

SEARCHING *The* SCRIPTURES

"Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me."—John 5:39.



*"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."
—Acts 17:11*

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OF HEAVEN OR OF MEN?

H. E. Phillips

"And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority? And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet. And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things" (Matt. 21:23-27).

In the present generation these questions asked by Jesus to the chief priests and elders would be interesting to apply to some major problems facing us. The matter of AUTHORITY and its SOURCE are the points of discussion. What is the authority for doing certain religious acts? Where did such authority come from? If we were talking to a denominational preacher about the name of his denomination, we would first inquire about his authority for the name, then we would ask where the authority came from. This is all important. Whoever gives authority must have the right and power to give it, otherwise it is really not authority. Suppose I should appoint a friend to the United Nations as a representative of this nation; do you suppose he would be accepted by the delegates and officers of that international body? Perhaps the first two questions that would be asked of such a person preparing to take his seat in the official hall would be the two asked by the chief priests: "By what authority do you take this position? and WHO gave you this authority?" I must first have the authority to appoint such a person, and then I must have the right to give him the authority. Only Christ has the right and power of authority in the church. If he does not give us authority to do a thing, we simply do not have any authority.

This matter of authority and its source is the very thing that troubles many in the church today. Why do some reject certain things that have been given by authority from heaven? Suppose we apply the principles taught in these questions between Jesus and the chief priests and elders to conditions in religious matters today.

The Lord's supper, whence is it, from heaven, or of men? Now, if we say it is of men, and we can prove it, there is no authority from God for its observance. On the other hand, if it came from heaven, it is not of men and we must observe it to please God. Someone inquires, "By what authority do you take the Lord's supper every Lord's day? and who gave you this authority?" I answer: By the authority of the New Testament, and Paul was the agent of the Spirit who gave the authority (I Cor. 11:23-25). In Acts 20:7 the example of the early disciples gives the authority to partake of it on the Lord's day when the church comes together for that purpose. Any other observance, any other day, for any other purpose is without authority from heaven.

Singing in worship, whence is it, from heaven, or of men? If of men, we do not have authority from God for doing it. If from heaven, it must be done to obey God. The authority is in the New Testament and from Christ through the apostles (Eph. 5:18,19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 2:12). But let us ask, Is mechanical music in worship from heaven or of men? In the New Testament, the law of liberty under which we now live, there is absolutely no authority from heaven. It must rest upon the authority of men alone. If it is done by the commandments of men, it is vain worship (Matt. 15:9), and turns men from the truth (Titus 1:14).

Baptism for the remission of sins, whence is it, from heaven, or of men? The New Testament clearly establishes the baptism of the great commission as a condition of obedience to Christ in order to obtain the forgiveness of alien sins (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15,16; Acts 2:38; I Peter 3:21; Rom. 6:3-6,17,18). But is the act of sprinkling water or pouring water on a person as baptism from God or men? That makes all the difference in the world. If it came from the New Testament, it must be practiced to obey God. Where is the authority? What passage teaches it? Silence is the only answer; there is not one bit of authority from heaven for such practices, yet it is being done as a religious act. The only and highest authority is that of men which will perish with the using (Col. 2:20-22).

We could go on and on with the various doctrines of men, but these establish the fact that if God did not give us the authority for doing a thing, it is of men and sinful to do. When we reach the point to say, "We do not need authority to do some things," we have reached the point of the chief priests and elders who answered, "We cannot tell" by what authority a thing is done. It is time to cry out against all conduct in the church that has no authority but from men. It is time to return to a "thus saith the Lord" for all that we

do or teach in the church today. Unless this is done, we will be divided and many will be lost for rebellion against God and His word.

We might ask the question: By what authority does one think to establish a work through a board or committee to activate the church universal, whether in the field of evangelism or benevolence? Whence is it, from heaven, or of men? The principles here are the same as in instrumental music in worship and sprinkling for baptism. If the authority is from heaven, we must do it to please God. If it is of men, it is vain (Matt. 15:9) and leads away from the truth (Titus 1:14). The authority can be easily established by citing the verse that teaches it. Of course, many will read passages that do not even touch the subject, just like a Baptist preacher reads verses to prove impossible apostasy that do not even remotely touch the subject and claims his position is proved. Some will read verses to prove universal "mission" programs through organizations other than the local church that are perverted and twisted to suit their purpose, but this is not the proof that the practice came from God. If God teaches it, it will be as plain as baptism or the Lord's supper. What we need to establish authority from God is to read it from the "faith once for all delivered." The word of God will furnish us unto every good work, and if the work or the directions for doing the work are not in the living word of God, that is positive proof that the authority is not from God, but of men. It makes no difference whether we disobey God by going back to the law of Moses or going to the traditions of men of this generation, we are in disobedience and will suffer the wrath of God when the day of accounting comes. It is all a matter of divine authority. When any practice, individual or collective, is established without the authority of heaven, we must have no part of it. We must oppose it whether in the church or in denominationalism. If the authority is established by the New Testament we must do it to go to heaven when life is over. Let us always inquire whether any practice is from God or men before we undertake to do it. That makes all the difference in the world.

Please accept our apology for the delay in the last two issues of SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES. This has been due to the move to Tampa, Florida and other matters beyond our control. If you will bear with us, we will be back on schedule as soon as possible.

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Editorial

H. E. PHILLIPS

The church of the Lord is a special and separate body of people who are not only "called out" of the darkness of the devil's kingdom, but called "into the kingdom" of the Son of God (Col. 1:13). It is probable that many professed Christians today do not place the emphasis upon the meaning of "into the kingdom of his dear Son" that should be there. There is too much negative emphasis sometimes and not enough positive teaching on the obligations of being in the kingdom of Christ. By *negative emphasis* we mean the teaching *against* things that are wrong such as drunkenness, stealing, lying, etc. It is right to teach against sin with all our power, but there is more to the word of reconciliation than what we should not do. To many all Christianity consists of is not to do the things that are evil and immoral. "I am a Christian because I do not cheat in business, I do not lie to my fellowman, I do not, I do not, I do not . . ." Cornelius was a man who did not do these evil things, and he even did many of the good moral duties of man, but he was not a Christian just because he was good morally. It is only a part of Christianity to oppose wickedness. A Christian must not do these evil deeds, but there are some things he **MUST** do because he is in the kingdom of God. Just to emphasize the negative does not make one a Christian. In fact, in some instances one's sin might consist in "I do not."

Being called into the kingdom of God involves some duties that are often minimized. There is just one hope of this calling (Eph. 4:4); it is the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:14); it is an holy calling (I Tim. 1:9), and we must be partakers of this holy calling (Heb. 3:1); we must give diligence to make this calling sure (II Peter 1:10).

Called into the kingdom of Christ involves several positive and aggressive actions on the part of those so called. We are called into fellowship of Christ (I Cor. 1:9). Fellowship means partnership and working together with Christ

Paul said we are workers together with God; we are fellow-heirs with Christ. John said the basis of this fellowship is to walk in the light (I John 1:3,7). This walking requires positive action—more than not walking in the way of the wicked. We are to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called (Eph. 4:1). This calls for meekness, longsuffering, forgiving, loving, keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (I Peter 3:9; I Thess. 2:12).

We are called to liberty, yet this liberty is not to be used to destroy the work of God. Liberty from sin and its consequences and from the works of the law, which could not save, does not permit us to engage in actions that cause weak brethren to stumble and fall into sin. But we are called into the liberty to serve Jesus Christ. While enjoying the liberty from sin and the works of the law of Moses, we are bond servants of Jesus Christ and must do his will in all things.

In Colossians 3:15 we are called to let the peace of God rule the heart. This is not peace at any price; it is not peace with the evil forces because we are told to "fight the good fight of faith" (I Tim. 6:12). In fact, this fight is with all forces of evil, including "spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12). There is no peace with spiritual error, in the church or out. This fight is not with the carnal sword, but with the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God (Eph. 6:17). We are to be aggressive with the word of God and fight all battles for the faith once for all delivered. Keeping peace of the Spirit involves a fight with all false teachers and forms of spiritual error where ever they are found, but the peace of God—that peace that comes from God by obeying His word—must rule our hearts. This is an objective of our being called into the kingdom of God.

In I Peter 2:9 we are told that we are called to "show forth the praises of him who called us." To show forth the praises calls for something more than just "I do not do . . ." It includes worship as well as a life of godly living. It is by our "good works" that we give praises to God. II Peter 1:3,4 teaches that we give glory and virtue in conducting our lives in accord with the living word of God. I Thessalonians 4:7 shows that holiness is the objective of this calling into the kingdom of God. This forbids the wickedness that the world practices, but it also demands those actions that are in harmony with the divine nature of which we are to be partakers.

Paul and his company knew that the Spirit had called them to Macedonia to preach the gospel to the lost (Acts 16:10). The calling into the kingdom of God requires us to be teachers of the word of God. The lost of this world can be saved by no other means than to preach to them the gospel of the Son of God, which is the power of God to save when believed (I Cor. 1:21; Rom. 1:16). We cannot leave this to others to do because as a citizen of the kingdom I must do the work for which I have been called, and this includes teaching the word to others.

We cannot be content to say, "We do not lie, steal, commit adultery, get drunk, murder, etc.," and expect that this is all that is required of us as servants of Christ and citizens of his kingdom. We must make our lives of real service to the King and do those things which the holy calling into the kingdom of Christ demands. When this is done, and only when it is done, will we be walking worthy of the vocation wherewith we were called. Only then will we be holding to the one hope of that calling. Only then will the praise and glory be shown to God in the members of the body of Christ. Let us not be content to live a life of "I do not . . .," but let us follow the example of the Master and

do those things that are well pleasing to God. There is work to do and we must do it faithfully, scripturally, constantly if we expect to live with Christ in eternity.



The geologist and astronomer, by their theories, get the world formed and then face another great problem: life on the earth. The obvious question is: Where did life come from? Again they must turn to more speculation based upon more hypotheses. One hypothesis is that life came to the earth on a fragment from another cosmic body. This is no explanation as to the source of life but merely puts it on another planet or body with the hope that no one will ask how it came to be there in the first place. Other theorists hold to the hypothesis that living protoplasm came about due to a natural synthesis of hydrocarbons when the earth was in a molten state. Others say life came about due to actinic radiation from the sun upon colloidal substances in the sands of the seashore or in the seas themselves. By whatever process life came about and then events occurred to change some into plants and some into animals. From these early simple forms life continued to evolve through various stages, each becoming more complicated and the end result has been man. The fossils that are found indicate this to be true according to their reasoning.

Now let us look clearly at these hypotheses and speculations¹ and the conclusions that have been drawn. In the Geologic Time Scale the Cambrian is the first important fossiliferous period. About two thousand species of life have been located in the Cambrian strata in which all the phyla of animal life except the Chordates are represented. Thus all of the invertebrates appear at the same time, members of differing phyla, without any indications as to how they arose or that one phylum produced another phylum or a differing group. In other words there are no animals present that may be pointed to as the "connecting link" between two different phyla of animals. The "missing link", even during this age, was still missing. Dr. Austin H. Clark of the Smithsonian Institute wrote as far back as 1928 in the *Quarterly Review of Biology*: "So we see that the fossil record, the actual history of the animal life on the earth, bears out the assumption that at its very first appearance animal life in its broader features was in essentially the same form as that in which we now know it . . . Thus, so far as concerns the major groups of animals, the creationists seem to have the better of the argument. There is not the slightest evidence that any of the major groups arose from any other." Statements like this from scholars who refuse to violate their scholarship to uphold the theories of men continue to cause the evolutionists many sleepless nights.

SCRIPTURAL ELDERs AND DEACONS

H. E. PHILLIPS

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The apostle Paul makes this statement to Timothy near the close of this second letter, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall heap to themselves teachers having itching ears." The end is very clear "And they shall turn away their ears from the truth and be turned to fables." There are many lessons to be learned from these two verses and I marvel that after almost 2,000 years we have failed to profit from them. Consider for a moment what these verses teach.

First, it is easy to leave the word of God as the standard in pulpit preaching. This alone with the Corinthians as an example, should work a "carefulness" in us that would cause us never to follow "above that which is written." Paul tells Timothy that the "word" is the thing to be preached, and it alone must be preached at all times "in season and out of season." Every utterance should be tested by the written word and thus approved. Every teacher needs to speak as the "oracles of God."

The second lesson is simply this: once the word of God is left, man becomes the judge of what is preached. God has already brought to naught the "wisdom of this world," but men continue to alter and change the gospel. The "foolishness of God" through the ages has not been good enough for man. The "itching ears" of the long ago are still with us. The "sign seeker" and the "wisdom follower" have multiplied until they cover the earth.

Perhaps the saddest lesson of all is the third. That throughout the ages there are men who will tickle the ears of those who do not want the sound doctrine of the Lord. True centuries ago, it is still true today. Brethren can find any kind of preaching they look for, and can "heap" to themselves any kind of preachers they want. There are those who preach all of the gospel and there are those who will preach any part of it. Many have the idea today that it is actually in the providence of the elders of the church to decide what is preached and the preacher is just a spokesman for the eldership. Timothy's charge here was before God and the Lord Jesus Christ. We all answer to a higher court than even the elders of the congregation. Instead of limiting the preaching of the word, it is their distinct duty to see that all of it is preached. Paul told the Ephesian elders that he had "kept back nothing that was profitable to you", and this should be true of every preacher today. If this were the rule of our time brethren would know that the Bible alone was the rule of faith and practice. There would be little use in firing one preacher to effect a change in preaching and attitude. Yet, how easy this is today. If the brethren want soft preaching they know where it can be found. If they want a part of the Gospel left out, this can be arranged and all of this without difficulty. How true that "they can heap to themselves teachers having itching ears."

DEPARTING FROM THE FAITH

We do not know all of the details of these departures from the faith but we know that they turned "away from the truth." There are some principles however that all can clearly see. First, there must have been a compromise in the preach-

ing on sin. This always is present in false teaching. The practices of that day were either overlooked or apology was made for them. Sin became either a mute subject or found defenders in the pulpit. How true this is today; dancing elders, square dancing deacons, cocktail drinking brethren and divorce-filled churches can find preachers who will either turn their back or apologize for their conduct. When asked how he tolerated these conditions one preacher of a wealthy southern congregation simply said, "we do not say anything about things like that." Yes, there are many teachers who are willing to please itching ears.

In turning from the truth, brethren in the long ago manifested a dissatisfaction in the divine standard of conduct that God has established. This, however, did not change the truth on the question or the responsibility of the preacher to the churches for Paul closes with this admission. "But watch thou in all things, endure affliction, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."

INSTITUTIONALISM

E. L. Flannery, Bedford, Ohio

Institutionalism is a controversy in the brotherhood today simply because brethren having taken different positions as to whether or not the church may work through other existing or created institutions. One of the greatest dangers in any controversy is the tendency to become impatient and bitter with those differing with us. There is added confusion to the discussion when terms used are not properly defined and delimited as to precise usage, as "organization", "institutional", "scriptural", etc. (One man argued with me that I was working through another "organization" in getting out the bulletin, as a typewriter is an "organization"!.) Certainly one short article could not fully discuss the various phases of this serious question, but perhaps a part of it can be profitably explored.

Webster defines "institutional" to mean: "Highly organized so as to include various charitable, educational, and other activities". Remedial institutions include hospitals, jails, old people's homes, orphanages, etc. By "institutionalization" of the church, I simply mean "the building up of plurality patterns" through which the church functions (Diet, of Sec). An "institutional church" then is a church that features social, cultural, and recreational activities, and works through a number of institutions in accomplishing this. To boil it down, the issue today is: May a congregation scripturally contribute to, or work through, other institutions in doing the work God has given her? May she work through a sister congregation? Saying we oppose institutions is not true: that! does not face the issue. Saying we hate orphans is not true: that does not face the issue. Saying we are disinterested in the old, the feeble, the afflicted is not true: this does not face! the issue. Saying we do not believe in educating our children under Christian teachers is not true: this does not face the! issue. Saying we are not interested in lost souls, that we are! "anti-missionary", is not true: this, too, fails to face up to the! issue!

But those who disagree with me in this controversy have! stated that the Lord said in the generic we are to "visit the! sick" and the building of a clinic or hospital is but one means,! one method, of doing it—that there are indeed other methods! of visiting the sick and afflicted, but that no one method should be bound upon us as a specific, and none of the! many methods open to us should be forbidden. Sounds logical and good, doesn't it? Are you ready to build or support from|

the treasury a hospital as one "method" of visiting the sick and relieving the afflicted? Why not? If a hospital is but a "method" who could scripturally object? God did not tell us *how* to visit the sick; He did not bind the method. Now, brother, if you will think this argumentation through and detect its fallacy, and then be honest and sincere in applying it to caring for widows, orphans, and to preaching the gospel to the lost, you will be on your way out of the institutional quagmire that has swallowed so many well-meaning brethren in so many different generations. This is the same old, threadbare argument used in 1849 in establishing the American Christian Missionary Society in Cincinnati, Ohio—"the Missionary Society is only a method; God said to teach but He didn't say how to teach, so we cannot bind one certain way, nor forbid others to use any method they might select."

Of course you see the fallacy here is in the misuse of the word "method". The Missionary Society is not a method, but an association organized to accomplish particular aims, and which will determine what methods (procedures, course of action) it will employ. A congregation contributing funds to the A.C.M.S. is not selecting a method of doing mission work, but selecting and supporting an institution other than the church to employ methods of doing it. Now, what about sending funds to build or to support a hospital, the hospital being but one of many methods of "visiting the sick"? Again, as with the A.C.M.S. argument, the word "method" here is misused. A hospital is not a method in the ordinary sense, but is "an institution in which patients or injured persons are given medical or surgical care" (Webster). A hospital will select methods of care they believe best for the patient. With one it may be surgery, while with another it may be medicinal. Certainly if a congregation felt the need to purchase the services of a hospital they could do so as a means of relieving some afflicted saint who was in need. The hospital service is needed, is directly applied to the need, and is a service the congregation as such cannot supply. The A.C.M.S., of course, offers no service the congregation cannot supply and affords no service that is needed. It is functioning squarely in the area (spiritual matters) that God instituted the church for.

What about church support to orphanages? Now, stay with me, and let us look at this question as calmly as we did the above questions. What is an orphanage? It is a remedial institution as is a hospital. It provides the institutional type home for the fatherless, parentless, or the deserted. It is in no sense a "home restored". It is an organization providing the institutional type care. This is distinctively different from the true family home care. But there may be times when such type care is needed and helpful. The question, however, is whether the congregations may scripturally send funds to these institutions caring for the "fatherless"? May they work through such organization in order to do benevolent work? Is this merely a "method" of doing benevolent work, or is the orphan home an institution that selects methods of caring for orphans? If you are confused now, back up, and consider the hospital case: is the hospital a "method" or an institution employing methods? You know in your heart the orphan home is an institution, an organization doing remedial work. If you emotionally answer that "poor little orphans must have care" we agree, but that does not face the issue of whether a church may work *through* other institutions or not. And if you say "Yes, a congregation may contribute funds to an orphanage", and base it on the fact the church has a responsibility at times in this matter, then, to be consistent, you will have to also say that the church may contribute funds to hospitals and to "our" schools, for the church at

times has a responsibility to the sick and to those needing teaching concerning God. The hospital, the school, and the orphanage are all institutions rendering a needed service. Could we say caring for orphans is more important than relieving the sick and afflicted? That relieving the afflicted in body is more important than training and developing the minds of our youth upon religious principles? Why refuse church support for the two, but insist, even to the dividing of congregations, upon church contributions to the other, the orphanage? Mark it! The time is not distant that the churches will be pressured to accept the whole parcel or reject it totally. The late G. C. Brewer urged the accepting of the whole package. He wrote: "Churches have always contributed to schools, and schools have always accepted such donations" . . . "Some of the schools, in order to appease these objectors, have made announcements that they will not receive a contribution made by a church" . . . "The time is now present when those who do not make such announcements are going to be branded as unsound. In fact, this is the implication of such an announcement by either a school or an orphan home. Therefore, it must be clear that the schools, in making such announcement, not only state their *policy*—which they have a right to do—but they *state their creed and condemn everyone who does not agree in that tenet*. The school, therefore, that refuses to accept a donation from the elders of a church tells these elders that they are unscriptural in making such an offer and thereby announces that all churches that contribute to any school are unsound churches. Thus the work of a congregation is not determined by its elders, but is determined by the school, and the school is therefore dictating to the churches" (*Gospel Advocate*, Oct. 13, 1949). Of course, I do not agree with this "reasoning" at all, but do believe that Brewer was right in saying if the *one* could be supported by church donations the others could also. I believe neither should be. Why is it right to send funds from the church to run the schools in the orphanages but wrong to send funds to continue this education above high school?

The late H. Leo Boles was asked whether the church should send funds to the Red Cross in the great work it was doing. He concluded his article: "It seems clear to the writer . . . that no elder or set of elders should use the church funds to do work through one of these human organizations. There is no New Testament example for such, and no instruction for a church to use any of the church funds through such organizations. Furthermore, many congregations are divided in sentiment as to whether the church as such should help relieve any distress through a human organization. Now, since there is no scriptural example, neither any scriptural instruction for such, and the church is divided in sentiment—that is, some members believing it should be done and others conscientiously opposed to it—it is wise and best to leave the church out of the picture entirely . . . The matter of relieving the distressed in the present emergency should be left to the individual Christian . . . The elders should not take funds contributed by members who are opposed to doing such work through the Red Cross and give it to the Red Cross. The elders of the church should want to keep the peace and harmony of the church, and should make it clear to all others that the church as a church is not functioning in this matter" (*Gospel Advocate*, Jan. 29, 1942, p. 101).

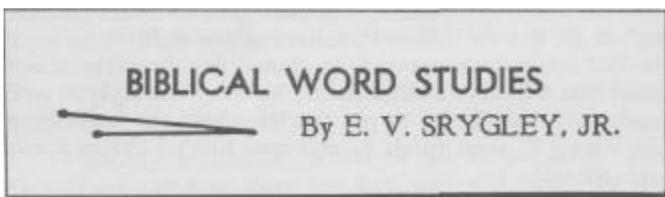
I believe that Brother Boles's advice was sound and good. I wish the brethren today would practice this as concerns the divided opinions over church support to schools and orphanages—send none from church treasuries but not molest the individual who would send personally to a school

or hospital or orphanage of his interest and choosing. This would make for peace by eliminating compulsion or forced contributions by those who conscientiously object. This would give time for cool, deliberate study of these controversial matters, and ease the pressures tending to division. Surely this is worthwhile.

Brother Boles further stressed: "Christians are to do good unto all, and helping those who are in distress is a good work. We do not find any example of a church that has sent help to those who are not Christians. The church as a church has not functioned that way; if so, we have not record of it in the New Testament. It seems that if one Christian could help those in distress who are not Christians, a church could do the same. This point should not be pressed, since we have no New Testament example of it. We do not have any example or instruction of the church or one church helping any cause through some other institution or organization" (*Ibid.*).

I feel sure all readers of this believe in the all-sufficiency of the Bible. Yet the all-sufficient Bible, as Brother Boles stated it, gives no example nor instruction for the church as such to help those not Christians or to help any cause through some other institution or organization. As the Scriptures are all-sufficient as a guide the church is all-sufficient as an organization to do all God wants it to do.

It requires the same type of men and principle to preserve our American institutions as it required to establish them.



HAMARTANO, "I SIN"-NO. 2

In the first article in the present series it was observed that *hamartano* is probably derived from *ameiromai*, "I fail to participate in." In the present article, and perhaps in others to follow, are presented some thoughts on the use of *hamartano* in classical Greek.

The broadest significations of *hamartano* occur in classical Greek. The verb is used both literally and ethically, with gradations in both of these areas.

When *hamartano* is first encountered it signifies, literally, "to miss a mark." See these lines from Homer: "Him he missed (*tou men hamarth'*), but smote in the groin Odysseus' goodly comrade, Leucus," *The Iliad* 4.491. See also: "He spake, and hurled his spear, but of purpose he missed (*hemartane*) the man," *The Iliad* 10.372.

HINDRANCES TO CONVERSION

Earl Fly, Tampa, Florida

"For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (Matt. 13:15).

The word *conversion* means "a spiritual and moral change attending a change of belief with conviction" (Web-

ster). It is the process by which one becomes a Christian. In the quoted passage Jesus teaches that there are hindrances to conversion. Since conversion on earth is essential to eternal life beyond the grave, we should recognize our hindrances and remove them. What are some hindrances to conversion?

(1) WILFUL IGNORANCE. Those of whom Christ spoke in Matt. 13:15 had deliberately closed their own eyes to the truth, lest they should see, hear, understand and be converted. Because they did not *desire* conversion they closed their eyes. Peter wrote of some lustful scoffers who were *willingly ignorant* of the destruction of the world by flood. They "conveniently" overlooked that fact to strengthen their position of questioning the Lord's return (II Peter 3:3-5). Many today are willingly ignorant of the gospel, God's power to save (Rom. 1:16), because they desire to continue walking their own ways.

(2) ANCESTOR RELIGION. Many reject conversion because it would mean a departure from the religion of ancestors. They sing the song, "What was good enough for father is good enough for me," not realizing it may not have been good enough for father, not being the "old time religion" of the Bible. We should be more interested in conversion and heaven than our forefathers' religions. Saul of Tarsus left the religion of his fathers to obey and preach the gospel of Christ (Gal. 1:11-16).

(3) PREJUDICE. This is one of the greatest hindrances to conversion. It is a padlock on the mind which brings condemnation before investigation, and effectively prohibits sincere investigations. Was it not prejudice that caused the religious Jews to murder Stephen, rather than accept the truth he preached? (Acts 7:1-60). Many who are blinded by prejudice ridicule God's church, scoff at his command to be baptized for the remission of sins, and scorn the one faith. Those who desire heaven must sweep prejudice from their minds as a hindrance to conversion.

(4) WORLDLY PLEASURES. Such pleasures choke out the word of God in human hearts (Luke 8:14), and hence are hindrances to conversion. Many are lovers of pleasure *more* than lovers of God (II Tim. 3:4). Demas forsook Paul because he loved this present world more than God (II Tim. 4:10). We should realize, as did Moses, that it is far better to suffer affliction with God's people than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season (Heb. 11:24-26). Sinful pleasure is only temporary and "the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever" (I John 2:17). An eternity in hell is too great a price to pay for a few fleeting years of worldly pleasure. Think about it friend!

(5) RELIGIOUS LEADERS. False teachers have always been hindrances to conversion. They deceive the people into I believing they are saved without obeying the gospel of I Christ. They fill the peoples' minds with false doctrines which hinder the entrance of God's truth which is able to make them free (John 8:32). In Acts 13:6-11 we read of a false teacher who tried to hinder the conversion of Sergius Paulus. Religious leaders provoked their followers to crucify Christ and persecute Paul. They conspired against Stephen because they could not answer the truth (Acts 6:9-14). Satan has ministers disguised as God's ministers (II Cor. 11:13-15). Jesus said they are wolves in sheep's clothing (Matt. 7:15). I *Beware of them!* "Who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth?" (Gal. 3:1).

(6) DESIRE FOR PROMINENCE AND POPULARITY. An example of this hindrance is found in John 12:42,43: "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on | him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him,

lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." If we are to be converted we must love the praise of God more than the praise of men.

(7) **DESIRE FOR RICHES.** "But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (I Tim. 6:9-10). "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:26). It is far better to lay up treasures in heaven, where moth and rust doth not corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal, than to lay up treasure on earth soon to be left behind. It is certain that we can carry nothing out of this world (I Tim. 6:7).

(8) **TRUST IN RICHES.** Many feel no dependence on God because they depend on material possessions, consequently their conversion is hindered. They tried spiritual security for worldly security. They trust in riches to prepare for this life which shall soon fade away, while neglecting to trust in God to prepare for a life beyond the grave which shall never fade away. God calls one a fool who does this (Luke 12:15-21). Jesus said, "How hard is it for them that *trust* in riches to enter into the kingdom of God. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:24,25). Hence Paul wrote, "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor *trust* in *un-certain* riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy" (I Tim. 6:17).

Dear reader, whatever it is that hinders your conversion, *cast it aside immediately*. Absolutely nothing is worth the eternal loss of your soul. Worldly pleasures do not begin to favorably compare with the joys of salvation and hope for the future. Worldly riches cannot buy salvation and a home in heaven. These uncertain riches can fade away through disastrous losses in flood, fire, hurricane, thefts, lawsuits, business failures and multitudes of other ways. But the riches of a Christian can never be corrupted, defiled or stolen, because our inheritance is reserved in heaven (I Peter 1:4). Soon we shall all lay aside the robe of flesh and be carried into eternity to await the resurrection and judgment before Christ Jesus, at which time we must give an account for the deeds done while on earth. Let us prepare while we can by removing all hindrances to conversion and obeying the gospel (Heb. 5:9; II Thess. 1:7-9). Believe in God (Heb. 11:6), in Christ (John 8:24), repent of sins (Luke 13:3), confess faith in Christ (Acts 8:37), and be buried in baptism (Rom. 6:4; Acts 2:38).

POWER TO THE FAINT

Wilbur Hunt, Palmetto, Florida

The last four verses of Isaiah 40 contains these wonderful words of encouragement. "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of his understanding. He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall

mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not weary; and they shall walk, and not faint".

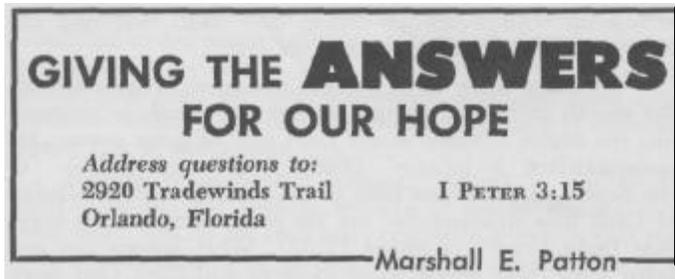
We have these three margin passages. "Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagles". "Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite" (Psalm 103:5 and 147:5). "O the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Romans 11:33). What lessons can one learn from these verses so as to serve and obey God more effectively?

First of all, we have the greatness and superiority of God proclaimed. Three titles or aspects of God are mentioned. The first one is "the everlasting God". This suggests both the Eternity of God and the Eternity of the mighty power and strength of God. The power and strength of God, therefore, are unexhaustible, and will never end and run low and dry. As Isaiah puts it, God "fainteth not, neither is weary".

The second is "The Lord". This suggests God as the One who is the Ruler of the Universe, and the proper Person to submit to and obey as one's King and Ruler in one's life. It further suggests God as the One who delivers, saves, and keeps and fulfills His promises and agreements, especially after one has done his part in obeying God so as to escape His wrath and enjoy His blessings of salvation and eternal life as well as other spiritual blessings in Christ. However, if one persists to disobey God and exhibits a rebellious attitude, then God will fulfill His promise to punish the sinner unless the sinner repents. God wants to save and bless a person, but His justice demands the punishment of sin if it is unrepented of, and God will not save and bless the sinner in his sins. Therefore, this makes it necessary for one to sincerely repent of his sins in faith in God and the blood of Christ that washes away one's sins (Revelation 1:5; Romans 3:24-26, and 5:9); to do what is necessary to be saved, justified, and reconciled to God; and to sincerely and willingly submit to the authority of God and His word.

The third is "The Creator". This, first of all, shows the superior authority of God over His creatures, just like the potter is superior to the clay vessels and, therefore, can mould the clay into whatever form he desires for whatever uses and purposes he has in mind. The same is true of God. This shows further that God has the right to rule, control, direct, and mould His creatures as He sees fit so that they may become the kind of creatures He desires, and may serve Him more effectively and pleasing for their own good, growth, and benefit. Only God, because of His infinite and unexhaustible power, knowledge, goodness, and wisdom, has this right. Therefore, finally, God is the proper Person to respect, fear, obey, love, and worship.

In view of these things, God, therefore, is the true Source of strength, especially in spiritual matters in regard to overcoming one's trials and temptations, and living the Christian life in general. A person in Christ has a better chance to overcome his temptations and to have strength in that God has promised to help him. A person outside of God and Christ is helpless and weak, and will not stand and hold out if he tries to rely on his own strength, knowledge, and wisdom. Paul puts it like this in Philippians 4:13. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me". The requirements are waiting upon or having hope, trust, and an obedient faith in God. Let us, therefore, strive to obey and please God better than we have ever done in view of His promises to save, help, and strengthen one.



GOSPEL PRESS

QUESTION: Is the GOSPEL PRESS parallel to the Missionary Society?—P.M.

ANSWER: The above question presupposes that the Missionary Society is wrong. An affirmative answer would mean that the GOSPEL PRESS is also wrong and for the same reason. A knowledge of the facts concerning GOSPEL PRESS and a knowledge of why the Missionary Society is wrong demands an affirmative answer to the above question. In saying that GOSPEL PRESS is parallel to the Missionary Society we do not mean that it is parallel in every particular. It is parallel, however, in those things that make the Missionary Society wrong. While many reasons may be given showing wherein the Missionary Society is without scriptural authority we point out only one in this article. This one reason we believe to be the basic evil of both the Missionary Society and GOSPEL PRESS.

THE REASON

The Missionary Society provides a means through which the congregations of the Lord can function as a single unit. Open your New Testament and find a single unit through which churches of the New Testament functioned. What was the name of the organization? Where was it located? Who composed its board of directors? Where is the scripture that tells of it?

Such organizations owe their existence to an unscriptural concept of church action. In the Bible the word "church" is used in the local sense. In this sense the Lord has revealed an earthly organization (Phil. 1:1). The word "church" is also used in the aggregate (Matt. 16:18). We also read of churches in a given district: Samaria, Galilee and Judea (Acts 9:31). Again we read of the churches of Asia and other provinces (I Cor. 16:19). However, it is only in the local sense that we find any church organization on earth. Consequently, the only church action provided for in the New Testament is that of the local church. For this we must conclude that it is God's will that the work of the church be done through the independent function of these local congregations.

When brethren think in terms of what many churches can do by acting as a single unit it results in bringing into being an organization through which such action can be taken. Where is the scripture for such? Such thinking often results in making out of a local eldership a society through which many churches act—e.g., the Herald of Truth. Correct this unscriptural concept and we make impossible any organization save that of the local church. Correct this unscriptural concept of church action and we make impossible any eldership serving as a single agent for any churches. There is no divine authority for many churches functioning as a single unit in the accomplishment of its mission. The Missionary Society is such an arrangement and for that reason is wrong. In this respect GOSPEL PRESS is parallel to the Missionary Society.

FACTS ABOUT GOSPEL PRESS

The GOSPEL PRESS is a human institution existing for the purpose of "Teaching God's Word to millions through pages of National Magazines." Five years ago there appeared an article in the *Gospel Advocate* of September 15, 1955, entitled "Another Door Of Opportunity Is Open Before Us" co-authored by John H. Banister and M. Norvel Young. An excerpt follows:

"The GOSPEL PRESS will not infringe upon the work of the church, but is simply trying to do the same thing other gospel papers are doing. Instead of trying to publish our own paper, we will publish the articles in large national magazines which already have their circulation built up into the millions. *Contributions will be solicited from individual Christians only. They will not be accepted from churches.* Of course, churches may want to buy reprints or tracts as they buy other literature from publishing companies." (Emphasis mine M.E.P.)

A few weeks ago a letter from the Nashville office of GOSPEL PRESS, signed by Paul Hunton, vice president of the organization, was sent to churches asking for their fifth Sunday (October) contributions as follows:

Elders and Minister
Church of Christ

Dear Brethren:

You will agree that preaching the gospel to every creature in our generation is the most urgent challenge we face. We must also count the cost and make the Lord's dollars go as far as possible. We can reach 1000 individuals through the enormous circulation of the national magazines for \$1.73. To reach the same number with a postal card, the postage, the printing and typing would cost at least \$60.00.

In our fall campaign we are asking every congregation to give the fifth Sunday contribution in October, or give all over regular expenses one Sunday in October or take a special contribution one Sunday October. If an announcement is made with enthusiasm for this work every Sunday for three weeks before the contribution is taken, the results will be overwhelming.

Yours for spreading the kingdom, ss/ Paul
Hunton Vice-President

WHY THE CHANGE?

It is evident that a change has been made in either their policy or convictions, just which we will not judge. But why the change? If in conviction, where is the scriptural authority which they did not see before? If in policy, can it be that they feel the brotherhood is more ready by now to accept the idea of church support of a human organization! in the field of "preaching the gospel"? Already many unashamedly contend for church support of human organizations in the field of benevolence and edification—e.g., I orphanages, old folk homes, and colleges. Why not church support of a human organization in the field of evangelism? This would make complete church support of human institu-

tions for all three phases of church work—evangelism, benevolence, and edification. Brethren, these are not on their way--they have arrived! GOSPEL PRESS is not only parallel to the Missionary Society--IT IS A MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

STATEMENT FROM FRANKLIN ROAD ELDERS

October 24, 1960

Mr. H. E. Phillips and Jas. P. Miller, Editors
 Searching the Scriptures, Box 9095 Tampa,
 Florida.

Dear Brethren:

As you know, G. K. Wallace wrote an article which appeared in the *Gospel Advocate* issue dated March 3, 1960 entitled "Saviors of Nashville". In this article, he made many assertions concerning a Gospel Meeting which was conducted here during October of last year. We felt that his article was filled with gross misrepresentations that should have been corrected, whereupon, we wrote him on March 27th, as per the attached copy. A copy of our letter to brother Wallace was mailed the same day to the *Gospel Advocate* to the attention of the Editor with a covering letter reading as follows:

"Brethren:

Herewith enclosed is a reply to Brother G. K. Wallace's article which appeared in the *Advocate* issue of March 3, 1960.

We request that this reply be acknowledged and printed in the *Advocate* as soon as possible, in fairness to this congregation.

Respectfully yours,"

We hold a registered mail receipt of delivery of our letter to G.K. Wallace but never received an answer from him, nor did we receive an acknowledgment from the Editor of the *Gospel Advocate* and no effort on their part has been made to deal fairly with us in making known our reply. Regardless of their opinions or convictions, we felt that some effort to correct the misrepresentations should have been made.

Inasmuch as this congregation and those who participated in the meeting referred to have been damaged by G. K. Wallace's article and that unfavorable repercussions toward those involved continue, we are passing this information on to you with the request that you reprint our reply and make it known to your readers, with the hope that some of this injustice will be corrected.

We extend to you our very best wishes in all your endeavors in the Master's Work.

Sincerely yours,
 FRANKLIN ROAD CHURCH OF CHRIST
 ss/ A. F. McDonald
 for the elders.

March 27, 1960

Mr. G. K. Wallace
 c/o Freed-Hardeman College,
 Henderson, Tennessee.

Dear Brother Wallace:

Rather than get into a lengthy discussion with you

concerning your article which appeared in the *Gospel Advocate* issue of March 3, 1960, we should like to say just a few words in reply.

Your designation of the term "The Saviors of Nashville" is your responsibility before God, just as you are responsible before God for all the other gross misrepresentations and deceit contained in your article, concerning this congregation and the meeting it conducted last October which you did not attend once.

It would be impossible for us to enumerate the amount of good work done by this congregation from the very first day it met. The Lord knows of our work and to him be the glory. In addition to the Lord, many local congregations know of our work in the care of orphans and other destitutes. Also, many others know of our efforts in supporting preachers of the gospel in other places. Too, during the past year, we were the major contributor in sending an evangelist to Australia and for over five years assisted an evangelist in Korea. Presently, we fully support one man, in addition to assisting in the support of eight other preachers of the gospel in other places. We were cooperating with many other congregations in carrying on most of this work.

As suggested in the last paragraph of your article, Brother Campbell is willing and ready to exchange pulpits with any preacher in Nashville to present the conflicting views to the people. We are certain that other preachers would be willing to do the same.

To say anything further to you on the matter would be beneath the dignity of elders of the work of the Lord at this place.

Respectfully yours, ss/ A. F.
 McDonald D. H. Shelton
 F. R. Zapp, Sr., elders.

CC: Gospel Advocate Co.



There is very little satisfaction in beating an enemy by evil means, but there is great and lasting satisfaction in overcoming your enemy with good.

* * *

It is not what was done yesterday or tomorrow by another that really counts; it is what we do today that is important to us.

* * *

Let the church be true to her charter—true to the ideals set forth by her divine Lord; let her lay aside the pretense of virtue and practice courageously that which she exists to show forth; and as it was with the Lord's teaching in ancient days, the common people will hear her gladly.

* * *

With some religionists of today custom and tradition have greater weight than the plain word of God. Assail baptism, a thing positively commanded, and they applaud; assail their unscriptural teachings and practices, and they become greatly offended. Some churches of Christ have had troubles over customs and traditions.

The News Letter Reports

... *They rehearsed all that God had done with them . . .*"— Acts 14:27

Three restored and two baptized at MacDill Avenue with JOHN IVERSON preaching. . . . The Franklin Road church in Nashville continues to do a great work. Many take courage at the stand of this good congregation for the truth. . . . DORRIS RADER is moving to Campbellsville, Kentucky and needs and is worthy of support in a hard place. Interested brethren can contact him there. RADER formerly preached for the church at Chapel Hill, Tenn. . . . Meeting at the Colesburg congregation out of Dickson, Tenn. with the following speakers, EVERETTE HARRIS, D. C. CRANDLER, ELVIS BARNETT, TOMMY EDMISSON, J. T. OVERTON, CALVIN PARKER, and HAROLD HOWARD. . . . The Downtown church in Lawrenceburg, Tenn., where E. L. Flannery preaches helps with the following men and places. HUSTON GATELEY at Millers Creek, Ky., HOWARD LEE at Irvine, Ky., WAYNE SULLIVAN at Camden, S.C., CLIFFORD McLEAN with the West Gaines church in Lawrenceburg, J. T. CHRISTIAN, West Point, Tenn., and O. FRED LIGGINS, JR., Nyasaland, Africa.

MARSHALL PATTON is moving across town to work with the Par Avenue congregation in Orlando, Fla. PATTON question and answer man for the paper preached with the HOLDEN HEIGHTS church in that city for the last three years. . . . WELDON WARMOCK is to take ROBERT PRESS NELL'S place with the First Street church in Lawrenceburg, Tenn. PRESSNELL will preach in that section and give time to his contracting business. . . . PAUL ANDREWS in a meeting with the Antioch congregation near Tampa. . . . Three baptized in the meeting with PAUL BROCK at the Bradenton, Fla., congregation where OAKS GOWEN labors. . . . The same number baptized in the meeting at Par Avenue in Orlando, Fla. with James P. Miller preaching. . . . H. E. PHILLIPS off to a good start in his work with the Forest Hills congregation in Tampa. . . . Seven baptized at Seminole in Tampa in the last few weeks. . . . JOHN GASSAWAY and the church at Gordon, Ga. publish a fine four page paper called *The Life Line*. . . . Miami meetings include MARSHALL PATTON at Seventh Avenue and WALTER HENDERSON at North Miami. Both good meetings with fine local preachers at both places. . . . PAUL SMITHSON preaching in the Miami area when needed. He can have a broader field of service. . . . HARRIS J. DARK preached for the new Perry Heights congregation on their first Sunday in Donelson, Tenn. . . . HOMER HALEY preaches in a meeting with the Drew Park congregation in Tampa. . . . W. C. HINTON, JR., preaches for the new Memorial Drive church in Decatur, near Atlanta. . . . J. ED NOWLIN preaches for the Glenwood Road congregation in the same city. . . . We came across the following in the *Defender*:

THE COST OF ALCOHOLISM

- In American industry over one billion dollars is lost annually because of alcoholism.
- 19 per cent of all absenteeism in industry is due to alcoholism.
- Wage losses alone in industry amount to 432 million dollars per year.

- More than 118,000,000 accidents in the United States last year were due to drinking.
- Of these accidents more than 10,000 were fatal accidents.
- More than 120 million dollars were lost in property damages due to drinking.
- Publicly supported hospitals and other state institutions spent more than 25 million dollars last year to care for alcoholics.
- More than 25 per cent of all divorce cases are connected with alcoholism.

JOHN IVERSON moving to Orange Highway church in Port Arthur, Texas. . . . J. W. EVANS moving to the same city after a fine stay with the Par Avenue congregation in Orlando. . . . Borrowed from the *Preceptor* the following report on the work in Nigeria.

. . . An excerpt from a letter written to the church in North Birmingham, Ala. from Sewell Hall (the evangelist in Nigeria which N. Birmingham is supporting) says "The work here is just as thrilling as we had pictured. Bro. Diestelkamp has scarcely missed a night in the past ten months preaching. As already reported several hundred have been baptized. Many of these have not remained faithful but every Sunday attendance at the five congregations in this area will average a total of more than 200. This is in contrast with the attendance of 15 in the one church meeting here 10 months ago. . . . We are deeply grateful to North Birmingham for making our return to Nigeria possible. I am convinced that we can do more good right here at this time than we could do anywhere else in the world."

RYMER KNIGHT the new preacher for the Temple Crest congregation in Tampa. . . . G. P. DUTOIT and A. P. JOUBERT are students from the Union of South Africa in Florida Christian College. Both of these men can preach the gospel and need to be used in driving distance of the college. . . . They are the result of some of the work done by Andy DE KLERK former student of the school in South Africa. Both of them will make fine preachers of the gospel if they have encouragement. . . .

Sword of Peace a fine monthly edited by IRVEN LEE can be obtained by writing P. O. Box 327, Russellville, Ala. I The price is \$1.25 a year.

AN ADMISSION AND A LESSON

Jas. P. Miller

In the city of Louisville, Kentucky, the week of October 21st was devoted to the INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES. This is the greatest meeting of the year for our digressive brethren who a few years ago stood for the "Ancient Order." Eight pages in the *Courier Journal*, great Kentucky newspaper, were devoted to this gathering. An estimated 10,000 members of the Christian Church attended. In reading these eight pages, many great lessons can be gained and powerful warnings given. On page six there was a four column story on the Mis-

sionary Society. This article tells its own story and more than half of the article is quoted as follows.

The major organization of the Disciples of Christ has never had the full support of all church members.

It is the United Christian Missionary Society, an organization of three divisions and 16 departments with headquarters in Indianapolis.

Members of the Christian Churches have always shied away from any superstructure agency that might tend to control the locally autonomous churches and pound their members into a common conformity.

But while fearing the control of denominationalism, Disciples have had to face the hard fact of modern life—that to do a job effectively, organization is necessary.

The first national convention of the Christian Churches at Cincinnati in 1849 was called primarily for "devising some scheme for a more effectual proclamation of the Gospel in destitute places both at home and abroad and taking under consideration the organization of a missionary society."

The American Christian Missionary Society was organized at that convention over the firm objection of many members.

Indeed, it was disagreement over the missionary-society idea that caused the defection in 1906 of a group that later came to be known as the Churches of Christ.

Missionary work tended to be taken on by different groups, because of the lack of over-all agreement. In 1874 the Christian Woman's Board of Missions was organized and a school established to train missionaries.

A Foreign Christian Missionary Society was organized in 1875 at a meeting in the First Christian Church, then at Fourth and Walnut in downtown Louisville.

Separate organizations to deal with various concerns of the church continued to be organized—a board of temperance, a Bible-school association, a commission on social service, and so on.

An attempt to bring these diverse functions under one board was approved in 1917 and in 1920 the United Christian Missionary Society was formed.

Even then and to this day there are churches and members who hold out against the missionary-society idea.

Of the 7,127 congregations in the United States and Canada listed in the 1959 Yearbook of The Christian Churches, 5,129 are regarded as "participating" churches. Only 4,381 churches sent offerings to Unified Promotion—the "community chest" of the churches. There were 1,255,115 members in these churches, compared to a total membership of 1,808,414 in all congregations.

EFFECTIVENESS OR DIVISION

Lesson number one is this: the society started to bring unity and effectiveness but brought division and strife. There are 2,000 churches by their own admission that do not support the society until this day.

Lesson number two: the reason many churches and brethren would not support the society was a fear for the autonomy of the churches. History proves this fear to be well founded and all who do not support the UCMS are branded by the brethren who do support it.

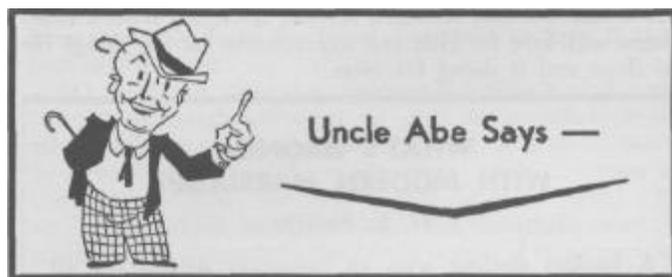
Lesson number three: when the divine pattern and the all-sufficiency of the church is left for human organizations there is no stopping place, but one unscriptural organization follows another. In this case we had the American Christian Missionary Society followed by The Christian Woman's Board of Missions, The Foreign Christian Missionary Society, a board of temperance, a Bible school association, a commission on social service, and so on. All of these finally merged into one great super organization now called The United Christian Missionary Society, with three divisions and 16 departments.

CONCLUSIONS

Conclusion number one: such organizations as the Gospel Press, Herald of Truth, etc., that have been started by our brethren to make the preaching of the gospel more effective and unified have brought strife and division to the people of God. Many of the churches and brethren of this generation will not support them and their unscriptural work.

Conclusion number two: brethren fear for the autonomy of the churches and their right to do the work God has given them to do. In the last five years they have abundant evidence that this fear is well founded. Churches and brethren are already branded who will not support these human arrangements.

Conclusion number three: these human arrangements are just the beginning. One organization will follow another with "like producing like" until we too, will be swallowed up in every kind of human plan to take the place of the church of our Lord. Today, in the Christian Church the congregations pay the bill and the United Christian Missionary Society does the supervising and gets the glory. Read well this last quotation from the same article. "The society supports 242 missionaries in 11 mission fields, operates 244 mission schools and 31 hospitals and dispensaries." Now hear the statement of the apostle Paul to Timothy in the long ago. "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Tim. 3:15).



When an object is held high and dropped, it starts immediately to reach for its maximum speed until it reaches the ground. A small snowball starts down a long hill. As it goes it picks up speed and grows larger in size and weight, which adds to its speed, until it has reached the very bottom

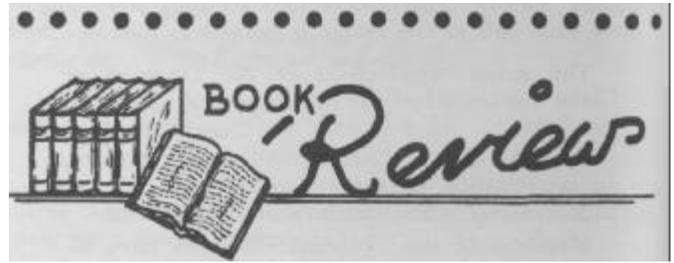
of the hill. Examples like these show the power of gravity in this world when no force holds the objects of gravity pull back. Men are like that with regard to sin. Sin is a mighty force of gravity that would pull all men down to it, and only the powerful word of God will hold men away from sin. In Isaiah 59:2 the prophet says that the iniquities and sins of the people had separated between them and their God. That was the force that pulled them away from their God.

This pull of sin does not always appear in the form of immoral and illegal actions. It sometimes comes as religious and pious actions. This is the most dangerous kind today because many will not admit that anything is pulling them away from God. So far as the church is concerned the hardest thing to do is to get the members to inspect their own motives and actions in religious life. The momentum of the fall toward apostasy is picking up and the further it goes the harder it is to get people to study and think for themselves. As a giant oak is cut in the forest and begins its fall to earth by the pull of gravity, the further it falls the harder it would be to stop the fall at any given position short of lying flat on the ground. As the departures from the faith are growing in size and number among many in the congregations of the church over the land, the harder it is to stop them and bring back to an erect position as taught in the word of God. There is not much hope of stopping some churches of their unscriptural practices. We can only hope to save some individuals who will stop and listen to the word of God.

Each individual, after all is said and done to teach the word of God, must account to God for his conduct in life. There is no consolation in this to the church member who would say, "It is my business what I do and you have no right to call it in question," because a man of the world could say the same thing. Each individual of the world must account to God just as each member of the church must do. It is time to STOP, LOOK, AND LISTEN! It is later than you think! The pull of sin is strong, even in the church. Let us cry out against spiritual wickedness in high places with all our power.

The real skeptic is the man who has so little faith in his own position that he is afraid to have it critically examined; who has so little confidence in truth that he fears to have more of it discovered; who is tormented by the fear that if he knew more he might believe less. • • •

God does not want, neither appreciates service that is not a willing service, neither does He appreciate efforts of His so-called followers to force people to do His bidding. God wants free and unselfish service, springing from a heart aflame with love for Him and appreciation for the things He has done and is doing for man.



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