

## **GOSPEL MEETING**

**May 6-11, 1990**  
**Granville W. Tyler**

- ☆ Nightly, Sunday Through Friday At 7:30
- ☆ Sunday Morning Classes At 9:45.
- ☆ Sunday Morning Worship At 10:45
- ☆ Plain Book, Chapter And Verse Preaching.
- ☆ Congregational Singing At All services.
- ☆ Collection Taken On Sunday Morning Only.
- ☆ Calm, Quite, And Dignified Atmosphere At All Services.
- ☆ No Emotionalism Or Pressure Tactics Will Be Used.

**Fultondale Church Of Christ**  
**2005 Elkwood Drive**

# Sound Doctrine Produces Sound Churches Demanding Sound Doctrine

**"I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables."—2 Timothy 4:1-4.**

A local church is going to be about as strong and sound as the preaching it receives and is willing to endure and support. Paul's solemn charge to Timothy had a sense of urgency about it. Preach the word now, while brethren will endure it, or face a time when they will not.

For several years this writer has been paying particular attention as seasoned brethren (preachers and otherwise) express their concerns about the churches of today. The one dominant concern seems to be the caliber of preaching coming from our pulpits of late. As one old soldier of the cross expressed it to me, "I am getting tired of going to gospel meetings and hearing 'fluff.'" He went on to explain what he meant by "fluff." Preaching that contained very little real Bible teaching.

Brethren, strong congregations cannot be built and maintained on "fluff." Did you ever buy cotton candy? Then you know what "fluff" is. I remember, as a youngster, that I would spend my dime on a huge stick of it at the county fair. It was spun and displayed so as to make me think that I was getting a lot more for my money than I was. I soon learned that I had bought mostly fluff — very

little candy inflated with a lot of air.

The sad thing about it all is that many churches had rather have "fluff" than real spiritual food. As long as churches demand it, there will be those who are willing to be paid to spin it out for them.

Sermons and classes with real doctrinal content are held in disfavor by many of today's churches. The demand is for more "relevant" (?) matters. Themes more suited for psychologists and sociologists are replacing basic Bible topics. Topics that address so-called "real problems" and "real life concerns" of "today's Christian" are replacing those that deal with what the Book says about man's basic spiritual problem, sin;

and his real basic needs — conviction of sin and the salvation of his soul. Lectures aimed more at enhancing man's present happiness and welfare than ensuring his eternal well-being are by far the most widely received. Preachers that entertain and make brethren feel good about themselves, rather than producing godly sorrow leading to repentance or any real depth of scriptural knowledge, are given the most favored status among brethren. Sermons that really teach the Bible are considered, "uninteresting", "too-structured" and even "crude" by some. All too often preachers who resort to such are asked to find some place else to do their preaching. We have observed a rash of this lately.

137

## CONTEXTUALLY SPEAKING ...

### Walking By Sight

That one should walk by faith rather than by his own wisdom or opinions is taught in the Scriptures. However, "For we walk by faith, not by sight" — 2 Corinthians 5:7, is not the verse that teaches this principle.

The context shows that the inspired writer is making a contrast between our present life on earth as a Christian and our hope for the life to come. At present, "while we are at home in the body" and "absent from the Lord," we must walk by faith (See verse 6). In the future, after we have been "clothed upon with our house which is from heaven" (v. 2) we shall walk by sight.

The contrast is between things seen and not seen — temporal eternal things — begins with chapter 4:18. Eternal things are not seen by us now. We must see them only through the eye of faith — the "evidence of things not seen" (cf. Heb. 11:1). It is by faith that we know that: (1) "we have a building of God... eternal in the heavens," (2) "while we are at home in the body" we will one day be present with the Lord. Then we will not need to walk by faith any longer, but will walk by sight. All the things that we now see through the distant eye of faith will then be observed by our sight. Hence, *now* we walk by faith, *then* we will walk by sight. — By Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.

Subjects more suitable for a civic club seminar than for a gospel meeting are commonly announced. Sunday after Sunday, if what I hear is accurate, talks that would be welcomed in any denominational church in town are passed off as gospel sermons. Unfortunately, as the title of the old country song put it, "*What Lola Wants Lola Gets?*"

So, all too often, preachers and elders bow to the pressure of those who want this "fluff." We know a good preacher, who is capable of making Bible studies interesting, who began a study of Isaiah (with its emphasis on the Messianic prophecies) for a college-age class. There was so much opposition to it by some members of the class that the elders saw fit to set up an alternate class — so that those who wanted to could study something more "interesting" and "relevant." As my daddy used to say, "Now isn't that a pretty come off?"

A congregation constantly fed on "fluff" will not develop an appetite for sound doctrine. Any who may have had an appetite will soon loose it. Without a desire for sound doctrine churches are vulnerable to all kinds of fables.

Neither motivational hype nor emotional manipulation is gospel preaching. Such may produce increased activity of a sort. It may even build and inspire audiences after a fashion. It may enhance the speaker's standing with brethren as a dynamic speaker. But, it will not produce a well-grounded faith based upon a "thus saith the Lord."

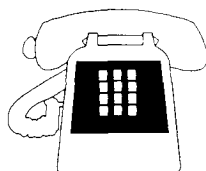
Brethren, our preaching must follow the pattern that Paul outlined to Timothy. In *form*, it must have a well-rounded combination of convincing (reproving — KJV), rebuking and exhorting (or encouraging). In *substance*, it must have teaching (doctrine) at the base. It is no accident that Paul, in

the preceding chapter, shows the Scriptures to be profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16).

Book, chapter, and verse preaching/teaching that quotes or reads scriptures and then makes clear applications of the reading seldom sweeps folks along on clouds of ecstasy. Nor does it flow quite as smoothly as Dale Carnegie trained orations. Nor is it likely to make folks jump up and down with uncontrollable joy nor roll in the aisles with laughter. It will likely cause them to mostly sit and ponder on the validity of the message — comparing it with the Scriptures before them. Once convicted of the validity of the message, they will then be motivated to act with both an intelligent and emotional response to the great message preached. They are then moved by the power of the gospel preached more than the charismatic personal power of the preacher/teacher or dynamic qualities of his delivery.

We need preachers who will preach it just like Paul and other inspired men wrote it. Preachers who will preach the word in season and out, without regard to whether churches will endure and support it.

We need churches who not only *endure* sound doctrine, but *demand* it of those they support in local work, in gospel meetings and throughout the world. Unless we have this we will continue seeing churches slide toward religious error and philosophical foolishness and away from the sound doctrine based on "what saith the Scriptures." — *By Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.*



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## An Unbeliever Might Read It

Through the years there have been brethren who have gone in for considerable hand-wringing when there has been some difference of view expressed in some of the papers. To those of such mind-set, any such discussion is "bickering" and they remonstrate with "What if this should fall into the hands of an unbeliever?" My response to this is, "What if it does?" Are unbelievers so dense as to think there are never any differences of views among Christians? Such folks should be careful not to ever leave a New Testament where an unbeliever could find it, for he might read Acts 15 where there was "much disputing" among the brethren when they met in Jerusalem over the issue of circumcision. And you surely would not want them to read Galatians, for Paul said some of them had turned aside to a perverted gospel (1:6-9). In the second chapter he said Peter was wrong and that he had to withstand him "to his face." He even named the loveable Barnabas a being "carried away" with this "hypocrisy." And you simply would not want an unbeliever to read 1 Corinthians with all the problems they had!

Hand-wringing aside, let us never develop better manners than the New Testament. Such a spirit manifests a penchant of compromise. With such, it is peace at any price. — Connie Adams in *Searching The Scriptures*.

# Great Scientific Find Turns Out To Be An Old Stomach Ache For Scientists

I never cease to be amazed at the amount of foolishness that can be wrapped up in a single bit of wisdom from the wise of this world. That large segment of the scientific community, wed to the theory of evolution, often with great arrogance and fanfare announce great archeological or geological finds that supposedly supports their various theories about the origin of things. How could anyone be so backward and stupid as to be skeptical of the accuracy of their dating system and imperious conclusions reached from their vast storehouses of data?

Yet, occasionally evidence surfaces that is so overwhelming that these great minds have to back-track themselves to avoid further embarrassment.

One such instance happened recently. Several months ago scientists announced the finding of a fossilized egg that was most certainly millions of years old. Now what good would a several million years old fossilized egg be to humanity? It would give us important information about the origin of certain animals species. It might help us understand what happened to many extinct animals of past ages. But, more importantly, it would likely contain some clues to help us learn more about our own origin and evolution. A valuable find indeed!

However, *NBC Nightly News* (February 22, 1990) reported that this prehistoric fossilized egg turned out to be a stomach stone from a cow — only about 50 years old. As Riley used to say, "What a revoltin' development that turned out to be!"

Yet, in spite of the fact that

these scientists had to stand up with egg on their faces on this matter, the liberal educational establishment and journalists will still blindly accept the scientific communities pronouncements as fact. If one dares question them and suggests that maybe we ought not teach evolution as fact in our public schools — he is ridiculed as a backward fundamentalist who would thrust us back to the dark ages.

I wonder how many more finds like this one that it will take for these people to begin to see that most of their educated guesses could be off several million years — minus 50 years of so.

Keep on digging fellows. It just might be that some to those bone fragments of prehistoric man may turn out to be about as valuable as that old cows stomach stone.

Stay tuned in. We shall see what we shall see. — By Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.

## DEAD WEIGHT

I've been a dead weight many years,  
Around the church's neck.  
I've let the others carry me  
And always pay the check.  
I've had my name upon the rolls,  
For years and years gone by;  
I've criticized and grumbled, too;  
Nothing could satisfy.

I've been a dead weight long enough  
Upon the church's back,  
Beginning now, I'm going to take  
A wholly different track.  
I'm going to pray and pay and work;  
And carry loads instead;  
And not have others carry me  
Like people do the dead.

ANONYMOUS

## Schedule of Services

Sundays:

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

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

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

Wednesdays:

Bible Class . . . . . 10:00 a.m.

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

## Fultondale Church of Christ

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