

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.

"DEVOTED TO THE SEARCH FOR DIVINE TRUTH"

VOLUME XIX

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NUMBER 1

THINK ON THESE THINGS

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WRITTEN REVELATION FROM GOD TO MAN

Abraham was called to head a nation of people (Gen. 12:1). His name was changed to Abraham from Abram (Gen. 17:5). This people which came of his posterity were called **Hebrews** or **Jews**. They were to receive the revelation of God which was given before Christ (Rom. 3:2).

Moses was the first to write by the command of God and gave His revelation to the children of Israel (Acts 7:38). Some say that God revealed Himself in writing before Moses, but the first reference to writing in the Bible is in Exodus 17:14: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua; for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." No historical facts reveal that God ever asked anyone to write before that time.

1. REASONS WHY NO WRITING BEFORE MOSES

Several reasons can be given to prove that no earlier inspired writings existed before God instructed Moses to write:

(1) **No Record of Them.** There is no record of any inspired writing before Moses. Moses was commanded to write (Ex. 17:14); he did write the words of the Lord (Ex. 24:4). John, the apostle, wrote the last book of the New Testament — Revelation (Rev. 1:1-3). God spoke to Adam, Noah, Abraham and others, but He did not tell any of them to write it. That does not argue that man had not learned to write before Moses, because we know that writing was used sometime before Moses was commanded to write. It means that there was no written revelation from God to man before Moses was commanded to write.

(2) **No Reference to Them.** There was no reference to any inspired writings before Moses. From Moses to the apostles, Christ referred to the Old writings from God as given through Moses. But neither Christ nor any inspired writer of the New Testament ever referred to any writing given from God before Moses wrote. Joshua was referred to the book of the law when he became the leader of Israel (Joshua 1:8), which was that which was given through Moses. He was referred to no other written work.

Some have referred to Jude 14, where Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied. But there is no evidence in this passage that Enoch was told to write this, or that he did write it. The passage simply says he prophesied. In the absence of any information that he wrote it we cannot assume that.

(3) **No Remains of Them.** There are no remains of any such inspired writings before Moses. Had there been such writings from God before Moses wrote, surely God would have preserved it like He did the rest of His word, since He said: "My word shall not pass away."

Some have claimed that some of the writings of older date than Moses were from God. It is contended by some critics that Moses copied these writings later and they became a part of the Law to Israel. One of these writings is the "Code of Hammurabi." The laws of Hammurabi (probably the same person as Amraphel in Gen. 14:1) are said to be the basis for the law of Moses. These were traditions committed to writing before Moses wrote. They are said to give the history of creation and the laws of conduct between men, but actually they are full of legendary nonsense, which would have made it impossible for Moses to have written them and be in agreement with what we know he wrote. This consists of a code of laws between man and man, but no obligation of man toward God. Hammurabi was an idola-ter and worshipped the Sun-god and other gods (Deut. 4:9).

One of the claims that Moses copied some earlier author is that some of the words he used are not strictly Hebrew. But that does not prove he copied another author. In spite of the fact that some of the words used by Moses appear to be some other language besides Hebrew, it does not mean that Moses copied them. There were some writings referring to God before Moses, but they did not come from God.

2. GOD BEGAN WRITTEN REVELATION THROUGH MOSES

In 1500 B.C. God spoke to Moses and called him to lead the Israelites from Egypt. When they came to Mount Sinai, God called Moses up into the mount and there gave him the first written revelation. From Exodus 32:15 we learn that the first writing of the Bible was done by God Himself. He wrote them with His own finger and gave them to Moses. The stones were written on both sides, and were two slabs of stone. Later these were broken in Moses' anger at the idolatry of Aaron and the people in his absence. God then had Moses to write these commandments. These tables contained the ten commandments.

During the forty years following the deliverance from Egypt Moses wrote the first five books of the Old Testament, called the "Pentateuch." These books contained an inspired account of the creation and the history of the world for the first 2500 years. They also contained the law to Israel in detail, and the things concerning their lives, worship and dealings with each other. They contained the promises made to Israel and the prophecies concerning Christ. During this period of time there is no record of any

other person writing by the direction and authority of God. After the entrance into the promised land Joshua and others began to write the will of God as they were directed. For about 1100 years different prophets and inspired men wrote the books composing the Old Testament. This written revelation from God stopped about 400 B.C. and nothing else was written from God until after the death of Christ.

About 50 A.D. the New Testament began to be written. Various inspired men wrote giving the history of the life of Christ (the four gospels); the history of the early church for the first 30 years (Acts); then various letters to churches and individuals to instruct in the Christian way of life (epistles of Paul, James, Peter, John and Jude); and the future of the church by John (Revelation). Written inspiration closed about 96 A.D. and there has been nothing from God since, and there will be no more revelation from God to living beings on this earth.

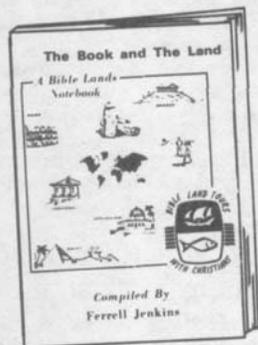
During the period of 1600 years, from 1500 B.C. to 100 A.D., about forty men from all walks of life, wrote in two major languages — Hebrew and Greek — giving the will of God to man in the Old and New Testaments. Though many of these men did not know each other, yet they wrote in perfect harmony on all matters. Their writings covered the whole history of man and deals with every phase of his life.

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Ferrell Jenkins, a Bible professor at Florida College, has been leading groups to the Bible Lands since 1967 and frequently presents illustrated lectures on Bible Lands and Customs.

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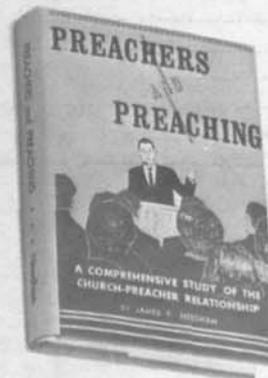
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REFUSE NOT HIM THAT SPEAKETH

The book of Hebrews introduces us to God's spokesman for the last days. "God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son" (Heb. 1:1-2). A contrast is drawn between "time past" and "these last days." A further contrast is seen in that he "spake unto the fathers by the prophets" while he speaks "unto us by his Son."

The thought that "God . . . hath . . . spoken" is sublime. What if God had not spoken? The natural world testifies to his "eternal power and Godhead" (Rom. 1:20) but it gives us no light as to the character of God, nor a single word as to our relationship to him. Had God not spoken in understandable terms to man we would know nothing of our origin, purpose or destiny. Life would be nothing more than a vain striving after the wind. But, from the beginning of human history, God has revealed himself to man in rational terms. To the patriarchs of old he spoke directly. At other times he spoke in a dream or from a burning bush. When the Jewish nation was formed, God raised up prophets to be his spokesmen to "the fathers." Moses was a prophet in a special sense. "Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days" (Acts 3:24). The prophets through whom God addressed the nation of the Jews foretold the days in which God would speak "by his Son." "For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John" (Mt. 11:13). These were valiant servants of God who often lifted up their hands to a rebellious and gainsaying people.

The "last days" describes the time period stretching from the day of Pentecost when the church was established and terminating in the second coming of Christ. Once that period began all men must look to Jesus Christ and his revelation in order to know the mind of God and to be at peace with him.

The Better Spokesman

God's spokesman for these last days **outshines every human spokesman** God ever sent. Moses was a most faithful and able servant. But he was a servant in his house whereas Christ was a "son over his own house" (Heb. 3:5-6). Time would fail to describe the greatness of Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Amos and all the rest. They were worthy as "God's servants, the prophets." Yet none

of them could be described as "heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. 1:2-3). What honor the Father has shown the human family in sending such a spokesman!

But wait! This spokesman **rises in rank above every angelic messenger** God ever sent. Angelic messengers were sent to warn Lot. We read of Michael the archangel and of Gabriel. The law was given "by the disposition of angels" (Acts 7:53) and was "ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator" (Gal. 3:19). This was "the word spoken by angels" under which every man was punished (Heb. 2:2). But we have a far better spokesman than any angel, regardless of his rank. "Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they" (Heb. 1:4). God never said "Thou art my Son" to any angel (v. 5) but he said that of the Son. This he did both at the baptism of Jesus and the transfiguration scene (Mt. 3:17; 17:5). Furthermore, at the advent of the Son into the world "he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him" (v. 6). Never did the Father say to an angel "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever" but he said that of the Son (v. 8; Psa. 45:6, 7). No angel was credited with laying the foundation of the earth nor making the heavens with his hands. Yet, all of that was said of the Son (v. 10-12). No angel was ever invited to "Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool" (v. 13). This honor was only accorded the Son of God, our spokesman in these last days.

The Confirmed Word

God does all things well. Not only has he honored man by sending, in the form of man, such an exalted spokesman, but God has confirmed the word of that messenger in such a way that no doubt can reasonably exist as to the source of his word. This word of salvation which at the first was spoken by the Lord "was confirmed unto us by them that heard him: God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will" (Heb. 2:3-4)? Here we are introduced to the province of miracles, not only in the ministry of Jesus but especially in the work of his apostles. They were promised such confirming power in Mark 16:17-20. Confirmation of the message belonged to the original declaration of it. Not only did Jesus speak God's truth to man, he selected and trained the apostles and said "as thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I sent them into the world" (John 17:18). They were sent out with credentials (miraculous signs and wonders) to confirm their testimony. Paul said "We have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2:16). To reject the ambassadors of God's Son is to reject the Son himself. To reject him is to reject the Father who sent him.

The Inescapable Word

Under God's revelation to the fathers by the prophets (the word spoken by angels) "every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward." The inevitable question for those who live "in these last days" in which God speaks to us by such a superior spokesman, is this: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation" (Heb. 2:3)? The answer is that there shall be no escape. The very fact that God has spoken to us obligates us to respond to what he said. This is the word which shall judge us in the last day (Jno. 12:48).

It is for this reason that "we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip" (Heb. 2:1). It is to this very point which the writer of Hebrews brings us with his sober directive: "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh" (Heb. 12:25). The warning continues "For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven . . . Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:25-29). To refuse the word of God's Son is to forfeit eternal life. To hearken to his word is to live now and forever. No wonder the Son of God concluded the sermon on the mount by saying "Every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock" (Mt. 7:24). Indeed, "It shall come to pass, that every soul, which shall not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people" (Acts 3:23). The choice is clear: it is either "give the more earnest heed" and enjoy "so great salvation" or else it is "refuse" and perish. Let none of us be deceived as to our option in the matter, nor as to the eternal consequences.

And Now - Volume 19

With this issue, *Searching The Scriptures* begins its nineteenth year of operation. During this time many papers have started. Only a few of these remain in business today. We are thankful for the faithful support of many readers throughout the world. We shall continue to offer a balanced diet of spiritual teaching from the pens of men known to be strong in the faith.

In 1978 we have many good things in store. Marshall Patton plans a series on the fellowship question. Ken Green is researching for some articles reviewing *Present Truth*, a strongly Calvinistic journal which is influencing many today. In August we plan another special - this time on the work and organization of the church. Stay with us and even help us enlarge our circle of readers.

ANSWERS
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10511 Moonlight Way
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A REVIEW OF REVIEWS ON 'THE LORD'S SUPPER ON SUNDAY NIGHT'

I have on hand three letters in response to my former article on "THE LORD'S SUPPER ON SUNDAY NIGHT" (VOL. XVIII, NUMBER 3). My schedule has not permitted a careful study and review of such until now. I plan to be back with this column henceforth on a regular basis.

One letter enclosed four articles that formerly appeared in another publication. Obviously, I can not make full reply in this one article to all that material. I have, however, made careful study of it all. I shall deal with a few points which in my judgment need further comment, so far as the real issue is concerned.

One letter manifest a spirit that is unbecoming. However, realizing that strong feelings on an issue sometimes blind one to truth and hinder objectivity, I shall make brief reply in the hope that obvious mistakes, once pointed out, will provoke more diligent study.

One letter shows sincerity and objectivity, but at the same time shows a lack of knowledge on the subject of establishing authority that leads to extremism in a number of things. While time and space preclude a full review just now, I shall deal with some primary points. I suggest also a more careful study of my former article.

In one of these letters I am accused of being like "institutional sponsoring church brethren, . . . who when asked to prove their practice . . . and when they can't, they will call you a number of names like anti, hobbest (sic), church dividers and so on." I deny that either these terms or any like them were so used in my former article—not even the spirit indicated by such can be found therein. Again, I am accused of saying that the opposition is "guilty of inconsistency, a prejudicial view, sectarian spirit and division." This is only partially correct and wholly wrong in some instances. I admit of pointing out an inconsistency—I did not just accuse, but submitted proof. If not, wherein did I fail? The expression "a prejudicial view" was used to identify an "appearance" of an effort in view of circumstances. Perhaps the word "arbitrary" would have served my purpose better. The expression "division and sectarian spirit" referred to the situation in Corinth (1 Cor. 1:10-13; 11:18, 19) to show that to which verse

33, "tarry one for another," related. Thus, I am misrepresented again. Then I am accused: "You said, 'Furthermore, the resurrection day of our Lord is the reason for the observance of the Lord's supper,' but gave no scripture I observe the Lord's supper because in his death he shed his blood for the remission of sins (Matt. 26:28; 1 Cor. 11:26). Since you observe it because of the resurrection day, where is your scripture?" What I actually said was: "Furthermore, the resurrection day of our Lord (which is the reason for the observance of the Lord's supper at this time in the first place) is shown elsewhere to be the Roman day (from midnight to midnight)" (Emphasis—MEP). If our respondent knows of another reason, exclusive of this one, or one more significant for observing it on the first day of the week, then let him produce it. He perverted what I actually said. Other misrepresentations appear in the letter. Also, arguments are made that were answered in my former article. This respondent needs to read more carefully.

One respondent, who enclosed the four articles from another publication, affirms the Hebrew count of time in Acts 20, hence, a Saturday night meeting and the Lord's supper observance in verse 11. While this position merits some consideration, I cannot accept it for reasons already stated in my former article. Concerning the expression "ready to depart on the morrow," our respondent says that Luke could have used an "accommodative meaning" and refers to the Lord's statement "Are there not twelve hours in a day?" (John 11:9). Notice, however, that in the reference cited, the context shows that a contrast is drawn between daylight and dark; that "day" is used to identify the daylight hours and "night" is used to identify the dark hours. There is no evidence of such use of the word "morrow" (KJV) or "day" (NASV) in Acts 20:7.

Concerning John 20:19, he says that in connection with the statement "for it is toward evening, and the day is now far spent" (Lk. 24:29), "We could here make allowances for 'polite exaggeration.' To visitors we say, 'It is not late,' when it really is. Similarly, they could have been stating, 'It is late,' when really it was not." In reply, let it be observed that it could never be "late" and "not late" to the same person from the same point of view! It might be "late" to one and "not late" to another, depending upon their viewpoint or that to which they relate the word "late." It might be "late" and "not late" to the same person from different viewpoints. However, since there is nothing in the context of verse 29 to relate the thought of its being late other than its natural meaning and the chronology of events as set forth in Jno. 20:1, 19; Lk. 24:1, 13, 21, 33, 36), we must conclude that the late evening is meant in John 20:19. (See also the meaning of the word "evening" as set forth in my former article.) While I am persuaded that the "first day" should be observed according to the custom and time wherever one may chance to be, I have submitted the above to show that the Hebrew count of time is not to be bound

exclusively.

One respondent differs only over the idea of "Segmental Observance," or which is the same, offering the Lord's supper twice on the same day to different ones. He denies the inconsistency of his position, which I pointed out in my former article, on the basis of the Lord's supper being specifically authorized while other items of worship are generically authorized. According to his concept, the specifics of the Lord's supper preclude a second arrangement whereas other items of worship may be engaged in at will anytime and anywhere. This identifies our brother's problem. Here he needs help!

What are the specifics of the Lord's supper? Our brother answers: "God has given his specifics on the supper, that is, we must remember his death (Matt. 26:26f; Acts 20:7), it must be done as God has commanded only on the Lord's day and as the church is together assembled." These may be summarized as follows: 1) In remembrance of Him, 2) On the first day of the week, and 3) In an assembly of saints. Now, here is the crux of the problem: When one aspect of some thing in specific, it does not follow that every aspect of the same thing is specific. This gets back to the age old question of determining just what in an example is binding exclusively. Just because some things about the Lord's supper have been made specific, does not mean that the number of times it is provided within the specified time is also specific. One does not necessarily follow from the other. Both may be specific, but if so, there would have to be evidence for each. The Lord's supper is specific in relation to what day. Singing is generic in relation to what day. Concerning the Lord's supper, if the example of the number of times provided within the specific day is binding exclusively, then it follows concerning singing that the example of the number of times on whatever day is likewise binding exclusively. This involves the inconsistency pointed out in my former article: "The 'no class brethren' are guilty of inconsistency when they insist upon specific authority for the class arrangement for teaching while at the same time accepting generic authority for other arrangements for teaching, e.g., an arrangement whereby the church teaches through the distribution of literature, tracts, radio and TV preaching, home Bible studies, etc. Those who oppose providing the Lord's supper twice on the same day are guilty of the same basic error, namely, inconsistency. While insisting upon specific authority for a second provision of the Lord's supper, they accept generic authority for a second provision for other items of worship on the same day. If the example of Acts 20:7 excludes a second observance for those hindered from the first, then the examples of special meetings (Acts 14:27; 15:30) would likewise exclude a second meeting on the same day for the same purpose for those hindered from the first. Furthermore, on this basis, respect for the examples of assemblies in the New Testament relative to the number of times in one day would exclude all assemblies on the same day except one. The truth of the matter is the law of materiality demands that the number of times in all these items of

worship be regarded as irrelevant or immaterial. There is nothing spiritually significant about the number of times. The "day" has spiritual significance—the number of times does not.

While other matters worthy of further study are found in this letter, I feel that I have gone to the heart of the matter for this individual. We must be careful to act always by divine authority, but remember that it is also possible to bind where God has not. The latter assumes a fearful prerogative that belongs only to deity. I would not want to stand in the shoes of such an one in the judgment.

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MASONRY—A FALSE RELIGION

There are many questions regarding Masonry. Is it a religion? What do they teach? If it is a religion, we need to urge brethren to come out of it, and we need to warn others not to get "caught up" in it. Also, we need to warn our young people against becoming involved in it as there is a strong inclination to anyone to do so as you are promised that "if you are a Mason, it will help you 'get ahead' in this world."

In this article I will be quoting from a number of authentic Masonic books. I will be quoting from the Kentucky Monitor, a book given to every Mason in the State of Kentucky; *Morals and Dogma*, a book written by Mr. Albert Pike and prepared for the Southern jurisdiction of the United States by the supreme council of the thirty-third degree, and published by its authority. Also, I will be quoting from Mackey's Revised Encyclopedia, written by Albert G. Mackey, a thirty-third degree Mason. So, if the quotations are incorrect regarding what Masons believe, we will have to blame those who are Masons.

Is Masonry A Religion?

The first question we need to ask is: Is Masonry a religion? Many Masons deny that the Masonic Lodge has any connection with religion. However, note the following quotations. ". . . on the contrary, we contend, without any sort of hesitation, that Freemasonry is, in every sense of the word, except one, and that its least philosophical, an eminently religious institution—that it is indebted solely to the religious element it contains for its origin as well as its continued existence, and that without this religious element it would scarcely be worthy of cultivation by the wise and good. The tendency of all true Freemasonry is toward religion. . . . Masonry then, is indeed a religious institution; and on this ground mainly, if not alone, should the religious Mason defend it" (Mackey's Encyclopedia of Freemasonry, Vol. 2, pp. 617, 618, 619). "Every Masonic Lodge is a temple of religion, and its teachings are instruction in religion" (*Morals and Dogma*, Page 213). "This is because Masonry is a religious institution, and we thereby show our dependence upon our trust in God" (Kentucky Monitor, Page 41).

The Bible teaches that there is "one body" and that the body is the church (Eph. 4:4; 1:22-23). The Bible also teaches, "For the husband is the head of

the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body" (Eph. 5:23). Thus Christ's church is not the Masonic Lodge. Therefore, if the Masonic Lodge is a religious institution (and they affirm that it is) it is an institution established by man and not by God. Which brings up our next question.

Is It A Human Or Divine Institution?

"It is to this institution, born of heaven in the gray of the world's morning, before poets sang or historians wrote, that I am privileged to accord you a Craftman's greeting" (Mackey's Ency. Vol. 1, Page 194). ". . . and if a man yields himself to it, he will need neither churches nor ordinances except for the expression of his religious homage and gratitude" (M & D, pp. 211-212).

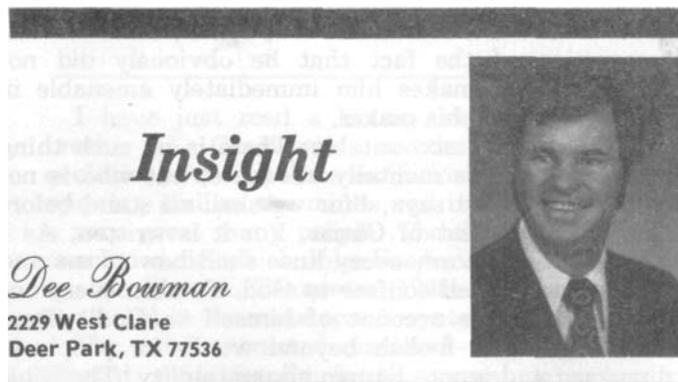
The Bible teaches that Christ established his church. In Matt. 16:18 Jesus said, "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Christ's church was established on the first pentecost after the resurrection of Christ, according to Acts chapter 2. To try to be a member of the Lord's church and the Masonic Lodge is making an effort to serve God and worship Him through a human institution. And, the above teaching of the Masonic Lodge is false.

Is What Masons Do Called Worship?

"Masonry is a worship; but one in which all civilized men can unite" (M & D, Page 526). Just as the Lord has instructed His people from His Word concerning the different items of worship (singing, praying, partaking of the Lord's Supper, giving, teaching) so those who are Masons have some of these same items. For example. Masonry teaches prayer. "In the light of that lesson (that Masonry is a religious institution. JTS) prayer becomes a duty as well as a privilege of every Mason" (Ky. Mon., P. 28). Also, Masonry practices a Lord's Supper. "Question: What is to us the chief symbol of man's ultimate redemption and regeneration?" Answer: "The fraternal supper, of bread which nourishes and of wine which refreshes and exhilarates, symbolic of the time which is to come, when all mankind shall be one great harmonious brotherhood: . . . And thus in the bread we eat and the wine we drink tonight, man enters into and forms part of us the identical particles of matter that once formed parts of the material bodies called Moses, Confucious, Plato, Socrates, or Jesus of Nazareth" (M & D, page 539). "To our Jewish brethren, this supper is symbolical of the Passover, to the Christian Mason, of that eaten by Christ and His Disciples, when celebrating Che Passover; He broke bread and gave it to them saying, 'Take Eat! This is my body;' and giving them the cup, He said, 'Drink ye all of it! For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins:' thus symbolizing the perfect harmony and union between Himself and the faithful; and His death upon the cross for the salvation of men" (M & D, page 540). In this same connection, LIFE magazine, a number of years ago,

(October 1958) carried a full page story with a picture of Masons eating this supper at a table shaped like a cross.

Christ said in Luke 22:29-30 that his disciples were to eat and drink at His table in His Kingdom—not in the Masonic Lodge. It, the Masonic Lodge, is a religious institution and has worship services as we have shown in this article. More next month.



HUMAN ACCOUNTABILITY

I seriously doubt that there is a subject more far reaching or more deserving of attention than is the subject of human accountability. The fact that hundreds of thousands of people are wandering aimlessly through life without regard to their relationship to God argues graphically the need of impressing every man with the fact of it. The failure to convict people concerning it is no doubt the cause of so much disinterest and apathy in religion. I am firmly convinced that proper treatment of the subject will still strike fear into the heart of the sinner, arresting his conscience so that he will more readily consider the truths of the gospel of Christ. Furthermore, a discussion of the fact of human accountability serves to encourage and exhort the child of God toward more faithful service.

Just what is accountability? Even the component parts of the word suggest its meaning. To account for something is to explain to someone your actions regarding that thing. For instance, in Matthew 25:14-19, the Lord explains how that a certain man was about to travel into a far country. In order to insure the protection of his possessions, he called in his servants and "delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey." Verse 19, following Christ's explanation of each man's conduct, says, "After a long time, the lord of the servants cometh and reckoneth with them." The point of the parable is that each man was called upon to account for his actions regarding that which had been committed to his trust. The Lord argues that they should have been ready for such a reckoning.

Notice that the word "accountability" has another part. It not only implies a reckoning, but tells us the subject of such a reckoning; it is giving account for one's ability. Man is a volitional creature. That is, he

is so constructed as to be the controller of his own course and, ultimately, his own destiny. He can respond to this ability by choosing either to serve God or the forces of evil; it is his decision to make (Cf. Rom. 6:16). Any man possessed of full mental capability knows inherently, because of his own consciousness, that he is a creature fitted for choice. Because of such a cognizance, he feels at once responsible (to himself, if no one else!) for making good choices, ones that are beneficial. And his recognition of the fact that he obviously did not create himself makes him immediately amenable in his own mind to his maker.

Every man is accountable. There is no such thing as a man who is mentally adequate, but who is not responsible. Paul says, "for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom 14:11-13). It is foolish beyond words for people to disregard and ignore human accountability. The Bible teaches emphatically that it is a personal fact! In the passage just cited we see that every knee shall bow; every tongue shall confess; and every one of us shall give account of himself to God. (Cf. Ezk. 18:19-20) Every man is accountable.

Man is accountable to God. After having created him, God revealed himself to man. Man has never been without the availability of sufficient information with which to worship and serve God. That does not argue that he has always availed himself of such information, but even those who have wilfully rejected His truth always had that truth available or they could not have rejected it (Rom. 1:18-ff). The Scriptures are replete with information concerning a day of reckoning before God; a day during which "the books will be opened" and every man will be judged according to the truth of God. In his discourse at Athens (Acts 17:31), Paul states that "he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness". Peter states in 2 Pet. 2:9 that, "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." Such other passages as Matt. 25:31-46; 2 Pet. 3:7; Jno. 12:48; and Revelation 20:11-15 give irrefutable testimony to the fact of our inevitable interview with God. The mere fact of accountability assumes judgment. And the surety of judgment presupposes that both remunerative and vindicatory actions will be taken by God at that notable day.

But it is not enough to affirm that man is accountable for his abilities unless we understand what his abilities are. We have before affirmed that man is responsible for making choices, but in relation to what? Let us see.

Man cannot create, so he cannot be held accountable for the basic laws of necessity. Nor can man destroy and therefore he can only be responsible for restructuring that which cannot exist but by another's power. Man can discover, learn, and

change, working all the while with things as they presently exist. This means he is responsible for whatever choices will result in the benefit of all concerned. In short, he is responsible for what he CAN do to effect the ultimate good of all. In this connection, man has two basic areas wherein he incurs primary or first obligation. They are 1) Attitude and, 2) Conduct. In these areas he does exercise complete control. They are inseparably connected together and the latter is sequential to the former. Every man has an attitude and so he is responsible to God for it; every man must, likewise, account for how he has fitted that attitude into his manner of living. For these two abilities man must account to God.

Man is responsible for what he thinks and that is what his attitude is all about. Attitude is a personal disposition or manner in regard to another person or thing. It is how a man thinks. Attitude is acquired, not inherited and, left unattended by information from God, will naturally degenerate to the lowest evil possible. But when that attitude is influenced by the Word of God, it becomes the source of great good, not only to the person who maintains it, but to all those with whom it comes in contact. God's information shapes and molds good attitudes by teaching proper thinking. It shows man the proper dispositions, inclination, purposes and goals. It causes man to use his ability of reason for high and quality purposes instead of coarse and low designs to which man stoops when separated from the influence of the divine directive. Time and again, the Scriptures warn vehemently against the tendency of man to give lodging to evil thoughts and base notions (Matt. 5:21-48; Mk. 7:21; Prov. 4:23, etc.). Remember that since it is formed mainly through associations, an intimate relationship with the Word of God is indispensable to the formation of a good attitude.

Man is responsible for his conduct. Conduct is merely the manner in which a man departs himself, how he chooses to go, his manner of living. In Matt. 7:13-14, Christ enjoins the responsibility of a right conduct. The broad "way" he describes has reference to an undisciplined and unrestrained mode of living, while the strait "way" refers to a manner of living that is law-restricted and disciplined. A man's conduct is the "way" he goes. No man can read the Bible for very long and not see clearly that God counts man obligated for the "way" he lives (Cf. Heb., Chapter 11). Having given a system for the control of his path of pursuit, it is only logical to assume that God will hold man accountable for how he follows it.

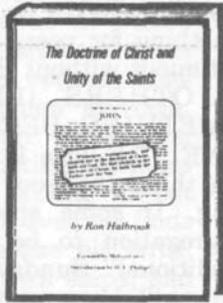
In Gal. 6:7-8, Paul says, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." This passage deals clearly with conduct, showing that each man is responsible for his own manner of life and further affirming that God will reward every man

according to how he has lived. It should be noted, too, that acceptable conduct is not to be measured merely in terms of negative holiness. James 4:17 states that, "to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin," showing that positive action is just as vital as is the leaving off of those things which are prohibited by God (See Matt. 7:24-27).

The conclusions are inescapable. Man is accountable to God, for by God does he "live, move, and have his very being" (Acts 17:28). God has given him volitional ability and ability makes him accountable. It should be carefully remembered that God is noting our handling of the abilities with which he has entrusted us. And such accountability assumes a day of judgment and that judgment assumes rewards, both of approval and condemnation. As a result of knowing such to be the case, we should hasten to give due consideration to our present state of affairs, for "it is appointed unto man once to die, but after this cometh the judgment".

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Evolution, the Piltdown Man and Mars

Jim Gabbard
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I have just read a lecture, delivered in 1927, by brother G. C. Brewer, on the theory of organic evolution. At that time evolution was on the definite upswing and on the minds and in the conversation of a very great many people. The Scopes trial had just concluded, in which John Scopes had been brought to trial in Dayton, Tennessee (1925) for teaching organic evolution in the state school system.

The trial attracted national attention and was treated sensationally in the press throughout the nation. A large newspaper in New York financed the defense for Scopes and brought the best known attorney of the day, Mr. Clarence Darrow, who had defended the murderers of little Bobby Franks (Leopold and Loeb) in Illinois, to defend Scopes. The prosecution brought in William Jennings Bryan, the silver-tongued orator, who had three times run for the office of President of the United States, to help the other side.

Scopes was found guilty of violating a Tennessee law which forbade teaching anything contrary to the Book of Genesis account of the origin of man. That law was immediately repealed. The theory of organic evolution grew by leaps and bounds for the next few years. However, there were a number of disturbing things about that theory.

One of the knottiest problems for the evolutionists, from a scientific view, is that there are no intermediaries. It would not escape even a dunce that if evolution, without intelligent direction, occurred, there would be all kinds of horrendous intermediaries. There was a lot of talk about missing links in those days, but scientists continued to promise that they'd soon find them. The missing link dominated discussions about the evolutionary madness in those days.

A group of scientists in England decided to attempt to partially silence the critic in this connection. They took a bunch of old bones found in a gravel pit at Piltdown Common, Sussex, between the years 1909 and 1915, and added the mandible of an ape to the bones, and carefully cut, carved, scraped and shaped them and came up with the *missing link* between ape and man, and called it the *Piltdown Man*.

In 1953, however, men of science noted some things as strangely wrong with the now famous *Piltdown Man*, and proved it a fraud. That, as would be expected, dealt a stunning blow to the evolutionary theorists. They recovered, however, by

the massive use of textbooks for schools throughout the world, from kindergarten through the graduate process in the universities.

Leave it to real science to prove truth and expose error in academic matters. (The Bible is truth in spiritual matters). The United States Space Program, trying incidentally to prove evolution, has dealt it another devastating blow which may prove to have more of a negative impact than the fraudulent Piltdown Man.

The scientific community has been in general agreement for some time that the Planet Mars may contain all the conditions necessary for the evolution of life, a belief which was pretty well confirmed by the recent explorations to that planet by Viking I and Viking II, in 1976.

The sad news for the explorers is that there is no life on Mars. If the conditions for organic evolution exist, and no evolution took place, what will be the inevitable conclusions as these facts dawn on more and more people and as they are articulated on a wider and wider scale?

We'll just have to wait and see, but it occurs to me that it (probably with a few more failures) could spell bad news for organic evolutionists.

THE STRANGE WAY PEOPLE THINK

Tom Moody

Imagine how you may have reacted had you been in Peter's place. A vessel comes down from heaven containing all manner of beasts and creeping things of the earth and fowls of the heaven. A voice commands: "Rise, Peter, kill and eat." This must have been quite impressive. Furthermore, Peter seems to have no doubt that this is from heaven and that the voice is that of the Lord's, for in his reply Peter addresses the Lord. What would you have done? Would you have quickly set aside any prejudices and preconceived notions, gotten up and obeyed the command? Maybe you would have, but not Peter! Notice Peter's reply: "Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that was common and unclean" (Acts 10:14).

Think for a moment about Peter's reasoning. He did not intend to eat these beasts because he had never before eaten such animals. In his commentary on Acts J. W. McGarvey makes this observation:

"His thoughts went no farther in justification of his boldness than the fact that he had never in his life eaten anything unclean, as were some of the things he was commanded to eat; but in thus abstaining he knew that he was obeying a law which God himself had given to his fathers, and he could not at the instant take in the thought that God was now abolishing one of his own laws" (page 203).

Have you considered how often people, like Peter, base their reactions to an argument or their con-

viction on a subject simply on what they have or have not done before, or what they have or have not thought of before?

1. SOME WOULD JUSTIFY WHAT THEY DO ON THE BASIS THAT THEY HAVE "ALWAYS DONE IT." "My mother, father, grandparents and great grandparents have always gone to church here, so surely this is where I should be a member" some will reason. Batsell Barrett Baxter in his booklet QUESTIONS AND ISSUES OF THE DAY defended church contributions to colleges on the basis that "This is the time honored position held by our brethren . . ." and he stated that there is "no reason to abandon the solid ground of this historic position" (page 27). But Peter said: ". . . ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, at; silver and gold, from your vain manner of life handed down from your fathers" (1 Peter 1:18). The traditions of men are not authority, but are the very thing we need to be redeemed from. Paul wrote, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Colossians 2:8).

Whether I deem something "time honored" or "historic" makes no difference. Because I have done something for years, does not make it right for me to continue it without Bible authority.

2. OTHERS (LIKE PETER) OBJECT TO SOMETHING BECAUSE THEY HAVE "NEVER DONE IT." This is no more valid ground to object to a thing than our former point is for doing some thing. If some special class is suggested for the congregation to be held at times rather than the "traditional" Sunday and Wednesday meeting times, some will be uncomfortable with it simply because they have never heard of such a thing. Objections may arise such as "No one will come"; "We get enough instruction in our regular classes"; "It will tire everyone out", etc. Some will not teach a class, make a talk, lead a song, or knock on doors, because "I have never done it before". Do they think others were born doing these things? If we see a command of God we need to obey it whether we have obeyed it before or not. If I see an opportunity to do good (James 4:17) or to exercise my talents (Matthew 25:14-30; Hebrews 5:12-14) I ought to do these things whether I have before or not. Perhaps some are afraid of the fact that if they do try something they have never done before, then they never again can rely on the excuse "I have never done it" in order to get out of some responsibility!

3. SOME REJECT AN ARGUMENT BECAUSE THEY "HAVE HEARD IT BEFORE". Several years ago a preacher, with whom I was discussing some of the issues between brethren, made the argument that Galatians 6:10 authorizes the church to offer benevolence to those who are not Christians. I replied that the context shows that Gal. 6:10 is a command to individuals rather than the church. His only answer was, "Oh, I have heard that before." Of course, I had heard his argument before too, but that is not what made it fallacious. It was wrong because it

was contrary to the Bible. Many seem to have this attitude. When Bible truth is presented to them, rather than grappling with it they try to shrug it off as unworthy of consideration since it is nothing new to them. This seems to have been the thinking of the men of Athens in Acts 17. Their interest was in hearing a "new doctrine" and "strange things". They did not really want to test and accept the truth, but they just wanted something to challenge their worldly intellect.

Truth is truth whether you have ever heard it before or not. If you have heard it before, your responsibility to obey it is even greater.

4. OTHERS REJECT AN ARGUMENT BECAUSE THEY HAVE NEVER HEARD IT BEFORE. Recently I was pointing out to a friend of mine how I felt the Lord's name was used in an objectionable way in a secular song. But he could not see any problem with it primarily because he had just "never thought of it that way". Even if my contention had been wrong, it would not have been wrong because he had never thought of it. Our personal thoughts and judgments can be way off base (Proverbs 14:12).

Some want to continue doing something unscriptural because they have always done it. Others refuse to do what they ought because they have never done it. Some will reject a principle because they have heard that before, it is nothing new to them. Others will reject a truth because they have never heard of such a thing. These contradicting attitudes simply show that if someone is not willing to put faith in God's word and accept what ever he finds therein, he will find a way to rationalize his error. Such people are trying to direct their own steps, and the Lord says this cannot be done (Jeremiah 10:23). They are walking by sight rather than by faith (2 Corinthians 5:7).

All of us need to be careful about the way we study and arrive at conclusions so that our convictions are truly based on God's word rather than on human reasoning or the traditions of men.

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By Earl Irvin West

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THE BIBLE CONTAINS CONTRADICTIONS

Jimmy Tuten, Jr.

I have purposefully selected the caption of this article in an effort to arrest the attention of our readers. Please observe that I have said the "Bible contains contradiction?;" I have not said that the Bible contradicts itself. I do not believe that there are narratives and accounts in Scripture that are at variance with each other. Modernists view the gospels for example, as substantial sameness which finds diverse expression (Harry R. Boer, *above The Battle*, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1977, P. 59). Mr. Boer further asserts that there is a "remarkable difference between the Synoptics collectively and the gospel of John" (Ibid., P. 62). I do not deny that there are problems in the New Testament, but these problems are removed by systematic, orderly investigation of scripture. Our confidence in the Bible need not be weakened by efforts of infidels and modernists to destroy the truthfulness of Sacred Scriptures. These efforts have been demonstrated in times past to be feeble and flimsy. The design of such actions is to poison the minds of mankind with reference to the unity of the Bible. The Sacred Scripture is inspired and has stood where it has always stood! Unaffected and unmolested by its assailants. It genuineness shines brighter than ever.

When I talk about the Bible containing contradictions, I am saying that the Bible flatly contradicts the opinions and ideas of men. The very fact that the "world by its wisdom knew not God," and "the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness," demonstrates that the wisdom of God as revealed in the Scriptures contradicts human dogmas and doctrines. It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps (Jer. 10:23). Man has his opinions relative to certain subjects, but the Bible contradicts those opinions by giving the truth on the matter.

The Bible Contradicts What Man Thinks of Himself

It has always been the boast of the unrighteous and the ungodly that they are wise ones. Through the use of reason the wise man feels that all things must be demonstrated or understood in the light of natural laws. He frowns upon the believer who walks by faith and not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7). Yet, with all his reasoning and rationalizations about God, the skeptical philosopher reaches no real goal in life. His thinking is useless and leads him into the abyss of infidelity. Instead of arriving at God, the wisdom of man denies the existence of God (1 Cor. 1:21). The Bible contradicts this human reason by saying, "if any man thinketh he knoweth anything, he knoweth not yet as he ought to know" (1 Cor. 8:2). Men say, "we are wise; we need not the God of the Bible." The Bible says that, "professing themselves to be wise, they became fools" (Rom. 1:22). Further, man feels the need for self-exaltation, but the Bible says that he ought "not to think of himself more highly than

he ought to think" (Rom. 12:3).

The creature called "man" must understand that without God he is nothing. He is most pitiable and wretched if in this life only there is hope. Man is a creature of choice (Josh. 24:14). He must choose between the wisdom of man and the wisdom of God; between truth and error; salvation and condemnation, and, heaven or hell. Men simply do not want to accept God's ways. They feel that they can accept what pleases them and still be acceptable to God.

The Scriptures contradicts this reasoning by saying, "not everyone that sayeth unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21). It is not enough to do something. We must do that which is prescribed in the Divine plan (1 Tim. 1:13; 1 Pet. 4:11). Man's choice is to either disobey, or obey God. If he seeks to obey God, he must obey in the manner prescribed by God in the pages of the revealed Word.

Man may feel no need for a Saviour, but the Bible teaches that man is a sinner and that he does need a Saviour (Rom. 3:23). As a sinner man is totally dependent upon the captain of our salvation (Heb. 9:14). In fact, in "none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved" (Acts 4:12, ASV).

The Bible Contradicts What Man Thinks of God

The wisdom of man denies the primal truth that there is a personal, supreme God of the universe. Many among the wise call themselves "atheists" in spite of the fact that the world and the fullness thereof mirrors the glory of the Great "I Am." These individuals look up to the bright heavens and the variegated earth and calmly reason, "there is no God!" They reject the supernatural God on the basis that such belief is contrary to natural law. Revelation declares not only the mind of God and His existence, it declares that it is He who made the heavens and the earth. The Atheist knows that we cannot demonstrate God's existence, but what he refuses to take into account is the solemn fact that he cannot demonstrate that there is no God! Atheism is a probability: no more and no less. In order to say with absolute certainty that there is no God, one would have to be a God himself. The one thing the atheist may not know is the fact of the existence of God.

Yes, the Bible contradicts the thinking of those who say that there is no God. It says, "the fool hath said in his heart, there is no God" (Psa. 14:1). Man must know God and place his confidence in Him by accepting the revelation of the mind of God. The Spirit of God has revealed God's mind (1 Cor. 2:11). The heavens declare His glory (Rom. 1:19-21). It remains for man therefore, to accept the Scriptures as the revealed will of God. "Without faith, it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him (Heb. 11:6).

The Bible Contradicts What Man Thinks of Christ

In spite of the vast amount of evidence testifying

to the historical position of Christ and the revelation of His Divine nature, many deny that Jesus existed. Some indeed admit that there was a man who lived nineteen hundred years ago called "Christ," but deny that He was the Son of God. Some say that Jesus was a myth, or legend, existing only in the imaginations of man. One person maintains that "the virgin mother conceived this idea of God and gave her ideal the name Jesus" [*Christian Science And Scriptures Contrasted*, by Robert A. Hadden]. Just as the Arians of the third century argued that Christ was a form of supreme angel, but not eternal or of Divine essence, so some today look upon Jesus as merely the master product of evolution. He is said to be simply a great ethical teacher. Arianism finds its expression today through Jehovah's Witnesses who say, "before our Lord came into the world, he was created an angel and none other than the archangel Michael (*Prophetic Program of Jehovah's Witnesses*, by Keith L. Brooks). They further state that Jesus was not a combination of "two natures, human and Divine." He was simply "a perfect human being, nothing more." The Mormons advocate that Jesus was the son of Adam-God and Mary (*Mormonism Examined*, Keith L. Brooks).

If Jesus is the result of the imaginations of the writers of the New Testament, then their imagination excels the thinking of any group of men before or after their existence. The invention of Jesus would be a miracle as great as the actual existence of Jesus Himself! The dramatization of Christ on the part of a group of men writing at different times and places through such varied and difficult aspects is absurd. Truly, the extravagance of such a position is its own refutation. If Jesus is simply a great man, a religious genius without anything supernatural about Him, then He is the world's greatest liar! How can the skeptic possibly call Him "a good man?" Would a good man lie? To say that Jesus was not all that He claimed to be, is the same as saying that He was an impostor. Why did He refuse the throne (Matt. 4:8-9)? Why did He choose the disgrace of the cross (Phil. 2:6-8)?

The Bible says Jesus was the Son of God. Recorded therein is the testimony of God, of the Holy Spirit, and of Angels to the Deity of Christ (Matt. 3:17; 17:5; Jno. 15:26-27; Matt. 1:21; Acts 1:10-11). Even the enemies of the Lord testified that He was God's Son (Matt. 27:17; Mk. 15:39). One said He was "Jesus which is called Christ," and the other said, "truly this man was the Son of God." The Scriptures also declare that Jesus was co-existent and co-eternal, as well as co-equal with God, the Father (Jno. 1:1-14). Archaeologists corroborate the accuracy of this testimony. Even though the spade has not turned up all secrets of the past, enough evidence is on hand to show the doubting Thomases that the Gospel story is not pious legend.

Conclusion

What you think of yourself, God and Christ will determine where you will spend eternity. Do not allow your thinking to be contradicted by the Bible.

The Word of God will never pass away and we will be judged by it some day. We are wholly dependent upon God and need the salvation He offers through His Son Jesus. Let us show proper regard for self, respect for God, and love toward Jesus by obeying Christ today. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mk. 16:16).

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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

JAMIE RHODEN, 8150 Driggers St., Jacksonville, FL 32205 — James P. Miller was with the Marietta church in Jacksonville for a week-end meeting Nov. 4, 5 and 6. There were four responses and record crowds each night. Although brother Miller's health is not what he would like it to be, it certainly has not affected his ability to preach God's word. He did a masterful job of expounding the gospel. He left following our meeting for a meeting in Montgomery, Alabama and was to be with the South Jacksonville church the last of the month, if the Lord is willing (as he would surely say).

DAVID PATTERSON, 563 NE 5th St., Crystal River, FL 32629 — On November 10 I moved to Crystal River to begin a full-time work

with that congregation, the first man to work here in that capacity. Currently we have 19 members and our attendance runs in the 20's and 30's. We feel the church here has taken a big step forward and look optimistically toward the future. We encourage those traveling south to stop and worship with us. The building is just off U.S. 19 on state road 44. We would appreciate receiving bulletins from around the country.

JIM ALLEN, Box 181, Oglethorpe, GA 31068 — We came to the work here in July, following Art Adams. The work is growing. Since July we have had four baptized and five restored. The congregation is at peace and the future looks good.

GARRETH L. CLAIR, 711 Santa Anna, Mesa, Arizona 85201 — After three years with the church in Dumas, Texas (6th and Meredith) we are now settled in the work at 61st and Hibbert Street in Mesa. We enjoyed our work in Dumas and recommend the work and the leadership there. Since September, in Mesa, we have had 31 restorations, one baptism and two have placed membership. We had a meeting in December and presently are improving our meeting facilities. We are to begin two new classes in January. The first one will be a 90 minute class on Thursday nights dealing with the Holy Spirit. The second class will be a ladies Bible class on Monday mornings. Visitors to the Valley of the Sun are welcome to attend services here with us.

GARY HARGIS, Rt. 1, Box 60, Mekinock, North Dakota 58258 — We moved to Grand Forks, N.D. on April 1, 1977 to work with an on-fire group. During their first year they grew from 9 to 38 in attendance. Two families, the Doc Daughertys and Jim Lohmans, started the work here. With several restorations from liberalism and 6 baptisms plus much hard work, they had grown to 38 by the time we came. Since then they have not slowed down. There have been 12 baptisms and 5 restorations from the base. We now number 55-58 when all are present. Six of these are non-members with whom we are now working. As a result of a men's training class started by Don Bonner of Jamestown, ND., we now have four men who handle Sunday night preaching. They are Doc Daugherty, Jim Lohman, Wally Ireland and Kelly Stowers. Three of these have been faithful Christians for less than two years and one for only 6 months. They do very fine. We need \$8,000 for a loan to buy a lot. We can put down \$2,000 but need \$8,000 more at 8 % interest. If you know of anyone who can make such a loan please let us know.

(Editor's note: It was a thrill for the family and me to worship with these brethren last August on our way to Utah for a meeting and to speak to their Sunday morning assembly. It would do brethren from areas where congregations are more plentiful much good to visit brethren in such places.)

Roy Cogdill At Expressway

STEVE WOLFGANG, 3712 Warren Ave., Louisville, KY 40215 — During the week of October 24-30, 1977, members of the Expressway church of Christ, 4437 South Sixth St., Louisville, KY had the privilege of hearing Roy E. Cogdill preach in a gospel meeting. The meeting was well attended by Expressway members and by a number of community visitors who are not members of the Lord's church. **SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES** readers who have known brother Cogdill through the years will rejoice to know that he has regained a measure of health and strength and came preaching with the same fervor, force and clarity which has been characteristic of him through the years. Without meaning to turn the pages of this paper into an "adulation sheet", we do feel that good news regarding those who have fought long and valiantly in the Cause should be reported.

Although brother Cogdill's health has not been the best in the last few years, at this time he appears to be in better health (and seems to feel much better) than he has for some time. He spoke each night for nearly an hour, sometimes more, to above-average crowds (which puts the lie to the idea that brethren will not abide lengthy sermons; they win, **SO LONG AS THE PREACHER HAS SOMETHING TO SAY!**) At a special Saturday morning session on the Charismatic Movement, he spoke for nearly two hours and answered questions from the audience. He spoke three times on Sunday, and participated in the call-in radio program of the Preston Highway church along with this scribe and Jamie Sloan of Douglas Hills (where brother Cogdill held a meeting last fall). Brother Cogdill went from Louisville to Danville to conduct a meeting there, and we have received a good report of his continued good health and forceful preaching to good audiences there. While we do not wish to fall victim to the wrong of thinking of men "above that which is written" (1 Cor. 4:6), we feel that brother Cogdill's long experience (he will mark his 55th anniversary of preaching on November 20) and his evident ability make him an exceptional proclaimer of God's word.

His love for the souls to whom he preaches in manifest in the earnestness with which he preached the gospel. The saints at Expressway were truly edified.

In our opinion, one of the main contributions brother Cogdill has made in his efforts to teach the truth as widely as possible has been the numerous books, debates and tracts he has authored. Perhaps the best known of these has been *The New Testament Church*, first written nearly forty years ago (1938). Besides going through nearly twenty printing editions into about a dozen foreign languages involving nearly a quarter of a million copies, the book has, in his own words, "done a lot of preaching at places I could not or would not be allowed to go." While he was here he replied to a recent request from the American Braille Society in Los Angeles to grant permission for them to publish *The New Testament Church in Braille* so that even the blind may now have access to this thorough and scriptural study of the Lord's church.

This scribe counts it a rare privilege and honor to have been associated with brother Cogdill in this effort and to have had the benefit of sitting at his feet during this period. We bid him Godspeed and wish for him continued health and many more opportunities in preaching the gospel.

An Unusual Baptism

GEORGE FLEM, Vacaville, CA — The prison located in Vacaville, California is called "The California Medical Facility." One of the convicts housed there is the subject of this account. Raised a Roman Catholic, as a man, he became a murderer. He shot and killed a father of seven children, tried to shoot a policeman and kidnapped a hostage to obtain a get-away car. Approaching a road block he attempted to use the hostage to get through. A policeman shot him in the back, hitting the spine and paralyzing him from the waist down. After hospitalization he pleaded guilty before a judge and received a sentence of life, without parole, plus 15 years. He was then transferred to Vacaville to receive medical care for the paralysis.

A Christian from another state came to see him and contacted me about him. He received a Bible which he began to read. Conversations, letters, bulletins, and our local "Ask Your Preacher" program were all employed to assist in his study. Finally, I received a letter from him acknowledging the authority of God and rejecting the authority and doctrines of men. He desired to obey the gospel. Having taught high school in a prison some years ago I knew there would be problems. Certainly they would not let him out to be baptized. In addition, he was paralyzed and would require special care in the baptism. A medical facility, however, has therapeutic tubs deep enough for complete submersion. With permission from the authorities of the prison I received his confession and baptized him in a therapeutic tub. I will never forget the happiness he expressed as he came up out of the water, a new creature in Christ Jesus. Glory be to God! The power of the word of God reached through an upbringing in a false religion, a life of crime, and even a brutal killing to touch the heart of this man, bringing about obedience. Who said that the plain, simple gospel has lost its power? **GOD STILL GIVES THE INCREASE.**

TRADE, ANYONE?

WILLIAM B. WRIGHT, 246 Putnam Lance, Weirton, WV 26062 — I have about two volumes (it may be three) of *Christianity Today* (unbound) for the late 1960's. I also have an almost complete set of *Truth Magazine* for the years since 1964 (with the exception of the past twelve or fourteen months). I also have some issues of other journals such as the *American Christian Review*, *Bible Herald*, etc. for the 1950's. I keep them for two basic reasons: (1) Reference; (2) I'm a pack-rat. But, the fact is I have no real storage space for such matter and I would like to be rid of them. On the other hand, I would like to have smaller (but reliable) journals in a binding I could conveniently keep and have for reference. Examples of this are: *Searching the Scriptures* and *The Preceptor*. Is anyone interested in a trade? I would be happy to make it on a 3 or 4 to 1 basis. I'm interested in quality, not quantity.

JIMMY TUTEN, JR., 6710 Dorchester Rd., Apt. 2200H, Charleston, SC 29405 — Our work at Ashley Heights is progressing nicely. Attendance averaged 48 during the month of October. We just closed a gospel meeting with James P. Needham preaching. It was outstanding in every way. Brother Needham did his usual outstanding job of preaching the pure gospel and the brethren supported him diligently. In the meeting we baptized three and one was restored. If you know of anyone in any branch of the military located in Charleston who is looking for a sound church, put them in touch with us. You may phone 803-552-4308 or 803-553-4970.

Preachers Needed

MILBRIDGE, MAINE — Isn't there anyone out there who loves our souls enough to sacrifice at least a year for us who are trying to hold onto the truth? The church at Milbridge very badly needs someone to come here and work with us. We do not need an unstable man, a novice or a troublemaker. Two men in the past have been willing to come and work with us (one even sold his home) but neither was able to find adequate support to come. Why was this? Are there no men who are willing to help us, and no congregations which will supply what they need to work in this hard field? The church here can supply \$200 a month and with better teaching might be able to do more. The rest will have to come from elsewhere. Why can't we find the help we need? Contact Alvin West, Harrington, Maine 04643. **EXTON, PA** — The church meeting at 217 Whitford Road is looking for a man to work with them on a full time basis. Partial support is available. Address replies to Church of Christ, c/o Everitt Wood, 1207 Farmington Lane, West Chester, PA 19380 or call collect 215-363-8042.

Debates

THOMAS G. O'NEAL met **J. W. Holcomb** in a debate on women

teachers in some Bible classes at Cannonsburg, KY Nov. 28, 29, 30 and then at 5th Avenue in Bessemer, AL on Dec. 29, 30,31. Barney Keith moderated for Tom O'Neal. We regret not getting this printed prior to these discussions but received the announcement too late.

H. E. PHILLIPS of Tampa, Florida will meet **JACK GIBBERT** of Newport, North Carolina in a debate April 17, 18, 20 and 21 at Fredericksburg, Virginia. The subject will be divorce and remarriage. The first proposition is that "The Scriptures teach that the guilty party (the one put away for fornication) has the scriptural right to marry another." Jack Gibbert affirms this while H. E. Phillips denies it. The second proposition is that "the guilty party must be reconciled to his/her former mate or live a celibate life from that point forward." H. E. Phillips will affirm this and Jack Gibbert will deny. The third proposition is that "The Scriptures teach that when a man puts away his wife for any cause other than fornication and subsequently marries another that his first wife must remain celibate or be reconciled to her husband." H. E. Phillips will affirm and Jack Gibbert will deny. The final proposition is that "when a man puts away his wife for any cause other than fornication and subsequently marries another that his first wife then may put him away for fornication and she has the scriptural right to marry another" Jack Gibbert will affirm this position and H. E. Phillips will deny. After January 1st you may contact Roland Worth, Jr., 417 Rann Court, Fredericksburg, VA 22401 for information as to the location for this debate.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	610
RESTORATIONS	152
(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)	