

# 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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## THE TENTH CHAPTER OF ACTS

*Jas. P. Miller*

Our study is directed to another of the great conversions of the Acts of the Apostles, the conversion of Cornelius. All of these studies are important because man must be converted to be saved. The word "conversion" means to change a thing or person into something else. Religiously speaking, conversion is the changing of the sinner by means of obedience to the child of God. The method and means of conversion are set forth in these examples of inspired preachers. The things that they told men and women to do then to be converted and receive remission of their sins are exactly what we ought to do today that we, too, may be children of God. Cornelius is one of the greatest characters in all the Word of God. Let us study his conversion. Listen to the reading of the first two verses of the tenth chapter:

"There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, A devout man and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always."

Verse one tells us who Cornelius was politically. He was a soldier in the Roman army, a centurion. The term usually denoted a captain over a hundred, but the constant reorganization of the Roman army causes some uncertainty as to the office. In any event he was a man of importance and power in the army of occupation then in Palestine.

The second verse tells us who he was morally and spiritually. Notice the marks of his character:

1. He was a devout man.
2. He was a God fearing man.
3. He gave much alms to the poor.
4. He prayed to God always.

Now, if morality would save, and all that is necessary in order to go to heaven is to be a good, honest, fair, and praying individual, Cornelius would have been in need of nothing more. Let us emphasize this again. If mere morality alone would save, Cornelius was already saved and was in need of nothing. But the God of heaven did not regard him as a saved man. He had to HEAR, BELIEVE and OBEY the Gospel just as in the other cases in Acts. He, a good man, had to do exactly the same thing as the wicked Pentecostians.

### THE MIRACLES

Now let me suggest that there are three miracles connected with the conversion of Cornelius, and yet none of these miracles saved him. Let us study them one by one.

### Miracle Number One

**VISIT OF THE ANGEL:** While Cornelius prayed, an angel appeared to him saying: "Thy prayers and thine alms are gone up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and fetch one Simon, who is surnamed Peter: . . . who shall speak unto thee words, whereby thou shalt be saved, thou and all thy house" (Acts 10:4, 5; 11:14). The only thing the angel told him was where and for whom to send to learn what to do to be saved. As per his instructions, Cornelius started three men for Peter immediately.

Notice now that he was not told that he was saved, or that the visit of the angel was a Christian experience that he could relate as a proof of a new birth. Nothing of this kind occurred. As a matter of fact just the opposite took place. Peter was to tell him WORDS whereby he and all his house SHALL BE SAVED. It was necessary to send for Peter because Cornelius had to hear, believe and obey the Gospel. Now give attention to the second miracle:

### Miracle Number Two

**PETER'S VISION:** About noon the following day Peter went upon the housetop to pray. Here he "fell into a trance" and saw a vision of a great sheet with a menagerie of all kinds of animals, and heard a voice saying: "Rise, Peter; kill and eat. But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common and unclean." The voice replied; "What God hath cleansed, make not thou common." This Peter interprets to mean: "God showed that I should not call any man common or unclean" (Acts 10:28).

While Peter yet wondered what the vision meant, the three men whom Cornelius had sent arrived and called for him. Then the Spirit said unto him: "Arise and get thee down, and go with them, nothing doubting: for I have sent them." What was the purpose in all this? Unquestionably, it was to convince Peter that he should go and preach to the Gentiles. At any rate, this is the way he understood it; hence, he sets out, taking with him six of his Jewish brethren.

Thus we see that these two miracles had but a single purpose, that of bringing the preacher to the sinner that the Gospel might be the power of God unto salvation. Here is the record on the power of the Gospel, Romans 1:16.

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth: to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

Let me emphasize another point. In the conversion of the eunuch the miracle or the appearance of divine guidance came not to the man out of Christ, but to the preacher. The angel of the Lord told Philip to arise and go into Gaza. Thus we see that it is the preaching of Christ, the Gospel of Christ, that is God's power to save.

Before we study the third miracle let us notice another thing about the character of Cornelius. He was the right kind of parent and kinsman. Hear verse twenty-four:

"And the morrow after they entered into Caesarea. And Cornelius waited for them, and had called together his kinsmen and near friends."

Consider the problems of juvenile delinquency in our time. It has been pointed out by the best writers and thinkers among us that juvenile delinquency is nothing more than parent delinquency. It is a failure on the part of the parents to guide, teach and pray with their children. Cornelius was not such a man. He was interested in the spiritual welfare of his house, and of his loved ones. He called them all together to hear the words of the Apostle who was to come to him. Now give attention to the third miracle:

### Miracle Number Three

**DECENT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT:** As soon as Peter arrived at the house of Cornelius he explained that it was hitherto an unlawful thing for a Jew to go unto one of another nation; but since God had shown him that he should not "call any man common or unclean," he asks: "Therefore with what intent ye sent for me?" Cornelius explains the visit of the angel, then adds: "Now therefore are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of the Lord." You never have any trouble in telling people of this sort what to do to be saved.

Without further delay, Peter began his sermon on the life, the work, the death, the resurrection, and the office of Christ, concluding with these words: "To him bear all the prophets witness, that through his name every one that believeth on him shall receive remission of sins." Note that he did not say, "every one that believeth on him has remission of sins;" but, "shall receive remission of sins."

"While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them that heard the word. And they of the circumcision that believed were amazed, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, can any man forbid the water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Spirit as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ."

Now remember that Peter was to tell them words whereby they could be saved and he commanded them to be baptized in water.

Now what was the purpose of the falling of the Holy Spirit? It was not to give faith. Peter settles this in Acts 15:7, saying: "God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel, and believe." It was not to save them. They were saved in doing what Peter told them to do, Acts 11:14. Let Peter answer the question: "As I began to speak (hence, before he had yet told them what to do), the Holy Spirit fell on them, even as on us at the beginning. And I remembered the word of the Lord, how he said, John indeed baptized with water: but ye shall be baptized in the Holy Spirit. If then God gave unto them the like gift as he did also unto "us, when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God? And when they (the Jerusalem church) heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying. Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life." The sole purpose of the Holy Spirit baptism in this instance was to convince the unbelieving Jews that the Gentiles were entitled to the blessings of the gospel.

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*Editorial . . .* H. E. PHILLIPS

## THE NEW TESTAMENT PLAN OF SALVATION

H. E. Phillips

Most every careful thinking person at some time in his life thinks about his eternal destiny. This is a very important subject. It is not enough just to think about salvation; one must learn what to do and do it.

No greater question has ever been asked concerning the individual than the question, "WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?" The answer to this question has needlessly caused a great amount of religious confusion in the present century. Is this because the Bible is not clear in giving an answer? Or is it because preachers and religious leaders have ignored some clear passages on the subject or have misapplied them? It cannot be that the Bible is not clear on the matter because that is one of its main themes. The Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, presents four major themes: man is a sinner and can do nothing by himself to procure his salvation; God loves man and desires his salvation; God gave His Son to die that man's sins might be remitted; man must do something in obedience to God to obtain this salvation provided for him. How could such an important matter be treated vaguely in the New Testament? It claims to be our only guide (II Tim, 3:16, 17), and must be rightly divided to learn the truth (II Tim. 2:15).

It is clearly evident from the Bible that salvation cannot come purely by law. The Jews were given a law which could not give salvation because none could keep it perfectly. James says if one keeps the whole law, yet offends in one point, he is guilty of all (James 2:10). To be saved by the law one must keep it perfectly, but no Jew could do that (Rom. 3:23).

It is likewise evident that man could not work out a formula without law that would give him remission of sins. The Gentiles were without this law given to the Jews, and they

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Re: Searching the Scriptures

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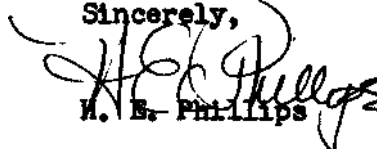
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H. E. Phillips

were no better off (Rom. 2:14; 11:32). Since neither the Gentiles without the law nor the Jews with the law could obtain forgiveness for a single sin committed, some plan must be provided by God through which this salvation could be obtained. This is what we call the *Gospel Plan of Salvation*.

### THE PLAN OF SALVATION AS TAUGHT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The first thing an honest seeker for truth must do is to divide the Bible as it should be. We should not go to the part that tells of Noah's salvation from the flood to learn what God wants us to do. That would be failing to rightly divide the Bible. What God demanded of Noah, Moses, Abraham, or any other person living under former dispensations is not what he commands of men today. One section deals with men before the death and resurrection of Christ and the other with men since that time. A serious mistake made by many religious leaders and teachers is to fail to distinguish between the Law of Moses and the Gospel of Christ. Since we are looking for the salvation that could not be produced by the Law, we must find the answer in some section of the Bible other than the Law of Moses. That leaves the New Testament in which to find the answer.

#### I. PLANS NOT TAUGHT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Everyone knows that there are several systems of salvation taught by religious denominations today, some of them conflicting widely. Men are required to do various things in an effort to reach forgiveness of sins, some of them differing so widely as to be incongruous. Shall we say that God is the author of such confusion? Certainly not (I Cor. 14:33). God has one single plan of salvation, and to be saved every man must submit to it.

These systems of salvation fall into two classes: (1) Salvation by Faith Only. (2) Salvation by Works Only. It is impossible for both of these to be true at the same time. Neither of them may be true, or one may be true, but both cannot be true.

#### 1. Faith Only Salvation

The majority of Protestant denominations hold to this plan in one form or another. They differ somewhat as to the process of this system, but they are generally agreed that salvation is by "faith only". The process of reasoning in formulating the plan is simple: find a passage that attributes salvation to faith and then conclude that salvation requires nothing more. Then explain out every other passage that may attribute salvation to any other condition.

They use many proof texts which have one of two things in common: they either have to do with matters under the Law of Moses, or else speak of the entire plan under the term "Faith" in contrast to the Law of Moses. The principle texts are: Luke 7:50; John 3:16, 36; 5:24; Acts 16:30; Rom. 5:1; 9:30-33; Eph. 2:1, and others of similar import. None of these passages are denied, nor do we deny that everyone is saved by faith. But it is entirely different when someone adds the word ONLY to the proposition. Not one of these passages teach that one is saved by FAITH ONLY. There is a big difference. We are saved by the blood of Christ, but not by the BLOOD ONLY. If that were true faith could not enter. *Faith Only* means nothing except faith. That would eliminate repentance, prayer and other things they require the sinner to do to be forgiven.

Not only does the New Testament not teach the doctrine of salvation by faith only, it condemns it in no uncertain terms. In the epistle of James we have an inspired argument to this very end. In verse 14 of the 2nd chapter we find these words: "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say

he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?" Now he is stating the very proposition—"can a faith without works of any kind save a man?" In verse 17: "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble." He clearly states that faith without works is dead. Will a dead faith save anyone? If so, the devils have nothing to fear in eternity, for they go that far. It will do no good to say that this is "historical" faith, for there is not one single hint anywhere in the Bible of such a thing. The difference in saving faith and all other kinds is that one works in obedience and the other does not. Whatever one calls it, any faith alone is dead and will not save.

But James goes on to prove from the history of Abraham that the faith that blessed him was one that obeyed. There is not a single example anywhere in the Old or New Testament that shows a man was blessed until his faith obeyed God. That is the difference in "faith only" and a "live faith." In verse 24 James says: "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by FAITH ONLY." This is the only place in all the Bible where the words "faith only" are together. This teaches that one is NOT saved by faith only.

There are some Scriptures that thoroughly destroy the system of salvation by faith only. In John 12:42, 43 we read: "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many BELIEVED on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." Here are some who believed on Christ, and the same writer said in chapter 3:36 that "he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life . . ." Were they saved? They were if faith only saves. But the obvious meaning of this passage is that some among the chief rulers believed as others who were saved but did not go on to confess him because of fear. Jesus said those who would not confess him before men would be lost (Matt. 10:32, 33).

In Acts 2:38 the people who heard Peter and the apostles were "pricked in their hearts," which is the same as believing. Peter did not tell them to believe when they asked what to do, and the reason is that he knew they already believed. He told them what more they must do in addition to just believing—"repent and be baptized." This proves something more than belief.

In Acts 16:30 Paul told the jailor to believe on the Lord and he would be saved. Then he preached Christ that he might believe. After the jailor was baptized he brought them into his house and set meat before them, "and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house" (verse 34). His believing included his obedience and was not "faith only."

The plan of salvation taught in the New Testament was not a plan of "faith only." It included something in addition to faith but based upon it.

#### 2. Works Only Salvation

This position is the opposite extreme of faith only salvation. It was the principle idea practiced by Catholics and included in many denominational practices later. One strange thing is that most of the religious bodies who teach the doctrine of "faith only" actually practice the doctrine of "works only." A denial of this is expected but the evidence is top strong to deny.

*Works Only* means salvation that results by works of some sort without faith. The majority of religious bodies today practice infant baptism, and their creeds show that they believe in infant damnation or original sin. If one believes an infant

is born in sin and lost, he must be consistent to have some plan by which the infant can be saved. Baptism upon the faith of his parents is used for this purpose. God does not save us on the faith of others. If an infant is saved from original sin by baptism without faith—and no infant can believe—then is it not by works without faith? Every practice of infant baptism tells of a salvation by works without faith. But Paul says "for whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23). Again, "But without faith it is impossible to please him . . ." (Heb. 11:6).

(Continued Next Issue)



In many Bibles the date 4004 B.C. is found in the margin of Genesis 1. Bishop Usher, an Anglican bishop worked out this chronology of the Scriptures and published the results in 1654. By 1701 his dates were published in the margins of many of the Bibles printed. These dates were arrived at by considering, primarily, Genesis 5 and 11. Bishop Usher produced this chronology on the basis of the father-son relationships and assumed that these were complete. This can easily be shown to be a false assumption for the term son is sometimes used to mean "decendent" instead of son. In Matt. 1 Jesus Christ is said to be, "the son of David, the son of Abraham". Jesus was actually the son of neither in the generally accepted usage of the word but was the decendent of both. In the same chapter of Matthew, three names are omitted between Joram and Ozias (Ussiah) in verse eight. Those omitted are Ahaziah (II Kings 8:25), Joash (II Kings 11:2), and Amaziah (II Kings 14:1).

Again, there is evidence that the father-son relationship is incomplete in the Genesis record. In Luke 3:36 Cainan is said to be the son of Arphaxad while Genesis 11:12 says that Arphaxad "began Salah" and omits Cainan altogether. Luke gave the genealogy of Christ by inspiration as did Moses in Genesis. Who would condemn either of these inspired writers? Who would say that every generation is mentioned in either or both accounts? Compare the genealogy of Ezra 7:3f and I Chron. 6:6-10. Here you notice the omission of six names between Meraioth and Azariah in Ezra's record.

These instances will serve to show that abridgment of genealogical records is common in the Bible. The point is to indicate that man may make mistakes relative to the Bible as well as in the field of science. If we contend the earth had its beginning in 4004 B.C., based on the strength of Bishop Usher's evidence with its observable weak points, we can hardly condemn others for their beliefs though they possess like weaknesses. In all things we need to be careful lest we base our beliefs on opinions and guesses rather than truth and on man instead of the Word of God.

## BIBLE ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS

E. L. Flannery Is

Baptism for Remission of Sins?

False teachers, trying to annul God's command of baptism, will quote passages which are stressing faith and do not mention baptism. They then reach the conclusion that God's com-

mand can be set aside. Some "proof-texts" they use are John 3:16, 18, 36; 5:24; 6:40, 47. Not one of these passages mention baptism, yet they stress the essentiality of faith to salvation. But neither do these passages mention repentance, and yet those opposing baptism for remission of sins say one cannot be saved without repentance. But if these passages prove salvation without baptism they prove salvation without repentance. But this is too much for them. They want one of God's commands to the exclusion of the other.

### Who Put Baptism Between the Sinner and the Saviour?

Jesus chose this act of faith, baptism, as the point of pardon to the sinner. It was to be preceded by hearing and believing the gospel, by repenting of one's sins. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," said Christ (Mark 16:16). Does not that put baptism *before* salvation? To the penitent believers on Pentecost seeking release from their sins Peter commanded, "Repent and be baptized, everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins . . ." (Acts 2:38). Did not Peter put baptism *before* the remission of sins of the sinners? Saul of Tarsus was told, "And now, why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins . . ." (Acts 22:16). Where does that place baptism, *before* or after his sins were washed away? A man without prejudice or preconceived notions can readily see *where* God placed baptism in the scheme of redemption.

### Love Is Important

To eliminate baptism in the new birth some quote I John 4:7-8, "And everyone that loveth is born of God . . ." Thus they would sweep away any and every other teaching. But in this same letter John wrote, "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God that we keep his commandments . . ." (I John 5:2-3). No one is saved until he does what God tells him to do to be saved; until he proves his love by obedience to God's will. And illustrations of gourds, etc., do not change God's commands one bit! (If you held a man's body under water several days it would decay, too! Baptism is not for a cleansing of the body, but to purify the soul by obeying God (I Pet 3:21). The scriptures abundantly teach that water baptism is essential to salvation. This I affirm.

## "THE SPONSORING CHURCH"

### NO. 3

Thomas C O'Neal, Jasper, Ala.

In the first two articles of this series, it was shown what the 'sponsoring church' is. Briefly, it is a church that 'sponsors' a work and other churches contribute to it, thus working thru this 'sponsoring church.' Two examples were shown of the 'sponsoring church' arrangement. These are not the only ones in operation; others could be cited. These two are South 5th and Highland in Abilene, Texas, which puts on the 'Herald of Truth,' and the 10th and Gladstone church, Frederick, Okla.

In this article, we propose to show why the 'sponsoring church' arrangement is unscriptural. There are many valid objections that can be made against the 'sponsoring church', however, if we can find just one valid and scriptural objection, that alone will prove the purpose of this article.

There are many passages of scripture in the New Testament that we could use to accomplish our purpose here. However, we will limit our use to just two; (1) Acts 20:28;

(2) I Pet. 5:1-3. First, let us notice the organization or government of the local congregation. The N.T. reveals a plurality of elders and deacons over each congregation, with their duty limited to the congregation or flock in which they are members, Acts 14:23, Acts 20:28, Phil. 1:1, I Pet. 5:1-3. Acts 20:28 reads thusly, "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." Their obligation before God is to "the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers." Notice that the divine record does not say, "the flocks" but rather "the flock." Their oversight is limited to the congregation in which the Holy Spirit has made them overseers. They have oversight by divine authority in no other congregation. If you can, imagine a shepherd overseeing a flock over on some distant hill that he could not see. How can one *oversee* that which he cannot see? It would be like overhearing a conversation that you did not hear!

Just what are elders of a congregation to oversee? They are to oversee the work (Eph. 4:12) that a congregation does, to discipline its own members when they become unruly, to oversee the worship of the congregation, to oversee the resources contributed by her members. The Philippian church "communicated" with Paul as he preached the gospel with the funds contributed by her members, Phil. 1:5; 2:25-30; 4:15-20. The brethren in Antioch sent the relief to the elders of the Judean congregation, Acts 11:27-30, understanding that the elders were over the work of the church.

How does the 'sponsoring church' violate these passages of scripture? These verses are violated in that in most cases the resource of one congregation are turned over to the 'sponsoring church' to oversee. However, it would not necessarily be limited to the resources of a congregation, it could be the worship of the congregation or some other function. The argument has been made and is being made that the thing that makes the 'sponsoring church' scriptural is the fact that the contributions are made to her on a voluntary basis or willingly. You and I may lose \$5 either by someone taking it away from us by *force* or by willingly giving it to someone. In either case we have lost \$5. A congregation may lose her autonomy (right to govern herself) either by some congregation taking her autonomy away from her by force or she may willingly give her autonomy away, but in either case, she has lost her autonomy! If a congregation has \$100 taken from her by force, she has lost her autonomy of \$100 to the 'sponsoring church.' If she gives willingly \$100 to a 'sponsoring church', he has lost her autonomy over that \$100 to a 'sponsoring church.' She can no longer oversee that \$100 because she no longer can see it!

Peter said, I Pet. 5:1-3, "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind, Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock."

The "feeding" and the "oversight" is to the "flock of God among you." This does not permit the "feeding" and overseeing a flock 2,000 miles across the country that the 'sponsoring church' elders don't know, have never seen, and don't in many cases know anything about the congregation except that they sent so much money and it was from a certain place.

When elders from some congregation come into town representing some church and begin begging elders to turn over \$100 a month or whatever amount it may be, brethren should

tell them in no uncertain terms to go home and if they want "their project" to go over with a big bang, just to dig down into *their own* pockets and pay for it.

The idea of one church 'sponsoring' a work and other churches working through that 'sponsoring church' in accomplishment of that work, is something that is foreign to the Word of God.



I read in an Associated Press report from New York that the Jehovah's Witnesses have another version of the Bible ready for sale. They have printed a million copies and have been at work on the new translation for the last twelve years. After all is said and done, they have the most direct approach to the matter of making their doctrine and the Bible agree. They just change the Bible. This will be the third time they have tried to take the scriptures into their own hands and remove the word "hell" and other matters from its sacred pages. The sad thing about it all is that hundreds of people will be misled by this false doctrine. There is a hell and the word of God clearly teaches the doctrine of the final end of the wicked. See such passages as, Matt. 5:22, 29, 30; Matt. 10:28; Matt. 18:9; Mark 9:43, 45 and Luke 12:5. As in the last translation, the "scholars" chose to remain anonymous. There is little to marvel about in this for such careless handling of the text would not be done by men who signed their names to their work.

#### THE NATIONAL BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION

The following news story was copied from the religious page of the *Tampa Tribune* on Saturday, June 24th. It is quoted in its entirety as follows:

Dr. Benton B. Miller will be a guest speaker tomorrow in the pulpit of the Peninsular Christian Church. He will be heard at the 11 a.m. service.

Dr. Miller is area representative of the National Benevolent Association affiliated with the church. The association provides for the care of children and the aged. He has served in the post in the southeastern area of the United States since 1954. His work specifically concerns the home for children in Atlanta and the home for the aged in Jacksonville."

Our institutional brethren should try this on "for size." They have long argued that the Bible does not tell us HOW and hence any method is all right. If this is true what about the NATIONAL BENEVOLENT ASSOCIATION? Without doubt, there are many brethren who would have no objection. They, like the "Christian" church, give the 11 O'clock service over to the institutions to beat their drums and plead their causes while the gospel is forgotten.

#### ANOTHER PREACHER LOST

The march away from the church of the Lord continues with the deflection of John Brinn from the faith. Brother Brinn is a former teacher at Freed Hardeman College and for years a well known preacher in Calloway County in Western Kentucky. The loss of men like Brinn is the result of the liberal thinking of our time. When brethren loose their respect for

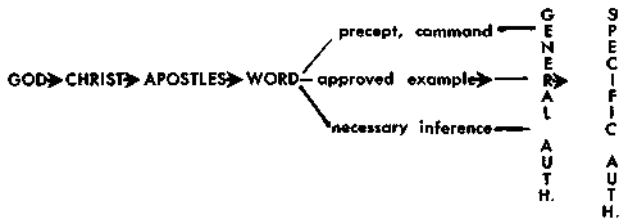
the authority of the scriptures there is little to hold them in the "old paths." It is regrettable that the men who point these things out have to suffer persecution. In the first issue of this paper I called attention to the loss of Pat Hardeman and asked the question, "Will he be the last?" The answer is clear. Men like Hardeman and Brinn are just the first of scores to follow. Brethren, we need to move back to the Bible and a complete and unqualified respect for its authority before it is too late. Brethren need to stop fighting the preachers and elders that cry for chapter and verse in all we do and start holding up their hands.

## ALL THINGS ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN

R. A. Ginn, Trussville, Ala.

"... who serve that which is a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, even as Moses is warned of God when he is about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern that was showed thee in the mount" (Heb. 8:5).

God's plans have always been executed according to a definite "pattern". A "pattern" is that plan in "conformity to which a thing must be made" (Thayer). Thus, God gave definite specifications to Noah for the building of the ark, and to Moses for the formation of the tabernacle. The church is a *copy* of that tabernacle, and it is also fashioned after a definite pattern from the Lord. Many serious problems exist among our brethren today because some have inadvertently left the *pattern* given for the church of Christ in the realms of and organization. We should remember that it is entirely possible for us to continue to stress the pattern of obedience required of sinners in becoming Christians while we minimize the importance of maintaining the pattern in our work in the church. One pattern, however, is no more vital than the other. "... for there is no respect of persons with God" (Rom. 2:11). We should be able to solve every problem in the church merely by determining what the *pattern* of work is, and then by applying that pattern to all questions for have arisen among us. Hence, a lesson in the authority for church activity is basically needed today. This chart may be helpful in deciding just *how* the church has authority for any activity:



All authority in the New Testament originates with God. Christ recognized that authority as a pattern for his own life. He came to do the Father's will, not his own (John 4:34). His teaching was not his but the Father's (John 12:49, 50). Even his own rights as he labored among men were determined by the supreme authority of God.

Jesus was given *all* authority by his Father (Matt. 28:18). The church may therefore act *only* when he orders it, for he must remain pre-eminent in everything (Col. 1:18). Every act of the individual or the church is necessarily limited to what may be done in his name—by his authority. "And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus. . ." (Col. 3:17).

The apostles were in turn given authority by Jesus (Matt. 8:18). Their authority was complete in every way—"whatsoever" they bound and loosed would be respected by heaven. This, of course, was possible because they received the Spirit's guidance (John 14:26; 16:13). Our duty to God today is confined to their apostolic orders found in the "binding and loosing" among New Testament congregations. Their decisions settled the serious problems confronting the church in the first century (Acts 15), and their teaching provides the *only* basis for such solutions today.

The authority that was imparted to the apostles was transposed to the inspired Word which they wrote to churches and individuals. Hence, Paul stated that one who ignores its teaching in any respect is not worthy of fellowship in the church (II Thess. 3:14). He wrote the Corinthians that they must learn "not to go beyond the things that are written" (I Cor. 4:6). The revealed word is the only means we have today to know the "things of God" (I Cor. 2:11-13). Therefore, **ALL RELIGIOUS ACTIVITY MUST BE BASED UPON THE AUTHORITY OF GOSPEL TEACHING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.** *Any* practice not based on such authority stands condemned despite the widest acceptance by the brotherhood of believers!

The seriousness of neglecting the Bible pattern for every church activity is stressed in Matthew 7:21-23, where some are condemned for not having done God's *will* but are workers of *iniquity* (the condition of *One* who is without law). Even their "good works" are condemned because they had been without authority. The church, then, is never justified in doing some "good work" that is not first authorized in the Scriptures! No departure from that authority can be considered small when we consider that the small beginning of apostasy mentioned by Paul in II Thess. 2:7 eventually resulted in the monster of Catholicism. We cannot be "too strict" in abiding in the pattern given for the church and its activity.

The New Testament pattern for the church is *complete*. It is a "perfect law" (James 1:25) and lacks nothing. It renders' the obedient man *complete* (II Timothy 3:16, 17). If individuals must follow that pattern to be complete, then it is a complete pattern for the individual. If individuals have duties that must be performed through the church, then the pattern must likewise be *complete* for the *church activity* of the individual. This perfect law of the New Testament governs every phase of the Lord's church: its name, doctrine and worship, as well as its organization and the work to be performed through that organization. This pattern is uniform for *every church* now as it was in the first century (I Cor. 4:17). It is true that God has made some provisions in his pattern for the church for human judgment to be exercised, but in each such case it is not in determining what the pattern is, but how to apply that pattern to each individual matter of church activity that may arise.

There are three ways in which all authority must be established. The pattern for the church today must be revealed to us in one or more of these avenues:

(1) By direct statements and commands. For instance, in Matthew 26:26, 27 Jesus gave authority for eating the bread and drinking the cup of the Lord's Supper in plain instructions to his disciples.

(2) By approved examples. In Acts 20:7 the church ate the Supper we are commanded to eat on the first day of the week. There is nowhere any direct command given to eat on the first day, but Paul's participation in this service proves that eating on the first day carries the divine approval of God. No other suggestion of the Supper being eaten on another day can be found, thus participation by the church on

any other day would be totally without authority. Approved examples form as good authority for church activity as any other kind.

(3) By necessary inference. Things are often necessary to what is recorded, though not specified. The church was not in existence before the feast of Pentecost (Acts 2), but was in existence afterward. It is necessary to the record that the church was established on that occasion.

Whatever authority is given to the church by any of these methods, that authority is in the form of either *general authority* or *specific authority*. General authority is such as to make necessary the supplying of details in order to execute the law commanded or taught. Specific authority, on the other hand, excludes all other things of the same class or kind in the execution of the command. Some instruction is general with respect to some matters, while specific in regard to others. For example, the church is instructed in I Timothy 5 to care for certain widows. Such authority is general insofar as how (what means and methods) the local church shall supply such care. This same instruction is specific, however, with reference to the *organization* that executes this responsibility. It is through the *church* that this care shall be provided. Other organizations are excluded from this direct responsibility in this particular work which rightly belongs to the church itself.

We must have Bible authority for ALL the church is to do. If any practice is not authorized in one of these three ways by either general or specific instruction, the abandonment of such activity is long overdue! When God has given some things in specific instruction for the church to observe, *there is no other way for the church to perform them!* Let us ever abide only in that which is *authorized* to do.

## THE SIN OF BACKBITING

*Earl Fly, Orlando, Florida*

In listing the ungodly acts of a reprobate mind, the apostle Paul lists "whisperers, backbiters" among them, saying that those who practice such things are "worthy of death" (Rom. 1:28-32). These two sins usually go together because the backbiter is secretive in his whispered "confidential" reports to secluded hearers. He usually refrains from backbiting in a crowd for fear of rejection and rebuke, but waits until a limited number is present to begin his destructive work.

Backbiting is a grievous sin with irreparable harmful results. The "bitten" one usually knows nothing about it, and even if and when he learns about it, there is usually no opportunity to clarify distorted reports, unfair criticisms or false statements. It is a sad but true fact that some hearers are deceived thereby, and consequently lower their esteem and confidence in the "bitten" person. They unjustly condemn without investigation, adopting the principle in practice that a man is *guilty as reported until proved innocent*, and grant no opportunity to the condemned one to defend himself. This is contrary to the laws of man and God, which teach that one should be considered innocent until *proved* guilty.

Backbiting may be motivated by many things. In this article I will discuss a few possible causes as follows.

1. Jealousy or envy. A few years ago I knew a preacher who constantly engaged in backbiting other preachers, seemingly because he was jealous of whatever abilities and accomplishments they possessed. He possibly thought that he could increase his own by criticising theirs. Some evidently have the false idea that one can build up his own reputation, prestige and influence by destructive backbiting criticisms of others. Such an one is deceived, for a good reputation and

respected influence can only come from humbly being and doing good in the sight of man and God.

2. Attempt to justify self. If one is innocent and justified it is not needful nor right to backbite others to prove it. If one is guilty he must repent and reform to be justified; backbiting simply increases his guilt.

3. Offended by a real or imagined offense. In such a case the scriptural procedure is to go to the alleged offender to settle it (Matt. 18:15-17). Backbiting will never remove the alleged offense. It only makes matters worse.

4. To advance false doctrine. Sometimes an undercover agent for Satan will circulate false reports in an effort to destroy the influence of one who stands for truth, so that error may have free course without effective opposition. Many people, sad to say, judge a message by the messenger's reputation, *as reported by his enemies*. The apostle Paul had many slanderous reports spread concerning him by backbiting false brethren and other enemies of Christ. It was necessary that he expose such reports that the truth not be hindered (II Cor. etc.).

5. Disagreement on doctrine and/or opinion. Some resort to backbiting when one does not agree with them on a doctrine, opinion or practice. But truth does not depend upon such a carnal weapon. If a doctrine, opinion or practice cannot be substantiated by the Bible, it cannot be substantiated by any means. Only those who are fearful of their doctrines and practices will seek to eliminate investigation by backbiting the investigator.

6. Resentful of preacher. Many brethren who will not endure sound doctrine in "great plainness of speech" become resentful of one who thusly preaches, and seek to undermine his work and destroy his influence by secretive backbiting, making false charges and unfair criticisms, perhaps hoping to replace him with a compromiser who will "scratch itching ears" by speaking only "smooth things." In many cases the backbiting continues after the preacher has gone in an effort to further destroy his influence.

7. Dislike for an individual. Some dislike an individual because of a contradiction of personal tastes. They do not like the way he looks, combs his hair, wears his clothes, what he does or does not do, et cetera. Hence the destructive backbiters begin their evil work. They need to realize that it is none of their business how he looks and conducts his personal life, so long as he obeys God, and that they are busybodies, meddlers, backbiters and sometimes liars, all of which are condemned by God (II Thess. 3:11; I Peter 4:15; Rev. 21:8).

Backbiting may be motivated by other things but whatever the cause it is still sinful. It cannot be justified by any means and the guilty are "worthy of death." It is the carnal weapon of a coward who does not have the courage of heart, conviction by God's word, nor the sincere desire to deal honorably and openly with matters, and is more interested in destroying the person than helping him. He does not love man nor God.

Love for God and man will not allow one to backbite, nor does it permit condemnation without sufficient investigation to determine facts. It does not behave itself unseemly, takes not account of evil, believes all things (I Cor. 13:4-7). It is not suspicious and does not attribute evil motives to nor put the worst construction on the acts of others. It will not believe a critical damaging report against a brother until *compelled* to do so by the most irrefutable evidence. Love rejects and rebukes the backbiter.

Let us not be deceived by backbiters, nor be guilty of the sin ourselves. If we become the objects of the backbiter's work, let us not render evil for evil. And since our true friends will not believe damaging reports without investigation and



discussions with us, since true Christians will reject backbiters, and since our enemies would not believe the truth if we told them, it is not always needful to follow the backbiter's trail correcting false reports, even if it were possible to do so.

Let us always seek to please God in our decisions and activities, being guided by his word, using our best judgment in matters of opinion after fervent prayer, investigation and consideration of facts and factors regarding a particular situation. If men then misinterpret, misunderstand and misrepresent in backbiting, let them answer to God, but let us continue to serve God in all good conscience.

## BIBLICAL WORD STUDIES

By E. V. SRYGLEY, JR.

### HAMARTANO, "I SIN"—NO. 8

Folly and *hamartia* are equated in the LXX: "As a dog becometh odious when he returneth to his vomit; so is a fool for his wickedness, when he returneth to his sin (*hamartian*)." In this place *hamartia* represents the Hebrew *'iwweleth* which indicates culpable ignorance of God, and so, Godlessness.

The familiar Old Testament thought of folly as sin and wisdom as piety is further reflected in the LXX use of *hamartia*: "Death meeteth the uninstructed, and a fool dieth by sins (*en hamartiiais*)," Prov. 24:9. Here, again, *hamartia* represents a Hebrew term for "ignorance."

We must not, therefore, overlook the LXX usage of the verb *hamartano* and the noun *hamartia*. It is in the LXX that the verb and the noun first come to have the moral and religious quality which they lacked both in the classical writings and in the Greek of common speech.

## "I GO A FISHING"

Wilbur Hunt, Palmetto, Fla.

The last chapter of John is an account of Christ's showing Himself to seven disciples the third time. What lessons can be learned from it, especially from the viewpoint of being a soul winner for Christ or a fisher of men?

The first lesson is that of dependence upon Christ if one is going to be fruitful in "catching" people for Christ. The seven disciples, under Peter's leadership, decided to do some fishing, but "that night they caught nothing". This suggests the utter failure of being a fisher of men apart from Christ.

How would this take place? There is, first of all, being out of Christ and not one of His followers, and being unknown to Christ as seen in Matthew 7:21-23. Here Christ told some people to depart from Him because He did not know them and they were workers of iniquity or were doers of unlawful things in spite of their claim that they had prophesied in His name, cast out devils, and done many wonderful works. The second is not doing things by His authority, but trusting in human efforts and wisdom and believing that the end justifies the means. A Christian can have good intentions as to being a soul winner, but goes about it in the wrong way, and with zeal without knowledge, good judgment and timing, and so on. The result is that God is not glorified and pleased, and one is unfruitful or unrewarded

as to results of his efforts to teach the Truth and bring others to Christ.

The next morning, Christ appeared and, after asking "have ye any meat?" and receiving a negative answer, told them to "cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find". The result was a multitude of fishes. This clearly teaches the lesson of doing what God says in the way He wants it done in order to receive abundant results in regard to "catching" people and spiritual things in general. A few minutes later, as everyone headed towards land, "Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught". Certainly Christ wants to take care of our needs and to help us, but it is necessary to co-operate with Him first and to rely upon Him as well as to do all that is humanly possible to bring others to Christ.

After breakfast, Peter was restored to Christ's confidence and was told to follow Christ. Apply this to being a soul winner for Christ, there is, first of all, loving Christ and spiritual things more than earthly things, and putting the kingdom of God first in one's life. The second point is that of each Christian being concerned with whether he is following Christ as he should rather than being concerned about what happens to someone else. In other words, a Christian should work out his "own salvation with fear and trembling" and keep his body or himself under subjection" lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (Phil. 2:12; I Cor. 9:27). Following Christ is an individual matter, not congregational in nature or dependent upon what someone else will do or not do. It all depends on individual faithfulness. Christianity is selfishness in this sense only, but this does not make void the Christian's duty to do all he can to bring others to Christ and to their personal or individual realization of their duty to God. The right, kind of life will help a Christian to be a better soul winner or a fisher of men than he would be otherwise. In view of these things, let us strive to follow Christ so as to please God and Him better, and to help to save others as well as ourselves.

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Is it right to talk about loving God with all the heart, and at the same time try to destroy your brother in Christ?

Is it right to use every excuse known to avoid public-worship to God, and use everything to promote personal gain and pleasure ?

# The News Letter Reports

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

SAM BINKLEY, JR. is moving from Portsmouth, Ohio where he has been with the Harding Avenue church to the Eastside church in Athens, Ala. . . . EARL FLY of the Holden Heights church in Orlando preached in a meeting at Umattilla, Florida early in June. . . . JAMES R. COPE of Tampa, Fla. preached in a meeting at Westvue church in Murfreesboro, Tenn. June 18-23. RICHARD WEAVER is the preacher with this congregation----HOMER HAILEY of Tampa, Fla. was in a gospel meeting with the First Street church in Lawrenceburg, Tenn, June 4-11.

There will be a series of gospel lessons presented at the Azalea Park church in Orlando, Fla. July 17-23, with different speakers each night. Make your plans to attend if you live in that area ----DENNIS REED of Birmingham, Ala. was in a meeting in New Bern, N.C. in May. . . . BOBBY THOMPSON of the North Miami church was in a meeting with the church in Coral Gables, Fla. in May. . . . LUTHER BLACKMAN was in a meeting at West End in Franklin, Tenn., June 12-21....JOHN GERRARD was in a meeting at the new El Bethel congregation, three miles west of Shebyville, Tenn., June 12-18....BEN MCGUKEN preached in a gospel meeting at St. Marys, Ga., June 11-18. . . . CLAUDE WILSFORD of the East Hill church in Pensacola, Fla. preached in a tent meeting in the Montclair area May 21-31. . . . FRANK INGRAM, formerly of the West Hill congregation in Pensacola, will move to Springfield, Mo. soon to begin work there. Brother Ingram is a fine gospel preacher who loves the truth.

FRANKLIN T. PUCKETT of Dyersburg, Tenn. will be in a gospel meeting at St. James, Mo., July 2-11. Services are at 7:45 each evening. All in that area should hear him. EUGENE BRITNELL preached in a good meeting at Preston Road in Louisville, Ky. in early May. A. C. GRIDER is the preacher with this congregation....DAVID CLAYPOOL was in a meeting at Winchester, Ohio in May. . . . N. L. EVANS of Texarkana, Texas was in a meeting with the Burnett Avenue church in Louisville, Ky. . . . A. C. GRIDER was in a meeting at Walton's Chapel, Macon County, Tenn., June 26 to July 5 ----DONALD TOWNSLEY preached in a meeting at South End, Louisville, May 21-28. . . . W. C. HINTON, JR. was in a meeting and vacation Bible school in New Blaine, Ark. May 29-June 13....WESLEY JONES was in a meeting at Smiths Grove, Ky. June 4-11. . . . HOMER HAILEY was in a meeting at Spring and Blaine church in St. Louis, Mo., June 12-21....BILLY SHELTON was in a meeting at Smith Springs June 4-11....W. C. SAWYER of Park and 13th Street church in Bowling Green, Ky. will move to work with the Harding Avenue church in Portsmouth, Ohio about the first of August.

The 10th Avenue church in Bradenton presented a series of sermons on the theme: "The Church, The Manifold Wisdom of God" May 15 through 21. Different speakers were assigned various subjects on this theme. H. E. Phillips of Tampa: "Establishment of the Church, The Manifold Wisdom of God"; James R. Cope of Tampa: "Responsibilities of Membership"; James Needham of St. Petersburg: "Growth and Development of the Church Through Evangelism"; Earl Fly of Orlando: "Development of Organization and Work of the Church"; R. L. LaCoste of Clearwater: "The Apostasy of the Church"; Thomas G. Butler of Lakeland: "Reforma-

tion and Restoration of the Church"; Oaks Gowen of Bradenton: "The Worship of the Church" and James P. Miller of Tampa: "The Bride Beyond Compare." Oaks Gowen is the faithful preacher with this good congregation.

The church in Largo, Florida sends the following announcement: Brother T. E. Akin, Jr. has resigned his work as evangelist with the church at Largo, effective September 3, 1961. Anyone desiring to do the work of an evangelist here may address all inquiries and information to the church of Christ, P. O. Box 80, Largo, Florida."

## GRIDER-WOODS DEBATE

A. C. Grider and Guy N. Woods will discuss benevolent institutions and the Herald of Truth, July 10-14 in the Gottschalk Junior High School auditorium, 4615 Taylor Boulevard, Louisville, Ky. The first three nights Grider will affirm the unscripturalness of churches building and maintaining Benevolent Organizations. The last two nights Woods will affirm the scripturalness of the Herald of Truth.

JAMES P. MILLER co-editor of SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES will preach in a meeting with the church in Tompkinsville, Kentucky where ROSS SPEARS labors July 23-30. He will be engaged in a similar effort with the church at Farmington, Kentucky beginning August 6-13). JAMES SHOCKLEY preaches for the Farmington congregation. All are invited to hear him in these gospel meetings.

## MARRIED

Congratulations and best wishes from all readers of SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES go out to Tom O'Neal and Sue Bates who were married at Jasper, Alabama on Monday evening, June 12th. Brother O'Neal is a fine gospel preacher and a regular contributor to this paper. They will live in Jasper where brother O'Neal preaches for the McArthur Height congregation.

A gospel meeting was conducted in Orange City, Florida, June 26-July 1 with different speakers each night. The speakers and their subjects were: MARSHALL E. PATTON, "Authority of Christianity"; EARL FLY, "The Old and New Testaments"; HAROLD DOWDY, "Worship of The Church of Christ"; JERRY BELCHICK, "Salvation by Faith"; MAURICE JACKSON, "What Is The Church of Christ?"; MORRIS RUBY, "Bible Baptism." Services were held in the Library building located on U. S. Highway 17. This is a new congregation.

JAMES HAHN was in a meeting at Mt. Washington, Ky., June 12-17 ----JAMES R. COPE will be with the Preston Highway church in Louisville, Ky. August 3-11. . . . HOMER HAILEY was in a meeting in Louisville, Ky. with the Wendell Avenue church, June 25-July 2....ROBERT WELCH will be in a meeting at Oak Grove, Ky. June 29-July 7. . . . LESLIE E. SLOAN of Palmetto, Fla. will be with the church in Shepherdsville, Ky. in a meeting July 30-August 9. . . . EARL FLY of Orlando, Florida will be at Center Hill church, near Alachua, Fla. August 27-September 5.... CONWAY SKINNER was at Mt. Dora, Fla. in a meeting June 11-18. . . . ROBERT J. LaCOSTE of Clearwater, Florida was in Big Clifty, Ky. in a gospel meeting June 21-July 2.

GROVER STEVENS of St. Louis, Mo. will begin work with the Wendell Avenue church in Louisville, Ky. the first of September. . . . BUDDY MEYER is preaching for the church at St. Cloud, Fla. during the month of June. . . . ROBERT JACKSON preached in a meeting at Academy Street in Dickson, Tenn. . . . HAROLD HOWARD preached at Colesburg with 8 additions. . . . OLAN KERN is moving to Charlotte, Tenn. from Berea, Ohio.

### NEW CONGREGATION

Bro. Guy McDaniel along with six other brethren began a new congregation in the El Bethel community about 3 miles west of Shelbyville, Tennessee. This new work began April 23rd with evening services being held in a garage building. This building is situated on a piece of property comprising 2 acres. This has been purchased by a mortgage loan for \$5,000.00. The building is being renovated and will be quite suitable for assembly.

### CHURCH LEADERSHIP FREE

Brother A. W. Dicus has written a book entitled *Church Leadership* which he offers to those who will send him their names and addresses. "I will be glad to furnish, (GRATIS), copies of CHURCH LEADERSHIP to any and all desiring such, if they will mail me their name and address." — A. W. Dicus, 212 Woodbine Avenue, Tampa 10, Florida.

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JAMES E. GUNN, evangelist with the Azalea Park church of Christ in Orlando, Fla., announces a gospel meeting to begin there July 17-23, 7:30 each night. The speakers will be MARSHALL PATTON, EARL FLY, JERRY BELCHICK, all of Orlando, and JIMMY TUTEN of Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

The congregation at Antioch, in Thonotosassa, Florida, where Charles E. Murray, preaches, reports that three have been restored, and five baptized, since the beginning of the year.

### J. R. MILLER PASSES

On June 14, brother J. R. Miller suddenly passed from this life in Hazel, Ky. He was the father of James P. Miller, co-editor of *SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES*. Brother Miller was born in Calloway County, Ky. in 1875. He was a member of the first graduating class in about 1898 after the Old Potter Bible College of Bowling Green, Ky. had become West State College. He obeyed the gospel when a young school teacher in Kentucky, and was a Christian over 60 years. He served as an elder in the church at Hazel, Ky. for many years. His funeral was held in Hazel, June 16, 1961. We extend our sympathy to his wife and sons: James P. Miller of Tampa, Fla. and Robert O. Miller of Murray, Ky.

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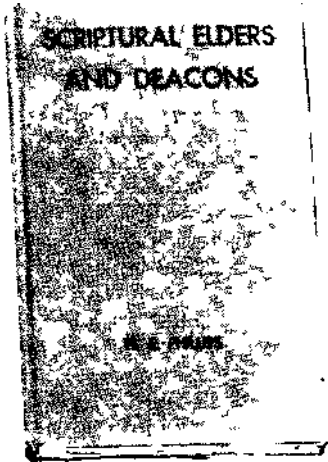
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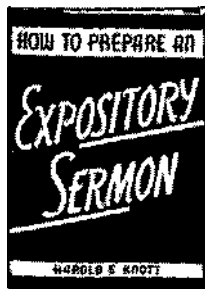
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