



Volume 27

August 1987

Number 8

## G O S P E L M E E T I N G

September 25 – 27

Sunday Morning 9:45 & 10:45  
Each Night 7:30

Speaker:

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of Providence, RI

FULTONDALE CHURCH OF CHRIST  
2005 Elkwood Drive

## What Are We Doing To Our Young People?

*Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.*

Many young people have little or no faith. In a desire to help the matter, brethren may be doing something to our young people rather than for them. We may be building within them more concern for this life than the life to come. Only the "hope that is set before us, which hope we have as an anchor to the soul, both sure and steadfast..." (Heb. 6:9) is strong enough to sustain souls during life's

trials. When all else fails this can secure them. Faith is the substance ("that which stands under" -- Vine) of things hoped for (Heb. 11:1), which faith comes by hearing the word of God. (Rom. 10:17). Hope, undergirded by faith, is the only thing that will really anchor the souls of our young people.

The gospel is the power of God unto  
*Continued on Next Page*

## Schedule of Services

### Sunday:

Bible Classes . . . . . 9:45 a.m.

Worship . . . . . 10:45 a.m.

Worship . . . . . 6:00 p.m.

### Wednesday:

Bible Class (Begins 10/14) . 10:00 a.m.

Bible Classes . . . . . 7:30 p.m.

### YOUNG PEOPLE (from page 1)

salvation for young and old. (Rom. 1:16) God did not give one gospel for the young and another for older folks. Nor did He establish one church for the young and another for the old. That one gospel can draw all to Christ when they hear and learn it. (John 6:44,45) It can keep them from falling and finally save them in heaven, if they keep themselves in the love of God. (Jude 21,24). Young people need the gospel to produce faith enough to give them hope to stabilize their troubled souls. Temporal things cannot give them anything **sure** and **steadfast**.

Congregations sometimes attempt to lure and hold the young by a variety of fleshly appeals. The church is presented to them as a provider of better social opportunities rather than the "pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). They are not impressed with the idea that "we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." (2 Cor. 4:18). The weight of emphasis in the appeals made to them is on the **here** and not the **hereafter**. If they are drawn and held by these temporal considerations, to what can they hold if those things should suddenly perish -- as all temporal things, sooner or later, must pass away?

Here is an example of the "social gospel" concept among churches of Christ: The Laurel Church of Christ in Knoxville (with the help of contributions from other churches) sponsors a student center at the University of Tennessee. Their literature says that "the center is evangelistic." They appeal for contributions by showing how many young people "we are losing" at colleges. This "evangelistic" center offers: 1. "A home away from home" complete with "television, piano, kitchen facilities,

telephone, refreshments, ping-pong, and various other games and sports;" 2. A "Quarterly Retreat" which is a week-end of camping out at a lodge or state park; 3. An annual spring banquet; 4. "Suppers, parties, cookouts, games, singing, etc. (I would like to know just how big that "etc." is - EOB) A Christmas party for underprivileged children is sponsored by the students each year." Oh yes, they do throw in **some** religious activity. They have regular devotionals four nights a week at the center. You see, this gives it a religious flavor -- enough to saddle the church with the bill for this college play pen.

When Paul wrote Timothy to do "the work of an evangelist" ("the center is evangelistic"), he failed to tell him how to set up a "home away from home," how to conduct a "retreat" or the arrangements for "annual banquets". He did tell him to "preach the word." Do you suppose that there were no "young people problems" in New Testament days?

What is being done to our young people? Their concept of the church is being distorted. Young people who have never heard of Christ nor His church can have those temporal things, but **only** in Christ is there **hope** that transcends all temporal considerations. Our fine young people need to fully realize that Christ did not die to give them a week-end retreat. He died that they might have hope to anchor their souls. Christ did not shed his blood to build a society for social reforms and pleasures - the church is a spiritual institution. Let's build within them a deep respect for the pure word of God which will produce faith which is the foundation of the hope they so badly need. This is the only way to **really** hold our young people. T  
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### MY INFLUENCE

My life shall touch a dozen lives before  
this day is done,  
Leave countless marks for good or ill ere  
sets the evening sun,  
This is the wish I always wish, the  
prayer I always pray;  
Lord, may my life help other lives it  
touches by the way.

# 'Who Made Me a Judge or Divider Over You?'

Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.

*"And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother that he divide the inheritance with me. And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or divider over you? And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." (Luke 12:13-15).*

Jesus did not find it necessary to exhibit strong feelings on every issue in every realm. He refused to be an umpire in an inheritance dispute between two brothers. He rather used the occasion to teach against the sin of covetousness and materialism. He did not concern Himself with who had a *legal right* to which portion, but showed that life is more than possessions.

Every Christian needs that lesson. Some in the church (even preachers) think that they must get involved in every social, economic, and political dispute in the community. Some become very vocal crusaders against the "injustices" in these fields. Some become worked up on behalf of some reforms in these fields -- but would not stand on spiritual issues even if their feet were nailed to the floor! It is better for Christian to suffer civil wrong than to injure Christ's Cause by vehement demands for his "rights." (1 Cor. 6:6,7). Why destroy the prospects of later reaching a man with the truth by unnecessarily offending him over temporal matters?

Christians should be taught justice, fairness, mercy, forgiveness, kindness, etc., in every aspect of life. This should be our approach to the problems of the day, and not that of being vigorous campaigners for this or that earthly matter. Let us go "everywhere preaching the word" which makes a man better regardless of the social, economic or political system under which the gospel reaches him.

There were social ills in the world in the days of the early Christians. There was much room for political reforms. Describing the period from 96 to 180 A.D., one historian wrote: "Rome possessed a

large police force to keep order. Nevertheless, at night few honest citizens dared venture down the winding streets without proper guard. In the poor sections of the city, walls were covered with scribblings -- messages for a friend, insults for an enemy, romantic sentiments for one's lady love. The wooden tenements on these streets, where the great majority of the populace lived, were overcrowded firetraps whose flimsy construction often caused them to collapse. It was little wonder that the plebians seemed always to be searching for better quarters." (*Civilization, Past and Present*, Vol. I.) While the period described began in 96 A.D. (about the close of apostolic writings) it is reasonable to believe that these conditions existed to some degree during the days of the apostles. What early preacher in the New Testament days took to the "soap box" trying to correct these conditions? Where is the Scripture that instructed Christians to join in protest against such inadequacies? They were too involved in looking for eternal things to get too involved in temporal affairs. (2 Cor. 4:18). They labored under time impression that "we have not here an abiding city, but we seek after the city which is to come." (Heb. 13:14). We would do well to follow their example.

The Christian slave is told: "Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather." (1 Cor. 7:21). The gospel makes one better whether he is a master or a slave, rich or poor, Jew or Gentile.

If we could only learn Paul's lesson: "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Phil. 4:11), then we could get on with our **main** business of preaching the gospel to the lost world and living a quiet and peaceable life before all, instead of burning the "social gospel" incense upon the altar to the god of materialism.

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Love your enemies -- it will drive them nuts.

# CANNIBALISM

Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.

*"But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another."* -- Galatians 5:15

It is possible for members of the church to become **cannibals**, after a fashion. No, I'm not speaking of cannibalism in its awful literal sense. Fortunately, that practice is limited to a very tiny element of humanity in very remote regions. But, unfortunately, the practice described in our test is not nearly so limited. Too often the spiritual life of congregations is all but consumed by those who continually bite and devour one another.

I know some congregations where, if everything some members say about the others -- and vice versa, is so, I fail to see what keeps the whole bunch out of jail! Business meetings are nothing short of verbal "free-for-alls". Disagreements, however insignificant are often blown up into major controversies and members "lining up" along the lines of personal friendships. If there is or ever was a real issue, it is forever lost under a pile of childish epithets. Personal bitterness often get such a hold on situations that you may know that if certain brethren suggest a thing (regardless of the intrinsic value of the suggestion) other will automatically oppose it. At times one feels uncomfortable in Bible classes, because he knows

that if there happens to be the slightest disagreement (either real or imaginary) that charges and counter charges will be flying like bottles in a bar-room brawl.

I realize that some have become so soft that they regard any kind of argumentation, rebuking and admonishing (except when they rebuke other for rebuke or argue against arguing) to be "biting and devouring". We are commanded to "rebuke and exhort". (2 Tim. 4:2-4; 1 Tim. 5:20). It is right to engage in argumentation with those whom we have religious differences -- brethren or otherwise. (Acts 17:16-17; 18:24-28; 15:2, 6-7; Matt. 23). But we must not be among those who "bite and devour one another". Thayer's Lexicon defines *bite*, as used in this passage: "*to wound the soul, cut, lacerate, rend with reproaches*".

The effect of such biting and devouring is that of "consuming one another". The church that begins and continues in such is bound for self-destruction. The cure for biting and devouring is given in verse 14: "*Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.*"

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(Editor's Note: If any of the articles in the issue seem familiar, there may be a reason. We went back in our files and pulled out these articles that we wrote around 20 years ago. We think we needed to say the same things again for a new generation to consider)

THE REFLECTOR is published monthly  
by the church of Christ meeting at 2005  
Elkwood Drive, Fultondale, AL  
USPS 606-140

Second Class  
Postage PAID  
Fultondale, AL  
35068

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ATTEND OUR NEXT SERIES OF MEETINGS  
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