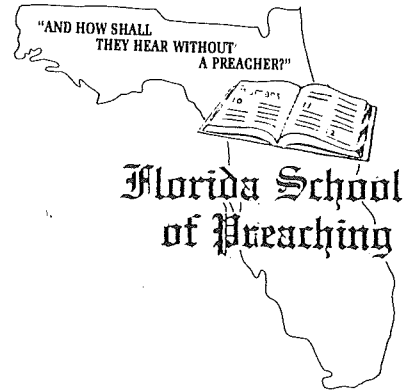


THE HARVESTERS



VOLUME XII

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GUEST EDITORIAL

Some Reflections From A Special Edition of the Gospel Advocate

[We are appreciative for words of truth and soberness which recently appeared in the *Gospel Advocate*. The Editor of the the *Advocate* asked that concerned souls help alert our brotherhood to specific apostasies which can be documented. We are reproducing some words from the February *Advocate* for our readers to consider. editor]

The president of the Advocate writes: *The roll of the Gospel Advocate is to encourage readers to search the Scripture for truths relating to today's issues. As one brother put it, "The truth has nothing to fear . . . the Gospel Advocate does not and cannot ignore the controversial matters."*

The Editor of the Advocate writes under the heading "Signs of Apostasy." *This issue of the Advocate contains articles focusing on signs of apostasy among us. Read them carefully and survey what is happening in your congregation and your area. Help alert us and the brotherhood to specific apostasies which you can document.*

Brother Earl Edwards,

dean of the School of Biblical Studies at Freed-Hardeman University, Henderson, Tennessee, was commended by the Editor of the *Advocate* for securing the cover stories in the February 1992 issue. Under the heading "The Way To Avoid Apostasy" brother Edwards paints a picture that is disturbing. *It seems very probable to me that if Christ were to reveal Himself miraculously today, He would also urge numerous individual congregations (and even churches of Christ as a whole) to cease tolerating the false teachers which are becoming more and more numerous among us. How serious is the situation? God only knows, but specific documentation could be given for the instances of false teaching which we will now describe, all of which have taken place within the past years or so.*

A large Tennessee congregation uses women to lead in prayer in an adult class. Women have been advertised as co-teaching mixed adult classes in at least two major college/university lectureships. In a workshop teachers organized

and conducted by one of our Christian schools, ladies were asked to lead in prayer. An Alabama congregation recently published a document saying it will use women in the pulpit by 1994.

A n O k l a h o m a congregation published in its bulletin that it intends to have "fellowship with other non-church of Christ" groups. Still another church of Christ in the same state ran the above article and agreed with it.

A Texas preacher of a large church, when interviewed by a newspaper, said, "All this conflict between us and the Baptist is ridiculous."

A major school among us organized a "conference on the Restoration ideal" in which Mennonites and Pentecostals and Latter-Day Saints were included and the program stated that they would have a "common worship" together on Sunday morning at the campus church of Christ.

A Texas church has, at last report, continued to use a "youth minister" who admitted he taught baptism was not essential

to salvation. A congregation in Oklahoma has recently split with the splinter group now using instrumental music. A well-known youth speaker has openly said he would not preach that instrumental music is a sin because that would be "going beyond Scripture," and yet, he continues to be used widely.

A well known lecturer has compared using Acts and the Epistles to using second and third—lower quality—copies (clearly implying something negative about their inspiration), but he continues to be invited to speak more and more frequently.

A gospel preacher among us has published a book in which he affirms that there is no eternal punishment for the wicked, and he has later featured on this topic in a major college lectureship. A gospel preacher/counselor was quoted by the Associated Press as making fun of the "pathological model" for females which is taught in the churches of Christ. He said our mistake is that we think the "man should be the wife's head." He must have overlooked Ephesians 5:23 and several other passages! Yet, this fellow continues to be used more and more widely in our brotherhood.

Many other examples could be given to show that we are dealing with a serious threat to the Restoration Movement as we have known it. The other nine brethren who have written cover story articles in this special issue have been carefully selected from across the brotherhood.

They come from Texas (1), Oklahoma (2), Pennsylvania (1), Tennessee (3), Arkansas (1) and Mississippi (1). They are men who are balanced; they have good track records. They are not alarmists, and yet all 10 of us agree that there are significant segments of our brotherhood moving toward an apostasy similar to that which caused the division between churches of Christ and Christian Churches in the period 1850-1906. Brother Edwards closes his editorial with this admonition: *May God help us to have the courage to do what is best for His cause. Remember, if we do not, God will have something "against" us (Revelation 2:14).*

Sarasota Student Day

February 23, 1992, Brother Carr and a number of the students were invited to the Osprey Avenue Church of Christ, Sarasota, Florida, for a student day. Brother **Harold Rodriguez**, a graduate of the Florida School of Preaching, is the evangelist there. Brothers Bernard Cooper and David Dominessey spoke at the 9:30 hour and Devon Bryan spoke at the 11:00 a.m. service.

The congregation presented brother Carr with \$350.00 toward the support of the Florida School of Preaching. A fine meal was served and enjoyed by those present.

Counting The Loss

By

Jackie M. Stearsman

We often hear sermons of that call upon us to count the cost of being a faithful child of God. Luke 14:28-35 is often used. This text teaches us to forsake all to be His disciple (14:33). The great lesson in this text is of the consequence of not acting in view of the ultimate end.

Building That Ends In Mocking

This is the case of the man that started to build but did not complete what he began (Luke 14:28-30). We must be willing to abide, continue in, endure, labor, strive, struggle and toil to reach the goal. We must be willing to withstand family and foe; be willing to take up the cross daily—the ultimate goal must be the most important of all.

(1) David Was Mocked

David built his tower of shame and saw himself mocked as he was driven

The Harvesters

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TRAINING PREACHERS SINCE 1969

from the palace by his own son. *And as David and his men went by the way, Shimei went along on the hill's side over against him, and cursed as he went, and threw stones at him, and cast dust* (II Sam. 16:13). It could have been different had he counted the loss.

(2) Israel Was Mocked

God warned Israel through her prophets that the building she was erecting was not going to succeed. Her sad recognition of it all is recorded in Psalm 137 as she sat in Babylonian captivity enduring the mocking of her captors. *By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion* (Psalm 137:1-3). How different it would have been had she counted the loss.

Fighting That Ends In Defeat

We must also consider the outcome of opposing God. A king with proper reasoning would not think of facing an opposing force without sufficient strength to be victorious (Luke 14:31-32). We too should consider the loss when we entertain the idea of ignor-

ing meeting God unprepared.

(1) The Cross

And The Coronation

The combined forces of evil were unable to upset the determinate counsel of God in making His Son the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. Consider the words of the Second Psalm. *Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion* (Psalm 2:1-6).

(2) False Religion Will End

In Ultimate Defeat

In the rich symbolism of the last half of Revelation we have dramatic pictures of the defeat of false religion that seeks to oppose the truth of God. The Devil, the Beast, the False Prophet, those who receive the mark of the Beast (those who join in league with false religion), the Old Harlot, the Wicked City (spiritually called Sodom, Egypt, where the Lord was crucified), and Babylon all end in ultimate

doom. Only those who make peace with the Great King of Kings will be spared eternal punishment.

The Loss Is Great

God has a purpose for His creature man. When man ignores that purpose he is doomed to everlasting ruin. In the words of the Lord: *Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savior, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear* (Luke 14:34-35).

Not only is the loss in eternity great, it is great in this world where the fate of all will be decided. For the lack of salt Sodom was doomed. For the lack of salt Israel was doomed. For the lack of salt all will be doomed.

The absence of faithful Christians is destroying the home. The nations are rotting morally because there is not moral character present. The church in many ways is no different from the world—and what may we expect will be the outcome? It is past time for individuals, the church and societies to count the loss.

The Lord has spoken; man must comply. *Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. It is a*

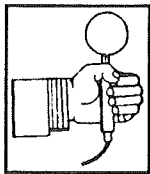
faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us: If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself (II Tim. 2:10-13). Some will spend eternity recalling their loss? **Have you counted the loss?**

Back To The Bible Program Works

By
Joseph Sejour

Since February 23, 1991 I have been broadcasting the word of God over the "Back to the Bible" program. I do not know how many souls I have touched. Sometimes I wondered if I were spending the money and my time in vain. I was looking for concrete results. After about one year, God in his mercy has shown me some tangible fruit.

After a program on January 25, 1992,



two men met me and told me that they had been listening to my radio program and wanted to know more about the church of Christ. I set up a Bible study with them in their home. Following three Sundays of Bible study, they obeyed the gospel.

The following people were baptized February 16, 1992: (1) Jacques Jasmin, his wife Mary and their daughter Daphne. Brother Jasmin and his wife Mary have been members of the Pentecostal church for 19 years. They have three children. (2) Francois Jean and his wife Mary, brother Jean has been a member of the Baptist church for 14 years and his wife Mary was a Baptist for 19 years. They have five children. (3) Mirlande Thomas is 19 years old and had never been baptized.

The word of God is powerful and effective. The Bible says *So shall my word be that goeth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper*

in the thing whereto I sent it (Isaiah 55:11). *He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him* (Psalm 126:6).

I am thankful for the Florida School of Preaching and those who support it. You have enabled me to preach the truth. I am thankful for all of my teachers for their advice and encouragement in helping me to carry out the gospel. I am also thankful to sister Louise Elliot and all the rest who support the radio program by their prayers. All the glory to Him! Please continue to support this radio program by any means you can for the benefit of the kingdom of God.

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