

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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PROVE ALL THINGS

H. E. Phillips

"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil" (I Thess. 5:21,22). These words call upon each of us to do three things: make a test of all things—prove them to determine what is good and what is bad; hold on to all things that are proved to be good; refuse and abstain from the very appearance of those things that are proved to be evil.

All men have motives for what they consciously do or say. Many times these motives are not right, and whether they do or say the right thing or not, they are wrong because the motive is wrong. It is also possible that the motive be right and the action or word is wrong. We must "prove all things," that is, put to a test every thing we do or say to determine if it is right or wrong. Now, the question arises, what shall be the standard or method of proving all things? The only answer is the word of God. The word of God will make us "thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Tim. 3:17). Every motive, action or word should be weighed in the light of God's word to determine whether it is good or evil. If good, do it; if evil, abstain from it completely.

Some men and women are much like buzzards: they like to find something rotten, evil and dead to feed upon. They are not in the least interested in something good said or done, but they can "walk a mile" to get a little dirt to feed on and tell to others, making it just a little worse each time they tell it. We wonder just what motive people can have in such conduct? We can think of only two possible reasons: (1) lack of spiritual thinking and (2) revenge. People with either of these motives are not interested in "proving" anything; they care little whether a thing said is true or false.

I. LACK OF SPIRITUAL THINKING

Some who have professed to be spiritually minded people have failed to prove what is good and what is evil by the words of the Spirit. Paul speaks of the contrast of the spiritually minded and the carnally minded in Romans 8. "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:5-8). The things of the Spirit

are the things the Spirit teaches in the word of God. The things of the flesh are those things that arise from human wisdom and will. When men are governed by the appetites of the body rather than the doctrine of Christ, they are carnally minded and lack spiritual thinking.

Peter spoke of some who were carnal in thinking and showed how they speak and think of those who are righteous. "But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities" (II Peter 2:10). Continuing in verse 12: "But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they *understand not*; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption." Such men speak evil (they have not proved what is good and what is evil) of dignities and of right things which they do not understand because they are directed by the carnal nature and not the Spirit of God.

Jude also speaks of these who lack spiritual thinking. "But these speak evil of those things which they *know not*: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves" (Jude 10). They do not know the things of God, yet they speak evil against them.

II. REVENGE

This is a very deadly motive even for the one who holds enmity and seeks revenge. Many more in the church act with this motive than those who absolutely lack spiritual knowledge, yet we must say in the light of God's word that the man who seeks vengeance is a carnal minded person. Envy, strife and division are classified as carnal (I Cor. 3:3).

Christ and the apostles had enemies who sought revenge against them for teaching against their evil doctrines. As it was then, so is it now. Men who do not get their way about everything frequently will resort to a campaign to destroy the character and reputation of the person who stands in their way. It is a well known fact that one who seeks vengeance will resort to any means at his disposal to accomplish his goal. Christ spoke of some who spoke against him in Luke 7:31-34: "And the Lord said, Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like?"—He was speaking of religious Pharisees and lawyers who had rejected the message and baptism of John, and who sought to discredit both John and Christ. Now, what are these men like? "They are like unto children sitting in the marketplace, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept." Christ said these men were

as children playing, and some did not get their way with others. Some in the church are like that. They say, "You do not play the game by our rules; you will not heed our directives." The Lord gave an example of the evil statements of these religious leaders in seeking revenge against both John the Baptist and Christ. "For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil. The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!" Either way was condemned by these people. They had an evil report no matter which Christ did.

The apostle Paul also had enemies who sought revenge. Paul wrote to Corinth to establish his apostleship among other things. False teachers had been following him and trying to counteract his teaching and influence. They did not hesitate to misrepresent him and belittle his doctrine and person. In the second letter to the Corinthians he refers to one thing these false teachers had been telling to destroy his teaching: "For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible" (II Cor. 10:10). Notice that these false teachers had their say in the absence of Paul. Usually men of this character prefer to speak to the back of the man they charge. They are primarily cowards and would rather do their evil work under cover as much as possible. They want revenge without indicting themselves. They would rather not have their charges contested and proved. But remember this, we under command of God to "PROVE ALL THINGS" and though this applies to the word of God, it would also include an evil report about a brother (see verse 15). Paul had enemies who said that he wrote letters as if they were weighty and powerful—he wrote as a big man—but when he was present in person he did not speak so boldly, and even his speech was contemptible. This was said to the Corinthians in the absence of Paul. In the next verse Paul states the fact: "Let such an one think this, that, such as we are in word by letters when we are absent, such will we be also in deed when we are present." He goes on in the verses that follow to show that he is not like these who measure and weigh themselves by themselves, but that he lives by the rule which God had given.

Stephen had some enemies who sought revenge which ended in his death. "Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake" (Acts 6:9,10). Sometimes men will seek revenge against one because they cannot resist the truth which he teaches. Their slogan seems to be: "We cannot defeat the truth, but we will turn attention to the man and destroy him and people will forget what he was teaching." That is precisely what these Jews did to Stephen. They could not stand against the truth he was teaching. "Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God. And they stirred up the people, and the elders, and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council, and set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: for we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us" (Acts 6:12-14).

This effort to distort facts, misapply statements, establish false reports against a man to discredit him did not die with Stephen. It has been the sad disgrace of many through the

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centuries to this very day. Any man of God who tries to stand for the truth will have enemies who oppose him with this method of battle. This is further proof of the lengths to which one will go to seek vengeance. We must "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." This applies also to evil reports of actions and statements made against one as in the case of John the Baptist, Christ, Paul and Stephen.

Anger is a state of mind very fertile to making false charges. James says, "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God" (James 1:19,20). When one's sins are exposed he often in anger retaliates with evil charges and false reports that have absolutely no bearing on the sin exposed. If I am a thief, what help is it to me to charge the man who exposes me with using poor judgment in buying his clothes, or something of that nature? If that man is proved to be a murderer, it does not keep me from being guilty of theft.

Jesus goes to the very heart of the trouble when he spoke of evil speaking coming from an evil heart. "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matt. 12:34-37). An evil man will not speak good things, and a good man will not speak evil things, because it is out of the heart that man speaks. If the heart is good the speech will be good, but if the heart is evil the speech will be evil. We can therefore judge the condition of a man's heart by his words.

Peter gives the spiritual admonition to those who will serve the Lord in times of persecution for righteousness sake: "And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" We must "prove all things; hold fast that which is GOOD." This comes before we can follow that

which is *good*, "But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear: having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ" (I Peter 3:13-16).

We must be ready always to give an answer for our hope, and that must be done as the oracles of God (I Peter 4:11). This means that we must "prove all things" by the word of God. The only way we can hold to that which is good and abstain from all appearance of evil is to prove everything by the standard of right and wrong. If one should believe the charges of the Pharisees that Christ was a sinner (John 9:24), and not of God (John 9:16), where would we be today? We must prove by that which is truth whether Christ is the Son of God or a sinner. Jesus warned his disciples, "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets" (Luke 6:26). When a man has no enemies who seek his destruction, it may be because he has compromised with evil and is taking no stand against sin. Let us "prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil." "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1). We cannot hope for eternal life unless we prove every statement to be true and then live by what is true and reject all that is evil.

DIVISION: ITS CAUSE AND CURE

L. A. Mott, Gainesville, Florida

Some time ago I talked with a lady who teaches Sunday School for the Baptist Church (or did then). As our conversation turned to things Biblical she remarked, "If I had my way, there would be just one church."

No one can give the scriptures a serious reading and deal with them honestly without realizing that this is God's desire also. God's attitude toward division was expressed by the wise man when he stated that *Cod hates "he that soweth discord among brethren"* (Prov. 6:19). The Roman Christians were instructed to "mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned: and turn away from them" (Rom. 16:17). Paul classed factions, divisions, and parties among the works of the flesh and repeatedly warned "that they who practise such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21).

THE UNITY OF APOSTOLIC CHRISTIANITY

In New Testament days, only one body, or one church, existed (Eph. 1:22-23; 4:4). If God's will had been carried out through the years, this unity would have remained, for this was God's desire. Jesus, in his prayer for believers of all ages, petitioned the Father "that they may all be one" (John 17:21). To meet the "sect" problem in Corinth Paul wrote, "Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (I Cor. 1:10).

One individual told me he thought the Lord knew what he was doing when he divided the church and let all of us go our separate ways. Neighbor, such a remark comes little short of blasphemy! God did not cause the division. *God hates division!* If all men had subjected themselves to God's will, all believers even to this day would have remained united in one body.

But unity was not to continue. The truth was taught quite generally in the ancient church "that in later times some shall fall away from the faith" (I Tim. 4:1; cf. Acts 20:28-30; etc.).

Almost all of us are acquainted with the story of how this predicted apostasy found its fulfillment (or at least *one* fulfillment) in the development of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. Then, in the 16th and 17th centuries, many different groups arose and the foundations of modern protestantism were laid in what history terms the protestant reformation, a reform movement led by those who had become disgusted with the doctrinal and moral abuses of the apostate church. Other groups arose later till today we have about 300 different religious societies, each with its own distinctive name, doctrine, and organization. The true church of God is divided, and is therefore, not able to speak to the needs of this situation. Personally, I am convinced that this generation is witnessing the emergence of a new denominational church of Christ which has its roots in an apostasy from the faith.

But neighbor, mark it, and mark it well: *God is not pleased with such division.* Jesus' prayer is *still on record.* Paul's message has an application *today.*

The essential point of this article is: How to restore New Testament unity.

A PREREQUISITE TO THE RESTORATION OF NEW TESTAMENT UNITY

Unity can never be established unless we can settle upon a common standard and agree to abide by this standard. The players of any game must agree to abide by a set of rules. If they do not, confusion will result.

Baptists, Presbyterians, and Methodists are divided because they do not have a common standard. Baptists believe the doctrines of their *Manual*; Presbyterians, their *Catechism*; and Methodists, their *Discipline*. Baptists do not believe the *Discipline*; Methodists do not believe the *Manual*; etc. This is why they are divided. But the three of them can be united if they could find a common standard. For instance, if they all decided to accept the *Discipline* as a common standard, they would be united. They would all be Methodists, true; but the point is: This would bring unity.

But no human creed will ever be accepted by all men as a common standard. Baptists and Presbyterians do not believe the *Discipline*. Any human creed must necessarily fall far short of general acceptance. But there is a standard which *all* can accept: *Cod's Word*. Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians all can believe and accept it. *If men will just throw away all human creeds and opinions and accept God's Word as the final authority in all matters of religious faith and practice, we can be united.* But this is the *only* plan that will bring New Testament unity.

The scriptures are all we need (II Tim. 3:16-17). An adage often repeated and still true, states; If a creed book has more than the Bible, it has too much; if it has less than the Bible, it has too little; if it has the same thing as the Bible, there is no need for it for we have the Bible itself. The Bible and the Bible *only* is our plea. No place exists in God's plan for unity when we understand the cause of division.

THE RISE OF RELIGIOUS DIVISION

Organization

In New Testament days when the church was one, elders (Acts 14:23, etc.), deacons (Phil. 1:1, etc.), and evangelists (II Tim. 4:5, etc.) served as officers of the church.

But as men departed from God's plan, the offices of bishop (distinct from elder), metropolitan, patriarch, and pope arose. Today we hear of arch-bishops, cardinals, etc.

Today division exists on this subject. Some use one form of organization; some, another. Once there was unity on the point; now there is division. Where in history shall we mark the beginning of the division?

Underscore this point and mark it well: *In New Testament days under the inspired plan, true believers were united on this point. DIVISION CAME WHEN MEN LEFT THE NEW TESTAMENT PLAN!*

Action of Baptism

Apparently, any other action than immersion was unheard of in apostolic times (Rom. 6:4, etc.). Believers were united on the point.

Later, "clinical baptism" (see the various church histories) was practiced by sprinkling. Sprinkling was recognized by the apostate church only as late as 1311 A.D. at the Council of Ravenna.

In Paul's day there was unity; today there is division. Again, mark the point: *DIVISION CAME WHEN MEN LEFT GOD'S PLAN!*

Church Membership

With men of old, the important question was not "Which church to join?" but "what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 2:37). Upon their obedience to the gospel, God saved them and added them to the church (vv. 38, 47).

"But now it is different," says Edward T. Hiscox (*Standard Manual for Baptist Churches*, p. 22). Admitting that men were added to the church by obedience to the gospel in the New Testament, Hiscox goes on to say that now it is different, and, to make a long story short, the church members must vote on candidates for membership, and this vote admits them to membership.

Today, some receive church members in one way; some, in another way. *The division came when men decided God's plan was imperfect and began following schemes of their own devising.*

The Church Today

Today there is division amongst us. Division cannot exist where all are strictly adhering to our common standard, the Bible. Clearly then, the division exists as the result of a departure from the truth. This cannot be successfully denied. The division is caused by those making the departure, not by those who oppose it.

The Way to Unity

Division came when men departed from God's Word. Unity will be restored when we all go back to the Bible.

"The seed is the word of God" (Lk. 8:11). If all sow the same seed, all will get the same product. Only when different kinds of seed are sown do we get different plants.

Campbell's slogan is still the need of the hour (and only because it is scriptural). To be united and thus please and glorify God we must go back to the Bible, and speak where the Bible speaks and respect God's silence by remaining silent where the Bible is silent.

AN APPEAL FROM TWO POINTS OF VIEW

1. From My Point of View: The Issues Are Over Matters of Principle

Brethren, the only way unity could ever be established between the conservative wing of the Christian Church, for instance, and God's church is for those brethren to give up whatever they are doing that is not authorized by the scriptures, i.e., instrumental music, societies, etc., and take their stand upon God's Book alone. We can all see and understand this. Why, then, cannot we understand that the only way unity can be brought about in the Lord's church is for those brethren who promote unscriptural societies to give them up? The only basis for unity is God's Book. Our only hope for unity is to practice only that for which we can give a "Thus saith the Lord."

No one yet has produced the passage of scripture that authorizes the erection and maintenance of human institutions by the church. Some brethren have tried to justify these practices by arguing that the Bible authorizes the use of "methods" in carrying out the work of the church. But this evades the issue just as a similar evasion was used by those who contended for the missionary society. The brethren who stand with me are not opposed to the use of "methods" by the church. But we do oppose the *human organizations* which use the methods. Where is the authority for a human board of directors to take over and control the work God gave the church to do? *This is the issue!*

Brethren, let me make a sincere appeal to you: Walk right up to this issue and deal with it. Either show the authority for such human arrangements, or admit that no authority exists, and give them up.

2. From the Point of View of Those Differing with Me: The Issues Are Over Matters of Expediency

Several years ago, brother N. B. Hardeman debated a Christian Church preacher by the name of Boswell. He charged that Boswell had rather have the organ than the fellowship of a large number of the Lord's churches. Brother Hardeman could not consistently say that to a Christian Church preacher today, for now the question would rebound to him: Would brother Hardeman and those who stand with him rather have their institutional idols than the fellowship of a sizeable portion of their brethren?

I do not say these things to be unkind or hurtful to brother Hardeman, or anyone else. Though I have seen brother Hardeman only once, I know him through his printed sermons and debates, and love him for his work's sake. I earnestly desire to be able to stand and work together with such a stalwart and faithful soldier of the cross of days gone by. There are many other great and admirable men about whom I would be pleased, yea, overjoyed, to say, "He and I are *fellow-soldiers* of Jesus Christ." But I cannot go against my conscience to have this. Nor can the many other faithful brethren who stand with me. We cannot compromise on a principle to have peace! "Peace at any price" is not New Testament unity. Paul did not compromise on the "circumcision" issue for the sake of unity (Gal. 2).

Do you, brethren, consider your projects essentials? or aids and expedients? Surely the most you can say for them is that they are aids and expedients. Would it be wrong to give them up and to let the church do its own work. Would it be *wrong* for *individuals only* to support them (as one or two of the schools are maintained)? Then surely the way to peace and unity is clear for all those who love the Lord *and their brethren in him* more than these projects.

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" But unity can only exist where we practice only that which is clearly authorized by God's Book.

Brother, whoever you are: Take your stand upon that ancient volume of truth. Be not moved from it though it cost your life! God help us all!

WATERING DOWN AN INFLAMED ARTICLE

James P. Needham, St. Petersburg, Florida

An article entitled "Under the Cover of Darkness" written by a prominent preacher of Mobile, Ala. has come to my attention. Since it is so typical of the kind of writing being done by our pro-institutional brethren, it was thought a review of it would be advantageous.

Our brother begins his article with this sentence: "Any doctrine that man has to advocate under the cover of darkness to get converts could not be the doctrine of Christ." He then applies this statement to those of his brethren he delights to call *anti*, meaning, of course, those of us who oppose his human institutions to do the work of the church. He tells a long, detailed story about how those mean old antis creep in and preach their doctrine "under the cover of darkness," which according to him is sure proof that what they preach "could not be the doctrine of Christ." Of course, he assumes that those terrible antis are the only ones that do that. I don't know of any of his so-called antis that work in the way described, and wouldn't approve it if I did, but I certainly know of some of his brethren who promote their doctrines "under the cover of darkness." Hence, since he seems to know of some "antis" who work this way, and I know of some "pros" that work this way, we have to reach the conclusion that neither is "the doctrine of Christ" because, according to him, it couldn't be. That means then, that neither he nor his opposition has the truth on the present issues! Either our brother didn't think his statement through, or else he is unacquainted with the tactics of those who stand with him.

I found our brother's vocabulary quite colorful if contrary to the spirit of Christ. Here are a few of his terms: "undercover work," "gullible," (Sic) "hatchet men," "hobby," "fighting orphan homes and cooperation," "anti-orphan home," "anti-church cooperation," "weak-knee elders," "gullible (sic) church," "crack-pot ideals," etc.

Wonder which would be worse, to work undercover or to malign and vilify ones brethren? Since our brother seems to think he has the doctrine of Christ are we to conclude that the use of such language is necessary to its promotion?

Then our brother says, "The orphan home fighters will never accomplish very much for the simple reason that it is a negative religion." He talks like he knows nothing about "negative religion," but I believe he does. Doesn't he have a "negative religion" when considering instrumental music in the worship, dancing, drinking, denominationalism, Catholicism, etc.? We all know that he does, and according to him he'll "never accomplish very much" in fighting these things because he has "a negative religion."

Next, we come to the most amusing statement of the whole article. He says, "There is not one orphan home fighting church in the world that could go into a community and tell the people in the beginning of the meeting, what they believe and baptize one intelligent person. Let them announce at the first service, 'We don't believe the churches

can cooperate, and we also believe that it is a great sin for the church to help any person unless he is a member of the Lord's church!" Our Mobile brother thinks he has found a sweet morsel, but we shall see. Wonder how many intelligent people he could convert if at the first service of a meeting he should announce, "We speak where the Bible speaks and are silent where the Bible is silent, *except* when we talk about caring for the needy and how churches can cooperate, then we do many things for which we have no scriptures, nor do we need any, we then rely upon what has been done by our brethren for the last several years, and where there is no pattern we are governed by sanctified common sense." Does he think that would really appeal to intelligent people?

Next our brother says, "The only way the anti group can ever grow is to first deceive the people about what they believe, and after they join up with the anti group, some one has to convert them to hobby (sic) of fighting orphan homes; as a result of this they will lose most of those baptized, for not many honest people could believe such a damnable heresy." If our brother has any point at all here it is this: if he and his brethren convert a man he will just automatically believe in Gospel Press, the Herald of Truth, Orphan homes, etc. There won't be any need for anyone to try to persuade him to accept them; an acceptance of them will be involved in and apart of his conversion. Is this true? Certainly not! If our brother were to preach the guiding principles of the New Testament such as the autonomy, independence, sufficiency, and equality of the local church and converted a man to these, orphan homes and all other human institutions to do the work of the church would be repulsive to him. He would say, "You converted me to one thing, now you want me to practice something else."

Next he says, "The church can build him (the preacher JPN) a house, pay his lights, water, telephone bills, but a sin, a terrible sin, to build a house for orphans. This is what they are tearing up churches over." From this we can see that our brother is quite adept either at mis-comprehension of the issue or at mis-representing his opposition. If our brother thinks the orphan homes which we oppose are parallel to a church's furnishing her preacher a place to live as a part of his salary, he would profit himself and others much more by *studying* present issues than by *writing* about them. If such irresponsible statements as this is any indication of the degree of knowledge he has of current problems, it would seem that he has not seriously studied the position of those he delights to call "antis" and "crack-pots". If a group of brethren should form a "Preacher's Home Service" corporation and receive monies from churches all over the nation for the purpose of furnishing houses for preachers, we would have a parallel to the orphan home society set-up. But when a local church, under its own oversight, builds and furnishes a house for a preacher to live in we don't have a 42nd cousin to the orphan societies to which many congregations surrender their money plus its oversight. It is just such "reasoning" as this that keeps the real issues in our present difficulties hidden.

May we all think for ourselves and be not led away by trumped-up side issues and mis-representations.

Every person converted to Christ in the New Testament learned that he was wrong and made a change. The man who is "never wrong" will never be a Christian. Your estimate of your own self matters little; are you right in God's sight?

"Innovations are usually adopted on the plea of expediency—and afterwards defended as Scriptural. Societies, sprinkling, instrumental music, are illustrations."

THE WORD OF GOD: POWERFUL AND SUFFICIENT - NO. I

(Read Isaiah 55:6-11) *George
Lemasters, Barberton, Ohio*

"For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I send it." Here in the inimitable language of inspiration the prophet states a very fundamental principle concerning the word of God, for in substance he affirms of it that it is powerful and sufficient to accomplish all that God desires in His dealings with men. The nature of this and some two or three subsequent articles will be to consider the implications of that principle.

A failure to abide in the sufficiency of the word of God and to recognize its power has always characterized man. The nations of men described by Paul in Rom. 1:21-28 are pictured as gradually departing from God and finally being regarded by Him as reprobate because they "exchanged the truth of God for a lie" and "did not like to retain God in their knowledge". Israel did not enter Canaan because they failed to honor this principle; and their desire for a king which ultimately resulted in their downfall was a direct result of their failing to abide in the power and sufficiency of God's word. The early church failed also in this matter and the falling away which finally culminated in the rise of Roman Catholicism was the fruit of their folly.

This present generation follows in the same pattern as those which have gone before. The problems which presently confront us on every hand are but the symptoms of the real disease, which is a failure to have the right attitude toward the word of God, and its power and sufficiency. Ours is the most modern age that the world has known; our culture seems to demand that certain arbitrary standards be adhered unto; prosperity elevates the standard of living and the false security begotten of riches is engrafted in many, hence, there is an ever increasing emphasis on the materialistic aspect of life. The church is effected by this for an emphasis on the material necessitates a moving away from the spiritual (Matt. 6:31-38) and consequently a moving away from the word and its power and sufficiency. We, thus, move toward a state of conformity with the world and with worldly wisdom and ideas. We see this manifested in many ways. For instance, many times money is wasted to no good purpose on elaborate buildings designed to attract the attention of the worldly minded rather than simply to expedite the work of the church. The influx of the elements of the "social gospel" into the budgets of the churches as well as the adopting of worldly principles on moral issues (social drinking, etc.) are also manifestations of this trend.

Since the disease producing these symptoms is a failure to abide in the power and sufficiency of the word of God, these articles shall be designed to call your attention to this all important point. We shall note the power and sufficiency of the word in creation; in conversion; in the disciplining of the individual Christian, and finally its power to keep the church pure.

While this first point is more for illustrative purposes it is significant to note that the word of God was powerful and sufficient in the creation of the worlds. For the scripture says,

"Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made from things which do appear" (Heb. 11:3 cf. also John 1:1-3). How long it was before the creative voice of God broke the silence of eternity and issued forth in the creation of the heavens and earth is not known, neither is it important. But there came that occasion, when, in the language of David, ". . . He spoke and it was done, he commanded and it stood fast" (Psalm 33:9). And not only was that word able to create this universe, but it is also the omnipotent command by reason of which all things are presently upheld (cf. Heb. 1:3). Moreover, we are instructed by Peter, that, ". . . the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved into fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (cf. II Peter 3:17). Hence, the word of God was powerful and sufficient to create the worlds; to uphold them at this present time; and shall finally bring them to naught, when God sees fit for time to be no more. If the question is here asked as to why the word of God is so powerful in the physical realm; I answer that it is by reason of the nature of God who spoke it. For indeed, if God is all powerful, then certainly for Him to speak and thus accomplish His desires in the physical realm need present no problem.

BENEVOLENCE AND THE CHURCH

Harris J. Dark

PART I

(NOTE: Harris J. Dark delivered the following sermon recently on Sunday evening at Perry Heights church in Nashville, Tennessee. We obtained his permission to publish this fine lesson in SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES. It will be given in two parts.—Editor.)

The topic announced for this evening is "Benevolence and the Church", or "The Benevolent Work of a Congregation." When we say "the church" in reference to any function, we mean the congregation. As was pointed out here recently, the church can function in no other capacity, because the Bible authorizes no organization for the church except that of a local congregation.

INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY

When we talk about the church and its charity work, let us not forget the responsibility of the individual. The individual has responsibility in this matter also. And although that's not our theme this evening, and we don't have time to give you all the scriptures on it, we do want to emphasize that fact lest we appear to overlook it.

Particularly on that point, I call your attention to I Timothy, chapter 5, and certain verses in that chapter. Verse 4 says:

"But if any widow have children or nephews [and one translation says grandchildren], let them learn first to show piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God."

The 8th verse of that same chapter says:

"But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."

And the 16th verse says:

"If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed."

Here the Bible makes a very clear distinction between the responsibility of the individual and the responsibility of the congregation. Whereas they might overlap in some areas, there is certainly also a distinction. And on the very face of it, the statement that the church does whatever the individual does is false.

It is true that we are in the church, in the general sense of that term, 24 hours a day. But it is not true that we are functioning in our congregational capacity 24 hours of the day. There are some things that we do congregationally, and there are some things that we do separately. If the fact that one is a Christian 24 hours a day means that whatever he does, the church is in fact doing, then when a mob commits an act of violence, the state commits the act, because the members of the mob are citizens of the state 24 hours a day. Likewise, if a Christian buys an automobile on the installment plan, then the church has bought a car on the installment plan. This is so obviously wrong that there's no need to argue it. It is not true that whatever is done by the individual is in fact done by the church, because an individual is not the church. On this point, common sense is confirmed by I Timothy 5:16:

"If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them who are widows indeed."

Now let us consider two or three other scriptures emphasizing our responsibility individually in these matters. For instance, a very well known passage, James 1:27.

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

Benevolence is a part of pure and undefiled religion. If we fail to do our duty in this respect, then we are just not measuring up to the standard of pure and undefiled religion. Then Galatians 6:10, with its context, also emphasizes individual, rather than collective or congregational responsibility:

"As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

Whenever the occasion arises, whenever we have the opportunity, let us do good unto all men, not merely those who are saints, but especially to those who are saints. Jesus teaches in Matthew 10:42, that if we give even a cup of cold water to a disciple, in the name of a disciple, we shall in no wise lose our reward.

It is not necessary then that all charity work be done through the congregation. You not only have a right, but you also have a responsibility, to do good directly unto those who are in need, as you have opportunity. The Bible does not say, "Whatsoever you do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the church." On the contrary, it says in Colossians 3:17:

"And whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus [by the authority of Jesus Christ] giving thanks to God and the Father by Him."

While this work does not have to be done through the church, let me emphasize that *it does have to be done*. We

must help the poor if we expect to be saved when we die. Among the many scriptures emphasizing this point is the judgment scene in Matthew 25, where the separation takes place on the basis of whether one has ministered unto those in need.

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

With those things before us now, we come directly to the question, "What does the Bible say about the charity work of a congregation, and what is the pattern to be followed by a local congregation in its work of helping the poor?" I'm going to read to you the scriptures that bear upon this subject. When I do that I know that I'm preaching the truth. I know that no one can find fault with it, and you who are here tonight would not want to do so, because you believe the Bible just like I do. When I call your attention to these things in the Bible, I believe that that's what you want to hear. I believe that that's what you want to follow. I shall refer to every passage in the New Testament that has anything at all to say about the charity work of a local congregation. I don't believe I shall omit any. If I do, it's not on purpose, and if you'll call my attention to it later, I'll be glad to add it to the list. When I read to you every scripture upon this subject, then I know that I'm preaching the truth on this matter.

The very first reference to anything of this nature is found in the second chapter of the book of Acts—a very general statement concerning what took place in this first church of Christ on earth. After about 3,000 had gladly received the word and had been baptized, the Bible says:

"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need."

You are aware, I am sure, that this was an unusual situation. When people had come from all over the world to the Pentecost feast at Jerusalem, they were delayed or detained there longer than expected by the great events then occurring. Notice that they "sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need." I call your attention to the fact that the existing need was the basis of the distribution.

BASIS OF DISTRIBUTION

This very general statement is enlarged upon in the 4th chapter of this same book and beginning with the 33rd verse:

"And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked."

There may have been some other folk in town who were hungry; there may have been some people at Jerusalem who were in need, but there were none in this church that lacked.

"For as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need."

I call your attention again to the fact that the existing need was the basis of the distribution. They distributed to every man according to his need. If a congregation follows

that pattern today, it may be taking care of one type of poor person one time and another type the next. One year the church may find itself engaged in helping orphans; next year it may find itself taking care of an invalid man who is not able to support his family, or contributing to their needs. Then again it may find itself taking care of a widow indeed. What the church does according to this principle, will be determined by the existing need. There's a big difference between starting with the existing need and starting at the other end of the line by establishing an institution and setting up a policy providing to care for a certain type of person and looking around for someone to patronize the program. Now there's a big difference between these two approaches. According to this Bible example, they began with the case of need.

The next verses tell us about what Barnabas did in this matter, and then the 5th chapter, of course, tells about the case of Ananias and Sapphira. They pretended that they were giving all, but they were keeping back some and were punished for their hypocrisy. There is one verse perhaps we should read in this connection. Peter, in rebuking Ananias, said:

"Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? While it remained, was it not thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? Thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God."

This indicates to me that Ananias was not punished because he had failed to give everything he had. Peter virtually said, "Couldn't you have kept it if you had wanted to?" But he was punished because he lied about the matter; because he pretended to give all when he was not giving **all**.

METHOD OF DISTRIBUTION

The next reference to the charity work of a congregation is found in the 6th chapter of this book:

"And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration."

I'd like for you to notice the word "daily" here. They were making a daily distribution. Also note how the apostles handled this case of murmuring. They called the multitude of the disciples unto them and said, "It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables." In other words, it's not proper for us to give up our work of teaching and praying and spend our time ministering to physical needs.

"Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte of Antioch; whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them. And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."

I read that last verse that you might note the effect of this plan the Jerusalem church followed. The effect was that the church grew very rapidly; at least this statement concerning its growth immediately follows the statement of what they did.

But I want you to notice this plan. They appointed seven deacons. Although the word deacon is not in this English translation, a related word, *diakonia*, is in the original. They appointed seven deacons, seven men whom we call deacons, to make this daily distribution to the members of that congregation who were in need. So my friends here is the plan followed by the Jerusalem church in its charity work. Members contributed into a common fund, referred to in this case as laying it at the apostles' feet, and then seven men were appointed to distribute these goods day by day unto those who were in need among the membership of that congregation.

(Continued Next Month)

BIBLICAL WORD STUDIES

By E. V. SRYGLEY, JR.

HAMARTANO, "I SIN"-NO. 4

In previous articles of this series, studies on the etymology and classical usages of *hamartano* were presented. Progressing historically in Greek literature, attention is now directed to usages of *hamartano* in the LXX (Septuagint).

In the canonical books of the LXX the verb *hamartano* is found about 170 times, and in all but 21 of these places it is a translation of the Hebrew *hatd*. In the LXX the verb is used in non-ethical senses and even in the literal sense. An excellent example of the literal sense occurs in Judges 20:16: "every one could sling stones at an hair breadth, and not miss (*ouk examartanotes*)." Another literal usage occurs in Prov. 19:2: "also, that the soul be without knowledge, it is not good; and he that hasteth with his feet sinneth (*hamartanei*)." Other versions render this, "miseth his way," the apparent signification of the verb. See also Prov. 8:35, 36; Psa. 25:8; Job 5:24.

What Would You Do?

—in applying Scripture

—make your answers brief and to the point—

Situation 1—You are a gospel preacher. A friend intends to do you honor by calling you "Reverend" in the presence of several people. Would you rebuke him before those who heard him make the statement? try to teach him privately? or ignore the incident?

Situation 2—You attend worship on the Lord's day in a strange town as you are passing through. A woman arises to direct the song service. Would you arise at once to object and teach? stay and participate without objection? or leave at once and not worship that day?



PAUL'S WARNING APPLIED TODAY

In the year 60 A.D., nineteen centuries ago, Paul called one of the ablest groups of men in the church to the sea-coast town of Miletus to give them warning. They were, of course, the elders of the church at Ephesus. I say they were able elders for many reasons, but one verse will sustain the point. In verse 20, the apostle tells them, "and how I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house." It is little wonder that the Ephesian church had already come "into the unity of the faith" when the Ephesian letter was written. The purpose of the warning from the mouth of the great apostle to the Gentiles is known to every Bible scholar. It is different in the sense of dealing directly with the work and responsibility of elders and the relation they sustain to the church of the Lord.

I marvel, that after 1900 years we have not learned more from this warning. Let us read the warning itself and then draw some lessons.

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock, Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them."

Lesson number one: the scope of the *warning* of Paul was the scope of the *authority* of the elders of Ephesus. Many other congregations in Asia needed the same warning, but it was not given to the elders at Ephesus to pass on to them. They were told to see to the "flock over the which the Holy Ghost has made *you* overseers," no more and no less. The Elders of the church at Ephesus were not planning work and carrying on a program that involved many congregations. I tremble to think of the scope of the warning Paul would need to have given to some of the promotional minded churches of our time who are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars for other churches. Just think of the things he would need to have said. His stay at Miletus would have been extended, and one chapter would not have contained the exhortation. It was not a case of the elders of the church at Ephesus not having the ability to see to giant programs on a national and worldwide basis. The elders had been taught by Paul himself. It could not have been that Ephesus was not well located from which to launch such a program. Nor could it have been that the world was not crying for the gospel and thousands were dying every day without hope. Then why was the warning limited to the church, and to that alone, over which they served as elders. Just this, God never intended for his work to be carried on as it is being done by some of the large liberal congregations in the brotherhood today. The scope of the *warning* was the scope of the *authority* of the elders warned.

Lesson number two: The scope of the *authority* of elders is the scope of the *activity* of the church. If the Ephesian elders had no authority over any other congregation, then there is no basis for locking churches together in such or-

ganizations as the Herald of Truth and etc. It will stand without controversy that where there is no authority, there can be no activity.

Lesson number three: Just a few short months had passed since the greatest preacher on earth had left Ephesus but the church was already in danger. Paul declared his positive knowledge of this danger when he said, "after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you not sparing the flock." The church was in danger from the outside, and the wolves were just waiting to spoil the flock. How careful we ought to be of outside influences today. Our pattern is not in the denominational thinking of the day, nor in the human wisdom and urgency of the twentieth century, nor is it found in a headlong race to outdo the sects. Elders need to watch and remember. All of the danger to the flock is not from the outside. The church of the Lord stands in constant danger from within. The false teacher has to his advantage the confidence of the sheep, and who because of this, is in position to draw away disciples. Brethren "try the spirits" and test the teaching with the word of God. Too many brethren have the idea that brethren can do no wrong; that if the church is right then anything the church does is right; that papers and colleges that have been sound in the past are sound now regardless of what is taught and practiced. The college today that looks to the blood bought church for monetary support out of its treasury is wrong. The paper today that seeks to mark brethren and carry on a hate campaign against all who do not agree with its teaching and prints only one side of any controversy in which good brethren differ is wrong. When it practices such matters, it is no longer "the Old Reliable" but endangers the church of the Lord. Yes, I marvel that we have not learned more from Paul's warning. Let us resolve to watch and remember.



I used to think that the idea that monkeys had changed into man was silly. I have always hooted at the idea that one species could change into another. But seeing how so many "Christians" can become "Night Owls" on Saturday night and then become "Bedbugs" on Sunday morning, I'm beginning to wonder.

o o o

"Worry is like a rocking chair: it will give you something to do—but it will not get you anywhere."

o o o

"Quitters in the church are like motors: they start *sputtering* before they miss, and start *missing* before they quit."

o o o

It has been said that there were FIVE reasons for the fall of Rome:

1. Rapid increase of divorce, undermining the home.
2. Higher and higher taxes and unwise public spending.
3. Mad craze for pleasure—sports exciting and brutal.
4. Building gigantic armaments, when the greatest enemy was within, the decadence of the people.
5. Decay of religion, faith fading into mere form, losing touch with life, impotent as a guiding force.

(Is America following this same road?)

The News Letter Reports

"... THEY REHEARSED ALL THAT GOD HAD DONE WITH THEM ..."—Acts 14:27

A. C. GRIDER of Louisville, Kentucky will do the preaching in a meeting in Palmetto, Florida, April 17-26. LESLIE E. SLOAN is the regular preacher. . . . ROBERT C. WELCH of Nacogdoches, Texas preached in a meeting at West Hollywood, Florida church February 5-14 . . . JIMMY YOPP will begin a meeting at Academy Street church in Dixon, Tennessee, February 23 . . . FERRELL JENKINS was in a gospel meeting with the church meeting on Whitney Avenue in Memphis, Tennessee, January 27-February 5 . . . HARRY PICKUP, JR. will speak in a gospel meeting at East Hill church in Pensacola, Florida the first week in March. . . . One was baptized recently at MacDill Avenue church in Tampa, Florida. COLIN WILLIAMSON is the preacher. He was united in marriage to Martha Jackson of Dade City, Florida, January 15.

E. L. FLANNERY and CLIFTON INMAN discussed propositions on church support of orphan homes and the church working through similar human institutions, and the Herald of Truth, January 16-20 at Columbus, Ohio. Good order prevailed and certainly much good was done for a free study of human wisdom versus Divine wisdom.

HUGH DAVIS of Lake Wales will speak at North Street church in Tampa, Florida in April. PAUL ANDREWS is the local preacher . . . JOHN O. DILLINGHAM will soon move to Murfreesboro, Tennessee to teach at Middle Tennessee State College, but will continue to preach for the Lanton congregation near Spring Hill, Tennessee. . . . BROOKS WEBB recently moved from Indianapolis, Indiana to Hickory Heights church in Lewisburg, Tennessee. . . . PAUL ANDREWS of Tampa, Florida was in a meeting, singing school and teacher's training school in Arab, Alabama in January. . . . After about four years at Main Street in Shelbyville, Tennessee, HERSCHEL E. PATTON has moved to Lufkin, Texas. . . . HARRIS J. DARK is doing the preaching with the new congregation meeting in Donelson, Tennessee, known as Perry Heights. Good progress and growth is reported since its beginning. . . . CHARLES A. HOLT has done a fine work in the Florence, Alabama area and has recently moved to Wichita Falls, Texas. He is a staff writer for the *Gospel Guardian*.

The Westvue church in Murfreesboro, Tennessee is providing a radio program over WMTS in that city in which W. H. LEWIS is preaching on New Testament passages dealing with benevolence. . . . HAROLD HOWARD of Academy Street church in Dickson, Tennessee was in a gospel meeting February 16-19 at Westside church in Kennett, Missouri. . . . GLENN SHUEMAKER preached in January in a meeting at Havendale church in Winter Haven, Florida. . . . B. G. HOPE of the 12th Street church in Bowling Green, Kentucky will be the speaker in a gospel meeting at Tenth Avenue church in Bradenton, Florida March 5-15. . . . EARL FLY of Belmont Heights church in Tampa, Florida closed a meeting at Ninth Avenue church in St. Petersburg, Florida, January 22. JAMES NEEDHAM is the regular preacher with this church. . . . A new congregation began meeting in Fairdale, Kentucky, January 1. Joseph Cox is working with this new church. . . . J. P. MILLER will begin a meeting March 19 at the Downtown church in Lawrenceburg, Tennessee. E. L. FLANNERY is the regular preacher.

James P. Miller, Tampa, Fla.—The meeting the first of February with the Diston Avenue congregation in St. Petersburg resulted in 5 additions with enthusiastic audiences. James R. Cope has been working with this fine old congregation for the last five years. He followed the beloved W. A. Cameron in the work. Sister Cameron still meets with the church and is greatly respected by the entire membership. In the last year the building has been completely redone with a large annex added to the auditorium. This was used every night of the meeting with the exception of Friday night when a rain kept some away from the services. Brother Cope has become the object of the affection that had to be given up at the death of Brother Cameron about a year ago. The last two nights of the meeting were devoted to a discussion of the dangers that face the church in our time. These two services drew some of the largest crowds of the meeting.

NEW AUDITORIUM AT F.C.C.

Those attending the lecture series at FCC this year will be edified in the new auditorium finished this fall on the campus. New opera seats of the most comfortable kind are being installed as this is being written. This pleasant and commodious setting will be a far cry from the lectures of past years. Some years the speakers gave their instruction under a large tent. One or two of the years this worked out in a wonderful way and the Florida weather lived up to its reputation, but in other years it was a different story. Cold and rain would cut the attendance. Chamberlain High School granted the use of its auditorium for the lectures, but this was off the campus and not convenient for the night sessions. Last year the lobby and reception rooms of the girls dormitory were used and although this seated several hundred, it was not very desirable. How happy all will be, therefore, this year to find a beautiful auditorium with comfortable seats in which to enjoy the fine lessons that will be given.

JPM

ROBERT PRESSNELL is preaching for the East Florence, Alabama church. In June BARNEY KEITH, now with the University Heights church in Lexington, Kentucky, will move to Florence to preach for the East Florence church. CURTIS FLATT is now preaching for a new congregation meeting in Florence, Alabama. Those composing the new congregation are from Poplar Street church where brother Flatt has been for several years. They are off to a fine start and have some of the finest Christians in the Florence area. HORACE HARTSELL is the preacher for the new congregation in Gainesville, Florida, known as North East church. This is a fine congregation of willing workers and standing firm for the truth. This church is composed largely of former members of University Avenue church in Gainesville. They are temporarily meeting on South Main Street. . . . EARL DOWDY is doing a fine work with the Melrose, Florida church. . . . HARRY PICKUP, SR. of Tampa, Florida began a meeting in Floral City February 19. Pickup is Public Relations Director at Florida Christian College.

EARL FLY of the Belmont Heights church in Tampa, Florida is leaving that work to begin with the Holden Heights

church in Orlando, Florida, February 20. ROY NEAL will preach for the Belmont Heights church from that date. MARSHALL PATTON has been the fine preacher for the Holden Heights church for several years and is now with the Par Avenue church of Orlando. He is the Question-Answer man for SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES. . . . HERBERT THORNTON is now with the small church in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. His address is 4270 Perkins Road, Baton Rouge, La. . . . FRANKLIN T. PUCKETT is soon to move to Dyersburg, Tennessee. He has been with the Thayer Street church in Akron, Ohio for several years. . . . THOMAS KICKEY is now preaching for the Central church in Owensboro, Kentucky. . . . EVERETT MANN preaches for Henderson Blvd. in Tampa, Florida and JAMES WALKER is the song director. This congregation is breaking records in attendance and reports 1 baptized, 5 placed membership and 1 restored recently.

We would appreciate your sending us bulletins from your area that we may report the news from your section.

MILLER-VAUGHN DEBATE

James P. Miller of Tampa and Ray Vaughn of Orlando will meet in public debate February 27, 28 and March 1, 2 at the Howard Junior High School auditorium in Orlando, Florida. The propositions to be discussed in this four night discussion will be the *Oneness of the Godhead, Baptism of the Holy Spirit and Divine Miracles in This Age*. Mr. Vaughn is highly respected by his own people and is considered among their best debaters. He has met our brethren in similar discussions before. He is a member of the United Pentecostal Church in Orlando. James P. Miller is a nationally known debater and has had discussions with almost every kind of religious preacher. A few years ago he met Morris B. Book of the Christian Church in Orlando on the subject of Instrumental Music in Worship. This debate is in printed form and may be obtained from Phillips Publications, P. O. Box 9095, Tampa 4, Fla.

Science and Truth

I Tim. 6:20-21

William D. Burgess

In considering the theory of organic evolution two words always find their way into the discussion. They are very different yet at times are not made so by those who use them. The words are: *mutation* and *transmutation*. Let us define each of them. *Mutation* may be defined as a sudden change or variation in which the offspring will differ from its parents in one or more well marked characters. *Transmutation* is defined as the converting or changing of one element into another. These words are more fully defined in any standard dictionary.

Mutation has been studied in many animals. Probably the most widely used in such investigations has been the fruit fly. It can be easily demonstrated that mutations do occur and that they can and do produce various changes in characteristics of the animal. The genes which are the factors of inheritance are the parts affected. Some of these genes will be altered or destroyed in some way and the offsprings will differ from the parents in eye color, wing form and numbers of other variations. Even though these changes in character occur and are passed on the fruit fly still remains a fruit fly.

It is true that these mutations are likely to encourage early death in the offsprings rather than to benefit them. Now, if these offsprings of fruit flies were not fruit flies but common house flies, grasshoppers or honey bees this would be transmutation. I know this is silly by any kind of reasoning, but in order for transmutation to occur something like this would have to take place since the word means to change from one thing into another. As far as any records show such a thing has never occurred.

This presents a problem for the organic evolutionist. According to theory life came about when, in some way, a single simple cell was formed. Over millions of years this cell gave rise to a more complex organism and eventually through these changes man was produced. All of this from a single cell! This would require transmutation. These changes from one organism to another different one could not be brought about by mere mutation and as far as man has been able to observe and/or demonstrate a transmutation has never occurred.

Beware lest you be misled by those who have their "facts" based upon an impossibility in an effort to explain away the God who created all things.

COMMENTS TO THE EDITOR

"You have done an excellent job with the paper. I rejoice that you are willing to do such a work and that I can have a small part."—Rufus R. Clifford, Nashville, Tenn.

"Continue to enjoy your articles"—Thomas G. O'Neal, Jasper, Ala.

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\$83,000 ORPHAN HOME HAS NO CHILDREN

We give below the most of an article which appeared as here quoted in the *Houston Post* on January 14th under a date line of Palestine, Texas. An abbreviated report of the same article appeared in the *Lubbock Avalanche Journal*.

The reason we give the article from the *Houston Post* is because it states the cause of the lack of applications for entrance into the home, whereas the one from *Lubbock Avalanche* does not give the whole statement. There is some information here that is not generally known and we think it is deliberately suppressed.

"PALESTINE—Two months after opening for business, the Cartmell Home for Children here is still awaiting the arrival of its first orphan resident.

"In fact, there have been no applications or inquiries received regarding admission since the home's board of directors announced Nov. 8th that it had been licensed to operate a home for orphans.

"The new \$83,000 brick cottage, with facilities for caring for 15 youngsters, has been locked almost from the day it was completed in the southwest section of Palestine. A house mother was on the payroll for three months, but became discouraged and resigned when weeks passed without an inquiry from prospective residents.

"The home for children was provided in the will of the late Miss Sara E. J. Cartmell, Palestine philanthropist, who left the bulk of an oil-rich estate to the people of Texas when she died in 1949.

". . . The wording of Miss Cartmell's will is pointed out by Royce Thompson, former FBI agent who manages the homes and estate, as the chief reason for the absence of applications to the children's home.

"The will stipulated that admissions must be neglected and destitute orphans. Thompson said a check with other children's institutions revealed that 95 per cent of their residents come from broken homes. Only about 5 per cent are orphans in the true sense of the word, he said.

"Our board has not given up, although we are yet to receive an inquiry concerning admission, the attorney said. We are proud of the facilities we have to offer. Maybe the word we're ready to operate hasn't gotten to the right people yet."

—From *The Defender*

taken from A. Hugh Clark, in *Caprock Bulletin*, Lubbock, Texas

One reason so many children are seen on the streets at night is that they are afraid to stay home alone.

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