FOR THE WORD OF GOD IS QUICK, AND POWERFUL,
AND SHARPER THAN ANY TWOEDGED SWORD...

THE CHRISTIAN COURIER

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Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the 'religious world' is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, BUT NOT ACCORDING TO KNOWLEDGE. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. See Romans 10:1-3. Jesus once said, *"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven; but he that DOETH THE WILL of my Father which is in heaven."* Matt. 7:21. *"For whosoever shall DO THE WILL of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."* Matt. 12:50. *"Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the WILL OF THE LORD is."* Eph. 5:17.

"Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself SHALL NOT STAND." Matt. 12:25. There are many divisions in the religious world today, BUT, IF these denominations, churches, individuals, etc. are all a part of the body of Christ, then the body of Christ "Shall not stand." Eph. 3:21 says Christ will have glory in the church throughout ALL ages. The church SHALL STAND! The truth is that those who claim to be christians, but DO NOT OBEY the gospel of our Lord Jesus are NOT members of the body and will be punished with everlasting destruction (see Matt. 7:22-23 and II Thess. 1:7-9). *"They profess that*

they know God: but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." Titus 1:16.

"If ye love, me, keep my commandments...If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." John 14:15, 23. Why is it that there are so many different interpretations of the scriptures relating to the commandments to believers? The apostle Peter tells us, *"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation."* II Peter 1:20. If two people disagree on an interpretation of scripture, AT LEAST one of them is wrong.

We learn of the commandments of Christ in two different ways: 1) By hearing the word preached; Rom. 10:14-17; and 2) By studying the scriptures, II Tim 2:15. When we hear the word preached, we must be sure that what we hear is actually the word ofGod! The only way we can do this is by going to the scriptures. II Tim. 3:16-17. The people in Berea were considered noble because they listened to Paul and Silas preach, and then went to the scriptures to see if what they heard was true (Acts 17: 10-11). If the Bereans were right in checking up on an inspired apostle, then we also should search the scriptures to prove what we hear. Once this word has proven to be good, we must hold fast to it. (IThess. 5:21). We must also study the scriptures with an open mind and seek the truth or we may be misled (II Thess. 2:9-12).

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for all of us is that we will have a zeal of God ACCORDING to knowledge. *"Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to DO HIS WILL, working in you that which is well-pleasing in HIS sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."* Heb. 13:20-21.

In Christian Love,
Bro. Jon Powless
Port Orchard, Wash.

SALE OF A BIRTHRIGHT

Hebrews 12:16, says, *"Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright."* From this plain statement, we see that Esau sold his birthright, and that we also could forfiet our birthright. His was a natural birthright which carried with it the right to be the forebearer or our Lord; while ours is the spiritual birthright we have obtained by being born again.

Genesis 25:23-26, *"And the Lord said unto her, two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels: and the one people shall be stronger than the other people: and the elder shall serve the younger. And when her days to be delivered were fulfilled, behold, there were twins in her womb. The the first came out red, all over like an hairy garment: and they called his name Esau. And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on Esau's heel: and his name was called Jacob: And Isaac was threescore years old when she bare them."* So we see that Esau was the oldest of these two boys; but we also see from verse 23 that these two boys were "two manner of people", and that "the elder was to serve the younger." Hence, we see that God knew what "manner of people" Esau would be; and what "manner of people" Jacob would be, and He gave that prediction, "That the elder will serve the younger", for He knew that Esau was not "the manner of people" to be the Forbearer of the Lord.

Jacob sod pottage and Esau came in from the field and was faint, Gen.25:29. Verse 30 shows Esau asking Jacob to feed him. Verse 31 shows Jacob asking Esau to sell him his birthright. Verses 32-33 shows Esau selling Jacob his birthright and binding it with an oath, verse 34 shows Jacob feeding Esau, and the verse closes with the statement "Thus Esau despised his birthright." No one, after examining this evidence, could consistantly say, that Esau was worthy to inherit a birthright of such magnitude as was here involved.

Yes, they were two manner of people, and Esau was that type that would sell the most wonderful heritage, the right to be the forebearer of the Lord, for so little.

Paul tells us in Hebrews 12:17,*"For ye know how that afterwards when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears."*

We see three outstanding points in this statement: FIRST-"Afterwards he would have inherited." SECOND-"He was rejected." THIRD-"He found no place for repentance though he saught it carefully with tears."

But some people will say, read the 27th chapter of Genesis and you will see that Jacob and his mother resorted to unfair stratagy to obtain that which he had bought and paid for--the birthright; but the record plainly states--"He was rejected", "When afterwards he would have inherited", Hebrews 12:17. So we see God "Rejected Esau" just as He will us if we prove ourselves unworthy to inherit our birthright.

Esau found no place of repentance; does that mean we cannot repent and inherit, if we should sin and become unworthy to inherit? If we wait until time to inherit, 'til the judgment, it will be too late as it was with Esau. We must not "despise" our birthright, as Esau did.

In I Peter 1:4, Peter speaks of our inheritance as being "incorruptable, undefiled, and fadeth not away"--then in the same verse he says--"reserved in heaven for you--." What a wonderful birthright and inheritance. Can we sell it as Esau did? The Bible says we can. As we read in Heb. 12:16. In the 15th verse he says *"Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; Lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;"* Then in the 16th verse he says--*"Lest there be any fornicator or profane person as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright,"* Heb. 12:15-16. We must look diligently, lest this awful condition overtake some of us.

In Christian love of truth,
Bro. K. J. Harper
The Indian Springs church of Christ

To the Courier Staff and the Brethren scattered across the U.S.A. and Abroad, "GREETINGS",

As we are in the beginning of another year, suppose we start by heeding to Paul's teaching in I Cor. 11:1 *"Be ye followers of me, as I am a follower of Christ."*

Let us now *"set our affections on things above, and not on the earth.* Col. 3:2

Let us "*fight the good fight of faith and lay hold on eternal life.*" I Tim. 6:12.

Now "*let us run the race with patience, that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith: who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, dispising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God.* Heb. 12:1&2.

As the year 1980 passes, we will have our trials and temptations, just as we have had in the past; but let us hope we will learn by our past mistakes and not make the same ones over again.

Why not start now and forget those things which are behind,and reach for those things which are before, (yes) "*let us press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God, in Christ Jesus.*" Phil. 3:13&14.

Just these few reminders, that we may have a better life, in 1980, both living and teaching God's Holy Word.

Yours in Christ,

Bro. L. E. (Earl) Atchley
Elk City, Okla. 73644

LOST--FOUR SOULS

Something important came up, he doesn't remember what, but he decided it wouldn't hurt to miss church this once. He had been taught differently, but he missed. His wife hated to go without her husband. The two children were difficult to manage without his help, so she missed too.

The conscience worked overtime that day. A few sundays later they decided on a Sunday out-of-town trip and missed again. Conscience spoke again, but it's voice was softer.

With each succeeding absence their spiritual appetites diminished. Fellow Christians were concerned and came to check on them. At first there were excuses--out of town, didn't feel well, etc., and then resentment because such concern made them uncomfortable.

It has been years since they have been active in the Lord's work.

Their hearts are stirred occasionally by nostalgic memories of a better yesterday, but God seems far away. No one ever goes back to see them. Too many have tried, but their interest was not welcomed. They are now left alone in their sin and their darkness.

Their loss is bad enough, but the loss of their two children, now teenagers, is even more tragic. They never had a chance. The mother and the father had the privilege of knowing the Lord, but they rejected Him. The children never knew Him.

It is a tragic story. The story of four souls on a one way street to somewhere they don't want to go. The parents are driving, the children are being taken for a ride. And it all began with a mistaken idea that it wouldn't hurt to miss "just this once."

Please study Mark 8:34,37. Also Matt. 6:33.

"As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country"
(Prov. 25:25)

Concerning the church and it's members at Elk City and at Colter;

Having wonderful weather, summer weather in January.

Everything back this way is doing very good. One of our brothers here at Elk City has been in the hospital for treatment for some time, preparing him for surgery, which will be soon.

Also one of our brothers at the Colter congregation has been in and out of the hospital for some time. Please pray for these brothers.

I am still preaching for the Colter congregation one Lord's Day each month.

We enjoyed Bro. Jackie Warford and his three sons from the Baron congregation. Bro. Warford brought us a wonderful lesson, comparing our fight and temptations with the devil, to the same that Christ had with him. The title of the lesson was Three Rounds With the Devil. The boys did a wonderful job leading the song service.

Anyone coming this way please schedule your trip to be here and meet with us.

Written by
L. E. Atchley
for the church of Christ
Elk City, Okla.

Dear Brethren,

We hope this news letter finds all of our loved ones spiritually and physically well. Unfortunately, we at this congregation cannot say that it has been a joyous time for us these past several days. Our hearts were saddened with the sudden death of Sister Norma Fulkerson, Betty Perigen's mother. She had been a member of the church of Christ for quite some time, although she did not attend services regularly due to her illnesses and surgeries over the past several years. Her health had deteriated rapidly during the last few years, resulting in her death at the age of 55. Those of us that knew her will miss her. But we know that there's a better place prepared for those who love and obey the Lord, much more desirable than anything we can attain or obtain in this life. It is a sad thing to say farewell to friends and relatives who pass on from this life, but it is such a comfort when we know they are members of the church and have a chance at that heavenly home prepared for the faithful.

The rest of the congregation have been blessed with comparatively good health this last month. All have been in attendance. We were glad to have Sister Myrtle Lee back with us after her visit with relatives in Texas.

Visitors this month have been few--namely Brother Marty and Larry Brockman from the Chico congregation. We are always happy to have visitors come and be with us in worship and also in our homes and invite any and all who have the chance to come and be with us when you can. We are looking forward to our meeting this summer and hope to have many visitors from all over in attendance.

Our love from the
Bellflower congregation

BIRTHS

To Jon and Rene Powless, a daughter, born Feb. 15, 1980. They've named her Sara Christine.

OBITUARIES

Brother John Edward Givens, of the Yuma congregation passed away December 25, 1979 at the V.A. Hospital in Tucson, Arizona. He was born January 24, 1924 in Winsboro, Tex. He is survived by his wife Eva, a daughter Sandra McFord, two sons; John Jr. and Leon; three sisters, Winnie Waffand, Gradys Ray, and Ruth Benefield and one brother, Bill Givens.

Brother Leonard McClure Starnes, of the Indian Springs congregation (out of Grass Valley) died while visiting his daughter in Eugene, Ore. He was born Oct. 9, 1914 in Linsey, Okla. and died Nov. 16, 1979. He is survived by his wife, Louise.

Sister Norma Fulkerson, of the Bellflower congregation died in Jan. 1980. She was born in Jacksonville, Texas, on Nov. 27, 1924. She is survived by a daughter, Sister Betty Perigen, a son, Grady Walker, and three brothers in Texas.

Sister Juanita Nelson, of the Yuma congregation passed away Feb. 12, 1980.

Our prayers go out to the families and friends of these brothers and sisters in their time of sorrow.

1980 MEETINGS

DATE	HOST	SPEAKERS
March 30-April 6	Modesto, Calif.	Kelly McCay Al Way
June 15-22	Yakima, Wash.	Camp
June 22-29	Cederedge, Colo.	Camp
June 29-July 6	Bellflower, Calif.	Bill McCay, Sr.
July 13-20	Chesterton, Ind.	Tom Broadway
Aug. 3-10	Port Orchard, Wash.	Robert Farley