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Hickory Grove church of Christ  
1131 Hickory Grove Rd.  
Almo, KY 42020-9332

Return Services Requested

Sunday Services:  
*Bible Classes* 9:00 a.m.  
*Worship* 10:00 a.m. 6:00 p.m.  
Wednesday:  
*Bible Study* 7:00 p.m.

## What Do You See?

This provoking question has many applications. Speaking of John the Baptist, Jesus essentially asks, When you look at him, what do you see? — A soft person? A compromiser? James says the “the word” is like a “mirror.” What do you see when you look at yourself in that mirror?

Jeremiah (C. 1) was given a daunting preaching job — “unto the nations.” He was not flattered; he panicked. God, however, said, “be not afraid... I have put my words in thy mouth.” In another preparatory session, God asked, “What seest thou?” Jeremiah responded, “a rod of an almond-tree” and “a boiling cauldron [with the] face... from the north.”

The almond tree blossoms in January when other trees are still dormant. When people saw it they new Spring was soon to come. Just as the almond tree watches over the beginning of the season, so the Lord is watching to bring judgment on Israel’s sins. The overall message of the Book of Jeremiah is simple: The warning of judgment by all those former preachers: It is about to happen. Judgment was imminent. The rod of the almond tree said, God keeps his word: whether by blessing or by warning.

The boiling cauldron up north, was tipped precariously and its contents were about to be poured down on the south. Babylon (up north) was going to pour out wrath on Judah (down south).

The almond-tree branch and the boiling pot reminded Jeremiah that God does not make idle threats. His judgment is sure. Many christians skip assemblies; don’t study their Bibles; engage in works of the flesh; put their own interests first; don’t participate in the church’s good works. They need to look at the rod of the almond-tree and the boiling cauldron.

—AA

### FOR YOUR ADDRESS BOOK

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## Scriptural Response to Liberalism

*Having been forewarned by inspiration that brethren would “depart from the faith,” that some would not “endure sound doctrine,” and that many false prophets had “gone out into the world,” we are now seeing this in reality as we have never seen it before. Our Lord must be weeping as he did over those in Jerusalem who would not receive Him. But thanks be to God that He has provided us with an unfailing response to this evil that we now call Liberalism — His inspired word.*

EDITOR’S NOTE: The above topic was carried in Banner of Truth a few years ago, but due to the rapid spread and dominance of liberalism, we are carrying it again. For the most part it is the original article, but some revisions have occurred.

A “sickly” and “sleeping” brotherhood is being swept by a scourge of pernicious liberalism, which is being encouraged by a growing number of influential and ultraliberal brethren among us. Outside the church, a most liberal political force is out in force, upholding that which is completely contrary to God’s will for man. Politicians run on platforms of ungodliness, because many would have it so. The very liberal bias of the news media and the entertainment industry are creating a climate which is very conducive to the furtherance of this evil. Even man-made religions in general are turning more and more away from a true

belief in God and His word. True hope for the well-being of the cause of Christ in the days ahead depends largely upon what is now “a remnant” of truly devoted, God-fearing brethren who are unafraid to “contend... for the faith” as they become and persist as active participants in the **Scriptural Response to Liberalism**. If ever there was a time to arise and “put on the whole armor of God,” it is now.

### WHAT IS LIBERALISM?

This term is somewhat difficult to define, being subject to a wide variety of definitions, not all of which suggest evil. Due to the varied use of the term we shall give our own definition, as it will be most often used in this discussion, and as it is usually understood by those of us who recognize the evils of religious liberalism and stand opposed to it. *Webster* gives this definition →

## BANNER OF TRUTH

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*Continued from Page 1*

"4. a movement in modern Protestantism that emphasizes freedom from tradition and authority in matters of belief." In our definition of liberalism we emphasize the latter portion of that definition, *freedom from authority in the area of belief*. Our working definition of the term is: **Liberalism involves an attitude and/or action which reject God's word as the complete and absolute authority for belief and practice in the realm of spiritual things.** When a person is characterized by the idea of freedom from authority in the area of belief, there is no limit to the unscriptural things which may be believed and practiced, since God's word is no longer accepted as the sole authority.

The liberalism of which I speak is exemplified by quite a variety of things, things which are not authorized by God's word. A *liberal*, therefore, may accept one or more from the following list, which is by no means exhaustive. The liberal may believe: 1. Silence of the Scriptures is authority for a practice. 2. One's subjective feelings, and desires justify actions. 3. All

activities in worship and service need not have Bible authority. 4. There are few restrictions relative to Christian conduct in daily living. 5. Faith does not mean "Taking God at His word." 6. God's word may not mean what it clearly says, as we have learned from the current "New Hermeneutic." 7. The KJV and ASV are old and outdated and should be cast aside for new and modern versions, such as the NIV. 8. Preaching and teaching should always be *positive*. 9. Our "five stepper," "Scripture quoting," "radical," "Church of Christ" preachers are unloving and out of date. 10. Salvation is by "grace alone" and/or "faith alone." 11. We should not speak out against and/or criticize our denominational friends. 12. Arrogating to himself authority which God has not given.

**Arrogating Authority.** When thinking about liberalism we usually think in terms of ignoring what God's word says, and engaging in things which are not authorized by God's word. This is, indeed, liberalism. But, it is also liberalism to claim authority for belief and practice of things when there is no biblical authority. This is a quite common practice in our time. For example, a preacher may claim he has authority to fellowship, even preach for, man-made churches. It is not uncommon for elders to claim authority that God has not given them. Some people even think that whatever elders say is to be obeyed. But that is not so. It is only when elders act in harmony with the authority that God has given them that they are to be respected. Even elders, when in error, are to be rebuked in a public way (1 Tim. 5:20).

The desire for unauthorized power has caused many problems. An example of being power hungry is found in the apostle John's third epistle: "I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not" (3 John 9). I have known a number of brethren who loved to have "preeminence." It is not uncommon for churches to effectively have "one man" elderships, that is, a single individual claiming the rightful authority of an eldership. In some cases, one elder is "the elder" in that he makes the decisions and the others follow. To arrogate to one's self power which God has not given him is to show disrespect to God's word, and disrespect for God's word is indeed a trademark of a liberal. †

## Figures and Dark Sayings

May we assume that the Book of Proverbs accomplishes its stated objective? Surely. The objective? There is a concern for "wisdom," "instruction," "wise dealing," "prudence," "knowledge," and "discretion"; and the book says it can enable a person to "know," "discern," and "increase in learning." It further says that it is designed for the betterment of "the simple," "the young man," as well as the "wise man." May we then further assume that a person who does not *know* the Book of Proverbs is not a smart or learned person? Surely. Put another way: People generally desire to be smart; learning the Proverbs will make a person smart; therefore, people desiring to be smart should learn the Proverbs.

The Book of Proverbs presents an even greater challenge. The Spirit has also given us this book in that we might: "understand a proverb, and a figure, the words of the wise, and their dark sayings" (1:6). Not everything is what it seems to be on the surface. Sometimes one has to "stop and think," to ponder and imagine. A "proverb" is a saying, a parable; a "figure" [interpretation, KJV] is a symbol, a unique twist on something; and "dark sayings" are enigmas or riddles.

I personally think that over the years, from our pulpits and Bible classes, we have received too much of a steady diet of "keep it simple," and I think that the diet has long since begun to show. We have at least a couple of generations of Christians who way too easily balk at hearing, reading, thinking about and learning things that take any effort at all. Some things in the Bible are "hard to be understood" (2 Pet 3:16); yet, they can be understood through patient and diligent thought and study. A good place to go for that kind of "exercise" is the Book of Proverbs because a study of it will help us to "understand...a figure...and...dark sayings."

Be curious; be determined; don't be so easy to curl up and say, "That's just too hard for me."

—AA

## Different Kinds of Smart

There are book smarts, street smarts, people smarts, business smarts, and so on. The truth is, for a successful life, you need some of all of these, plus more. Little, if any, of this comes naturally, which is why the Spirit is concerned that we "receive instruction" (Prov 1:3). Our (English) "instruction," is from (Hebrew) *musar* which carries the idea of discipline, correction; even a formal discipline and approach to things. We tend to have a pretty shallow concept of discipline thinking that it's limited to punishment or a whipping; it's broader than that. The fact is the Book of Proverbs is a "formal discipline and approach to things." In other words, it's a manual on all kinds of "smarts." For it to work, however, we must "receive [*laqach*]" it, i.e. take it in hand, carry it along with oneself.

This manual is not only for the "young man" (v. 4), but for the "wise man" (v. 5) as well. Stupidity is unbiased when it comes to age. The manual will train a person in such things as: "wise dealing" [wisdom, KJV], "righteousness," "justice" [judgment, KJV], "equity," and "discretion" (vv. 3,4). A manual like this must have made its author a billionaire; surely there are millions of frayed and worn copies of this amazing book. We know better: talk about your secret hidden in plain sight. Look at that list again: Wise dealing [*sakal*]—insight, circumspection, that which causes success; righteousness [*tsedek*]—rightness, what is right or normal; justice [*mishpat*]—straight, right; equity [*meshar*]—even, level, smooth; and discretion [*mezimmah*]—purpose, device, as in choosing the right course of action.

A person lacking in any of these areas is at best going to have a hard row to hoe, and at worst he's going to be miserable; most live somewhere betwixt the two. As Christians, sometimes our troubles "need be" (1Pe 1:6). We can't "go out of the world" (1Co 5:10), and if you are a faithful Christian "marvel not...if the world hateth you" (1Jno 3:13). In the meantime, it is the height of folly for anyone to be taking it on the chin because they don't know and live by "the proverbs of Solomon." —AA

“Hope your health is improving. We appreciate all you are doing for the church. Thanks for sending the bundle of B.O.T. to Tyree Chapel church of Christ. We pass them out and share with others. Use this small contribution for where you need it most. In Christian love – **J.W. Grace and family.**” – **KY.** (*We thank you so much for your passing out of B.O.T., and your contribution. More people will read when given something, rather than picking it up. My health is much improved over last year. For that I’m thankful.* – Editor).

“Walter, the enclosed check is for your personal support. We want to remain anonymous, please. We wish the amount could be more, but we feel it can’t at this time. God bless...” (*As we said earlier, every gift, regardless of the amount is greatly appreciated. I wish I had the time to personally thank every person and congregation which has a part in making our work possible.* – Editor).

“Your paper means much to me. Please add these names to your mailing list for BOT. Such a fine publication! I pray it continues to be so, and for God to bless each one putting it out – **Hibernia Weaver.**” – **AR.**

“I received Vol. 15 #2 today. I commend you for standing for the truth, especially the article, ‘Liberals and Their View of Matthew 18:15-17.’ It is very easy to see this passage is speaking of a personal matter between two people. If a person preaches error from the pulpit, teaches error in a Bible class, or even a student in a Bible class makes a false statement, it should be corrected then and there. I do think [that] as ... Christian[s], we have an obligation to try to restore (Gal. 6:1) such a person, but not before the false teaching is corrected. .... Keep up the good teaching of truth – **Joe C. Turbeville.**” – **TN.** (*That passage is certainly misused. When a preacher or teacher sets forth error in a public way, it should be rebutted in a public way. You are correct when you say the passage refers to a personal matter between two people. It does not apply to a matter of public discussion, but some try to make it do so.* – Editor).

“Please add me to your mailing list for BOT. I was handed the March issue and do appreciate your work. May God continue to bless your faithful efforts in His service – **L. Curtis Gilbert.**” – **SC.**

“Just a note to say hi. I hope you are having a wonderful summer! I would like to ask you to pray for me, as I will be going to Jamaica on a mission trip with several others on the 20<sup>th</sup> of July. I’ve never been outside the country before, so this will be very new for me. Please pray for all of us, that all will be safe and much good will be done. Thanks much! – **Jake Taft.**” – **AL.** (*Good to know you will be going on that mission trip. You will most likely want to go again. Our prayers are with you that all will work out well* – Editor).

## The Perfect Lady

Frank Sinatra sang *Luck Be A Lady Tonight*. Luck has nothing to do with a good life; there is, however, a “lady” who can help us along the way. Inspiration calls her *chokmah* [Wisdom] who “crieth aloud in the street” (Prov 1:20).

This is the perfect woman. *Chokmah* is plural. Hebrew makes plural things of mind and morality, thus making the idea whole, perfect, or complete. So, Lady Wisdom is here plural and stands for: the absolute, the all-comprehending, full personal wisdom. Albert Barnes says, “...the noun is a feminine plural, as though this Wisdom were the queen of all wisdoms, uniting in herself all their excellences.”

Lady Wisdom is set in opposition to the “sinners [who] entice” (v. 10). Everybody has something to say; everybody listens to somebody. Lady Wisdom represents all that God says to man. God “speaks”: through the physical creation (Ps 19:1; Rom 1:18-20); through the special sense of oughtness that he put into all human beings (Rom 1:32; 2:14,15); through human experience, inasmuch as every generation can learn the hard fact that “your sin will find you out” (Num 32:23); through His revealed Word (Heb 4:7; Eph 3:1-5; 1Co 2:9-13); and, most importantly, through “the word [Christ]” who “became flesh and dwelt among us” (Jno 1:1,2,14). Isaiah foretold the coming of Jesus, he said, “the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah” (Is 11:1,2).

A lady of such elegance as Wisdom must be hard to find, especially since so few seem to know her. No. Lady Wisdom speaks openly and to all. In “the street,” the “broad places,” “the chief place of concourse,” and “in the city,” She “crieth aloud,” and “uttereth her voice” and “her words” (Pro 1:20,21). She speaks to “simple ones,” “scoffers,” and “fools” (v. 22).

We all start out as “simple ones,” but it can be a short and painful trip from becoming a “scoffer” and finally graduating to a “fool” (v. 22). The determinative question is: “How long” (v. 22) will we go without embracing and learning from Lady Wisdom? She lovingly pleads, “Turn you at my reproof: Behold, I will pour out my spirit upon you; I will make known my words unto you” (v. 23). Will you listen? —AA

To be fairly classified a liberal, one need not manifest all the possible marks of liberalism. If God’s word is knowingly and willfully rejected as being authoritative in just one area, that constitutes liberalism. As noted above in our definition of liberalism, an attitude which rejects God’s word is what we mean by the term. If God’s word can be rejected in one area, so can it be in others as well. Therefore, if our objective is to please God by following His will, we must recognize the fact of liberalism and be prepared to face it as God’s inspired word has clearly instructed us.

### FACING THE FACTS OF TODAY’S LIBERALISM

Some within the church are not aware of the frightening state of things. Some may not want to know, and others have simply failed to keep informed relative to the grave danger. And, there are some who just refuse to face reality. It seems that some are like the Israelites who said, “Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits” (Isa. 30:10). In either case, such has helped to create the condition in which we find ourselves relative to liberalism. No doubt but that some who read these very words will cry: “Alarmist,” “negative minded,” and “unloving.” But facts are facts whether we accept them or not; and reality is reality, even if some live in a dream world of oblivion. There is nothing good to come from the liberalism of which we speak. As we pointed out years ago, even the religions which have gone all out for liberalism have experienced drastic decline. Untold harm has been and is being done to God’s people through liberalism, and this can only be measured in terms of the multitude of lost souls.

In the following we list several **FACTS OF LIBERALISM** as seen today. Though many other examples could be given, we trust these will suffice to awaken at least a few to the spiritual dangers now faced by those who would be servants of God, and encourage them to become engaged in the **SCRIPTURAL RESPONSE TO LIBERALISM**. There is no other God-appointed way to combat it. If we fall victim to this evil, as multitudes have already fallen, we will have no one to blame but ourselves. It is tragic when accountable people will not heed the many warnings set forth in God’s word.

### THE EXTENT OF TODAY’S LIBERALISM

All across our country, and even in foreign lands, faithful brethren are voicing their concern about the liberalism in their respective areas. An elder in this area said to me recently, “Over half the congregations have already gone into apostasy.” Well over half the congregations in our area are on the road of liberalism, and it gets worse as time goes by. It has been stated that in the Nashville, TN, area (with some 130 or more congregations) only a very few are sound. A preacher from Arkansas said that in a given area of, I believe 28 congregations, only two or three would be considered as sound. It is a matter of fact that in many cities or areas where several congregations are located, one would be hard pressed to find even one congregation which is truly “contending for the faith” and unwilling to compromise. Now if this is not something to disturb and alarm us, would anything? I wonder?

The condition within the church today is so much like that which existed within the church more than a century ago when liberalism held sway over the greater majority of church members, and the authority of God’s word was rejected as people opted for that which pleased themselves rather than God, which is another trademark of liberalism. We know what the shameful results were. The liberal brethren took the church buildings in many instances, and went their way of digression, playing their pianos in worship, and paying the Missionary Society to evangelize, as they listened to the preaching of a diluted gospel where “silence was consent.” Of this condition a knowledgeable, and well-read man on church history, Johnny Ramsey, had the following to say a few years ago, and the present conditions are even more pronounced now than then.

Any honest, careful student of church history knows we are living again the scenes of apostasy that shattered the restoration movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Attitudes, and probably motives, are virtually parallel to the sad saga of digression that shattered the work of great servants of the Lord a century ago. The powerful emphasis of ‘What does the Bible say?’ is once again being replaced by ‘Is this acceptable to the people round about us?’ One can detect an almost worshipful atmosphere at the shrines of higher education on the →

part of brethren today. And any student of history can tell you the end results of this arrangement. Even from among those who must know better comes an appeal for cheap grace, and not the deeply based teaching of the commands of Christ. It would appear that some are willfully ignorant (2 Pet. 3:5) as they wrest the Scriptures and go about seeking their own righteousness (Rom. 10:2; 2 Pet. 3:15-16). While they often speak of liberty and freedom in Christ, they and their devotees become the abject slaves of error (2 Pet. 2:17-22).

Brother Ramsey's words cannot be successfully denied, and he could have pointed out many other things. One thing which should also be mentioned is that among the liberals of today, some are fellowshipping denominational men in preaching, and in fellowship with the Christian Church and other denominations. Yes, it is much later than so many of us think. It is time to awake.

Another movement of liberalism and apostasy is that of the current effort to join, in full fellowship with the Christian Church. We have not seen such an extensive effort as this. It involves many brethren and congregations. Jeff Walling, an apostate for many years, is among the influential leaders in this liberal move. Earlier this year Jeff Walling was the keynote speaker at the North American Christian Convention (the annual meeting of instrumental Christian Churches). Walling pleads with several thousand people to go home and follow his example. One report says "as many as 1,000 members of a cappella congregations stood and accepted the challenge." The challenge to follow Walling's example boils down to this: full fellowship with the Christian Church. Also present at the convention were: Marvin Phillips, Jerry Taylor, Royce Money of Abilene, and Mike Westerfield, President of Rochester College.

#### LIBERALISM IN OUR SCHOOLS

There is not a single one of our sizable brotherhood colleges or universities that I know about, which has not already gone deep into liberalism, or headed in that direction. The fact that some deny this is just more evidence that many people no longer recognize liberalism, or for some reason will not admit its existence. This will simply encourage further inroads of

liberalism. When schools become, as they have with some, a "sacred cow," the influence of these schools, including that of liberalism, will be reflected in congregations where those people preach, teach, or participate as members. Some powerful lessons can be learned from history, by those who care to learn. In some instances schools have rendered great services for which I am personally thankful. When, however, the "tail begins to wag the dog," things have gone too far.

We do not have the space to discuss in detail such schools as: Abilene, Freed-Hardeman, Pepperdine, Lipscomb, Rochester College, and Faulkner. But the evidence of their affinity for various forms of liberalism is fully evident.

We do want to call attention to a recent activity of Abilene Christian University. The story is told in a nutshell by the headline of an article by Garland Robinson (*Seek the Old Paths*). That headline reads, *Abilene Christian University Allows Homosexual Rights Group on Campus*. The article points out a statement by Jack Reese, Dean of the College of biblical studies that says so much, and exemplifies the progression of liberalism: "We were the first school to allow them to come on campus and make presentations to our students, the first to receive them with full hospitality..." Garland's entire article was carried in the June issue of BOT. Brethren, just think of the evil influence of liberalism being spread around by this school of "about 4,000 undergraduate and 800 graduate students." A heartbreaking thing about this is that our brethren will likely continue to support Abilene Christian with money and students. As our schools go, and have been going for some time, helps explain the pernicious liberalism which has and is engulfing us at such a rapid pace.

#### TODAY'S RASH OF MODERN VERSIONS

There is absolutely no evidence that I have seen, that today's modern versions in any way contribute to a greater respect for God's word as our sole authority in religious matters. But to the contrary, where modern versions are used extensively liberalism will generally be evident, and respect for God's word will be less. In view of this it should be of great concern to those who love Truth, that outcries from faithful brethren concerning the proliferation of modern, ↓

### FELLOW-HELPERS

May, June, July 2006

Berea	100.00
Saks	180.00
West Road	200.00
Chardon	50.00
Palmer'sville	100.00
Pine Ridge	100.00
Pilot Oak	50.00
Damon Road	100.00
Special Gift for foreign mailing	1,000.00
Barbara Kist	60.00
Robert M. Price	600.00
Phyllis Mitchell	55.00
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Hibernia Weaver	5.00
Shirley Phillips	30.00
Mrs. John H. Brown	75.00
David Hammer	5.00
Anonymous	100.00
R.L. Richard	25.00
Lucille Krantz	25.00
Martha E. Lewey	25.00
Mrs. Anthony Gullo	20.00
Alton W. Fonville	200.00
James W. Smith	50.00
Clarence Whiteman	100.00
Betty Riddle	10.00
Total May-July contribution	
3,290.00	

#### "Fellow-helpers to the truth" (3 John 8)

Words fail to allow us to fully express our most sincere appreciation for those individuals and congregations who make our work possible. We are so thankful to have them as *fellowhelpers* in getting the truth out to thousands of people who might not otherwise have it presented to them. The greatest good we can do for others is to present the Truth to them and encourage them to faithfully follow it. Paul admonishes us to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:12). This admonition certainly includes taking the truth to others, even within the entire world. Christ's command just before He ascended was: "Go into all the world, and preach

### Banner of Truth Financial Report

May, June, July 2006

Balance on hand May 18,	405.90
May, June, July contribution	3,290.00
Total funds available	11,695.90
Total expenses:	
Mailing B.O.T. & other postage	2,455.43
(This does not include more than \$500 which is yet to be paid for July mailing)	
Supplies	9.20
Envelopes	166.76
Phone	12.80
Travel	28.00
Flyers for BOT lectures	50.90
Video	35.00
Mailing labels	103.55
Total expenses	2,861.64
Total funds available	11,695.90
Less expenses	2,861.64
Balance on hand July 30,2006	8,834.26

We are thankful that our financial balance is good. This shows the interest of our brethren who continue to supply our needs for the paper, as those needs continue to increase in mailing costs and paper, and other things. —Editor

### Readers' Response

"Brethren, I would like to receive Banner of truth. My name and address is: . . . I'm a member of the Front Street church of Christ in Milan, TN, where bro. Charles Taylor is the minister. Thank you – **Julie Word.**" – TN.

"Bro. Pigg, this is not much, but my prayer is that it will help. I love your work .." (*Name withheld by editor*). *Your gift is greatly appreciated. Every gift, in whatever amount, is welcomed and it plays an important part in making our work possible. Thank you! – Editor.*

"Would you please mail me your monthly news letter or bulletin, or whatever you call it. It tells about issues in the church today. My mom and dad were born and raised near Hickory Grove church. During the depression we lived on a farm near the church and attended it. A friend of mine was on vacation and picked one up. I saw it, would love to be on your mailing list for it. I would gladly send a check for the cost of mailing it to me – **Betty Riddle.**" – MI. (*Glad to enter your name. We don't change anything for the paper. We do appreciate gifts since that is the means by which the paper is made possible. – Editor.*) →

## BANNER OF TRUTH IN ITS 15TH YEAR

I started the *Banner of Truth* in March of 1992. Naomi and I spent a little more than three years in mission work in Taipei, Taiwan. About a year after our return stateside, we began work with the New Hope church of Christ, near Middleton, Tennessee. I first started a bulletin and called it *Banner of Truth*, but did not mail it out. In March of 1992, we got a postal permit and began mailing just over two hundred copies of the *Banner of Truth*.

In January 1994, we moved near Murray, Kentucky, and the Hickory Grove congregation became the sponsor of *Banner of Truth* and has continued until the present. Our mailing list has increased to well over seven thousand. We have also had six *Banner of Truth* lectureships here in Murray.

A note on the masthead of the paper states the purpose of *Banner of Truth*—

Published monthly and sent free to interested persons. Made possible by the contributions of congregations and individuals. Our purpose is to: 1) Teach and uphold God's truth; 2) Encourage mission efforts to seek the lost; 3) Oppose that which is "contrary to sound doctrine" and not in harmony with the "doctrine of Christ."

It has been our purpose from the beginning to send the paper primarily to Christians with view toward addressing present challenges. Given the nature of the subject matter, some things may not be the best material to send to non-Christians. Their needs are best met in other formats.

The *Banner of Truth* has been more successful than we could have imagined in the beginning. We have received so much encouragement from the readers, and comparatively little criticism. The ratio of positive over negative response is easily 20:1. We are not naive and naturally expect some negative response, but we encourage people to respond to our content either way. We carry some of the response received from readers, but that is only a very small portion of what we receive via e-mail and other means.

The financial support, in generosity and consis-

teny, of those congregations and individuals which make *Banner of Truth* possible has been short of amazing. Since early on in the beginning, we have not had to make a plea for financial support.

The circulation of *Banner of Truth* is most satisfying; it goes to just about every state in our country, and to hundreds of people in other countries. We have received requests from faraway places such as: Sweden, Nepal, New Guinea and others. Several years' of *Banner of Truth* are available on David Lemmon's website: BOT.LemmonsAid.net

It makes us feel that our work is worthwhile in that different people use the material we carry in teaching, and for reference. Several people from the African countries speak so highly of the material and express their appreciation for it.

*Banner of Truth* has earned a reputation for standing up for the "old paths," and opposing things contrary to God's will. A good friend, now living in Arizona, related how his search for a sound congregation. Visiting one church and seeing *Banner of Truth* on display he had found one.

Our Plans For The Future? Few of us know for certain what the future holds relative to our well-being and ability to carry on in the Lord's work. God has given me eighty years; he may give me several more. If the Lord so grants me more time, it is my intention to use it in connection with the *Banner of Truth*. I sincerely believe that I have accomplished more through this means than I have ever accomplished by located preaching. Through the *Banner*, I communicate with several thousand, whereas by preaching it is a very small number in comparison.

I would like to see the circulation of *Banner of Truth* increase to ten thousand. This would involve more labor and expense, but I am optimistic enough to believe it can be found. I believe there are a great many brethren who would want to be on our mailing list if they knew about the paper. Our readers could help us greatly by finding other interested individuals to add to our mailing list.

We solicit the prayers of our readers that we may have several more years in which we will be able physically and mentally to continue our work in behalf of the cause of Christ.

—Editor

unreliable versions of the Bible are being heard less and less. Though it should not be, time seems to be on the side of liberalism; the resistance of the faithful to error seems to wear down with time. Often when error first appears, some are disturbed; but with the passing of time slumber returns. We must be aware of this and constantly renew our determination to stand, and encourage others to do likewise.

As mentioned in the October 1993 issue of BOT, the "Campaign America" organization is pushing the use of the NIV through literature sent out to callers. They are critical of the KJV making it appear that one would have a hard time learning the truth from it. The *Gospel Minutes*, weekly circulation 100,000+, recommends and regularly cites the NIV. Many preachers and teachers have learned the truth from the KJV or ASV in the past and people can still do so today, if they desire to do so.

### LIBERALISM THROUGH THE POWERFUL, PRINTED PAGE

The widespread use of written material which promotes liberalism is increasing among preachers and members day by day. Not only is the material by our own liberal brethren being promoted and sold by bookstores, such as FHU and other places, this is also true of the writings of such men as: Swindol, Schuler, Graham, et al. Materials from these false teachers (liberals) are cropping up more often in the writings of men who claim to be sound. Bible Class and VBS materials which have not been influenced by liberalism are becoming more scarce and difficult to find. The time was that a number of sound materials were available.

Liberalism brought in by the printed page is just as destructive as that delivered from the pulpit or the teacher's lectern. But some seem to be unaware of this. Take for example, a congregation which claims to stand firm for truth, but allows liberalism to come into the congregation by way of the printed page. Liberalism is only one of the Devil's devices, but he promotes it in many effective ways. It is my belief that the printed page is the most effective way of communication. For example, where would the Jehovah's Witnesses be if it were not for their printed page? The printed page is also effective for the promotion of truth, and there can hardly be too much of that kind.

### SILENT PREACHERS AND TEACHERS ENCOURAGE LIBERALISM

By silent, I do not have in mind those who say little. Their silence is in a different way. There are more preachers and teachers now who, though they would not teach a false doctrine, will not raise their voice against the error of liberalism. Such action as this is a rejection of God's authority, which demands that truth be used in the battle against error. But some still remain silent. Just a few days ago a friend related to me how that he had heard a preacher recently, who through his teaching had taught a friend out of the Masonic Lodge. My friend asked this well-known preacher, who left the church for many years but has supposedly been restored, if he was still teaching men out of the Masonic Lodge. The preacher's response was, "I don't preach anything but positive anymore." In other words, he was no longer willing to declare the "whole counsel of God." Others have become unwilling to preach the whole truth and nothing but the truth. How sad.

More than 30 years ago I heard the same preacher preach a powerful sermon on *The Dangers of Liberalism*. He could not do that now, it would involve the negative. Anyone who will not preach negatives as well as positives has rejected the authority of God's word, thus making that one a liberal. Those who want the truth instead of error should reject such preachers and teachers. Liberal-minded people do not like negatives, but when their error is shown up for what it is, they some times use negatives very freely in their opposition to lovers of the truth. I know from my own personal experience. Their pretended "love" may even turn into hate.

### LIBERALS SUPPORTED BY CONGREGATIONS

For the most part, liberal preachers are supported in their liberalism by congregations where they preach. But in some instances a liberal preacher may be supported by congregations which claim to stand for the truth. An example of this occurred in an area-wide meeting in Corinth, MS, some years ago. Nine congregations were listed as "participating congregations." At least one of the congregations listed, and their preacher, would quickly affirm that they →

stand for the truth. But the preacher in that meeting, the well known Larry West, is very liberal, even as affirmed by his heart broken father in a public statement which I heard. Therefore, the nine congregations supported liberalism. Whether this was done deliberately or through ignorance does not change the fact or nullify the influence.

The “Jubilee” in Nashville, TN, the very epitome of liberalism, has been supported by a number of congregations in Middle Tennessee. Each one of those supporting congregations was a partaker in liberalism. Twenty or thirty years ago most of those congregations would have been considered sound. If such actions as the above, and so many others, do not tell us something as to the state of the church, we simply do not want to be told, or we don’t care.

#### **THE PREACHING OF GOD’S WORD IS BEING RESTRICTED**

Some forty or fifty years ago, many preachers affirmed that they would preach God’s word “without fear or favor of man,” and they meant it and were not restricted in doing so; it is different now. That expression is not often heard nowadays. Why? More and more preachers are being restricted in what they preach. Of course, some preachers don’t mind being restricted since they don’t want to preach the whole truth anyway, a characteristic of liberals.

In this day of “divorce for every cause,” the preaching of God’s law on marriage and divorce (Matt. 19:9), simply would not be tolerated in a growing number of congregations where God’s law is not properly respected. A preacher will not get very far in some congregations if he chooses to preach on the “works of the flesh,” including such sins as social drinking, dancing, mixed bathing, immodesty, etc. In fact, I had a letter from a good friend in which he said the following with reference to the elders of the congregation where he had worked less than a year, before having to move on. The preacher said:

In April this year they called me in and told me I could not preach on the works of the flesh, Masonry, marriage, divorce and remarriage, [and] denominationalism because the people did not want to hear about such. This was judging, according to Matt. 7, they said... The oldest ‘elder’ told me I

could not call names such as ‘Baptist,’ ‘Methodist,’ etc. because such was not in the Bible. The same man did not know the terms ‘bishop’ and ‘pastor/shepherd’ also pertained to an elder, or how it applied. It is not difficult to see why the church is in trouble today.

This preacher has a good knowledge of God’s word and believes it should be preached in its fullness and without compromise.

Yesterday I had a call from a young, discouraged preacher, who had to leave a congregation due to unfair treatment and restrictions on what he could preach. He was restricted to preaching *only positives*. Needless to say, submitting to such conditions would be compromising the Truth, and make of one a liberal.

In more recent years, with quite a few congregations, it has become out of bounds to call attention to errors in our brotherhood schools, including that of liberalism, as mentioned earlier. The liberal influence of a school upon the congregations in this area is unmistakable to any observing person, and few preachers mention such.

Calling attention to the dangers of modern, unreliable versions of the Bible is a no-no in some circles. It would hit a sensitive spot in many places, since their use is upheld by many congregations, even by elders, teachers and preachers.

Though Christ spoke rather specifically with regard to the Pharisees, Sadducees and their error, speaking out on the errors of denominationalism will not be tolerated in an increasing number of places. And, when it comes to being specific, unless a preacher is ready to receive flak, even moving orders, he best not follow the example of Paul and call the names of rank false teachers, as did Paul in his naming of Hymenaeus and Alexander, who “concerning faith” had “made shipwreck” (1 Tim. 1:10-20), and Hymenaeus and Philetus, who had erred concerning the truth “saying that he resurrection is past already,” overthrowing “the faith of some” (2 Tim. 2:17-18). Sadly, too many preachers are willing to abide by restrictions, even though God’s word is compromised in doing so. I never want it to be said of me that I would not abide by and stand for my convictions. †

## HOW TO BECOME A CHRISTIAN

The most important and rewarding information one can ever come to know is that of how to become a Christian and live a faithful life. The reward of the same is eternity in heaven, the home of the soul.

Even before the fall of man it was in God’s plan to provide mankind with a way by which he could overcome sin, and ultimately be rewarded far beyond our ability to even comprehend. The first allusion to God’s plan is found in Genesis 3:15. The inspired record says, “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”

This way or plan of God would be carried out through Abraham and his descendants, through whom Christ would be brought on the scene as the Savior of those who would obey His him.

The apostle Paul refers to God’s eternal plan in Ephesians 3:10-11. “To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Now, in order to be the recipients of that which God purposed eternally in Christ Jesus our Lord, it is necessary to be a part of the church, which is a manifestation of God’s wisdom. But in spite of the magnificence of that which God has made available through Christ, eternal salvation of the soul, most people are unaware of the fact that in order to receive that eternal blessing, one must be a Christian. And as a Christian, as revealed in the New Testament, it is necessary for one to be a part of the church, for which Christ gave His blood to purchase (Acts 20:28).

When Christ came to earth to be the Savior, He offered Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of man (Heb. 2:9). Those who became followers of Christ were referred to as “disciples.” Those disciples would be referred to as “Christians,” as in Acts 11:26: “And the disciples were called Christians, first in Antioch.” We find the apostle Peter referring to Christians, when he said, “Yet, if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.”

“Agrippa said unto Paul, almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian” (Acts 26:28).

Seeing that to enjoy the grandeurs of heaven eternally, it is necessary to be a Christian. In view of this, “How To Become A Christian” becomes all-important! From the record in the Book of Acts, the “book of conversions,” we see the steps which were taken in becoming Christians. One becomes a Christian today, just as they did in the first century as recorded in the New Testament. I do not hesitate to call the things involved in becoming a Christian “steps.” We can see those steps in the record of conversions.

**FAITH** in God is the first step taken. The writer of Hebrews says: “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” There are no Christians who did not first believe in God.

**REPENTANCE.** God now commands “all men everywhere to repent” (Acts 17:30). Peter told the Jews on Pentecost, when they asked, “what shall we do?” to repent (Acts 2:37-38).

**CONFESSION.** By this we mean confessing faith in Jesus Christ. Paul makes it very clear as to the place of confession when he wrote, “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Rom. 10:10). The Ethiopian, when he requested to be baptized by Phillip, was told, “If thou believest with all thin heart thou mayest. The Ethiopian responded by saying, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God” (Acts 8:36-37).

**BAPTISM.** In every case of conversion recorded in the Book of Acts, baptism was the final step which occurred. It was at that point that the people got “into” Christ. Paul makes this clear in what he said in Galatians 3:27: “For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” This act of baptism is all-important since it is at that point that one gets into Christ, where salvation is found (2 Tim. 2:10).

As a Christian, one must live faithfully until the end of life, to receive that “crown.” —Editor

the following question: Do Christians who are unwilling to sacrifice to the fullest have a Scriptural basis for entertaining a living hope of an eternal reward in heaven?

### **CONCLUSION**

We have set forth the foregoing in an effort to alert, caring brethren as to the state of things relative to liberalism, and to offer some scriptural ways of responding to that danger. We have done so with the realization that some may say we are just being negative and overreacting. But the observations we have made are based upon valid evidence relating to the past fifty years. The New Testament is replete with warnings relative to the very conditions which exist within the church this very day. We would do well to heed those warnings and take appropriate actions to guard against such dangers.

Let no one conclude that I believe every member of the church has become a liberal. Though it is a matter of fact a great many have done so, let God be thanked for those brethren who still love the truth and are striving with all their might to live by it. Upon those faithful brethren so much depends. In the years to come their influence can mean so much relative to the course the church will take. But if that influence is fully felt for good, it will demand action in speaking out for the truth, and opposing every false way. The all-sufficient word of God will provide the faithful with essential instructions to “Fight the good fight of faith, [and] lay hold on eternal life” (I Tim. 6:12).

NOTE: In recent times several things have commenced within the church which show the even steeper dive into liberalism. There are such things as: “Progressive worship,” “Drama Teams,” “Praise Teams,” “Entertainment provide by the church.” Unscriptural innovations are coming quickly. And yet, there has never been in our time such indifference in our brotherhood. We cannot say that we have not had ample warnings in the New Testament, that such times as these would arise. But let us remember that we can withstand all the evil if we so desire. God will not suffer us to be tempted above that which we are able to withstand (I Cor. 10:13).

—Editor

## **A Preaching Brother In Dire Need**

[The following letter is self explanatory:]

Brothers in Christ: This letter, on behalf of the elders at Judsonia church of Christ, is in regards to a fellow Christian in urgent medical need. Mark Brewer is a graduate of the Northwest Florida School of Biblical Studies. Mark is serving as the pulpit minister for the Des Arc church of Christ. Mark took on this mission work two years ago under the oversight of the Judsonia church of Christ. During this time, Mark has had 24 baptisms and numerous Bible studies. The Lord’s church in Des Arc has grown 500%. Mark is 36 years old and is engaged to be married and as of a month ago, his future was bright. Mark had surgery on his gall bladder recently and the doctors discovered a problem. Mark Brewer is in desperate need of a liver transplant. Without [it] he will die. The elders at the Judsonia church have set up a fund to pay for Mark’s medical expenses. The cost of the medical expenses, including the transplant is approximately \$350,000. If there is any way you can help, please do [so]. We ask not only for your financial support, but also for the prayers of faithful brethren. Please help us spread the news of Mark to others. If you have any questions concerning this matter, please contact any one of the following [brethren listed below.] God bless you, Sid Scudder, member, Chris Collett, deacon.

[The letter closes with the signatures of the Judsonia elders:]

Dean Curtis, 501-729-3556.

Paul Farley, 501-729-5188.

Donald Loy, 501-729-0402.

Please [make] checks payable to Judsonia church of Christ and specify that the money be placed in the “Mark Brewer medical fund.” Send to: Judsonia church of Christ, P.O. Box 422, Judsonia, AR 72081.

EDITOR’S NOTE: I know our brother Mark Brewer personally, and would encourage brethren to come to his aid, both financially and in prayer.

How much do you love Christ? Did you ever stop to think — There will be no people in heaven whose first and greatest love was on earth?

### **LIBERALISM RAGES OUTSIDE THE CHURCH**

Never before in the history of our nation has there been such a powerful sociopolitical force which was determined to completely secularize our society, and snuff out the “righteousness” which “exalteth a nation.” This force encourages even the basest of sins which is “a reproach to any people” (Prov. 14:34). As this sociopolitical influence gains a greater control of the people in order to make our country a “queer” and “perverted” nation, reminiscent of Sodom and Gomorrah, the spirit of multitudes will be broken and the quest for God slackened ever further. This condition, which is the result of political liberalism, is one in which spiritual liberalism thrives. Spiritual liberalism has neither the power nor the will to impede the progress of ungodliness.

In addition to the sociopolitical influence of liberalism, we may add the far-out news media, the entertainment industry, and the abundance of pornographic material by way of the printed page, TV and videos. With the promotion of liberalism by these sources and others, the harmful effects will be seen in a greater way in the church as liberalism grows.

Now that we have considered some of the facts and the extent of liberalism, let us turn our attention to what our response should be if we would be victorious in the battle against it.

### **SCRIPTURAL RESPONSE TO LIBERALISM CONSIDERED**

It may sound somewhat redundant to suggest that the only scriptural response to liberalism is found in the Scriptures, but that is the case. God’s word is all-sufficient in providing man with instructions as to how evil may be faced and overcome. When we “abide in the doctrine of Christ” (2 Jno. 9) we have the approval of both the Father and the Son. But one of the tragedies of liberalism is that when one is engulfed by it, there is no longer a desire to offer a response to it. Liberalism, by its very nature, does not look to God’s word as the only perfect guide, but even causes people to “receive not the love of the truth.” The time was, in my earlier years, that those who went beyond the “doctrine of Christ” were subject to criticism, and rightly so. Since liberalism has gained such a hold within the church, those who stand solidly against it are the ones

most likely to be criticized. I have seen that change come about. Though God has provided us with the never-failing response to liberalism, it is necessary that one learn that response and then make the proper use of it, if it is to be effective. Therefore, we shall consider a number of factors which are pertinent. We begin with:

### **GOD’S WORD MUST BE TAUGHT IN ITS PURITY AND SIMPLICITY**

The God-approved, saving faith, comes from the hearing of God’s word (Rom. 10:17). This active faith resists and condemns liberalism and its disrespect for God’s word. The essentiality of the true, unperturbed gospel is pointed out in Gal. 1:7-9 as the only source of salvation. A curse rests upon those who would “preach any other gospel.” The absolute necessity of adhering to the teaching of Christ if order to have God’s approval is spelled out by John when he wrote: “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son” (2 Jno. 9). Peter declared, “If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God...” (I Pet. 4:11). When Jesus was tempted by the devil, the father of liberalism, in each of the three instances He used God’s word in His defense by stating, “It is written...” (Matt. 4:1-11).

Book, chapter and verse preaching is desperately needed if liberalism is to be checked, because it exalts God’s word and not the wishes and desires of men. This kind of preaching demands that we get back to the Book and rid ourselves of spiritual ignorance. It also demands men who have the courage and love of the truth to preach it “in season and out of season,” that is, as brother Marshal Keeble said, “When people like and when they don’t like it.”

### **AN UNCOMPROMISING STAND FOR THE TRUTH**

Once truth is learned, it must be upheld in an uncompromising manner and at all costs, which means we may not uphold, encourage or support error to any degree. This forbids our closing our eyes and stopping our ears with regard to that which is wrong. Paul would not give in for even “an hour” to those “false brethren” who would have brought him “into bondage.” (Gal. 2:4-5). →

Those who are willing to compromise God's truth even in a small way, sadly find no stopping place. But in the first place, we have no right to "sell" the truth in amount, but rather should always be "buying the truth" (Prov. 23:23). Standing for the truth forbids fellowshipping error, as Paul makes clear in Ephesians 5:11 when he said, "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." We are living in a climate where there is an alarming disrespect for God's word. Without change it will only worsen.

### **FIGHT FOR THE TRUTH**

If anything on this earth was ever worth fighting for, Truth is. And that is exactly the message in Jude 3, where the writer commands us to "contend for the faith..." Contend, according to *Vine's*, means to "contend as a combatant." In the first century, truth was precious to many brethren who stood by it. Christ said to the church at Smyrna that she would be persecuted, and that she should "be...faithful unto death" (Rev. 2:10); that is, be faithful to the point of giving up your life, not as often averred, faithful as long as one lives. Not many are called upon to give up their lives, but if that should become necessary, that we should do. If we truly love God's truth we could not afford to do less. We cannot allow truth to suffer at the hands of our liberal brethren. Paul said to "stand fast in the faith, quit ye like men, be strong" (1 Cor. 16:13).

Enemies of the truth may use intimidation and accusations to try to dampen the spirit of the faithful. One who fights for truth may well be labeled as a troublemaker, nitpicker, or any number of other terms of ridicule. This I know for a fact. Liberals are enemies of the truth of God. We must not be fooled to think otherwise.

As the U.S. Marines used to advertise for "a few good men," there cannot too many "good men" who love the truth and are willing to live by it and defend it at all costs. It hurts me greatly to see brethren who know the truth but who are unwilling to defend it, for whatever reason. The story is told of a teacher asking her young students why Daniel was not eaten by the lions when he was cast into the lions den. One little boy, as the story goes, replied, "Because he was all backbone." We need more brethren who have the backbone to stand up for the truth of God without waver-

ing or any degree of compromise. The Lord's church is indeed a militant organization, and in Ephesians six, Paul describes the armor we need to carry on both a defensive and offensive battle.

### **MARK THOSE WHO TEACH FALSE DOCTRINE**

To "mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Rom. 16:17), is another of God's ways of dealing with liberalism. Yet, few are they who are willing to accept God's way in this case. To "mark" the teachers of error is to direct attention to them. This cannot be done without making known who they are, and the best way to do this is to follow Paul's example and call their names (1 Tim. 1:10-20; 2 Tim. 2:17-18). This is indeed a scriptural response to liberalism. It is not an uncommon thing now, for brethren who claim to stand up for the truth, to give known false teachers the "silent treatment," for one cause or another. There is the erroneous idea that if something is swept under the rug it will go away. Marking and avoiding those who cause doctrinal division involves withholding fellowship. Yet, I have heard people say, "I just don't believe it will work." It is evident that some think many things the Lord has commanded will not work. But God's plan will always work if carried out according to inspired directions contained in His word.

### **APPOINT ONLY QUALIFIED ELDERS**

Those who are elders according to the Book are characterized as: "apt to teach," "holding fast the faithful word," and "able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers" (1 Tim. 3; Titus 1). Such men are hard to find, but God's word is compromised when brethren settle for less. Appointing men who are inept and unqualified is an affront to God and his instructions in this very important matter.

Elders, who due to a lack of knowledge do not know liberalism when it appears, are a great threat to the church. Some do not keep abreast of what is going on within the church and are unable to safely guard the flock against deadly error. It is a sad fact that many so-called elders do not meet the spiritual qualifications on a number of counts. They are often lacking in knowledge and remiss even in areas where their duties are clearly understood. Some are not trustworthy, †

and in a lust for power, they become "Lords over God's heritage" (1 Pet. 5:3), rather than examples to the flock which they are to oversee.

If I were asked to state what I believe to be the greatest cause of the liberalism in which so much of the Lord's church is engulfed, it would be: The lack of qualified elders in so many of the congregations of the Lord's people today.

### **COME OUT FROM AMONG THEM**

When liberalism gains control of a congregation and prospects for bringing about a change are hopeless, the faithful must come out from among the liberals, or else run the risk of actually aiding them and becoming partakers with them. It sometimes becomes necessary that division come about, in order that truth may be upheld. In First Corinthians 11:19, Paul wrote, "For there must also be heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." Division is not always a bad thing, as when it results in support of Truth, rather than compromise with error. Sometimes brethren have such a fear of "division" that they will remain in a situation where error rules, and eventually become contributors to that error. I have seen that happen. Who would deny that it would be better for fifteen faithful members of the church to separate themselves from fifty members in error, rather than remain with them and all become partakers of wrong and be condemned. It is sort of like people who could get off a sinking ship and save their lives, but choose to go down with the ship.

### **BEGIN ANEW A QUEST FOR TRUTH**

It is becoming more and more common to find areas where several congregations exist, and yet not a single one is seriously trying to walk in "the old paths." In some of these congregations there are at least a few who love the truth. What options do they have? They can continue in a situation where the love of truth does not abide, running the risk of succumbing to the prevailing influence. In this case, if one continues to support the situation in a financial way, he becomes a partaker of the evil. Another option is for those who love the truth and the right way, to band together in a united effort to worship and serve God acceptably, preaching and teaching the true gospel and opposing every false way.

The latter option could mean a few people meeting in a home, an abandoned store building, or some place "across the tracks," as many brethren did when liberalism captured most of the brethren in the later 1800s. It could mean the use of a "tent-making preacher," at least for a time, until there is an increase in number and support.

If such as the above is not done, it is simply a matter of time until there are whole cities and counties where not a single loyal and faithful congregation can be found. Call this being an "alarmist" if you will, but that will not change the facts. There are areas today where liberalism took over a century ago and for the most part still prevails. I am deadly serious when I say the "Bible Belt" is becoming a mission area where there is an urgent need for the preaching of the pure, unadulterated gospel of Christ.

### **A WILLINGNESS TO SACRIFICE**

In order to "stand fast in the faith" (1 Cor. 16:13), it is some times necessary to sacrifice. But true and faithful Christians are sacrificial people. This is easily understood when we consider the fact that the Christian system was built upon the sacrifice of our Savior. The apostle Paul made a far-reaching demand of the Roman Christians when he said, "I beseech you therefore, brethren by the mercies of God, that ye present you bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1). In the first century, faithful Christians some times made the ultimate sacrifice of life itself, as was commanded by Christ of the church in Smyrna (Rev. 2:10). The likelihood that we will face a like situation today is remote, but if we would be true to the Lord we must be willing to make whatever sacrifice is necessary to remain faithful. That could involve our friends, relatives and weak and compromising brethren. There is no question but that we must be ready to sacrifice in our time, efforts and money. Even our jobs, businesses and livelihoods could be affected. The extent to which we are willing to sacrifice is a test of our loyalty to God and our love for his truth. Liberalism has made inroads in many cases simply because brethren were not willing to sacrifice for the cause of truth. In view of the sacrifices which faithful Christians may be called upon to make, perhaps it would be in order to pose→