

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

VOLUME II

AUGUST, 1961

NUMBER 8

PASSAGES, QUICK AND POWERFUL

Jas. P. Miller

Every passage in the New Testament should be precious to every child of God. All of them should be read and studied over and over again. There are, however, some passages that help give an answer for our hope in a wonderful way. They serve as a key to unlock some of the problems of our time and give a ready answer to the error of our age. Look at some of them with me.

FAITH HEALING

Brethren are always faced with the question of what to tell those who are misled by the so called "faith healers" of today. In the last 6 verses of Mark we have these words.

"And he said unto them, Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. A-men".

Answer the modern miracle worker simply by asking him if he preaches verse 16. This verse says belief plus baptism saves; that it takes both faith and baptism, as clearly stated in the verse. Of course, if he tells the truth he would have to say *no*. He above all others elevates faith and says little about other commandments. The conclusion is then clear. *If he does not preach the 16th verse he can not work any of the miracles in the 17 and 18 verses.* The signs in the 17 and 18 verses only belong to the ones who preached the great commission as the Lord gave it. **IF THESE MEN HAD LIVED IN THE VERY DAYS OF THE APOSTLES, THEY COULD NOT HAVE WORKED THEM.** If they could have performed the signs, then the Lord would be proving a lie, namely that men are saved by faith without baptism. It is unnecessary to go on and show that all such miracles have long ago ceased. Just cut the false teacher off at the headwaters, for if any man on earth today could heal the sick by a miracle it would be the man who preaches, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"; and that would be a gospel preacher.

FAITH A WORK

Those who cry out against works having anything to do with our salvation and are always preaching that it is by faith only, need to explain a passage in John 6:28,29 that makes faith itself a work. This forever upsets the theory of salvation by faith without complete obedience.

"Then they said unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, this is the work of God, that ye believe on him who he has sent."

The question is asked of Jesus, "what shall we do that we might WORK the WORKS of God? They were told to believe on Christ and that was the WORK of God. Thus, it has to follow that if salvation is without works, it is without faith, for faith is a *work* and it is a work we must do.

Not only is this true, but we need to remember that faith is a work of God for one reason, **GOD COMMANDED IT.** It is positive divine law in its simplest form. In the very same way every other command is a part of positive divine law and is a work of God. If faith is a work of God because it is a command of God, then repentance, confession and baptism are the work of God because God commands them also. God gives the command, man does the work and it is all called the work of God. Keep the lines clear between this kind of work and the works of the law and the works of man's invention and we will have a ready answer.

GODS PEOPLE NOT A PEOPLE

The Calvinist, such as Primitive Baptist and their new Progressive brethren, base their entire doctrine of election on the fact that God foreknew his people from the foundation of the world. They teach that man can do nothing about his salvation, for the number is so fixed that it can neither be increased or diminished. They are faced with the impossible task of explaining 1 Peter 2:10.

"Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."

Just think of how God could have a people from the foundation of the world and have Peter say that the "royal priesthood" now is made up of those that were out of Gods number then. Can you imagine God's children without mercy? This verse as well as others forever answers the old doctrine that man cannot obey the gospel to the salvation of his soul. The very ones, the Gentiles, that are in the service of God are the ones that Paul declared were "without hope and without God in the world." Eph. 2:12. Thank God for his rich mercy.

WAS PETER POPE?

With the rise of Catholic power in this country there is a new interest in biblical teaching about the Catholic church and the apostle Peter. If Peter was a pope of any kind, Paul did not know it. In the Galatian letter in 2 Chapter 2 and Verse 9, Paul had this to say about the men he found in Jerusalem;

"And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship; that we should go to the heathen, and they to the circumcision."

The simple fact is that Paul said there were three of equal rank in the Jerusalem church and Paul says they SEEMED to be pillars. Catholic versions do not deny the reading. Their revised New Testament printed in 1941 and approved by the President of the Pent. Biblical Commission says "were considered the pillars." The old Douay reads just as the King James. Now how in the world could Peter have been the Pope and Paul miss the fact entirely? If this scripture teaches anything about a super organization (of course it does not) it seems they would argue for a three man commission called Pillars to run the church from Jerusalem. On second thought, some of my brethren may think of it yet. It is a matter of amazement that Paul was not chosen by our Catholic friends for the Pope instead of Peter. He would fit at least two conditions that Peter cannot. First, he never married, and second, he preached in Rome.

ANOTHER DANGEROUS TREND APPEARS

Oaks Gowen, Bradenton, Fla.

The question of the "college in the budget" of churches has been discussed for many years. Only a few churches have in recent years supported "our colleges" out of their treasury, and but few of the colleges have made direct appeals to the churches to do so. But now one of our southern college is making a direct appeal to elders of churches in the southland to get busy and urge all members of their charge to give liberally to the college by establishing an annual ELDERS CHRISTIAN EDUCATION EMPHASIS WEEK. No, this is not the "shades of sectarianism", it is the DARK SHADOWS of darker days ahead for the church of our Lord. Let those who think "institutionalism" is a harmless and dead issue, think again, especially when the institution is a "Christian College" seeking support from churches.

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by Homer Hailey

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Searching The Scriptures

*Published Monthly At
Tampa, Florida*

Entered as second class matter at U. S. Post Office at Tampa, Florida, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

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Tampa 12, Florida

THE NEW TESTAMENT PLAN OF SALVATION

II THE PLAN TAUGHT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The place to begin is with the authority of Jesus Christ after his resurrection. Just before he ascended into heaven to be seated at the right hand of God and begin the reign over his kingdom, he assembled his apostles and gave them what we call the GREAT COMMISSION. This commission tells us the plan of salvation today. The accounts of this are found in Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15, 16; Luke 24:46, 47; John 20:22, 23. All these refer to the "great salvation" spoken of in Hebrews 2:3 that "first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him." Before the great commission was given salvation was administered according to the will of Christ while on earth, but now his divine law—the Gospel—was to forever establish the terms by which all men, Jew or Gentile, must be saved.

There are five well defined steps that lead to the remission of sins. Moreover, these steps must be in proper order. Each one depends upon the one preceding. Let us study them in their order in obtaining forgiveness of sins.

(1) *Preaching.* God has always bound preaching under the gospel dispensation as the first condition to salvation. "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (I Cor. 1:21). This is the beginning point. Paul says the gospel is "the power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16). Unless this gospel is preached salvation cannot follow. Not only must the gospel be preached, it must be the ancient gospel that was preached by the apostles. Every other gospel is condemned (Gal. 1:8, 9).

When Philip came to the eunuch on the road from Jerusalem to Gaza, he "began at the same scripture, and preached

unto him Jesus" (Acts 8:35). When Peter related his experience in the house of Cornelius to those in Jerusalem, he says that he was sent to "tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved" (Acts 11:14). All this shows the importance of preaching to effect salvation. It is in harmony with the great commission which says to "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." But what is the purpose of this preaching?

(2) *Belief*. No man can be saved who does not believe the gospel that is preached. Just what should one believe? "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:9, 10). In verse 13: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" Believing is accepting as truth that which the gospel teaches. We believe on Christ who is the central figure of the gospel as the Saviour of the world. This is the second step, and leads naturally to the third.

(3) *Repentance*. No man can be saved who does not repent, and no one can repent scripturally who does not first believe. Some religionists insist that repentance must come before faith so that faith can be the condition that saves. But if repentance is a condition, either before or after faith, it destroys the doctrine of "faith only."

The Bible plainly teaches that repentance follows faith. "For whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23). If repentance is not by faith, according to this passage, it is sinful and will not produce salvation. In Hebrews 11:6: "But without faith it is impossible to please him . . ." If repentance is before faith, it is without faith, and cannot possibly please God.

Besides all this, the very nature of repentance demands faith. Repentance is the change of mind with regard to sin. Would an unbeliever do this? The very thing that leads a man to turn from sin to righteousness is his faith. This faith comes from the preaching of God's word. "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). After a person hears the gospel he believes it. When he believes the gospel he must repent of his sins. This is further proved by the example on Pentecost. After Peter had preached Christ, the people were "pricked in their hearts," which means that they believed what he preached and were convicted of their sins. Peter did not tell them to believe, for they had already done that; he told them to REPENT. Then repentance follows faith. What comes after repentance?

(4) *Confession*. This condition is not stated in the great commission, but it is implied because it is stated elsewhere in the New Testament as a condition to salvation. Paul said in Romans 10:9, 10: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." This confession is made with the mouth UNTO (looking toward) salvation. The mouth is to confession what the heart is to belief. This is in harmony with John's statement in I John 4:15: "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." It must follow faith or it will not please God. It must follow repentance or it would be a lie. Now what follows this confession?

(5) *Baptism*. This is the act of obedience that most denominationalists reject as a condition to salvation. The main reason is not that the Bible is not clear on the subject; it is because some have died without obeying this command and these preachers want to entertain some hope of their salvation. They know if baptism is a condition, and if these have died without it, they are lost. The best way to solve the problem is to denounce baptism as a condition to salvation.

Peter told the multitude on Pentecost who believed his preaching to "repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." The expression "for the remission of sins" means exactly the same as the statement by Christ when he gave the Lord's Supper in Matthew 26:28: "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS." The expressions are identical in the original language and carry exactly the same meaning. If one says that "for" means "because of" in Acts 2:38, it must carry the same meaning in Matthew 26:28, which would make Christ's blood shed "because of" remission instead of "in order to."

Peter associated repentance and baptism together for the same purpose. If baptism is "because of remission," so is repentance. This would eliminate repentance as a condition to salvation and make it an after effect. Baptism stands in the same relation to forgiveness as repentance. If repentance is in order to the remission of sins, so is baptism.

In addition to this we have the great commission of Christ. He told the apostles to preach to every creature, "that repentance and remission of sins might be preached to all nations . . ." In another account he placed baptism in the same relation to remission of sins. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." In these two passages we have *faith*, *repentance* and *baptism* all to the same end—remission of sins.

Peter plainly tells us that baptism is a condition to salvation. "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 3:21). He says baptism "also now saves us." Someone says this is "figurative salvation." The figure of our salvation by baptism is the salvation of Noah; as the waters of the flood carried him from the old corrupted world to a new one, so obedience in baptism carries us from the old world of sin into the new world of forgiveness. No man can be scripturally baptized who does not follow every step that goes before it. That is the reason infants cannot be baptized; they cannot believe the gospel and repent.

Paul explains this design of baptism further when he writes: "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection" (Rom. 6:4, 6). Notice the expressions: we are "buried by baptism" into death; then "like" Christ was raised, we are raised in baptism. It is a burial and a resurrection LIKE the death and burial of Christ. Why did Christ have to die and be raised? All through the New Testament it is explained "for the remission of sins." This act which is LIKE that of Christ is for the same purpose. Notice further: We are raised to WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE. Is it possible to walk in the new life without being raised to it? Certainly not. Then is it possible to be raised without being buried? No. How are we buried? This passage says we are buried with him by baptism. In Colossians the same writer

says we are buried with him IN baptism (Col. 2:12). The only conclusion from this passage is that baptism is essential to walk in the new life—one cannot get into it without baptism.

In this same chapter, verse 17: "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you." Now what is the FORM which they had obeyed? Obviously, the death and resurrection of Christ spoken of earlier in the chapter. Paul said the doctrine was the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (I Cor. 15:1-4). The only form of the death, burial and resurrection which man can obey is baptism spoken of earlier by this writer.

Now what does obeying this FORM accomplish? "Being THEN made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6:18). Paul says it makes us free from sin THEN, at the time of obedience.

The man who labors to eliminate baptism as a condition to the remission of sins is fighting a losing battle from the beginning because God's word will stand forever. Every man who has not been scripturally baptized is yet in his sins and will remain so until he completes his obedience in this act.

IS IT IN THE NEXT VERSE?

W. N. Henderson, Meridian, Miss.

Last Sunday a preacher was asked for scriptural authority for an institutional orphan home; he replied about like this: It's in the next verse after the one where you read about the preacher's home. To many people this is a valid argument; it is only a quibble, an evasion of the question. There is a benevolent board which runs the institutional home: this answer did not deal with this. Suppose the preacher's home is wrong, where would this leave the institutional home? Whether a thing is right or wrong cannot be decided by some other practice of ours — the scriptures alone determine whether it is right or wrong.

Authority for Christians having houses to eat and drink in is found in 1 Cor. 11:22. Since the preacher is a Christian there is scriptural authority for him having a house. But what about the church building a house for him to live in? In chapter 9 Paul defends his right to eat and drink, and to lead about a wife; this would make a house necessary. He further says: "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel" 1 Cor. 9:14. Jesus said: "And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house." (Luke 10:7) Also read Matthew 10. "The labourer is worthy of his hire;" a part of that hire Jesus said was a house. The next verse says nothing about a home operated by a board. Now, where is that verse that authorizes a board to look after the benevolent work of the church? This is the issue. No one is objecting to orphans and widows having a house in which to live. They are entitled to a house as a preacher, you or any one else. It is not the house we are asking authority for; we have that. We want authority for a board, an organization with a president or chairman, a secretary and treasurer, and everything else it takes to make a board to operate an institution. A house is one thing and a board is another thing. The board is the thing I am asking authority for. Can you give it?

Whenever brethren select a board to build and maintain houses for preachers to live in while preaching for lo-

cal congregations, I shall then ask for authority for that board. Furthermore, I shall fight it from Dan to Beersheba; I shall smite it hip and thigh. The local elders have the responsibility of the preacher's hire if there is a house involved in his hire, the elders are to look after it, and not a board of directors looking after it for the brotherhood. Can't you see the difference? If there were orphans and widows in a congregation who needed a house in which to live, and it became necessary for the church to provide that house, the church could and should provide it would not be necessary to organize a brotherhood board of directors to build and maintain that house. It could and should be done within the framework of the local congregation, just as the widows at Jerusalem were provided for within the framework of the Jerusalem church. Read 1 Timothy 5.

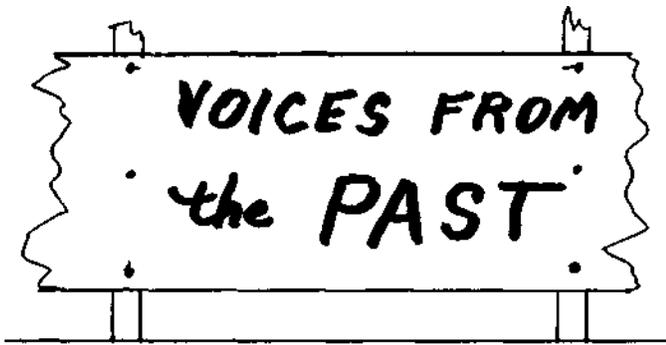
The person who refuses to aid widows and orphans in their afflictions cannot hope to be saved. They shall be consigned to the same place as those who continually go beyond what is written (I Cor. 4:6; II John 9; Rev. 22:18).



Today there is much concern over outer space; what it is like, when we get there what will we find? There are many hypotheses as to whether or not life exists and the forms of life on other planets. Recently in a local newspaper a professor of astronomy was discussing the possibility of civilizations on other planets. I quote a statement from this discussion as it was published in the paper. The professor declared:

"On a favorable planet, such as the Earth in the early days, from two to five billion years ago, oceans consisted of a 'soup' of organic and inorganic chemicals, which, under influence of almost continued lightning discharges and ultra-violet rays from our Sun, plus continual mixing, produced the first primitive life form. After natural selection and biological evolution over a nearly inconceivable length of time we are led to our present civilization."

According to this professor you came from a 'soup' which was struck from lightning, mixed up, and life resulted. Then after 'selection' and 'evolution' you are what you are today! This is being put forth in the name of science! "But", someone will say, "this is a man of learning and experience. Who would dare to question the above statement with this: *Not one statement in the above quotation has been nor can be proven by either known facts or by experimentation.* Such statements as the above quotation includes are often made by men in order to "prove" the various theories that are put forth. When these are taught or found in textbooks many people accept them without question. Such statements as these are intended to disprove the theory of special Creation, the Biblical account of creation, and replace it with a "more logical theory that is reasonable and acceptable". May I suggest to you that much that is taught today in the name of "science" is falsely so-called!



CHURCH AUTONOMY

(This article on Church Autonomy by brother T. Q. Martin is a timely subject for the present. It appeared in the December 23, 1937 issue of the Gospel Advocate, page 1208).

That body, institution, organization that Jesus calls "my church" (Matt. 16:18) is unique, simple, perfect in organization. Jesus Christ is its head (Eph. 1:22, 23; Col. 1:18), and those who have been called through the gospel out of the world into this body (II Thess. 2:14), who have from the heart obeyed the form of teaching, and have thereby been made free from sin and have become servants of righteousness (Rom. 6:17, 18, 22), members of that body. The purpose of that body is plainly stated in the New Testament—namely, the glory of God (II Thess. 2:14; Eph. 3:20; I Pet. 2:9). If all fulfill our mission as members of that body, we must be governed wholly by Him whom God made to be head over all things pertaining to that body (Eph. 1:22, 23).

Organized Religion vs. Church Autonomy. You will search the New Testament in vain to find the spectacle that the religious world presents today. The various religious denominations of today seem not so much concerned about what our guidebook, the New Testament, says as what our pope, priest, bishop, religious "higher ups" say. Not what has the Holy Spirit decided through holy men of old, who spake or wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit? but what have our ecclesiastic councils, associations, conferences, synods, conventions decided?

Christ's Authority. In the presence of Moses and Elijah, who had come back from the unseen world, and Peter, James, and John, yet living in the flesh, God said of Christ: "Hear ye him" (Mark 9:7). No voice must be heard as authority in our preaching, work, and worship but the voice of the Christ. Of course when we are governed by the teaching of the apostles, who were filled with the Holy Spirit to guide them into all the truth, we are governed by the teaching of Christ. In John 16:13, Jesus promises the Holy Spirit to the apostles to guide them into all the truth. In Luke 24:49 he instructs them to tarry in the city (Jerusalem) until they were clothed with power from on high. In Acts 2:1-4 the apostles are filled with the Holy Spirit and speak as the Spirit gives them utterance. In Matt. 10:40, Jesus says to the apostles: "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me." These statements show that when we are governed by the teaching of the inspired apostles we are governed by the teaching of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

What Do We Find in This Teaching as to Church Autonomy? First of all, divine revelation furnishes us with nothing in the way of a religious organization through which we are to work as Christians, except the congregation. "Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ

Jesus that are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons" (Phil. 1:1). All the saints at a given place, with the bishops and deacons, a local assembly working and worshiping as it is written, constitute the church in that place.

The New Testament bishops and elders were not two classes, but one and the same class. They were called "elders" because they were selected from the older ones; they were called "bishops" because of their work. They were overseers, as the word "bishop" signifies. There was a plurality of elders, bishops, over one congregation; never one elder or bishop over several congregations. This latter arrangement is a perversion of God's order.

Now, please note that the word of God teaches that elders and bishops are the same persons: "From Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called to him the elders of the church" (Acts 20:17). To these elders he (Paul) says in his solemn charge to them: "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops" (Acts 20:28). He calls for the elders, and to them he says that the Holy Spirit has made them bishops (See also Titus 1:5, 7).

The man-made distinction between elder and bishop was one of the first steps toward the great apostasy. In New Testament times, as we have seen, the congregation, saints with bishops or elders, and deacons, was all the organization that was known in the realm of Christian work and worship. Each congregation was independent of every other congregation, yet they moved in perfect harmony. All were bound together by a common purpose and guided by a common rule—the rule given by Christ.

Every one who has even a very limited knowledge of church history knows that the church of Jesus Christ has never, in any succeeding age, gained such victories as she gained in those days before uninspired men began to legislate for her government. In those days of glorious conquests for Christ a simple, childlike faith in God's wisdom and power was the dominant note in Zion's marching music. As we have seen, each congregation managed its own affairs, each guided by the Holy Spirit's teaching; hence, unity prevailed.

When the congregation in Jerusalem needed men to "serve tables," or to look after the material affairs of the church, the inspired apostles instructed the multitude of the disciples, the congregation, to look out men having certain qualifications to look after that work. I am sure the apostles were competent to select the men, but they did not do it. These men were to serve in the Jerusalem congregation, and they must be selected by that church.

We read that elders were appointed in every church (Acts 14:23), in every city (Titus 1:5), but we have no New Testament example for selecting elders. In I Tim. 3:1-9 and Titus 1:5-9 we have given the qualifications of both elders or bishops and deacons. Now, in the absence of New Testament example for the selection of elders, what is the inference as to their selection? If the congregation selected its men to "serve tables"—or, in other words, its deacons—would we not infer that the congregation selected its own elders? And in view of church autonomy—seeing each congregation had elders—would not the inference be a necessary inference?

If all religious bodies would discard everything in their teaching and practice for which a "thus saith the Lord" cannot be produced, unity and victory would be ours.

But I am asked: "Was there not a council of churches held in Jerusalem to decide an important matter as recorded in Acts 15?" I answer emphatically: No. Please turn to the chapter mentioned and read the entire narrative. How many congregations were concerned in that meeting? Only two—Antioch, disturbed by false teachers; and Jerusalem, whose in-

dorsement the false teachers evidently claimed. Note the message sent by the church in Jerusalem to the church in Antioch: "Forasmuch as we have heard that certain who went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls; to whom we gave no commandment" (Acts 15:24). The church at Jerusalem could discipline her members for false teaching, but she could not discipline the members of the church in Antioch for accepting false teaching. Hence, the matter must be referred to the congregation from which the false teachers came.

Even in the days of the inspired apostles, who were to the primitive church what the New Testament is to the church now, we find congregational independence.

Back to the God-given pattern, and forward to glorious victories for God and Christ! A return to New Testament simplicity in teaching and practice is the great need in the religious world today. "Every word of God is tried: he is a shield unto them that take refuge in him. Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar" (Prov. 30:5, 6). "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work" (II Tim. 3:16, 17).

DO WE TALK TO OURSELVES?

B. G. Hope, Bowling Green, Ky.

In Luke 12:13-21 there is recorded two conversations: (1) The one the rich man had with himself and (2) what God said to the rich man. The principle of the account is a rather normal occurrence. It has happened, or it could happen in the life of any normal person.

The rich man said to himself: "What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater: and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." Then God said to him: "Thou fool, this night thy soul should be required of thee: then whose shall these things be, which thou hast provided?"

Notice that the rich man was too busy talking to himself to listen to what God had to say to him. He waited too late for a message from God to do him any good. Some of us may be doing a lot of talking to ourselves when we ought to be reading God's Word to find out what He has said to us. It is definite that we can't talk to ourselves and listen to God at the same time.

Do we talk to ourselves or listen to God with reference to salvation? Have we said to ourselves: "We can be saved by faith only"? Have we said to ourselves: "We'll pray through"? Have we said to ourselves: "We can be saved without baptism just like the thief on the cross"? Have we said to ourselves: "Sprinkling is just as good as immersion"?

If we have been guided by any of the statements mentioned above, we have been talking to ourselves rather than inquiring of God, for none of the above statements can be found in His Word. Christ said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Mark 16:16. God said through Paul: "We are buried with him by baptism into death." Rom. 6:4. We had better stop talking to ourselves. We might wait too late to listen to God, like the rich man.

Do we talk to ourselves about worship? Do we say to ourselves: "We don't think it's necessary to go every Lord's

Day", or maybe we have said to ourselves: "We don't have to accept the Lord's Supper", or have we said to ourselves: "It doesn't matter what we do just so we're honest—we can sing with or without instrumental music"?

But God said through Luke in Acts 20:7: "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them . . ." God said in Heb. 10:25: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching". In Eph. 5:19 God said: "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." Col. 3:16 says, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." We had better listen to God while we have an opportunity to do what He says—whether what He says is in the form of a command or by example. We could talk to ourselves, for instance, about whether an example is binding or not and wait too late to listen to God.

Do we talk to ourselves about the church instead of listening to God? Do we say to ourselves: "One church is as good as another"? Or "It doesn't matter whether you're a member of any church or not"? Do we say to ourselves "Any good work can be done by the church"? Do we say to ourselves: We believe education and recreation can be done by the church, or we ought to have refreshments at our meetings to encourage people to come so that they can get acquainted with one another?" Do we say to ourselves: "The church can have boards outside of the framework of the local congregation to do the work assigned to the church"? If any of these statements are true, we are talking to ourselves, and we are not letting God instruct us.

God says through Paul in Eph. 4:4: "There is one body" and in Eph. 1:22, 23: "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all." He also says in Eph. 3:3: "Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." And in Eph. 1:7 He says: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins . . ."

God directs the church to relieve the needy: "And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need." Acts 2:45. 1 Tim. 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 that are widows indeed." When we have boards to arrange for the preaching of the gospel, edifying of the members, or relieving the needy, we are talking to ourselves, but when we let God direct us, we will accept the church as an all-sufficient body to make any arrangements for any work that he has told us to do.

Let's each examine our own self and ask the question: "Am I talking to myself, or am I listening to God?" We ought not to do like the rich man—wait too late to listen to our Maker.

FALSE WITNESSES

W. N. Henderson, Meridian, Miss.

The Associated Press carried this news item: "Clad in bathing suits, about 1,800 persons were baptized today as Jehovah's Witnesses at Orchard Beach in the Bronx." I would not be surprised if some wore "bikinis." I am not surprised

at these people flaunting God's law of modesty before thworld, and turning the holy act of baptism into a vain show. People who do not believe in the Christ of the Bible, and what he has said about baptism, will not believe or respect what the Bible teaches about modesty, baptism or anything else unless it suits them.

The New Testament does not say anything about people being baptized "as Jehovah's Witnesses," they were baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). And after baptism they were called Christians (Acts 11:26; I Peter 4:16). In the days of the apostles people were baptized when they became believers Acts 8:35-39; 2:41; 16:33. They did not wait until they had a large number and then gather them from all over the country to put on a show that would get them a write-up in the newspapers. The apostles were servants of God so they taught the gospel of Christ and baptized people that they might be saved (Mk. 16:15-16; I Peter 3:21; Acts 22:16).

These people cannot be Jehovah's witnesses for He has not appeared to them, neither have they heard His voice. Opinions and hear-say will not stand up in any court in the land. Their testimony does not agree with what the Lord has said; therefore, they are found to be false witnesses. Everything they teach that is peculiar to their doctrine is false. This can be proved by the Bible. They will not study the Bible with you; they must have the Watchtower books or there will be no study. Resist them with the word of God, and they like the devil, will flee from you (Matt. 4:1-11; James4: 7).

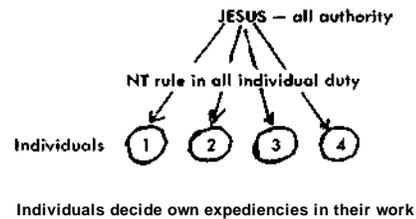
THE CHURCH - UNIVERSAL AND LOCAL

R. A. Ginn, Trussville, Ala.

Every apostasy has begun in the realm of church organization. The Roman Church was the ultimate development of the first recorded departure from the pattern of the the Lord's church. The Christian Church resulted from another departure many years later. Both apostasies took the form of organizational corruptions; the first established the Papacy and the Catholic hierarchy and the second provided societies through which the work of the church might be done. Another departure now faces the church, still small in many respects, but with serious potential. It is not a popular thing to oppose adverse tendencies in the work of the church, but such must always be the work of every faithful child of God (Ezekiel 3:17). The pattern of church government is easily understood, yet often abused. We have little trouble in determining what the pattern is. Our difficulty lies in our *application* of the principles of church organization to the present problems. Many have in recent years *changed their preaching* to conform to practice, have *changed their practice* to conform to these principles which we have believed so long. A few simple truths should keep our preaching straight with respect to church government, and sincerity in doing right will keep our application and practice consistent with these principles.

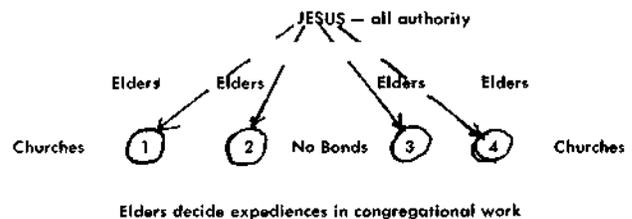
The term "church" has both a universal and local usage in the New Testament. The universal aspect of the church, including *all* believers irrespective of their membership in a local congregation, may be seen in Matthew 16:18 and Ephesians 5:25: "Upon this rock I will build my church," . . . "even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it." The following diagram shows the spiritual

relationship existing directly between Jesus as head and the members as individuals in the world-wide church:



In performing his duties in this universal church, the member is accountable only to the Lord. *No* organization is needed, nor has such been provided, through which in-dividuals might perform duties not inherent in membership in a local church.

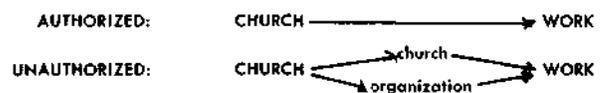
The local usage of "church" may be found in Romans 16:16 and Revelation 1:4: "The churches of Christ salute you;" "John to the seven churches that are in Asia." God has provided for the local grouping of Christians in an organic form, with its peculiar organization of elders and deacons (Philippians 1:1,2). Every collective duty binding upon Christians is discharged through the local church, with the elders of that church exercising whatever judgment necessary to the duties performed:



There is no organization whatever specified in the NT either larger or smaller than the local church (congregation) through which a plurality of Christians may discharge collective responsibilities. The *silence* of the Bible on this matter will therefore be sufficient to EXCLUDE all else — societies, associations, Sunday School organizations separate from the church, Young People's Associations, etc. The local church is the *ONLY* functional unit of church activity to be found in the NT pattern.

Each local church *must* function in performing its *own* duties. Individuals may not function through others. "So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12). This applies to their individual responsibilities in: assembling (Hebrews 10:25), giving (1 Corinthians 16:2), study and teaching (2 Timothy 2:15) (1 Timothy 4:16). Each member must do his own work irrespective of others' successes and failures. This is a fact discussed by Jesus in the parable of the talents, Matthew 25.

In the same way, the local church is given certain peculiar duties in the work of God: raising funds for its work (1 Corinthians 16:1,2), supporting gospel preaching (Philippians 1:15), caring for its own needy (Acts 6:3). These are works to be done by the local church *as such*. The congregation may not function in its own work through another church or organization any more than one individual may function through another individual. Notice this:

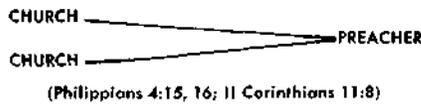


The silence of the Scriptures precludes a church from doing work that is its own in an indirect manner, through another organ, either human or divine (another church).

Certain *divine examples* of early church activity allow for one church to cooperate with many churches that are in need by supplying funds for them to do their work, or for many churches to do likewise in supplying means to one needy church for its work, thus:



Other Bible examples allow for one or more churches to send funds to those preaching the gospel in other places, if done directly from church to preacher through selected messenger (s).



Every local church is obligated to be autonomous (self-ruling) in the discharge of its work: in discipline (1 Corinthians 5:4,5), in local expediences (time of service, selection of preacher, etc.), in its peculiar work of evangelism and benevolence, and in the control of its own resources with which to do this work. No other organization human or divine (another church) can oversee the discharge of these duties for any church.

The government which God gave to the church clearly indicates the necessity of each church *fully* maintaining control of its work and resources. He has designated elders to rule over each church (1 Timothy 5:17), not in matters of faith but in judgement. This rule by elders over the local church is confined to the flock over which they have been appointed as overseers. "Tend the flock of God which is among you" (1 Peter 5:2). No group of elders can assume oversight and control of the work of local churches other than their own. *The Bible is silent as to any universal function of the church. No agency is provided by which a plurality of churches can do a common work.* Each church must function independently in the performance of its own work. Thus, both following arrangements are unscriptural because they are unauthorized:



A local church may lose their self-rule in either of two ways: (1) By direct interference from another organization so that the other organization assumes the control of certain work of the local church without its consent. All recognize the wrong in such a procedure. (2) By voluntary surrender of its oversight of its work to another organization — human or divine (another church). This is true because autonomy (self-rule) is not just a privilege that a church can exercise or not as it sees fit, but rather a responsibility that cannot be acceptably avoided. Christians have the *right* to pray, but they have no choice as to whether they will exercise that right. We must pray. Local churches have the *right* to oversee their own work. This they *must* do, for autonomy is a duty God has imposed upon the churches. Even

though one church's oversight of its work (or a portion thereof) is freely and gladly turned over to another body, church or institution, that church has lost its autonomy to whatever degree the second organ has assumed the oversight. Such a local church displeases God in this action.

The local church *must* retain control over *all* its work. This includes the spending of whatever funds it may have with which to do that work. Surrender of those funds to another body is a surrender of control in work that is done through that body.

The wisdom of God's plan for every church to be completely independent of every other church is clearly seen in every record of apostasy in the past. Only when churches are merged into some form of central organization is it possible for the mistakes of one to affect all the churches. As long as each congregation maintains its control of all its work, departures in one church will have but little influence on another. Any step, therefore, toward centralization of work and finance is a step in the wrong direction.

TIME TO CHECK UP

H. E. Phillips

Termites are some of the most destructive creatures upon earth. They work under cover of darkness and in some of the most powerful buildings. The greatest opportunity for termites is in the building where the owner is certain no such thing could happen to him. Because there are no outward signs of destruction, the owner becomes careless and ignores all warnings to check up occasionally on the condition of his supporting timbers to his house. After a while he begins to notice signs of their evil work. When he investigates thoroughly he finds that his house is nearly gone.

Religion is like that. The evil work of undermining the very foundation of Christianity must work in secret until it gains the foothold to act in the open in bringing the downfall of the church. Strange as it may seem, the most ardent workers against the church are in the church. Just as termites get into the foundation of a building to do their work, those who would destroy the church must get into it and at the very foundation of a congregation.

There are early signs of termites working, and the same is true of religious termites. The experienced and trained man knows where to look and what to look for in locating them. The word of God furnishes us the signs of evil workers in the church. Watch out for puffed up and over-zealous persons. Watch out for those who cry "let us do BIG things for the Lord." Watch out for those who want the church to get into everything that comes along. Watch for the language that is not found in the word of God when they begin to describe the work and worship of the church. Watch out for the slack in morals and personal duties of Christians. Watch out when everything is approved and nothing opposed. These may be signs of religious termites. We had better have a good check up of our own personal thinking and of the church.

BLACKMAIL

Blackmail is not only unrighteous, it is also illegal. Blackmail is used as a means of getting what the person has who is being blackmailed by threatening exposure of some evil or by economical pressure. While we abhor the tactics used by blackmailers, we often are blackmailed or we

blackmail others without being aware of it at first. Threats of some reprisal are often used to get our way. It does not always mean that money must be involved to be guilty of this sin and crime. The "honest" man may threaten his employer by telling him he will not do what is good for the business or by not doing what is helpful.

There is no field where blackmail is more used than in the church today. Men threaten others to disrupt the peace of a congregation if they do not get their way. Preachers blackmail elders and elders blackmail preachers by threatening trouble if their wishes are not respected and carried out. Is this not just as evil as if money were involved?

Perhaps one of the most noticed blackmail attempts is the threat of economic reprisal against preachers who will not conform to traditional standards of teaching and practice dictated by "big" men among us. Such statement as, "I will see that you do not get any respectable place to preach if you do not endorse the Herald of Truth, the Gospel Press and our Orphan Homes." Did you realize that statements like this have been made hundreds of times to faithful gospel preachers in recent years? Yet the advocates of these institutions being supported by the church say all of them are "expedients" and "methods" that the church can employ if she desires. Think of it! An *expedient* and *method* MUST be endorsed or you will not be considered faithful and can not have a "respectable" place to preach! If this is not blackmail, I do not know what the word means.

Blackmail does not stop with men; many try it today against God. They threaten to quit the church and do not attend worship with the saints just because they are not permitted to do the things their own way in spite of what God has said on the subject. True worship does not demand doing something "my own way," but rather it asks: "Lord, what wilt thou have me do?" Do not try blackmail in religion; it will not work. God will not be blackmailed by anyone, and if you try it you will be the one to suffer. The man of God who really counts will not be blackmailed by any kind of threatening.



Under a picture reporting the story of the death of Ernest Hemingway, famous author and story-teller, in the July 14th issue of *Time*, we find this caption, "No remedy for anything in life." It is such a shame that Mr. Hemingway did not try the religion of Jesus Christ. He tried about every thing else on earth, and with the wise man of the Old Testament, found them vain. Hemingway was a Catholic but it has been proven over and over again that this is not sufficient for life. It leaves too much to be desired. The statement, he found "no remedy for anything in life" expresses the hopelessness of the thinking of modern man. Liberal thought has brought him to this conclusion. The result of such philosophy always ends in despair, with a gun at the head and another suicide for the records of history. Some may think it old fashioned to remind the world that there is a way of life that has all the answers. Answers to the questions of *where* and *how* as well as *why*. It is such a tragedy that Ernest Hemingway, and all of his fellow travelers, are not willing to take the words of the Savior

when he said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matt. 11:28. The true religion of Christ and it alone has the answers. If Hemingway had spent just a part of his time in seeking them from the Bible instead of seeking new thrills all over the world he would have been alive with a real purpose for living today.

ON READING THE BIBLE

I have before me a story from the Courier-Journal of Louisville, Kentucky, July first of this year, that tells of the marathon reading of the New Testament that the Fogarty's are doing before they start a meeting. This report was from Lexington, Kentucky where 107 brethren read the New Testament through in 12 hours under the huge tent used by the Fogartys. Now there is nothing wrong with reading the scripture and men need to read it more and more, but on the other hand, there is nothing wrong with praying but the Lord condemned men who prayed to be "heard of men." Long prayers like long reading would stand or fall together. The religion of Christ makes no place for things done for show. We cannot read the hearts of men, but this long reading seems to make the news papers every where the Fogarthys go.

HARDING COLLEGE AND BROTHER BOONE

In the June issue of the Harding College Bulletin most of the entire edition is given to reporting of Pat Boone's visit to the college. There are 7 pictures of Pat in the four page folder in addition to the story of his baccalaureate address. Harding has nothing but praise for Brother Boone and states, "May 28 was a big day to students, parents, and faculty due to the visit of Pat Boone to the Harding campus." I marvel that brethren have gone so far in such a little time. It seems that Harding could see that Pat's example will become the example for the young men and women at the college. If it is all right for Pat to dance it is right for every student at Harding. If it is all right for Pat to kiss another woman other than his wife it is the right thing for every married man on the campus. If it is right for Pat to attend night clubs and even entertain there it is all right for us all. Just how will the faculty at Harding condemn any of these things when they themselves have chosen Pat as a model?

Not only is this true but the news story in the bulletin told about Pat's address. Here is a quote from the report. "Your destiny is not shaped by the big decisions, but by the little decisions you make from day to day." The report goes on to say "This in a nut shell was Pat's message." He read from the 8 Chapter of Romans at the close of the address. I cannot help but wonder if this is the way Pat preached before he became a star. Surely the 8 Chapter of Romans does not teach that the little decisions are the most important ones. The decision to obey the gospel would not be a little one. The decision to be faithful to the Lord and live a pure life above reproach would not be a little one. I cannot help but agree that both Pat and Harding have missed the importance of the great decisions in life. It is the prayer of every true Christian that both Pat and the college will reconsider and make decisions that will keep both unspotted from the world.

THE BATTLE IS ON

There is an issue that comes around about this time every year that affects almost every church in the land. It is not any of the so-called issues of the day, but as one

of the bulletins put it, it is, "fighting the summer slump." This battle rages in all the bulletins of hundreds of churches that send their publications to our desk. The summer takes its toll in attendance, contribution and faithfulness. The de-nominations long ago gave up in this universal battle and said we cannot win so we will no longer fight. Some of them even close the door of the building altogether and the preacher takes off with the congregation for the fish-ing country or the bathing beaches. Others curtail their programs and have just a minimum and hope for the best. Some place their teams in the soft ball league and join in all other summer sports and claim they are doing the Lord's work. Our own brethren in many places have decided on this course.

As strange as it may be in some congregations, and stranger still some of these are in the great cities, find that the summer is one of the very best times to send the work ahead at full speed. Gospel meetings have good re-sults for them in the hottest part of the year. In some way, they have learned that the gospel is never out of season. I marvel that we all do not learn from these churches. They make the "battle of the summer" a wonderful time to save souls, and preach the gospel in season and out. Perhaps they should be an example for us all.

POTTERS HOME AGAIN

In the May issue of the Potter Messenger the superintendent of the home in an editorial called "Policies Unchanged At Potter", makes this statement. "Potter Home at no time has contended that it is better than the private home in caring for children." We are glad to see this state-ment. It is just hard to understand how grown men that lead the brotherhood can be so careless. In the same paper last winter he contended that the institutional home was su-perior "in developing habits in work and behavior," "in teaching good moral behavior," and "in making Christians of the young people." Now he says he never said it and that the private home is superior and that the policy is unchanged. Selah.

BIBLICAL WORD STUDIES

By E. V. SRYGLEY, JR.

HAMARTANO, "I SIN" — NO. 9

The verb *hamartano* and the noun *hamartia* lose their literal significations as we pass out of the LXX and into subsequent Greek literature.

The significance of the usages of *hamartano* and *hamar-tia* in the Apocrypha and Psuedepigrapha should not be overlooked. The first interesting observation on this point is that these writings do not employ either the verb or the noun in a strictly literal sense. In this they differ from LXX usage. On the other hand, the ethical sense in which **both** the verb and the noun are used parallels the LXX usage. It is to be observed further that the Apocrypha and Pseu-depigrapha use the noun *hamartia* in the two basic senses in which the noun is found in the New Testament; namely, "the doing of sin," and "the deed itself."

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The News Letter Reports

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

MORRIS D. NORMAN, Plant City, Fla.—Our vacation Bible school closed June 16 with record crowds. We averaged 113 for the five night sessions. There was one baptism the last night. The week following there were three restorations. This makes a total of five restorations and one baptism since I began work here in Plant City the first of April. The brethren here say the work never looked brighter.

J. FRANK INGRAM began work with the church in Springfield, Mo. in July. He was formerly with the West Hill congregation in Pensacola, Fla. . . . SAM BINKLEY reports 3 baptisms at Portsmouth, Ohio the last of June WARD HOGLAND will speak in a meeting at Franklin Road church in Nashville, Tenn. October 1st to 11th W. C. SAWYER begins work with the Harding Avenue church in Portsmouth, Ohio August 1st. He was formerly with Park and 13th Street church in Bowling Green, Ky. SAM BINKLEY has moved from Harding Avenue to Athens, Ala. . . . Different speakers from the Orlando, Fla. area preached in a meeting at Azalea Park July 17-23. The speakers included M. E. PATTON, EARL FLY, JERRY BELCHICK and JIMMY TUTEN PAUL ANDREWS of Tampa, Fla. preached in a meeting in Dover, Fla. in early June. DON BASSETT is the preacher at Dover. One was baptized.

PAUL BALL is now preaching for the church at Crystal River, Fla. . . . BARNEY KEITH was in a meeting at Sheffield, Ala. July 16 E. L. FLANNERY, DELTON PORTER DICK POPLIN, MARTIN LEMON, REAVIS PETTY and T. T. CARNEY spoke in a meeting in Lewisburg, Tenn. July 24-29 CHARLES M. CAMPBELL of Nashville, Tenn. was in a meeting in Arkansas in July

. . . . MELVIN CURRY, preacher for the church in Berwyn, 111. was the guest speaker at Holder Heights in Orlando, Fla the first Lord's day in July HARVEY J. WILLIAMS is the new preacher with the Glen Park church in Gary, Ind. . . . GUY P. McDANIEL preached in a meeting in' New Albany, Ind. where JOHN GERRARD labors in June LEWIS HUSSELL reports good attendance at the Knollwood congregation in Dayton, Ohio RONALD MOSBY reported 1 baptisms and 10 restorations in a meeting with the West Washington Street church in Indianapolis, Ind. in May.

M. E. PATTON of the Park Avenue church in Orlando, Fla. will speak in a meeting at Northside church in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. in September HUEY HARTSELL is now with a congregation in Shreveport, La. . . . GROVER STEVENS has moved from the Spring and Blaine church in St. Louis, Mo. to work with the Wendell Avenue church in Louisville, Ky.

A. C. GRIDER and GUY N. WOODS engaged in a discussion in Louisville, Ky. on some of the current issues in the church. The question of church operated Benevolent organizations was discussed the first three nights and the question of the Herald of Truth was discussed the last two nights. Grider opposed the invasion of these extra organizations in the work of the church and Woods affirmed their use. This discussion took place July 10-14.

FRANK ANDREWS of Floral City, Fla. recently closed a meeting at Intachatta, Fla. with good attendance. He will be in a meeting in Kentucky in August. A good vacation Bible School was conducted in June in Floral City, Fla. where Frank Andrews preaches.

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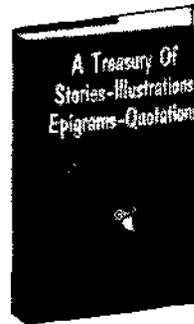


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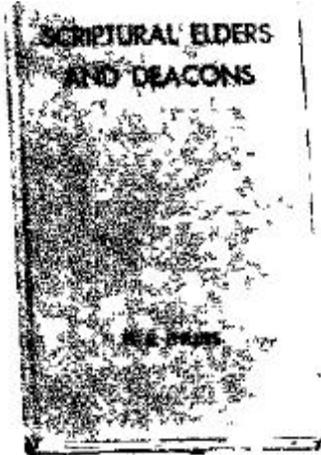
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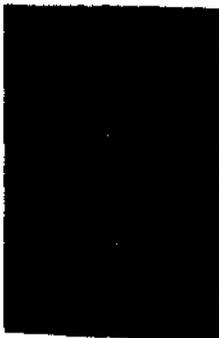
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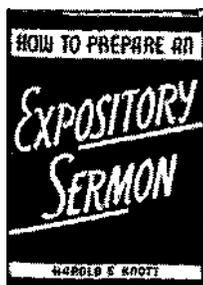
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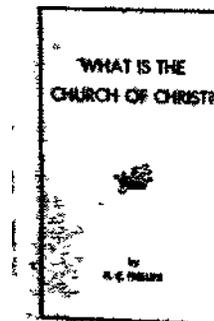
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