Israel: whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2). Just think of the number of people who have, like the wise men of old, traveled to Bethlehem because it was the birthplace of Jesus.

The wise men sought Jesus to properly worship Him. Herod the King claimed that he too wanted to worship Jesus. "And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also" (Matt. 2:8). Ulterior motives filled the heart of Herod the King. Think of the number of individuals down through the pages of time who have desired to worship Jesus but whose hearts were filled with ulterior motives.

The wise men fulfilled their desire to worship Jesus. "And when they come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their trea-

tures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh" (Matt. 2:11). What excitement must have filled their hearts to look upon that little baby boy and realize they were looking upon a king, a governor, a ruler of Israel! What wonder, awe and gratitude must have flooded their souls. All of these feelings filled our hearts while we were in Bethlehem and of course we weren't privileged to see the baby Jesus as they did.

The wise men of today's world come each Lord's Day to worship Jesus. Their hearts being filled with wonder, awe and gratitude for heavens blessings of Jesus. There are those who, like Herod, express a desire to worship Jesus but whose real intentions are anything but that. There is also a third group of people who simply have no desire to worship Christ, express no desire and do not worship Him.

Remember, wise men come to worship Christ. They come with proper motives and open hearts. Their hearts are filled with wonder, awe and excitements! What kind of worshipper are you?

"HEAVEN GETS A HIGH SCORE, HADES LOSES OUT"

In an article in the Atlanta Journal of July 28, 1983 an insight was given into the spiritual depth of many Americans. The article was entitled, "Heaven Gets A High Score--Hades Loses Out." The article revealed some of the results of a survey conducted by J.S. Catholic Magazine. My distinct impression of the results was that the spiritual thinking of many Americans is indeed shallow.

When asked about heaven one lady said she wanted an unlimited charge card. Another said they wanted all the chocolate they could eat. One said they would like to see an instant replay of the earth's creation and another wanted golf every day. Unless these folks were being frivolous, their ideas of heaven manifest little depth of understanding concerning the heavenly realm.

Ninety-seven percent of the respondents expressed a belief in heaven and eighty-three percent said they expected to go there. One individual, who envisioned playing baseball in heaven, said he wanted to drive "one of God's fastballs into the upper deck." In the first place if God were pitching, he'd pitch a perfect game and this individual wouldn't get the first hit! But to talk of heaven in such terms is silly and totally frivolous. Multitudes have difficulty being serious about spiritual matters. They tend to play the spiritual down with a good joke and a laugh.

Concerning hell, only 22 percent thought Hitler was in hell; 15, percent condemned Josef Stalin; 10 percent said Judas, 6 percent said Pontus Pilate, 12 percent said Idi Amin, and so on. Most of the respondents were reluctant to place anyone in hell.

An Ohio Woman wrote, "I do not think too much about heaven and hell; I'm too busy getting it all together here." I think many Americans are like this woman--living for the NOW to the extent of wanting to take their earthly pleasures with them into heaven. The Ohio woman went on to say, "However, I would like to think that if I got run over by a truck while mailing this questionnaire, I would be ready to meet my maker." I also would like to think the Ohio woman would be ready but I'm afraid that too many in our land today are living for the NOW and failing to make preparation to go to heaven.

Let's think for a moment about us. What would our answers have been had we been filling out the questionnaire? Would we have been able to furnish scripture to support our answers? Perhaps more regard for II Timothy 2:15, would help us at such times. Also I Pet. 3:15 should admonish us to be prepared: "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to everyman that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." Surely, each Christian should so prepare that when asked questions about spiritual things we won't have to rely on foolish speculation.

THE EFFECTS OF PROBLEM DRINKING ON A MARRIAGE

Over a preaching ministry spanning some 19 years I've witnessed the break up of many homes as a direct result of the use of alcohol. I've spent countless hours counselling many couples where alcohol was the paramount problem in the marriages. Never have I found even one good thing the use of intoxicating beverages does. Rather, I've learned to hate alcohol and its effects on mankind. Alcohol and its effects has brought heartache, suffering and misery that can't adequately be explained in this short article.

I recently received a very touching letter from a Christian woman whose 18 year marriage has crumbled because her husband could not stop drinking. She tells of four children being brought into the world by this marriage to witness bitter years of disappointment, heartache, loneliness, frustration, pain, deep hurt, loss of

respect, distrust, embarrassment and tremendous financial losses. She urged me in her letter to write a follow-up article to one on alcohol I published recently in the bulletin and to encourage young people to be especially careful to marry non-drinkers. She felt it would be worthwhile if even one person could be spared the harmful effects of living with an alcoholic (a drunkard) mate. She related four things that alcohol causes:

- 1) "It causes deep hurt that destroys respect."
- 2) "It causes men not to work or take care of their family."
- 3) "It caused my husband to distrust me because of his guilt."
- 4) "It keeps the children from proper security that they need."

She spoke of the embarrassments, trips to jail, three cars wrecked and totaled, and three homes sold in order to survive.

Finally, she said, "You see, alcohol can mess up lives all the way around. Please urge teenage girls not to date a boy that drinks! It's not big. Anyone who drinks is a potential alcoholic!"

This woman said of her husband, "He just isn't the man I knew 20 years ago." How sad, alcohol's end result. She is praying that her children will not marry into a similar situation. Surely, that needs to be the prayer of every Christian parent. Young person, be aware that approximately 60% of the problem drinkers today come from homes where their parents had drinking problems. You might do well to check a potential mate's refrigerator prior to saying, "I do!"

I would like to end this article with a personification by James D. Williford in a radio sermon in Sept. of 1958.

"IS IT NOTHING TO YOU?"

"I am the greatest criminal in history. I have killed more men than have fallen in all the wars of the world. I have turned more men into brutes. I have made millions of homes unhappy. I have transformed many ambitious youths into hopeless parasites. I make smooth the downward path for millions. I destroy the weak and weaken the strong. I enslave the innocent. I make the weak and weaken the strong. I enslave the innocent. I make the wise man a fool, and trample the fool in his folly. The abandoned wife knows me; the hungry children know me. The parents whose children have caused their gray heads to bow in sorrow also know me. I have ruined millions of women and, if I am able to do so, will ruin millions more. I AM ALCOHOL!"

ANGELOLOGY

Angelology is the study of angels and represents an exciting and challenging field of study for anyone desirous of a complete knowledge of Divine truth. This particular subject is little spoken of in today's world and as a result much mis-understanding has developed concerning these ministers of God's providence. Many wild and fanciful theories are promoted regarding the angels and their origin, form, attributes, mission and destiny.

Angels comprise a part of God's family in heaven. They are created beings for we read in Neh. 9:6, "Thou

art Jehovah the God, even thou alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all things thereon..." Job says that the "sons of God" shouted for joy, when God laid the foundations of the earth (Job 38:4-7). These sons of God were created beings that were created before the foundation of the earth was laid.

Angels have no sex distinctions, for Jesus said, "Ye do err, not knowing the scripture nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as angels in Heaven." Angels were placed under law (Psa. 103:20, 21; Jude 6; II Pet. 2:4) and are of a higher order than man (Heb. 2:7).

Angels are ministering spirits sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation (Heb. 1:14). What is that service? This we can fully know. However, we do know that angels serve to carry the saved home when they fall asleep in Jesus. Lk. 16: 22 says, "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried." So this is one work angels do in behalf of man and in service to God. Angels are superhuman in their incredible speed but are not omnipresent (Dan. 9:20-23; Rev. 14:6; Lk. 16:22; Lk. 1:26-35). Angels are superhuman in strength and power (Gen. 19:11; II Sam. 24: 15-17; II Kings. 19:35, 36; Dan. 6:22; Mt. 28:2-4; Acts 5:19; Acts 12:23; Acts 12:10; II Pet. 2:11; Psa. 103:20).

Angels stand before God in behalf of children (Mt. 18:10). They rejoice in behalf of sinners who repent and obey the gospel of Christ (Lk. 15:10). The angels rejoiced at the birth of Christ (Lk. 2:14). Apparently the angels of heaven constitute an "Innumerable host" according to the scripture (Heb. 12:22; Mt. 26:53).

Angels are invisible to the unaided human vision (Num. 22:27-31; II Kings 6:14-17). Angels are also capable of assuming any form in which God is pleased to employ them (Ex. 3:2; Heb. 1:7; Gen. 18:11-2; Gen. 19:1-2; Judges 13:9; Gen. 32:22-28; Mk. 16:5; Acts 1:10-11).

When the Lord returns to judge mankind His return will be accompanied with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God (I Thess. 4:16; II Thess. 1:7-9). They will then "...gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Mt. 24:31). The Bible also states that the angels shall sever the wicked from among the righteous (Mt. 13:39-50).

Much more can be said concerning the subject of Angelology but perhaps this article will cause you to study this subject further in your own personal studies.

JOSIAH THE RIGHTEOUS BOY KING

Josiah was an eight year old boy when he began to reign over Judah in the stead of his father Amon. Amon had been twenty-two years old when he began to reign and he reigned two years in Jerusalem (II Chron. 33:21). His reign was more wicked than his father's, Manasseh, before him. Amon was assassinated by his servants in his own house (II Kings 21:19-26). The people of the land then slew his assassins and made Josiah, Amon's son, king in his stead (II Chron. 33:24-25).

Josiah the boy king reigned for a period of thirty-one years and it was said of him, "And he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, and walked in the ways of David his father, and declined neither to the right

hand, nor to the left." (II Chron. 34:2). The name Josiah means, "Whom Jehovah heals." Josiah began to reign over Judah at a tender age. Manasseh, Uzziah and Joash had been twelve, sixteen and seven respectively when they ascended the throne of Judah. Josiah at age 16 began to seek God and at 20 years of age he began purging Judah and Jerusalem. "For in the eighth year of his reign, while he was yet young, he began to seek after the God of David his father: and in the twelfth year he began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images" (II Chron. 34:3). He demonstrates piety in youth and provides an example to the young that the days of ones youth must not be squandered. His life illustrates that, "each period of life is a stepping stone to the next, a preparation for the next. We sow in youth what we reap in young manhood; as we go on our way we gather in the harvest of the thought and toil of the years that came before it. And it is certain that when life is past and we come to have it in review we shall be most happy in the thought, if we can but cherish it that our youth also was spent in the fear of God, in the life and service of Jesus Christ."

"Twill please us to look back and see
that our whole lives were thine."

The sudden discovery of "the book of the Law of the Lord by Moses" (Deut. 31:26; 10-13) and Josiah's heeding of that law brought a flickering ray of light and hope to destitute Judah. Josiah, the king led the way for Judah to return to God. "He began to purge Judah and Jerusalem from the high places, and the groves, and the

carved images, and the molten images. And they broke down the altars of Baalim in his presence; and the images, that were on high above him, he cut down; and the groves, and the carved images, and the molten images, he brake in pieces, and made dust of them, and strawed it upon the graves of them that had sacrificed unto them. And he burnt the bones of the priests upon their altars, and cleansed Judah and Jerusalem" (II Chron. 34:3-5).

The life of Josiah, King of Judah, reflects "the beauty of early piety, the excellence of Christian zeal, and the difficulty of executing reformatations."

CHRIST WORE A BEARD

Did you know that the scriptures indicate that Christ wore a beard? We read in Isaiah 50:6, "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting." Christ is mentioned here in prophetic utterance. He offered his back to those who smote it and his cheeks to such as plucked out the hair of His beard. Plucking off the hair was a form of punishment used by the Jews (Neh. 13:25). This verse in Isaiah plainly teaches that hair was plucked from His cheeks thus indicating that Christ wore a beard at the time of His crucifixion. "Three forms of indignity were heaped upon Jesus in His death (1) smiting or scourging (2) plucking of hair (3) spitting. Easterners have great respect for the beard and plucking it was extremely insulting as it was painful," Christ endured contempt, reproach and extreme pain in the death he died for sinful mankind.

You might wonder why I would write an article on a subject that doesn't seem to be all that important. I do so because there is so much misunderstanding resulting in unfair criticisms on the subject of beards. Several years ago while living in a small town that was celebrating the Bi-Centennial of our great country I was a witness to this fact. The business and civic leaders of this town were growing beards for the occasion and they asked me to participate. I readily agreed and like most men, I was anxious to see what a beard would look like on me. All beardless men were to be put in public stocks (all in fun) on a certain day near the end of the celebrations. However, just as my beard was really beginning to get somewhere one brother declared he'd "quit the church if the preacher didn't shave." He actually missed several services to show he meant business. Not wanting to be a stumbling block to this old timer who was a friend and a brother in Christ I promptly shaved. He returned to services and apparently forgave me of my "youthful craziness" and our friendship has grown stronger over the years. Since that time I've heard the old timer's sentiments reiterated numerous times by people making unjust criticism of men who wear beards. Even if the man's beard is well kept and clean you still hear references to "that dirty old beard!"

I've worn a moustache for six years and I still on occasion hear people say outright or by implication that it is wrong to have a moustache or a beard. We have some few in the church who actually believe it is a sin for a man to wear a beard. How ridiculous! Jesus had a beard and He is the sinless Son of God!

The Bible teaches in I Cor. 11:14-15 that it is a sin for a man to have long hair and appear like a woman. Women, by nature, do not have beards. Growing a

beard does not make one appear "as a woman." I could, in debate, defend a man wearing a beard with greater ease than someone else could defend shaving. I Cor. 6:9 condemns the effeminate and a man shaving would come closer to being wrong than wearing the beard God gave him. Please be assured that I'm not saying that it is effeminate to shave for I certainly do not believe that. I stated I could better defend with scripture the wearing of a beard than the act of shaving.

The following Bible characters had beards, to name only a few: David (I Sam. 31:13), Ezra (Ezra 9:3), and Aaron (Psa. 133:2). I've never read an article on this subject and felt one would be helpful to dispel many of the false views that are expressed by many brethren on the subject of beards. Personal opinions on matters of liberty should not be used to insult or be-little our brothers. Let love prevail and let us take heed of the golden rule. Unfair and unjust criticisms are un-Christian! Let them cease!

DO WE REALLY WANT A SEXLESS SOCIETY?

The unification of the sexes has been the goal and guiding star of a multitude of people for many years. We see men becoming effeminate and women becoming masculine and children becoming confused by it all. "Unisex" is a term with which we've all become familiar. This movement seeks to unite the sexes in hair styles, clothes, jewelry, shoes, mannerisms, voices, etc. The effort to create a sexless society is well underway.

The movement has come full cycle now to invade

the sanctity of the Holy Scriptures! The outcome is the preposterous paraphrased rendition of the Holy Writ called "Inclusive Language Lectionary." Who can we hold responsible for publishing this outrage? You may not be surprised to learn that it was the National Council of Churches! I must admit that nothing they do surprise me anymore.

They claim to be trying to rethink the language of the scripture to include both men and women. They refer to God as "God, the father (and mother)" and Jesus is referred to as "child" rather than son. Sometimes he is referred to as "the human one." I know right thinking people will consider them to be highly offensive.

Even a casual reading of various passages of the Bible will reveal to the reader the inclusion of both men and women. But, the men are men (masculine) and the women are women (feminine). The men are not "men (women)" nor are the women called "women (men)" How silly that would have been. Notice I Cor. 6:9 and Deut. 22:5.

According to an Associated Press report the "defenders point out that the alterations are not of the Bible itself, but of the set of readings for use in public worship through the year." I certainly agree that the alterations are not of the Bible for such is totally foreign to Divine revelation. Those who change or tamper with the revealed Word of God are accursed (Gal. 1:6-9). The Bible expressly forbids individuals adding to or subtracting from the Word of God. (Deut. 4:2; Prov. 30:6; Rev. 22:18-19).

Claire Randall, the councils general secretary, says it is "not a new Bible but a sequence of passages to be read aloud in Sunday worship." She said, "denominations have been pressing the council to provide such

nonsexist readings since the mid 1970's with the rise of women's task forces in most denominations. She admits that pressure by the non-sexist element in society induced them to conform to their wishes and disregard the work of the Holy Spirit through inspired men. The National Council of Churches would have people disregard the gender the Holy Spirit instructed us to use when referring to God and Jesus simply because of some mixed up people who don't know whether they're male or female put pressure on them. Well, as for me (male) and my wife (female) we'll take the Holy Spirit and "His" instructions. It strikes me that God knows a lot better what gender he is than those who would be so presumptuous as to indicate He is both masculine and feminine.

LECTIONARY AND SCRIPTURE

In my last article I promised to follow up that article with some sample texts of the "Inclusive Language Lectionary." This Lectionary is a perversion of God's Holy Writ and should be rejected by all who trust in God and hold the scriptures to be sacred and Divinely inspired.

The following are some samples of the absurd alterations to be found in this Lectionary:

Phil. 1:2 "Grace to you and peace from God our Father (and Mother), and from the Sovereign Jesus Christ."

Jn. 3:16-17 "For God so loved the world that God gave God's only Child, that whoever believes in that Child should not perish but have eternal life. For God

sent that Child into the world, not to condemn the world, but that through that child the world might have life."

Matt. 25:31-34 "When the Human One comes in glory, with all the angels, then that one will sit on a glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before the Human One, who will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, placing the sheep on the right, but the goats on the left. Then the Monarch will say to those on the right, Come, O blessed of (God) my Father (and Mother), inherit the realm prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Excerpts of Gen. 2: "In the day that God the Sovereign One made the earth and the heavens.....a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground.....then God the Sovereign One formed a human creature of dust from the ground, and breathed into the creature's nostrils the breath of life; and the human being became a living being. And God the Sovereign One whom God had formed....Then God the Sovereign One said, 'It is not good that the human being should be alone; I will make a companion corresponding to the creature' ...So God the Sovereign One caused a deep sleep to fall upon the human being, and took a rib out of the sleeping human being and closed up the place with flesh; and God the Sovereign One built the rib which God took from the human being into woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, 'This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.'"

What is the reason for individuals changing the Holy Scriptures in this manner? A desexualization of the human race has been underway for many years now and this is but another of the extreme measures the non-

sexist will take to bring this about.

Once again I'm amazed that people will allow this type of thing to happen. A number of denominational preachers in the Atlanta area were questioned regarding this Lectionary and only one came remotely close to condemning this perversion. It was apparent that they all feared being called a "sexist". I can think of something worse. It's being called a man who is afraid to speak his real convictions.

ABORTION, THE CRIME OF THE PAST DECADE

(PART I)

Since the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decision all fifty states have had legal right to abortion on demand until the cord is cut. During this decade 15 million babies have been slaughtered. They are killing 1-1/2 million helpless infants annually in this century. Perhaps most of us have felt that there isn't anything we can do because we're just one person. A feeling of helplessness often causes good people to do nothing. Unless the God fearing and righteous people of this nation speak out abortion could be the sin that brings this nation to its ultimate dissolution. We must cease sitting idly by while these tiny, defenseless babies are killed by brutal methods. Christian people must speak out so forcefully that we force an amendment to the Constitution. Such an amendment is a massive undertaking and will perhaps take years of struggle before being accomplished.

What can we do to help? 1) We must speak out, 2) Educate ourselves, 3) wear "Precious Feet" lapel pins, 4)

Distribute tracts leaflets with pictures, 5) Write our senators and representatives letting them know where we stand, 6) Write letters to editors, 7) Put "Unborn Babies Are People Too" stickers on all outgoing mail, 8) Put bumper stickers on our vehicles, 9) Join pro-life organizations, 10) Subscribe to the National Right To Life News, 11) Volunteer time to assist Pro-life organizations, 12) Contribute money and contact your doctor urging him to carry Pro-life literature in his waiting room. If he's for abortion, you need a new doctor. These are just some of the ways we have at our disposal of bringing about an amendment to the constitution.

The following is taken from a brochure entitled "Children, Things We Throw Away?" by Melody Green and it is shockingly revealing.

HIPPOCRITIC OATH?

"I will give no deadly medicine to anyone if asked, nor suggest such counsel, and in like manner, I will not give to a woman a pessary to produce abortion."

"This statement is part of the Hippocratic Oath which doctors have taken for centuries as a moral standard governing their work as physicians. These lofty words are framed and hanging in the halls of countless doctors offices and hospitals.....the very places where millions of innocent lives are taken yearly. So just how is it that doctors and nurses reconcile the idea of saving lives with the techniques of destroying them?"

Yes, the Hippocratic Oath becomes a Hippocritic Oath with many of these professionals. Why do these professionals violate their hippocratic Oath? Money!

ABORTION, THE CRIME OF THE PAST DECADE

(PART II)

In last bulletin I was presenting a portion of an article entitled "Children, Things We Throw Away?" by Melody Green. What she has to say is shocking and revealing. The following is a continuation of that article.

"Dr. John Szenens, age 36, has this to say: "You have to become a bit schizophrenic. In one room you encourage the patient that the slight irregularity of the fetal heart is not important--that she is going to have a fine, healthy baby. Then in the next room you assure another woman, on whom you just did a saline abortion, that it's good--that the heart is already irregular....she has nothing to worry about, she is not going to have a live baby." Dr. Szenens continues, "At the beginning we were doing abortions on smaller fetuses and the kicking and heartbeat did not manifest itself as much. I think if I had started with 24--weekers right off the bat, I would have had a much greater conflict in my own mind if this was the same as murder or not. But since we started off slowly with 15-16 weekers, the fetus just never got consideration. Then gradually, the whole range of cases started to become larger. All of a sudden, one noticed that at the time of the saline infusion, there was a lot of activity in the uterus. It wasn't fluid currents. It was obviously the fetus being distressed by swallowing the salt solution and kicking violently through the death trauma. You can either face it, or turn around and say it's uterine contractions. That, however, would be repressing, since as a doctor you obviously know that it is not. Now whether you admit this to the patient is

another matter. Her distress by unwanted pregnancy is to me the primary consideration, ahead of any possible consideration for the fetus. We just have to face it. Somebody has to do it. And unfortunately, we are the executioners in this instance.”

Susan Lindstrom, M.S.W. age 27, puts it this way: “I am having a lot of difficulty with my feelings about late abortions--and all the pain that's there so much of the time after the baby is moving. So one day, in a need to arrive at a measure of clarity, I went into the room where they keep the fetuses before burning them. They were next to the garbage cans in paper buckets, like the take-home chicken kind. I looked inside the bucket in front of me. There was a small naked person in there, floating in a bloody liquid. He was purple with bruises and his face had the agonized tautness of one forced to die too soon. I then took off the lids of all the buckets and with a pair of forceps lifted each fetus out by an arm or a leg--leaving, as I returned them, an additional bruise on their acid-soaked bodies. Finally, I lifted out a very large fetus and read the label--Mother's name:Atkins; Doctor's Name.....; Sex of the item: Male; Time of gestation: 24 weeks (six months). I remembered the mother. She was 17-- a very pretty blond girl. So, this was Master Atkins -- to be burned tomorrow--for the sake of his mother.”

BY FAITH!

It is amazing what the Bible declares was done by faith. Faith is powerful and each Christian should be praying to God asking that their faith might be increased. The Apostles requested that the Lord increase their faith

(Lk. 17:5). There is much that we can do by faith today. Let's go to the scripture and see what was done by faith.

First, let us notice that "The just shall live by faith." (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38; Heb. 2:4). The Gentiles hearts were purified by faith (Acts 15:9). Paul declared that the Gentiles eyes were to be opened and they were to be turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God and that they were to receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith. Paul stated in the letter to the Romans and Galatians that men are justified by faith (Rom. 5:1; Gal. 2:16; 3:24). We have access to God through Christ by faith (Rom. 5:2). The Gentiles were cautioned not to insult the Jews because they had been broken off because of unbelief and they stood by faith. We are the children of God by faith. We wait for the hope of righteousness (reward) by faith (Gal. 5:5). Christ dwells in our hearts by faith.

In the great Hebrew letter we read of a number of God's greats who did marvelous things by faith. Please note:

Heb. 11:4 By faith Abel.

Heb. 11:5 By faith Enoch.

Heb. 11:7 By faith Noah.

Heb. 11:8,9,17 By faith Abraham.

Heb. 11:20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob.

Heb 11:21 By faith Jacob.

Heb. 11:22 By faith Joseph made mention.

Heb. 11:23, 24, 27 By faith Moses.

Heb. 11:29 By faith passed through Red Sea.

Heb. 11:30 By faith walls of Jericho fell down.

Heb. 11:31 By faith Rehab.

In the eleventh chapter of Hebrews we can read where faith: 1) offered 2) prepared an ark 3) went out 4) sojourned 5) blessed 6) forsook 7) suffered affliction 8) passed through the Red Sea 9) compassed or marched 10) received.

In this same chapter we read where God's faithful ones subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouth of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness was made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens, received the dead raised to life again, they were tortured, endured cruel mockings and scourgings, placed in bonds and imprisonment, stoned, sawn asunder, tempted, slain with the sword, wandered about in sheepskins, destitute, afflicted, tormented, wandered about in deserts, mountains, dens and caves.

What are you doing for God today by faith? Yes, faith is powerful! Let each Christian pray, asking God to increase their faith.

IF WE REALLY BELIEVED

How strong is your faith? How deeply do you trust in the promises of God? How much do you believe in God, Christ, The Bible, Heaven and Hell?

Perhaps the reason we fail to live up to the standard set forth in the Word of God is a simple lack of faith. Last article dealt with what was done in times of old by faith. Where faith is lacking there can be no moving of mountains! Unbelief was Israel's great sin (Rom. 11:20) Unbelief caused God to break Israel off and graft in the

Gentiles. The Jews could be grafted back in if they did not remain in unbelief. Rom. 11:23 says, "And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again."

Unbelief will damn both Jews and Gentiles. It is a greater problem than most people think. Our failures in serving God today are not always from our not knowing God's will on a matter but rather from our lack of faith in God and the Bible.

If more really believed there was a Hell they would be sharing the good news of salvation with friends and family. Hell is a place of punishment (Matt. 25:46), and therefore, those who truly believe God's word are constrained to seek the lost for Christ (Lk. 19:10). Paul felt an indebtedness to preach salvation through Christ to the Greeks, barbarians, wise, unwise and to those at Rome (Rom. 1:14). Paul's faith was such that he had to declare what he believed!

If we really believed in the magnitude of world-wide evangelism we would give of our financial resources to support the cause of Christ on this earth (I Cor. 16:1-2; II Cor. 9:7; Mal. 3:8-10). Man's greatest problem regarding giving back to God is his lack of faith. WHERE FAITH ABOUND THE GRACE OF GIVING ABOUND.

If we really believed as we should we will study the Bible more diligently (II Tim. 2:15). In most Bible classes today an obvious lack of study by the students is manifested. If we really believed we would hunger and thirst after a greater knowledge of the God in whom we believed. Paul desired that the Colossians "... might be filled with knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understandings; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col. 1:9-10).

If we really believed in Hell and eternal punishment and if we really believed in Heaven and eternal life and if we really believed in God's promises regarding both these places we would live better lives and we would surely endeavor to go to Heaven and take as many as possible with us.

True belief would lead to many changes in our lives and manifest itself daily.

SPRINKLING FOR BAPTISM IS FOREIGN TO NEW TESTAMENT TEACHINGS

One searches the Bible in vain for an example of sprinkling for New Testament baptism. The 1st century Christians always immersed people in water and did so that their sins might be forgiven or washed away (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Mk. 16:15-16). Why is it that man has turned away from the teachings of Divine revelation to practice something that God never commanded? Col. 2:12 says, "Buried with him in baptism..." Baptism is not a sprinkling but rather a burial!

The Greek word baptizo means to immerse, cover, submerge, dip, plunge and overwhelm. Men had never heard of sprinkling until it was introduced long after the Church of Christ had its beginning in Jerusalem on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus from the dead (Acts 2). Why is it that men will so fervently embrace a practice that obviously originated with man and not God? There isn't one passage to justify such a practice but men continue to risk the eternal destiny of their souls on it (I Jn. 2:2-5).

How did sprinkling instead of immersion for baptism

come into existence? In 251 A.D. a priest by the name of Novatian became seriously ill and immersion seemed unwise so water was poured in small amounts on the subject and was called baptism. However, what at first was an exception became the rule and thus, sprinkling for baptism developed in place of the divinely commanded act of immersion. Why can't men today see that this is a man made substitution? The Bible warns man against tampering with or changing God's commands (Deut. 4:2; Prov. 30:6; Rev. 22:18-19). Why can't more of those who have been sprinkled in lieu of baptism admit to themselves that what they've done is not scriptural and then take the positive step to be baptized by immersion for the remission or forgiveness of their sins? (Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21) Since we know that sprinkling was not practiced by the 1st century Christians, and it was not until 251 A. D. that it was introduced, we must conclude that it came not from heaven but from man.

I was brought up in a denominational church that practiced sprinkling for baptism. Upon reaching an age where I could study the scriptures to see if what I had done was commanded of God or man, I found no scriptural command or precedent for sprinkling in the holy scriptures. Therefore, I was placed in the position of either saying "What difference does it make" or of doing what I knew the Bible taught. I chose to obey the command of God. I also chose to believe that there are many others who, when taught the Biblical truth about baptism will do what God commands rather than obey a false doctrine that came about because of human instrumentality.

If any who read this short article are presently confronted with the question of sprinkling for baptism

and I can be helpful please contact me. Be courageous and DO WHAT GOD COMMANDS!

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF BAPTISM?

(PART I)

Multitudes of individuals will quickly tell you that baptism is not for the purpose of salvation. Why do they say this? Does the Bible actually teach that baptism is not for the purpose of salvation? Others say that baptism is for the purpose of salvation. They believe that baptism is essential to salvation. Does the Bible actually teach that baptism is essential unto salvation?

There is a vast difference in the following: 1) Baptism is not for the purpose of salvation 2) Baptism is for the purpose of salvation. It shall be the purpose of this article and one other to establish which of the above statements is true. This effort must be achieved by allowing God's divine Word, the Bible, to give us the answer.

Peter declared to those assembled on the first Pentecost, after the resurrection of Christ from the dead, that they had crucified their Lord and Christ (Acts 2:36). They were pricked in their hearts and asked what they needed to do to be saved (Acts 2:37). Please note that Peter instructed them to "... 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). These individuals were told to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. Now, just imagine someone in that audience of people saying to

Peter the preacher, "Baptism is not for the purpose of salvation so I'll repent but not be baptized." Do you suppose he would have received the remission promised to those who repented and were baptized? To ask the question is to answer it.

In Acts 22:16 Paul, in writing about his conversion, stated that Ananias the preacher instructed him, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Saul had believed on the Damascus road but belief only did not save him for he was told to go into the city and there it would be told him what he must do (Acts 22:10). Saul believed and yet there was more to do? He went into the city and Ananias, God's messenger, told Saul, "Arise and be *baptized* and *wash away thy sins....*" This preacher told Saul that baptism was *for the purpose of washing away sins*. What if Saul had said, "Oh, I've been taught that baptism is *not* for the purpose of salvation and I'm not about to go against all I've been taught." Well, Saul had a choice, he could have his sins washed away or keep them!

We have in this first article on this subject given two Biblical examples of where the inspired Word of God states or illustrates that baptism is *for* salvation. Really, if we had no other scriptures, the Biblical position on the issue has been established. God's word need only say a thing once and we can be assured that it will not conflict with any other passage. However, in next article we'll continue our march through the sacred scriptures searching for truth.

The difficult thing before us is not proving that baptism is for salvation but getting men to do something about it.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF BAPTISM?

(PART II)

This is the final article in a two part endeavor to establish the truth on the purpose of baptism. Is baptism *for* the purpose of salvation or is *it not*? In last article we noted a couple of conversions where baptism was *for* the purpose of salvation. We will note the scriptures teach baptism is *for* the purpose of salvation (Acts 2:38; 22:16).

Jesus called for his disciples to be "baptized" (Mt. 28:19). This baptism was to endure until the end of the world (Mt. 28:20). Peter stated, "The like figure where unto even baptism doth also now save us.." (I Pet 3:21). Please notice that Peter stated the purpose of baptism was to save us! Paul states that baptism is a *burial* into the death of Christ (Rom. 6:4). Paul wrote, "For as many of you as we have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27). Those who have *put on* Christ are those who have been baptized *into* Christ. Those who have *not* been baptized into Christ have *not* put Christ on and are *not* in Him.

Baptism is the final step of obedience on man's part to get *into* Christ. In II Cor. 5:17 Paul has this to say of those who are *in* Christ, "Therefore if any man be *in* Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." Baptism is preceded by *belief* (Heb. 11:6; Rom. 10:17); *repentance* (Lk. 13:3; Acts 17:30, 31) and *confession* (Mt. 10:32,33; Rom. 10:10). Can a man ignore God's command to be baptized and still have the promise of eternal life? In every example of conversion in the N.T. we read that people were baptized. Why? Because God commanded

it! "Through baptism a disciple would accomplish: first, a burial of 'our old man of sin' (Rom. 6:6), secondly, a 'resurrection' (Rom. 6:5), thirdly, a 'birth' (John 3:3, 5), and fourthly, a 'washing' (Acts 22:16)."

My experience has been that it isn't difficult to get people to see that the purpose of baptism *is for* salvation. The difficult thing is getting men to do something about it. Often individuals will just not go against their parent's teachings even if that teaching is wrong in light of plain Bible teachings. They will embrace the teaching of their denomination even if it teaches just the opposite of what the Bible teaches. For instance, Peter said, that baptism "doth also now save us". He did not say, baptism doth *not* also now save us.

What keeps man from obeying God? Perhaps such things as a lack of love (Jn. 14:15), tradition (Mt. 15:9), fear (Rev. 21:8), prejudice (Rom. 10:3), or simply a failure to truly understand (Acts 17:30, 31). What will keep you, the reader of this article, from obeying God's commands to *believe* (Rom. 10:17), *repent* (Lk. 13:3), *confess* (Rom. 10:10; Acts 8:37) and be *baptized*? (Acts 2:38, 22:16; Mk. 16:15; I Pet. 3:21).

I've devoted my life to preaching the good news of salvation that Christ died for our sins, was buried and rose again from the dead. We can love Him for that, obey his commands and through our obedience and His marvelous grace we will be saved. If I may assist you in your obedience please contact me.

HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN?

Our fast pace of living often prevents us from really

taking the time to do what we should. Americans strive for the "good life" and "Gusto Living." This attitude is reflected in the television beer commercials, newspapers ads, radio talk shows and the daily activities of American people. In the rush for the "good life" Americans are overlooking the simple things of life that make for the really good life. They are grabbing for the things they think produce the good life only to learn that once attained it wasn't what they imagined it would be. God wants us to have the good life but man continues failing to believe that God's way is the way that produces the GOOD LIFE.

How long has it been, for instance, since you've taken the time to talk to God through prayer? Christ was distinctly a man of prayer and he left us "an example, that ye should follow His steps" (I Pet 2:21). We often wonder why we have lost our vitality, but it is simply because we have failed to pray penitently and powerfully. Why not seek out a lonely place where you can pray to God in solitude and renew your inner self? Prayer is a reservoir of strength awaiting those who will slow down amid the rush and press of daily living and take time to pray.

Perhaps we need also to consider how long it's been since we slowed down long enough to look deeply in our children's eyes and to tell them how much we love them. The Psalmist said, "Lo children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them." (Psa. 127:3-5). In our rush we often fail to just enjoy our children. They'll be grown and gone from home before we can realize it. Children and parents need to spend time with each other. Just providing clothes, lunch

money, schooling and allowance is not enough!

What about your wife? How long has it been since you've slowed down in your rush of daily living to take your wife in your arms and tell her you love her? The wise man Solomon said, "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies" (Prov. 31:10). The seemingly small insignificant things can mean so much and add to the sum total of human happiness? How long has it been, wives, since you prepared your husband's favorite meal and when he asked "why" you said, "because, I love you!" Husbands and wives need to take time from the hectic pace of daily life to get off in a quiet corner and TALK. They need to communicate their needs to each other!

How long has it been since you forgot about yourself and performed a deed of love and kindness to another human being who had some special need? Paul said, "and let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. 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). Oh, the joy that is missed when we don't take time for others! Yes, how long has it been?

A BODILY RESURRECTION

(PART I)

The Bible is resplendent in its affirmation that there will be, not only a resurrection, but a BODILY resurrection (I Cor. 15; I Thess. 4:13-18). It is rather startling to discover how many people today have not comprehended that the Bible teaches that our bodies will

be raised from the dead in the great day of judgment and that the soul will be reunited with the body. That our vile body will be changed and fashioned like unto His glorious body (Phil. 3:20,21). Flesh and blood will not enter the eternal kingdom (I Cor. 15:50, 54). But bodies we will have! They'll be spiritual bodies (I Cor. 15:42-49).

I Cor. 15 is the greatest resurrection chapter of the New Testament and every Christian should read it often. The resurrection should thrill our imagination of what will be and cause each to prepare accordingly. The Bible doctrine of the resurrection is not exclusively a New Testament doctrine but was first made evident in the Old Testament scriptures (I Kings 17:17-24; II Kings 4:8-37; Gen. 5:21-24). Abraham "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." David said, "but now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me" (II Sam. 12:23). Daniel stated that, "many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt (Dan. 12:2). It is, however, in the teachings of the New Testament that a wonderfully clear picture is revealed of the marvellous bodily resurrection of man.

Jesus spoke unto Martha the sister of Lazarus and said, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" (Jn. 11:25). If one embraces the Bible as being the inerrantly inspired Word of God, then the resurrection cannot be denied. Did Jesus rise BODILY from the tomb? "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain" (I Cor. 15: 14). The gospel of Christ consists of the death, burial and resurrection. "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received,

how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures (I Cor. 15:3-4). The empty tomb where Christ laid bears testimony of Christ's BODILY resurrection. Man must believe in the death, burial and resurrection of Christ or forfeit eternal life (I Cor. 15:7).

While Jesus walked the pathways of Palestine he spoke these words: "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Mt. 22:32). The BODILY resurrection of Jesus is one of the most substantiated facts in the annals of history. To deny the bodily resurrection is to deny the evidence that everywhere abounds.

Next week's article will deal briefly with the problem of the empty tomb as well as additional facts from the Bible establishing the truth that we too shall experience a BODILY resurrection the same as our Lord Jesus experienced.

A BODILY RESURRECTION

(PART II)

Christ's bodily resurrection was proclaimed by the apostles in Acts 4:2 and Acts 4:33. These apostles were trustworthy, respected and upright individuals and they gave witness to His bodily resurrection. Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene who had, "stooped down and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain" (Jn. 20:12). Jesus was standing and spoke to her (Jn. 20:14-17). Our Lord also appeared

to the disciples when Jesus first appeared to them (Jn. 20:26-28). Jesus showed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias (Jn. 21:1). Luke records, "To whom also he showed himself alive after his passion by many unfallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God (Acts 1:3). Jesus also appeared to two disciples on the road to Emmaus and one of those disciples, Cleopas, talked with Him (Lk. 24:18). The risen Lord was given, "a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb" (Lk. 24:42) by the disciples to eat. Our Lord appeared to Cephas (Lk. 24:34; Jn. 21:15-17; I Cor. 15:5), James (I Cor. 15:7), above five hundred at once (I Cor. 15:6), and to Paul last of all (I Cor. 15:5-8). The number of witnesses and their veracity attest the BODILY resurrection of Jesus Christ.

"The battle over the empty tomb" still rages between the Christian and infidel. However, the empty tomb, the missing body of Christ and literally hundreds of reliable witnesses, should silence the unbelievers by replacing their unbelief with belief in the risen Lord. The bodily resurrection of Jesus was the crowning miracle of all ages. Happy is the man who believes in the risen Lord!

Numerous theories are offered concerning the resurrection of Christ but they are only theories. They fail the acid test of investigation. These theories are: The Delusion Theory, The Deception Theory and The Visional Theory. The Visional Theory is the one most relied upon by the infidels and it explains Jesus appearance to His disciples as mere vision or subjective hallucinations. In a sermon by Dr. Rex A. Turner, Sr. the following points demonstrate that the Visional Theory is totally inadequate: 1) The Theory fails to explain the

empty tomb, 2) The Theory fails to harmonize with the character of the first witnesses, 3) The Theory fails to account for five hundred having seen the risen Christ at one time, 4) The Theory fails to account for the testimony of the apostle Paul, 5) The theory fails to account for the sudden cessation of the visions, 6) The theory fails to account for the glorious results that followed the resurrection.

The tomb of Christ remains empty and unexplained unless he arose from the dead and bodily ascended back to Heaven as the Bible states He did (Acts 1:9). Just as certainly as Christ was taken up into heaven, He will come again in like manner (Acts 1:11).

When one believes in the resurrection of Jesus Christ transforming power occurs in his or her life. Unless one believes that Jesus was who He claimed to be (God's Son) he cannot be saved (Heb. 11:6; Jn. 8:24). "If Christ was not raised, our faith is vain, and we are yet in our sins" (I Cor. 15:17). Your belief in the resurrection will determine where you spend eternity.

Next article will discuss our bodily resurrection.

A BODILY RESURRECTION

(PART III)

When Christ returns to judge the world there will be a shout and the trumpet of God shall sound (I Thess 4:16). Time as we know it shall end. The Lord Jesus will return in like manner as he left, in the clouds of the air. When Christ comes all the dead will be raised and judged. Every person who has ever lived will be there.

Daniel tells us, "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some for everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. 12:2). The righteous and the wicked will be raised at the same time and judged. Judgment will begin at the house of God (I Pet. 4:17-18). "ALL that are in the grave.." (Jn. 5:28-29). The sea will give up the dead in them (Rev. 20:12-15). All nations of people will be gathered before Christ and judged (Mt. 25:31-46; Rev. 20:12-15). The righteous will go away into the life eternal and the wicked into eternal punishment (Mt. 25:41). Paul says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ: that every one may receive the things done in His body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Cor. 5: 10). The great apostle added, "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power." (II Thess. 1:8-9).

What will happen when these dead bodies are raised? Christ will change our vile bodies like unto His glorious body (Phil. 3:20-21). I Cor. 15 teaches that our bodies are going to be changed. It was sown a natural body and it will be raised a spiritual body (I Cor. 15:42-48). As we have borne the image of the earthly, we will then bear the image of the heavenly (I Cor. 15:44-49). Flesh and blood will not enter the eternal kingdom (I Cor. 15:50-54). We'll have bodies suited for eternity! Our bodies will not grow old and wear out. The body is sown in corruption, in dishonor, and weakness, but it will be raised in incorruption, glory, and power (I Cor. 15:42-44).

Please take note that we will not be ghostly spirits floating around in the air but we'll have incorruptible bodies that will live eternally.

The righteous dead will be raised first (I Thess. 4:16). Then the righteous living shall be changed in a moment in the twinkling of an eye (I Cor. 15:50-54). Both shall then be caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord (I Thes. 4:17). Christ will then deliver the kingdom up to God and Father. Jesus is presently reigning and will reign, "... till he hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death (I Cor. 15:25-56). Paul tells us that death is swallowed up in victory at the bodily resurrection of redeemed of all the ages (I Cor. 15:54).

PLANET EARTH DESTROYED BY NUCLEAR HOLOCAUST

An ever growing number of people believe that "Planet Earth Destroyed by Nuclear Holocaust" will, at some future date, be a headline without a newspaper company to print it. Almost daily we're receiving a steady diet of the push button end of marvelous planet earth. Fears, doubt and frustration are taking over in the lives of many because of this constant barrage over television, over radio, in newspapers and in daily conversations of the threat of nuclear holocaust.

Man may well reduce this world of ours to rubble by the insane push of a button. However, let it be understood that **MAN WILL NEVER DESTROY THE ENTIRE PLANET EARTH NOR IT'S POPULATION.** The world will not be destroyed by man but by the God of

Heaven who created it by speaking it into existence. God will sustain this planet until His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, returns to judge it in righteousness. The Bible informs us that "The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first (I Thess. 4:16). When that shout occurs the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat" (II Pet. 3:10-12). Neither Russia, the United States nor any other nation on the face of this earth will destroy this planet and its entire population with a nuclear holocaust. There will be an earth and people living on it when Jesus comes again to judge all man kind (I Cor. 15; I Thess. 4:13-18). In today's world, man's inhumanities to man are horrifying.

The threat of nuclear war is a present reality. Man's ability to inflict pain, heartache, sadness and death is not to be taken lightly. All of the sin and atrocious happenings in this present age should compel us to look to God for help. The Psalmist said, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth."

God desires that we accept His Son as our Lord and Savior (Jn. 8:24; Acts 2:36). Peter said, Christ would have us, "casting all your care upon Him; for he careth

for you" (I Pet. 5:7).

"Planet Earth Destroyed By Nuclear Holocaust" is a headline that will never occur. Our God has revealed that much to us. The fear of a nuclear holocaust that destroys millions of lives is, however, a very real possibility. Because of this we need to be able to say as Paul said, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. (Phil. 1:21).

ROCK MUSIC - SEX AND VIOLENCE

(PART I)

Many parents are wondering why they can't control their children today. Some wonder why their child got caught up in drugs, sexual sins or a violent crime. They always thought that that happened to other families and could not happen to their own. Parents need to wake up! They need to see what is happening and prevent the disastrous ruin of their children's lives.

Rock music is warping the minds of our youth today and parents seem oblivious as to what is occurring. Rock music is a work of the flesh! (Gal. 5:19-21). It is sinful, harmful, destructive and it is damning the souls of multitudes who follow after it. Parents are blameable for allowing such filth to be piped into their homes by radio and television. Loving parents will put an end to the brain-washing effect of rock music in their homes.

Is rock music really sinful? The Bible teaches that a tree is known by its fruits (Mt. 7:15-20). The fruits of rock music are EVIL and anyone who denies that is simply unaware of what is being said in the lyrics of the songs

or is lacking in spiritual values and the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-25).

To speak out against the evils of this type of music can not be written off as just someone out of step with the times or as one who just doesn't have a taste for that type of music. We've got a real problem when it comes to the Satanic inspired evils of rock music and if Christians don't speak out and oppose it then they need to hand their heads in shame. Rock music involves MIND CONTROL and when we investigate and research what is taking place in this field we are at first startled and then frightened at the potential disastrous effects upon our youth and nation.

The producers of this music tell us of its intent. Eric Burdon of the Animals said, "Rock can be fun. It can also be. . . . Rock 'n' roll is a game with no rules, because the rules keep changing all the time." The Atlanta Journal carried an article recently concerning the violence associated with rock music and here is a quote from that article: "That the music industry sees sex and violence as a marketable commodity is evidenced by a recent press release sent to pop music written by Elektra-Asylum Records. The promotional material described the latest album from the Motely Crue as 'dripping with impure and adulterated lust . . .' The release began by quoting the group's bass player, Nikki Sixx: 'we're the American youth. And youth is about sex, drugs, pizza and more sex.'" They pull no punches as to what they are about and what they intend to do in life. Their works are evil and their fruits are evil.

Parents wake up! Stop nodding consentingly when your children tell you rock music is nothing more than an "art form." It is a satanic inspired counterculture emphasizing sex, violence and rebellion against authority. What

some say is "only suggestive", has turned cruel and vicious. More on this subject next time.

ROCK MUSIC - SEX AND VIOLENCE

(PART II)

Jesus our Lord said, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matt. 5:8). Does rock music promote purity of heart? What are its fruits? Matthew stated that a tree is known by its fruit (Matt. 7:15-20). By looking at the fruits of this type of music we'll be able to properly evaluate it.

According to an Atlanta Journal news release, "Vince Neil, lead singer of the heavy-metal group, Motely Crue, peppered his between song patter with sexual vulgarities and a description of the group's erotic encounters with groupies. Many of the 13,000 fans in the audience were no more than 11 or 12 years old, and had been ferried to the arena by their parents." How can parents do such a thing? Don't they care anything about their children? What is even more difficult to understand is how Christian parents can allow their children to participate in something so immoral and spiritually bankrupt.

The Journal article went on to say, "Every day on cable television's MTV, children as young as 5 regularly watch women in chains and people being tortured and shot." We're witnessing the corrupting and perverting of the minds of a multitude of young boys and girls in this country. Some of the youth in Christ's church are also getting caught up in this ungodly movement. Rock music

produces the opposite of godliness. Peter instructed that we add to our faith godliness (I Pet. 1:6). Paul told Timothy, ". . . neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure" (I Tim. 5:22). Is it reasonable to think that our children can remain pure while attending rock concerts where sexual vulgarities are uttered by the performers; drugs are used by many in the audience; alcohol is being consumed by many; immodesty everywhere abounds; violence is being encouraged; rebellion to authority is taught in the lyrics of the songs; the grossest kind of behavior is taking place before their eyes and Satan is set forth as king?

My Bible says, "keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23). Our struggle with Satan is difficult. Can we be so blinded as to believe for a moment that exposure to rock music will help us keep ourselves pure?

Rock music depicts sex and violence as being related. When small children are fed a steady diet of such perverted ideas what can we expect of their marriages? Does the viewing of videos which depict violence and sexual torture cause individuals to duplicate in their own lives what they've seen on the screen? It certainly does! We have evidence in abundance that it does. Rock videos are gruesome, perverted and potentially dangerous to the future behavior of the young people who view them.

The message of rock music is that any and everything goes. Drug abuse, illicit sex, violence and the dehumanization of men and women should be repugnant to the God fearing, God loving people in today's world.

ROCK MUSIC - SEX AND VIOLENCE

(PART III)

Our children are media kids today. Pete Fornatale, a 15 year veteran at New York rock station WNEW-FM said, "Kids today are media kids in the truest sense of the word. They can't remember a day in their lives without television. Because of the seductiveness of the tube, in the same way that I view 'Sesame Street' to be seductive in a positive way, I view some of the music videos in a negative way. One is teaching them their ABC's and 1,2,3's and the other is teaching them to bring knives to concerts and to defile as many women as they can in the shortest time possible."

In a recent report the National Coalition on Television Violence reported that more than half of the videos shown on MTV, the 24 hour rock music channel, featured violence or strongly suggest violence. "Michael Jackson's 'Thriller' features a very appealing young hero having fun terrorizing his girlfriend with horror violence." "The Rolling stones" 'Undercover of the Night', features intense automatic weapons violence . . . including a violent lawless execution, and Idol's 'Dancing with Myself' (Filmed by the producer of 'The Texas chainsaw Massacre'), has a naked woman struggling in chains behind a translucent sheet." Dr. Thomas Radecki, NCTV chairman and a psychiatrist on the staff of the University of Illinois School of Medicine says: "The message (Conveyed on MTV) is that violence is normal and Ok, that heroes actively engage in torture and murder of others for fun." Remember our children are media kids and many of their attitudes are being molded by what they view on the tube. Their attitudes about women,

sexuality and violence are being distorted and perverted by many of the rock videos today and the results could be tragic. In fact much of the gruesome rape and torture that seems to be on the rise today may well be attributed to the mind warping effects of 3 to 8 hours of rock music and videos that people are viewing today.

Rock music is promoting violence in today's world. One need only look at some of the album covers to know that what is on the album opposes everything a Christian should stand for and uphold. "Album covers routinely feature women in bondage (Vices by Waysted depicts a woman in handcuffs and chains), bizarre creatures (Ozzy Osbourne as a werewolf on "Bark at the Moon"), and violence 'the Scorpions' "Blackout" shows a man in a strait-jacket with forks stuck in his eyes). "The names of some groups - particularly those of punk rock bands - are just as controversial. Among the current crop are the Dead Kennedys, Alien Sex Fiend, 3 Teens kill 4 and Woman Haters." The lyrics on the Motley Crues latest album promotes violence by saying "Out go the lights, in goes the knife, pull out his life, consider the _____ dead. Get on your knees, please beg me, please. You're the king of sleaze. Don't try and rape me." Then there is a section in the song that I've chosen not to reprint due to its being so filthy. However, there is a section that says, "Make it quick, blow off his head." Their whole album speaks of violence, rage, Satan, hate, misuse of sex and reeks with unadulterated lust. Can people consume such and not be adversely affected? Does rock edify spiritually or does it destroy the moral fiber of spiritual people?

ROCK MUSIC - SEX AND VIOLENCE

(PART IV)

Much of the rock music which affects tens of millions of people around the world today is laced with lyrics exalting drugs, immorality, homosexuality, hate, violence, rebellion and the gruesome. I'm shocked and stunned to read the actual lyrics of the songs being sung by rock performers today. Those lyrics reflect degenerate minds and every work of the flesh mentioned in Gal. 5:19-21. The lyrics today reveal the sin sick and perverted minds of their composers. Christian minds should be offended by hearing such base ideas.

"Can the viewing audience of MTV and other video outlets--which includes children as young as 5--and teenage concert goers differentiate between violence used for a dramatic purpose and violence used strictly for exploitation? No, say Dr. Gladys Halvorsen, a Tenafly, N.J. child and adolescent psychiatrist, and Vincent Androsiglio, a family therapist with a practice in Teaneck, N.J. Kids don't have discriminating powers, they act as if they know everything, but they lack experience.' What young people are seeing and hearing is a distortion of what life is all about, and this distortion can have damaging effects. At this impressionable age, young people need strong role models, and they're not getting them' says Dr. Halvorsen." The only part of that entire quote I differ with is concerning our children and teens not getting strong role models. They are getting some super strong role models today in the rock performers themselves. The problem is that most rock performers are evil and openly admit that they are servants to Satan. Our children are developing strong

ties to these individuals. Just say something against one of their idols and see if their response isn't strong and swift in their defense.

Much of what the Apostle Paul had to say in Rom. 1:22-32 applies to those in the rock scene today. In the name of all that is right and decent, Christian people should stand against anything that produces evil. What are the fruits of rock? Its fruits are evil and it is rotten to the core! (Mt. 7:15-20) Paul instructed the Ephesians to be followers of God, to walk in love, not to be involved in evil, or with the children of disobedience. He said, "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11). How can we reprove those who worship Satan, practice and teach every imaginable sin while at the same time we attend their concerts, listen to their songs and support them by buying their evil music? Paul went on to say, "For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret" (Eph. 5:12). Brethren, in these articles on rock music we've not presented the darkest side of what is occurring because I simply would have been ashamed to put it in print. But please believe me when I say that it is much worse in nature than what this four part series has revealed. Most rock music is truly base, vile, perverted and anti-Christian. May God help all who are on the side of righteousness to reprove the unfruitful who are on the side of righteousness to reprove the unfruitful works of darkness and to have *NO* fellowship with it.

THE CHALLENGE OF THE TEEN YEARS

The teen years present a time of immense

temptation on the one hand and immense opportunity on the other. The preacher in Ecclesiastes said, "Remember now thy creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them" (Eccl. 12:1). The challenge of serving God during the teen years is being met by many of our youth today. It is reassuring to associate with our youth, to observe their works and the fruit they are producing by dedicated service to Christ.

Again, the preacher said, "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment" (Eccl. 11:9). He went on to urge that youth put away evil from their flesh. What a challenge faces all young people today. Perhaps, the youth of today are confronted with more temptations than any generation of youth since the beginning of time. Yet we see many engaged in active duty to Jesus Christ their King.

Paul told Timothy, ". . . Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (II Tim. 2:19). He exhorted Timothy, "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ (II Tim. 2:3) and to, "Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart (II Tim. 2:22).

The road of righteousness is an upper road and the road of worldliness is a lower road. Each young person reaches an age where they have the power to choose the road they will travel in life. No one, not even parents, can force them to choose the upper road. Teenagers "come into their own" and when this occurs they are fully responsible for every action of their lives. Coupled with

this newly found ability to decide there needs to be the knowledge of accountability. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil (Eccl. 12:13-14).

Young person, choose your companions carefully, master your habits, guard your thoughts, select your course in life with extreme care, don't ever let your parents down and give your all to Christ who gave His all for you!

It has been said that life is a tapestry and the picture isn't completed until the last thread has been woven into place. However, keep in mind that the *early weaving* will determine the over-all look of the tapestry. Happy is the person whose body is stooped and whose hair is white as snow due to the passing of years who can look back at the tapestry of their life and rejoice with that early weaving.

We admire and salute each teenager who is meeting the challenge of the teen years.

COME ON MOM, DAD - WAKE UP!

Recently I was reading a newspaper article entitled, "Children Are becoming An Endangered Species." This article addressed a very serious problem facing our society today. It does seem to me that multitudes of parents have their heads buried in the sand when it comes to the welfare and happiness of their children. The writer of proverbs wrote, "Children's children are the

crown of old men; and the glory of children are their fathers" (Prov. 17:6). Our children are an heritage of the Lord (Psa. 127:3) and are as arrows in the hand of a mighty man (Psa. 127:4). However, ". . . a child left to himself bringeth his mother shame" (Prov. 29:15).

Many children are being left to themselves today. Some parents demonstrate an outright selfishness in neglecting the needs of their offspring. Responsible motherhood is noticeably lacking today as mothers pursue careers and turn over child rearing to baby sitters, child care centers, and the television. Mothers can't be successfully replaced by these substitutes. Come on Mom, wake up!

Children today are faced with perhaps more temptation than any generation before them. They need more responsible parents. Instead, nearly half the children in our world will spend their childhood days with only one of their parents. More than one million children a year are involved in divorce cases. The above mentioned article stated that, "during the 1970's, the number of children living in single-parent households rose from 8.4 million to 12.2 million." These additional facts were also revealed, "As the number of mothers in the work-force increases, millions of children are being cared for by outsiders--sitters, centers, neighbors and before and after school programs. High quality day care is scarce, and many preschoolers are shuffled to as many as four settings a day. More than 5 million children under 13 spend a large amount of time unsupervised."

Parents think they are "out providing for the needs of their children" when they're both working and buying them *Things*. However, the Bible says, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it (Prov. 22:6). In order to *train up* a child we

have to devote time with that child. Baby sitters and day care centers are no substitute for mothers and fathers. Come on Mom and Dad, wake up! It takes time to teach them manners, how to pray, and then to listen to their problems and assist them in resolving them. Children aren't equipped to face all the stress and strain of contemporary life without the loving, guiding hands of Mom and Dad. Children learn their sense of right and wrong from godly parents who guide their thought processes based on the inspired Word of God.

More than 6,000 teenagers committed suicide last year. Their confusion, pain and anxiety lead to self-destruction. An estimated 1,000 teenagers across this nation try to kill themselves each day. Much of this is a direct result of parental failure. Some parents are failing to provide the spiritual and emotional needs of their children. Come on Mom and Dad, wake up!

YOUTH - PREPARING TO MEET LIFE'S DEMANDS

The demands and pressures of contemporary life are great! Young people need to develop productive, worthwhile lives that will bring honor to Christ and happiness to themselves. It is during the days of youth that we develop attitudes and a lifestyle that usually remain with us in our adult years. Every young person who yields their life to Christ and service to God is building on a solid foundation that will enable them to meet the stress and strain of life's demands.

Let's consider eight points that will help youth develop an inner and outer order to their lives. These

eight points, if followed, will aid the young to reach their full potential.

Firstly, follow Jesus. At first you may think this too simplistic but this is the key to your future happiness on this earth and your life in eternity. The wise man said, "Hear thou, my son, and be wise, and guide thine heart in the way" (Prov. 23:19). Christ is the cornerstone upon which meaningful lives are built.

Secondly, develop positive attitudes. A positive mental attitude is essential for ongoing happiness and success. Youth need to visualize themselves as being of *Value* and *Worth*. God loves young people and has a unique plan for their life.

Thirdly, stimulate your vision. Each young person should visualize a wide variety of things that they can do in life. The setting of short-range and long-range goals should be of prime importance. You fail if you have no vision for the future (Prov. 29:18).

Fourthly, learn patience. Patience is becoming a lost virtue in our "instant everything society" (Rom. 8:25). The lack of patience in modern society creates stressful situations in human relations, occupational achievements and happy living.

Fifthly, learn to cope with failure. It takes something extra to pick yourself up off the floor and press on when you've experienced a failure. Learn to turn failures into successes!

Sixthly, learn humility (Prov. 22:4). If you would be exalted you must first learn humility (I Pet. 5:6). God will resist the proud (I Pet. 5:5). Our world already has too many "big shot, know it alls".

Seventhly, ground yourself in truth. If you are to meet the demands and pressures of life successfully you must have the stabilizing influence of the Bible in your

life (Psa. 119:105). Learn to read the Bible daily and you'll be enhancing your opportunities for genuine success!

Eightly, learn to follow through. The inability to follow through has been the undoing of many great achievements and the downfall of many potentially great men. Following through isn't always easy but if what you're doing is worth-while and you want to be successful, follow through you must (Rev. 2:10).

IF ONLY ONE WILL HEAR AND HEED

A sermon is effective only if the audience will hear and heed the message. Perhaps, the greatest challenge the gospel preacher has today is not the delivery of his sermon but the selection of his subject. Our world is in desperate need of preachers who will stand like the prophets of old and speak the Word of the Lord." Is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides, that we might inquire of him?" (I Kings 22:7) In the aforementioned scripture Jehoshaphat was asking, "Isn't there somebody around who speaks for God?"

Adlai Stevenson is reported to have said that he had devised a new word, "yo", which can mean either "yes" or "no"! The preacher who speaks 35 minutes and then leaves the audience wondering where he stands regarding his subject has adopted a "yo" type of preaching. However, preaching the gospel without fear or compromise produces the results that heaven expects and accepts. The philosophy of "everything goes" and "don't step on any toes" produces no real prophets.

Ahab hated Micaiah for prophesying evil against

him (I Kings 22:8). However, please remember that the prophet only spoke what God had instructed. Christ stated that the world hated him because he testified of it, that the works thereof are evil (Jn. 7:7). Paul said, "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth" (Gal. 4:16). Gospel preachers have a charge to, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mk. 16:15). To preach the gospel is to preach the Word (I Tim. 4:2-5) and to preach the Word is to preach the truth (Jn. 17:17).

The faithful preacher can not afford to have peace at all cost! It prevents him from preaching the lessons needed by the people. Sin must be attacked head on! God's word must be presented as effectively as possible realizing there is power in it to change the world. The faithful gospel preacher must realize, "The preacher is a soloist; he was never meant to play accompaniment to anything." God's spokesman cannot drift in the tide of popular movements, public sentiment or the sweetness of popularity.

Verbal abuses and lack of appreciation fall into insignificance along side the reward of seeing one person answer the invitation to give his life to Christ! Often the preacher wonders if his sermons are relevant; if he is meeting the needs of the audience. He can know that he is on target if God fearing Christians love and appreciate him: if the lukewarm and indifferent dislike him and the outright sinner hates him.

Yes, where are those who will speak for the Lord? Preacher remember: Even if only one person hears and heeds the message, everything involved in being a spokesman for God becomes worthwhile.

ARE YOU OFFERING STRANGE FIRE?

In Leviticus 10:1-2 we read of the disobedience of Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron. God had commanded that a particular type of fire be offered on the altar and these two took it upon themselves to offer a strange fire before the Lord. Strange fire in this passage simply means a fire other than what God commanded. It was a fire he commanded not (Lev. 10:2).

These two were like many in our world today. They were guilty of presumptuous sin. They presumed that whatever they wanted to do was alright. Many today operate thusly; they think that whatever they want to do is alright and they disregard the direct commands of God.

It is foolishness to think that whatever we want to do in worship to God is acceptable. God allowed a fire to go out from Him and devour them and they died before the Lord (Lev. 10:2). Perhaps Nadab said to Abihu, "Abihu, I know God said that we should use only this type of fire on our censers but God is a loving, merciful and compassionate God and I'm sure He'll not mind. The main thing is that we're sincere!" To which Abihu replied, "Yea, what difference will it make."

It did make a difference because the fire that went out from God devoured them that they died before the Lord (Lev. 10:2). To alter God's commands today to suit our own fancy is to surely produce a response from God for God will not tolerate such action (Deut. 4:2; Prov. 30:6; Rev. 22:18-19).

Are you offering strange fire today by changing a God given command regulating New Testament worship?

WHAT IS THE "IT" OF I COR. 15:42-44?

Some are teaching that there will not be a bodily resurrection. The assertion is made that we receive our resurrection body at the moment of death. Nothing could be further from what divine revelation states!

What is being called for is a recreation rather than a resurrection. To deny the bodily resurrection is to deny the plain teaching of the scriptures. The word resurrection means, "coming to life again of that which is dead." Just as surely as Christ experienced a bodily (literal) resurrection, so will we! The tomb was empty. The literal body of Jesus had been resurrected. "And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay" (Matt. 28:5-6).

What is the "it" of I Cor. 15:42-44? "It is sown" refers to one's dead body and "it is raised" refers to that same "it" or body that was sown. The body sown will be the same body raised. If such isn't true then it calls for a recreation rather than a resurrection. Granted our bodies will be changed when this resurrection occurs (I Cor. 15:51-52) but there will be a *Literal Bodily Resurrection!* The change that will occur is the corruptible putting on incorruption and the mortal putting on immortality.

WILL YOU BEAR YOUR OWN CROSS?

In Luke 14:27 we learn that, "Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." Discipleship that has no cross to bear is

counterfeit. Our Lord bore a cross and those who follow Him will have a cross to bear. Something is wrong with your Christianity if it cost you nothing.

Jesus stressed the cost of following him by saying, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple" (Lk. 14:26). Later in the same chapter at verse 33 our Lord said, "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."

The cross you must bear in order to follow Christ might be different from the one I must bear in that we all face different burdens and temptations. But bear our own cross we must. Jesus stresses that one should count the cost of discipleship in these words, "For Which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it" (Lk. 14:28).

Every one individually has the responsibility of counting the cost and then paying the price by bearing whatever cross is necessary to be a faithful follower of the king. Will you bear your own Cross?

REMEMBER LOT'S WIFE

In Genesis chapter 19 we read the story of Lot's wife how that she was turned to a pillar of salt for "looking back" to Sodom and Gomorrah while they were being destroyed. In verse 17, God had warned them "not to look back" but in verse 26 we see that Lot's wife chose to disobey God's commands, thus, reaping the

awful punishment for her sin. What is the lesson for us today? In Luke 17:32 we are admonished to "Remember Lot's wife". We are to remember Lot's wife for looking back. May I suggest that she looked back with longing to a city of sin after God had rescued and saved her. In like manner many Christians today "look back" to a life of sin with longing after being rescued by the very Son of God.

How dangerous it is for Christians to look back! I've heard some talk about their past sinful lives with such relish and enjoyment that it is obvious they missed it very much. Remember Lot's wife! Don't look back with longing. Don't boast of past sins. One should be ashamed of sins committed prior to becoming a Christian. Consider the awful price that was paid to rid you of your sins and be ashamed not boastful.

Paul, in writing to the Hebrew Christians, wrote to individuals who were looking back at their old life with longing. They were on the verge of apostasy and Paul wrote to encourage them. They were about to forsake Christianity by turning back to Judaism. They were looking back and needed to remember Lot's wife.

Looking back is an ever present danger to those serving Christ today. Jesus pointed out the cost of looking back in these words, "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the Kingdom of God" (Lk. 9:62). Looking back is usually indicative of a shallow depth of spirituality in a person's life.

Congregations, like individuals, should not be guilty of looking back. Many good works never reach fruition due to a congregation's looking back. Missionaries have had to come home due to congregations looking back to a time when so much financial sacrifice wasn't needed. Multitudes of lost people remain that way because

individuals and congregations look back.

Yes, we'll do well to be sober and *remember Lot's Wife!*

MAN'S INVINCIBILITY VS. GOD'S INVINCIBILITY

History again and again has illustrated to man lessons on the impossibility of invincibility, however, man seems never to learn!

The word "invincible" means: incapable of being conquered, overcome or subdued. This word came to mind recently as I stood on the magnificent walls of Ft. Pulaski located where the Savannah River meets the Atlantic Ocean on Cockspur Island. I allowed my mind to run with imagination as I reconstructed the assault of the Federal forces on this glorious old fort and its gallant forces near Savannah.

When my thoughts returned to the present I was forced to think of the lesson to be learned from this historical event. Those "in the Know" at that time had thought the fort to be impregnable. However, A new weapon--the rifled cannon brought an end to the era of impregnable masonry fortifications and verified the superiority of the new rifled guns.

Did you know that of the "Seven Wonders of the Ancient World" only one is still standing today, the pyramids of Egypt? Even they have been ravaged by raiders and robbed of their priceless treasures. What do these magnificent structures, Ft. Pulaski, the Titanic and the great Empires of the ancient world have in common? They were *Vincible!* They were indeed capable of being

overcome and subdued.

The same is true of man. Man often becomes puffed up and thinks within himself that he is invincible and needs no one, not even God! He convinces himself that he has the world in his pocket, that he is self-reliant and self-sufficient. Yes, he even reaches the point of feeling invincible! Helen Reddy expressed it in a song like this, "I am Woman, I am invincible!"

Man isn't invincible and the many lessons of the impossibility of invincibility should serve to warn us that one day regardless of man's glory, strength, wealth or power, he'll go the way of all the earth. Psa. 103:14 says, "For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more."

Man's frailty is exhibited daily, "because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets" (Eccl. 12:5). The preacher went on to say, "or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return to God who gave it. Vanity of Vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity" (Eccl. 12:8-9). As I stood on the walls of Ft. Pulaski and looked out across the marshes I asked myself, "where are the gallant men that built these walls? Where is that young lieutenant fresh from West Point, named Robert E. Lee, who was assigned to build the dikes and drainage system for the island?" Gone, yes gone! All of these who began constructing this mighty fortress in 1829 were gone the way of all men.

Then I think of God's invincibility and the words of

the Psalmist comes ringing forth, "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God" (Psa. 90:3). God is from *everlasting* to *everlasting*. That is invincibility! God is truly incapable of being overthrown, subdued, overcome or conquered. Man is here today and gone tomorrow (Jas. 4:13-14) but God is from "everlasting to everlasting". The battle of *Good* and *Evil* rages but God cannot be conquered by the evil one. Here is man's only picture of true invincibility.

I want to serve the invincible God. What about you!

POPE CLAIMS FORGIVENESS CAN'T BE OBTAINED DIRECTLY FROM GOD

(PART I)

An Associated Press article dated Dec. 11, 1984 said, "Pope John Paul II, in a 138 page document, today attacked the idea that Roman Catholics can obtain forgiveness directly from God without going through the church. . . ." This article went on to say, "The pontiff said confession was being undermined by several factors, including the obscuring of moral and religious conscience. On the other hand it is being undermined by the sometimes widespread idea that one can obtain forgiveness *directly from God.*"

Standing on the solid ground of scripture I would like to *refute* the Pope's claim that Christians need go through any man on earth to obtain forgiveness of sins. Forgiveness of sin is obtained by the grace of God through the shed blood of Christ.

The Hebrew writer said, "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission. So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." (Heb. 9:12,14,22,28).

Jesus stated in Matt. 26:28, "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

Paul to the Colossians said, "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." (Col. 1:20).

We learn from I Peter 1:18-19, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible thing, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But With the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

POPE CLAIMS FORGIVENESS CAN'T BE OBTAINED DIRECTLY FROM GOD

(PART II)

Catholics have long held the belief and doctrine that forgiveness of sins must be obtained from their local priests. So, the Pope's claim is not new. But what caused them to make such an extraordinary claim in the first place so contrary to scripture? I think it goes back to a very false concept they have about the headship of the church that leads them into so many doctrines contrary to plain and simple scriptures.

Pope John Paul claims to be the head of the church on earth, the visible vicar of Jesus Christ. When he speaks from the throne, ex cathedra, he claims infallibility in all his utterances concerning morals and dogma! However, the diligent student of the Bible knows that Christ is the head of the church on earth, sitting at the right hand of God in heaven. It would be difficult to mis-understand Eph. 1:22-23 which says, "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." And Col 1:18 which states, "And he is the head of the body, the church: Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence."

The Pope has no right to lay claim to the headship of the church that Jesus purchased with His own blood (Acts 20:28). It certainly isn't the Pope's church because Jesus said, ". . . I will build my church. . ." (Matt. 16:18). Christ died to build, establish and purchase his church! In speaking of the man of sin, the son of perdition, Paul said, "who opposed and exalted himself above all that is

called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God (II Thess. 2:4).

Forgiveness of sins isn't found in a priest, the Pope or the Roman Catholic church. For the Christian, forgiveness of sins is obtained by genuine repentance and praying directly to God in the name of Jesus Christ for forgiveness. For the alien sinner, forgiveness is found in 1) Belief-Heb. 11:6; Rom. 10:17. 2) Repentance-Lk. 13:3; Acts 17:30-31. 3) Confession-Rom. 10:10; Mt. 10:32-33, and 4) Baptism-Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16, I Pet. 3:21). Regardless of what the Pope claims, we still have the words of Jesus: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me." (Jn. 14:6).

"AND I, IF I BE LIFTED UP"

Jesus spoke of his death in John 3:14 when He said, "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up. . ." This of course was a direct reference to Num. 21:9 where it is said, "And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass he lived."

Our Lord knew that the Jews would lift Him up on a cross and kill him. John 8:28 reads, "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things."

Why was it necessary that Christ be lifted up and crucified upon a cross? Jesus stated why in John 12:32

when he said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." Christ was lifted up so He could draw all men unto himself. The very next verse, John 12:33, explains what Jesus meant about being lifted up. Verse 33 says, "This he said, signifying what death he should die." The cross in that day was an instrument of death.

Christ's drawing power depended upon his being lifted up. He said, ". . . if I be lifted up. . ." If Jesus had never been lifted up, the redemptive plan of God would have been thwarted and we would have died in our sins.

However, Satan, the prince of the world, had been drawing people unto himself but Christ in offering Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the world counteracted the work of the evil one. This, therefore, explains Paul's strong feelings expressed in Gal. 6:14 when he said, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

Zechariah in Chapters 12 and 13 spoke of Him who would be pierced and of a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and uncleanness, What a marvelous, wonderful and faith building prophecy, It predicts the "Fountain, filled with blood, drawn from Emanuel's veins." This fountain of blood flowed from the body of God's Son making it possible for man to escape the end result of sin, eternal damnation.

Why was Christ lifted up? That you might be saved!

“BROUGHT TO A PIECE OF BREAD”

The wise man of old has fully warned us of the devastating results of a whorish woman. The wise writer of Proverbs said, “My son, keep thy father's commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother: Bind them continually upon thine heart, and tie them about thy neck” (Prov. 6:20-21). Why should we keep the father's commandment and forsake not the law of the mother? He says that they shall lead us, keep us and talk with us. “The commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life: To keep thee from the evil women, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman” (Prov. 6:23-24).

One of Man's great failings today is a refusal to take instruction. Foolish is the man who will not listen to wise counsel. Ours is a time where individuals seem to scoff and laugh at wise prudent counsel. Ungodliness is the order of the day. it is in vogue! It just isn't in fashion to seek after Godliness and holiness in daily living (Heb. 12:14).

The liberated, free thinkers of our day will not listen to the voice of inspiration regarding sexual sins. People today believe they can ignore God's law regulating sexual conduct without punishment. They totally abandon the law of God only to reap the harvest of their own doing.

The wise one of Proverbs says, “Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids. For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread: and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life” (Prov. 6:25-26). Please note that God through Divine inspiration states that a whorish woman will bring a man down to a piece of bread.

However, the foolish man will not listen to instruction or warning. He believes he can escape what others have not escaped.

Observation reveals that the warning of the Bible isn't being heeded by a host of people in society today. Many men will disregard the warning and lost after the beauty of a whorish woman. They allow her to take them with her eyelids: they commit adultery and are **BROUGHT TO A PIECE OF BREAD**. Isn't that exactly what happens in life! A whorish woman comes hunting the precious life and a foolish, silly man commits adultery. He breaks the precious, sacred vows made to the bride of his youth and sins. He thinks within himself saying at first, "I've gotten away with it" only to learn that his sin has come to light and his wife is aware. Oh well, he thinks, "It was worth it anyway" only to have a succession of events to rapidly follow. His wife divorces him due to adultery; he loses his home and automobile in the process ; his children tell him to his face that they despise him; he loses his job; he loses some close friends; he finds himself thinking about taking his own life and it is at this point he realizes the truthfulness of Proverbs 6:27-29, 32.

"Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned? So he that goeth in to his neighbor's wife; Whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent. But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul."

MICAH'S PROPHECY

It is characteristic of men to dislike and even hate an individual who speaks against them in any manner. Most people like to hear pleasant words of praise and commendation. Ahab, the king of Israel was just such a man. He enjoyed the praise and plaudits of men but he hated Micaiah who, according to Ahab, “. . . doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil” (I Kings 22:8).

Micaiah is a rather obscure, unknown prophet of God to many in today's world. Perhaps this is because there is no Bible book named after him. However, he is truly one of the bravest and most outstanding of God's prophets of old.

Jehoshaphat the king of Judah and Ahab the king of Israel were forming an alliance together. They intended to war against the king of Syria and possess Ramoth in Gilead. Jehoshaphat suggested that they inquire of the Lord concerning their intended exploits. Four hundred of the prophets of Israel were summoned and inquiry was made of them about the word of the Lord. . . . “Shall I go against Ramothgilead to battle, or shall I forbear? And they said, Go up; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king” (I Kings 22:6). This for some reason, did not satisfy Jehoshaphat. Perhaps, he was immediately suspicious when 400 preachers all agreed with not one voice of opposition.

Jehoshaphat said, “Is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides, that we might inquire of him?”: And the king of Israel said unto Jehoshaphat, “There is yet one man, Micaiah the son of Imlah, by whom we may inquire of the Lord: but I hate him; for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil” (I Kings 22:7-8). This is a remarkable revealing statement about Ahab. Like many

today, Ahab wanted to hear words that were smooth and that pleased him. Ahab had stopped listening to Micaiah because he spoke the truth and the truth was hurtful to Ahab because of his sinful ways. Ahab said **"I HATE HIM!"**

The messenger that was sent to bring Micaiah to the kings told him to prophesy like the other prophets. He said, "Let thy word, I pray thee, be like the word of one of them, and speak that which is good" (I Kings 22:13).

Micaiah's answer is found in verse 14 and reflects what every preacher's attitude should be regarding his preaching. He said, ". . . As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak." He prophesied against Ahab and Jehoshapat to which Ahab replied, ". . . Did I not tell thee that he would prophesy no good concerning me, but evil?" (I Kings 22:18). Paul told Timothy the time would come when men would not endure sound doctrine but would heap to themselves teachers having itching ears (I Tim. 4:3). So Ahab's problem of having itching ears desiring to be tickled with smooth words did not end with him. Oh, how we need men of courage and loyalty like Micaiah who will say, ". . . As THE LORD LIVETH, WHAT THE LORD SAITH UNTO ME THAT WILL I SPEAK."

GOD CALLED HIM A FOOL

We are living in the age of the passive. Ours is a time when little concern, if any, is shown for anyone but self. In Luke 12:16-20 Jesus tells a parable of a man with such a selfish attitude. I think his life is typical of the

lives of many living today. He had great riches bestowed on him from above. And yet, we find that his chief concern in life was to establish a life of ease and prosperity all for himself. He did not consider how he could use his riches to help care for a poor orphan child. He did not consider how a portion of his goods could make life more bearable for the plight of the poor widows around him. He cared only for himself. He was selfish. He was living under a "take it easy" policy, This "take it easy" policy is running rampant in our society today. This rich man thought he had a lease on life (Lk. 12:19) but quickly learned that he had made a GRAVE mistake.

Many people, like the rich man, have simply left God out of their thinking. America as a whole seems to worship the God of Materialism. We want "things" and we want them all for ourselves.

This foolish man who left God and his fellowman out of his plans talked about "my fruits", "my barns", and "my goods". God had given this man everything he needed to become a success and he was not willing to give God anything in return.

Man often forgets God in the day of prosperity. It would seem that the opposite would be true and that man would realize where his blessings come from (Jas. 1:17) and would praise and serve God all the more! However, the sad reality is that the richer a man becomes the more difficult it is for him to go to heaven (Matt. 19:23-24).

The human soul can not be satisfied with material things. Money cannot bring complete happiness and fulfill all our desires. The wise writer of Ecclesiastes wrote, "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver: nor he that loveth abundance with increase: This also is vanity" (Eccl. 5:10).

God called this man a fool! Here was a man who had entirely missed the real meaning of life. We've been placed on the earth for a reason and I urge you, my friend, to stop and evaluate your own life. Have you left God out of your life? Is it possible that due to your present lifestyle God might soon say of you, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee" (Lk. 12:20).

STOP BLAMING THE RIGHTEOUS

Often when children are playing together some mischief occurs that results in a reprimand by an authoritarian figure. One child is heard to say, "Look what you made me do; it's all your fault." Like children, adults also are adept at shifting the blame for their misconduct to the shoulders of someone else.

Adam said to God, ". . . the woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat? (Gen. 3:12). Lord, look what you made me do! This woman *thou gavest to me*, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. Eve, look what you made me do! As we read on in the Genesis account we learn that Eve blamed the serpent (Gen. 2:13). The Bible story is resplendent with accounts of man's shifting the blame for his sins to someone else.

Sin often brings unwanted consequences to the lives of those who engage in it. The Bible teaches, "Be not deceived. God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7). It is ironic indeed that men often try to blame the righteous for their miserable and wretched condition which they brought on themselves by sin. Man desires to sin with impunity, but

it just doesn't work that way.

I recently talked with a member of the church from whom fellowship had been withdrawn. He, like so many others, blamed the church for his wretched condition. Often the disfellowshipped brethren will cast disparagement upon or belittle, down-rate and castigate the saints for withdrawing from them, all the while hardening their sinful hearts. In effect they're saying, "Look what the church has done to me. Poor little ole me! Shame on the saints for treating me this way. After all, I only committed adultery, divorced my wife, left my children without a father, broke up another man's home and stubbornly maintained an unrepentant attitude. After all, I only told them that I planned to continue living just the way I was living and that I really had *no regrets*" (II Thess. 3:6, 14-15). "After all, who are they to tell *me* how I can live! They can't judge me!" (Matt. 7:16-20; I Cor. 5:12; 6:1-5; Gal 6:1). "I didn't leave the church; the church left me! Look what they caused! Look what they made me do!"

The saints of God are to, "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11). The sinner must realize that he brings such reproof upon himself because of *his own sins*. He cannot successfully side-step the guilt nor the repercussions of his sinful deeds. Repentance is the answer! (Lk. 13:3; Acts 8:22).

Frankly, I'm annoyed when I hear the wicked blaming the righteous for their wretched circumstances resultant from their own mischief and lack of love for Christ. Aren't you? (Jn. 14:23; 15:14).

CONGREGATIONAL LOYALTY

In the great restoration movement that we're engaged in, we have heard the plea: "In matters of faith unity. In matters of opinion liberty. In all things love." This article will contain my personal opinion regarding some aspects of congregational loyalty. It will also contain some doctrinal truths regarding this subject. The article is written with love and concern for this local congregation.

In Christ we have many liberties and no one has the right to bind something on us in matters of opinion (Gal. 5:1, 13; I Cor. 8:9; I Pet. 2:16). However, there are many situations that arise in the realm of opinion where good judgment calls for loyalty to the local work. Though it may be a situation that is a matter of opinion, wisdom is needed.

It seems that if a local congregation is to thrive and grow numerically and spiritually there must be a keen loyalty on the part of the membership toward the work of the congregation. Surely, when a member of a local congregation is planning his activities in life he will, to the VERY BEST OR HIS ABILITY, take the local congregation's welfare into consideration. Due to his love for that work he will endeavor to put the activities of that church above his own personal activities and especially if these activities are in the realm of leisure or recreation. The world must take a back seat to the church at *All Times!* It's never right to put the secular before the spiritual if the church suffers because of it. To put ball clubs, civic organizations, schools, family and a myriad of other such things before the church just isn't right! (Mk. 12:30; Lk.14:25-37; Mt. 4:10; 6:33).

There are times when we might be away from the

local congregation engaging in a spiritually uplifting program, but nonetheless our absence robs from the local effort. It doesn't seem at all in the best interest of the local work to miss the Gospel Meeting, Homecoming, V.B.S., World missions Forum, and so forth, to attend similar programs in other locales. These are local efforts that call for a united effort and unity or purpose on the part of all. Faithful devoted Christians (With the local church's interest at heart) would not miss unless it was absolutely necessary.

Every individual ought to feel the need to take his or her proper place during such functions. I know there will be times when being away cannot be avoided but it seems it should be the exception and not the rule.

I do not think dynamic, growing and soul saving churches are developed where there is a lack of loyalty to the local work. We'll never flourish locally as we should with a divided allegiance. It is not in the best interest of the local work to attend a spiritual activity in another place if by doing so we fail to support what is taking place at home. Well, what if one does attend a spiritual activity in another place, if by doing so we fail to support what is taking place at home? Well, what if one does attend a spiritual effort away from home and in the process neglects the home church's activity? Has he sinned? No! He hasn't sinned because both were spiritual activities and right within themselves. However, if loyalty to the local congregation is to be maintained then wisdom would dictate that the individual remain at home and assist the cause of the home front.

I suspect that congregations that do not have a strong allegiance to the local church will never have much of an impact although they may continue to exist. Churches that are seemingly having the greatest impact

are those where the members are serving with a *devoted love* and *loyalty* to the local body of which they are a part.

If my opinion should be valid in this matter, I can only hope that the majority of the local congregation feels the same.

THE PRE-EXISTENT CHRIST

Jesus Christ, in His Pre-existent state in heaven, was in the form of God. We read in Phillipians 2:6-8 "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." This verse reveals that Jesus was in the *form* of God and *equal* with God.

In Genesis 1:1 we read, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." In the Hebrew language of the Old Testament, the name of God is Elohim, which is plural. In Genesis 1:26 we read, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth." Please notice that God said, "*Let us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness."

This confirms the passage in Phil. 2:6-8 that says Jesus was in the form of God and equal with God in the beginning. Christ created all things (Col. 1:14-18; 1:1-3).

Jesus emptied himself of his diety and "took upon

himself the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men (Phil. 2:7). He condescended to becoming lower than the angels, in order to position himself to die on a cross so that all mankind could be saved. God manifested his love for mankind by allowing his son to be a propitiation for our sins (I Jn. 2:2; 4:10).

"Made himself of no reputation", comes from two Greek words, and they are rendered, "emptied himself" by the Englishman Greek New Testament; four other translations render them the same. Jesus gave up the form that He enjoyed in heaven before coming to this earth and took upon himself the form of a man. "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:8; Heb. 5:8-9).

Jesus Christ stands as the most wonderful character of all time. As He approached death, He spoke again of His Pre-existent state in Jn. 17:5 saying, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."

Isn't it exciting that God reveals the great truth of the pre-existent Christ unto us in His Word!

PAUL'S THORN IN THE FLESH

Recently I was asked, "What was Paul's thorn in the flesh?" This question is often asked in Bible Class situations and in private discussion. Therefore, I thought it worthwhile to devote a few lines to this question.

"And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan

to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (II Cor. 12:7-9). "For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak and his speech contemptible" (II Cor. 10:10). The above scriptures provide us the facts for our discussion.

It should be noted first of all that Paul was given this thorn in the flesh for a purpose. Because Paul had been blessed with revelations in abundance there was the danger of his being filled with pride or improperly exalting himself.

Let us secondly note that this thorn in the flesh was a "messenger of Satan to buffet." This thorn brought pain to Paul, and constantly reminded him that he was but a frail human being.

What was this bodily affliction that was given to Paul? Apparently this affliction was also humiliating to Paul! He said, "Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus" (Gal. 4:13-14). Whatever this infirmity of the flesh was it was of such nature that they could easily have despised Paul because of it. The Bible does not specifically state what this thorn of affliction actually was, but a careful study of several passages gives us some reason to believe it was an affliction dealing with the eyes.

Paul stated, "Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been

possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me" (Gal. 4:15). Why would they have offered their eyes if Paul's eyes were as good as their own? In Acts 23:1-5, Paul demonstrated visual problems in that he did not recognize Ananias the high priest when it should have been obvious to him who he was speaking to.

Paul's thorn served its purpose, and Paul stated that he gloried in his infirmities because God's Grace was bestowed upon him enabling him to endure it. God's strength is made perfect in weakness!

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

(PART I)

A Christian must do all that he does by faith. Paul said, "For we walk by faith, not by sight (II Cor. 5:7)." How does faith come? Paul stated in Rom. 10:17, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Therefore, if we are to use the instrument in our worship to God there must be some authority found in God's word for its use. However, God's word is silent relative to the use of mechanical instruments of music in New Testament worship.

There are two basic approaches to studying God's word. One approach is to reason that if the Bible doesn't expressly condemn a thing it is alright to do it. This is to operate on the silence of the scripture. Another approach is to reason that, if the Bible doesn't expressly authorize a thing to be done that there is no way to scripturally do that thing. The approach one takes in his

study of the Bible will determine whether he uses the instrument or whether he refuses its use.

Faith comes by hearing the word of God. Paul said, "So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Since God's word doesn't even mention the instrument in New Testament worship then there is no way of using it by faith. Let it be remembered that Paul said "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23). It seems reasonable that if God intended for us to use the instrument in worship to Him it would be mentioned in His word.

What kind of music is commended? Paul wrote, "... I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also (I Cor. 14:15). To the Ephesians he wrote, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19). To the Colossians he wrote, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3:16). The Hebrew writer said, "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name" (Heb. 13:15). In these and other passages the music mentioned in the Bible is singing or vocal. Why change it or add to it? Why not simply sing as the early Christians did? Why not offer praise to God with the fruit of the *lips* as the Hebrew writer instructed? To do more is to be presumptuous and to add to what God said. Why not *sing* and make *melody* in the *heart*? This can be done by faith for God has told us through the written word that such is acceptable.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC,

(PART II)

We are deeply indebted to brother M.C. Kurfees for writing his book entitled, "Instrumental Music in Worship." In that book he has this to say about the use of a lexicon.

"In the meantime, as an aid to a proper appreciation of the argument from the lexicons, we present here a summary of their definitions:

1. Radical meaning, TO TOUCH, regardless of the particular object touched, the latter not inhering in the word.

2. Meaning as applied in Great literature:

- (1) To pluck the hair.
- (2) To twang the bowstring.
- (3) To twitch a carpenter's line.
- (4) To touch the chords of a musical instrument, that is, to make instrumental music.
- (5) To touch the chords of the human heart is, to sing, to celebrate with hymns of praise.

3. Thus, according to the lexicons, here are five separate and distinct meanings of psallo growing out of the original idea, all of which it has borne at one time or another during the progress of the centuries. Now, in view of these facts, what shall we say is the meaning of the word? Out of five well-defined and distinct meanings, shall we select one of them, and then affirm, regardless of the time when used, or any other circumstances, that

this is the meaning of the word? If so, which one of the five meanings shall it be, and why? As we have them here numbered, shall it be the first one? If so, why so? If not, why not? According to the highest standard authorities, the word at one time meant "to pluck the hair." Now, when Christians assemble to worship God, may they proceed, Nehemiah-like (Neh. 13:25), "to pluck off their hair" as a part of that worship? If not, why not? Does the reader say that such an act in the worship of God would be silly? We reply that it would, indeed, be silly and sinful, too, for that matter, but certainly not because that was not a meaning of psallo. Such worshipers could promptly defend themselves by appealing but to the Greek lexicons and to the Bible. They could show from standard Greek lexicons that "psallo" had that meaning, and that the New Testament authorized them, if we may accept a coined word, to "psallo."

The same course could be pursued with reference to the second and third meanings, which are "to twang the bowstring" and to twitch a "carpenter's line." Both of these were meanings of "psallo" vouched for by lexicons of the highest authority. May we, therefore, contend for twanging the bowstring and twitching the carpenter's line IN THE WORSHIP OF GOD? If not, why not? If it be replied that these meanings, which the word had before the New Testament period, but that in the new Testament it has no such meaning, then we reply by admitting the fact, and making the point that this is precisely what is true of the fourth meaning also. This fact abundantly appears as our investigation proceeds.

In the meantime, we now see the necessity for wise discrimination in the use of lexicons, and that it does not follow, because a given definition of a word appears in a

lexicon, that therefore the word always had, and still has, that meaning.

"It must not be evident to the thoughtful reader that, when the lexicons attach a given meaning to a word, we should still inquire, when did the word have that meaning? Or did the word have that meaning at one time or place, and then cease to have it at another time or place? And hence, any argument based on our term psallo which does not take account of all these facts and considerations is unsound and misleading.