

# 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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## A VOICE FROM THE PAST

Bobby Witherington, Louisville, Ky.

Members of the Lord's church can be as traditional minded as anyone else. Frequently, in discussing and opposing the many innovations that have been added, some un-thinking brother replies by saying "We've always done it this way." Of course, what "We've always done," or have only recently begun, does not determine the right or the wrong of the belief or practice in question. A thing is either justified or condemned depending on whether or not the Lord has authorized it. (Col. 3:17; Matt. 7:23; 2 Jno. 9) However, it is frequently good to read what respected men of faith in the past have said. In February, 1967, bro. R. C. Bell spoke at the Abilene Christian College Bible Lectures on a subject entitled "Motives for Missionaries." In the course of his sermon, bro. Bell presented the following words of truth and wisdom:

"Observe that when Christ first put to sea and Paul and Barnabas, beginning the great Christian odyssey which has not yet ended, sailed away from Antioch to Cyprus there was but one congregation involved. It is significant that the church during the most fruitful era it has experienced, had little organization and executive machinery. The simplicity of Christ's methods is what puzzled John the Baptist. Christ had not met his expectations. No ax had been used and there had been no baptism of fire. After eighteen months, John was amazed at what Christ was not doing. He had no political program, and He cared so little for organization that John thought He never could get His kingdom under way. Surely His methods were wrong! To him, in prison, it looked as though Herod, not Jesus, was king. Nevertheless, Christ's simple way was carried over into His church. His church is not so much an organized institution as it is a living organism. Like the human body, it is animated by one Spirit and instinct with one Life and, consequently, needs no mechanical organization to assure unity and efficiency. The very simplicity of the executive machinery of the New Testament church has continued to puzzle men until now, and they still think it is wrong in method and try to improve upon it. Will men ever learn

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The publishers of Bibles, religious books and supplies have announced a price increase, effective June 1st. We are sorry to have to announce this price increase, but circumstances demand it. Pre-recorded tapes of debates and lectures will be increased from \$3.00 per reel to \$4.00 per reel. This is necessary to provide the highest quality tape and recording. We thank you for your orders of Bibles, literature, tapes and religious books.

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to trust God and be wise enough to believe that human mechanics can never take the place of divine dynamics?"

Bro. Bell's remarks were well put! And it has always been a "significant" fact that the church experiences its "most fruitful" era at such times when the "simplicity of Christ's methods" are employed. The "human mechanics," which bro. Bell said could "never take the place of divine dynamics," have sought to remake "the very simplicity of the executive machinery of the New Testament church," and that which has emerged in many quarters is a brand new model, which retains but few of the distinctive features of the original. I know of no place where the simplicity of the Lord's plan has been perverted more than in Abilene, Texas, the location of Abilene Christian College and also the Highland church with her "brotherhood elders" who, in producing the Herald of Truth, are seeking to receive, oversee, and spend the resources of some 2700 contributing churches.

The simplicity of the Lord's plan limited the work of elders, as elders, to the feeding and oversight of the local church over which they were appointed "overseers." (Acts 20:28; I Pet. 5:2). In spite of the Lord's plan revealed in Holy Writ, and bro. Ball's warning, "human mechanics" in the form of "brotherhood elders," in cahoots with "dynamic" and "on-

the-march" preachers, have created much highly organized "executive machinery," which has taken the place of "divine dynamics." The result has been tragedy, heartache, alienation, ruin, and division.

712 Victoria Pl.  
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THEOPHILUS

Beginning Saturday, January 14 of this year, the Rosedale church of Christ in Beaumont, Texas undertook an extension of its teaching program in the form of weekly articles in the **Beaumont Enterprise** and the **Beaumont Journal**. Inasmuch as these newspapers reach approximately 200,000 families in western Louisiana and throughout east Texas, we anticipated a fruitful work from the very beginning. Our articles are of a doctrinal nature, written pointedly and well-placed in the same location each week. From the inception of these writings, we received occasional mailed response from readers.

In February, we hit upon the idea of interspersing the **Theophilus** strips, executed by brother Bob West of Orlando, Florida, among our regular articles. We felt that, by the addition of **Theophilus** on the subjects with which we were dealing, we could create greater public interest in our work. I called brother West, and he readily granted his permission — requesting only that we send him tear-sheets from the paper.

Following publication of the first strip, on March 9, our correspondence picked up noticeably. It is obvious to us that these strips are augmenting our effort and that we are gaining readers from week to week.

Rather than having the engravings made individually, we had sixteen dealing with first principles made on a composite engraving. It is our intention to have additional engravings made as we continue our articles. We have suggested to brother West that others may be interested in a similar program and that we can supply mats of this engraving for \$3.87 apiece. Perhaps I should explain that the supplying of these mats would be done by me on an individual basis. The price stated is the amount that the **Enterprise** and **Journal** office charges per mat.

I would like to personally encourage others to use **Theophilus** in this way. Courtesy would dictate that, in all such cases, brother West be consulted; then, I will be pleased to supply the mats. Let me hear from you if you are interested.

Bill McCuiston 5475  
Cole Road Beaumont,  
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(Theophilus is a regular column originating now in *Searching The Scriptures* by brother West. We also encourage this use in teaching the word of God — Editor.)

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EDITORIAL

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WORLDLY TENDENCIES OF THE DAY

A good lady recently wrote of her concern for the immoral tendencies among Christians today. She asked that we write something that might be of help to encourage parents to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. She was especially concerned with the problem as it relates to her own children who hear even in Bible classes the loose and liberal ideas of some teachers regarding some moral problems.

It is easy to drift along with the tide of human behavior and slowly become like the world without realizing it. There are some things, however, that are so obviously evil and are so plainly spoken against in the word of God that I am amazed that one could think he could practice such things and go to heaven. I am even more amazed that some conservative brethren would advocate and practice some of these things.

"Worldliness is a term usually used to denote im-

moral conduct or thinking. **Webster's New World Dictionary**, College Edition, defines **morality** as: "1. relating to, dealing with, or capable of making the distinction between, right and wrong in conduct. 2. relating to, serving to teach, or in accordance with, the principles of right and wrong. 3. good or right in conduct or character; often, specifically, virtuous in sexual conduct: opposed to **immoral**."

**Immorality** is the very opposite of the above definition. The proper conduct of right and wrong must be determined, not by society or custom of a certain age, but by the word of the living God. The small degree to which lying, stealing, disobedience to proper law, and sinful sexual practices may be accepted does not in the least make these things acceptable to God. A little lie is as wrong in God's sight as a big one, if you can distinguish between a "little" and "big" lie. Stealing a penny is as wrong before God as stealing a million dollars. Proper conduct, real morality, must be determined by what the gospel of Christ teaches.

### THE WORLD VS. THE KINGDOM

What makes one immoral? What does worldliness mean? A man is actually what he **thinks**. "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7). Jesus said, "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the **heart** proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnesses, blasphemies: these are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man" (Matt. 15:17-20). "Keep thy **heart** with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. 4:23).

What we are is the result of what we see, hear, feel and do. Each person endowed with the mental ability to be responsible for his own conduct must decide between good and evil in all his deeds and speech. His decision must necessarily come from whatever force governs his thinking. If he is led by the lusts of the flesh, his conduct will be worldly; if he is led by the Spirit of God, his conduct will be in harmony with the will of Christ. This is the difference between a **moral** and **immoral** person. We understand that one may be a moral person in some respects and not be a Christian. In respect to his moral conduct he is doing what the Spirit directs whether he knows it or not. In short, when one's thinking and conduct is in harmony with the will of God, he is right; he is moral. Otherwise he is immoral.

Worldliness begins with the love of the world. The Lord placed such a contrast between the world and his kingdom that it is impossible for one to be in both at once. The tragic mistake thousands are making today is in trying to serve the god of this world and the God of heaven at the same time. They apparently think they can be a friend of the world and the friend of God at the same time, at least their actions indicate this. Jesus made it clear that no man is in the middle of the road when it comes to serving him or Satan. "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad" (Matt. 12:30).

The New Testament draws a sharp contrast between the world (reign of Satan) and the kingdom

of Christ. In fact, so much is said that it is impossible for any responsible person who reads the word of God to think that there is a "gray area" somewhere between the two that is neither right nor wrong, moral nor immoral. If one lives by the word of God he will find that the world will hate him for he is not of the world. This, of course, does not mean that the people of the world will not respect him for what he is. They will. But he will not be accepted by the standard of the world. Jesus said, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you" (John 15:18,19).

As Jesus prayed for his disciples he said, "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are"... "I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:11; 14-16).

If we belong to Christ we can not be of the world because we have been delivered from the world. The Lord "who gave himself for our sins, that he might **deliver** us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father" (Gal. 1:4). We are partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light by God "who hath **delivered** us from the power of darkness, and hath **translated** us into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Col. 1:13). Again, "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the **corruption that is in the world through lust**" (II Pet. 1:3,4).

Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence:" (John 16:36). These verses abundantly show that those who have been delivered from the evil of this world can not live as the world because they are not of the world; they are partakers of the divine nature and belong to a kingdom that is not of this world.

(continued next month)

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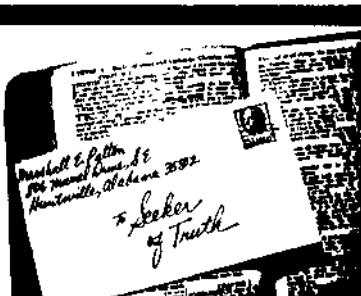
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# ANSWERS for our hope



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Marshall E. Patton, 806 Muriel Dr., S.E., Huntsville, Ala. 35802

**QUESTION** — Heb. 10:26 says, "For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." Does this imply that there remaineth a sacrifice for since only for those who sin ignorantly and through weakness? If so, Why does this sacrifice avail for one and not for the other? Again, if so, Does this rule out all hope for those who sin knowingly and deliberately? — M. E.

**ANSWER** — The above questions grow out of failure to understand that the verse under study refers to a specific willful sin. It does not refer to all sin knowingly and deliberately committed. It refers only to the willful sin under consideration in the context.

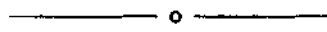
Most students of the Bible know that the Hebrew epistle was written to stay an apostasy already in evidence on the part of many Jewish Christians. This apostasy was caused by opposition, persecution, and strong pleas from the unbelieving Jews. Those yielding to these pressures were turning away from the gospel of Christ (God's plan of salvation) in the hope of another sacrifice which they, no doubt, thought would make efficacious another system or plan that would not be so bitterly opposed and persecuted. At least, they were in hope of another sacrifice. This is the issue the Hebrew writer meets throughout chapters nine and ten. After all, the Jew was accustomed to many sacrifices — another was offered every year (Heb. 10:3). The objective is to show that the one sacrifice of Christ is their only hope — there never will be another! Hence, their only hope was to accept this one and then live according to the plan (the gospel) made effective by it (Heb. 9:24-28; 10:10-13). This plan included the matter of assembling with the saints (Heb. 10:25). The willful sinner of verse twenty six is the one with knowledge of this sacrifice, its efficacy, but who deliberately turns away from it in hope of another. He needed to learn that there is no other — never will be. The only end in view for him is "a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries" (Heb. 10:27).

Now what about the one who was ignorant of this one efficacious sacrifice? He needed to learn of Christ, His sacrifice, and its atoning power. For him there remaineth another sacrifice (one other than the animal sacrifices under the law) — even the sacrifice of Christ. This, however, is not so for the one with "knowledge." He already knows about Christ and His sacrifice. When he turns away from it, there

remaineth no other — he has nothing to look forward to but the judgment of verse twenty-seven. His only hope is not in turning to another, but in turning back to the one of which he has knowledge and from which he left.

In the light of the above, we must conclude that this verse does not imply hope "only for those who sin ignorantly and through weakness." The "knowledge" of the text does not refer to one's knowing that he is sinning, but to his knowing of the sacrifice of Christ and its efficacy.

Again, this does not rule out all hope "for those who sin knowingly and deliberately." There are different kinds of willful sins. The one identified above, namely, one who has knowledge of the sacrifice of Christ, but who turns away from it in hope of another. Then, there are those who have knowledge of this sacrifice and who know that their only hope depends upon it, yet, they deliberately sin in hope of being forgiven at some future date. Right now they are procrastinating. However, for them there is hope, if, while they have opportunity, they come back to this one sacrifice by meeting God's terms of pardon for such (I John 1:9; James 5:16; Acts 8:22). There are also some who have persisted in sin — willfully and deliberately — until they have become so hardened to all the influences of God's grace they cannot be brought to repentance (Heb. 6:4-6). Many of the Hebrew Christians were headed in this direction. Hence, the efforts involved in this epistle to turn them from this ultimate end before it was too late.



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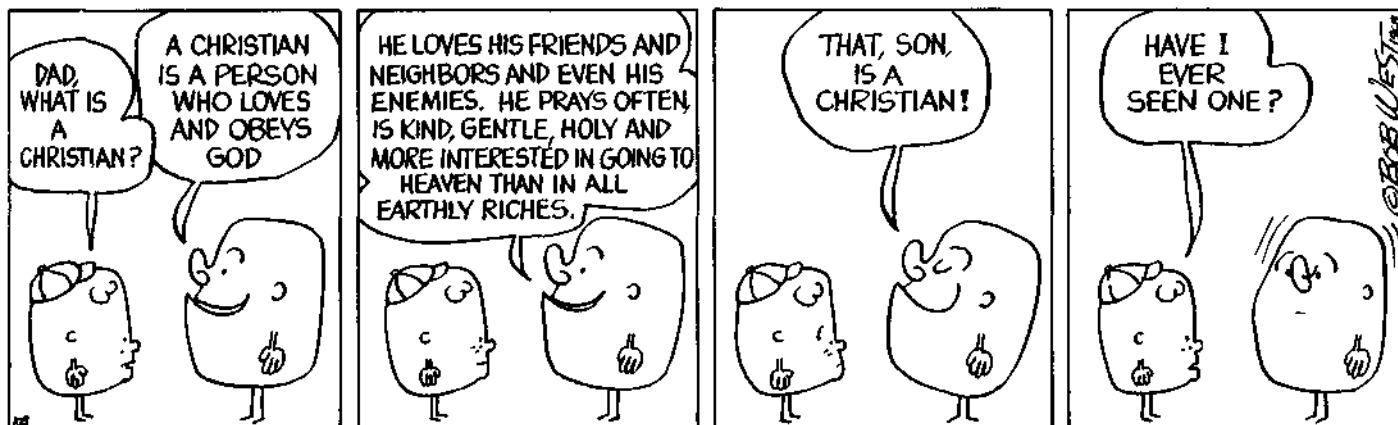
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## THEOPHILUS



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## I. DEFINITION OF TERMS

**THEISTIC EVOLUTION.** This is one of the most prominent and popular kinds of evolution accepted today. The majority of denominational preachers and seminary students have embraced it. But it is much more dangerous than other forms because GOD is thus associated with the evolutionary dogma or process which tends to make it more palatable and acceptable.

From the time the dogma of Evolution, with common ancestry and descent of man and beasts, began to be so popular, beginning with Darwin, Lamark and others about the middle of the last century, thousands decided that they must seek an accommodation between evolution (which they decided had been established, was a fact, and "pure science") and their belief in God and His Word, the Bible. Of course they soon decided they would have to "adjust" and "give up" formerly held positions on the Bible by "spiritualizing" it, making certain passages, which appeared to clash with their newly embraced evolutionary doctrine, figurative . . . parables or allegories. But they determined to hold on to their belief in God as a supreme being and First Cause, and so in order to enable the two to "live together" they called their new position of compromise "Theistic" (from "Theos" meaning God) evolution.

Being convinced that evolution, from the lower to higher, from the simple to complex, and from protozoa and amoeba to man was a scientific FACT they trembled in awe of, and bowed down before, the god of science so much so there was no desire to risk a battle or even call in question its findings. They well

remembered how the churchmen many years before were embarrassed when they challenged Galileo and his acceptance of the Copernicus theory of the movement of the planets, even to the point of excommunicating him. The belief of Galileo was established as a scientific fact. So these theologians of the past, as well as many whom I have seen on TV, heard on the radio and whose writings I have read, while never doubting the existence of God, believe just as strongly that evolution with descent has been established and **must be** accepted as a SCIENTIFIC FACT. As has been true for 100 years, to reconcile both positions, which they believed were true, the only way they felt they could both exist together was for them to accept "Theistic" evolution. They therefore say, God was behind it and responsible for it, God started it off, put the life in that first one-cell form (or a few simple forms) and Nature, THROUGH THE VERY SAME EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS OTHERS ACCEPT, brought all other forms, INCLUDING MAN, into being. They affirm God caused the higher and complex forms, INCLUDING MAN, TO EVOLVE from lower and simpler forms.

As evidence that since the middle of the last century men have espoused "Theistic" evolution, in order to hold on to belief in God's existence and the reality of evolution from amoeba to man, I cite statements from a book written over 90 years ago by A. Wilford Hall which has the title THE PROBLEM OF HUMAN LIFE HERE AND HEREAFTER. (Many preaching brethren have the book I am sure.) This book was written when Darwinism was so popular and making great inroad into the faith of Bible believers. His book ORIGIN OF SPECIES, which Haeckel called "anti-Genesis," was less than 20 years old when Wilford wrote this book. Chapter I of this fine work has to do with a study of THEISTIC EVOLUTION and in the book generally Wilford exposed Darwin, Huxley, Tyndal, Haeckel and others but in this chapter he deals with the many "Theistic" giants of his time. He quoted freely from their writings as they tried to defend their Theistic position and he thoroughly refuted and exposed them. He gives attention to University Presidents (such as Princeton), various professors and theologians — men like McCosh, Joseph Cook, Asa Gray and others.

Wilford said in his day that there was an increase every year, in great magnitude, of gospel ministers surrendering to Darwinism and that "thousands of the best educated clergymen in Europe and America are outspoken advocates of evolution not strictly as Darwin advocates it, but evolution never-the-less, with the proviso that GOD used it in his method of creating the species" (page 16). These "Theists" took the position that "if Darwin's theory should finally be accepted it would simply be shown by science to be God's method of carrying on creation through the action of laws over which and in the operation of which, through each transitional variation from a polyp up to the human form He exercised efficient control and supervision" (page 17). This is a correct statement (in 1877 and 1968) of "THEISTIC" evolution as held by some professors and many theologians. The latter, seeing no way of answering the facts (?) of Darwin, Huxley, Osborne, Simpson, etc., have tried in this manner to save a fraction of religion and belief in God by almost getting down on their knees to a false philosophy, parading around in the guise of modern science.

Although "Theistic" evolutionists take different positions as to what part God played in the entire process and how much He was involved, we have properly and honestly portrayed what is involved in "Theistic" evolution. As we read, page 202, in BAKER'S DICTIONARY OF THEOLOGY, the writer deals with the modern usage of "Evolution" and true novelty arising. In answering the question, "When and how does it arise?" the writer gives five different ways advanced and he lists one as "not as a matter of force residing within matter but as a result of frequent or continuous intervention by God (Theistic evolution) or some other power." Rushdoony says in CRS Quarterly, July 1965, "This compromising position (i.e., the philosophical position of "Theistic" or "Creative" evolution or "progressive creationism" — P.F.) represents an attempt by neo-evangelical Christians to retain the respectability of science and of Christianity as well — of course the "creative" evolutionist denies that he is surrendering God; he is trying to retain all the values of two systems of thought. But, in attempting to serve two masters, he is clearly being disloyal to one, since both have mutually exclusive claims. Where does creativity rest, within God or within Nature?" (page 15).

Robert H. West in ANOTHER LOOK AT EVOLUTION, says the same thing relative to the definition and usage of "Theistic" evolution that Wilford said 90 years ago. "There is an ever increasing number of religious leaders and teachers who accept evolution AFTER MAKING A FEW MINOR ALTERATIONS IN THE THEORY. Darwin's original and popular concept was that "resident forces" (i.e., powers inherent and resident in Nature or Matter — P.F.) so changed matter over a vast period of time as to produce a simple form of life. These same RESIDENT forces continued to react to the changes and demands of their environment and thus produced more complex forms of life from amoeba to man. Of course virtually no professed believers in the Bible could accept the theory in this grossly atheistic and materialistic form, so some of them added the miss-

ing ingredient to make it more palatable for those who were anxious to conform to the popular trend, THAT INGREDIENT WAS GOD" (page 38).

One of the prominent "Theistic" evolutionists of some years past was the geologist W. B. Scott. He maintained that belief in evolution by no means excluded belief in a Creator or creative plan but it offered the most satisfactory solution of the problem; that evolution has proceeded along a course laid out by the Creator, a course running from primeval potist to modern man. The plan was made, Scott says, and God left its working out to the forces of nature of which he retained general control. See GOD AND THE COSMOS, page 230.

(To Be Continued)

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INTRODUCING THOMAS G. O'NEAL

Thomas G. O'Neal was born May 2, 1938 in Washington, D. C. His parents are Mr. and Mrs. J. E. O'Neal of Lawrenceburg, Tennessee. He attended schools in Tennessee and Alabama. He also attended Freed-Hardeman College, Henderson, Tennessee and Livingston State, Livingston, Alabama.

Tom was baptized October 12, 1952 by Rufus R. Clifford, Sr. and began preaching the gospel of Christ in June, 1954. He preached regularly for churches in Alabama, Florida and Tennessee and has held many meetings in different parts of the country. He has had a number of debates with different denominational preachers and false brethren.

Tom married Miss Sue Bates of Jasper, Alabama, in 1961. They have one daughter, Kimberly Diana, born March 9, 1966.

Tom is a good student of the Bible and an ardent defender of the faith. He is unashamed and unafraid to meet any opponent of truth at any time. He has been a great help with the paper almost from its beginning. He has worked to get subscriptions and has done "leg work" that is necessary in a publication of this kind. Tom has been an encouragement to Jim Miller and to me in this endeavor. He has written a number of articles on various subjects for this paper. At the beginning of this year I asked him to write on "Signs of The Times" which deals with errors and practices now being accepted by some churches of Christ. He now lives in Murfreesboro, Tennessee and preaches for the Westvue church in that city.

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## PRESCRIPTIONS

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### SELF-CONTROL

Self-control is a virtue which is oft extolled in the Scriptures (Proverb 16:32). He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city (I Cor. 9:25-27). And every man that striveth in the games exerciseth self-control in all things. Now they do it to receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, as not uncertainly; so fight I, as not beating the air: but I buffet my body, and bring it into bondage: lest by any means, after that I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Finally in Acts 24:25 — And as he reasoned of righteousness, and self-control, and the judgment to come, Felix was terrified. I think that what Paul is telling us here is that the essence of Christianity is our ability to bring our lives (self-control) into harmony with God's way (righteousness) and that there will be a day of reckoning.

There are a multitude of things that affect our health that are matters of self-control. We shall discuss many of them later at some length, but to just mention a few, there is the amount and kinds of food we eat, the bodily exercise we do or do not get, our manner of life which will determine the amount of stress we endure, the use of alcohol and tobacco and a host of others.

Self-control is often thought of in the context of our ability not to do something. While this is true it is only a part of the picture and we must not lose sight of the necessity to exercise judgment in the area of how much to do and when to do it even after we have decided the activity is alright. This part of the picture is often neglected. It is not a question of whether to eat or not because to refrain from eating is to starve. The question is what do we eat, when do we eat and how much do we eat? What shall be our attitude toward eating? Shall we regard it solely as a necessity of life to be done without pleasure because there is a possibility of eating either the wrong thing or the wrong amounts? While the answers to these questions are obvious, and they were chosen for that reason, there are many other areas of great concern which are not so obvious. I believe there are areas where we have been so taken with the possibility of sinful activity that we have completely lost sight of the benefit and pleasure of legitimate activity. I intend to discuss sexual matters in the coming months as I think they particularly fall into this category. These are matters of great concern to our young people and I am afraid that we in the



past have put all of our stress on the sinfulness of illicit sexual relationships and in doing so have almost presented sex as a part of married life which is to be endured, but never enjoyed. In denying its pleasures we have left especially our young people to the wiles of the devil in the correction of our erroneous teaching. More of this later.

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"I just received my January issue of Searching The Scriptures today and after reading it felt I should drop you a note and let you know your efforts in publishing it are deeply appreciated. Your prospectus for 1968 is very encouraging. I am sure I can not adequately know the physical nor mental effort that it requires but I know that in addition to that of the work at Forest Hills church it is more than most are willing to endure. May God bless and help you to continue." — Owen H. Thomas, Akron, Ohio.

"I continue enjoying the paper, Searching The Scriptures. I appreciate your open letter to Charles Holt and think you hit the nail squarely on the head several times." — David W. Claypool, Nashville, Tenn.

"Enclosed is check for \$3.00 for my subscription to Searching The Scriptures for 1968, the best paper out." — C. E. Rosenbalm, Birmingham, Ala.

"I don't want to miss a single copy, I enjoy it so very much." — Rose E. Jonas, Palmetto, Fla.

"I am renewing my subscription for another 2 years. I am 91 years old and enjoy the paper very much; I wish it were possible for you to make it a weekly issue instead of monthly." — D. B. Whittle, Palmetto, Fla.

"I enjoy this magazine very much, the good lessons taught are very valuable." — Mrs. H. C. Moss, Horse Cave, Ky.

"I am glad to see the line-up of men and subjects for the 'new' Searching The Scriptures. Much success to all of you in this effort to teach the truth." — Earl E. Robertson, Moundsville, Va.

"May God bless you in His work, and give you health and the necessary strength to carry on. You're doing a terrific job with Searching The Scriptures. It is better than ever and is making a sizable contribution toward maintaining true Christianity. I only wish we could receive it every week." — Leslie E. Sloan, Memphis, Tenn.

"I appreciate and enjoy the paper." — Clara B. Durrance, Trenton, Fla.

"Please renew my subscription to your wonderful paper — 'Searching The Scriptures' — so fittingly named; something we should all be doing these dark and strange days. The church is fast becoming just another denomination." — Mrs. William Dossett, Oakland City, Ind.

"For some time I have been receiving Searching The Scriptures. Although I may not always agree with the total conclusions, I do appreciate your fairness in dealing with the 'issues.' Some of the letters you quote, although they may believe some things as I do, leave the appearance that their minds are

closed to further investigation, etc. I pray that I am not prejudiced and will never refuse to give a fair hearing. I think some of our brethren need to read such works as 'Otey-Briney Debate' and John T. Lewis' works on the missionary societies.

"I do not go along with all the 'branding' that has been done, neither the 'liberalism' and 'modernism' that seems to have been manifest the past few years. I pray that we will give a slow careful study to God's word on all subjects and not be directed by traditions, of today or yesterday.

"I do want to thank the one responsible for my receiving the paper. But at the same time, I do not want to give the impression that I agree 100% with any paper or man. After seventeen years in the Austin and San Marcos area, I am moving to Corsicana. I would appreciate receiving the paper there and try to read it with profit." — J. Leathel Roberts, Corsicana, Texas. (Let me commend this attitude. No man ought to subscribe 100% to the works of any man living or dead. God's word alone is the only sufficient guide. — Editor.)

"I have enjoyed the paper very much — the only draw back, it should be a weekly paper." — Mrs. Modena Flippin, Dike, Texas.

"Surely enjoy the paper. It is great." — Arnold Hardin, Dallas, Texas.

"I enjoy it very much and read every word of it. Keep up the good works." — Horace Snell, Bowling Green, Ky.

"I'm stationed on this remote island, 165 miles off Okinawa, Mijabo Jima, and I would like to thank you for the fine work and effort put into Searching The Scriptures. I am the only Christian here, but I hold services for the site on Lord's day, and we have 8-12 in attendance. I've used some of the material for sermon outlines from Searching The Scriptures and Gospel Guardian, which have been very helpful to me. Remember us in the effort here and keep up the good work." — Tommy W. Thomas.

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## ARROWS OF TRUTH for denominational error

Ward Hogland, Post Office Box 166, Greenville, Texas 75402

### "AT THE POINT OF FAITH"

Several years ago Baptist preachers did not resent the idea of "faith only." However, they got themselves into so much difficulty by that theory, they decided it would be better to say one is saved at "the point of faith." Actually, the consequence of their doctrine is the same. They will take scores of passages which mention faith and predicate their arguments on such scriptures. However, they resent one saying they espouse the doctrine of "faith only." They now say, one is saved at the point of faith.

Baptist preachers like to ask questions about the candidate for baptism. They will usually ask a series of questions something like this: Is your candidate for baptism a child of God or a child of the devil? Is your candidate for baptism condemned or not condemned? Does your candidate for baptism have a pure heart or an impure heart? Is your candidate for baptism led of God or of the devil? If your candidate for baptism at peace with God? Does your candidate for baptism have a clean or a filthy soul? All of these questions are in reality the same. They simply mean, is he saved before he is baptized? The answer, of course, is "no," according to the scriptures. However, they will not let the matter rest at this. If one says his candidate has a filthy soul or is condemned before baptism, they immediately come back and SCREAM "water salvation." They accuse one of teaching salvation by water ONLY. Some of them will go far enough to say water is our god. Others will affirm that our salvation is as close as the nearest water hole!

Now, let us turn the tables for just a moment. Baptist preachers teach that one must HEAR, HEED, REPENT and BELIEVE in order to be saved. However, remember they teach that one is saved at the point of faith. Let us ask a few questions about their candidate. Please remember their candidate has already HEARD, HEADED AND REPENTED. First, is your candidate for "this so called point of faith," a child of God or a child of the devil? Does he have a filthy soul or a clean soul? Does he have a pure heart or an impure heart? Is he condemned or not condemned? Is he led of God or of the devil? Does your candidate have peace with God? This will FLUSH a Baptist preacher out in the open on the question business. If he says his candidate has a clean soul and is at peace with God, he has him saved before FAITH, and thus surrenders his position. If, on the other hand, he says he has a filthy soul, he is teaching the doctrine of "faith only," according to

his only logic! Remember, he accuses us of "water only" if we say the candidate is condemned before baptism. But low and behold he is in the same boat. Why, in the name of common sense, isn't he guilty of "faith only" if we are guilty of "water only" according to his own logic? Of course, what Baptist preachers say on this matter is not so, but one has to feed them their own milk to open their eyes.

Then again, they are faced with all those scriptures which say repentance saves. The Bible says that repentance is unto life (Acts 11:18). The Bible also says, "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3). If the Baptist preacher applies the same principle to these passages as he does to the ones on "faith" he is in deep trouble. When giving scriptures on faith, he implies they say the sinner is saved "at the point of faith." If that be true why can't one affirm the passages on "repentance" say "at the point of repentance?" Thus again, they surrender their position. If these scriptures will work that way for a Baptist preacher on "faith," I want to know why they will not work on "repentance." The truth of the matter is that none of these scriptures say "at the point of faith." That is something they have added to uphold their false doctrine.

They usually come back and say that if a man truly repents, this will always culminate in faith. Excellent! But remember, we are talking about the man who has repented, and his repentance has not yet CULMINATED. What about this man? I also believe that real FAITH will always CULMINATE in BAPTISM! But, alas, the Baptist preacher wants to know about the man before he is baptized. Well, in all fairness, I want to know about the man who has repented and has NOT yet believed. This pressure will get any Baptist preacher in great difficulty. One famous Baptist preacher, tried to wiggle out by saying that repentance and faith came real close together. He illustrated by talking about a bullet going through two pieces of paper. He said, "When you fire the gun you can't hardly tell which piece of paper it goes through first." Of course, he meant that one piece of paper was repentance and the other was faith. So I say, let us take the "paper of repentance" and put on one side of the man, then take the "paper of faith" and put on the other side of the man. Now let us fire the gun, let the bullet pass through the "paper of repentance," hit the man and kill him, then pass through the "paper of Faith!" Now would the man be saved by REPENTANCE before he believed? This is the issue. Gentle friend, don't expect an answer because you won't get it. One man said, "Yes, but repentance and faith are so CLOSE together." Yes, and so are Faith and baptism. I cannot find a case of delayed baptism in the Bible. I could have a man standing on the edge of the creek, and as soon as he confessed his FAITH in the Lord, I could shove him in. I will venture to say that I could have him baptized almost as fast as the Baptist preacher's bullet!

Friends, we need to give up sophistry and come back to the Bible in all things. The Bible says, one must hear, believe, repent, confess and be baptized to be saved (Acts 2:38; Rom. 10:17; Luke 13:3; Matt. 10:32; I Pet. 3:21).

## THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

### NEW CONGREGATION

Another faithful and loyal congregation had its beginning in Saratoga, California on March 13, 1968. The first Lord's Day meeting was attended by 72 in the morning and 77 in the evening. Much interest has been generated in the starting of this new work.

The meeting place for the new work is the Odd Fellows hall and the Firemans hall (the buildings are next to each other) in Saratoga. The street address is 14414 Oak Street, Saratoga, California.

The time of our meetings until school is out will be as follows: Sunday morning 8-9 a.m. Sunday evening 5-7 p.m. Wednesday 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. We have room for six classes and both buildings are equipped with nice places for group assembly.

Brother Warren R. Cheatham has been selected to work with the new congregation. Brother Cheatham has just completed three years work with the good church which meets at 1050 Remington Drive, Sunnyvale. Brother Cheatham's address will remain the same (933 Bernardo Ave., Sunnyvale, Calif., Ph. 736-5912) until school is out. There is harmony and fellowship between the two works and support has been offered by the Sunnyvale church if needed.

For further information concerning the Saratoga work you may contact brother Cle Riggins, 7528 De La Farge, San Jose. Phone 252-3498.

**Edward Fudge**, Abilene, Texas — **Jerry Phillips** of Baton Rouge, La. will preach in a gospel meeting April 8-14 for the Christians who meet at 610 E. Avenue B in Sweetwater, Texas. I am presently preaching for this congregation. The work is progressing and God is blessing us with additions and spiritual growth."

**Larry R. Devore**, New Carlisle, Ohio — We just concluded an excellent series of gospel meetings March 18-26. Brother **J. T. Smith** of Dayton, Ohio did an outstanding job of presenting the gospel of Christ clearly and forcefully. Four precious souls were immersed into Christ, and one was restored.

**Philip A. Morr**, Romulus, Mich. — The congregation at Romulus is self-supporting and our membership is 46 at the present time. During the past year we were blessed with 16 baptisms, and a visible increase in interest and love for the Lord's work.

**C. A. Cornelius**, P.O. Box 302, Pea Ridge, Arkansas 72751 — During March 10-17 we preached in a meeting with the church of Christ meeting at 705 Broadway, La Porte, Texas. This church was beset by division for nearly four years. Most of those pulling off from the church and going off in rebellion, have repented of that wrong and have come back,

and the church is laboring together in peace and harmony. There are a few that are still in rebellion, and we hope and pray that they, too, may be led to see their terrible sin, repent of it before death calls them away, and lend their efforts to erase the stigma that was brought upon the church when they went away in rebellion. The division was not over the "issues," but was rather a culmination of a lot of things other than the teaching of the truth, for both groups taught the truth over the "issues." I predict that the church meeting at 704 Broadway in La Porte will make their influence felt for truth and righteousness in years to come. In our joint efforts, there were four restorations, two identified, and three baptisms. We recently purchased a home here, having reached that age when one is spoken of as being "retired." However, we shall continue to do whatever we can in teaching people to worship and work in the way God has revealed to his created creatures. There is much work to be done in this part of the country, and we shall "hold" meetings and do "supply preaching," whenever and wherever needed and requested. Let us preach the truth with courage, fervor and zeal, for the night fast approaches.

### O'NEAL-HILL DEBATE

**Herschel Patton**

On the nights of Dec. 18-19, 21-22 Thomas G. O'Neal, preacher for the Westvue church in Murfreesboro, Tenn., engaged Albert Hill, preacher for the Darby Drive church in Florence, Ala., in a debate on current issues.

The discussion was held at the Rock Creek church in Colbert Co., Alabama. The debate was the outgrowth of both brethren O'Neal and Hill being invited for a meeting at this place for the week of Dec. 4th by two different groups in the congregation. Seeing that both preachers would be on the grounds, a debate was suggested, and after talking with brother Hill on Sunday, Dec. 3rd, the brethren felt that a discussion would begin on the following Monday night. However, when brother Hill arrived on Monday night, he refused to debate. During the week brother O'Neal preached at 7 p.m. — on the issues — and brother Hill at 7:30 p.m. — on various subjects other than the issues. During the week, brother O'Neal chided brother Hill for refusing to debate, having previously sent to him the same propositions that they had signed and debated before. On Friday night, brother Hill came with new propositions and challenged for a debate on them during the week of Dec. 17th. He demanded that brother O'Neal affirm the proposition of churches being obligated to "saints only," but refused to sign the opposite proposition of churches being obligated to "all men without exception." Finally, it was agreed that they would debate "on the issues" without propositions.

Brother Hill wanted to affirm on Monday and Thursday nights, so naturally he introduced what he wanted to discuss, which was, primarily, limited benevolence.

On the first night of the debate, brother Hill had printed a statement, taken from the writings of brother O'Neal, in large bold letters and had this statement stretched all across the front of the church building — "I BELIEVE THAT NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES RELIEVED ONLY HER OWN MEMBERS." Throughout the debate brother Hill ridiculed this belief with emotional pleas about allowing poor little orphans to starve, and being so contrary to the teaching of Christ concerning "our neighbor" and "saluting brethren only." Of course, he used Jas. 1:27 and Gal. 6:10 in an effort to show that the church was obligated to non-saints.

Brother O'Neal pointed out that there was no question about someone starving to death or being unrelieved in the position he advocated, and even brother Hill admitted in his first speech that he believed that neither brother O'Neal nor I (I moderated for brother O'Neal) would let a little orphan starve. It was shown that with individual Christians doing what the Lord requires of them and the church, out of its treasury, doing what it is charged with doing, needs and opportunities for relief would be met. James 1:27 and Gal. 6:10 were shown to be instruction for individual Christian action and not church action. Brother O'Neal repeatedly called upon brother Hill to produce a passage that involved both church action and the non-saint. Finally, brother Hill wrote II Cor. 9:13 on the board.

The following night, brother O'Neal put a statement right above the one brother Hill had stretched across the front of the building saying — "I BELIEVE THAT NEW TESTAMENT CHURCHES ONLY SANG IN THEIR ASSEMBLIES." He showed that the sum total of New Testament teaching was "singing" and that if one scripture could be produced where they "played," then the instrument would have to be accepted — that brother Hill refused the instrument and accepted "only" singing because this constituted the sum total of New Testament teaching. O'Neal then showed that the sum total of New Testament teaching on churches relieving others was to "believers" — to "saints," and that unless brother Hill could find a passage where a church, or churches, relieved unbelievers, or the world, he would have to agree with the statement of churches only relieving her own members, or give up his position of churches "only" singing and endorse instrumental music.

Brother Hill's need for a passage that connected church relief and the non-saint became very apparent. So, II Cor. 9:13, which he wrote on the board, became his principal proof text. Brother O'Neal forcibly showed that while this text did have the church in it, the "all men" had to be considered in harmony with the context, which showed that saints at places other than Jerusalem were meant. Numerous scholars are cited who substantiated this. O'Neal pointed out that the "all men" could not be another class in Jerusalem other than the "poor saints," as Hill contended, because of the context, the fact the contribution was solicited for the "poor saints," and because verse 13 had reference to THE

PRAISE of those relieved in Jerusalem for the Corinthians' liberality to them, and "all" — saints elsewhere. Hill did not cite one scholar who agreed with his position, ignored the context of the passage, and the fact that his position had Paul soliciting funds under false pretenses, and insisted that the passage showed the church relieving "all men" — non-saints — because he HAD TO HAVE a passage or, to be consistent, give up his position of singing "only."

Hill argued from Acts 4:34-35 that since all the Jerusalem saints impoverished themselves, laying the money received from the sale of their goods at the apostle's feet, they could not relieve a non-saint as individuals, so to practice pure and undefiled religion, aid would have to come out of the treasury. After showing that this was not a communistic arrangement, brother O'Neal pointed out that according to Hill's argument, the saints couldn't even "lay by in store on the first day of the week." Brother Hill replied by saying they went to the apostles and they gave each one some money out of the treasury so they would have something to put back into it.

Brother O'Neal stressed the importance of learning who could be helped and what could be done out of the treasury of the church, in order to learn the truth about "limited benevolence." Brother Hill admitted there are limitations, and brother O'Neal pressed him with the questions of how much? How? and Why? He asked, "are there limitations where colleges, hospitals, ball teams, etc. are concerned?"

Brother Hill vigorously affirmed his opposition to colleges being supported out of the treasury of churches, and his disagreement with N. B. Harde-man and Batsell Barrett Baxter that the orphan homes and colleges stand or fall together, but he refused to sign his name to a statement that he believed it to be a sin for churches to contribute to colleges. He said, "I have stated it and it is on the tapes and I see no need to sign a statement." Brother O'Neal signed such a statement and gave brother Hill a copy, but Hill refused to fix his name to such a statement.

The debate was an orderly conducted one and well attended. Allen Highers of Memphis, Tenn. moderated for brother Hill the first two nights and James Coil the last two nights.

P. O. Box 282  
Lawrenceburg, Tenn. 38464

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**Jamie Sloan**, Perry, Florida — After 3 years with the good church in Perry, Florida, I am moving to work with a small group in Charleston, S. C. which began about 2 years ago. It is the only church in that city that stands opposed to the modern trends of today. Anyone knowing of prospects in that area may contact me at 2111 Barbour St., Charleston, S. C. 29407. Any preacher interested in moving to Perry can contact **Bruce Nowlin**, 209 Pineland, Perry, Florida 32347.

**Robert A. Bolton**, Ontario, Calif. — **Jady W. Cope-land**, of Long Beach, California, will do the preaching in a gospel meeting here in Ontario, California May 13 through 19, at 7:30 p.m. each evening. Three have recently been baptized in Ontario.

## DIFFICULT AND PERVERTED PASSAGES



Roy E. Cogdill, 35 West Par Avenue, Orlando, Florida 32804

**ROMANS 5:13 — "For until the law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law."**

It has been suggested that something be written on the meaning of this passage. It is admittedly a difficult passage and we may be unable to say anything that will be very helpful to anyone but we will try.

In the first eleven verses of the fifth chapter of the Roman letter Paul had pointed out the provision that had been made for man's justification through the faith of the Gospel by divine grace and the availability of these provisions upon the condition of man's faith. He had urged exultant joy because of these provisions for man's reconciliation to God through the sacrificial death of Jesus and the hope of future and final salvation by the fact of His now living, having been raised from the dead.

In view of what had gone before in these eleven verses, Paul begins verse 12 with "Therefore," or "For this reason." Then begins a comparison of the baneful effects of Adam's transgression with the glorious effects of what Christ has done for our redemption because of God's love for us. The first point in the comparison is introduced in verse 12 and then he discusses some problems about sin and death and resumes his comparison in verse fifteen.

"**Through one man sin entered into the world,**" makes it plain that Adam introduced sin into the world. Sin is here personified and pictures as coming into the world from the outside. This emphasized the reality of sin and points out the fallacy that sin is merely "an error of mortal mind" (a notion) or as others regard it, "merely an animal inheritance devoid of ethical quality."

"**And death through sin**" suggests that through sin, death, both physical and spiritual, made its entrance and was imposed as a sentence upon humanity. Adam and Eve were warned of the consequence of breaking God's law and yet they did it (Gen. 2:17). Physical death — "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return" came as a consequence of Adam's transgression (Gen. 3:19). Since that time physical death has been an appointment that all must meet unless they live unto the coming of the Lord (Heb. 9:27; I Cor. 15:51). However, physical death is not the only consequence of Adam's transgression. Sin was introduced thereby and all men became subject to it and therefore guilty of it through engaging in it.

"**And so death passed upon all men**" affirms that the result of every man, including the whole human

family, becoming guilty of sin through his own sinning was the passing of the sentence of spiritual death unto all men. That "death" in verse 12 is spiritual death should be obvious for several reasons. 1) Paul is discussing the moral and spiritual condition of mankind and not just the physical state; 2) The clear reason that the sentence of "death" had been imposed upon all men was because "all sinned" — "committed sin"; 3) Babies and idiots, irresponsible persons mentally, die but not as the consequence of sins they commit. Where there is no ability there can be no responsibility and where there is no responsibility there can be no guilt. Physical death is the consequence of Adam's sin but spiritual death is the consequence of a man's own sin. Sin alienates from God and in this alienation or separation, man is said to be "dead in sin" (Ephesians 2:4-6; Romans 6:11).

"**For that all sinned**" — in this statement Paul gives the reason for the sentence of spiritual death having passed unto all men — that is, all responsible men. Men were made subject to sin, introduced to it by Adam's transgression; but they become guilty of sin and come under the sentence of spiritual death when they themselves sin. And all men do sin and have sinned (Romans 3:23; I John 1:10).

"**For until the law sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed when there is no law.**" Paul generally used the definite article "the" when he referred to the law of Moses. In this instance the definite article is not in the original. What he says is "until law," meaning that since sin is a transgression of law where there is no law, there can be no transgression of the law and therefore there could be no guilt. If God had not given Adam a rule of conduct — a law — he could not have violated that rule and therefore could not have sinned as he did. The Cambridge Greek Testament says that the phrase means "just so far as there was law, there was sin." So the statement is that sin can exist to the same extent that law exists.

It is a principle of both divine and human justice that there cannot be a violation or transgression when there is no law. Therefore guilt cannot be imputed in the absence of law. This principle is true spiritually. If there is no law, there can be no transgression or violation and therefore there can be no guilt charged or sin imputed for sin is a "transgression of the law" (I John 3:4). Paul is reasoning that since Adam introduced sin and the guilt of sin had passed unto all men with its resulting penalty of death, there must have been some law that men could violate from Adam on down through the ages.

Contrary to the Jewish concept, sin did not begin with the law of Moses. Sin began with Adam. But all men had sinned from Adam to Moses. God's punishment had been poured out on men from Adam to Moses because of their sins. The antediluvian world was destroyed when the flood came because of sin. Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed because of their corruption. Many other Old Testament incidents evidence that there was guilt before God and men were punished for it. That guilt was the result of sin and sin is the result of transgressing law. Therefore there must have been some law back there. "For without law sin was dead" (Rom. 7:8).

"**But sin is not imputed when there is no law.**"

This is a general principle of justice that Paul is stating. It evidences as we have pointed out that since sin existed from Adam on down through man's generations, there must have been some kind of law from Adam's day. But what law existed before God gave the law through Moses? The law of Moses was not given to the Gentiles but this did not mean that they did not have any law. They committed sin and it was imputed to them and "God gave them up" (Romans 1:24, 26, 28). They evidently had some kind of law. There was sin during the patriarchy, before the call of Abraham and therefore before the distinction between Gentile and Jew. There must have been some kind of law back there.

We should remember that there are two kinds of law. One is moral law. This is determined by the very holiness of God, Himself. It was wrong for Cain to slay Abel for the reason that such an act was a violation of God's very holiness and righteousness and He could not countenance it. The nature of man also made it wrong. Immorality is the violation of those principles dictated by the holy will of a God who is perfectly righteous. It is also a violation of man's duty toward man because of his very nature. God has made all men equal with the same rights and privileges and the same duties to respect and extend the same consideration to one another. This is the whole system of moral law. It existed in these principles before it was declared in the law of Moses. All men who lived before the law of Moses had been guilty of violating this moral law.

In addition to this moral law, when God made known something to be His will, it was sinful for man not to regard it and obey it because that is the duty that man owes to God. This was the sin of Adam and it is the sin others commit when they fail to reverence God's will and have enough faith to do it. The two great commandments of the law of God are — 1) "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and all thy soul, and with all thy mind"; 2) "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." This is the foundation of all man's duty and these are the principles upon which the whole law hangs (Matt. 22:35-40; Romans 13:8-10).

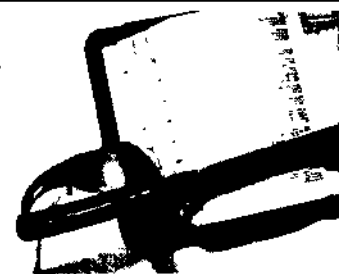
God had revealed himself to the Gentiles before the law of Moses. They had contact with the will of God in many ways and to the intent that they knew the will of God were responsible for doing it. They along with all others before the Jewish dispensation were responsible to God upon the basis of reason and conscience and held responsible for doing what they knew to be right (Romans 2:26-27).

Some people think that unless there is some specific prohibition in an express commandment—"thou shalt not" — a thing is not sinful. This is a very foolish notion indeed. If this were true, everything that is a violation of the holiness of God and is offensive to Him, and everything that is contrary to man's duty to man would have to be specifically prohibited or they would not be sinful. On the same reasoning, there would have to be specific authority for everything that is right and man's duty. The Bible would be so voluminous one could not read it through in a life time. The idea that there must be a specific prohibition in order for a thing to be wrong or a specific authorization or commandment for a thing to be

right are both extreme and erroneous misconceptions of law and divine authority.

Then there is the Calvinistic idea that while God imputed the guilt of Adam's transgression to all men even before they sinned, He will not impute any guilt at all to those who are saved by the blood of Christ and are His children and that for this reason, no matter what wrong they may do, they cannot come into condemnation. This makes God a party to man's guilt and denies the responsibility of man entirely. He is held guilty of sin which he does not commit to begin with and when once he is saved he is held guiltless in spite of what sins he may commit. This is a poor and very wrong concept of God's justice. Such doctrine teaches that God turns away His face from the sins of His children as an indulgent father and lets our sins go unnoticed because we are His children. This is an insult to God. The only sins that are not imputed (charged) against men are the sins which have been forgiven through the blood of His Son (Romans 4:6-8).

## Using the SWORD OF THE SPIRIT



Eugene Britnell, 8909 Mayflower Road, Little Rock, Ark 72205

### SHALL THE PRODIGALS RETURN?

A few months ago, twenty-six gospel preachers met in Arlington, Texas for a four-day study of the problems and attitudes which have divided the church.

The news of that meeting brought mixed reaction from brethren across the country. I shall not endeavor to sit in judgment on the meeting or its results. Some think that it was a mistake, and I feel that it has had an illusive influence on some brethren. Surely it is not wrong for Christians, whether six or twenty-six, to sit down and study together.

I am acquainted with the majority of the brethren who took part in the Arlington Meeting. I know all of the men who represented the conservative view (that which I believe to be the truth) and I have much love, respect, admiration and appreciation for each of them. I'm sure they did what they believed to be right.

I suppose that time alone will reveal whether the meeting was wise or otherwise. There is one danger which has already developed, and that is what I am writing about. The liberal (I do not use that word derisively, but for want of a better term) brethren have taken advantage of the meeting, and are seeking to leave the wrong impression. In many of their papers, they have indicated that the conservative brethren have admitted that they were wrong, and now desire to be restored "to the fellowship of the

church."

An example of this appeared in the BOLES HOME NEWS of April 25, 1968. The article was written by brother Gayle Oler, Superintendent of Boles Home in Quinlan, Texas. In order that you may get the complete thought of his article, I now quote what he said:

"Every person of good will longs and prays for the day when those who went out from us and divided the brotherhood over their opinions and fancies about church cooperation and the care of the fatherless will come back home. With the waning influence of some of the leading proponents of these divisive theories and with the searchlight of pure truth burning upon the issues, we think we see signs of this return and we are grateful and thankful for every indication that cheers our heart. We pray that the day may hasten when brethren will overcome the rifts and the wounds the church of our Lord has suffered because of these things and that unity and the subsequent power of such unity may be seen on every hand.

"But we think here is a time to say a word about the circumstances around the return of these brethren and their restitution to the fellowship and work of the church of the Lord. We would emphasize for the understanding of all that we are happy to see indications that these brethren are coming back and that they are now abandoning and opposing these theories they once espoused to the division of the brotherhood. 'Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.'

"But we must not let our longing and hopes for this unity overshadow Bible teaching as to what constitutes restoration and the conditions upon which fellowship may be obtained and extended. When the prodigal son, who has wasted his substance with riotous living, finally came to himself and returned home, the first thing he said when he got home was 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight.'

"When brethren are responsible for dividing the church of the Lord and would come back to the fellowship of that church, their first remarks should be, 'I have sinned.' They should try to make their correction as broad as their errors in an effort to correct and undo the damage they have done. They should not slip back into the brotherhood, into the fellowship of the church, without making an acknowledgement of wrong and trying to correct the evil they have done. True repentance and true correction requires this acknowledgement.

"Only in this manner can we know that they are trying to correct their mistakes and that they have repented of the wrongs that they have done to the body of Christ. Only in this manner can we have assurance that they are not creeping in unawares to spoil the church of the Lord, still further, and to create additional divisions through the confidence extended to them by hopeful brethren.

"Our brotherhood has long recognized that it is Bible teaching that confession of sins precedes the forgiveness of sins and the extension of fellowship. Brethren who have espoused divisive theories and have pressed them to the dividing of the churches will be among the first to recognize this fact.

"But this writer would like for all to know he would like to be among the first to give the hand of fellowship to everyone who has pressed these theories and opinions to the dividing of the church and who has come later to recognize the error of this way, and is courageous and manly enough to confess it. It will be a good day when once again such brethren can stand on the grounds of fellowship, good will, and cooperation as we stand arrayed against all the forces of evil, and determine to spread the gospel of Christ over the entire world."

There you have it! Brother Oler has stated the conditions for our restoration. Let it be clearly understood that he is going to resent and reject any effort — be it buying services, a box in the vestibule, or individual support — which would divorce his institution from the treasury of the church. He and others like him have exploited helpless children to the point of building up a multi-million dollar institution, and any basis of fellowship which would hinder its income and defense will bring forth unjust and unreasonable terms. They love their human arrangements more than they love peace among brethren. This has been demonstrated time and again. He may think it good and pleasant to "dwell together in unity" but he will not give up his institution that such may be accomplished.

From the beginning of his article, he charges that WE have divided the church by our "opinions and fancies" and "divisive theories." That charge has a familiar ring, doesn't it? THEY built and promoted the institutions and arrangements which divided the church, yet WE caused the division! It's the same old story. This always reminds me of what Foy E. Wallace wrote in the GOSPEL ADVOCATE of March 29, 1934. He said:

"Efforts to shift responsibility for division is the invariable rule of innovationists in the church. The innovators themselves never cause the division — it is always the opposition. It is an old story. The introducers of instrumental music never caused the division — it was the opposition to it! Thus would the sponsors of the speculations now disturbing the church escape their just condemnation."

By calling attention to whose practice has divided the church, we are not going to let them escape! Those who introduced the missionary society and instrument into the work and worship of the church caused the division, yet they denied it. Similarly, those who introduced benevolent societies, sponsoring churches, and other human arrangements in the church today caused the division, and they deny it! They want peace, let them remove those things which caused the division and we can have peace. We have not introduced anything into the work and worship of the church which has caused division, or even been questioned by them. Let's place the blame where it belongs!

Evidently brother Oler thinks that Boles Home is a divine institution and stands in the realm of faith. He indicates that those who have opposed such institutions have sinned against God and will have to meet the conditions applicable to apostates and prodigals in order to be restored "to the fellowship and work of the church of the Lord." Can you imagine a man needing to be restored for opposing something



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which God did not authorize, the apostles never heard of, the New Testament doesn't mention, and which did not exist a hundred years ago? This proves that they regard their institutions (which they sometimes seek to defend as expedients or methods) as matters of faith and are willing to make them a test of fellowship!

Just what have I taught that makes it necessary for me to confess to God and Gayle that "I have sinned"?

I believe and teach that the only arrangement for the collective action of God's people in spiritual matters is the church — the congregation. I believe that the congregation, with its bishops, deacons and saints (Phil. 1:1) is capable of supervising, doing, and supporting anything and everything which God has commanded the church to do. Therefore, I do not believe that the church can relinquish its oversight, work or funds to a human organization in evangelism, edification or benevolence. Isn't that simple? Do I need to be restored for teaching that? Oler thinks so, but I don't believe that God does!

On church cooperation, I believe in congregational autonomy. The Bible says that the work and oversight of elders is limited to the flock over which they have been appointed (Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:2). The New Testament does not authorize the elders of a church to assume a work beyond its ability and then ask other churches to work through it.

I believe that the church is a spiritual institution with a spiritual mission. Therefore, I do not believe that it can engage in such works as entertainment, recreation, business, social works or secular education.

In all things, I try hard to manifest the proper attitude toward God, the Bible, my brethren and my enemies. I teach and encourage others to do likewise.

Does brother Oler expect me to come to Quinlan and confess that I have sinned because of such teaching? If he does, I hope that he doesn't decide to fast until I get there. If he does he is going to lose a lot of weight.

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Harold Tabor, 2721 North Pecan St., Nacogdoches, Texas 75961

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the root KADASH." (Girdlestone, Synonyms of the O.T., p. 175). The original meaning of K-D-SH is difficult to determine by etymology or by an analogy of cognate dialects. Older scholars connected the word with the Assyrian word qadasu which denotes purity or cleanness (I.S.B.E., p. 1403). Modern scholars have generally abandoned the older idea and have connected the root idea with the Semetic languages that suggest the primary idea as "cutting off" or "separation" (Brown, Driver, & Briggs, **Hebrew Lexicon**, p. 871).

Although this original sense is nowhere demonstrated, it may be adopted because it lends itself to the various usages in which the word is employed in the Old Testament. It appears in the majority of Hebrew grammatical forms. "It might almost be said that it is the grammatical centre of the Old Testament just as the idea which it expresses is the theological centre" (Jacob, **Theology of the O.T.**, p. 87). Holiness is primarily a characteristic of deity. It is applied in the highest sense only to God (Isa. 6:3; Rev. 4:8). "Holy" does not denote an attribute of God but it is the idea of divinity itself. The terra "holy gods" does occur in Dan. 4:8-9; 5:11, but Jehovah, the "Holy One," stands in contrast to all false gods (Ex. 15:11). Hannah sang "There is none holy as Jehovah" (I Sam. 2:2).

Jehovah is described as having a "holy arm" (Isa. 52:10; Psa. 98:1), and as His word (Jer. 23:9), His oaths (Amos 4:2; Psa. 89:36), as well as His name (Lev. 20:3; 22:2,32) being holy. God is a Being who is separated, distinguished and thus transcends every other being and creation.

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