

# The University Heights Messenger

August 15, 2010

## **Diotrophes--A Nice Guy**

By Joe Fitch

“I met Diotrophes the other day. Do you imagine him dark of visage, loud voiced, arrogant, and mean? Well, you’d be wrong! He is handsome, middle aged, soft spoken, well educated. He knows a lot about most every subject and is especially interesting to talk to. In fact, he is a *very* nice guy. A lot of the problem is that people just don’t understand him--and he has gotten a lot of bad press lately.

“Now I know he is opinionated. I frankly asked him about all that church trouble--and I admit that he did get a little upset. He is a man of deep convictions; he really believes what he believes. And he is worried about the church. He is afraid the church will really get messed up if he fails to keep a tight rein on things.

“Oh, about John, he and Diotrophes have a real personality clash. He has this thing about John--and maybe he is partly right. He says John is getting old and senile. Besides John is just a little uppity because he was a personal friend of Jesus--at least that is what Diotrophes says. And...”

Does this imagined interview sound strangely current? Well, that’s because Diotrophes is not dead. I have met him--and I have heard this report from several interviewers who later became his devotees. Several observations might help our evaluations.

First, evil people are not without commendable traits. It would be nice if bad people were entirely bad--and thoroughly unlikeable. It just is not that way. Recall rebellious but lovable Absalom (2 Samuel 15:1-6). Take a look at Esau--a real man’s man, but entirely carnal minded (Genesis

25:27). Evil people have some good, even magnetic, traits but are in rebellion to the truth; good folk have some faults but are trying to overcome and do right.

The objective of the devil, one that he is entirely too successful with some times, is to get us looking at the commendable, appreciating the friendliness, and admiring the knowledge and devotion. At this point we may well entirely ignore the rebellion and finally disregard the truth. We must not be ignorant of Satan’s devices (2 Corinthians 2:11). Far too many people have selected a congregation based solely upon it’s “friendly people” rather than its stand for the truth.

Second observation. No excuse ever changes doing wrong. Noble motive (the Robin Hood syndrome), extenuating circumstances, other people did not do as they should--sin is still sin. Do not be deceived!

Third observation. Diotrophes did not learn about “rule” from the word of God. That rule is being a leader, an example of one who does right. He inspires the respect and confidence of believers and they follow. An army general must have trained Diotrophes. He only knows rule by coercion, mandate, force, and exclusion. No one questions the elders right to decide but Diotrophes sees every suggestion as a challenge to his authority. Each criticism or disagreement is an insult to his position. Diotrophes will always be puzzled over Moses who was given charge of Israel but was the meekest of men (Numbers 12:3).

## **Just Wanted To Say Thanks!**

The article was purposely short this time as I’d like to take some space to simply say thanks to a few people. You never know when you’re going to see Paul Fox here at

the building hard at work cleaning. Imagine how this building would look without Paul's efforts. Thank you very much, Paul!

Jim Parsons prints every bulletin at his shop and brings them over on Friday's or Saturday's. Since I've been here Jim has not been late even once with the bulletin. Thanks for your efforts, Jim!

David Collins takes care of the website and gets the sermons and bulletins up as quickly as he can. People the world over are able to benefit from the truth David takes care to make available to them. David also does a good deal of work in organizing teachers and other class details. Thanks for your efforts, David!

Jackie and I have enjoyed immensely seeing Alexander grow due to the work of the ladies teaching his class. Thank you to all the women who volunteer to teach our youngest children. You are helping to shape them very early on and your efforts do not go unappreciated!

*All* of the Bible class teachers clearly put great effort into their preparation. You set examples to your students as well as those considering teaching. Thank you very much for your efforts!

We have so many members here working silently behind the scenes visiting members, writing cards, and making phone calls. Your love and concern for the brethren is a blessing!

I want to extend my personal thanks to all of the members who offer words of encouragement to me and have helped Jackie and I in varying ways since our arrival here last year. What an example you've been to us and we love and appreciate you more each day!

#### **IN NEED OF PRAYERS:**

**Kay Montgomery**, an acquaintance of Gina Seabolt's, has been diagnosed with terminal cancer and given only months to live. She is not a Christian. Let us pray that this situation will cause her to think seriously about her soul and lead her to the Lord.

**Dorothy Gregg**, Jackie's great aunt, remains in hospice as of this writing. She is not a Christian.

**Jean Gartland**, Garry Banks' sister, is on blood thinners and the fear is that they may be causing internal bleeding.

Our members: **Glen Davis, Glenn Kimberlin**

Others: **Robert and Sarah Brundige, Ruel Baker, Wes Kidd, Vera Howerton, Gail Stein, Glenn Goldy, Shannon Gilbert, Harley Miller, Chuck McDavitt, the Shamas family.**

#### **UPCOMING EVENTS:**

The prayer/Bible reading service will be this Friday at 7:30. Please make your plans to attend.

#### **WELCOME OUR NEW BROTHER!**

Cody Bowman obeyed the gospel and joined the household of God last Lord's day evening. Let us welcome and encourage our new brother!

#### **BIBLE READING SCHEDULE FOR 8/15-8/21:**

**Sunday:** 1 Chron 24-25, Ps 14, Matt 16-17

**Monday:** 1 Chron 26-27, Ps 15, Matt 18

**Tuesday:** 1 Chron 28-29, Ps 16, Matt 19

**Wednesday:** 2 Chron 1, Ps 17, Matt 20

**Thursday:** 2 Chron 2-4, Ps 18:1-24, Matt 21

**Friday:** 2 Chron 5-6, Ps 18:25-50, Matt 22

**Saturday:** 2 Chron 7-9, Ps 19:1-6, Matt 23

#### **SERMON TOPICS:**

Sunday AM. The Merging Image--1

"Itching ears" (2 Timothy 4:1-4)

Sunday PM. "In the beginning God..." (Genesis 1:1-2)