

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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ALTOGETHER SUCH AS I AM

James P. Miller

Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadedst me to be a Christian. And Paul said, I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds. (Acts 26: 28, 29)

Altogether such as I am—this was the cry of the great apostle in answer to the exclamation of a Herod who said he was almost persuaded to be a Christian. Paul, even in chains, knew the great advantages in being a Christian. He longed to make a Christian out of Agrippa, even as he longed to see his own countrymen in Christ. He wrote the great Roman letter to call to Israel's attention, not only to the superiority of the gospel over the law, but the promotion of the Christian over the Jew. In Romans, Chapter 8, he makes a list of these great advantages. Consider them, dear reader with me.

Verse 26

The spirit makes intercession for us in our prayers. Hear the verse, "Likewise the Spirit helpeth our infirmities: for we know not how to pray as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groaning which cannot be uttered." Think of this great truth: dependent as we are upon prayer, without the Spirit we would be helpless. The blessings of God could not be ours for in our little, limited, finite way we would soon wither and die.

Verse 28

Paul cries out that all things work together for our good. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Think of the joy of knowing that all things are ruled and overruled for our good. No matter how dark the pathway, how black the night, God will work things out for us, if we love him and keep his commandments.

Verse 31

No man can be against us to our final harm. "What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" The world may cry out, "I am against you." The forces of evil may set themselves in array, but to the Christian what does it matter, he stands with God.

Verse 33

God keeps the record. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies." Charges may be made and accusations hurled, but not one of them counts

with God. Heaven's record does not record them and the judgment will not bring them forth. God's elect stand free.

Verse 35

No man can separate the Christian from the love of Christ. This is one of the greatest truths of all ages. In the last two verses of the chapter, he lists the strongest forces this world knows anything about and says that they are helpless. Here is the roll: death, life, angels, principalities, powers, things present, things to come, heights, depths, nor any other creature. *None* can separate us from the love of Christ.

Verse 37

We are more than conquerors. "Nay in all of these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." The Christian may be despised by the world and even in peril "among false brethren" but regardless of his state, he is more than a conqueror.

Is there a man that lives, no matter how great he may be, that can afford to be without these six great advantages that belong only to the Christian? Can you be without them gentle reader? To the thousands that read SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES, can any of you be without them and be saved? Why not obey the gospel today? The terms are clear: Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." (Mark 16:16) To the unfaithful, and to those who say they have need of nothing, John writes in Rev. 3:17 "knoweth not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Think of the contrast. The apostle sums it up this way in Verse 30 of our chapter under study, "Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified."

FREQUENT EXCUSES THAT CAUSE FAILURE

There is no cause for failure in Christian living more serious than the following excuses often heard by professed Christians. Have you used any of them recently?

1. I am waiting for . . .
2. That's the way we have always done it.
3. That's not my job.
4. I forgot!
5. I didn't think that was important.
6. I am so busy that I just cannot do it.
7. Everybody else does it.
8. God does not require all this.
9. We are doing all right.
10. I thought . . .

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EDITORS

<p>H. E. Phillips 124 S.E. 7th St. Gainesville, Florida</p>	<p>James P. Miller 2523 W. Diana Tampa, Florida</p>
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Address all communications and changes of
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Editorial . . .

H. E. PHILLIPS

THY SPEECH BETRAYETH THEE

One morning, a few months ago, a middle-aged man knocked at my door. When I opened the door he politely bowed and quickly introduced himself as a "member of the church of Christ" in a certain northern town. He informed me of his terrible predicament. He looked the part he was portraying — a helpless, poor, neglected and destitute man who had no family or friends on earth. Before he had finished his story he had told me three times he was a "member of the church of Christ," and on one occasion that he was a "faithful member" back home. I did not favor him with the help he requested because I knew he was lying about being a member of the church of my Lord, hence about some of the other things, probably.

You may inquire, How do you know he was lying about being a member of the church of Christ? I answer, Because he used strange language that showed a complete lack of Bible knowledge. Any man or woman must have more knowledge of the Bible than he had before he or she could become a Christian. He used these expressions frequently: "Reverend," "your denomination," "I used to sing in the choir," "I was christened when a child," and "when I got religion." Christians who have been "faithful" in the "church of Christ" as long as he said he had been a member would know better than to call a gospel preacher — or anyone else for that matter — a "Reverend." A Christian would know that the Lord's church is in no sense "a denomination," and that "christening" does not have any place in New Testament practice.

When I informed that man of his mistakes in language his reactions further indicated that he was lying about

being a Christian. At first he turned red in the face and began to accuse me of not wanting to help poor people. He then tried to correct his mistakes by completely reversing his story and telling me he wanted to "test me" to see if I was really a gospel preacher. Need less to say, he soon left without my aid. When one will lie about his religious life for the sake of money he has something to hide that makes him unworthy of anybody's help.

Now what is the principle to be learned in this experience? We must learn how to use language that will indicate what we really are — Christians. Peter said, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (I Pet. 4:11). Again, "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man" (Col. 4:6).

We are coining phrases every day in expressing a Christian's activity and relationship that are nearly as wrong as the language of the man just referred to. We are calling the meeting house the "church" with such regularity that our children think that is really the church. We talk about "church" weddings, "church" funerals, "church" picnics, "church" showers, etc. We talk about the preacher in a way that he becomes the HEAD of the local congregation. "Our preacher said," "our preacher does," "our preacher approves," etc. Then we talk about "The church of Christ doctrine," "the church of Christ preacher," "the church of Christ people," etc. This is not Bible language, and does not display the knowledge of God's word that we should have.

We are involved with organizations that call for terms unheard of in the word of God. "Captains," "chairman," "superintendent," "circles," (yes, he have a few of them), "committees," "youth clubs," etc. What place do these terms have in the simple organization of the Lord's church?

We talk about "mission points," "brotherhood work," "sponsoring agency," "central point," etc. These are not scriptural terms. We are either practicing something that we ought not to practice, or we are calling a thing something that it ought not to be called. Let us speak as the Word speaks and we will stay on the right track and speak in right language.

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A PREACHER?

By H. E. PHILLIPS

It is not uncommon today to see advertisements in religious journals for a preacher to move to a certain place and "work" for a certain congregation. It is rather amusing to note some of the qualities brethren are demanding in preachers of the gospel, or rather "Church of Christ Preachers." Recently I have been observing some of these ads and have been wondering if such a man exists as they advertise for. Usually the most important three questions concern his education, where and how much, his social qualities, and whether he "rides hobbies" or not. Very few are concerned about how much he knows about the Bible and how determined he is to "preach Christ and him crucified."

Following is the kind of man that would exactly fit most of the appeals now for a preacher:

Age, about 30 to 35; *family*, pretty wife and two children; *education*, graduate from one of "our" most



The apostle Paul in the long ago, in Galatians 1:6 declared that he was filled with wonder and surprise that the Galatians had proved themselves unfaithful to the Lord. It caused Paul to marvel that any man could know the truth and be removed to a perverted gospel.

There are many things in our day that cause me to be filled with wonder and astonishment. I can say with Paul, "I marvel."

I marvel that any parent would expect his children to be faithful to the Lord through life and not set the right example. The instruction in Ephesians 6:4 to "bring them (our children) up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," is not idle advice, but the very word of God itself. A look at any good dictionary will tell the reader that the word "nurture" means a nursing in education, training, feeding, rearing, and fostering in the things of the Lord. This cannot be done without the right example. Through the years, I have known parent after parent who has wept the bitter tears of heart break over the departure of his child from the faith when the true cause was his own example.

A child only knows in early life what he sees and hears. His eyes and ears are the faucets to his mind. If that child knows that his own parents are "slipshod" and careless about their relationship to God, the Father, he will cultivate the same attitude. Fathers and mothers need to be more concerned about their responsibility to teach their children. Years ago, in a meeting in Tennessee, a father came forward to be baptized at an afternoon service in a gospel meeting. Upon completing his obedience, I asked him why he had obeyed the gospel that afternoon. I knew that he had turned down many invitations. Here is the story that he told me and the great lesson that he learned from it. "This morning I started into the pasture to get the cows from the lower field. As I hurried along, I heard our little son just four years old, cry out behind me, 'dad, wait for me, I am hitting every step.' When I looked around, everywhere my feet had brushed dew away, my little boy was trying to step also. So you see, preacher, I am trying to fix it so he can hit every step and I will lead him to Heaven."

What a wonderful lesson. Father and mother, what about you. Do you expect your children to be faithful without the right example, or like Lot of old, do you expect to "pitch your tent toward Sodom" and not pay the price in the loss of your own flesh and blood? *I wonder.*

"The parents of America can strike a telling blow against the forces which contribute to juvenile delinquency if our mothers and fathers will take their children to Sunday School and church regularly."

— J. Edgar Hoover in *Nuggets*, April, 1958

important schools with at least two degrees; *social*, a very good mixer and party man; *public figure*, must be a good speaker and fit in well with all the public activity in the community; *worker*, special interest with young people and constant personal worker (go to see the brethren) in the church. His pay? Well, it would be better if he owed nothing and could live on \$50 or \$60 per week.

Of course, I have not yet read these standards in exactly this form, but this is the sum of what is demanded. Wonder who would answer an ad like this one:

"Wanted — a gospel preacher, any age, any size family, social and public qualities unimportant, but **MUST** be a sound, hard hitting, gospel preacher who fears no man and who will speak the Word with all authority; one who will speak out against all forms of sin in the church or out; one who will not compromise at any cost. We will support him in any amount necessary for his needs."

It might be refreshing in these times to see such an ad in some of the religious journals. I have an idea that such an ad would bring more applicants than we suspect. There are still many gospel preachers who would sacrifice for the chance to "preach the word" without fear of losing his job.

ORAL ROBERTS FAILED AGAIN

Donald P. Ames, Tampa, Florida

Recently, brother David Gulley and I had a chance to talk to an elderly man concerning his soul's salvation. It was rather obvious that the man had been drinking for quite some time that night (in fact, that was what gave rise to our talking to him about it). During our course of conversation, the man remarked that he had recently been "healed" by Oral Roberts. Since Oral Roberts has long been an interest of mine, I asked him if he would tell us all about it.

The man began by relating the feeling of excitement, etc. that he experienced before going up to see Mr. Roberts, and while there. He said he felt a shock "similar, but not quite like an electric shock" which he knew came from Mr. Robert's power. He was convinced he was "healed," as no man could "have that much power for God" and not "heal" him.

I then asked the man of what he was healed. He replied, "Alcoholism." (Yet, at this very time, the man was about half drunk). I then asked him if he could quit drinking now. He replied in the affirmative. I asked him if he could quit before he went to see Oral Roberts — or had it taken control of him completely. He replied that he could quit any time he wanted to before too. I then asked him what Mr. Roberts had done for him that his own will power could not do or undo. He couldn't reply.

It was obvious, by circumstances present, that if Oral Roberts had cured him of alcoholism, as he claimed, that he had failed in the process of time. The man himself admitted he had always drank. He was aggravated because his boss referred to him as an "alcoholic — unable to stop drinking." Yet, he turned right around and admitted he drank all the time. As usual, here is another of many testimonies which shows that Oral Roberts is a fake and does not have the power he claims.

PRIVATE AND PUBLIC WORSHIP

Irven Lee, Russellville, Alabama

The great sermon on the mount (Matt. 6) encourages men to pray in a quiet room at home. The very command to fathers to nurture their children in the chastening and admonition of the Lord is a command for teaching at home. Paul mentions his daily prayers in the first paragraph of almost every epistle he wrote. He offered thanks to God and petitions for loyal Christians and for churches in many lands. There can be no doubt that the Lord is pleased with such private devotions.

Much of the finest teaching is done in private. The busy apostle of the gentiles earned much of his support, but he took time to teach from house to house as well as publicly. (Acts 20:20.) The master teacher could take time to teach the woman at the well (John 4) or his apostles in some desert place away from the crowd, or he could meet with the blind man whom he had healed. (John 9.) Again we can say that our Lord wants us to speak, as it were, in the temple and in every house. (Acts 5:42.) The inspired men taught the men of the Jerusalem church so effectively that the men in general could preach the word when they were scattered by persecution. (Acts 8:4.) It certainly was in order for Priscilla and Aquila to take Apollos aside and teach him the way of the Lord more perfectly. (Acts 18:26.) We need thousands more in the church today who may be called faithful men who teach others also. (II Tim. 2:2.)

Paul was not cut off from prayer even in the prison cell. The Christians over the world were asked to pray for him. These effectual, fervent prayers availed much. These prayers were not offered on the street corners after the blowing of a trumpet. They were not long prayers made for a pretense. They were not offered just as a matter of form in some ritual. They are examples of private devotions poured out to the Father who knows his children's needs and has made wonderful promises. We can also say that we need thousands more in the church today who come boldly to the throne of grace in private devotions.

The diligence one gives toward becoming a workman that does not need to be ashamed includes much private study. One is encouraged to meditate in his word day and night. The daily contact with the precious promises, warnings, commands, and exhortations of the scripture is very important to one's spiritual welfare. One who would be strong should give attendance to reading that he may understand what the will of the Lord is.

Have these remarks indicated that there is no reason for public services? Do the books of our New Testament suggest that we have a choice between public and private worship, that we may choose the one or the other? Friend, no careful student of the Bible would admit that a choice is suggested. The same Bible that suggests prayer in the inner room also asks that we not forsake the assembling. (Heb. 10:25.) The same apostle who prayed so regularly and fervently from his prison cell asked that we teach and admonish one another by psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. The Christ who died for us asked that we take of the bread and the fruit of the vine in memory of him. Disciples, according to the approved example (Acts 20:7), came together for this. The early church was steadfast in worship (Acts 2:42) just as it was remarkable in showing brotherly love. The private worship suggested was not instead of public meetings in the temple (Acts 5:42), the school of Tyrannus (Acts 19:9), or in other available places.

The church is the pillar and ground of the truth. (I Tim. 3:15.) Elders are to take the oversight willingly, and all are to serve heartily. The very fact that God made plans for a congregation in each community where saints are found indicates that the coming together is of divine wisdom. Men may say they get more from private study. It is not a matter of where we get more or less. Both public and private devotions are taught in his word. How much benefit one receives at home or in the assembly depends much, though not alone, on his own attitude. The Lord knows that we need to be admonished by others, and that we should cultivate Christian association, as well as to have private study.

Sometimes wonderful periods of public study may suggest ideas and doctrines to our minds which conflict with our own personal ideas and habits. Antiseptics may burn the place that is infected. One reason, no doubt, for our need for group study is that we may be in a position to receive the benefit of the study others have done. Men at Berea could have studied at home, but Paul knew things they needed to hear. (Acts 17:11.) Yes, they needed to search the scriptures, but they needed to go back to the place of meeting for another sermon, too. Our prejudices keep us from realizing our own errors and inadequacies. We need to be reproved, rebuked, and exhorted lest we come to resent sound doctrine, or to draft away from the things we have heard.

Imperfections in others did not remove the need for assembly at Corinth. The long letters to the church at Corinth make it very clear that there were imperfections within that congregation, but the best people were not asked to turn away and forsake the assembly. They, rib doubt, were to work in humility and meekness to restore those who were overtaken in fault. We know they were to examine themselves, too. (II Cor. 13:5; 1 Cor. 11:28.) In private study we may be more inclined to study on those themes that are most pleasant to us. In public study we may be inclined to want to hear those things that we already appreciate most. Surgeons, physicians, and Bible teachers should concern themselves most with the points of special need. May the Lord give us wisdom and courage to speak the word boldly as we ought to speak. (Eph. 6:20.) We need his blessed help in our efforts to develop the ability to receive the word with all readiness of mind. (Acts 17:11.)

Let no one feel that a few hours spent in the assembly each week will suffice for private study and worship. He who often meets with the saints in hearty worship may be the one who delights most in prayer and study at home. He who is satisfied with an occasional visit with the church at eleven o'clock on Sunday morning may be one who cares little about prayer in private. Let none neglect public worship for private, or private worship for public. Each is suggested by the all wise God who loves us and advises for our good.

Why are we so concerned with our bodies? We wash, dress, feed and coddle them. We buy them hats and jewels and wrap them in furs. Then, suddenly, they fall to pieces, hideous and malodorous.

The soul has a body and not the body a soul, and when the soul has done with the body . . . it throws it off as any of us might an old overcoat. Let those who are left behind, therefore, not weep because the familiar form and face and voice are not there . . . it makes the glorious transition from mortal to immortal life a tragedy instead of a release and triumph.

—R. V. C. Bodley

THE ISRAEL OF GOD

L. A. Mott, Gainesville, Florida

The title of this article is suggested by an expression used by Paul in Galatians 6:16, "And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon *the Israel of God.*" Israel was the name of God's chosen people. In old covenant times God's chosen nation was the Jews. Today it is the church. Probably Paul, in Galatians 6, had in mind this latter, namely, the church, God's spiritual Israel.

THE ORIGIN OF THE "ISRAEL OF GOD" IDEA

The first time we read of the name *Israel* is in Genesis 32:28. After Jacob has wrestled in the night with a man, who turns out to be God, his name is changed to Israel, meaning "one who strives with God." (Note: Hos. 12:3-4 indicates that this "wrestling" was a symbolic representation of Jacob's strivings with God in prayer.) Then in Genesis 35:10 God says, "Thy name is Jacob: thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name: and he called his name Israel." So Jacob's name is changed to Israel. The descendants of Jacob were called Israelites, or children of Israel.

God promised Abraham to make of him a great nation (Gen. 12:1-2). Abraham's descendants would be as the stars of the heavens in number (Gen. 15:5). This promise was repeated to Isaac and Jacob (Gen. 26:2-5; 35:11-12). God, "who cannot lie," was faithful to his promise and the children of Israel became a great nation.

This great nation was God's peculiar people. He chose them from among all the peoples of the world to be *his* people. "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be mine own possession from among all peoples: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation" says God to Moses from Mount Sinai (Ex. 19:5-6a; cf. Deut. 14:1-2; 26:18-19; Psa. 135:4).

The relation of this people of God was based on their fleshly descent from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. One became an Israelite, and hence a member of God's chosen family, by physical birth.

THE FAILURE OF THE JEWS The Jews, in almost every period of their history, had a tendency to rely upon their descent and position of special privilege. Thinking that their position and its special blessings would excuse them from God's judgment (See Rom. 2:3), they boasted of being the people of God, sons of Abraham, the circumcision, and of having the law (See Matt. 3:9; Jno. 8:31-39; Rom. 2:17-20). They thought that they could live as they pleased just so long as they kept the sabbath, offered their sacrifices, and observed the rituals of the law. Therefore we find the Jews apostatizing from God, living in sin, then coming to the temple and offered their sacrifices, and yet continuing to live in sin as they had before. At such times God would send his prophets to call them back to the "old paths." Speaking through Amos Jehovah says:

I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Yea, though ye offer me your burnt-offerings and meal-offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy

songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream (Amos 5:21-24).

Micah sums up Jehovah's requirement in these Words:

Wherewith shall I come before Jehovah, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves a year old? will Jehovah be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God? (Mic. 6:6-8).

And so, time and again the prophets had to call people back to the law and show them that God wanted obedience and righteousness, not sacrifice and ritual.

John the Baptist and Jesus confronted and condemned this same spirit in the Jews. John preached that this national pride must be broken down; God demands repentance and right-living (Matt. 3:7-12). To the Jews who boasted, "Our father is Abraham," Jesus said, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham" (Jno. 8:39). He further stressed the truth that ritual and sacrifice are of little avail unless they are accompanied by justice, mercy, and faith (Matt. 23:23).

Paul, in order to get the Jews to accept the gospel plan of righteousness, had to convince them that they needed righteousness, and that their position of special privilege was no guarantee that they would be saved. The judgment would not be based on personal considerations, but according to one's works (Rom. 2:1-11). Every one of them had sinned, and therefore, not a single one of them could be justified by works of law, for justification by law can only come through perfect obedience (Rom. 3:10-12, 20; Gal. 3:10-12; Rom. 2:13).

THE TRUE ISRAEL OF GOD

As we leave Old Testament Israel and turn to the New Testament we see that God still has a chosen people: "But ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: who in time past were no people, but now are the people of God" (I Pet. 2:9-10a; cf. Col. 1:13; Eph. 1:11).

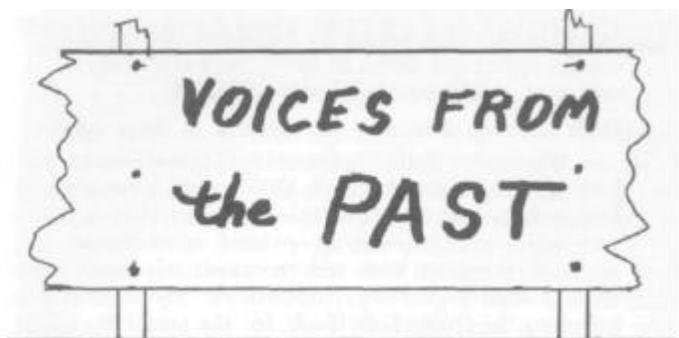
This people sustains a new relation to God. It is not based on fleshly descent, but on spiritual considerations:

1. We enter this relationship by a new and spiritual birth: "... who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (Jno. 1:13; cf. 3:3, 5).

2. Physical ancestry makes no difference: "For neither is circumcision anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature" (Gal. 6:15).

3. Obedience, not circumcision, is that which renders one acceptable to God. The true Jew is circumcised *in heart*. In Rom. 2:25-29 Paul points out: 1) That circumcision only profits if one is obedient to the law. 2) That the uncircumcision can be accepted with God if they keep the law. 3) So the important thing is not circumcision but obedience.

This, then, is a wonderful spiritual relationship with God. But how does one enter this relationship? Page 10



WHAT IS IT ?

Flavil L. Colley (FIRM

FOUNDATION, January 20, 1948, Page Three)

(Many in the church today do not understand that the church is not a human denomination. The following article appeared in the *Firm Foundation* 12 years ago dealing with this very subject. —Ed.)

"Now, a denomination—what is it? I think the following will prove true: A denomination is a religious organization larger than any local church on earth and yet smaller than all the Christian people on earth. Think of the statement thus made. What is a denomination? It is a religious organization larger than a local church, smaller than the redeemed in the aggregate. Therefore it comes in between, separate and distinct from, the church of the Bible at both ends of the line. How is the church used? It is either a local congregation or it embraces all Christians. Now, a denomination stands between these, and, therefore, it is a thing unheard of and unknown in the Bible: and I say that cautiously, respectfully, and yet firmly."—N. B. Hardeman, Volume 1, page 226-7.

This statement was true before Brother Hardeman made it in Nashville, in 1922. Let us reason some about these things.

1. Is a board to do church work a "religious organization" ?
2. Is it larger than a local church?
3. Is it smaller than the redeemed in the aggregate?
4. Does it come between, separate and distinct from the church of the Bible at both ends of the line?
5. If a board controlled organization is not a religious organization, why are churches called upon to give to and through an organization that is not religious?
6. If a board controlled institution is too large to be controlled by a local congregation, with its elders and deacons, is it a religious organization? If not what is it?

FALSE AND TRUE

False: "You do not believe the Holy Spirit converts, because you do not believe it does it direct."

True: The Holy Spirit converts the alien sinner through the word of God.

False: "You do not believe in mission work because you will not give through a missionary board, or society."

True: Bible teaches that the church is that through which mission work should be done, and not the church through another organization.

False: "You do not believe in "Christian Colleges" because you will not place the college in the church budget, and give through a board."

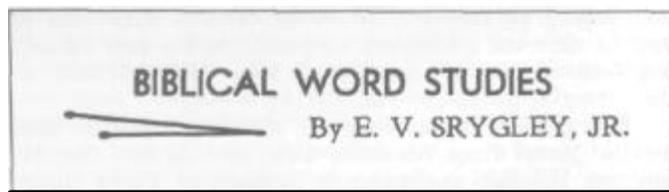
True: A group of Christians can form a board, larger than a local congregation in government, and prepare young men and women for "secular calling" using the Bible as a text book to teach spiritual things, along with other text books that teach the regular college courses, science, English, etc. Individual Christians, support such an institution as they would any other investment that would train and prepare young men and women for their place in society, and yet be free from many of the evils of state institutions of learning.

False: "You do not believe in caring for orphans, or supporting orphan homes, because you do not believe in taking money from the church treasury and giving it through a board."

True: A group of Christians can form a board, or society, with members from many congregations and care for orphan children. These may be supported by individuals who are interested in such work. The church of the Lord does not need a board or society of any kind through which to do mission work, college work, caring for orphans, or any kind of work. Any work that is so large it cannot be under the supervision of a local congregation, or if the nature of the work is such it cannot be under the supervision of a local congregation is to big.

Where are the men of God that fought digression in the past? Mission boards, instrumental music etc. Truly institutions have strung the churches on a wire, and gradually taken over. Every board that has members of several congregations serving on them is larger in government than the local congregation. It thus forms an organization, and if allowed will direct the polity of the church of the Lord. These organizations, "come in between, separate and distinct from, the church of the Bible at both ends of the line."

2119 S. Ewing, Dallas, Texas.

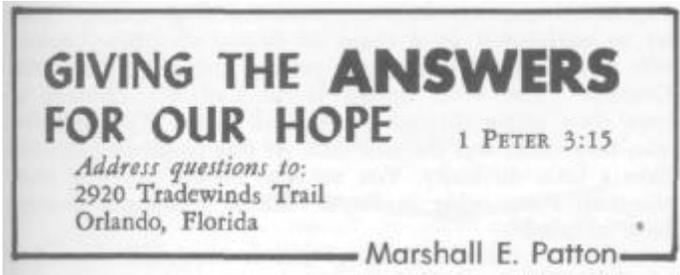


Matt. 28:19, ". . . into the name . . ."

Robertson maintains (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*) that "eis the name" is here used in the same sense that "en the name" is found. He says that "eis the name" here means "by the authority of." However, Vincent maintains (*Word Studies in the New Testament*) that "eis the name" means literally "into the name," which signifies baptism into a fellowship with. I am inclined to agree with Vincent on this matter. I doubt that "eis the name" is used in the sense of "en the name" in the Greek. Hence, the com-mission shows that New Testament baptism is necessary in coming into a fellowship with the heavenly family. Paul uses the same "eis the name" in I Cor. 1:13. Clearly, Paul is denying that the Corinthians were baptized into a fellowship with Paul.

The final text of our lives will not be how *much* we have lived but *how* we have lived; not how tempestuous our lives have been, but how much bigger, better and stronger these trials have left us. Not how much money, fame or fortune we have laid up here on earth, but how many treasures we have laid up in heaven.

----- Megiddo Message.



ELDERS

QUESTIONS: Is it necessary for a congregation to have elders to be scriptural? Or is it left up to the judgment of the brethren? 2. How did the Holy Spirit make the Ephesian elders? (Acts 20:28) 3. Can the elders rule in opposition to a majority of the members? — D.W.H.S.

ANSWER NO. 1: Whether or not a congregation has elders is not left to the judgment of brethren. It is God's will that there be elders in every church that has within it qualified men. (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5) Whether or not one possesses the scriptural qualifications (I Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1: 5-11) is a matter determined by brethren.

Near the close of Paul's first journey he returned to churches formerly established on that journey and "ordained them elders in every church." (Acts 14:23) These were churches before the appointment of elders and they were churches after the appointment. In the former they were incomplete from the viewpoint of organization. This incompleteness God tolerates until in *due* time men scripturally qualify themselves to serve as elders. Until such time arrives a congregation may be scriptural—even though it has no elders. During this time something is "wanting." (Titus 1:5) Such a church must be doing everything possible to supply that which is "wanting", otherwise it cannot remain scriptural.

ANSWER NO. 2: The elders at Ephesus were made in the same way that all other elders are made, namely in compliance with the Holy Spirit's instructions. The Holy Spirit guided the apostles into all truth. (John 16:13) Paul was guided by the Spirit when he gave the qualifications of elders. (I Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-11) When men are appointed elders who possess the qualifications designated by the Holy Spirit, they are in reality made elders by the Holy Spirit. Human agency is necessarily involved. It was so in New Testament times and it is so now. Then the Spirit may have guided directly in the making of elders, but now he guides indirectly through the Word. In both instances man act in compliance with the Holy Spirit's instructions. Thus, elders are made by the Holy Spirit.

To insist upon the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit in the making of elders, as per the no-elder theory, is to make the same mistake made by the denominational world relative to salvation. They insist upon a direct operation of the Spirit in conversion. We, however, understand that the Holy Spirit operates in conversion, not directly, but indirectly, through the Word. (Eph. 6:17) We become children of God by the Spirit (Rom. 8:14), and we are baptized by the Spirit (I Cor. 12:13), but this is done only as one complies with the instructions of the Holy Spirit. So it is in the matter of making elders. A congregation appoints elders in compliance with the Holy Spirit's instructions as revealed in the Word. Such men are made elders by the Holy Spirit.

ANSWER NO. 3: The power of elders is executive rather than legislative. They enforce law rather than make laws. There is only one lawgiver — Christ. (James 4:12) Elders, therefore, rule, according to the will of God. This they must do regardless of the minority or the majority. (Acts 20:28; Heb. 13:17; 1 Pet. 5:1-4) Since elders rule by the authority of Christ, failure to submit to the oversight of elders is rebellion against Christ. "For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry." (I Sam. 15:23) The rule of elders can be rebelled against only when it is out of harmony with God's will. Just as a wife is to obey her husband only "in the Lord." (Eph. 5:22), and children are to obey their parents "in the Lord" (Eph. 6:1-3), and citizens are to obey the "powers that be" so long as they do not conflict with God's laws (Acts 5:29), so members of the church are to obey the elders so long as they rule in harmony with God's law. Truth is determined by the word of God (not by elders) and all men have equal access to it.

The rule of elders must be within the realm of faith. In this realm there is an area of judgment. (I Cor. 6:12) When such matters pertain to congregational activities the elders are to lead, oversee, or rule the congregation. Their qualifications enable them to make decisions that are considerate, full of wisdom, and for the good of all. Such may sometimes be in opposition to the majority. Nevertheless, the decision of the elders must be respected! The only exception in such matters would be when elders become inconsiderate, selfish, and seek to enforce their own preferences, fancy, or taste without regard to the congregation. Such would be "lording it over God's heritage," a thing they are forbidden to do. (I Pet. 5:3) It might be difficult to determine such a spirit from a single incident, but over a period of time the disposition to "lord it over God's heritage" would become obvious. No Christian should submit to elders who rule out of harmony with God's law. On the other hand when they are in harmony with God's law "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." (Heb. 13:17) Consider also: I Thess. 5:12,13; I Tim. 5:17-20.

A Baptist Speaks Concerning The Baptist Church

Thomas G. O'Neal, Butler, Alabama

On November 19, 1959, the following appeared in the *Birmingham (Alabama) News*.

MY ANSWER

Billy Graham

I have heard the argument that John the Baptist was a Baptist. Will you please tell me if he was, and if so, where do you find it in the Scriptures? — I. V.

John was called "the Baptist" because he baptized with water.

I do not think that many Baptists would say that he was the first member of the Baptist Church.

The Baptists as a distinct denomination date from the time of the Reformation in the 16th Century. The first Baptist Church in America was founded in Providence, R. I., in 1639 by Roger Williams.

Unfortunately, it is the tendency 'of some religious people to push back their origin to the Apostles of Christ, thus establishing that they are the "original" Christians and the only real church.

The important thing, whether you be Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist, or whatever, is to be a sincere follower of Jesus Christ.

When we get to heaven, I don't think we will all have little "dog tags" telling which denomination we were members of on earth.

When John saw in Revelation the great company of the redeemed, he asked who they were.

The Angel said: "These are they which have made their robes white in the blood of the Lamb.

The question which will be asked on entrance to heaven is not; "Of what sect are you?" but "Have you been redeemed by the blood of Christ?"—(c)

This is a very significant article. Its author is Billy Graham, the world-famed Baptist evangelist. Coming from a recognized source, a Baptist preacher, we shall pay our respects to the words of this Baptist.

I. V. has heard the old Baptist argument in attempt to prove that the church of the New Testament is a Baptist Church. The argument is as follows: 1) John was a Baptist, 2) He baptized Christ, making Jesus Christ a Baptist, 3) Christ established His church, 4) Conclusion: The church belonging to Christ is the Baptist Church.

Graham says, "I do not think that many Baptists would say that he was the first member of the Baptist church." "Many Baptists" may not take this position, but "some Baptists" take it. If some Baptists don't take that position, where did I. V. hear this argument? Surely not from the Catholics.

John was not "a Baptist." He was "the Baptist." He was not one Baptist among many, but the *only* Baptist. Because he baptized people "for the remission of sins" based upon their confession and repentance he was called "the Baptist." (Mk. 1:4-5; Jno. 3:23.) The fact that John was not a Baptist religiously is seen in Graham's next paragraph.

"The Baptists as a distinct denomination date from the time of the Reformation in the 16th Century." Thus, Graham has admitted that which gospel preachers have been telling people all the time. The Baptist Church is of HUMAN origin and not of divine origin. Since the Baptists did not start until after the 1600s, how could a man be a Baptist in the first part of the first century? Something else to note is: Graham has admitted the Baptist Church is not mentioned in the Word of God. The Word of God, the Bible, was completed by the year 100. The Baptist Church was not known until after the year 1600. How could it then be mentioned in the Bible.

Graham attacks a group by saying, "Unfortunately, it is the tendency of some religious people to push back their origin to the Apostles of Christ, thus establishing that they are the "original" Christians and the only real church." There may be others, but the only groups known to this writer that attempt the above are the Baptist and the Catholics. The Baptist claim is: Baptist churches can be traced back through

Baptist churches to their origin in the first century. They try to establish it by a chain of Baptist churches. Graham tells us the Baptist church was produced out in the "16th Century." The other group is the Catholics, claiming to trace their origin through Popes back to the Apostle Peter, who they claim was the first one. At this point the Catholics have a little difficulty. You see, the New Testament never mentions Peter being in Rome. Which group did Graham have in mind?

Graham thinks the thing that is important, regardless of your affiliation with some group, "is to be a sincere follower of Jesus Christ." In Antioch "a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord" (Acts 11:21). Thus, they were following the Lord. But in so doing, they were not called Baptist, Methodist, etc. They were just simply called Christians, (v. 26.) Following the Lord today will make the same thing that it did in Antioch.

Graham doesn't believe upon entrance into heaven "we will all have little 'dog tags' telling which denomination we were members of on earth." His thinking is correct. There will be no denominations in heaven—only the faithful of the church. (Eph. 5:27.) What the world needs to do is take the "dog tag" labeled "Methodist", "Baptist" etc., and throw them away. Then, wear the name Christian. (Acts 11:26; 26:28; I Pet. 4:16.)

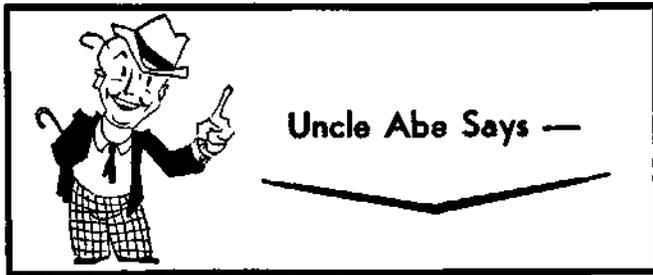
Upon entering the gates of pearl, Graham says that the question one will be asked is not, "Of what sect are you?" but, "Have you been redeemed by the blood of Christ?" About this Billy is correct! But I raise the question, How is one redeemed by the blood of Christ?

The answer to the above question can be found completely in the Bible, the Word of God. First, to benefit from the blood of Christ, it is necessary to get in contact with the blood. Second, we need to know where the blood is. And, third, it is necessary to know how to get into the blood. The Bible answers these questions for us.

Jesus Christ shed His blood in His death. (Jno. 19:34.) Therefore, to get the benefits of the blood, one must come in contact with the blood, one needs to get into His death. Paul tells us in Rom. 6, that he and the Romans "were baptized into his death." (v. 3.) He also makes the affirmation that they "were baptized into Jesus Christ." (v. 3.) So, to be baptized into Christ is the same as being baptized into His death. I Cor. 12:13 says, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body . . ." That body is the church. "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all." (Eph. 1:22-23.) To be baptized into the body is equal to being baptized into the church. To be baptized into Christ is equal to being baptized into the church of Christ. Put all these passages together, and one sees that baptism into the death of Christ, baptism into the body of Christ, and redeemed by the blood of Christ means all one and the same thing. Thus to be redeemed, one must be in the body. To be out of the body means unredeemed.

Baptist doctrine is redeemed at the point of faith only, baptism is not necessary to redemption. So the conclusion is: redeemed *without* the blood of Christ. I didn't say that; the Baptists did.

Paul said, ". . . and he is the saviour of the body . . . That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of the water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish," (Eph. 5:23, 26, 27).



When cold weather comes round people fuss about going out to church. When the weather rises to a sizzling 98 the same people fuss about it being too hot to go to church. When a comfortable 78 comes round it is too beautiful for these people to go to church; it is picnic or traveling time. Wonder why the Lord did not make a temperature that suits church goin'? If any degree below 78 is too cold, and any degree above 78 is too hot, and 78 degrees is too beautiful to waste on church going, it seems there is no weather that is suitable for worshipping God. Why not close the doors of the meeting house and let the preacher go fishing or sleep late?

When we get to heaven — if we get there — wonder what the temperature will be? If it is above 78 degrees, it will be too hot, and if below 78 degrees, it will be too cold. If it is just 78 degrees, it will possibly be too beautiful to waste on heaven. Where will we go? If we miss heaven and find ourselves in hell, wonder what the temperature will be? It will be too hot, but nobody will be going anywhere else. All the crying and begging will not relieve the heat. If you are disturbed about worshipping because of the heat, just think of the temperature in hell and you will have no more trouble about weather conditions hindering your worship.

Brethren do not love the Lord is the reason they complain about how hot or cold it is when they should attend worship. Neither 32 degrees nor 98 degrees stands in the way of going to a ball game. In fact, cold, hot, rain, snow, sunshine or normal weather is not even considered when we want to see the home team win. The only time weather is really a factor is when we want an excuse for not doing what we should do. Better not stay away from worship because of the weather; you might really have a weather problem some day, and it will last for eternity.

LET ME PRACTICE WHAT I SING, BUT —

"I want to be more like Jesus . . ." but it is not right to deprive one of all his *fun* and have to go to church every Sunday.

"All to Jesus I surrender . . ." but my money and time.

"Give me the Bible . . ." but don't always talk about reading and studying it every day.

"I'm not ashamed to own my Lord . . ." but don't tell my associates and fellow workers that I'm a Christian.

"Not all earth's gold and silver can make a sinner whole . . ." but we need to make and keep as much

as possible for a rainy day.

"I love thy Kingdom, Lord . . ." But only on Sunday morning at eleven.

"I am thine, O Lord . . ." but I don't have to be religious all the time.

"My Jesus, I love thee . . ." but I love other things more.

"More about Jesus would I know . . ." but one or two sermons a month is enough.

"Stand up, stand up for Jesus . . ." but this does not mean me.

"I need thee every hour . . ." but only at eleven on Sundays.

"To the work, to the work . . ." but let someone else do it!

"Tell me the story of Jesus . . ." but make it short and sweet.

"Bless be the tie that binds . . ." but there are other ties that are stronger.

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As mother and 10-year-old Larry trooped in, father looked up from a lapful of newspapers to ask what he'd learned at Sunday School.

"Well," said the lad, "our teacher told us about when God sent Moses behind the enemy lines to rescue the Israelites from the Egyptians. When they came to the Red Sea, Moses called for the engineers to build a pontoon bridge. After they all crossed, they looked back and saw the Egyptian tanks coming. Quick as a flash, Moses radioed headquarters on his walkie-talkie to send bombers to blow up the bridge and saved the Israelites."

"Larry," exclaimed his startled mother, "is that really the way your teacher told that story?"

"Well, not exactly," he replied, "but if I told it her way, you'd never believe it."

—Via. *Healthways*.

A young woman, defending her attendance at some doubtful places of amusement, said, "I think a Christian can go anywhere."

"Certainly," rejoined her friend, "but it reminds me of the time I went with some friends to explore a coal mine. One girl wore a pretty white dress. When someone commented, she said to the old miner who was our guide, 'Can't I wear my white dress into the mine?'"

"'Yes, Mum,' returned the old man, 'there's nothing to keep you from wearing a white frock down there, but there will be considerable to keep you from wearing one back.'"

—*Nuggets*, Dec, 1957.

The world today does not understand, in either man or woman, the need to be alone Anything else will be accepted as a better excuse. If one sets aside time for a business appointment, a trip to the hairdresser, a social engagement, that time is accepted as inviolable. But if one says: I cannot come because this is my hour to be alone, one is considered rude, egotistical or strange. What a commentary on our civilization, when being alone is considered suspect; when one has to apologize for it, make excuses, hide the fact that one practices it—like a secret vice!

—Anne Lindbergh.

On a warm Sunday morning the minister noted that the head of one of his parishioners was beginning to droop; in a few minutes the man was asleep.

Thinking to apply a little discipline the minister said softly: "All those who want to go to heaven, rise." Everyone stood except the peacefully dozing member. When the congregation had again been seated, the minister called, in a much louder voice: "All those who want to go to hell, stand!"

The startled sleeper jumped to his feet. Noting that he was the only one standing, he turned to the minister: "I don't know what we're voting on, preacher," he said, "but it looks like you and I are in the minority."

—Via. *Healthways*.

ENTRANCE INTO THE ISRAEL OF GOD Paul makes plain that no one can be saved by works of law for no one can meet the law's demands (Rom. 3:20). But God has provided a means, *apart from law*, whereby we can be justified by faith in Jesus Christ (Rom. 3: 21-26). So then in answer to the question, "How do we become sons of Abraham?," Paul replies, "By possessing the faith of Abraham." "Know therefore that they that are of faith, the same are sons of Abraham" (Gal. 3:7). Again in verse 9, "So then they that are of faith are blessed with the faithful Abraham." In this manner we become united **with** Christ. "And if ye are Christ's, then ye are **Abraham's** seed, heirs according to promise" (verse 29).

To prevent misunderstanding I must state: **This faith** is not a lifeless assent to certain doctrines, but a living faith that works by love (Jas. 2:17, 24; Gal. 5:6). James states that Abraham was justified by faith when his faith was made perfect through works (Jas. 2:21-23). Paul declares, "For ye are (present tense, LAM) all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26). The next verse states how they were made such: "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ."

That all who read these words may lay hold on the faith that saves and maintain it unto the end is my prayer.

GREAT THRILLS IN LIVING

To a generation that is in mad pursuit of rare adventure and wonderful sensations, let us suggest six sources of thrills that may be quite new and strange to a large proportion of it:

Doing a good turn to somebody who dislikes you, or who has wronged you.

Being generous with those who have nothing but gratitude with which to repay you.

Daring to champion an unpopular cause which you believe to be true and righteous.

Accepting the challenge of the "impossible," with the determination to make it possible.

Glimpsing as through a door suddenly opened the tremendous powers and possibilities within you waiting to be utilized—to see a vision of the person you are capable of becoming.

Living daily in the realization that you are a child of God (if you are), in serene assurance of all the guidance, protection and glorious heritage such a birthright implies.

Life knows no greater thrills than these.

—*Nuggets*, Aug., 1957

SEVEN SOCIAL SINS

According to Canon Donaldson, of England, in the *Christian Conservator*, there are seven social sins in the world. They are:

1. Politics without principles.
2. Wealth without work.
3. Pleasure without conscience.
4. Knowledge without character.
5. Commerce without morality.
6. Science without humanity.
7. Worship without sacrifice.

The News Letter Reports

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

HOLIDAY TRAFFIC FATALITIES

Traffic accidents struck hard during the past holiday period. All over the nation sorrow and grief wiped away the expected smiles and happiness as the toll of auto accidents mounted. Three such accidents in Florida and Georgia took four lives among brethren and left others injured.

On December 24, about 6:30 a.m. sister Waldeen Phillips and her mother, sister Walter Carlton, and sister H. E. Phillips left the motel where they had spent the night on their way from Nashville, Tennessee to their home in Clearwater, Florida. Waldeen and Polly (Mrs. H. E.) had been to Nashville to attend the funeral of Waldeen's father, brother Walter Charlton, and were bringing her mother back to Clearwater to spend a few weeks. About 8 miles south of Bainbridge, Georgia, where they had spent the night, a car suddenly appeared before them on their side of the road and struck head-on. Apparently the driver of the other car fell asleep and crossed the center line. The result of that accident was the death of two in the other car and the death of sister Charlton. Waldeen and Polly were taken to the hospital in Tallahassee, Florida and treated for broken bones and severe cuts. Waldeen is now at home in Clearwater and Polly is still in the hospital at Gainesville. The accident was the reason for the delay of over two weeks in the first issue of "Searching The Scriptures." Your editor worked on it in a hotel room in Tallahassee while trying to minister and comfort his wife, Polly.

On December 31, about 8:30 p.m. just south of Perry, Florida, brother Paul Tidwell and his family were returning from a holiday visit in Alabama to their home in Tampa, Florida. Without warning they came upon a truck parked on the wrong side of the road with no lights on it; Paul tried to miss the truck but side-swiped it, killing his wife and 12-year-old son. A younger son was seriously injured and was not expected to live for several days. Others in the accident were injured, but have now been released and returned to Tampa. The younger son is improving nicely.

On January 2 brother Joe Farless of Brooksville made a trip to the store with his small son on a motor scooter and was returning when a dog ran under the wheels and threw them both to the road. The boy was seriously cut about the head, but is now recovering nicely. Joe was injured more seriously than at first diagnosed. His injuries were internal and he passed away on January 7 following surgery.

Our hearts are saddened by these losses and our sympathy goes to each of the families who has suffered such losses.

JACKSONVILLE, Fla., Lake Shore — Brother Paul Brock has resigned his work with the Market Street church in Dyersburg, Tennessee after four years and will move to the Lake Shore church in Jacksonville within the next few months.

PENSACOLA, Fla., Ensley — The church in Ensley enjoyed a series of lessons by different speakers January 3 through 8.

GOSPEL MEETINGS

Charles M. Campbell of Franklin Road in Nashville, Tennessee preached in a meeting in Wilmington, Ohio in December . . . Guy Roberson preached in a meeting at Island Home church in Knoxville, Tennessee in November. Jimmy Thomas is the regular preacher . . . Charles M. Campbell preached in a meeting at North Birmingham church in Birmingham, Alabama November 15-22. Robert C. Welch is the regular preacher . . . Taylor Davis of Dyersburg, Tennessee preached in a meeting at Melbourne, Florida, beginning January 17 . . . Rufus Clifford of Lawrenceburg, Tennessee preached in a meeting at North Street church in Tampa, Florida January 3-13. Paul Andrews is the regular preacher.

CLEARWATER, Fla. — The church in Clearwater, Florida moved into its new building last month. This is a very beautiful modern designed building, located on South Hercules, a block off Gulf-to-Bay. Bob F. Owen preaches regularly for this church. Harry Pickup of Tampa will begin a series of gospel meetings in the new building this month.

CLERMONT, Fla. — The church in Clermont recently moved into its new building. This is one of the neatest and most attractive buildings to be found. Brother Charlie Hendrix has been of great help in getting this building for the church in Clermont. His untiring work with the brethren there is greatly appreciated. Brother Jackson is now preaching for this congregation. A gospel meeting closed Tuesday night, February 2. James P. Miller preached through Friday night and Jerry Belchick, Marshall Patton and J. W. Evans, all of Orlando, finished the meeting.

NYASALAND, Africa, James D. Judd — (From Nyasaland News Letter) Since the last report, 61 have obeyed the gospel making a total of 551 Christians here as of January 1, 1960. As the year of 1959 began there were only 107 Christians. An overall goal of 500 was set. This looked rather ambitious for two preachers with limited equipment in a foreign country. However, this number was exceeded by 51 giving an increase of 444 for the year or an average of 37 per month. This was made possible by the Lord's help, your prayers, financial assistance and encouragement. This can be surpassed this year.

PENSACOLA, FLA., East Hill — After five years of laboring with the East Hill church in Pensacola, Sam Binkley and family have moved to Portsmouth, Ohio. Brother Binkley moved the last of January and will live at 5396 Winchester Avenue, Portsmouth, Ohio. His successor at East Hill has not been announced.

PENSACOLA, Fla., West Hill — A series of lessons on "The Church" was presented by different speakers in the Pensacola area from January 10 through 15. The lessons dealt with various aspects of the church of the New Testament.

MAKING PRAYER SCRIPTURAL

By J. Frank Ingram, Pensacola, Florida

In searching the scriptures on the subject of prayer, one is made to realize its wonderful value to man. Because of its value, when understood and used properly, one should endeavor to study God's word on the subject that his prayer may be received as a memorial before God. It is a blessed privilege the child of God has in going to his Father in prayer . . . in talking to God.

Praying to God shows in whom one believes and trusts. It is the way man may communicate with One he believes to be his superior, to extend thanksgivings and offer petitions for things needed. In offering prayer unto God, one shows his dependency upon One he believes capable of all things. The Bible teaches that God answers prayer. "Ask and it shall be given you . . ." (Mat. 7:7-11). James says it availeth much (Jas. 5:16-18). Now, for what should we ask and pray?

Upon an investigation, we find there are conditions of acceptable prayer. It is written that faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17). Jesus said, if ye have *faith*, and doubt not when asking in prayer, "ye shall receive (Mat. 21:21, 22). Petitioning God for only those things He has promised (Mat. 7:11; Psa. 85:12), rather than things He has kept silent on. We are taught to say HIS will be done and not ours (1 Jno 5:14, 15; Lk. 22:41, 42). But, when we begin to pray our motive must be right (Jas. 4:1-3), or the Bible teaches we ask amiss. For instance, we ask amiss if we fail to realize the mediation of Christ, or asking not in the right spirit (faith), or failing to show proper trust and confidence in Him. If the prayer is selfish, insincere, cold and our soul not in it, we ask amiss. Consider then carefully your purpose in approaching the throne of God. When you go to Him, what of your spiritual condition or frame of mind? We cannot afford to have aught against our brother, but to overlook his transgressions against us if we expect the Father to forgive ours (Mat. 6:12; Prov. 28:9). When engaging in prayer the Bible teaches that Jesus is our mediator and intercessor and that prayer should be offered in His Name (Jno. 14:13, 14; 1 Tim. 2:5), which is by His Authority. Even when all this is done it may not be acceptable, if we have not made our abode with Him (Jno. 15:7). This necessitates one coming into Christ through baptism (Rom. 6:3, 4; Gal. 3:26, 27).

There aren't any set words we must use, but we are taught in Mat. 6:9, "after this *MANNER* therefore pray ye." Following this, a model prayer is given in Mat. 6:9-13 and Lk. 11:1-4 for our consideration.

1. **THE SALUTATION OR ADDRESS:** "Our Father which art in Heaven." The address is not to Christ or Mary but to God. Thus we show consideration and acknowledgement of the universal power and goodness of God. In heaven shows His abode and seat of His government, the region of holiness and all that is good.
2. **PRAISE:** "hallowed be thy name." Hallowed means to make holy or to sanctify. The works of God glorify His name and this expression implies: a desire to know God's name; to treat it as a reality; to rejoice in it; to separate it from our

corrupt thoughts and desires; to regard it as inviolable in its unity.

3. **THEN AN INTEREST IN THE GROWTH OF SPIRITUALITY:** "Thy kingdom come (We can no longer ask this, since the kingdom is here but we may ask, "Thy kingdom increase, thy will be done.") The closeness of the kingdom coming to pass was spoken by Jesus when he said, ". . . There are some here of them that stand by, who shall in no wise taste of death, till the kingdom of God come with power (Mk. 9:1). The kingdom came with power as promised on Pentecost (Acts 2). From that day forward the apostles always spoke of it in the present tense. "Thy will be done." We are taught here to pray that God's will may become our standard and rule our actions. That His will may become the regulator of our wishes and pleasures and that it will be constant and perfect in our lives.
4. **PETITIONS:** For daily bread, guidance and protection. "Our daily bread," has profound reference to those necessities to sustain life. This expression shows one's complete dependency upon God to provide things needed for the body as well as the soul. "Daily," not for days, months, and years ahead but that which is needful today. "Forgive us our debts." We need to dispose all enmity before we bring our oblation to the throne, of God. Having no spite or grudge toward man but having a heart clear of ill-will; being in affection of mind towards others, as we wish, hope, and pray God would be toward us. ". . . lead us not into temptation." Here we express our desire not to be absolutely freed from that reluctance of the flesh against the spirit but from those additional trials that surprise forgetfulness, public affairs may bring upon us more at one time than another. Here we are taught to pray for guidance. "Deliver us from evil." Praying for protection. That if we be led into temptation, let us be kept from the evil of it. The evil of temptation is that which will separate man from God, not the temptation itself.
5. **FINAL ASCRIPTION OF PRAISE:** "For thine is the kingdom and power . . ." Here one shows a confession of faith in all the power and glory of God, who only can receive and grant such a supplication as this.

Having come to the knowledge of how our prayers may be acceptable, I would suggest such thoughts as follows to be considered in praying: recognition of the providence and gratitude for blessings, and that we use them properly; petitioning Him for personal strength and development; for growth in the faith, with knowledge and wisdom; to have the proper attitude toward God and man; unity among brethren; for the sick and bereaved; for teachers; preachers, elders, etc.: for the lost that their lives may be spared, that they may understand, have courage to obey; for the remission of sins; rulers of nations: purity of the church; for open doors to preach the truth; and above all that God's will be done and not ours.

Remember it's a prayer and not a sermon. Don't endeavor to "tell" God or relate things He has said. Avoid vain repetitions (Mat. 6:7; Mat. 26:39-46)