

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 XXIII

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NUMBER 1

THINK ON THESE THINGS

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CENSORING ELDERSHIPS

A relative or friend will send others tracts, bulletins or papers such as this one in an effort to teach them the word of God. In some cases the one to whom the paper is sent requests that his name be removed from our mailing list. That is always done with all who do not want to receive this paper. But I have received requests in the past from the elders of some congregation requesting that we delete the names of all in their congregation who receive our publication, even if the persons receiving it requested it themselves. Now I do not intend to withhold publishing truth because someone believes he is the guardian of what others should read in the search for divine truth.

Roman Catholicism controls its membership through a tight system of censoring its membership as to reading material. This, of course, presents the membership with no alternative but to read what is prescribed by their rulers. They have no choice in searching all the evidence to ascertain the truth of God's word.

About sixteen years ago, when I was editing **SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES**, I received payment to send this journal to a number of members of the congregation that person attended. About three months later I received a letter from the elders of that congregation submitting "a humble and sincere request" not to send the members of that congregation this religious journal any more. I was told that they hoped I would "respect the autonomy of that congregation and the authority of its eldership."

I am amazed that so many elders do not know what the "autonomy" of a congregation is and what the "authority" of the eldership involves. What authority do elders have to decide for the flock what they shall read in the search for divine truth? Where do they find the verse that authorizes the elders to decide what the members of the congregation shall or shall not read? It is possible for the elders themselves to speak "perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:30). Are they infallible that they know what mature men and women should and should not read? I don't think so!

The rule of elders requires them to "feed the flock of God which is among" them (1 Pet. 5:2), but that does not permit them to be "lords" to censor the reading material of the flock and decide for them what truth is. The word of God tells exactly how the elders are to stop the mouths of vain talkers. This would include "the pens of vain writers." They do this by "holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers" (Titus 1:9). Instead of censoring the reading material of the members, the elders should use sound doctrine to expose the errors of the speaker or writer, and then the soundness of the flock will rest in the power of God's word and not in the opinions of the elders as they try to evaluate the writings of other men.

There is not one word in the New Testament about the eldership having "authority" to decide for the church what they shall read in learning the truth of God. Roman Catholicism has listed the forbidden books their members are not to read, but do we refuse to try to teach Catholics God's truth in order to respect the "autonomy" of the Catholic Church and the "authority" of Catholic priests? No man has the right to think for another.

This matter of autonomy of congregations is so misunderstood by many that it is ridiculous how they try to use it. The word means "self-governing" or "self-ruling." This rule does not extend into the area of legislation: the making of laws. Christ is the only law giver (Jas. 4:12). Autonomy does not involve the judicial, for Christ is to be the judge of the destiny of

all men. The only area of autonomy (self-governing) is in doing the will of Christ without outside control. It means that each church is completely independent in doing its own work as directed by the New Testament. Some elders will send their own funds to another eldership to control and spend as they please, and cry: "We are not losing our autonomy." But when a preacher, who is authorized to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" sends teaching material to members of any congregation, they cry: "Violating autonomy!"

Preachers are to "preach the word; be instant in season, out of season" (2 Tim. 4:2); they are to do so with all authority (Titus 2:15); they are to teach what Paul taught (2 Tim. 2:2). They are to rebuke even elders when they sin (1 Tim. 5:20).

I certainly agree that the elders (when scripturally qualified) have the oversight to guide the flock into all truth, and they are directed to the word of God as their authority (Acts 20:35; Titus 1:9). But they do not do so by censoring the reading material of the members. They expose the error of false teachers by sound doctrine so that those under their oversight may know the difference between truth and error. I do not intend to allow any group of men, in the church or out of the church, to tell me to whom I shall try to teach God's eternal truth. I have the whole world in which to preach, and the authority of Christ to preach the gospel. What more do I need? Neither is this intended to reflect upon the scriptural responsibility of elders to watch against false teachers as they tend the flock which is among them.

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Editorial

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THE INDESTRUCTIBLE KINGDOM

Elsewhere in this issue, Rodney Miller has another of his thought-provoking articles drawn from the book of Nehemiah. Not only has he done excellent work in acquainting readers with the life and times of that great leader of God's ancient people, but he has as well drawn many practical and penetrating lessons which have stirred many readers and should have stimulated elders, teachers, preachers and all other Christians to self-examination and self-improvement in serving the Lord in our day.

In his article carried in this issue, he says some things which badly need saying and which are "hard sayings" because they expose raw and sensitive nerves which we would rather let alone. There is no excuse for the apathy which is lulling so many congregations to sleep. I fear that all too many elders and preachers have decided that if they cannot awaken such congregations from their slumber that they will snuggle down comfortably and go to sleep with them. Someone has to stay awake in order to awaken others.

Lest We Forget

But while we are in need of all such instruction, let us not forget certain basic things about the kingdom of God as they are set forth in the word of God. While any congregation anywhere may die, yet the church of the Lord will not and cannot die. That is as certain as the fact that God cannot lie (Heb. 6:18). Daniel prophesied a kingdom "that shall never be destroyed" (Dan. 2:44). When he in vision saw one like "the Son of man" ascend to the Ancient of days, he said "his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Dan. 7:13-14). The angel Gabriel announced to Mary "He shall be great, and shall be called the Sons of the Highest: and the Lord shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Lk. 1:32-33). The Hebrew writer described those who were in "a kingdom which cannot be moved" (Heb. 12:28). The reason the kingdom cannot be destroyed is that it is perpetuated by indestructible seed, even the "word of God which liveth and abideth forever" (Lk. 8:13; 1 Pet. 1:23-25). The life of the kingdom is co-extensive with the life of the seed that produces it.

A Needed Distinction

While it is certainly true that congregations may die, it is not true that the church has died because of that. We are back to a consideration of the church local as opposed to the church universal. THE church (universal) is composed of all the saved in all the world. No local church constitutes the entirety of the saved. That local churches may die is evident by the fact that sound churches do not today exist in very many places where they were found in the first century. That local churches in a given region of the world may suffer from the same afflictions and either become totally extinct or go into apostacy and lose identity as the Lord's people is seen in the fate of the churches of Asia where Paul, Barnabas, Silas, Timothy, Apollos and others labored. Where are they today? While we know of them only from history, the church of the Lord did not die with them.

If all the fine buildings we enjoy today are sold for shopping centers, or bought by sects in which to propagate their false doctrines, yet as long as brother Miller's children, or mine, have the conviction to meet in a warehouse or a store-front building with only a handful of the devout, just that long will the church of the Lord continue in them and others like them. Should congregations in America regress beyond zero growth and begin losing members by the thousands, the church will not die in this generation or any other as long as the world stands. With all our lethargy and apathy, this generation of Christians in America has sent faithful men to preach the blessed gospel into many parts of the world. That seed of the kingdom has taken root and there are today several places in the world where the cause of our Lord is anything but dying. In some spots it is growing rapidly. Should the time come that there is a need for a new restoration movement in this country, and that could well happen, as brother Miller pointed out, the seed is already planted in the hearts of thousands around the world that provide the means for this to be done, should such become necessary.

God's Seven Thousand

While it is imperative that we face up to reality, assess the reasons for decline and failure in congregation after congregation, determine to apply the remedy of divine truth to our diseases; yet, let us not go with Elijah into his cave of despair and tell the Lord that "only I am left." God told that prophet "I have seven thousand that have not bowed the knee to Baal." Elijah did not know them or about them, but God knew them. It was out of the small remnant with which Ezra and Nehemiah worked that God reestablished his people in their land and renewed the Messianic hope. The midnight of Hebrew history ended, the day broke, hope renewed and God kept his promises.

Along with brother Miller, I am concerned deeply for the welfare of what used to be strong, aggressive, militant congregations. I am concerned to see some which still consider themselves towers of strength,

converting five or ten people in a whole year and gradually declining in numbers and work. Something is wrong and it will never be made right until we admit that something is wrong. Along with Nehemiah, let us not only survey the walls, but let us then get to work to repair the damage. But while we assess the matter, let us not conclude that the church will die in this or any other generation. Such would make false prophets of Daniel, Gabriel and Paul. With shame for our failures, resolve in our hearts, and purity in our lives, let us get on with the work at hand. While the church, universally speaking, cannot be destroyed, local churches can and do, perish. From that viewpoint what brother Miller has said urgently needs consideration. It will pinch (perhaps even gouge) us, but when the pain lets up it will do us good. In conversation with brother Miller I have gone over the gist of this article and he fully agrees with the distinctions made here and states that he plans to deal with the matter more fully in additional articles on Nehemiah. Watch for them and read them carefully.

PREMILLENNIALISM IN NIGERIA

Those who read my editorial in the November, 1981 issue on "Premillennialism in the Philippines" will be interested in the following letter received from Leslie Diestelkamp.

"Dear Connie:

Please accept my genuine commendation of the fine editorial in the paper which came yesterday—regarding the premillennial efforts in the Philippines. I am delighted to know that J.T. Smith was able to go and help in the confrontation and I am thankful that you promoted the arrangement. Having spent ten weeks in the islands, nine of them on Mindanao island, I have a deep interest in the welfare of the churches there. It may be of interest to you (and perhaps to your readers) to know that Robert Boyd has made two or three trips to Nigeria also, and has infiltrated the ranks of brethren there, so much so that a few brethren have espoused his theories. So far the damage is not significant, in numbers, and it is being strongly opposed by faithful and capable native preachers there. But American churches that support Nigerian preachers should be aware of the dangers, some mature American preachers (especially some who have been there) would do well to visit there again to strengthen and encourage the faithful, and all of us must manifest our concern in whatever ways are available. If you can do so, I think it would be good if you would publish some remarks to enlighten your readers about Nigeria just as they are now informed about the Philippines. Thanks.

Sincerely,
Leslie Diestelkamp

IN NEXT MONTH'S ISSUE

The February issue will carry the excellent material prepared and used by J.T. Smith in his lectures on Premillennialism during his recent trip to the Philippines. It is clearly stated and well illustrated with charts which all will find useful in studying the question and in refuting the error whenever and wherever it raises its head. Plans call for this material to be put in tract form and circulated free of charge to brethren in the Philippines.

IN ANOTHER FUTURE ISSUE

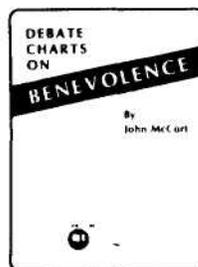
Sometime in the spring or early summer we plan to publish in one issue of this paper the text of three sermons on the Holy Spirit which were presented several years ago by Franklin T. Puckett at the Thayer Street Lectures in Akron, Ohio. We have the first two speeches ready and are waiting now for the third one. This is the richest material on the subject the editor has been privileged to see. His material on "the gift of the Holy Spirit" in Acts 2:38 is thorough and even exhaustive and should be of special interest to all. Watch for further word on this.

AND NOW—VOLUME 23

With this issue we begin our 23rd year of publication. As one wag of the past remarked "Tempus shore do fugit." Our aims remain the same as in the past. We yet build on the solid foundation for the paper laid by H.E. Phillips during his 13 years of faithful service as editor. A number of the initial writers for the paper (including H.E. Phillips) continue to contribute material month after month. Many of our readers have come to look upon these men as old friends who have been constant and true through the years in teaching the truth and exposing error. Stay with us. We will do you good.

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PHILIPPINE TRIP

On October 13th I boarded a North West Orient plane in Miami, Florida to begin my trip to the Philippine Islands to try to help the brethren there combat Premillennialism, brought there by brother Robert Boyd (and others) from Louisville, KY.

I changed planes in Chicago, and unlike the "old" 707 that Connie Adams and I traveled on in 1971, so crowded we could hardly move, it was refreshing to see a Boeing 747 waiting at the gate when we boarded in Chicago, our next stop being Tokyo, Japan.

After one of Elijah's "long days" (for although we left Chicago at 1:30 P.M. and had an 11 hour flight to Tokyo) the sun shone on us from the time I got up in Miami at 6:00 A.M. (having crossed the international date line) until the time we left Tokyo, almost 24 hours later.

We arrived in Manila, Philippine Islands, safely at 9:30 P.M. on the 14th having made another stop in Okinawa, and by 10:30 P.M. I was safely in my hotel room in Manila.

The next day I was scheduled to leave for Davao City on Mindanao Island, which was to be my home for the next 12 days. Brother and sister Juanito Balbin, and a number of other brethren met me at the airport in Davao City and escorted me to my room in the hotel Maguindanao.

The next day I went to Magsaysay to speak to the brethren there on Premillennialism. However, because of much rain in the area north of Magsaysay, an estimated 500 brethren or more were not able to attend because of the flooding. Thus our attendance was around 150.

The next morning when I arose to prepare for a trip by boat to the Island of Samal, who was I to see in the coffee shop but (as the Filipino brethren referred to him) the "rich" Robert Boyd, the teacher of Premillennialism from Louisville Ky. who had been spreading the false theory there by radio, and had come there in 1980 to "confirm" some brethren who had been inquiring concerning the teaching.

May I explain. Many of the brethren there referred to the "rich" brother Boyd because he sent 5,000 pesos of Philippine money, (equivalent to about \$625.00 in American money) ahead to prepare for his coming. For example, instead of riding in a Jeepney or on a bus as we did, brother Boyd hired his own private car and driver for his journeys, which, according to the

brethren in Davao City would cost approximately \$100.00 per day. Oh well, when you don't have the truth, you must have something that will impress the people.

At the time of a meeting on Saturday morning with brother Boyd and the Filipino brethren who were with him, as I returned to the lobby of the hotel, brother Cyrus Gesulga (who was to be brother Balbin's opponent in the debate) and brother Balbin along with brother Boyd, were discussing a matter. Brother Balbin informed me that they were saying to him that instead of having a moderator for each man that we have one moderator or chairman—now get this—A Roman Catholic! No your eyes are not deceiving you any more than my ears were deceiving me. They actually made this proposal. Of course, with the premillennial brethren fellowshipping W. Carl Ketcherside and the Christian Church people in Louisville, what more could you expect from them. Of course brother Balbin and I immediately turned down their proposal.

After a boat ride of about one hour and a half, we arrived at Samal Island to meet with the brethren there and have a lecture for them. The meeting with them was very enjoyable. They have a small chapel where Julio Notarte preaches.

On Sunday morning we traveled to Gumalang where brother Manual Caa preaches. After speaking there for three or four hours, I was invited to speak for a United Pentecostal Church whose preacher had visited our services in Gumalang. They invited me to speak in their chapel that afternoon. They were very receptive to the things that were said, and said they were seeking only the truth. Brother Caa and others will try to assist them in their search for truth.

On Monday we were invited to go to Suawaan, as brother Balbin said, on the seventh hill, and I can believe it. There I spoke for about three hours to a group of people from two congregations, Suawaan where brother Awyan Beusan preaches, and to brethren who were visiting from nearby Tambubung.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, we had all day lectures at San Juan Villiage in Bankal where brother Balbin preaches. Attendance was not as good as we had hoped it would be, first of all because of a mix-up on the dates as well as a lack of funds on the part of many who were not able to come. Also, the premillennials boycotted our studies even though they were invited to come and bring tape recorders, etc. Actually we did not know for sure whether or not the debate with brother Gesulga and Balbin would continue or whether we would even be allowed to attend their lectures on the 22nd and 23rd. For, brother Gesulga told brother Balbin on Tuesday afternoon that the debate was "off" because I had referred to brother Boyd as a false teacher on brother Balbin's radio program the previous Sunday, and we would probably not be welcome to attend their lectures.

It was not long, however, until we learned the outcome of this matter. The debate was "still on," but on Thursday morning as we went to attend their lectures,

I just walked on in as I normally would at any gathering where the Bible was to be discussed. However, to my surprise, brother Gesulga came into the assembly and asked me to leave. He said that I was not welcome. Thus neither I, nor brother Balbin nor many or the other brethren were permitted to hear a single word uttered by brother Boyd in his lectures.

On Saturday, the debate was held as scheduled. Brother Robert Boyd moderated for brother Gesulga, and I moderated for brother Balbin. It was good to know that brother Boyd was not only willing to attend the debate, but to serve as a moderator in one. During both the afternoon and evening sessions, in my opening remarks I pointed out that it would be good if brother Boyd and I could have such a discussion in the U.S.A. Although he did not accept the challenge, at least he did not "flatly refuse" it. Thus at the close of the debate, I handed him the following propositions which I believe fairly represent our respective positions.

The Scriptures teach that the kingdom of Daniel 2:44 was to be a spiritual kingdom that would include all nations. It has already been established and will be returned to the Father at the second coming of Christ which will be the end of all things.

Affirm: J. T. Smith

Deny: Robert Boyd

The Scriptures clearly teach that after the second coming of Christ—and before the final resurrection and judgment—there will be an age or dispensation of one thousand years during which Christ will reign on the earth.

Affirm: Robert Boyd

Deny: J. T. Smith

Hopefully sometime in the near future, at a time which will be convenient to both our schedules, such a debate can be arranged in Louisville and other places where brethren would desire to hear the subject of Premillennialism discussed.

Both brethren Balbin and Gesulga were well prepared for the discussion, though in the final analysis I honestly believe that brother Balbin's efforts in presenting the truth were seen by all present.

I thank God for a man like brother Balbin, and others in the Philippines, who are willing and able to defend and preach the truth.

While in Davao City, we were visited by brother R. G. Carino of Pagadian City. Brother Carino had been sent by the brethren in Pagadian City to escort me on my journey there. We left very early on Sunday morning October 25th and arrived in Pagadian City late that afternoon. I preached there on Sunday night and lectured on Monday and Tuesday on the subject of Premillennialism to a number of preachers who had come from many places. It was good to meet brother

Carino and his family and to be in their home. Also, it was good to see brother and sister Eddie Ramiro whom I had not seen since 1971 and to be in their home.

On October 28th I returned to Manila where I was met by my old and dear friend, Victorio Tibayan, his son Vic, Jr., and brother Billy Hayuhay's son. Vic told me of the brethren's plans for me to come and speak on Premillennialism in Pasay on Thursday, October 29th. We met and discussed the subject, and other matters, including the great harm that has been done to the brethren on Luzon Island regarding support, by the Ed Harrell and Tommy Poarch report a number of months ago.

Since the time I visited the Philippines in 1971 until now, they have had the same problem with inflation that we have had here in the United States. And it is beyond my understanding how men who have families (a wife and from 2 to 7 children) are "getting by" on \$200.00 to \$300.00 per month. "Getting Rich"? Horse feathers!

I have a number of pictures of homes where these brethren, who are good and faithful men live, try to provide for their families and preach the gospel in rented rooms, homes, or chapels made out of Bamboo poles. And I believe many of them are honest, sincere brethren who will stand for the truth with or without support. So if you have funds you would be willing to send to men like these, (individuals or congregations), (50.00, \$100.00, \$200.00 or \$300.00 per month, write me or brother Connie Adams, Ben Shropshire, or any of the other brethren who have been there and visited in the homes of the people and know of their ability and their needs. We have the names of several men whom we believe are worthy of such support and are willing to try to "get by" on these amounts and give their full time to preaching the gospel of Christ.

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In our study of the Book of Nehemiah we have noted the two seemingly overwhelming tasks that Nehemiah had before him. First, he was to lead the people to rebuild the wall. When we consider that this wall was constructed in 52 days, then we see what a great leader Nehemiah was. The rebuilding of the wall portion comprises the first 7 chapters of the book. Yet, no matter the greatness of this feat, it was not the sum total of his work. The most important aspect of his leadership was the spiritual renewal of the people. Herein lies the success or failure of any leader, and we find this portion of his work in Chapters 7-10 of the book.

Spiritual renewal is the key to any leadership effort. No matter how great the achievements may be, without a renewed heart the people would simply lapse back into the sin from which they came. There can be no lasting growth without the spiritual renewal. Nehemiah sought to accomplish this by teaching the people, as we studied together in our last article (Chapter 8). What is our challenge in the kingdom today? Are we serious about teaching the coming generation? In that last article we noted that to answer this question we might examine our commitment to teaching, by checking to see if we have a regular program of teacher-training, or if we even have any teacher-training at all. Do our classrooms look like broom closets, or do we have a planned series of Bible study goals and objectives? Nehemiah, as a leader, was serious about teaching the Word of God because he realized that if the people were not renewed the wall which they had built would be of little consequence because the enemies of Israel would soon overrun it.

Revival the Guide to Survival

There can be no doubt that the only way the Kingdom is going to survive is for there to be a spiritual revival. The attitude of the Pharisees was that they were God's people and He could do nothing without their finer qualities. John, in Matt. 3:9, told the Pharisees that God could raise up children from the stones if that was His desire. Then again in Luke 19:39, 40 when the Pharisees directed the Lord to rebuke His disciples for proclaiming Him as the Messiah, He told them that if His disciples were silent, the stones would cry out to glorify His name. So, while we feel very smug about our place as the people of God,

we are not the only people to have felt smug and secure in our traditions of righteousness. The Pharisee ignored the heart of the Law and a vital living relationship with God for a code of externals that could be ritualistically performed even if one did not love God at all. This traditional external code of righteousness was substituted for a heart that loved God, walked humbly and dealt with justice and mercy to his fellowman. This pharisaical attitude developed into such fractured sectarian spirit that the various parties would argue over which was the "greatest commandment." All the while they were thrusting out their chests and proclaiming with such great pride that they were thankful they were not sinners like all the others. If this attitude is present among us today then we too would be guilty of the spirit that killed Christ. We would be building our own crosses to crucify Him instead of simply using a Roman cross. If we fractured into parties gloating that we were the only ones with the truth on this issue or that issue, or if we were swelling our chests and proclaiming that we are not sinners, or that we can by "doing our own thing" earn our place at the throne, or if we were so pleased that we are the people of God and know that we always will dwell in our ivory-towered meeting houses, then we would have a great deal to fear. As with forest fires, "only you" can search your hearts and make your evaluation.

Where Is Religion Headed?

On any given Sunday only about 7% of the American population attends a "church service" somewhere. This would include all Catholic, Evangelical, Protestant and non-denominational churches, as well as the Lord's body. While this figure is very small, the fact is that it is growing smaller every year! But the most revealing question to us is, **what about the Lord's church?** What is happening in His body? Are we growing in spite of a general religious decline? Are we simply "holding our own"? This is a most widely used deception, and is used by various gospel preachers when they meet one another. The conversation usually goes something like this: "How is your work going?" The response generally is: "Well, we are just holding our own." Could the real truth be that we are declining just like all the denominations around about us? To ask the question is to answer it!

There was a time when the Lord's body was the fastest growing religious group in America. This was widely recognized by all of the monitors of the religious world. But this is not the case today. Note this quotation from Flavil Yeakley, Jr., on page one of his book, *WHY CHURCHES GROW*:

"If the trend of the past decade continues into the future, the present net annual growth rate of around one percent will continue to decrease until around 1980 when growth will totally stop. The church will then begin to shrink. By around 1990 it will be back to the present size or below. Around the turn of the century, it will be down to only half its

present size. DURING THE NEXT GENERATION'S LIFETIME, THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN THE UNITED STATES WILL DISAPPEAR ENTIRELY IF THE TREND CONTINUES."

Yet, as pessimistic as that sounds, Dewayne Davenport is even more pessimistic in his book, *THE BIBLE SAYS GROW*, he says: "At this present trend, membership in the churches of Christ by 1990 will be ZERO." This conclusion was arrived at statistically by a comparison of our gains and losses.

Are We on the Road to Extinction?

Just to think of the church not meeting in the "zip, zip street building" where it has met for so long is almost beyond our belief. While I was speaking on this theme at one of the larger congregations in the southeast, which has been a bastion of the faith for several generations, one brother commented later on in the week that sometimes he has felt like standing up at his seat and crying out that "this is not so." But, brethren, we are looking at the generation in which the "CHURCH DIED", unless we are willing to face the problem and seek to rectify the disease instead of playing church and bathing the symptoms. Yes, many do refuse to believe what cannot be denied. How much we are like the Jews of the Old Testament days! They tried to take Jeremiah's life when he preached the message of doom for Judah. It was only the quotation from one of the previous prophets that saved his life at the hands of a desperate mob. Still, smashing the barometer does not change the course of the coming storm. They killed every prophet who dared mention that Israel or Judah was not the beautiful apple of Jehovah's eye. It mattered not that they had no love for God, or that they had no burning relationship with Him in the most personal way. No, just so long as they routinely substituted the sabbath and sacrifices for an abiding relationship with Him, so they could cheat, steal and lust as they desired, **THEY WERE STILL GOD'S PEOPLE**. So, since we are God's people, we will never be destroyed, they erroneously reasoned. We who consider ourselves as being in the church challenge the world that we are God's people. But, are we living up to our own challenge? We have restored the worship, the origination and the doctrine, but what about the commitment of the New Testament Church? What about the evangelism of that first century body? What about zeal and devotion to the Lord? What makes us think that we can claim to be what we are not without even realizing our own weaknesses and failures, and still be pleasing to Him? It is not that the problems cannot be seen and effort put forth by some to right them. However, the greater majority refuse to even see that they exist!

We are so self-satisfied with our efforts that we continue to judge denominationalism and never stop to think that the same measure by which we judge others will be used to judge us. Just as the Lord took ancient Judaism out of the way so that He might rebuild by dedicated men like Ezra and Nehemiah, what makes us

think for a moment that He would hesitate to take us out of the way as well. Why would He do this? To develop men of faith who are willing to stand in the gap and reach lost souls for Jesus.

"But the church is not dying," you say! Well, brother or sister stop and think about it for a moment. Suppose you ask on next Lord's day morning, "how many of this assembly are new converts to Christ of a year or less?" How many hands would be raised? If less than 10% of the total audience assembled that morning raised their hands, we are in fact dying! We must maintain at least a 10% growing rate to "just hold our own", as the preachers are accustomed to expressing it. You see, we are staying alive by SWELLING, not by growing. What we mean by swelling is that people "place membership" by coming from another congregation. Our larger urban congregations have swollen by the general movement of brethren to the sunbelt and to the urban centers, as opposed to rural areas in which they grew up. Bro. Adams, the Editor, wrote an excellent article last year about what the rural church has done to contribute to the city congregations in the last 20 years or so. They have given us our preachers, elders, deacons, and bible class teachers. The "backbone" of most of the city churches is comprised of individuals who grew up in a rural church but moved to the city because they could not make a living in that rural environment. But what has happened to those rural churches? Have they maintained that strength to keep supplying the brotherhood with the leaders that it so desperately needs? Of course, we know what the result has been. In most cases the rural churches have suffered a great deal because of the loss of their very best and most able people. Now, the reservoir is running dry!

How many examples of this do we need to give in order to prove the point concerning places and churches? In place after place brethren are selling their buildings to the Pentecostals and going to worship at another congregation located in a different place. In congregation after congregation the median age is in the high 50's or low 60's, with few if any young people. What will become of these churches when these grey-haired brethren pass from this life? What have they left behind? Have they left faithful children serving the Lord in their places? Sometimes, yes, they have; but the statistics reveal that in 63% of the cases they have not even left children behind that are faithful.

Brethren, we have become somewhat of a "half-turned cake," as was Ephraim in Hosea's day. Just listen to what we are saying, teaching and preaching about. We rapidly point at what is wrong with the Crossroads plan, with the prayer-partner, with the Herald of Truth and with every other thing in the world. We already know what is wrong with it. (And, there certainly are Scriptural errors in each of these examples.) **BUT, WHEN ARE WE GOING TO SPEAK AS FORCEFULLY ABOUT WHAT IS WRONG WITH US?** When are we going to talk about **WHAT IS THE RIGHT THING TO DO?** When are

we on a large scale going to talk about what we are FAILING TO DO, rather than what is wrong with what everybody else is doing? The other day an article appeared touting the fact that the liberals are "dying." Yes, the liberals are dying, but at least some of them KNOW IT! Not one word in the article says that we are going down at a much faster rate than they are. We are like the crabs under any salt water pier in Florida. They feel so little pain that one crab can eat another, while the first crab is actually being eaten by a third crab. We are standing in the dark and pointing frantically at others who are blind and cannot see. We have one little group here, and one little group there and they cannot get along doctrinally with the other. Too much of our effort has been simply like rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic!

Does it have to be this way? Well, let's ask the prophets. Let's ask ancient Israel before 722 B.C. or Jerusalem before 586 B.C., and then ask them after 722 or 586. No, it does not have to be this way. Why? Because Israel and Jerusalem could have repented and changed their posture, returning in humble obedience to a forgiving God. But the reality is that they didn't repent, and they were not humble. So, the lesson we might learn is simply this: We probably will not change either, and there will have to be another restoration movement sometime, somewhere by those that love Him far more than we do. The tragic thing is: WHAT ABOUT MY CHILDREN? Where will my daughter, who is now 9, and my son, who is now 7, worship when the building is closed and sold to some aggressive and growing cult? Well, let's pray that their faith will be strong enough to meet in a cold warehouse or in a dusty store front. But then again, if their faith is strong enough to start all over again to restore the New Testament Church then maybe, just maybe, their faith will be strong enough to teach their children to deny a material world with plastic and polyester, with chrome and double-knit, instead of lusting for better than their dads have, and who will try not to walk in both worlds.

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"Unto you therefore which believe,

He is precious..." 1 Pet. 2:7a

When upon life's billows you are tempest
tossed,

When you are discouraged, thinking all is
lost,

Count your many blessings, name them one by
one,

And it will surprise you what the Lord hath
done.

So go the words of a popular hymn by E. O. Excell. Yet, when instructed to number our blessings we immediately realize that such is an impossible task! However, Mr. Excell's song only serves to remind us all of the magnitude, the immensity, and the countless blessings afforded to God's children which are too numerous to count and too great to number.

Let's suppose that you are given the assignment of producing just one word descriptive of all your blessings. What would it be? Dear friend, Peter picked a word! He used one word repeatedly in his two brief epistles to convey to his readers what it meant to be a Christian and what it meant to receive the blessings of Christ. That word was—"PRECIOUS." Eight times in eight chapters Peter uses that term to describe the blessings of Jesus.

The term precious is defined as, "of great value or high price, excessively refined, highly esteemed and cherished, priceless." We use the word to portray moments in our life which are especially meaningful and we refer to them as "precious memories." Those we deem as "precious" are those most dear to us. And what do the ladies ALWAYS say when viewing a newborn child? "Oh how precious!" No wonder Peter used that word.

Notice:

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 1 Pet. 1:18-19 | — "redeemed with precious blood" |
| 1 Pet. 2:4-6 | — "a chief corner stone, elect, precious" |
| 2 Pet. 1:2-4 | — "great and precious promises" |
| 1 Pet. 1:6-7 | — "trials of your faith. . . precious" |
| 1 Pet. 3:3-4 | — "meek and gentle spirit. . . precious" |
| 2 Pet. 1:1 | — "like precious faith" |

Yet, without Christ there would be no blessings. Peter says, "Unto you therefore which believe, He is precious" (1 Pet. 2:7). That is, Jesus is the reason for it all. This particular verse differs from the rest, for, in the original, we find not an adjective but a noun. He is "THE PRECIOUS ONE," or "THE PRECIOUSNESS," i.e., Jesus is the object of inestimable value. Peter in essence says that among the cluster of jewels worn by the Christian, there is one central jewel whose brilliance outshines all the rest. It is Jesus. He is the pearl of great price, the bright and morning star, the light of the world, and He is the priceless and precious crown jewel of the saint. Around Him we revolve, because of Him we are, and through Him we shall be. Yes, He is the center of it all! And so with Christ being the center of the crown, let's note the Christian's crown jewels as given by our Lord and as described by the apostle.

1. Redeemed With "Precious" Blood

Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things.. .but with precious blood, as a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ (1 Pet. 1:18-19). Do we really appreciate the significance of Calvary? People, Jesus was willing to pay a price that had to be paid, for "without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Heb. 9:22). Read Isaiah 53 and see if the prophet doesn't look forward to the day when there would be one to walk who wouldn't deserve to suffer and die. One whose soul would be spotlessly pure and whose hands would be full of kindness. One who would walk the pathway of righteousness and whose heart would constantly beat of love and devotion to God. He would be the "unblemished and spotless lamb of God," yet He would be led to slaughter. And there on the rugged heights of Golgotha, the only one who never knew sin would hang as a sinner. Why? Paul responds by saying, "He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (1 Cor. 5:21). Someone had to pay the price. Someone had to set us free. "Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

2. Built Upon "Precious" Corner Stone

To whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, Ye also, as living stones are built up a spiritual house. . . Wherefore also it is contained in scripture, Behold I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on Him shall not be disappointed (1 Pet. 2:4-6).

Here is Peter's second aspect of preciousness. It's not enough to be redeemed and forgiven for we must at that point begin to grow and be built up into holiness and godliness of character. How? Peter says, "You build on Jesus, for He is our chief building block." Later he admonishes us to "follow in His steps" (1 Pet. 2:21). Jesus Himself said, "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me." Peter's point is that we should grow, learning to imitate the character of Jesus.

There is an interesting passage in Psalms 118:22. There are some translations which render "the chief corner stone" as "the head stone of the corner." Now the head stone is not necessarily the bottom stone. In a structure such as a pyramid, the head stone of the corner would have been the top stone laid on the pinnacle to indicate completion. What the Psalmist may be saying is that Jesus is not only our corner stone laid beneath our character and life, but that He is also our head stone laid at the very apex of our life to complete it. The Hebrew writer says the same thing in a different way in 12:1-2. The idea is one of a race. Often in a track event the starting point is also the finishing point. Jesus is "the author and finisher of faith." We start from Him and we come back to Him. He is our corner stone and we build on Him. He is our head stone and we finish building on Him. Jesus lies beneath us as an everlasting rock and He glitters on top as our crowning jewel!

3. Hope Through "Precious" Promises

For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises (2 Pet. 1:4).

Do you realize that the only thing in this life in which we can place our total and complete confidence, is in what God has said? God's promise is at once the assurance of fulfillment. In Romans 4:21 we are reminded that Abraham was "fully assured that what He had promised, He was able to perform." Then in Hebrews 10:23 we are admonished to "hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful to deliver." Yes, everything that God has promised will come to pass. That should produce both desire and expectation in the heart of every Christian as we hope for heaven. That's why Peter says in 1:3-4 that we are "born again to a living hope.. .reserved in heaven for you." Peter says that we have a hope that lives. Why? Because our hope rests upon His precious and magnificent promises. And what a comfort it is in the midst of a troublesome and changing world to know most assuredly that we have an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, and that such is reserved for us in heaven. And Peter, when called upon to describe our living hope, used the term "precious." I know of no better word.

To Be Continued...

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MORE ON "IF ANY WILL NOT WORK"

Warren Berkley, of Mulvane, Kansas, writes:
"Dear bro. Green:

"I appreciated your recent article in Searching The Scriptures, "If Any Will Not Work." The advice you gave was good.

"We do something here that seems to be working well. We have a 'policy' we follow with each transient requesting assistance. We ask the person to fill out a filing form (see copy below), then we tell them we will consider their request. We explain that we will not make an impulsive decision, but that we need several hours. Then, if they fill out the form and actually apply for assistance, we take the information to the Police Station and ask them to run it through their computers. (Most law enforcement agencies will gladly do this, as they are anxious to eliminate undeserving transients). If everything checks out with the Police, we check the references and the story, then make some decision, in keeping with the guidelines you gave and the Scriptural restriction on the use of funds in the treasury.

"Now, no one have ever yet filled out the form! One man got half way through it, became disgusted and left. Others have simply refused to be subjected to any kind of verification. And some have looked at the form and then politely dismissed themselves (thinking we were 'on to them).

It may seem too bureaucratic or ridiculous, but it has proved to be a helpful tool (or expedient) in separating the legitimate from the undeserving."

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Give names, addresses and phone numbers of at least two people who would be willing to vouch for you:

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By my signature, I verify that all the information given on this form is correct.

_____ Date: _____

(Signature)

**THE OLD TESTAMENT DOES NOT GIVE
AUTHORITY FOR NEW TESTAMENT
WORSHIP**

Tom Moody,
1422 Cloverhill Drive
Louisville, KY 40216

In the Law of Moses provision was made for someone to eat the passover at a later time if they were not able to eat it on the prescribed day (Numbers 9:1-14). In the past several years there has been growing interest in using this as an indication that the Lord's supper may be served a second time on the Lord's day for those who were not able to eat it the first time it is served. Such was suggested by brother Keith Ward in the October *SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES*.

This argument disturbs me. Not because of the conclusion that saints may eat the Lord's supper on Sunday night, with which I agree, but because it is using the Law of Moses to establish authority for New Testament worship.

Does It Show Authority Or Is It Just "Something To Think About"?

A number of times I have heard people make the point of the second serving of the passover and qualify it with a statement such as: "This is something to think about" or "I believe this is worthy of consideration", but stopping short of saying: "The second serving of the passover *authorizes* the second serving of the Lord's supper". Keith is consistent in that he is not in a non-committal way trying to just "slip" this idea into the thinking of people; rather, he is stating without reservation that this point of the Law of Moses authorizes the second serving of the Lord's supper. While I commend his forthrightness, I question the validity of the argument.

Keith correctly states concerning the question of the second serving of the Lord's supper: "The germane question is, 'Is it authorized?' "

He states of the second-serving-of-the-passover argument that is **"a scriptural and clear argument"**. He has a paragraph with the heading **"The Authority**

Of The Old Testament". Near the conclusion of the article he says that the parallel between the passover and the Lord's supper **"teaches us that as those who could not attend an annual feast assembled at a later date to partake, so may those who cannot attend in the morning assemble in the evening to partake of the Lord's supper."** Keith believes that **"if we allow the O.T. to teach us anything"** that it teaches this.

I deny that the Old Testament teaching about the passover teaches us anything about the Lord's supper apart from what the Bible says that it teaches.

Keith stated some parallels between the passover and the Lord's supper: Christ is our passover, Jesus instituted the Lord's supper on the passover, the passover was to be observed when Israel was congregated as the Lord's supper is to be observed when the church is congregated, a time is specified for observing both. Actually to call a couple of those points "parallels" may not be quite accurate. Nevertheless, scripture can be given for each of the above points. Where can scripture be given to parallel an *alternate time* for eating the passover with an *alternate time* for eating the Lord's supper?

There are a number of things which the scriptures do not parallel between the passover and the Lord's supper.

Old Testament Teaches But Does Not Give Authority

As Keith points out, the Old Testament is written for our learning and admonition (Romans 15:4; 1 Corinthians 10:11). But, brethren, if we begin going to the Law of Moses to *defend our practices in New Testament worship* we are inviting some difficult situations!

Imagine having taught a friend that our authority for faith and practice is the New Testament. He then visits an assembly and observes that we serve the Lord's supper on Sunday evening to those who were not there on Sunday Morning, and wants to know why. (I have had people ask me!) Suppose I begin to explain that our authority for that practice is the fact that the passover and the Lord's supper have some parallels and that the *LAW OF MOSES* provided for an alternate date for eating the passover, therefore we offer an alternate time for eating the Lord's supper. How would I convince him that I am consistent in decrying his use of the Old Testament in defending instrumental music or burning of incense?

Brethren, if it is right (which I believe it is) to offer the Lord's supper on Sunday evening to those who could not be there on Sunday morning, it is right because the NEW TESTAMENT teaches that the Lord's supper is to be eaten upon the **FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK**, and Sunday evening is still the first day of the week. It is not right because the OLD TESTAMENT teaches that the **PASSOVER** could be eaten at an alternate date.

We *must* have New Testament authority for what we do in the worship of the New Testament church

(Colossians 3:17; Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:22-23; Hebrews 1:1-2;2:1-4).

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T. G. O'Neal

P.O. Box 723
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THE NAME "CHRISTIAN"

T. G. O'Neal

Isaiah, the son of Amoz, said, about 760 B. C., in 56:5, "Even unto them will I give in mine house and within my walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off." He further said in 62:1 and 2, "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name which the mouth of the Lord shall name." In these verses, Isaiah is telling of the giving of a new name that the God of heaven is to give to his children.

We must turn to the New Testament of Jesus Christ in order to find the fulfillment of this prophecy of Isaiah. We turn through the first four books of the New Testament and we find not a word said about the new name that Isaiah mentioned in this prophecy. We then turn to the book of Acts and in the second chapter we learn of the Jews receiving the law of the Lord. Peter is saying, as he closes his great sermon on that day, "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call (Acts 2:37-39). In these words Peter has said that the promise of remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost is not only to the Jews but also unto the Gentiles, those that are "afar off". If you will turn to Ephesians, chapter two and in verse seventeen, we will learn of the Apostle Paul telling the Gentiles that the promise is unto those that were afar off and to those that were nigh. "And came and preached peace to you

which were afar off, and to them that were nigh." Paul tells the Ephesians they are Gentiles: "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind" (Eph. 4:17).

Since we have learned that the Gentiles are those that Peter referred to as being afar off in Acts 2, we need not look for the new name that God was going to give to the children of the Lord until after the Gentiles have seen the righteousness of the Lord. We have seen in Acts 2 the Jews receiving the righteousness of the Lord and we turn in our New Testaments to chapter ten of the book of Acts of Apostles and now we are ready to learn of the Gentiles receiving the Lord's righteousness. Here we learn of the conversion of the Gentile, Cornelius. Information is also given in Acts 11.

The Gentiles have received the Lord's righteousness and we are ready to look for the new name that the mouth of the Lord is to give. "And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11:26).

We have the new name that the mouth of the Lord was to give. The new name is CHRISTIAN. This name is in two other passages in the New Testament. We hear Agrippa saying unto Paul, ". . . Almost thou persuadedst me to be a Christian (Acts 26:28). Peter said, "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf" (1 Pet. 4:16).

One will instantly see that in the name Christian is the name of Christ who is the head of every child of God. In wearing the name of Christ, honor is given unto Him who redeemed us and made us free from sin. Just as a bride wears the name of her husband, her head, just so every faithful child of God wears the name of his head, who is Christ.

The New Testament shows that the name Christian is worn by individuals. Sometimes people want to call the Lord's church by the name, "Christian Church." But this is a mistake because this is a usage that the word of God never makes of it. The church of the Lord is described in the Scriptures as "the church of God" (1 Cor. 1:2); the "church" (Acts 8:4); the "churches of Christ" (Rom. 16:16); and the "church of the living God" (1 Tim. 3:15); but never is the church of the Lord called the "Christian Church" in the Scriptures.

By a careful study of the Scriptures, it is evident that the name "Christian" is never used as an adjective, but always as a noun. This should be noted by the children of the Lord. Many times we want to call this nation a "Christian nation." Some are heard to use the name Christian with institutions, papers, and other things. Often we hear brethren talking about "Christian papers," "Christian Colleges," "Christian orphan homes," "Christian works" and many other such things. To the careful student of the word of God, it is clear that this is a usage that the word of God

never makes. In times past some of us have been guilty of the mis-use of the word.

Having recognized this teaching from the Bible, brethren who operate "Florida College" have seen this and, wanting to use the name "Christian" only as the Scriptures use it, they changed the name of the school from "Florida Christian College" to "Florida College." While the idea of changing the name of the school did not originate with me, I certainly approve of what they have done.

Since the change from "Florida Christian College" to "Florida College" several of the institutional preachers and brethren have had articles to appear in which they ridiculed the idea of the change and have had some unkind things to say about the brethren for their change. When brethren change from right to wrong, it is sad; but when they change from wrong to right, they are moving in the right direction.

Some of the brethren have said that since the name "Christian" was removed from the name of the school, it shows that they have kicked Christ and the Bible out of the school. Because the brethren who operate Florida College believe in the all-sufficiency of the Scriptures as a rule of faith and practice and believe in the all-sufficiency of the church to do the work that God has given the church to do, they have been the objects of much slander and misrepresentation by the *Gospel Advocate* time and time again. It is not my purpose in this article to either defend or condemn the school; however, I think an observation or two in order.

If the fact that the name "Christian" is absent from the name of a college or is removed, is proof that Jesus Christ and the Bible are not respected by operators of said institution, and this is what some brethren have been charging, then let us look at some facts. Freed-Hardeman College in Henderson, Tennessee, has never had the name Christian connected with that school. Does this mean that the brethren who operate Freed-Hardeman College have kicked out Jesus Christ and the Bible? Also, the name Christian has never been connected with the name of David Lipscomb College in Nashville, Tennessee. Does that mean that Jesus Christ and the Bible were never respected by that school? If the name of Christ being absent from the name of an educational institution means that Christ and His word are not respected, then the absence of the name of Christ from such an institution from its beginning would mean that the institution never did respect Christ and His word. It is now the attitude of both Freed-Hardeman College and David Lipscomb College that "we do many things for which we do not have Bible authority" because they preach the doctrine of "Where there is no pattern."

Someone has said we should call nothing "Christian" that has not been baptized. Those who were called Christians in New Testament days were those who had obeyed the gospel.

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MOUNT CARMEL

The Hebrew word translated "Carmel" means "fruit garden." The word was used to refer to a mountain range in Israel which ran about 13-20 miles toward the southeast from Haifa on the Mediterranean to the plain of Esdraelon. Its greatest height is 1742 feet above sea level.

One of the great contests in man's history took place on Mount Carmel. This contest was between Elijah and the prophets of Baal (1 Ki. 18:20-40). In this study we want to consider some characteristics of that struggle which took place on Mount Carmel.

A Mountain of Choice

In verses twenty and twenty-one the record says, "So Ahab sent a message among all the sons of Israel, and brought the prophets together at Mount Carmel. And Elijah came near to all the people and said, How long will you hesitate between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him. But the people did not answer him a word." Elijah calls for the people to quit "hopping" from one side to the other. If Jehovah was God, they should follow Him. If Baal was God, they should follow him. There was no middle ground.

We also must choose whom we will serve. We are reminded of the words of Joshua, "choose for yourselves today whom you will serve: whether the gods which your fathers served which were beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are living; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Josh. 24:15). A choice has to be made between two because "no one can serve two masters" (Mt. 6:24). For a person to make a choice of neutrality is to make a choice against the Lord (Mt. 12:30). We need then to quit limping from one side to another—from truth to error and from worldliness to godliness.

A Mountain of Courage

We find Elijah telling the people on Mount Carmel, "I alone am left a prophet of the Lord, but Baal's prophets are 450 men" (1 Ki. 18:22). Poor Elijah, he was outnumbered 450 to 1. But that fact did not stop him for he knew, like the psalmist, "The Lord is for me; I will not fear: What can man do to me" (Psa. 118:6)? After all, God and one make a majority.

We should manifest this same courage today. Paul directs us, "Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act

like men, be strong" (1 Cor. 16:13). This strength is found in the Lord (Eph. 6:10-11). We should never be ashamed of Christ or His church, but always stand ready to defend it by fighting "the good fight of faith" (1 Tim. 6:12).

A Mountain of Challenge

Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal to show that Baal was the true God. He said, "Now let them give us two oxen; and let them choose one ox for themselves and cut it up, and place it on the wood, but put no fire under it; and I will prepare the other ox, and lay it on the wood, and I will not put a fire under it. Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call on the name of the Lord, and the God who answers by fire, He is God" (1 Ki. 18:23-24a). The worshippers of Baal claimed that he was the sun god or the god of the elements, so this challenge should have been easy for him. It was equal and fair both to Elijah and to the prophets of Baal. The people agreed to the proposal (1 Ki. 18:24b).

There need to be more challenges to false teachers of our day. There comes a time when every Christian should "contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). They need to be shown in their true light (2 Cor. 11:13-15; Mt. 7:15). In fact we have a divine command to "test the spirits to see whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (1 Jno. 4:1). This work is important because souls are at stake (Mt. 15:14; Ac. 20:29-30). If we faithfully carry out this responsibility the Lord will commend us as He did the church at Ephesus (Rev. 2:2).

A Mountain of Confusion

The prophets of Baal failed miserably (1 Ki. 18:25-29). They cried and danced around their altar till noon. Then Elijah began to mock them. "Maybe he is occupied with something else." "Maybe he is turned aside." So we really see the sharpness of Elijah's remarks. But he continued, "Maybe he is on a journey or asleep and needs to be aroused." So the false prophets tried to attract Baal by cutting themselves with weapons (swords and spears). They continued their efforts till time for the evening sacrifice which was about 3:00 p.m. Their failure was clearly manifested as the Bible says, "there was no voice, no one answered, and no one paid attention" (1 Ki. 18:29).

Modern false teachers find themselves in the same state of confusion when pressed with the truth. They contradict themselves as well as the truth. They are false promisers (2 Pet. 2:17,19). Such confusion shows they are not of God "for God is not a God of confusion but of peace" (1 Cor. 14:33a).

A Mountain of Conquest

After the failure of the prophets of Baal, Elijah allows God to show Himself as true (1 Ki. 18:30-39). He not only prepared the altar, but soaked it with water so that there would be no question as to the source of the fire. Some historians have told us of how false prophets would have someone to hide inside the altars to start fires so as to deceive the people into thinking it was

miraculous. The trench around the altar held two seahs of seed or about 22 quarts. Elijah prayed to God to send the fire and show that He was truly "God in Israel." The fire fell and consumed the offering, the wood, the stones, the dust, and even the water in the trench. The victory was clear to the people.

As long as we stand with truth, we need to never fear that the victory will be ours. Jesus promised, "you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (Jno. 8:32). Paul never had fear of failure as he could affirm "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13). So with us, "in all things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us" (Rom. 8:37).

A Mountain of Condemnation

Verse forty gives us the conclusion to the story. "Then Elijah said to them, Seize the prophets of Baal; do not let one of them escape. So they seized them; and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon and slew them there" (1 Ki. 18:40). Some may think this act cruel but it was what the Law commanded (Deut. 13:1-5).

The greater condemnation of eternal punishment awaits false teachers of today. Those who twist the Scriptures do so "to their own destruction" (2 Pet.

3:16). So the warning is, "if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:9).

Conclusion

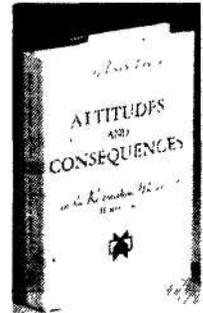
May we learn these valuable lessons from the contest on Mount Carmel. Let us have the courage and faith of Elijah to stand with God. The end will be rewarding.

Attitudes and Consequences in the Restoration Movement

By Homer Hailey. The aim of this work has been to trace the development of two attitudes toward the Scripture authority in the Restoration Movement: that of the early spirits in the movement, and another which grew up within it, leading ultimately to division.

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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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A VALUABLE WORKER FOR THE SPANISH FIELD

Wayne Partain

Royce Chandler has decided to go into full time Spanish work. I say "full time" because he became involved in the work in Columbia, South America in August, 1977, and since that time has had a major part in that effort. At that time, he and I went to Manizales, Columbia to teach a young man, Carlos Restrepo, who had been converted by Correspondence Course distributed by the church in Danville, KY where Royce preached at the time.

When Carlos moved to the capital city of Bogota that fall, Royce and Bob Crawley of Lexington, KY and their wives made plans to go there, and not only give more daily classes to Carlos, but also located property, bought chairs, made a pulpit, etc. so the work could begin. Then immediately after this, in January, 1978, my wife and I went to Bogota to spend about six weeks.

Since that time Royce has returned to Columbia six more times, teaching and preaching with Carlos interpreting. Make that five times, because the sixth time, in Aug.-Sept. of this year Royce preached in Spanish, in Bogota, Manizales and Cali. This summer he spent 100 hours in a classroom, taking a concentrated Spanish course, and then went directly to Columbia to put it to use.

Shortly after returning from Columbia, he announced to the Franklin Rd. congregation in Nashville where he has preached about 2 1/2 years, that he and his wife had made a firm decision to dedicate themselves to the Spanish effort on a full-time basis. His plans call for a move to San Antonio in January, 1982, to make this his home base. His heart is very much in Columbia, but he tried for some time to get a visa to work there and was unsuccessful. It is getting increasingly difficult to get visas to preach in Latin countries. But Royce is interested in the Spanish work in general, in local work, meeting and publishing work, and is eager to serve wherever possible.

His decision has thrilled us. More workers, especially of his calibre, are urgently needed in this work. Many doors are opening to us at the same time that others close in our face.

Let me list a few of the activities he has in mind: (1) work here in San Antonio with us house to house. This is a city of some 850,000 and over half of our population is composed of Mexican-Americans and Mexicans (we have a Mexican-American mayor). Bill Reeves started the congregation here in 1963. They built a nice little concrete block building in 1967 on I-35 South. We're real proud of it, and lately we've done some fixing up, have fenced the property, etc., but more than anything else we want to fill it with people! The congregation is quite small, not because it has never grown but mostly because of "move a ways." So we must put a lot of emphasis on personal work, gospel meeting, distributing literature, etc., to reach more of these people. But a big problem has been that I'm out of town a big part of the time in gospel efforts in other places. But Royce and his wife Hope, have children at home, and will remain in the city much more than we do, especially during the school year, so they can keep the home Bible classes going on a more regular basis. Plus they can do other things that require regular attention, if they so choose, such as utilizing a Bible Correspondence Course in Spanish like the one they had at Danville, or publishing a teaching bulletin, etc.

(2) Bill Reeves, who preaches at nearby Kerrville, and I publish studies in Spanish (such as sermons, commentaries, debate notes, tracts, etc.) and have the printing equipment to do it (it would be completely out of our reach to have it done commercially). Royce is interested also in this phase of the work. He has a wealth of material that needs to be translated into Spanish, printed and distributed to workers in the field. But this sort of activity also calls for full-time work in Spanish. I'm sure that many brethren have no concept of the tremendous shortage of study materials in Spanish. And so

many brethren need help in preparing sermons and classes who are not full-time preachers and who have little if any formal training. I wish you could see the letters requesting the materials we publish and the letters expressing appreciation for them. The exposure Royce has had to the work in Columbia will supply a strong motivation for him in this phase of the work.

(3) Two young men from Bogota, Santiago Castro and Oswaldo Leon, spent several months in Nashville, studying with Royce, and now Santiago preaches full-time in Bogota. Royce is very interested in training workers (2 Tim. 2:2). He preached in Danville eight years and along with one of the elders, brother Kelly Ellis, devoted much time to this effort. He will have much opportunity to give such classes in the field. For example, San Antonio is near the Mexican border, and I know of several fine young men who are eager for such classes. Royce could even give all day classes on Saturdays in Reynosa, Matamoros or Nuevo Laredo, as well as longer sessions when possible.

(4) Obviously he will continue work in Columbia. But this is just one South American country. As already mentioned, more and more doors are opening to us in Puerto Rico, in the Dominican Republic, and always in Mexico. Through brethren in New York and Los Angeles many contacts are being made that open doors to many Latin countries. Also our literature work is opening doors for us.

(5) Correspondence work cannot be overlooked in a list of opportunities (not just friendly letters, but a tremendous teaching instrument). As one works in meeting work, for example, he becomes familiar with needs and problems in other places and can help brethren when he's back home through the mail, by sending them specific studies, and dealing intelligently with what they write about.

Royce is very mature for his 36 years, with valuable experience under his belt, not only in English work but also in Spanish work. I was in Columbia in June last year, preaching in the same places Royce worked in Aug.-Sept., so I'm familiar with some problems there. I mention this now in connection with comment about his maturity. He did an excellent job in dealing with one particular knotty problem. The proof has come to me in the form of a letter written in some detail by a very responsible individual of the Bogota congregation. He writes that now, after Royce's visit, all is at peace again. That speaks volumes as to Royce's ability and is a good indicator of what a stabilizing influence he already is in the Spanish work. You'd have to know the situation to appreciate the encouragement this has brought to us.

I've gone into some detail giving specifics as to possible ways Royce may be involved in the Spanish effort. We need to convince a number of brethren immediately of the importance of his decision. He is determined to begin 1982 in the Spanish work. The work is urgent. Also it is important that he continue using his Spanish before it cools off. I know for a fact that there are congregations looking for good solid, productive men with whom to have fellowship in evangelizing. Here's your opportunity!

Write him at 623 Woodett Dr., Nashville, TN 37211, or better still, call him at 615-311-7484. He'd be delighted to discuss his plans in detail with those interested in having fellowship with him. Or feel free to contact me at 512-333-0595.

FOREIGN NEWS

FERNANDO VENEGAS, Casilla #122 C.C., 5500 Mendoza, Argentina, South America. This is to report that during the dates of October 9-11 we had a gospel meeting with Bro. Raul Caro from Puente Alto-Chile. Attendance averaged 15-20 each night. Then October 22-25 we had a meeting with Bro. Carlos Capelli from Buenos Aires, Argentina. Attendance averaged between 20-25 persons. During the meeting four were baptized into Christ. More recently two others were baptized and one brother left the liberal church and identified with us. Thanks to the Lord for the progress of the work here.

PEDRO RAMIREZ, P.O. Box 21, Douglas, AZ 85607. I have lost \$200 per month support from an individual in Memphis who could no longer send due to other financial obligations. I need to make this up at once, as I had no previous warning. I have many family obligations and need to hear from any who could help. We continue to have visitors to practically all of our services. At-

tendance averages around 100 on Sundays. Antonio Ramirez (my nephew) preached in a five day meeting in Xonacatlan in the state of Mexico. Camilo Villegas begins a 15 day meeting soon in Capamas Sinaloa, deep within the interior. The church here is a wonderful example of a group completely dedicated to the Lord. Our economy is probably 25 years behind, but we are trying. That thing in itself just could be the reason for the growth here. My daughter Sarah recently broke her engagement with her young man because he would not leave the Catholic church and because she would not leave the Lord.

SPRINGHILL, LA—Due to impending repairs on our building we are discontinuing \$125 monthly support to Bro. Rodolfo Valenzuela, Palanginan, Iba, Zambales, Republic of the Philippines, C-2202. His ability and reputation is well reported of by the U.S. brethren who visit there and would be worthy of consideration for support.

FIELD REPORTS

EDGAR E. HOLCOMB, 263 Massachusetts Ave., Elyria, OH 44035. The church in North Ridgeville, OH closed a very fine meeting in which Peter Wilson from Gresham, OR spoke mornings and evenings. Bro. Wilson did an excellent job presenting God's word and greatly edified and encouraged the brethren. Attendance was very good and 2 souls obeyed the gospel. Three have been restored since the meeting.

RICHARD TERRY, P.O. Box Eg 277, Melbourne, FL 32935. January 4 will mark one year with the church here in Eau Gallie. In the past year the church has prospered both physically and spiritually. We conducted meetings with Lloyd Barker and Macky Harden during the year. Our contribution has increased as well as attendance. We have conducted a ladies Bible class, a men's training class, instituted a 24 hour telephone message service wherein the caller hears a three minute message, and just concluded our second Teacher's Training class with 50% of our members in attendance at one of the two classes taught. In 1982 we are wanting to conduct a Personal Evangelism Training class. At present Wiley Adams of Warner Robbins, GA is scheduled to be with us in a meeting in January. The church here has two capable elders. My family and I look forward to many years of service in the Lord's vineyard with them and with the other brethren that comprise this fine congregation.

TROY ADAMS, c/o church of Christ. P.O. Box 506, Ellsworth, ME 04605. In February 1981 I left the small congregation in Ellsworth, ME to move to CA to care for my elderly mother who had lost much of her eyesight and could not care for herself. Recently, my mother had surgery which greatly improved her sight and ability to care for herself. As a result, my wife and I are going back to Maine and continue the work we started in 1978. Whether we raise support or not we plan to move in November, 1981. At the present time I have no outside support. With a wife and five children I need \$2,000 per month. If you are not able to help on a regular basis, please consider a one-time contribution in order to help us get settled. For more information about me or the work in Ellsworth you may contact Ralph Smart at 516 Union St., Bangor, ME 04401; the Temple Terrace church of Christ at 501 Bullard Parkway, Temple Terrace, FL 33617; or the Annandale church of Christ at 4709 Ravenworth Rd., Annandale, VA 22003.

RAY CORNS, 123 Sunset, Gibsonburg, OH 43431. I was in a good gospel meeting at Cob Hill, KY the dates of Sept. 6-11. The audience was very attentive and visitors came from other churches in the area.

RUSSELL H. DUNAWAY, Jr. 4667 Cooper Rd., Cincinnati, OH 45242. I would like to report that I moved to work with the Blue Ash congregation in August, 1981. Bro. Titus Edwards started a meeting with us the same week that I moved. Attendance was good and several visitors were present. The work is here to be done and with the help of the Lord we plan to work in the vineyard, bringing in those who have strayed as well as those who have not obeyed the

gospel. We ask for your prayers.

PAUL BRANCH, 2502-20th Ave. W. Bradenton, FL 33505. Since our last report the new congregation in Sarasota has continued to grow. Additional members have left liberal churches to work with us. One new family from Orlando has recently moved into the area and are meeting with us. One was baptized recently as well. We have gone from nine members to twenty-four members in twenty months. The future looks bright. We will soon move to the DAV (Disabled American Veterans) building for meeting. I will step aside as part-time preacher in order for Herbert Fraser to labor full-time. His work will begin in January, 1982. Much of his support is assured but he still needs some assistance. Can you help? Contact Herbert at 2920 Michigan St., Sarasota, FL 33577 or phone (813) 365-7628. You may also contact me at (813) 748-5592.

FRANK CHUMLEY, 350 Peggy Court, Goodlettsville, TN 37072. After nine years with the Northside church in Lexington, AL where we were able to see the attendance grow from the low 90's to a record of 200 and see the contribution go from a weekly average of \$240 to \$1,200 plus and see 117 souls respond to the invitation, I am now working with the church which meets in Madison, TN known as Kemper Heights church of Christ. We have had 16 responses to the invitation thus far. This congregation was established in 1922 and was known as the Joseph Avenue church of Christ until 1973 when it moved to this area and met in a school until it was able to move into its new building located on Kemper at Tuchahoe Dr. The church here is enjoying a healthy growth under the effective leadership of its elders. We also have seven deacons who are doing their work well. While having a Goodlettsville address, we have a White House, TN telephone number—672-4725.

JEFF COREY, 2047 Garrick Dr., Pittsburg, PA 15235. The new work in the Pittsburg area is now one year old. In the past year there have been six baptisms and several Christians have moved into the area. I began preaching here full-time in August, 1981. We appreciate the prayers, support, and encouragement that we have received. If you know of anyone moving to the Pittsburg area, or just visiting, please contact us at the above address or phone (412) 824-5843 or (412) 795-2560.

JIMMY TUTEN, 7911 Country Dr., Mobile AL 36609. Since our last report, things have continued to increase at Tillman's Corner in Mobile in many ways. We continue to make contacts in growing numbers. Various ones among the liberal brethren are showing an increased interest in our work. Among the several who have identified with us recently is a couple from the liberal church who are providing many contacts and opportunities for discussion of differences. In the Spring we were honored to have Don Hastings preach our meeting. In August, Donald Ames preached our summer meeting. Both men endeared themselves to the brethren. Several major improvements and additions were lately made to our building. All in all, I am enthused about the work. I am grateful to God and to my brethren's help that enables me to continue my enjoyable work in Mobile. Come see us. Call (205) 666-5769 for directions.

DEBATE IN PRINT

EUGENE BRITNELL, P.O. Box 5624, Little Rock, AR 72215. My debate with brother Guy N. Woods on the benevolent work of the church is now in print. The debate was conducted in Suffolk, VA in 1977. It contains about 20 charts which we used in the discussion, and is an interesting and profitable study. There are a few minor errors, and one rather serious error on pg. 80 where several lines were omitted from one of my speeches. I want the readers to know that I didn't black out at that point or change gears as abruptly as the printed copy would seem to indicate. But one can understand what I'm talking about, and the same points are stated at other places in the debate. If I ever have the privilege of meeting brother Woods again, I shall not proceed beyond my first speech unless I get him to admit or deny that he understands what the issue is and what we are discussing. He never did touch or even acknowledge the real issue in the debate. He jumped from the church (which we were not discussing) to the home (which we were not discussing) and

refused to discuss the board of directors (which we were discussing). Read the debate and see if that isn't right. You may order it from Religious Supply Center. The price (hardback cloth binding) is \$6.95 plus postage.

NEW CONGREGATIONS

GREENTOWN, OH—On October 4th a congregation began meeting in the American Legion Building on Perrydale St. Our first month's attendance averaged in the 20's. Due to the distance of the area from other faithful churches, it was decided a new work in this community would be beneficial to our faithfulness and to spreading the gospel. Anyone wishing to contact this new congregation may call Phil Duren at (216) 877-3903, or write him at 1112 Cosmos St., N. W. Hartville, OH 44632. We meet at 9:45 a.m. for Bible Study and 10:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. for worship on Sundays. On Thursdays we meet at 7:30 p.m. for Bible study.

EAST ST. LOUIS, IL—A new congregation began in October in East St. Louis. These brethren are presently meeting in the home of one of the members on Sunday morning and Tuesday evening. If you know of members of the church who live in E. St. Louis or would desire more information about this new work, please contact Johnny Little at 5160 K Campfire, Florissant, MO 63033. His phone number is 355-3020. These brethren have indicated a desire to stand firm for the truth and respect the authority of Christ.

FOLEY, AL—A work was started in Foley, AL in June, 1981. This is the only sound congregation in Baldwin County which has a population of 70,000. Foley is 12 miles from the Gulf and many vacationers pass through on the way to Gulf Shores.

PRINCETON, WV—A new congregation has been established in the Princeton, WV area. Their Sunday services are 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. Their mid-week services are at 7 p.m. For more information contact John Gibson, 413 Old Bluefield Rd., Princeton, WV, 24740. Or phone (304) 425-3622.

NEW LOCATIONS

MEDINA, OH—The church which has for several years met in the American Legion Hall, 620 N. Broadway in Medina, now has their own building at 6205 Wadsworth Rd., about a mile south of town on St. Hwy. 57 near the intersection of St. Hwy 162. Our mailing address is still P.O. Box 313, Medina, OH 44258.

WINCHESTER, KY—The Winchester congregation has finally succeeded in purchasing the property they have been trying to get for some time. There is a dwelling house on the property and on the back of the house is an auditorium suitable for our needs. We met for the first time on Sunday, September 6, 1981. The address is 623 Colby Rd., Winchester, KY at the corner of Mahan Drive and Colby Rd. It is two blocks off the by-pass around Winchester. Everyone is invited to attend services. Sunday Bible study at 10 a.m., worship at 11 a.m. and evening worship at 6 p.m. Wednesday night we meet at 7.

PREACHERS NEEDED

JACKSONVILLE, FL—The church that meets at 5518 Dunn Ave. in Jacksonville is in need of an evangelist. We are a small congregation numbering about 40. We can only offer \$150 per week in support at this time. As we grow so shall increase the amount of support. The one that comes must be sound in the faith, willing to give book, chapter, and verse for all that he teaches. We need one willing to do personal work. There are two congregations who have helped with support here in the past and will continue this support. If interested contact O'Dell Tucker at 822 Granville Rd., Jacksonville, FL 32205. Or phone 781-0757.

YOUNGSTOWN, OH—The Westview church of Christ in suburban Youngstown, OH is searching for a full-time preacher. The congregation has an average attendance of 35 and can be nearly self-supporting. The mortgage on a fairly new building will be paid off by the end of 1981. Please write to the Westview church of Christ at 800 South Niles-Canfield Road, Youngstown, OH 44515. Or call (216) 792-6405.

LAKE BUTLER, FL—The Danville church of Christ just south of Lake Butler (25 miles north of Gainesville) is in need of a preacher. Some outside support would be necessary. We would like an older man. Phone Troy Blackwelder at (904) 496-3859.

PREACHER AVAILABLE

DENNY DIEHL, 1758 Ravizza Ave., Santa Clara, CA 95051. I am interested in relocating with a church around the first of the year. I have six years preaching experience. Phone (408) 246-6932.

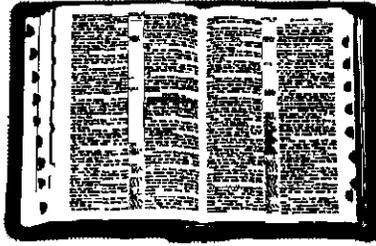
IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	330
RESTORATIONS	162

(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)

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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 XXIII

FEBRUARY, 1982

NUMBER 2

Using the SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

Ken Green

2212 Jordan Lane, S.W.
Huntsville, Alabama 35805



THE RIGHT TO DECIDE

"And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God?" (Genesis 50:19). A growing number in our time apparently feel they can answer that question in the affirmative. A recent editorial in the Huntsville Times reported that more than half of the British pediatricians who responded to an opinion poll said they felt that handicapped babies who were rejected by their parents should be allowed to die. Another poll indicated that 60 percent of the pediatricians felt the decision to let the handicapped baby live or die should depend on the severity of its handicap.

It frightens me to hear of such casualises toward human life on the part of those whose profession it is to preserve it. This editorial states: "**Doubtless there are situations in which to our human eyes it appears that a pathetically handicapped newborn child might be 'better off dead.'** These eyes, however, are human and do not see the future. And it is not taking a quantum leap to go from deciding that a child should not live because of physical handicaps to deciding that he or she should not live because of political, social, racial or whatever other reasons might develop in our Orwellian future."

It hasn't taken long for society to move from unconcern for the unborn child to apathy toward the handicapped and rejected child. "Discontinuance of life functions" for handicapped adults is being defended more and more. The latter end is really no

worse than the beginning, in this case. The question that surely should be answered is: "Am I in the place of God?"

THE WHITE OF AN EGG

Eliphaz had just opened the affirmative in that famous debate. The proposition: "Job is suffering greatly because Job has sinned greatly." As is the nature of polemics, he minced no words. No quarter was given to his adversary, and none was requested.

Job seemed dismayed, even confused over the turn of events. "My friends are like wet weather streams that overflow in the Winter and Spring. But in the blistering hot Summer, when a fellow needs some refreshment, he finds nothing but a dry bed" (See Job 6:15-21). Job needed someone to put his arm around him and comfort him. He wasn't interested in debating their proposition!

"**Can that which is unsavory be eaten without salt?**" he asked. "Or is there any taste in the white of an egg?" (6:6). There are two ways Job might have intended his words. Life was tasteless. It held no joy or pleasure. All flavor was lost. Then again, the words of his friend were as bland as food without seasoning. They were as tasteless as the white of an egg.

There are many things that go better with a little seasoning. These may be needful, and they may be nourishing. They may even be medicinal. But as the children's song expresses it, "A spoonful of sugar makes the medicine go down."

Reproof is like that. It's a duty. But it's always a distasteful thing. A little brotherly kindness (2 Peter 1:7; Gal. 6:1) will make it much more palatable and easy to swallow. I've known of instances in which brethren have rebuked others unkindly and were somewhat taken aback when their "good intentions" were not well received. We would do well to remember that those eggs are tasteless little things anyway. Few people can eat them without a little salt. Add the salt of kindness.

Many Bible doctrines are repugnant to most people. The idea that "only members of the church of Christ will be saved" is certainly of that nature to the average person who conceives of the church as just

another denomination. Misconceptions must be corrected and the truth must be taught. But "them eggs sure need some salt!" "But speaking the truth in love..." said Paul (Eph. 4:15). Let's sprinkle on the salt of love.

Affliction is ever a tasteless thing. Job found no pleasure in it. But the seasoning of patience saw him through. "For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise" (Heb. 10:36). "Behold we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy" (James 5:11). Let's be sure to add a pinch of the salt of patience to our trials.

Our speech should be seasoned with salt that we might know how to answer every man (Col. 4:6). The speech of many Christians has no edification, no godliness, and absolutely no benefit. Frivolous thoughts and questionable, if not downright vulgar, jokes corrupt their vocabulary. **"Let no corruptible speech proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying..."** (Eph. 4:29) The speech of too many is rotten, negative, critical, and full of maggots. It needs the purifying quality of a little salt.

Death is an unsavory expectation. We have a natural dread of the unknown. Even Jesus did not relish the thought of death (Heb. 5:7). But **"for the joy set before him he endured the cross"** (Heb. 12:2). Thoughts of eternal life are just the seasoning we need for that unfavorable dish.

Friends, let's not eat or serve these dishes without salt. There's no taste in the white of an egg. Add some seasoning to your life. Jesus came that we might have life and have it more abundantly.

About this book...

THE REIGN OF GOD

Jim McGuigan

The Reign of God: Is the "Kingdom" equivalent to the "church"? Are you sure? Exactly what is "Davidic authority"? Are Christians in the kingdom of David? Are you sure? Who was the kingdom taken from? Why was Daniel written? When was Zechariah 8:23 fulfilled? How could a "new" cov-

enant be made with the church of Christ if the church never had a previous covenant made with it? Has God cast off the Jews? Is Abraham in the church? Is the kingdom of the New Testament a "restored" kingdom? Has there always been a kingdom of God? Are you sure? What of Daniel 2:44? But, then again, what of Psalm 29:10? Interested? Why don't you take a look! Maybe this little book will put some things together for you. It helped me!

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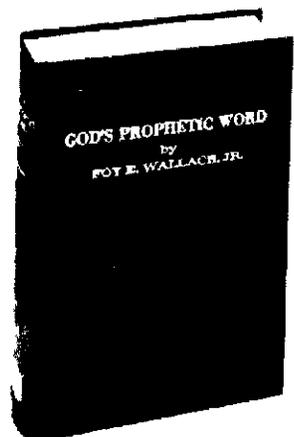
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Editorial

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A PERNICIOUS ERROR LIVES ON

In this issue of the paper we carry a lengthy article on Premillennialism, by J. T. Smith. It is clearly stated and well illustrated with charts and should prove useful not only in studying the subject 'but also in teaching against this error which, unfortunately, is alive and thriving. This material will be put into tract form and brother Smith is making arrangements to send it free to brethren in the Philippines, Nigeria and other places where recent efforts have been made to overthrow the faith of some churches and preachers.

There is a tendency for some to think that because an issue has been thoroughly thrashed in one generation, lines of fellowship drawn, and in some cases, error so identified and sealed off that it appears to be no longer a threat to the bulk of the churches, that the error will therefore go away forever. But all it takes is one untaught generation to prepare the soil for the enemy to sow tares while the rest sleep. There is evidence that premillennial brethren are becoming more militant and are spending much money and exerting much effort to infiltrate the ranks of faithful brethren in foreign fields. This has already come to light in both Nigeria and the Philippines. Robert Boyd of Louisville, Kentucky has personally visited in both these fields and has put his radio program on several stations in these and other countries. He has equipped native preachers whom he could influence with printed materials to indoctrinate them on the basic premises of this doctrinal error.

Premillennialism Lives Among Churches Of Christ

Within a thirty mile range of downtown Louisville, Kentucky, there are 26 known premillennial Churches of Christ. They date to the time and influence of R. H. Boll who lived and died in Louisville. WORD AND WORK is still published here. The Portland Christian School (pre-school through high school) still operates. A college at Winchester, Kentucky (where the famous Neal-Wallace Debate took place) folded about three years ago. There are a few other pockets of strength for this movement among churches of Christ, though Louisville is still the stronghold. Some of the premillennial congregations in this area are fairly large.

Premillennialism among brethren was borrowed from denominationalism and it is no accident that the churches and preachers associated with it manifest a

tolerant and compromising attitude toward denominational churches and error. One of the larger of these churches is known to dismiss Sunday evening services at times when a neighboring Baptist Church is having a "Revival" so they can attend. The Baptist church has been known to return the favor. The editor has personally observed the warmth of association some of their preachers show for preachers of the Christian Church in this area. When Carl Ketcherside and Leroy Garrett come to this area they are welcomed with open arms by both the Christian Churches and premillennial churches of Christ. Several years ago premillennial churches in the Louisville area bought a large ad in the local newspaper to endorse a Billy Graham Crusade and to register their opposition to churches of Christ which opposed Graham and his Crusade. They have an aversion to debating, though Robert Boyd moderated for a Filipino preacher in a debate last October in Davao City, Philippines.

We must teach the younger generation concerning these matters and we must do it NOW. We are a long time removed from the major battles of the late 1920s, 30s and 40s. Not only do we have second and third generations not properly taught, but many of those converted out of denominationalism have had their minds saturated for years with one form or another of this error.

Premillennialism Lives In Denominationalism

The so-called evangelical churches and especially the independent, fundamental denominations are nearly all premillennial in their outlook toward Bible prophesy and future world events. Billy Graham aids and abets this cause. Hal Lindsey has written several books which have sold into the millions (such as *The Late Great Planet Earth* and *Armageddon Now*) and have been popular best-sellers. A number of the churches associated with the famous "Moral Majority" are thoroughly premillennial. Many of the better known faith healers are premillennial. Such popular radio preachers as J. Vernon McGhee, Oliver Greene (now deceased, but whose programs continue either with re-runs of his tapes or with his son preaching the same errors), Herbert and Garner Ted Armstrong, to say nothing of the radio efforts of Adventists and others, pour out daily doses of this hodge-podge of deadly spiritual poison. Jehovah's Witnesses bring it from door to door. Time after time gospel preachers are called on to help church members answer questions raised by these deceitful workers. This false system of error is responsible for greatly complicating efforts of Christians to teach the truth because it warps and twists every part of the Bible to fit the pattern demanded by the engineers of this doctrinal maze. From the Abrahamic promises of Genesis 12 to the utterances of the prophets of Israel and Judah, to Babylon and back, through Matthew 24, I Thessalonians 4 and all the way to the end of the book of Revelation, these doctrinal quacks have wrested the word of God not only to their own

destruction but to the hindrance of some who might be able to see the truth were it not for the hang-ups created by this mass of misinformation.

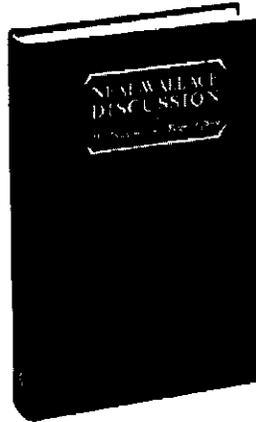
**Premillennialism Lives In
World Politics**

It is sad to see what Premillennialism does to undermine Bible study in the hearts of so many people caught up in denominationalism. It is heartbreaking to see it make any progress at all among those who have vowed to speak as the oracles of God. But it is downright dangerous to the peace and security of the world when it enters world politics. It is contended by nearly all premillennialists that the nation of Israel must go back to Palestine. Jesus is to come back to earth and reign on David's throne from Jerusalem. This view leads its proponents to promote the cause of Zionism in world politics. It regards the Jewish people as still a favored people who are to receive special attentions from the Lord. They therefore may be expected to use their influence in favor of legislation and foreign policy which gives preferential treatment to Israel. On his last visit to the United States, Prime Minister Begin had a visit with Moral Majority leader, Jerry Falwell. In spite of the fact that the New Testament teaches that "God is no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34) and both Jew and Gentile are reconciled to God through the cross of Christ and in the body of Christ (Eph. 2:14-18), these preachers with their powerful lobbying organizations are pressuring Congress and the present administration (as they did past administrations) to make decisions internationally which are pro-Israel and anti-Arab. This encourages political and military adventurism on the part of the nation of Israel. The world is in a big enough mess without quack preachers bolstering military conquests by a nation which stands before God on the same footing as all other peoples. There is nothing anti-Semitic about this. God's grace is extended to both Jew and Gentile through the gospel of his Son (Rom. 1:16-17; Acts 2:38-39). Those who embrace the gospel are God's chosen people. Of the church Peter wrote "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Pet. 2:9).

We are indebted to brother Smith for his excellent material. Why not drop him a note of appreciation. If you differ with him, he would still be glad to hear from you. Extra copies of this issue will be for sale as long as the supply lasts. First come-first served. Religious Supply Center has advertised several helpful study books on this subject in this issue. We especially recommend God's Prophetic Word by Wallace and the Neal-Wallace Debate.

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Though the doctrine of Premillennialism is taught by most every major denomination, there are but few brethren who believe in the theory. Recently, brethren from Louisville, Ky brought this doctrine to the Philippine Islands and spread it among churches of Christ.

Though the word "Premillennialism" sounds very complicated, it is actually a very simple word. "Pre," meaning "before," and "millennial" meaning 1,000. Hence the theory of Premillennialism is as follows:

(1) God promised and His prophets (Ezekiel and Daniel) prophesied that He would set up an earthly kingdom with Christ on David's literal throne in Jerusalem.

(2) That the kingdom of Old Testament promise and prophecy has not yet come into existence.

(3) Though the kingdom was announced "at hand" by both John and Jesus, it never has appeared.

(4) Jesus is King by right, but is not now actually on His throne.

(5) The kingdom of Old Testament prophecy was postponed because national Israel rejected Christ.

(6) Christ presented in parables a new announcement of the new and unexpected aspect (church age) the kingdom would assume during an anticipated age of the king in rejection and absence from the world (Kingdom of God, by R. H. Boll, Page 70).

(7) In order for the prophecy of Daniel 2:44 to be fulfilled, pagan Rome must come back into existence with a world dictator over a 10 part kingdom.

(8) The Jews must be restored as a nation, return to Palestine, and be converted en masse, in order that Christ can be king "in fact," instead of merely a "crown prince."

(9) The temple of Solomon will be rebuilt and a Jewish system of worship will be restored.

(10) There will be a "rapture"—the saints, both living and dead, will meet the Lord in the air and continue there for a time.

(11) There will be two resurrections in the future, one of the saints at the "rapture," and one of the wicked at the end of the 1,000 years which will be the end of the world.

(12) At the time of the "rapture," there will come a time of "the great tribulation" upon the earth, which the saints will escape.

(13) After the "rapture" a period of time will pass, perhaps 7 years, and Christ will leave the throne of His

majesty in heaven and occupy the literal throne of David for a literal 1,000 years.

(14) As king on David's literal throne in Jerusalem, Jesus shall engage in a carnal "battle of Armageddon."

(15) Christ's coming is imminent.

Thus the theory of Premillennialism is that when Daniel prophesied of the kingdom that was to be established (Daniel 2:44), he was speaking of Christ coming to sit upon David's literal throne in Jerusalem and rule over all Israel. When the Jews rejected Christ, the prophecy was postponed and the church was substituted instead. Now, according to the theory, Christ has promised to return and fulfill the promise of Daniel 2:44 by reigning in Jerusalem on David's literal throne for 1,000 years according to Revelation chapters 19 and 20. Thus according to the theory, "pre" means "before" and "millennial" means 1,000. Hence Christ will begin His reign before the 1,000 years of Revelation 20.

The Premillennial Theory—Part I

In our study I believe it will be to our advantage to divide the theory into 5 different parts, examining each part separately. We will include the first four statements of the theory in part # 1 of our study.

I do not suppose that any serious student of the Bible would deny that God promised, in the book of prophecy, that He would set up "His Kingdom." Neither is there any doubt as to "WHEN" it was to be established.

You will recall that in Daniel 2, Nebuchadnezzar had a dream. The dream was of the image of a man whose form was magnificent. Nebuchadnezzar called all his magicians, and astrologers, and sorcerers, and the Chaldeans, to show the king his dream. They told him if he could tell them the dream, they would give him the interpretation thereof. The king said he could not remember the dream, and unless they told him the dream and the interpretation thereof they would all be cut in little pieces.

Daniel sought "an audience" with the king and said, "there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known unto Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days" (Daniel 2:38). Then Daniel tells the dream of the great image Nebuchadnezzar saw.

The image which Nebuchadnezzar saw had a head of gold, arms and breast of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, and whose legs were of iron, with the feet and toes part of iron and part of clay. Then Daniel gives the interpretation of the dream. (Next Page)

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He said king Nebuchadnezzar was the head of gold (v. 38). Daniel was simply showing that Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom was represented by the head of gold. However, "another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass which should bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron. . . (vs. 38-40). Thus history reveals that the 2nd and 3rd kingdoms that should follow the Babylonian kingdom were the Medes and Persians, and the Grecian kingdom under Alexander the great. The fourth kingdom, that would follow the Grecian kingdom, was the Roman empire. Both Bible and secular history confirm that this is what did take place.

Daniel also prophesied that "in the days of these kings (of the Roman empire, jts) the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed: and it shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces all of these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever" (v. 44). Thus, all admit that God's prophecy, according to Daniel, was that during the days of the Roman kings, God would set up a kingdom that would never be destroyed.

However, the problem arises when brethren (1) want to make it a literal kingdom in literal Jerusalem with Christ sitting and ruling on David's literal throne; (2) and saying that even though the kingdom was prophesied by both John the Baptist and Christ as being "at hand," it did not come "in fact." I believe both of the above statements are erroneous.

First of all, it is simply an *assumption* to say that Christ was coming to Jerusalem to establish a literal kingdom and sit upon David's literal throne. Some brethren contend that the prophecy of Daniel was "postponed." Where is the passage of Scripture that indicates this? Either the prophecy was fulfilled, or it failed. Notice the following chart.

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PROPHECY — UNFULFILLED OR FAILED — WHICH?

If Unfulfilled:

1. Who Can Give The Meaning?

II Pet. 1:20-21

2. Only Deity Can Give The
Meaning Of Prophecy!

I Cor.2:9-12 - Eph.3:2-5

If Failed:

1. Spoken By False Prophet Deut.
18:21-22

Next we notice one of the great mistakes of the Jews of the Old and New Testament periods is the same mistake of premillennialists today. They all want to make the kingdom that God was to establish a literal, physical kingdom here on earth with Christ on David's literal throne in literal Jerusalem. God made no such promise. In fact, every specific thing taught by Jesus about the kingdom is that it would be a SPIRITUAL KINGDOM, and not a literal, physical kingdom like the kingdoms of David and Solomon in the Old Testament.

CHRIST'S KINGDOM PHYSICAL OR SPIRITUAL

Christ's Kingdom Is Not:

1. Of This World - John 18:36

2. Meat & Drink - Rom. 14:17

3. Entered By Natural Birth John 3:1-7

4. Entered By Saying Lord, Lord
Matt.7:21

Christ's Kingdom Is:

1. Within You - Luke17:21

2. Righteousness, Joy, Peace - Rom. 14:17

3. Entered By Spiritual Birth - John 3:1-7

4. Entered By Doing Father's Will

Matt:7.21 - 1 Pet:1.23

The very thing that Christ argues when he speaks concerning his kingdom is that it IS NOT physical, but spiritual. And then in many of the same verses, as you can see from the above chart, he argues that IT IS SPIRITUAL in its nature.

When Jesus began His personal ministry in John 3, a ruler of the Jews, Nicodemus, came to Jesus and told Him that he accepted Him as a teacher come from God. Now here was a man that had every right, according to Jewish and premillennial beliefs, to be a part of the kingdom prophesied by Daniel. He was a Jew, even a ruler of the Jews. Was he, because of his being of the literal seed of Abraham, eligible to be a part of God's kingdom? Jesus said he was not! In fact the very second lesson recorded by John of Jesus' ministry involved His teaching concerning His kingdom, and he told Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). Nicodemus was amazed at this teaching. "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?" (v. 4). Nicodemus had missed the point entirely, just as

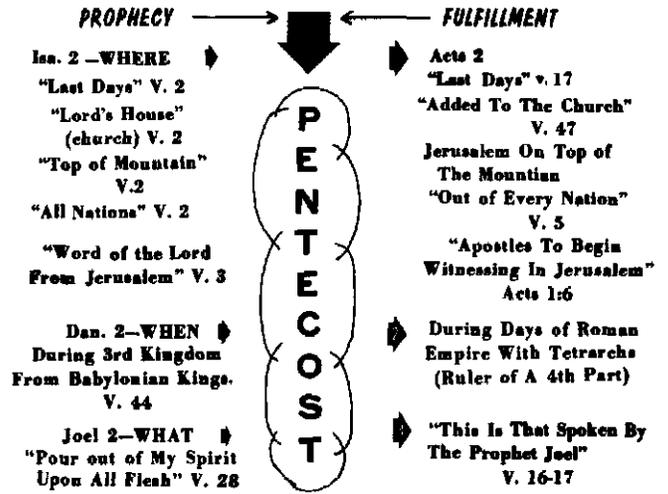
the premillennialists miss the point today. All he could visualize was literal. But Jesus explained that it was not the fleshly or Israelite that was destined to be a part of His kingdom, but "except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (v. 5). What did Daniel prophesy? That God would set up His kingdom. To whose kingdom is Christ referring? God's! Then Jesus told this Jewish ruler, who thought, according to all he understood of God's kingdom, that he was of the proper physical lineage to be a part of it, "ye must be born again (v.7).

So Jesus, in explaining His kingdom, said it is "not of this world." (The word "world" is from the Greek word kosmos which means "order or arrangement of things"), else would my servants fight (wage a carnal battle) that I might not be delivered into the hands of the Jews" (John 18:36). Paul explained it was not eating and drinking, but righteousness, and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17). And as Jesus explained, it is entered by a birth of water (baptism) and the Spirit (John 3:1-7). It is not entered by saying Lord, Lord, but by doing the will of the Father (Matt. 7:21; 1 Peter 1:23). Thus in the very beginning of His ministry, Christ introduced His kingdom as spiritual.

You will recall that Daniel said God had made known these things unto him that would take place in the "latter days." But Isaiah 2:2-3 also talks about what is to take place in the "last days." "And it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem."

Now from these passages we learn that the "Lord's house" would be established in the "last days," and the word of the Lord would go forth from Jerusalem. I understand the expression "The Lord's house" to mean the church (cf. 1 Tim. 3:15). Jesus said that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations (as Isaiah prophesied) beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47).

Then Joel's prophecy of what would happen in the "last days" (Joel 2:28-32), was quoted in Acts 2:16-21 and Peter said, this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel" (v. 16).

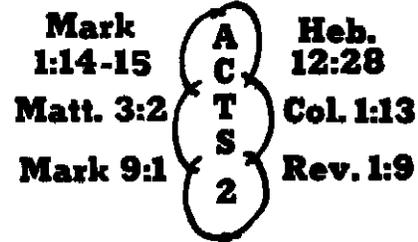


We can see from the above chart that the prophecy of Daniel 2, Isaiah 2, and Joel 2 were fulfilled on the first pentecost after Christ's resurrection.

Thus to sum up what has been said by Daniel, Isaiah, and Joel, they said in the last days the Lord would establish his kingdom (which would be entered by baptism as the Spirit directed, John 3:5; the Lord's house or church) would be established and all nations would flow unto it, or as Jesus said, His name was to be preached among all nations (Luke 24:47); and Joel's prophecy of what would happen in the "last days" DID HAPPEN according to Acts 2:16.

Hence, according to the above information, the kingdom of Daniel's prophecy and the Church of Isaiah's prophecy are one and the same thing, both are entered by baptism. Thus both the Jews and the premillennialists look for the fulfillment of a prophecy that has already been fulfilled.

Kingdom NOW In Existence



Those who are Christians, who believe in Premillennialism, are not foolish enough to deny that we are a part of Christ's kingdom today, for Col. 1:13 plainly says we have been translated into it. However, according to a conversation I had in the Philippines with brother Robert Boyd, the kingdom of Col. 1:13 is "Absolutely not the kingdom of Daniel 2:44." But where is God's prophecy of two kingdoms? Thus according to premillennialists, God promised a kingdom which we do not have, and has translated us into a kingdom which he had not promised. Who can believe it?

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According to premillennialists, Christ is supposed to change positions before the end. He is supposed to leave the throne of his Father David, which is now in heaven (Acts 2:29-35) and return to His footstool, the earth, to reign for 1,000 years. However, David, as quoted by Peter in Acts 2, said God would not leave Christ in the grave (v, 29). This was fulfilled, Peter said, when Christ was raised from the dead (v. 31). Christ began sitting on Pentecost, for he sat down at the right hand of the throne of God after He ascended (vs. 34-35). And, Paul said He must reign until he hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death (1 Cor. 15:25-26). The end of death will come at the judgment, thus Christ will occupy his present position (of sitting and reigning over his spiritual kingdom) until the end.

Besides, Christ was to be raised up to "sit on David's throne while he slept with his fathers" (II Samuel 7:12-13). But, if Christ is to sit on David's throne after the "rapture," as premillennialists tell us, then it will not be while "David is sleeping with the fathers," for they will all, according to the premillennial theory, have already been raised.

The Premillennial Theory—Part 2

This section of our study will include numbers 5 and 6 of our explanation at the beginning of this study on the salient points of the theory.

It is claimed that one of the reasons Christ postponed His kingdom was because of the rejection of the Jews. However, in Matthew 3, when John the Baptist began to preach, "repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (v. 2), the Scriptures say, "Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the regions round about Jordan, and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins" (vs. 5-6).

Also, in John 6 when the 5,000 were fed with the five barley loaves and two small fishes, vs. 14-15 say, "Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world. When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone." Does this sound like they had not accepted him to be their king? They understood all right who He was. However, they already had their minds made up as to what kind of kingdom He should establish (literal instead of spiritual) and later rejected Him because He did not establish the kind of kingdom they expected. How great, however, would have been the problem had Jesus done what the Jews expected of Him according to Ezekiel's and Daniel's prophecies. Observe:

That Christ should come to Jerusalem and sit on David's literal throne ruling over National Israel and conquering all the nations.

Question: If their expectations had been fulfilled, what about all the prophecies of Isaiah, and David in the Psalms, concerning a "suffering saviour"? For Christ could not have been conquered and would have never died on the cross. Thus, both the Jews ex-

pectation, along with the premillennialists theory, would completely have annihilated Christ's suffering on the cross (I Peter 1:9-11); remission of sins, both Jew and Gentile being included in God's plan (Eph. 2:16); etc. On the other hand, if all the prophecies concerning the "suffering saviour" were to be fulfilled, is it possible that God never intended to establish His kingdom during the days of the Roman kings as Daniel prophesied, which puts God in the position of making two sets of promises both of which COULD NOT have been fulfilled without contradicting each other? Who can believe it?

However, if as we have already suggested, Christ's kingdom is spiritual, and his body (church) is spiritual, then He was to suffer and die that by His resurrection and ascension He might receive authority both in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18; Romans 1:4) and establish himself king of His kingdom and head of His body, the church, which is, of course, what happened.

The Premillennial Theory—Part 3

Now parts 7, 8, 9 of our explanation of the premillennial theory are the next points of our study.

According to the premillennial theory, in order for Daniel 2:44 to be fulfilled, pagan Rome must come back into existence with a world dictator over 10 world kingdoms. In fact we are made to wonder, because of some statements by brother R. H. Boll, whether Christ's failure to establish His kingdom was a result of the Jews rejection, or God's mistake.

The Jews Rejection Or God's Mistake — Which?

According to brother R. H. Boll in his book. *The Kingdom of God*. page 32. "*The Roman world-power then, though now it does not exist, as such, is to return. When it returns, the Roman power will be in the form of a ten-kingdom confederacy under one dominant head; which fact is indicated by the toes of the Image: more fully set forth in the ten horns of the fourth beast (Daniel 7); and clearly revealed to John in Revelation:... (Rev. 17:12-13; 19:11-21).*"

HOWEVER

On page 30 of the same book brother Boll says. "*But she (Rome. its) has never as yet. nor at any time in the past, taken on its final shape as a ten-kingdom world-power which Daniel and John beheld. (Daniel 2 and 7, and Revelation 13).*"

THUS

According to brother Boll. God sent Christ into the world (and Christ was willing to come) at a time when it would have been IMPOSSIBLE for the prophecies concerning the Kingdom to be fulfilled.

Also to show that when Daniel said "in the days of these kings" he was speaking of the Roman empire that was in existence during Jesus' lifetime, we know that Caesar was on the throne in Rome. However, there were rulers (kings) over provinces during these days who were under Caesar, and the proof is so stated in Luke 3:1 where these men are referred to as "tetrarchs" (ruler of a 4th part). Herod is one of those who is listed as a tetrarch. However, in Matthew 2:1, Herod is referred to as "king." Hence, Daniel's prophecy of God's kingdom being established during

the days of "kings" fits completely in this time period. Almost every premillennialist that you hear preach on the subject sooner or later brings up the "land promise" or God's giving the land of Canaan to Israel in fulfillment of the promise to Abraham and his seed in Genesis.

RESTORATION OF THE JEWS TO PALESTINE

- I. THE LAND PROMISE TO ABRAHAM & HIS SEED FULFILLED UNDER JOSHUA**
 - A. LAND OF CANAAN PROMISED TO ABRAHAM & HIS SEED GEN. 13:15, 15:18,17:7-8,**
 - B. THE LAND PROMISE WAS FULFILLED EXO. 6:4-8, JOSH. 21:43-45.**
- 2. THE JEWS & THE ABRAHAMIC PROMISE**
 - A. THE LAND PROMISE WAS FULFILLED UNDER JOSHUA 23:12-16.**
 - B. THE RESTORATION PROMISE WAS FULFILLED UNDER EZRA 1:1-4.**
 - C. THE SPIRITUAL PROMISE IS FULFILLED IN CHRIST GAL 3:26-29.**

**PROMISES FULFILLED
CEASE TO BE BINDING!**

As you will note from the above chart, every promise God made to Abraham and his seed was fulfilled. The promise of God's giving the land of Canaan was fulfilled under the leadership of Joshua. Also the Jews and Abraham's promise was fulfilled under Joshua with a warning in Joshua 23:43-45 that if they did not continue to serve God but turned to idol gods, God would drive them off the land. However in the above cited passages in Joshua, God said "not ought of the promise failed, all was fulfilled."

But premillennialists say that after driving the Jews out of the land into Babylonian captivity, He renewed the promise to bring them back into the land. Every promise made by Jeremiah was "accomplished" or "fulfilled" under king Cyrus according to II Chron. 36:22 and Ezra 1:1.

This only leaves the spiritual promise God made to Abraham in Genesis 22:18 when He promised to bless all nations through the "seed" of Abraham. In Galatians chapter three, Paul explains the spiritual promise.

The above chart shows that God intended to fulfill His promise to Abraham through Christ (v. 16). He also shows that the Law of Moses was added because of the transgressions of the people till (showing duration of time) the seed (Christ) should come. So, says Paul, "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster" (thus no longer under the law of Moses). Now, Paul says, "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise." Thus if one has been baptized into Christ, he is therefore a part of the body of Christ, Abraham's seed, and an heir according to God's promise to Abraham. Hence all God's promises to Abraham and his seed have been fulfilled.

Thus (the teaching of the premillennialists that the Jews must be restored to Palestine as a nation and be converted en masse as a nation is just a figment of their imagination. The truth of the matter is, today the Israel of God are those who have received "spiritual circumcision."

**NEW TESTAMENT
CIRCUMCISION**

- 1. Kind — Spiritual of the heart
Rom. 2:28-29**
- 2. Performed By — Deity
Col. 2:11-12**
- 3. Purpose — Cutting Off of the
Body of the Sins of
the Flesh Col. 2:11**
- 4. When? — In Baptism
Col. 2:12 Rom. 6:6
"Spiritual Jews"**

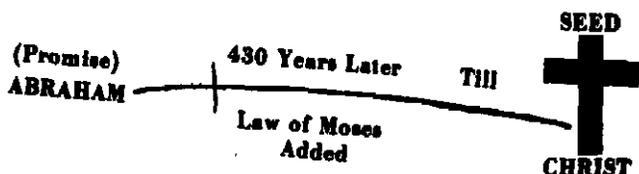
The Premillennial Theory—Part 3

Now parts 10-12 of our explanation of Premillennialism.

Premillennialists have taken a word that is not found in the Greek New Testament at all, but in the Latin, and continually talk about its fulfillment. The word is "rapture." Premillennial preachers preach about the "rapture" as if it is found on almost every page in the Bible. Of course the "idea" of the word "rapture" as used by the premillennialists is found in 1 Thess. 4:13-14. However, let me hasten to say that their application of it and their theory about it is not found.

The idea is that of "rising to meet the Lord." There is certainly no question about this happening according to the above passage. The problem arises when premillennialists say this is going to take place a thousand and seven years before the resurrection of the wicked. (Supposedly the raised saints will be with the Lord "somewhere" for 7 years before the millennium begins).

There is no evidence that there will be any "time



separation" between the resurrection of the righteous and the wicked. 1 Thess. 4:13-17 is not a passage to be used as proof by the premillennialists. Here Paul has only the righteous under consideration. Yes, the word "first" is used in connection with the resurrection mentioned here. However, Paul's statement is that dead Christians will be raised before the living Christians are caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord, and Christians who have died are raised first. The resurrection of the wicked is not even under consideration in this passage.

1 Thess. 4:13-17
Does NOT Teach
Two Resurrections
It Does Teach That
The Righteous Dead
Will Be Raised Before
The Righteous Living
Are Taken

There are a number of passages, however, that do discuss both the resurrection of the righteous and the wicked. According to the following chart, there will be an "hour" in which "all" shall hear the voice of the Lord and come forth, both the righteous and the wicked. Also, Acts 24:15 says there shall be "a" resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust. And again, Paul said that when the Lord Jesus returned, he would take vengeance on those who obey not the gospel. But at that time, He will also be glorified in His saints (II Thess. 1:7-10). For Paul said "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more" (II Cor. 5:16).

When Will The Lord
Return ? 2 Peter 3:10

Who Will Be Raised
At Christ's Coming?
ALL!

John 5:28-29
Acts 24:15

The evidence is overwhelming when we read the passages that discuss a resurrection both of the just and the unjust. There will be "an hour" (definite point in time) when "All" shall come forth. There is no room for 1,000 years between.

The Premillennial Theory—Part 5

This part of our study will involve the final portion of the premillennial theory, covering points 13, 14 and 15.

The majority of the teaching that is supposed to prove the final part of the theory is found in Matthew 24 and in Revelation chapters 19 and 20.

The facts in the case are these. Matthew 24 is discussing the destruction of Jerusalem. Jesus said in Matt. 24:34 "Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, until all these things be fulfilled." It is sometimes argued that the word "generation" means an "age" or "race," and thus Christ was discussing the end of time. However, Mr. Joseph Henry Thayer in his Greek-English Lexicon on page 112 says of the word *genea* translated "generation" in Matt. 24:34, "The whole multitude of men living at the same time; Matt. 24:34." So Jesus said "This" whole multitude of men who are living at this time shall not "pass." The word "pass" is from the Greek word *parerchomai* and means "to pass away, perish" (IBID p.488). Thus Jesus is simply saying that those people then living would not pass away or perish until the things he had prophesied be fulfilled. Hence, He was speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem and not the end of the world.

"But," someone may ask, "What about the teaching of Revelation chapters 19-20 on this subject"? "Isn't Christ to return and establish His kingdom here on earth and reign for 1,000 years in Jerusalem on David's literal throne?" Let's look at the book of Revelation and see just **what is said**.

John gives us an insight into the book of Revelation in the very first chapter and the first three verses that will help us to understand what is taught therein.

In verse 1, John made two points that must be understood in studying the book of Revelation. (1) God was revealing "things which must shortly come to pass." Also, "he came and signified... unto his servant John." The word "signify" simply means he presented it in "signs" or "symbols."

(2) In verse 3, he said the prophecies revealed should be read and observed, "for the time is at hand." Thus we understand from these statements that the things revealed were "yet future" but in the "near future," "at hand," "shortly to come to pass." So, these things were written in revelation specifically to give comfort to those who were being persecuted by the "great harlot" whom John identifies as "the great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth" or Rome (Rev. 17:18). Hence, the book was written specifically to teach those who were being persecuted and killed for the cause of Christ, that in the end those who would worship and serve God would be victorious. Chapters 19 and 20 are the victory chapters with chapters 21 and 22 showing the ultimate of what those who are victorious will receive.

Now back to chapters 19 and 20. I contend that the majority of the things referred to are symbolic. Otherwise, we will have a literal "lamb" riding through heaven on a "white horse." But observe the

following chart, and after reading Revelation chapters 19 and 20, see how many of the twenty things listed you believe are literal.

Revelation 19, 20 Literal or Figurative — Which?

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. The Great Harlot - 19:2 | 13. Fowls Flying To Supper - V. 17 |
| 2. Her Smoke - V. 3 | 14. Beast - Mark - Image - Vs. 19-11 |
| 3. Four Beasts Worshipping God - V. 4 | 15. Angel Coming Down - 20:11 |
| 4. Lamb V. 7 | 16. Key Chain Pit - V. 1 |
| 5. White Horse and Rider V. 11 | 17. Dragon - Tall Stars V. 2, 12:3-4 |
| 6. Eyes As Flames or Fire - V. 12 | 18. Bound - Bottomless Pit - V. 3 |
| 7. Many Crowns On His Head - V. 12 | 19. Shut - Sealed - V. 3 |
| 8. Vesture Dipped In Blood - V. 13 | 20. Thrones - Beheaded - V. 4 |
| 9. Armies On White Horses V. 14 | 21. Prison - Loose d - Battle - Vs. 7-8 |
| 10. Sword Out Of His Mouth V. 13 | 11. Camp of Saints Compassed - V. 9 |
| 11. Tread The Wine Press - V. 15 | 23. Fire and Brimstone - V. 10 |
| 12. name On His Thigh - V. 16 | 24. 1000 Years V. 2 |

Perhaps you only chose the 1,000 years. If so, why? Besides, in order for the 1,000 years to fit into the millennial theory, all of the things on our next chart would have to be taught in these two chapters. And, even though Revelation 19 and 20 are the "proof texts" given for the theory, notice according to the following chart that none of them are even mentioned.

REVELATION 19, 20 MILLENNIAL PROOF TEXT ??

Yet It Does Not Mention:

1. *The second coming of Christ.*
2. *A bodily resurrection,*
3. *Christ on earth.*
4. *An earthly reign.*
5. *Palestine*
6. *Jerusalem*
7. *The literal throne of David.*
8. *Resurrection of the Jews.*
9. *All the saved.*
10. *Flesh and blood.*
11. *Imminence*
12. *Us*

"But," someone says, "do you mean to tell me that when Christ returns that He will not be given His kingdom?" That's right. The facts of the matter are these. The premillennialist have Christ going in the wrong direction to receive His kingdom. (Read Daniel 7:13-14, cf. Acts 1:9). Christ received His kingdom when he came TO the Father—not FROM the Father.

Then What About Rev. 20:1-6?

The writer here concludes by showing that Satan has been overcome and is now bound so that he should deceive the nations no more. The Hebrew writer said that Christ by His death destroyed him that hath the power over death, even the devil" (Hebrews 2:14). Also, John said that the Son of God was manifest that he might destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8).

During the days of Christ and the apostles, Satan and his spiritual followers could deceive, and people were demon-possessed. However, that is not true today. Christ's death on the cross destroyed that

device of Satan. Notice what John said in Revelation 20:3, "that he (Satan) should deceive the nations no more." Man does not have to be deceived by Satan now, for we are not ignorant of his devices (2 Cor. 2:11). Christ came to make manifest the works of the devil, and said if we "resist the devil he will flee from us" (James 4:7). Peter says Satan does not deceive us, for he goes about "as a roaring lion," (1 Peter 4:8-9), not as one who "stalks his prey" but as a "roaring lion" seeking whom he may devour. Whom Peter said, "resist steadfast in the faith ..." So we are told not to let Satan get the advantage of us, for we are not ignorant of his devices. We are told we may resist him, and if we do, he will flee from us. Thus, Satan is bound. He can deceive us no longer, unless we allow him to do so. However, this is predicated on our "having an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God ..." and allowing ourselves to "be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Hebrews 3:12-13). So, as John pointed out in Rev. 20:3 no one should be deceived.

The First Resurrection of Revelation 20

But what about the "first resurrection" of Revelation 20:3? It seems to me that verse 4 explains it. "The souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and the word of God" in verse four are the ones who are reigning with Christ in vs. 4-5, and that is said to be the "first resurrection." Of time the Bible speaks of the freeing of people, who are held captive, as a resurrection. For example, when the children of Israel were in Babylonian captivity in Ezekiel 37, and God showed Ezekiel the "valley of dry bones," He said it represented His people in captivity. However, He was going to bring them out, and in 37:11-14 God describes it as "opening their graves and causing them to come out of their graves and live."

But we see the people of Rev. 20 described as the same people who had already been mentioned in Rev. 6:8-11 and being "under the altar" and begging for deliverance of their cause. They were told, "rest for a little season until thy fellowservants and thy brethren" that should be killed as they were, should "be fulfilled" (Rev. 6:9-11). Thus as we have the resurrection of a people held captive in Ezek. 37, so we also have a resurrection of a people held captive in Rev. 6 and 20. And the passage says, "and THEY lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years" (or long period of time).

Universal Peace

But if the preceding teaching is true, what of all the prophecies in Isaiah and Micah of the "peaceful nature" of the kingdom? When we understand that the kingdom of God is spiritual and not literal, then those promises also have spiritual application, and are not describing literal beasts of the field, but the nature of a people.

Please Renew Promptly

UNIVERSAL PEACE Isa.4:2 — Micah
4:3 Isa. 11:6-9, 65:25

**1. The Church — "Spiritual Kingdom" It A
Peaceful Organization:**

**A. Its Servants Should Not Fight
John 18:36**

**B. Its Weapons Are Not Carnal
II Cor.10:4**

**C. Its Members Are Peaceful In Nature —
Rom.14:17-19**

**2. The Church Is For All People, And Nations
Have No Identity In It
Eph. 2:11-17**

Though R. H. Boll said in his book *The Kingdom of God*, written in the 1920s, that the millennium is imminent, brother Boll is dead and Christ has not yet come. Besides, if premillennial teaching is true, we know that it cannot be imminent. (Observe the following chart).

Millennium Not Near

According to millennialists, certain conditions are going to have to be in existence before the millennium comes, for Example:

1. The Jews Will All Return To Jerusalem.
2. The Jews Will Be Re-Established As A nation.
3. The Jews Will Rebuild The Temple In Jerusalem.
4. A 10 Kingdom World-Ruling Roman Empire Will Exist.
5. This Empire Will Be Under A Roman World-Ruling Dictator.
6. I Thessalonians 4:13-17 Will Be Fulfilled.
7. The City Of Babylon Rebuilt

Conclusion

If Christ should return to earth, notice on the following chart the things that would have to take place in violation of the teaching of the Bible.

IF CHRIST RETURNS TO EARTH

1. He will not be a priest (Hebrews 8:4; 7:14).
2. There will be no forgiveness of sins.
There is evidence that there will be some sin even in the millennium" (R. H. Boll, *The Kingdom of God*, P. 163). cf. Hebrews 10:4
3. He will have a name inferior to the one he now has (Eph. 1:21).
4. He will not prosper (Jeremiah 22:30).
5. He could not have any more authority than he has now (Matthew 28:18-20; I Cor.15:27).

**THERE IS NO INDICATION THAT CHRIST WILL EVER SET FOOT
ON EARTH AGAIN!**

What then, does the Bible teach about Christ's 2nd coming? It teaches that "The Lord will come as a thief in the night in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Peter 3:10).

It teaches that both the just and the unjust—ALL will be brought into judgment at the same time (John

5:28-29; Acts 24:15).

But what about the kingdom and the end of the world?

WHAT IS TO TAKE PLACE

I Corinthians 15:23-26

"...at Christ's coming"

"THEN cometh the end

WHEN

He shall deliver up the kingdom to God.—

WHEN

He shall put down (bring to an end — Gingrich; render inactive — Vine) all rule and authority and power.

FOR= GAR

He must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.

The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."

Thus Christ is not coming back to BEGIN anything on earth. His coming will be an END of all things on earth, the premillennial brethren notwithstanding. For Jesus himself said, "And these are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me" (Luke 24:44). So, Jesus said it, that settles it, I believe it!

THE CHRISTIAN'S CROWN JEWELS (PART II)

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"Unto you therefore which believe, He is precious ..." 1 Pet. 2:7a

The apostle Peter used one word repeatedly in his two brief epistles to convey to his readers what it meant to be a Christian and what it meant to receive the blessings of Christ. That word was — "PRECIOUS." Eight times in eight chapters Peter uses that term to describe the blessings of Jesus. In 1 Pet. 2:7, Peter uses the term with reference to Christ Himself. Jesus is "THE PRECIOUS ONE," or "THE PRECIOUSNESS," i.e., it is from Him that all blessings originate. Among the cluster of jewels worn by the saint, there is one central jewel whose brilliance eclipses all the rest. It is Jesus. He is our central gem in a crown of blessings.

We gave notation last month to three aspects of Peter's preciousness:

1. Redeemed With The "PRECIOUS" Blood (1 Pet. 1:18-19).
2. Build Upon The "PRECIOUS" Corner Stone (1 Pet. 2:4-6).

3. Hope Through The "PRECIOUS" Promises (2 Pet. 1:2-4).

Now let's turn our attention to three more.

4. Trials of our faith are "PRECIOUS"

That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ (1 Pet. 1:6-7). Here the apostle introduces a subject that he will expound upon later, i.e., the theme of trials, tribulations and suffering. Note the outline of 1st Peter:

- a. Doctrine of Salvation, 1:1-2:12
- b. Doctrine of Submission, 2:13-3:12
- c. Doctrine of Suffering, 3:13ff

Beginning in 3:13, the apostle cautions us that if suffering comes, we need to be certain that we suffer for that which is right.

But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed (3:14).

For it is better ... that you suffer for doing what is right rather than for doing what is wrong (3:17).

If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed (4:14).

If anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not feel ashamed (4:16).

Therefore, let those also who suffer according to the will of God entrust their souls to a faithful creator in doing what is right (4:19).

Suffering has always been a great question confronting Christians. Why does God allow pain and anguish, disappointment and discomfort, various trials and tribulations? Peter gives the answer in 5:10 when he says, "And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you." Sometimes we have to go down in the forbidden valleys of life to realize our dependence from above. Sometimes we must experience trials in order to grow stronger. And sometimes we must suffer through the fiery furnace to attain perfection and be molded into the shape desired by God.

Why did Jesus have to suffer? For the same reason we do. "Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation" (Heb. 5:8-9). Jesus

suffered to learn obedience and to be perfected. So must we.

In Malachi 3:1-2 the Messiah is pictured as being both (1) fire, and (2) soap. Now fire and soap are purifying agents. Who are the objects of the Messiah's purifying? "He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them" (vs. 3). Who were the sons of Levi? They were the priests of the elder covenant. Who are the Lord's priests under this covenant? Who is it that Malachi says will pass through the Messiah's refining fire? Why, it is the saints! We are the Lord's holy priesthood. We are the sons of Levi. And why must we pass through the fire? "So that they may present to the Lord offerings in righteousness" (vs. 3). Metals that were not purified were worthless. God purifies the Christian for we are "precious." We are His chosen vessels and He wishes us to be free from imperfections.

5. Gentle and Quiet Spirit is "PRECIOUS"

Let not your adornment be merely external ... but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God (1 Pet. 3:3-4).

In this section the apostle stresses submission and adornment. Pound for pound there has been more error taught here than on just about any other subject. Two things are demanded in verses 1-4: (1) the right *character* (wives are to be subject to their husbands "in the same way" as Christ was subject to the Father), and (2) the right *adornment*. In verse 3 Peter is not condemning, but rather is stressing priorities. (If Peter is condemning the braiding of hair and the wearing of jewelry, he also condemns the putting on of dresses!)

Verse 4 informs us that the attitude God desires in His people is one of a quiet and gentle spirit. A quiet spirit is a spirit that is at peace, one that works in a quiet fashion (2 Thess. 3:12), and has itself under control. In 1 Thess. 4:11 Paul urges us to make it our ambition to lead a "quiet life." Then he tells us how—"by attending to your own business and working with your own hands." I imagine we all could seek improvement in that category. Next, a gentle spirit is a spirit that submits to the authority of God. The original meaning of meekness (or gentleness) had to do with the taming of an animal. A meek animal was one that was trained and disciplined. Consequently, a meek spirit is one who brings himself in line with the discipline of God. Those who do are "precious" in His sight.

6. Like "PRECIOUS" Faith

Simon Peter ... to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Savior Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 1:1).

How precious is the bond and union among God's people all over the globe. We are a people of "like precious faith." But how is our faith alike? What gives us a common bond?

- a. All of us hold to the same redeeming blood.

- b. All of us build on the same chief corner stone.
- c. All of us hope for the same promises.
- d. All of us experience the same trials.
- e. All of us are trying to develop the same meekness of character.

As a result we are men and women of "like precious faith." We all wear the same precious crown jewels of the Savior. Yes, "Blest Be The Tie That Binds." Can you think of anything more precious than that?

ANSWERS for our hope

Send Bible questions to:

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THE FREE WILL OF MAN

QUESTION: Recently we had some difficulty in our Bible Class trying to harmonize the free will of man and his accountability with some statements in the ninth chapter of Romans. Please comment on verses 10-21, especially verse 21—L.S. **ANSWER:** The verses in question read as follows: "And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who are thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" (Rom. 9:10-21).

The figure of the potter and the clay is not always used to teach the same lesson. What it teaches depends upon its use and application in its context. For example, a different lesson entirely (from Rom. 9:10-21) is taught in Jer. 18:1-6;

"The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel" (Jer. 18:1-6).

While these verses teach the power and willingness of the divine potter, God, to transform that which has marred into a vessel of honor, it also teaches that in the final analysis it is conditioned upon the pliability of the clay which represents the volition of man. Until the individual yields to the will of the divine potter (which is always a thing of beauty and honor in behalf of the individual) the divine objective cannot be realized. Hence, the tender appeal of God to the "house of Israel" in verse six. These verses teach with great emphasis and clarity the free will and accountability of man. This is the very opposite of the use Calvinism makes of this figure which affirms that man is what he is because the divine potter made him that way irrespective of his will and according to a decree of God from all eternity.

The lesson taught in Roman 9:21 and its context emphasizes the prerogative of God in designing, molding, and executing the scheme of redemption for all men. We are the products of His creation and have no right to criticize such efforts on His part. He "endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction," namely, the nation of Israel, until the divine purpose—the coming of the Messiah through whom salvation is provided for all—should be fulfilled (vs. 20-24).

Furthermore, since God is the potter in relation to the scheme of redemption, it was His prerogative to design a plan that would save both Jew and Gentile alike. Again, since He is the potter, it was His prerogative to elect whom He willed, to have compassion on whom He willed, to show mercy on whom He willed in executing this plan.

Right here a very important point must be observed! Otherwise Calvinism must be true. Of all the elections God made in Romans nine, not one was unto salvation or damnation. The elections had nothing to do with their personal salvation. Jacob was elected over Esau (vs. 10-13) to be a vessel unto honor in that he was to stand in the honored lineage through which Christ was to come. After this election, both Jacob and Esau were

still responsible for their salvation or damnation.

Pharaoh was elected to a position of power and widely extended influence that through him God's power and name might be declared throughout all the earth. After this election, Pharaoh was still free to obey or disobey. God did not ordain him to do evil. Had he obeyed, God's name would have been honored among all nations through the news that Pharaoh had humbled himself before the God of Israel. However, he chose to disobey, and God showed His power anyway, and through him declared His name throughout all the earth.

True, God hardened his heart, but the Bible also says that Pharaoh hardened his own heart (Cf. Rom. 9:17, 18; Ex. 7:3; (:12; 10:1, 20, 27; 11:10; 14:8; 8:15, 32; 9:34). God hardened his heart by multiplying his opportunities to obey. Each time Pharaoh disobeyed it was easier to do so the next time. Thus, he hardened his own heart. In this way God hardens people's heart today. Each failure in the presence of an opportunity to obey sears one's conscience to some degree (Cf. 1 Tim. 4:2). Pioneer preachers often referred to such as "gospel hardened." However, the verse in question (v. 17) shows that Pharaoh was elected of God to be the one through whom His name was to be declared throughout the earth.

Again, Paul refers to vessels unto honor, saying: "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work" (2 Tim. 2:21). This verse shows that whether or not one is a vessel unto honor depends, in the final analysis, upon man. God's part is certain . . . "he shall be a vessel unto honour." This, however, so far as the salvation of his soul is concerned, is conditional. Paul says, "If a man purge himself. . ." As the clay must yield to the touch of the potters hand, so man must yield to God's will.

The thrust of the ninth chapter of Romans is to show the divine prerogative of God to suffer long with the nation of Israel in order to execute His scheme of redemption; to cut them off as a nation after His divine purpose had been served; to include the Gentiles in this plan, and to save both Jew and Gentile individually upon the same basis. Furthermore, we have no right to criticize Him as the divine potter in electing whom He willed in executing the plan. Remember, the personal salvation of those elected in Romans nine is not the point at issue.

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"HE WAS SENT UP....TO THE 'BIG HOUSE'!"

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It is presumed that you understand what is meant when people currently remark that "So and so was 'sent up' to the 'Big House'"! The statement is being made that someone has been sent to prison...."the Big House" being a metaphor for the prison or imprisonment.

Centuries ago, long before the time of Christ our Savior, the Egyptians had occasion to make reference to the residence of their ruler, they spoke of "PAR-O", meaning "the Great House". "PAR-O" at first referred to the large structure in which the ruler was housed....a palace, if you will, but gradually, "PAR-O" came to refer to the entire Court of Egypt. The word may also have been related in their thinking to "PH", which was an article in their speech, and then, added to "PH" was their word for their God, "RA", the sun-god.

It is within the memory of many people living today, that Hirohito of Japan, was considered to be a Divine Ruler by the Japanese, at the time of the attack upon Pearl Harbor in 1941. So it was in ancient times that the Egyptians looked upon their rulers as gods or demi-gods. So, the Egyptian word for the "Great House" gradually came to be applied to the Ruler himself.... "PAR-O" changed to "PHAR-O", and finally spelled in English, PHARAOH. The Coptic word, OURO, meant "king", so PH-RA-OURO, literally meant "The Sun King".

In later centuries, in the time of the Old Testament record of the Children of Israel, in bondage to Egypt, the word "Pharaoh" was ultimately applied to at least ten different rulers of Egypt.

1. Pharaoh, in the time of Abraham (Genesis 12:15).
2. Pharaoh, of Joseph's time (Genesis 41st Chapter).
3. Pharaoh, the new king who knew not Joseph (Exodus 1:8).
4. Pharaoh, before whom Moses worked miracles (Exodus 5:1).
5. Pharaoh, who gave his queen's sister in marriage to Hadad (1 Kings 11:18-20).
6. Pharaoh, whose daughter, Bithiah married Mered, a descendant of Judah (1 Chronicles 4:18).
7. Pharaoh, whose daughter Solomon married (1 Kings 3:1; 6:37-38; 9:16).
8. Pharaoh, in whom King Hezekiah placed confidence (2 Kings 18:21).
9. Pharaoh-Necho, against whom Josiah King of Judah fought and was slain (2 Chron. 35:20-24; 2 Kings 23:29-30 & 24:7).
10. Pharaoh-Hophra (Jer. 37:5-8; Ezek. 17:11-13).

THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

Send all News Items to: Wilson Adams, 317 Trinkle Ave., N.E., Roanoke, VA 24012

TWO NEW FAITHFUL CONGREGATIONS

KEITH SHARP, 1800 Harriston Ave., Conway, AR 72032. It is truly a cause for rejoicing when a group of God's people take a stand for the truth after having been in error or when a congregation is started which stands for the truth. This article will report on one of each.

DRY PRONG, LA

September 14-18, 1981, I preached in Dry Prong. This village is in central Louisiana, twenty-two miles north of Alexandria, on U.S. highway 167. Until recently there was no sound church in this area. Several years ago Brother and Sister Bud Grimes, who are now members in Conway, lived in Pineville, LA. In search of a faithful congregation with which to worship, they visited Dry Prong. The congregation was not sound, but some were willing to study. The Grimes began meeting in their home, along with R. F. Knight, a member at Dry Prong. Brother Knight learned the truth concerning the organization and work of the church. Later Brother Knight studied with the members at Dry Prong. The entire church subsequently has taken a stand for the truth. When I preached at Dry Prong I found a congregation hungering for the truth and determined to stand for it. They have only about a dozen members. The building is located on the north edge of town on the west side of highway 167. They can be contacted by writing R. F. Knight at Rt. 1, Box 69, Bentley, LA 71407.

HEBER SPRINGS, AR

September 21-25, 1981 I preached in the Spring Park Amphitheatre in Heber Springs, AR. At the time there was no faithful congregation in this beautiful Ozark town. Several families worked intensely to prepare for a successful attempt to begin a new congregation. Brother Rick Gilreath paid for hand bill and radio advertisements and taped the radio spots himself, along with Brother Tim Haile. Brother Gilreath made the announcements, kept a list of visitors from the community and lead the singing throughout the week. Several families devoted time and labor to go door to door passing out hand bills and many drove long distances to be there each night. This was despite the cool nights and dim lights in out of doors. As a result, a band of Christians standing for the New Testament order now meet in Heber Springs. They are known as the Eighth and Scott Streets church of Christ and meet in the Senior Citizens Center at the corner of Eighth and Scott Street in Heber Springs. This is one block off highway 25 south, immediately west of the National Guard Armory. Sunday assemblies are at 11:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. with classes at 10:00 a.m. Wednesday Bible study is at 7:00 p.m. The preacher is Rick Gilreath of Bald Knob. You may contact these brethren through Brother Gilreath at P.O. Box 256, Bald Knob, AR 72010. Or phone (501) 724-5137. It is truly a joy that I am able to make these reports. Worship with these brethren when in either of these areas.

FROM THE FIELD

JOHN HUMPRHIES, 5017 Bardstown Rd., Louisville, KY 40291. Bill Beasley and I just completed our second India effort together (Bill's third trip and my fifth). We had to change the time of departure three times! Conditions in India caused the changes, Bill and I agree that this was the best effort yet that we have had. We believe that much good was accomplished, and the churches with which we are working appear to be growing spiritually.

We had classes in English with churches and also classes with preachers. We taped our classes (51 tapes of 90 minutes each) and left the tapes (along with tape recorders) for the brethren to use after our leaving. We also had outlines and charts for the brethren with many tracts as well. Some of the Indian brethren are in

education and thus appreciate these tools and methods.

Brother Beasley presented lessons on 2 Peter and a series of studies on love. Bill put a lot of hard work into the lessons and outlines, and I believe much good will come of his efforts. I presented lessons on the Old Testament in general and then on a study of the prophets in particular: finishing that series with a study of Daniel. The second series that was presented was a study of Colossians and Ephesians. Bill brought some prepared tapes on the Lord's church: history, organization, work, and the various issues of the day.

We continue, as on the last trip, to work mostly with the brethren and encourage them to undertake "evangelistic" work. They are converting people to Christ and several new congregations are in existence since our last visit in 1980. Some of these churches are trying to support the preachers working with them. Bill and I are thrilled at this evidence of maturing faith in India.

Brethren, thank you so much for your prayers and support. We couldn't do the work without your help in these areas. Bill and I managed to stay fairly healthy this time. Only minor problems with stomachs and a little back ache (from sleeping on a board bed with a one inch thick mattress). Please continue to pray for our brethren in India.

PETER MCPHERSON, Box 254, Airdrie, Alberta, Canada TOM 0B0. Brother Connie asked me to send Wilson a report of the work here in Airdrie, Alberta. He was happy to hear that I was "back on the firing line" as a preacher. Believe me I have been on "the firing line" all along! Only for a short time I was preaching and "tent-making." Now my wife Judy and our youngest daughter (Dawn Eve, age 9) have begun another "full-time" preaching "call" (Acts 16:9-10). We are hoping to be able to receive adequate support in order to be able to give ourselves wholly to gospel work. I am just a little short of total support. I will need about \$500 more a month. It is simply impossible to live here, in even the modest priced accommodations, without having about \$2,300 a month support. If you can help we would be very grateful and strive to be worthy.

Airdrie is a town in its own right with some factories, etc., but it is also a bedroom community for the "fastest growing Canadian city," Calgary. (Perhaps even North America's fastest growing city). Airdrie is situated only 15 miles north of Calgary on Highway 2 which leads to Red Deer and then to Edmonton, the province's capital.

Eight families make up the Airdrie church. Some of them live some forty miles north-east. The church started here two years ago by some faithful members of the Hillhurst congregation in Calgary. This spring one was added to the Lord, but their growth has been slow. Hopefully, with the Lord's help, we can help to numerically increase this loyal band. There are now four conservative congregations in the province of Alberta. There is hardly anything truly "conservative" further west in British Columbia. There is Brother Morris Bailey and possibly a handful in Saskatchewan, nothing in Manitoba, a half dozen in Ontario and nothing further to the Atlantic. The liberals have a fair number of churches in B.C., three in Alberta, some in Saskatchewan, a good number in Manitoba and Ontario, possibly a couple in Quebec and, hardly anything in the Maritimes.

We have had a pretty good interest since my moving here in late August of this year, 1981. A gospel meeting was held here in July, just before our move, with Rod MacArthur. I helped in that meeting, along with a number of others, in canvassing the whole town, population nearing 10,000. And we had a few visitors to attend and made one contact that shows signs for obedience one day. Then in October I held a meeting in Acme where some of our members live and several contacts were made. One woman was contacted who had just recently been baptized and was attending

the liberal 38th St. church in Calgary. She is now attending regularly with us and is a real worker for the Lord. One aged woman was baptized and other studies have resulted from that meeting.

I am a preacher and not a prober (into other people's business and lives) but in as much as it was pointed out to me by one preacher and some members here that a certain family was probably involved in an unscriptural marriage, we had to deal with that shortly after we moved here. It seems sometimes that some of us have to do some of the "dirty work" that others should have done years ago.

Contacts are made by meeting people. So I have decided to meet as many people as I can. In a new work this is imperative. And in a small town this is somewhat easier. Though in a larger church the members should be making many of the contacts for the preacher (see Don R. Hastings report in the November issue of STS). One way to meet people is to set a goal of meeting five to ten new people each day. One salesman put ten beans in his coat pocket in the morning and would not go to bed at night until he was able to, one by one, put those beans into the pocket on the other side of his coat. Every time he met a new person he would put another bean in his other pocket. Simple but effective. Some of us need that kind of discipline in regard to the Lord's cause.

The local paper here gives all the "ministers" in town an opportunity to write an article every ten weeks or so. I have averaged better than that with three already. Some of them don't like to write so I take their turn for them! Also we run a little ad each week in the classified section. It goes like this: "WANTED . . . people to study the Bible. Anytime, anywhere." Then we give an address and phone number and we get one or two calls per week. I have a number of ideas for the new year. We will be pushing our Bible courses, doing some door to door canvassing, possibly some phone canvassing in bad weather, looking into the "door knob packets" that some are having success with.

The attendance runs between 15-30. The collection averages \$175. We only have a couple of wage earners. The church here had a reserve and was able to support me for six months at \$1,000 a month. After January the amount will be reduced to between \$500 and \$600 per month. That's about the story from here. Oh yes, please allow me to tell you that Judy and I are grandparents again. My daughter, Sherry Puterbaugh of Seattle, WA gave birth to another boy last week. And Tim, our 19 year old is in college in Lethbridge. For further information write to me at the address above. I surely want to thank all that responded to my pleas for support. Most were already committed but your answers were appreciated. And a special thanks to those churches that are and will be able to support us in '82.

FERNANDO VENEGAS, Casilla # 122 C.C., 5500 Mendoza, Argentina, South America. With great joy I report that we baptized one man after four months of studying with him. With the obedience of this brother our membership has increased to 15 brethren. At the present I have seven home studies going. Also we now have a blackboard in our meeting place and are presently working on making a baptistry. As you can see our work is blessed by our heavenly Father and we give Him thanks. **JERRAL R. KAY**, P.O. Box 834, Rapid City, SD 57709. The church that met on Line Road in Box Elder is now meeting in its new building in Rapid City. Rapid City has a population of 55,000. Two years ago the church became concerned about growth in the small community of Box Elder with only the Air Force base to draw from. We began to make plans to move and purchased 2 acres of land in a new subdivision in the southeast part of Rapid City. When the land was paid off we began to build and in July of this year we moved into our new facilities.

This church is in its sixth year of existence in a state that had no scriptural churches. Starting with two families in 1975, it has grown to an average attendance of 75-85 on Sundays. We hold two gospel meetings a year, and have different classes to edify the church as well.

From the information that we can get we are the second largest congregation in a five state area—Minnesota (St. Paul church is the largest), North Dakota, Wyoming, Montana, and South Dakota (a small group is meeting in Sioux Falls). There are no sound churches meeting in Wyoming except for three Christians that meet in Saratoga, Wyoming (south-central).

I am so thankful for the wonderful saints here that are willing to sacrifice to see the church grow. Young families who were converted while in the military have stayed to help instead of returning home to other states. We work together as the family of God that we are, because there are no other churches to visit or associate with. The next nearest sound church is 400 miles away. We have averaged about 18 baptisms a year since coming here and this does not leave much free time. However I have enjoyed meetings with the church in St. Paul, MN; West Washington St., Indianapolis, IN; Saratoga, WY; and Peru, IN. Brother Ron Howes is leaving St. Paul after five years of preaching there and was able to come by and stay with us for a few days. He is moving to Arizona. If you are ever in the beautiful Black Hills or Badlands of South Dakota please visit with us at 1302 E. Fairmont Blvd. Phone (605) 348-8184. **HIRAM HUTTO**, 53 Idlewood, Tuscaloosa, AL 35401. The work here goes well. As you may know, Tuscaloosa is where the University of Alabama is located and as a result we have a number of young people from various places. They are very different from any I have ever worked with. They sit right up front, participate vigorously in all phases of the work: lead the singing, teach classes, preach, baptize people, etc. It's a real thrill to see it and be a part of it. We have about four young men who plan to preach.

CHURCHES RECONCILED

FORT COLLINS, CO—On November 1, 1981, the members of both the Downtown church of Christ and the Foothills church of Christ in Fort Collins began meeting together as one church. This was the result of favorable sentiment expressed on the part of all, and was brought to final action by unanimous consent of all concerned. The new church will hereafter be known as the Southwest church of Christ, and will meet in the building occupied by the former Foothills church. Johnnie Horton, minister of the former Downtown church, will serve the Southwest church in this capacity. Mailing address is P.O. Box 1418, Fort Collins, CO 80522-1418. Phone numbers are (303) 484-9838 and 226-0680.

AMUEL GARNER BELL 1912-1981

LEON GOFF, 3535 West Georgia, Phoenix, AZ 85019. My father-in-law passed from this life November the 6th. He was born in Mississippi, reared in Arkansas near Monette, married Ruby Simpkins in 1932, moved to California in the war years, where he lived until retiring to Mt. Pleasant, TX in 1977. He is survived by his wife, Ruby, two daughters, Mrs. Alma Goff of Glendale, AZ, and Mrs. Margaret Martinez of Lake Elsinore, CA, and by one son, James Garner of Mt. Pleasant, TX. He is also survived by two grandchildren, Derinda and Brian Goff, and by three brothers and three sisters.

Brother Bell had been a faithful Christian all of his adult life, and served as an elder for a number of years. He was an elder when the institutional controversy broke in the 1950's. He took a stand early against institutionalism. He stood alone in the eldership, which led to his resignation. He was an exemplary husband and father, a hard worker, and always helpful and considerate toward his family and others. I cannot imagine a better father-in-law. He has been much of an encouragement and support to me through the years. The memorial services were conducted in Mt. Pleasant, with Patrick Farish preaching. A good number of family, brethren, and friends were assembled for the service.

NEW CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

"WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURES" is the title of a new eight lesson Bible Correspondence Course. For a free set write H. L. Bruce, 5108 Sherrill Dr., Amarillo, TX 79108.

PREACHERS NEEDED

YOUNGSTOWN, OH—The church here is looking for a full-time preacher. We will make the last payment on our building in December, 1981 and will become nearly self-supporting. If interested contact Robert Shreve at (216) 792-6405.

LEXINGTON, KY—Bro. J. F. Dancer will be leaving Liberty Road here in Lexington the first of the year. Bro. Dancer is moving to work with the Eastside church in Russellville, AL. His new address will be P.O. Box 446, Russellville, AL 35653. The church at Liberty

Road is fully self-supporting and also helps in the support of five other preachers Any one interested should contact Harvey Baker (606) 299-5708, or Jerry Herndon 293-0741

WOLF POINT, MT—The church in Wolf Point is looking for a preacher We are a very small group and so would be able to provide only partial support If interested contact Phil Stewart at 213 E. Indian St , Wolf Point, MT 59201

ANCHORAGE AK—The church of Christ in Anchorage, AK is looking for someone to work with them as an evangelist If interested please correspond with Calvin Hoggard, P. O. Box 1448, Anchorage, AK 99510 Please supply references

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

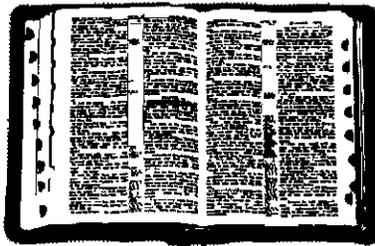
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RESTORATIONS 177

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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 XXIII

MARCH, 1982

NUMBER 3

EVERY CREATURE UNDER HEAVEN

Juven Lee
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We all understand that the Christ commissioned His disciples to teach all nations. He said: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). This is a very great field of labor, but when Paul wrote the Colossians the whole world was having an opportunity to hear the good news (Col. 1:23). This is remarkable. How could they carry it all over the world in one generation? We need to learn from those people.

The gospel was preached to all, but it certainly was not accepted by all. Many Jews rejected it, the pagan religions were arrayed against the truth, and even the Roman government finally sought to destroy its influence. The gospel covered the earth in that generation, but it was not because there was no opposition. There was opposition that was more bitter than anything we have ever tasted. The opposition was fierce, but the disciples had weapons that were mighty to the tearing down of strongholds.

Preaching to some was like casting pearls before swine, or like the sower's casting seed by the wayside. There were also honest and good hearts to receive, so the preaching was not in vain. In fact, the gospel made very great improvements in the lives of those who received it. Those who were receptive became "holy and unblameable and unproveable" (Col. 1:22). They became lights in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation because they were blameless, harmless, and without rebuke (Phil. 2:14, 15). Some thought it strange that the Christians would not run with them to the same excess of riot of their former lives and spoke evil of them (1 Pet. 4:1-4). How bright the light of their good lives must have shined in that pagan world!

The changes that came in the wake of gospel preaching were for the good of all. Honesty, benevolence, purity, and other traits of Christians stood in special contrast to the immorality, lawlessness, and greed of the Roman world. The Bible was given because of God's love, so its precepts are for our good always. It is sad that some church members conform to the world today rather than giving the demonstration of that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. Many did not believe, but there were samples of true Christianity in every area.

Persecution kept the number of hypocrites to a minimum in that first century. True Christians by their good works cause others to glorify God. There is an air of respect in our land for religion, so many take part in order to claim respectability. Religion becomes a cloak to cover their selfishness and ungodliness. There are so many counterfeits that some have not noticed the genuine. Untold harm is done by the large number who claim but do not practise.

The early church had some remarkable advantages as well as disadvantages. The world was not then torn by war. There were no iron or bamboo curtains. Men could travel freely from one part of the world to another. This is no little advantage. In the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son (Gal. 4:4). This peace was evidently part of this fullness.

The early church had to fight idolatry and many other forces of error and superstition, but it did not face the shameful confusion of denominationalism. If one Christian goes to a so-called non-Christian country today, there is a sense in which three hundred stand by his side to speak, each in a different way. This confusion is deadly. It is of the devil, and is one of the greatest evils of our time. Why do we not carry the truth to all in our time? What hinders more than the contradictions of denominationalism? The early church had a great advantage in not having so many false brands of religion on the market, as it were.

We still feel like saying, How did the early Christians do it? How did they take the truth to the whole creation in one generation? This remarkable task was not accomplished by the philosophy of "Let George do it." It was not by the many asking the few to do it. "And at that time there was a great per-

secution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria . . . they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:1, 4). The church at Philippi sent aid to Paul at Thessalonica, Corinth, and Rome. They had fellowship in the furtherance of the gospel from the first day. There was a burning zeal in the hearts of the many, the like of which we do not see in our day.

The early church was not characterized by wealth. It was unselfishness and zeal that sent men like Paul out to the uttermost part of the earth with the life giving truth. They went with a sense of debt to the human race. (See 1 Cor. 9:16; Rom. 1:14,15.)

The men of that successful day did not have the automobile, plane, or fast ships to aid in their travels. Neither did they have radio, television, or the press. No way will ever be found to do the work better than the direct, person to person, "I beseech you" method. They preached publicly and from house to house. They preached daily. That explains it.

It is very, very evident that the early church did not have denominational machinery. There was no money-drinking, publicity-seeking central agency. They all went to work in the great field—the world—and that was their method of cooperation. There was concurrent action with "operation" the chief part of "cooperation." Denominational machinery would have taken the sense of urgency away from the individual and local church as they laid their load on the agency. They did better because, by divine wisdom, they did not have the machinery.

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Editorial

Connie W. Adams

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ANOTHER "PEACE OFFENSIVE"?

For sometime now, our brother, Yater Tant, editor of *VANGUARD*, has hinted of another attempt at what he and William Wallace called a few years ago a "peace offensive." His speech at Crossroads in Gainesville, Florida suggested his intent to pursue this line once again. Now, in the December, 1981 issue of *VANGUARD* he said:

"Another thing I hope to do in the time I have left is to try once again to promote unity and harmony among the disciples of Christ.... In 1982 I hope to use *VANGUARD* in an effort to 'narrow the gap' between conservatively minded 'pro-institutional' brethren and their 'quarantined' brethren."

Since the days when division among brethren became a reality until the present hour, no true child of God has rejoiced over the fact of division. The choices were not easy. But there were valid issues which struck at the heart of Biblical authority and which made it impossible for people of contrary persuasion to remain together. Nothing would bring greater joy to my heart than to see all who wear the name of Christ standing together upon the solid foundation of divine truth. Through the years, we have never closed the door to discussion with sincere brethren. As time has passed, some brethren who followed the more liberal direction have seen their error and have come out of it. Others have closed their eyes to further study and have drifted wherever the tide took them.

Those who have been keeping up know that the liberal movement is in disarray. Serious issues now divide those who once stood united upon a platform of insistence on church supported private enterprises and sponsoring church super projects. The multiplication of recreational activities, including gymnasiums and carnival atmosphere and antics, have upset some and they may be more receptive to truth than they were a few years ago.

But this writer cannot help being apprehensive about another "peace offensive" promoted by brother Tant. During his last years as editor of the *GOSPEL GUARDIAN* he launched a similar "offensive" from which we have not fully recovered to this day. He thought then that he could somehow weld together the so-called "antis" and the "conservative-minded liberals" (if that expression makes any sense to you). His timing on that venture was parallel to his great IMP AC promotion to sell personal work kits to brethren around the country, complete with

motivational records and paraphernalia to stick on shaving mirrors or hang on the knobs of television sets. It was during those days that brother Tant wondered if perhaps this highly advertised soul-saving procedure might not be appealing to some of the liberals and might even be the means of bringing about closer understanding. He advanced that very thought in an "IMPAC luncheon" in Akron, Ohio at which I was present. He said he had already talked with Alan Bryan about it. His principal partner in this was John Whitehead who is now head of the "tape ministry" at Crossroads church in Gainesville, Florida. John is also a brother to Dick Whitehead, one of the elders at Crossroads.

These past entanglements and brother Tant's present affinity for Crossroads and repeated defense of them causes me to further question his renewed "peace offensive." If he thinks he sees light at the end of the tunnel concerning unity between "antis" and "conservatively minded pro-institutionalists" we cannot help wondering if he truly thinks Crossroads represents brethren of the latter category. And if he does, are we to interpret his conduct among them as a portent of things to come in his dealings with others whom he regards as in that category? When he spoke to them, after spending several days at Crossroads, he said nothing of substance to point out the errors in which they are involved. Some years ago Crossroads bought Fanning Springs which is equipped for all sorts of recreational and social activities and "retreats." The "Crossroads Singers" tour the country performing secular and sacred music. According to items in their bulletin, they also perform before the congregation at Crossroads. Their Master Plan approach in evangelism and their "prayer partner" practice smack of mind manipulation.

But what did he do when he had the chance? Here was a golden opportunity for him to focus attention on issues that divide. He has said in *VANGUARD* that he does not endorse everything at Crossroads. But which of the practices to which he objects did he expose forthrightly in his speech. He was warmly received and by actual count on the tape drew laughter twenty-seven times. What did he say about their church sponsored recreational activities? What did he say about their "Crossroads Singers" and their performances? What did he say about their "Master Plan" and their "prayer partners"? Is this to be taken as an example of the way to "narrow the gap" between differing brethren? Will he go in and out among the liberals, amuse them with his reservoir of wit, brag on what they are doing and leave them without ever really coming to grips with the basic areas of difference? If this is the way to promote "peace" then I can assure brother Tant that it is already "offensive" to some of us. Brother Tant, are YOU drifting?

Which "conservatively minded" liberals does he know who are willing to give up church supported private institutions and the sponsoring church concept? If they give up everything but those two items, then will we not be back where we started in the late 1940's and early 1950's? Oh yes, there are some who

can see abuses, but the abuse of a principle does not argue against the principle itself. If our brother could get Reuel Lemmons, Ira North and Guy N. Woods to strike hands with him on one hundred abuses, does he really think they are ready to oppose the aforementioned practices? In fact, one of the issues he would have to settle with brethren North and Woods is his defense of Crossroads to which they stand opposed, according to published material in the *GOSPEL AD-VOCATE*.

Still another thing which makes me uneasy about his proposed efforts is his affinity to brother William Wallace. Brother Wallace succeeded him as editor of the *GOSPEL GUARDIAN*. It was during those days that Edward Fudge was connected with the *GUARDIAN* operation. Because of the influence of Edward Fudge, many young men lost their bearings and some made shipwreck of the faith. Brother Wallace defended Edward Fudge in "pulse feeling" trips around the country. He did so here in Louisville about ten years ago. Under brother Wallace, the *GUARDIAN* sought to further brother Tant's "peace offensive" and ended up promoting the grace-unity movement. The scars of that misguided adventure are yet apparent and even at the present hour there are latent evidences of deeper damage than some had first thought. I am not sure that we can afford another such "peace offensive" or "gap narrowing" engineered in the same mind and promoted by the same generals which led to such a spiritual fiasco as the last one. In that conflict brother Wallace made some of the most slanderous charges that anyone could make against some of us who were speaking out against this error in an effort to salvage some young men we loved and who were being influenced in the wrong direction. Here in Louisville, before a large audience including many preachers, I publicly called on brother Wallace to apologize for what I regarded then, and still do regard, as the ugliest article written in the whole controversy ("The Political Mr. Willis"). He refused to do so, has not done so yet, and thus the matter remains. Brother Wallace has been in a meeting within the past few months where Charles A. Holt preaches and just recently Charles A. Holt was in a meeting at New Bern, North Carolina where brother Wallace now preaches. Charles Holt left the truth during the time brother Tant edited the *GUARDIAN* and has much to do to clear himself from the views of Carl Ketcherside with whom he has been associating in some of the "unity" forums around the country. Now, we see material in *VANGUARD* being furnished by William Wallace. Brother Tant, many of us still bear the scars from the end result of the last "peace offensive" and "gap narrowing" to which your compatriot, William Wallace, contributed with such devastating results. We know not how some of the "conservatively minded" institutional brethren may react, but the prospects of wide-spread support from some of your "quarantined brethren" are not very promising. Some of us are not like the drunk man who backed into the banker's new car. The banker was understandably angry. The drunk put his arm around the banker's shoulder and said "ole buddy, lesh jus' forget

the whole thing." We sigh for peace, but not at any price.

As always, we continue to be ready to discuss the scriptures with any honest soul. We have done this privately and publicly in the past and shall take advantage of any such future opportunities. But, as in the past, there is no element of truth which we are prepared to barter. We love brother Tant and feel personally indebted to him for many things. But based on past performances we want to see the mechanics spelled out before we can bid him Godspeed and forthrightly tell him now that if they are the same as his prior effort with its extension under the editorship of William Wallace, we will not only NOT join forces with him, but will actively OPPOSE his efforts. As Moses told Pharaoh "Not an hoof shall be left behind." The last "peace offensive" ultimately descended to the Ketchersidean "plain of Ono" and along with Nehemiah we have no intention to stop what we are doing to hold "dialogue" with those who have given no indication that they have any different perception of the nature, work and organization of the church than they had thirty years ago. Upon a "Thus saith the Lord" all of us can find common cause. We dare not even consider it a possibility on any other turf.

EDITOR'S MEETING SCHEDULE FOR 1982

March—Metairie (New Orleans), Louisiana
Middlebourne, West Virginia

April—Gulfport, Mississippi Olney,
Illinois Sheperdsville,
Kentucky

May—Northside, Conway, Arkansas
Kettle, Kentucky

June—Southside, Pasadena, Texas (lectures)
Highview, Bloomfield, Kentucky
Bancroft, Ontario, Canada

July—Pound, Virginia
Central, Dyersburg, Tennessee

August—Eastside, Russellville, Alabama
Clinton Blvd., Jackson, Mississippi

September—Round Hill, Kentucky
Harrison, Ohio

October—Nicholasville, Kentucky
Spencer, Indiana Glen
Burnie, Maryland

November—West Lafayette, Ohio
Warner Robins, Georgia

We would be pleased to greet any of our readers at any of these meetings. Watch local announcements for exact dates.

WAYSIDE GLEANINGS

James R. Cope
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Temple Terrace, FL 33617

In one's studies he sometimes comes upon a line of thought completely removed from a context where he would expect to find it. In a recent reading of the scholarly James MacKnight's *Literal Translation of the Apostolical Epistles With A Commentary, And Notes*, I was intrigued by the author's treatise regarding "Luke" on pages 499, 500 (1835 printing) as he made comments on the various persons mentioned by the apostle Paul in verse 24 of his epistle to Philemon. Since many who read these lines do not possess MacKnight's works, I submit here for profitable and enjoyable reading his observations. Before this presentation, however, I think it also proper to insert his comments on Colossians 4:14 to which he refers in the beginning of the Philemon observations. I therefore present the Colossian comments and then those in Philemon.

Col. 4:14

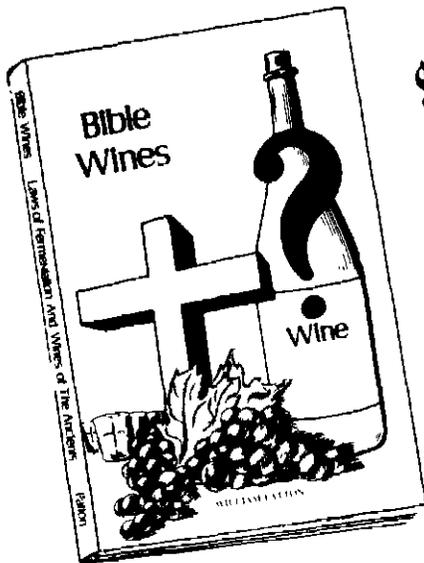
Luke, the beloved physician.]—Luke was deservedly beloved of the apostle Paul. He was not only an intelligent and sincere disciple of Christ, but the apostle's affectionate and faithful friend, as appears from his attending him in several of his journeys through the Lesser Asia and Greece. He likewise accompanied him when he carried the collections to the saints in Judea, where, during the apostle's two years' imprisonment at Jerusalem and Caesarea, he abode, and no doubt was present at his trials before Felix and Festus, and heard the speeches which he hath recorded in his history of the Acts. And when the apostle was sent a prisoner to Italy, Luke accompanied him in the voyage, and remained with him in Rome till he was released. Last of all, this excellent person was with the apostle during his second imprisonment in the same city; on which occasion, when his other assistants deserted him through fear, Luke abode with him, and ministered to him, 2 Tim. 4:11 note.

Philemon, v. 24

Luke.]—He is generally believed to have been the author of the gospel which bears his name, and of the history of the Acts of the Apostles.—Having in Prelim. Observ.

vii. prefixed to the Harmony of the Gospels, given an account of Luke's gospel, I think it may be useful to add here, concerning his history of the Acts of the Apostles, That setting aside the consideration of its inspiration, as an history of the first planting of the Christian religion in the world, it is a valuable work, both on account of the variety and importance of the transactions recorded in it, and on account of the manner in which they are related. For the circumstances of each transaction are selected with judgment, and told in a simplicity and elegance of language truly admirable. And the whole is comprised in a short but conspicuous narration, which cannot fail to give pleasure to every reader who is a judge of elegant writing.—Farther, the *Acts* being an history of persons who traveled through the most civilized and best known provinces of the Roman empire, for the purpose of preaching the gospel, the historian was naturally led to mention a variety of particulars relating to the geography of these countries, to their political state at that time, to the persons who governed them, and to the manners of the inhabitants. The learned, therefore, from the time of the publication of this history, have had an opportunity of examining all these particulars; and, on the most accurate investigation, they have found them confirmed by the contemporary heathen writers of the best credit, whose writings still remain. Nor is this all. in the Acts there are speeches recorded, said to have been pronounced by persons of the highest character and rank, which are not like the speeches in most other ancient histories, the production of the historian's own imagination, but the real speeches of the persons to whom they are attributed—such as the speeches delivered by the apostle Peter on different occasions; by Gamaliel, an eminent Jewish doctor; by the protomartyr Stephen, when arraigned before the Sanhedrim [sic]; by the apostle Paul in the synagogue of Antioch, and to the Lystrians, and to the senate of the Areopagus at Athens, and to the Sanhedrim [sic]: also a letter of Claudius Lysias to the governor Felix; and a speech of the orator Tertullus in accusation of Paul, before the same Felix; Paul's answer to that accusation; Festus the governor's speech to king Agrippa, the chief captains, and principal men of Caesarea, assembled to hear Paul; Paul's defence, pronounced in the hearing of that august assembly. In all which, the characters, and sentiments, and style of the different speakers, are so distinctly marked, that no one who reads them,

and is capable to judge of such matters, can doubt their being genuine.—These circumstances united, form a convincing proof that the history of the Acts was written, as it profeseth to be, by a person who was present at most of the transactions which he hath recorded. And with respect to such of the speeches as he had not an opportunity of hearing, they may have been made known to him by those who heard them, or by inspiration. However, not to insist on this, Luke's history of the Acts of the Apostles contains more internal marks of authenticity than any ancient history extant. So that, considering it merely as a human composition, it is by far the most valuable ancient monument of the kind which the world at present is in possession of.



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FOURTEEN WORDS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

Four words changed the world from darkness to light when God said: "Let there be light" (Gen. 1:3). Five words changed the world from sinlessness to sin when man listened to the serpent's words: "Ye shall not surely die" (Gen. 3:4). Fourteen words changed the world from hopelessness to hope when the angel of the Lord announced to the shepherds: "Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Lk. 2:10-11).

"Fear Not"

The first two words are: *fear not*. Although these words are directed toward the shepherds who were awe-stricken by the appearance of the angel and the glory of the Lord in the dead of night, they are most pertinent to all men who "through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2:15).

Jesus partook of flesh that all may be delivered from the fear of death (Heb. 2:14-15). Sin, guilt and condemnation cause men to be terrified of dying, but those in Christ have no anxiety about their safety and eternal security as they can say with Paul: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (2 Cor. 5:1). Jesus' life and death made freedom from sin possible and removed its terrifying effects by destroying the works of the devil (1 Jn. 3:8).

"Good Tidings"

The third and fourth words are: *good tidings*. This is the good news of the gospel. "Euaggelion," which means "gospel" or "good news," is the heart and core of the Christian's faith. The word occurs 72 times in the New Testament.

The gospel is the "good tidings" of truth. ". . . whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel" (Col. 1:5; cf. Gal. 2:5). William Barclay commented: "With the coming of Jesus Christ the time of guesses about God ended and the time of certainty begun. With his coming the time of groping after the meaning and the method of life is closed and the time of certainty is here" (*New Testament Words*, p. 104).

The gospel is the "good tidings" of hope. ". . . and

be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature ..." (Col. 1:23). The Gentile world had no hope without the gospel (Eph. 2:12) and Paul stated the gospel he preached (for which he was imprisoned) was the hope of Israel (Acts 26:7; 28:20).

The gospel is the "good tidings" of peace. "And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace" (Eph. 6:15). Man is estranged from God by sin (Isa. 59:2), but the gospel brings him back into a harmonious relationship (Col. 1:20-22).

This gospel of the resurrected Christ is the "good tidings" of salvation. "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation" (Eph. 1:13). It is good news of forgiveness of past sins, cleansing of present sins and power through faith and the blood of Christ to overcome future sins into which we fall.

"Great Joy"

The fifth and sixth words are: *great joy*. This is the antidote to the "great fear." "Joy" (*chara*) occurs sixty times in the New Testament and "rejoice" (*chairein*) occurs seventy-two times. Indeed, the Christian religion is one of joy. The kingdom is "righteousness and peace and joy" (Rom. 14:17).

The life of Christ on earth begins and ends with joy. The angel brought tidings of joy to the shepherds and the wise men rejoiced and were exceedingly glad (Matt. 2:10). The women returned from the empty tomb with fear and great joy (Matt. 28:8). After Jesus' ascension, the disciples returned to Jerusalem with great joy (Lk. 24:52).

Because of what Jesus did, man no longer has to suffer loneliness and despair, but he can now sing with jubilation: "Joy to the world, the Lord is come!"

"All People"

The seventh and eighth words are: *all people*. The coming of Christ was not just for the benefit of a few people. However, the believing Jews at first thought the gospel was for them, only. The Judaizers never did learn this lesson. But God had said a long time ago to Abraham: "___ and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3). The gospel is for Jews and Gentiles, bond and free, male and female, rich and poor, strong and weak and black and white. It has no geographical boundaries or racial barriers. All are included.

Jesus said: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mk. 16:15) and "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations ..." (Lk. 24:47). Paul wrote that the gospel is "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16).

"Unto You"

The ninth and tenth words are: *unto you*. Although the gospel is universal in scope, it is personal in application. The writer of Hebrews said of Jesus: ".....

that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9).

The Calvinian doctrine of limited atonement is completely devastated by this text. Calvinists teach that Jesus died for only the elect, and that his atonement was limited to them. But Jesus died for every man, that is, every man has access to the benefits of his blood.

"This Day"

The eleventh and twelfth words are: *this day*. Man had waited so long for the Messiah. The Bible states that Simeon was "waiting for the consolation of Israel" (Lk. 2:25). The prophets enquired and searched diligently, searching what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify (1 Pet. 1:10-11).

It is no wonder that Andrew rushed to find his brother, Simon, and tell him: "We have found the Messiah" (Jn. 1:41). When Philip discovered that Jesus was the Christ, he findeth Nathanael and said: "We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph" (Jn. 1:45). The Samaritan woman returned to the city telling the people: "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ" (Jn. 4:29).

The Christ has come! Truly, "now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2; cf. Isa. 49:8).

"A Savior"

The thirteenth and fourteenth words are: *a Savior*. How they needed one! How we need one! Man is lost without Christ the Savior. We cannot be saved through any other person. "Neither is there salvation in any other," Peter declared (Acts 4:12). John wrote: "And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world" (1 Jn. 4:14). The Samaritans realized this fact after hearing Jesus. They exclaimed: "... this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world" (Jn. 4:42).

Our Lord was given the name, "Jesus," which means, "Savior." The angel said: "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). Paul wrote that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. 1:15).

Zondervan's Pictorial Encyclopedia states that "Savior" is a word that "presupposes a danger, a disaster, from which the rescuer snatched the one whom he helped. The term in both OT (Isa. 53) and the NT suggests deliverance from the worst affliction and trouble known to mankind—deliverance from sin" (Vol. 5, p. 291).

What a change to the world was wrought by Jesus Christ the Lord, our Savior and Redeemer! Let these fourteen words change your world—today! Then you can sing:

"What a wonderful change in my life has been wrought, Since Jesus came into my heart."

MY SERVANTS THE PROPHETS

Rodney Miller
15 W. Par St.
Orlando, FL 32804



NEHEMIAH: LET US RISE UP AND RESTORE THE GENERATION IN WHICH THE CHURCH DIED

A Good Thing?

"Across the river, at the edge of the forest, near the big scrub, stands a frame meeting-house. Several years ago the saints of the Lacota community met there for worship. The songs of Zion which once echoed through the forest are heard no more; the prayers of the saints no longer ascend up to the throne of God. Its walls no longer ring with the preacher's voice, as he proclaims the message of salvation. There is silence,—deathly silence on the first day of the week. You see, the Woodmen Of The World do not meet on Sunday mornings. The church at Lacota died."

The above described scene is taking place far too rapidly in scores of communities across our land. It is taking place in the large muscle-bound cities and in the small rural communities as well. To try to prevent this type of spiritual death was the work and plea of Nehemiah as he sought spiritual renewal of the Lord's people. This is also the task before us in our generation. We are losing ground as faithful saints grow old and pass away. We are losing ground as the world attracts the "Demases" of our time. We are losing ground as the people we baptize fall by the wayside before they are productive in the Lord's kingdom. We are losing ground when our young people are bolting from the Savior in agnostic unbelief because of materialistic homes and dead, unproductive churches. Also, too many of us are like Samson who had lost his strength and didn't even know it until he tried to shake himself free of the Philistines' bonds and could not do so. Yet, we still ask the question: "What do we mean by the church dying?"

The Church Dying

In Daniel 2:44, the prophet said that the Lord would establish a kingdom which would never be destroyed. And, so it is,—the Lord's kingdom will never die. The Lord said that the gospel is the seed of the kingdom (Luke 8:11), and so long as we have the word of God the kingdom cannot die. Isa. 2:1-4 speaks of the mountain of the Lord's house and all nations will flow into it. Rev. 5:8-10 speaks of the kingdom being purchased out of every tongue and nation. Yes, as Brother Adams aptly reminded each of us in the introduction to this year's material, the kingdom cannot die. But on the other hand, it does not mean that there will always be a

group of saints meeting in the building in which we now assemble each Lord's day. It does not mean that there will always be a group of saints meeting in the cities that are now so strong in the faith. Major areas like Louisville, Birmingham and Tampa may not always be the bastions of the faith as they have been in recent years. You see, there is no promise from God that the church is an American entity. The Lord's church could cease to completely be in America, and a restoration movement could begin somewhere else in the world, and maybe it would turn out to be a good thing.

A Good Thing?

Just as shocking as it is to hear that the future of many congregations is extinction, and with the real possibility that it could become so widespread that no congregation as we know it today would exist in our land, the most shocking statement is: **MAYBE THIS WOULD BE A GOOD THING!** How could such a tragic demise be a **GOOD THING?** Consider with me the possibility of a future scenario which will help us focus on such a shocking statement.

The Lord's commission is to go! So it was to the apostles in Matt. 28:18, and so it is with us today. Yet we know that we are doing a pitiful job of going with the gospel. Following World War II the Lord's people were one of the most aggressive religious group in the world in taking the gospel to foreign places. After the war many of the men who were sent to various places around the globe went back again. Not with the Army, however, but with the Word of God, and churches were established. Yet, these new churches were not grounded, and there were not enough mature and willing preachers to go nurture the tender babes in the gospel. Consequently, the newly established churches either died or went into apostasy. Now there is even a negative attitude toward foreign evangelism. We are far removed from the source of the Lord's work, and we do not know if the Lord's money is being spent wisely, and there is little contact with the foreign preachers. The result is we have backed away from foreign evangelism to a great degree. As a matter of fact, several years ago Brother James Needham made the general observation that to his knowledge, there were less than 10 men from the United States preaching on foreign soil. Of course, that observation is several years old and may have a margin of error involved, but what if the error was 100%? That would mean that we are talking about less than 100 American preachers on foreign soil. We are not doing the job of taking the great commission to the lost world! We do not want our daughters to marry preachers or our sons to become preachers because preachers always have so many problems with the brethren. If they insist over our loud protests, then we will let them preach, but we don't want them to move too far away because we could not see our grandchildren every day or so. We must commit our resources, both money and children, to the proclamation of the gospel to people who have never had the opportunity to hear it before.

Now that we see some of our failures and even

though we might not agree on the degree of failure, we all know in our hearts that improvement is needed, so let us consider how it would be a good thing for the church to go out of business. Several years ago while I was sitting in the Blue Boar Cafeteria in Louisville, Kentucky, a little fellow about five years of age was beginning to make himself obnoxiously apparent. He was singing at the top of his voice and splashing the mashed potatoes and brown gravy all over his father. The father never noted his activity at all. Finally the little fellow took a handful of mashed potatoes and gravy and smeared it all over his father's tie. Then, he hopped down and walked up and down the aisles of the restaurant, playing in everyone's food just as he had done with his father's. Finally, his mother stood up, saying to all who would listen, "I just can't do a thing with him." An Army Officer from Ft. Knox turned to me and commented that if the child's parents were out of the way, he believed he could do a great deal with the little fellow. Of course, all will recognize what he meant. So long as the ones responsible for the task of raising this child were in control, there was nothing he or anyone else could do.

And, so it is with the Kingdom. We are the ones sitting in the driver's seat in America today. But it might just be a better thing to set aside our brand of half-hearted, materialistic, "playing-church" religion and let the real disease break out somewhere else among a people who would do the job. The Lord's Kingdom will never cease to exist as long as there is the word of God and the heart of man. It just might be a good thing to let the kingdom explode in some other land, among some other people, who would take the commands of the Lord to "GO TEACH" seriously, and be dedicated enough to that cause to lay down their lives if need be. As long as we have the imitation, the true gem can never radiate its glory.

Consider with me for a few moments: what if the statistical projections were correct concerning our growth rate in the church today and that by the year 2010 the congregations in America were to become non-existent? Suppose that it took 50 years for another restoration movement to begin among some more dedicated and committed people? The Lord told the disciples in Matt. 24:14, 15 that the gospel would be preached to the whole world, and then the end (destruction of Jerusalem) would come. That would mean that in some 37 years the truly dedicated and converted people of the New Testament church would have preached the gospel in all the world. So, in less than 100 years after the extinction of the church in America, the Lord could see His gospel preached in all the world. Something like that could never happen at the rate we are going now!

Does It Have To Be This Way?

Of course not! God's truth will be taught. Sinners will be saved and His church will grow and not die. The only question is WHO! WHO will be the ones that will dedicate themselves enough to carry that word. "Oh, I'm too busy to visit that family who dropped in for one of the services of the gospel meeting last week."

Well, it won't be you that He is going to use, will it? Or, "I'm just too involved in Scouts, Little League, P.T.A., or the Band, to teach a Bible class." Well, it won't be you that He will use either. I have preached this lesson in several different meetings and various ones came with firm resolve and pronounced that the church "won't die here as long as I have anything to do with it". That kind of resolve is wonderful, but yet I somehow keep wondering HOW MANY PEOPLE DID THEY TEACH THE GOSPEL TO IN THIS LAST YEAR? Not, how many did we baptize! But simply, how many studies did we have with non-Christians this past year? It is one thing to utter words of firm resolve, but it is yet another thing to open your Bible with your neighbors, friends, employees and family or really do something about it.

Look around you. What about the congregation where you attend? Is it about the same size it was four or five years ago? How many have you baptized this past year? The average for those that are baptized and fall away is far too great, and uncovers yet another vast problem. How many of that congregation are elderly and by reason of three score and ten will not be with us throughout this coming year? We must undergo spiritual renewal in the coming days.

In future articles we will continue to talk about spiritual renewal from the book of Nehemiah.

Give Me That

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By Jerry Sholes

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IN REPLY TO ED FUDGE

In the September 1981 issue of the paper, Ensign, Ed Fudge tries to reply to something I have said in my booklet, SET FOR THE DEFENSE.

Ed tries to make it appear that I deny the word of God. He lifts a quote from me in which I quote from him and says I call such "false teaching" and the quote contains a passage of Scripture. Thus, he concludes incorrectly that I am calling the passage he quoted "false teaching."

In a 1970 article in the Gospel Guardian, vol. 21, page 689 Ed wrote "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them (2 Cor. 5:19). Because of His obedience, those who are in Him can be saved although they never achieve perfect obedience themselves. They are not saved because they obey perfectly but because they believe on Jesus (read Rom. 5:15-21)" He is teaching the doctrine of imputed righteousness of Christ and is basing such false doctrine on 2 Cor. 5:19, but this passage does not so teach. I do not object to the passage; I object to his false conclusions from the passage.

In the church bulletin where I preach, I quoted him in **Walking In Truth**, July, 1974. However, Ed did not respond to that article. In *Searching The Scriptures* of December, 1974, this article was printed for the second time, but Ed said nothing.

SET FOR THE DEFENSE was published by the Cogdill Foundation in the summer of 1980, yet it is not until September, 1981 that Ed says anything about it. He waited seven years. Why? Then he quoted only one of six quotations I gave from his pen. Why did he not quote the other six to let people see his error? He quoted only the part that had a verse of Scripture so he could make it appear that I was saying that the Scripture was "false teaching." Such tactics are beneath the dignity of a man calling himself a gospel preacher.

Edward Fudge has been under fire for several years because of the false teaching he has done. This is as it should have been. Any false teacher should be exposed by faithful brethren. Ed should be no exception. He has complained about being exposed but he has never had the courage to enter a public debate and defend what he is teaching. I am ready to sign representative propositions with him on the questions that divide

brethren, but I don't believe he has the courage or the conviction to do so.

THE
"NO-SECOND-SUPPER"
DOCTRINE EXAMINED

J. Edward Nowlin
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Perry, FL 32347



From time to time this doctrine gains notice in the churches of Christ, largely as a reaction against careless brethren who abuse the privilege of partaking of the Lord's Supper at the evening service by willfully absenting themselves from the morning service to visit, hunt, fish, or just to be lazy. This writer offers no encouragement to those who abuse the privilege; but must speak out on behalf of the privilege for those who properly use it.

The Doctrine Stated

Those who argue against what they call the "second supper" base their arguments upon the following premises:

1. Only one assembly "to eat" the Lord's Supper recorded.
2. The church (via elders or business meeting) has the right to set only one hour for the Lord's Supper on Sunday.
3. If a member is absent through neglect he sins. If he is "providentially hindered" the Lord excuses him for the entire day.
4. Proof texts usually appealed to are: Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34.

The Doctrine Answered

1. There is only one assembly recorded—period! Hence, to be consistent, any other assembly of the church on the Lord's Day would have to be opposed. This proves too much, and what proves too much proves nothing. Actually, there is no such thing as the "second supper" for no member partakes of it a second time. It is the "first supper" for those who partake of it at the evening service.

2. There is no scripture that gives the church, via its elders or its business meeting, authority over the Lord's Table. The Lord put the Supper in the kingdom (Matthew 26:29); hence, the Christian is answerable directly, and only, to the Lord regarding it. The local church is not the kingdom into which souls are translated when born again (Colossians 1:13). The local church is made up of a few of those souls who hold membership in it by mutual consent, and each one is accountable to the Lord for his worship at that Table.

It is the Lord's Table; not the church's.

Brethren who espouse this doctrine seem to be obsessed with the idea that the "church" has authority over the Lord's Table and may legislate "the" hour of the Lord's Day for its observance by "all" the members of the local church, and may deny the Lord's Supper to any members who were unable to attend at that set hour. Although they would deny that the Lord's Supper is a "church ordinance," **in practice they make it a church ordinance** when they give the church authority to legislate these things. In a double-spaced, typewritten article of less than four pages, one brother used the word "church" thirty-two times, ten times on the first page! Luke told us all we know about the time for observing the Lord's Supper in Acts 20:7, and the word "church" is not even in the passage! It is obvious that somebody has jumped the track in assuming church authority over the Lord's Table. The church has no right to examine members regarding it, but Paul said to let a man examine himself (1 Corinthians 11:28).

3. There is no such thing as "providential" hindrance to doing God's will. Providence involves God—"3. In theology, the care and superintendence which God exercises over his creatures" (Webster). God does not hinder man in doing His will.

4. That God excuses the unintentional absentee for the entire day, when there are twenty-three other hours in that day, is a false assumption of the worst kind. It makes it possible for the Christian who could not be present for the morning hour to make no effort to partake of the Supper at the evening service. **This is the worst feature of the doctrine.** It allows him to willfully ignore the opportunity at the evening service. Where does the Bible say he is "excused?" The Jews who were unclean or in a journey were excused from the Passover on the 14th of Nisan, but not for the whole year. They could eat it on the 14th of Iyar, one month later (Numbers 9:6-13).

Consequences of the Doctrine

A position taken on a scripture obligates one to accept the consequences of his position; hence, we charge the "second supper" position with the following:

1. It perverts Acts 20:7 by applying to it an idea not found in the passage; i.e., an exclusive AM or PM hour for the Lord's Supper. "Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread. . ." "When" is an adverb of time incidental to the narrative and in no way limits the number of meetings during that day, nor the purposes of such meetings. If those disciples met that evening "to break bread," why could not other disciples who could not meet with them have met at some other hour for the same purpose? This is all that brethren who have not had opportunity to break bread before the night service are doing today when they break bread at the evening service. Only those who have the notion that they are "excused" for the entire day would ignore this—their first—opportunity. Furthermore, "to break bread" was simply a manner of speaking of the worship ser-

vice, and in no way limited what was done in the service. Break bread was not all they did.

2. It sets aside First Corinthians 11:28 ("let a man examine himself") and allows the church (via its elders or business meeting) to bar brethren from the Lord's Table because they were not present at the morning hour. This is exactly what the Close Communion Baptists do!

3. It makes the Lord's Supper a church ordinance by giving the church power to limit it to one service, ban it at the evening service and bar those who were absent at the morning hour from the Lord's Table. Note:



4. It places the church between the worshipper and the Lord's Table, as per denominational practice:



5. It causes the Christian to think he can ignore the Lord's Supper at night because he could not be there that morning.

6. It makes him inconsistent not to oppose all except one meeting on the Lord's Day, since only one meeting is recorded at Troas.

7. It makes the Lord's Supper a matter of controversy, instead of a symbol of love as the Lord intended.

8. It causes those who hold to the "second supper" notion to accuse and condemn their brethren who sometimes have to work at the morning hour of unfaithfulness, not putting the kingdom first and loving money more than the Lord. Such unwarranted judgments give them a feeling of superiority but do not impress the Lord with their charity.

9. It seeks to bind where the Lord has not bound. The only thing Acts 20:7 binds concerning the Lord's Supper is the day of the week. (See Next Page)

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The Passover a Type

That the Passover of the Jews was a type of the Lord's Supper is a fact ignored by those who condemn the "second supper." They seek to divert the force of this fact by claiming that the Passover was a type of Christ. This is not true. The Passover lamb was a type

of Christ, but the lamb and the supper were two different things. A type in Scripture is a person, thing or institution in the Old Testament which foreshadowed some person, thing or institution in the New Testament. Note the following comparative study of the Passover and the Lord's Supper:

THE PASSOVER	THE LORD'S SUPPER
1. Instituted by Moses—Ex. 12:21	1. Instituted by Christ—Mt. 26; Mk. 14; Lk. 22
2. Observed by fleshly Israel—Ex. 12:47	2. Observed by spiritual Israel—1 Cor. 11:23-29; Gal. 3:28, 29
3. Was a memorial—Ex. 12:27	3. Is a memorial—Lk. 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:25
4. Literal body & blood of lamb—Ex. 12:7	4. Symbolical body & blood of Christ—Mt. 26:26-28
5. Lamb without blemish—Ex. 12:5	5. Christ, our Lamb, without blemish—1 Cor. 5:7; 1 Pet. 1:19; 2:22
6. No leaven in house—Ex. 12:19	6. No leaven of malice, wickedness—1 Cor. 5:8
7. Observed annually—Ex. 12:6	7. Observed weekly—Acts 10:7
8. Day of year set by Moses—14th day of Nisan—1st month—Ex. 12:6	8. Day of week set by N.T. example—Sunday—Acts 20:7
9. Time of day set by Moses—at evening—Ex. 12:6	9. Time of day set by Christians as matter of convenience—N.T. does not set an hour.
10. Provision for absentees—14th of Iyar, 2nd month—Num. 9:6-13	10. Provision for absentees as matter of convenience as taught by O.T. example—Num. 9:6-13; 1 Cor. 10:6; Rom. 15:4. The Golden Rule requires it—Mt. 7:12
11. Reasons for provision—Num. 9:10 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Unclean b. In a journey 	11. Reasons for provision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. In a journey, breakdown, too far away, etc. b. Illness of self—unable at AM; able at PM c. On duty: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Illness in family—one parent AM; the other PM (2) Military—Rom. 13 (3) Civil—riots, storm, floods, jury, fire, police—1 Pet. 2:13-15 (4) Economic—must work—Eph. 4:28; 1 Tim. 5:8 (swing shift, food service, nursing, medicine, transport, harvest, animal care)
12. If neither, guilty of sin, to be "cut off"—Num. 9:13	12: If neither, but absent wilfully, or ignore the opportunity—guilty of sin—Lk. 22:19

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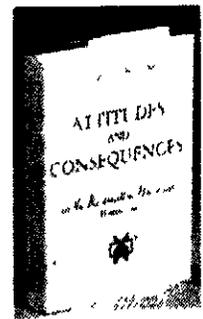
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Attitudes and Consequences in the Restoration Movement

By Homer Hailey. The aim of this work has been to trace the development of two attitudes toward the Scripture authority in the Restoration Movement: that of the early spirits in the movement, and another which grew up within it, leading ultimately to division

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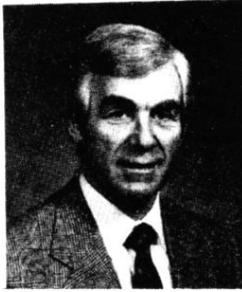


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“THE AWFUL SIN
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For thirty years or so the "party spirit" has meant, to me, the denominational attitude of dividing into sectarian groups and defending such action. Recently, the label of "party spirit", is pinned on just about anyone who opposes softness, compromise and liberalism. A publication called *"Ensign"* consistently engages in a campaign to label others as "legalists" and "patternists." They think it is evidence of the "party spirit" when one calls for scriptural proof and a "thus saith the Lord" in all religious matters. They appear to condone the denominationalist and condemn those who are opposed to denominationalism. Bob L. Ross, a Baptist preacher, is called a "brother" and gospel preachers are called something else.

Reading *"Ensign"* is an experience that is unique. Here in this small paper I find innuendo that complains against those things I try to stand for and criticism of my efforts to stand against other matters. I find my brethren ridiculed. I find the attitude of, "I feel sorry for those anti brethren, those legalists and patternists, for they don't really understand the Scriptures at all." And quite paradoxically, I find that *"Ensign"* and her devotees are really, in my mind, true denominationalists and wedded to the true party spirit. Perhaps my view of the "party spirit" is different than that of the editor of *"Ensign"* and if so, it would be quite advantageous to see which view is the right view. Therefore, I suggest a few characteristics of the true "party spirit".

1. **The Party Spirit is one of Denominationalism.** Denominationalism is a synonym for division and sectarianism. The denominational world is hopelessly divided and content to remain divided. It is the spirit of "you believe and do what in your heart you feel like, so will we and we will be brothers in Christ, no matter how much difference there is between us." Such a spirit is condemned. Paul pled, in Christ's blessed name that such division not exist (I Cor. 1:10). In this passage he demanded that all believers "be of the same mind and of the same judgment." Judgments are conclusions to which the mind comes. But the attitude reflected in *"Ensign"* releases all from such a divine duty. *"Ensign"* is wedded to the true party spirit.

2. **The Party Spirit is a Party of Prejudice.** For partyism to exist those who espouse it must be prejudiced. To be prejudiced is to pre-judge a matter before hearing all the evidence. Solomon condemned it. "He that giveth answer before he heareth, it is folly

and shame unto him" (Prov. 18:13). Prejudice, in the *"Ensign"* case, causes them to decide what they believe determined by what their opponents believe. A clear example of it comes from the editor. He said, in an explanation of why he had once criticized the "Crossroads philosophy" and later commended it,

"Since I had some critical things to say about Crossroads, this comes dangerously close to placing me in the same camp with Ira Rice, God forbid. So when I find myself on the same side with Ira, then I know I'm wrong! A re-evaluation of my thinking is in order." (*Ensign*. Dec. '81, p. 9).

Anyone can clearly see the ground on which the editor re-evaluates his thinking. It is not that someone pointed him to the Bible, it is because he got close to being in the same "camp" with Ira Rice. I have not seen a more blatant example of the party spirit prejudice than this. *"Ensign"* is wedded to the true party spirit.

3. **Partyism has an ungodly attitude toward Truth.** The theology of new evangelicalism has had more influence on *"Ensign"* than the New Testament. When one allows denominational theology to cause him to contradict plain passages of Scripture, he displays an ungodly attitude toward Truth. *"Ensign"* tells us,

"The great news of the gospel is that through Jesus Christ, God has elected to save us in spite of our sins (My emphasis, DRS)..."(Ibid., p. 10)

The editor goes on to misapply Romans 5:6 which says, "...for while we were yet helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly." Christ died for the ungodly, even while we were enemies of His, but He did not save us in spite of our sins. The expression, "in spite of", is a synonymous expression of "notwithstanding." *Reader's Digest Great Encyclopedic Dictionary* says, "in spite of indicates active, often violent opposition, and is the strongest synonym to 'notwithstanding'." The editor leads us to think that while men are in violent opposition to the Lord, His death saved them, "in spite of their violent opposition." The Lord calls men to turn from their sins before salvation is theirs (Acts 3:19). He promises that if men remain in their sins, they are destined to eternal punishment (Read Rom. 2:3-6). God's supreme act of goodness was exhibited and accomplished in the death of His son for our sins, and that, according to Paul, "leads us to repentance," and repentance means leaving our sins—not being saved "in spite of our sins." Nothing but pure denominationalism and the party spirit could cause an editor to make such a statement as he has. *"Ensign"* is wedded to the true party spirit.

4. **The Party Spirit has an ungodly attitude toward Opposition.** *"Ensign"* sends out her party line with regularity and when it is opposed, she does not join issue with scriptures, she rather hides behind a typewriter and calls names, misrepresents and shouts innuendoes. She is opposed to opposers. With editorial sanction, J. Ervin Waters was allowed to say,

"Brotherhood must not be determined by a willingness to oppose certain things. Rather it must be determined by a common and antecedent relationship to the same Father and therefore a consequent common relationship to each other. We must not remain committed to a program of brotherhood by counteraction and overreaction." (Ibid., p. 11)

Brotherhood is a term used sparingly in the Bible. The party spirit emphasizes the common and antecedent relationship humans have with the same Father and each other. Opposition to "certain things" has nothing to do with brotherhood. Waters and the Ensignites ignore such fundamental principles as, "and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11). The party spirit of "Ensign" weds her to partnership with everyone and anyone, regardless of doctrinal differences. She will glibly ignore God's demands on the alien sinner and offer that sinner salvation on terms never intended or expressed by the Almighty. To prove this, I offer a test. Here is a statement that I firmly believe the Bible teaches and feel strongly that it can be defended scripturally. I ask the Ensignites if they believe it or not. **Water baptism, to a truly penitent believer, is essential to salvation, and without it, the alien sinner will be eternally lost.** I further believe the Bible clearly teaches that no brotherhood can exist scripturally between the baptized believers and the unbaptized believers. What does "Ensign" think about it?

Much more could be said, such as the party spirit's attitude toward proving what they teach and practice. They think such is "patternism" and "legalism" and call that bad. They feign a sense of the free and liberated life and exult, "Oh, to be free in Christ, by Him who died for us, and delivered from the bondage of sin and death... that is the only way to fly." This is a false sense of security. There is no freedom for people who take such liberties with God's Word as they do; there is no freedom for people who manifest so many traits of the true party spirit!

I deny that the party spirit is manifested by men and women who stand soundly for the truth and will preach and practice it at the cost of being cut off from others. I deny that the church of Christ, with which I am identified is a sectarian group that is more interested in kicking people out than in saving them. If the Ensignites would only think straight and let themselves truly be directed by the Holy Spirit's eternal Truth, revealed in the Word of God, they would enjoy the blessings of Christ, but alas, they say and do not.

Those of us who are labeled falsely as "legalists" and "patternists" honor the Almighty God. We have the deepest faith in Christ and implicitly trust Him for our salvation. This trust is so deep it has committed us to a life of total obedience to His word. As long as we remain in the flesh, we entertain the strongest possible hope of a future life of happiness. The difference that stands between us and those of "Ensign" and her ilk, is simple. We can prove what we claim and they can-

not. We are right and they are in error. They cannot show that they are not wedded to the true party spirit. I urge all who may have been swayed by the "great swelling words" that tend to "entice the unstedfast souls" to think straight. There is no more solid foundation for life here and hope for the future than living by every word that comes from God. May the Lord help us all to be free from this denominational party spirit of softness, compromise and liberalism.

Using the SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

Ken Green

2212 Jordan Lane, S.W.
Huntsville, Alabama 35805



THOU MAYEST BE NO LONGER A STEWARD

A steward was one whom the master of the house made ruler over his household. He was given charge of those things which were actually not his own. Joseph is not called a steward, but he was seemingly faithful in such a capacity (Gen. 39:4,5). The steward of Luke 16:1-8 was unfaithful to his charge. His master suspected this and called upon him to give an account of his stewardship, "For thou mayest be no longer steward", he was told (v.2).

Stewardship is a matter that vitally concerns you and me. God has placed certain things under our authority and He will one day call upon us to give account of our stewardship. Let us learn that a time will come when we may be no longer stewards.

In regard to our children, we who are parents should understand that for awhile we are stewards.

There will soon come a time when we will no longer be stewards. "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord" (Psalm 127:3). The psalmist proceeds to point out that our children are to be pointed in the right direction: "As arrows in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth" (v. 4). Children are like guests in our homes. They only stay for awhile. And there are things we should willingly forgo that we might be good hosts. We only have a few years to pull this off. Then, we may no longer be stewards.

In regard to our talents, we are stewards. We have nothing that we have not received from God. But one day we shall be called to give an account of how we have used our God-given abilities. He will not require of us more than we are able to give. All God expects is our faithfulness in performing according to our abilities (1 Cor. 4:2). Are we using our talents faithfully? The time will come when we may no longer be stewards.

In regard to our bodies, we are stewards. We are not

our own. We've been bought with a price (1 Cor. 6:19,20). Our stewardship is to glorify God in our bodies and spirits which belong to Him.

"But I can do what I want! It's my life!" you say? Listen to Solomon: "... **walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment**" (Eccl. 11:9). Yes, you live as you want to and do as you please. But be ready to face the consequences. God is going to call you to give account. Your body belongs to God. You have no right to join it to a harlot (1 Cor. 6). Your lips belong to God (Psalm 12:4). They are designed to praise God; not to curse your fellowman. Your hands, feet, eyes, and mind belong to God. But they are under your control. God will one day call you to give an account. The day is coming when "you may be no longer steward."

In regard to time, we are stewards. C. S. Lewis argued that the fact that we are constantly surprised by time is evidence that there is something timeless about us. "I can't believe how that child has grown!" exclaim uncles and aunts. "Has it really been ten years!" we cry in disbelief.

It seems that there should be plenty of time for everything as we look forward. But we find there never is, as we glance backward. Because of this, we are told to redeem the time (Eph. 5:16). Whether you are rich or poor, prince or pauper, you have twenty-four hours in every day. Every second is a gift from God. We cannot make a single moment. Each one is a precious gift. We are stewards. But one day we will no longer be stewards.

In regard to our money, we are stewards. Let us not say, "My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth." Rather let us remember "the Lord (our) God: for it is he that giveth (us) power to get wealth. . ." (Dt. 8:17, 18). We are stewards of our possessions, and God will hold us accountable. The only advantage of having money is the use we may make of it. The only wealth which we shall really keep is that which is invested in the Lord's work. Only God can give the true riches (Luke 16:10). The time will soon come when we will be no longer stewards.

In regard to our influence, we are stewards. No one is without influence (Rom. 14:7). Influence is probably the most valuable possession we have, next to our very souls. Not even death will bury one's influence. The good or evil we do will long survive us. Let us be faithful to this stewardship. We may soon be no longer stewards.

In regard to our souls, we are stewards. "In your patience possess ye your souls" (Luke 21:19). God has put salvation within the reach of each and every one of us. But it is up to us to reach out and take hold.

Are you a faithful steward? One day soon "you may be no longer a steward."

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Restoration Footnotes

Earl Kimbrough

2212 Malibu Dr.
Brandon, Florida 33511



A WORTHLESS SCRAP OF PAPER

It is not possible for us to know the extent to which seemingly insignificant events in early life can implant ideas that affect attitudes in later years. The reader no doubt can recall personal instances that testify to lasting impressions made by "little things" that happened in childhood. The memorable evangelist, T.B. Larimore, wrote of such an incident that he believed had much to do with shaping the course of his life. In a letter to a friend, he said:

"More than forty years ago, in her humble, little, log-cabin home among the hills and mountains of glorious old East Tennessee, a godly, devout, grandmother, one frosty autumn morning, was sweeping the ashes and coals from the solid stone hearth, after having cooked breakfast there; and her little barefooted grandson was stepping first to one side and then to the other, to keep out of the way of his grandmother's broom, while still keeping his feet on the warm stone. Suddenly she stooped and picked up a little bit of paper, which looked like it might have been torn from an old newspaper: more probably, however, from an old almanac. She brushed the ashes and dust from it carefully, laid it upon the mantle, and put upon it a pretty little pebble that had been taken from the beautiful brook near by. The little boy said, 'Grandmother, why did you pick up that piece of paper? What is it?' She said, 'I saw the name of the Lord on it, my son; and I couldn't burn it. I couldn't sweep his holy name into the fire.'"

Larimore had traveled the length and breadth of the nation telling thousands of the sweet story of Jesus and his love, as it is revealed in God's eternal word of truth. But in all those years, and to the end of his life, he "never ceased to revere the memory of that blessed grandmother." He paid her beautiful and loving tribute, saying that she "may, upon that very occasion, have fixed and settled his destiny for time and eternity, and through him, wielded all the influence for good that he has ever wielded, or may wield, till times knell shall be sounded and all the redeemed shall be gathered home." The memory of that frosty autumn morning was etched forever in his mind. The look and the language, and "even the quiver of the tender, tearful voice" of the grandmother as she said, "I couldn't sweep his holy name into the fire," was never forgot-

Parents and grandparents, of course, cannot remove the personal accountability of their offspring before God. But they can have more to do in shaping their destiny, "for time and eternity," than any other mortals on earth. Even the "little things" count. (Larimore's words are published in, Letters and Sermons of T.B. Larimore, Vol. 2, pp. 359-360).

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RADER—MASSEY DEBATE

May 10, 11, 13, 14

PROPOSITIONS:

1. "The scriptures teach that water baptism is for (in order to obtain) the remission of past sins."

Affirm: *Donnie V. Rader*

Deny: *Kenneth W. Massey*

2. "The scriptures teach that one is saved before and without water baptism."

Affirm: *Kenneth W. Massey*

Deny: *Donnie V. Rader*

TIME: 7:00 p.m.

PLACE: Building of the Manslick Rd. church of Christ at 4724 E. Manslick Rd., Louisville, KY 40219.

PLACE TO STAY: If any people from out of town desire to come and want a place to stay, contact Donnie V. Rader at (502) 968-6495 or 964-3624.

FIELD REPORTS

PAUL BROCK, Box 3555, Deland, FL 32720. After six and one half years with the church at Trilacoochee, I have moved to Deland to work with the North Blvd. church. Trilacoochee was a most pleasant and profitable work. The church experienced a gradual but substantial growth and they are blessed with great potential. Don Hastings will begin there January 1. Ron McRay was here at Deland for about six months as the last local preacher. Before that, the men of the congregation did the speaking. The work presents many challenges. There has been some turmoil in the congregation in the past. However, the people here have expressed their willingness to work and to work together. Our building is located very near Stetson University on the main street through town. Travelers on U.S. 17 and U.S. 92 will pass right by the building. We are also within one block of the northern and eastern by-pass of these two highways.

O. FRED LIGGIN, JR., 2019 Forest Avenue, Panama City, FL 32405. On November 15-20, 1981, I conducted a gospel meeting in Crystal River, FL. This is one of the fastest growing areas in the state and the potential for future growth of the church is excellent. The brethren there have asked me to come and work with them. At this time they are only able to provide about \$100 per week plus house and utilities. In order to do the work needed I am seeking an additional \$300 per week. If any of you brethren are in a position to help with the work it would be greatly appreciated. If sufficient support is obtained we want to leave Panama City the first of March or April, 1982.

This will bring to a close over five years work with the Beach church of Christ. When we came this church was not self-supporting, but within a few months they were able to take over our full support. Two fine elders and deacons have been appointed during this time and a new congregation was started from the Beach congregation in Panama City proper. The Lord has richly blessed this work with 44 baptisms, 104 restorations and 40 to place membership. Should you desire to check with the elders you may call Bud Hastings (904) 769-0409; or Gene Little 785-2294. Should any of you desire me to preach for you and discuss the work, please let me know.

FRED GOSNELL, PSC 2281, APO NY 09130. This completes two years that the Lord's church has existed at Sembach, which is in the Kaiserslautern area of West Germany. Five souls have been baptized in this period. Two have fallen away, with three returning to the states faithful. Five Bible studies were engaged in this year, with one currently in progress. We currently consist of 17 members, with a total of 20 in attendance. All are American military serving in the Air Force with their dependents except for one civilian employee. Preaching, teaching and singing assignments are rotated among seven men. We teach and admonish one another a lot! We are currently supporting two preachers on a continuing basis. This past year we had fellowship with two others on a one time basis as the need arose. We plan on expanding our support as our ability to do so allows. We solicit your help in locating brethren in the Kaiserslautern area of West Germany. Addresses and civilian telephone numbers for the contact can be found in any current issue of this paper in the church ads.

WILLIAM C. SEXTON, 1937 Judson, Manhattan, KS 66502. 1981 is history and we face 1982 as a challenge to do more in the service of the Lord. In 1981 we had two meetings with Marshall Davis in April, and H. L. Bruce in November. Both were good meetings. A debate was held here on the subject of instrumental music in worship. Brother Burt Lockwood defended the truth well. Installation of a DIAL A NEW TESTAMENT MESSAGE was made by the congregation in 1981. By calling one can hear a 60 second message from the scriptures. It works 24 hours and we change the message every day. Cable TV has run the ad for us free. We get several calls especially after it's advertised on television. We have also used a local paper, given out free in this area, to make known the service. We have received many calls, several comments of various kinds, requests, etc. Although we have not baptized anyone directly from this contact, we do know that a number of people are hearing the message. Plans for 1982 call for a meeting with Darrel Shaw in April. We plan to pursue every avenue we can discover to reach people in the area. We shall lose some more people this year but we are hoping for others to come and take their place. Any military personnel coming to Ft. Riley, or students coming to Kansas State, please plan to worship and work with us. We are the only sound congregation in this area. If you have friends in this area, let us know. Phone (913) 539-0458. We invite you to come, inform us of others, and pray for the work here.

NEW LOCATION

ALAN YEATER, 1245 Shady Creek Dr., Greenwood, IN 46142. The congregation known as the White River church of Christ, which previously met at 357 S. St. Rd. 135 in Greenwood, now assembles at a new location. We began meeting at this place on December 20, 1981. The building is approximately two miles south of the previous location. We encourage anyone traveling through central Indiana to make plans to stop and worship with us. The building is located at St. Rd. 135 and Stones Crossing Rd. We meet together at the following times:

Sunday Bible Study	9:30 a.m.		
		Worship	10:30 a.m.
		Evening	6:00 p.m.
		Wednesday Bible Study	7:30 p.m.

For directions call Richard Hunter at (317) 535-7616 or Alan Yeater at 881-9515.

PREACHER AVAILABLE

KEITH STORMENT, P.O. Box 591, Ravenswood, WV 26164. Due to financial problems of the church here I am going to relocate by July, 1982. I am 28 years old, married, with 13 years preaching experience. I have completed one year here with the Sand St. church in Ravenswood. I am wanting to relocate with a spiritually and financially stable church, preferably with elders. Size and location are not factors. I am just interested in a sound group of brethren willing to work with me in building up the Lord's cause. Anyone interested please call me collect. I will be happy to answer any questions and supply references. Call (304) 273-2467.

PREACHER NEEDED

UMATILLA, FL—The church of Christ which meets at Umatilla, FL is in need of a full time preacher. Some outside support would have to be obtained. If interested contact Bobby O'Neal at (904) 669-4100 or A.T. Latner at 669-2247.

NEW CONGREGATION

LONGVIEW, TX—A new congregation has been started in Longview, TX. The church which has about 70 in attendance, meets at 3104 E. Gilmer Road in Longview. For information call, J. N. (Newt) Beard at (214) 759-1518 or Harold Taylor at 759-1780. Mailing address is: P.O. Box 1894, Longview, TX 75606. If in the area worship with us.

BAKERSFIELD, CALIFORNIA—After years of planning, praying and waiting (for the right time and circumstances to prevail), a new congregation began meeting in west Bakersfield—the Rosedale area. Previously we met with the Pioneer Drive church on 5300 Pioneer Drive in east Bakersfield. But due mainly to the growth of the Pioneer Drive work (including the former Rexland Acres congregation disbanding and identifying at Pioneer Drive), plus the fact that a majority of the members lived in west Bakersfield, some driving 25 or 30 miles, we thought it the right time to begin.

On Sunday, January 3, the Rosedale church of Christ began. We had 118 in our first worship service with 94 for Bible classes That evening 106 came. Our first contribution was \$1418. 92 attended our first Wed. evening service.

Elders and deacons have been appointed. Those chosen had served in that capacity while at Pioneer Drive and so were well known to the church and no objections were raised. The Pioneer Drive church continues to function with elders. Dan Melear is the preacher with Lalo Enriquez and Dick Millwee serving as elders. We have purchased property at 20955 Allen Road in Bakersfield and are working on plans now for building as soon as financing can be arranged. Until then, we are meeting in the Rosedale School Auditorium at 33567 Rosedale Hwy. See our ad elsewhere in this paper. Please remember us in your prayers and visit with us when in this part of California.

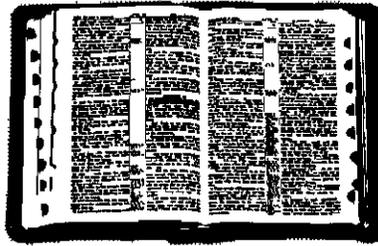
PREACHER NEEDED

OKEECHOBEE, FLORIDA—The Westside church is in need of a full-time preacher. The church here is small and can only provide partial support. Those interested may write to: Westside Church of Christ, P.O. Box 1023, Okeechobee, FL 33472. Or contact: Franklin Varson 813-763-2023 (days) or 813-763-3462 (evenings). (Editor's note: Two families from Expressway in Louisville spend the winter here each year and have been able to help some in the work. They are Clarence Smith and Marvin Walker and both speak of the urgent need for help.)

ALLIANCE, OHIO—The Homeworth Road church which meets two miles east of Alliance, Ohio is in need of a full time preacher. We are a small congregation, but can give some support. The rest will have to be raised elsewhere. If interested, please call either Ervil Poland (216-823-8700) or Robert Bollinger (216-821-8773). Or write to Ervil Poland, 516 N. Freedom, Alliance, Ohio 44601. (Will the brother in Germany who responded to us earlier, please respond again to the address above. We no longer have your address.)

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 XXIII

APRIL, 1982

NUMBER 4

THINK ON
THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

P.O. Box 17244
Tampa, Florida 33612



THY SPEECH BETRAYETH THEE

One morning a few months ago, a middle-aged man knocked at my door. When I opened the door he politely bowed and quickly introduced himself as a "member of the church of Christ" in a certain northern town. He informed me of his terrible predicament. He looked the part he was portraying—a helpless, poor, neglected and destitute man who had no family or friends on earth. Before he had finished his story he had told me three times he was a "member of the church of Christ" and on one occasion that he was a "faithful member" back home. I did not favor him with the help requested because I knew he lied about being a member of the church of my Lord, and about some of the other things, probably.

You may inquire, How do you know he was lying about being a member of the church of Christ? I answer, Because he used strange language that showed a complete lack of Bible knowledge. Any man or woman must have more knowledge of the Bible than he had before he or she could become a Christian. He used these expressions frequently: "Reverend," "your denomination," "I used to sing in the choir," "I was christened when a child," and "when I got religion." Christians who have been "faithful" in the "church of Christ" as long as he said he had been a member would know better than to call a gospel preacher—or anyone else for that matter—a "Reverend." A Christian would know that the Lord's church is in no sense "a denomination," and that "christening" does not have any place in New Testament practice.

When I informed that man of his mistakes in

language his reactions further indicated that he was lying about being a Christian. At first he turned red in the face and began to accuse me of not wanting to help poor people. He then tried to correct his mistakes by completely reversing his story and telling me that he wanted to "test me" to see if I was really a gospel preacher. Needless to say, he soon left without my aid. When one will lie about his religious life for the sake of money he has something to hide that makes him unworthy of anybody's help.

Now what is the principle to be learned in this experience? We must learn how to use language that will indicate what we really are—Christians. Peter said "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11). Again, "let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man" (Col. 4:6).

We are coining phrases every day in expressing a Christian's activity and relationship that are nearly as wrong as the language of the man just referred to. We are calling the meeting house the "church" with such regularity that our children think that is really the church. We talk about "church" weddings, "church" funerals, "church" picnics, "church" showers, etc. We talk about the preacher in a way that he becomes the HEAD of the local congregation. "Our preacher said," "our preacher does," "our preacher approves," etc. Then we talk about "the church of Christ doctrine," "the church of Christ preacher," "the church of Christ people," etc. This is not Bible language, and does not display the knowledge of God's word that we should have.

We are involved with organizations that call for terms unheard of in the word of God. "Captains," "chairman," "superintendent," "circles," (Yes, we have a few of them), "committees," "youth clubs," etc. What place do these terms have in the simple organization of the Lord's church?

We talk about "mission points," "brotherhood work," "sponsoring agency," "central point," etc. These are not scriptural terms. We are either practicing something that we ought not to practice, or we are calling a thing something that it ought not to be called. Let us speak as the Word speaks and we will stay on the right track and speak in right language. (SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES, February, 1960)

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THE CERTIFIED GOSPEL

"But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man" (Gal. 1:11). In this statement, Paul placed the gospel he preached in contrast to the perverted gospel which some had brought to the churches of Galatia (Verse 7). He further showed that perverted gospels were appeals to men rather than to God and that those who preached such perversions negated their claim to be the servants of Christ (verse 10). In these declarations, Paul gave his assurance that his gospel was genuine. He had received it by divine revelations. The further context of Galatians 1 shows that he did not confer with those chosen to be apostles before him in order to determine what he ought to believe and preach. After his conversion he went away into Arabia. Even when he did meet with the apostles later in his service to Christ, they "added nothing" to him. He received his gospel by divine revelation even as the others.

We long for certainty in a world darkened by doubt. We do not want to eat meat or drink milk unless we know it has met the standards of purity set by those who regulate such matters. When I get on a jet plane I want to have someone at the controls who has been "certified." When I go to the office of a Doctor whom I have not seen before, I always read his diplomas and certificates displayed on the wall. You see, I want certified meat, milk, pilots and Doctors.

Is it not strange that in a world where so many demand certification about so many things, there are so few who want certification when it comes to the realm of the spirit? Some do not even think there are recognizable standards by which spiritual truth can be verified. Luke wanted Theophilus to "know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed" (Luke 1:4). It was that certainty which prompted him to speak of "those things which are most surely believed among us" (Luke 1:1). But how can we know the certainty of the gospel claims? Have we been gullible? Are we without sufficient evidence to certify it? Consider now the following three lines of evidence by which gospel truth is verified.

Certified by Miracles

The whole gospel system rests on the truth or falsity of the claims of Jesus that he was divine. Were these claims empty boastings, or were there mighty powers performed by him which could only be attributed to Deity?

Consider first the reported miracles of Christ. There were three words which were often used together to discuss both the miracles of Christ and, later, those of his apostles. These were "miracles," "wonders," and "signs" (Acts 2:22; Heb. 2:4; 2 Cor. 12:12). The word "miracles" referred to mighty deeds and indicated the source of what was done. The might, or power, which stood behind the deed was not human but divine. The second word, "wonders," described the effect such deeds had on the witnesses. They were filled with awe and amazement. The third word, "signs," established the purpose of that which was done. These deeds were divine portents, or evidences of Deity acting in the presence of humanity to convince humanity of the fact of divine intervention.

In the four gospel records there are some 38 miracles of Jesus reported. In the gospel of John there are only seven of these reported, each falling into a different category and demonstrating mighty power in each of these areas. John summarized his purpose in this selection when he said "And many other signs truly did Jesus in this book: but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," (Jno. 20:30-31). How do you explain turning water into wine, feeding multitudes with a few loaves and fishes, walking on water, healing the sick, casting out demons, calming a storm by speaking to it, or raising the dead? These were "miracles," mighty deeds which could not be attributed to human resources. Peter said that it was by these that Jesus of Nazareth was "a man approved of God among you" (Acts 2:22).

Then we must consider the mighty deeds wrought by the apostles of Christ. They were his chosen ambassadors (2 Cor. 5:20). Not only were they officially sent, commissioned by the power sending them, but their testimony was certified by "miracles," "wonders," and "signs." These were their credentials or badges of authority. Jesus promised them that as they went abroad to baptize believers, that "these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark 16:15-18). What he promised them, he fulfilled. "So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following, Amen" (Mk. 16:19-20). The Hebrew writer said "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. 2:4). Paul identified such performances as "the signs of an apostle" and says they were wrought at Corinth "in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds" (2 Cor. 12:12). Paul's gospel (the certified gospel) at Thessalonica came "not . . . in word only, but also in power" (1 Thes. 1:5). His gospel came in word, for the gospel cannot be preached without word. But it was not the word devoid of the necessary divine credentials

to undergird the certainty of what was said. There can be no doubt that the same "signs of an apostle" which were wrought later at Corinth, were in evidence here in Thessalonica as well.

Paul and Barnabas appealed to the same line of evidence at Jerusalem to argue that their work of gospel preaching among Gentiles was approved by God for they were "declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them" (Acts 15:12). By such astounding evidences both the ministry of Jesus and that of his apostles were certified.

Certified by Eyewitnesses

The preceding claims do not rest upon the folk tales and legends handed down from mouth to ear nor upon the shifting sand of human credulity. They were "eyewitnesses of his majesty." Peter declared "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount" (2 Pet. 1:16-18). Peter, James and John were all present and were eye and ear witnesses to the things reported.

To this we add the words of another witness, John. "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life. . . . That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you..." (1 Jno, 1:1-3).

Every alleged fact of history rests upon four criteria: (1) That reported was done in the past; (2) It was visible so that witnesses could attest to it; (3) There was some marker, record or monument left to memorialize it; and (4) That marker, record or monument must have continued from the time of the reported event until the present. If there is any alleged fact of history which does not rely upon these evidences, I do not know what it would be. Yet, by the same criteria we certify the claims of Christ upon which the gospel rests. We are called upon to believe the certainty of events long past. These events were visible so that they could be reported by witnesses. When Paul stood before Agrippa to speak of "these things" he appealed to the fact that Agrippa himself was not ignorant of these events, for said he "this thing was not done in a corner" (Acts 26:26). Touching the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, Paul recounted the list of witnesses and said "he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain (my emphasis, CWA) unto this present, but some are fallen asleep" (1 Cor. 15:6). There are at least three markers, records or monuments which keep alive the memory of that done in the past which was seen of witnesses. There is the testimony of the indestructible word of God. It survives every attack

with a tenacity which cannot be explained short of divine providence. Then there is the monument of the Lord's Supper. This simple memorial observance takes place every first day of the week the world around and "show(s) forth" his death (1 Cor. 11:26). It is a living marker. Then there is the act of baptism which, when performed, memorializes the fact that Jesus died, was buried and arose the third day. The sinner who submits in faithful obedience to this command of God passes through the form or mold of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. It is a living marker. Until the skeptic is willing to discard these criteria upon which he accepts the facts of history, then he would do well not to expose his arrogance and inconsistency in discarding the claims of Jesus and the gospel which rest upon the same kind of evidence.

Certified by Fulfilled Prophecy

After stating that he and others were eyewitnesses of his majesty, Peter said "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts; Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1:19-21). Prophecy was that ray of light which illuminated the Old Testament period (the dark place of this passage) until such time as the day should dawn, the time of the fulfillment of that prophesied, and the day star should appear in the person of Christ to be the ruler of this era of divine light and truth. How could the prophets foretell events in minute detail which were to come to pass far beyond the reach of their own time and ability to influence the outcome? There are 332 prophecies in the Old Testament which had to do with the Messiah and his kingdom. With the appearance of the "day star" these began to unfold with exactness and precision. Were they unusually perceptive psychics able to accurately foretell events hundreds of years after their own time? No, my friends, they were "moved" (impelled, borne along, driven) by the Holy Spirit. "This is that" spoken by Joel, Amos, Isaiah or whichever of the prophets, came with a certainty that challenged every other explanation while, at the same time, guaranteeing the certainty of those things most surely believed among us.

In this age of theological guess work and blatant attacks upon the faith once delivered to the saints by moral reprobates and cynical skeptics which question every major premise of the gospel system, it is high time that we stand on the promises and with assurance state our case for the certified gospel. No other spiritual nourishment is acceptable. Any other has the anathema of God upon it and terminates in everlasting ruin. There is also a warning here for those who cling to the certified gospel to be sure what we teach and practice can be located in that gospel which was certified by miracles, eyewitnesses and fulfilled prophecy.

Florida College Names New President



S. O. Ward, Chairman of the Board of Directors, announced January 29 that Bob F. Owen had been selected by the Board to become the College's third President. Mr. Owen will assume his duties following the retirement of James R. Cope, July 1 this year.

In presenting Mr. Owen as the new President-elect to a specially called assembly of the administration, faculty and staff, Mr. Ward called attention to Bob Owen's 30 years of dedicated service to Florida College. He further observed that the Board of Directors was placing its full support behind him.

Mr. Ward stated that the 33 years of service by President James R. Cope to the College had brought it to its present strong position and that it stands debt-free in the midst of its greatest development period. He expressed his confidence, and that of the Board, that Mr. Owen can continue to build upon the foundation laid by the present administration.

President Cope also expressed his feelings that Mr. Owen's involvement in administrative experience for 26 years serves as an excellent stepping stone to the chief executive's office.

In accepting the appointment, Mr. Owen committed to put aside all outside interests, except church and home, that were not directly related to his work as President, in order to devote himself totally to the ongoing of Florida College. He assured the administration, faculty and staff that he wanted to continue with the present team and asked for their help and prayers as he moved into the new role.

Mr. Owen was born July 30, 1929, in Memphis, Tennessee, to the late Scott Owen and Nell (Forbess) Owen. He has one brother, H. Scott Owen, who also is a gospel preacher.

He is married to Janelle (Boswell) of Lakeland, Florida, and they have one son, Daniel Scott, who also preaches, and one daughter, "Jeni" (Roberts).

Mr. Owen attended Freed-Hardeman College the last two years that President Cope was an instructor there, followed him to Florida college, and was here for Cope's first year as President. He received his B. A. degree from Abilene Christian College and his M. A. from the University of Florida, returning to work with Florida College in September, 1952. He has served as instructor in Bible and speech from that time until the present. From 1956 through May, 1968, he was Dean of Students, then Business Manager for four years,

and has served as Administrative Assistant for Finance since 1972.

Mr. Owen has been very active in community and civic affairs. He is an active member of the Chamber of Commerce in the City of Temple Terrace. He was the Charter President of the Temple Terrace Civitan Club, became a member of the Tampa North Rotary Club in 1970, and served as its President in 1979. During the past 13 years, Mr. Owen has served as a member of the Temple Terrace City Council and served as Vice-Mayor for seven years. For the last several years he has served on the Council of Governments which has placed him in direct association with officials of the surrounding governments. He has a broad base of public and community friends and associates.

Bob Owen is well known among brethren. His meeting work has taken him into most states except those of the far west. He has engaged in regular preaching since his college days and for the last 18 years has preached in Largo, Florida, and presently broadcasts a weekly radio program.

The Board of Directors expresses its confidence that the experience and ability possessed by Mr. Owen will continue to assure the patrons and supporters of Florida College that the children enrolled here will be able to enjoy excellent moral training, Biblical instruction, and secular education.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: We extend our congratulations to brother Owen and wish for him great success in leading the administration of FLORIDA COLLEGE. In a future issue of this paper we will comment on the service rendered by James R. Cope, the role the college fills and say more about hopes for the future.)

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I'M TIRED!

Do you ever get to the point where you just have to "blow off some steam"? I do. I am at that point right now. Do you mind if I just sit down right here for a minute? Thanks. I just want you to know, first of all, that I love people. And especially my brethren. And I don't mean any harm to anybody. And I don't think everything and everybody is "going to the dogs," either. And furthermore, I don't profess to know everything. In fact, I know less this year than I did last and it seems the older I get the less answers I have for life's questions. Fact is, I don't even know that I understand the questions! And I am by no means a pessimist. But I get tired nonetheless. Could I just take a few minutes of your time and illustrate? Thanks.

I am tired of people who have no respect for authority. I see people run stop signs, red lights, race through school zones, cheat at things, steal fruit at the store, and all of it as if laws were merely suggestions. And religious authority I guess went out when the "new morality" came in. Even my own brethren don't respect it and are heard to say, "we don't have to have authority for everything we do." I picked up a bulletin from a Houston church a few weeks ago which advertised a "Winter Festival" (\$10.50 per ticket); a golf tournament for the members; a blood drive; and several other things for which one would search in vain for a passage for God's approval. Brethren, I'm tired of churches calling themselves churches of Christ and calling for a "thus saith the Lord" and then doing whatever they want! What about II Jno 9? Doesn't it mean anything? And I Pet. 4:11? And Gal. 1:6-ff?

I'm tired of people who excuse things. Things like homosexuality (Rom. 1:28-ff). Folks excuse it as an acceptable "alternate life style" as if that's all that's needed for the approval of God. And drunkenness? well, that's excused as "just a sickness." And I'm tired of people excusing lying in business by saying that it's just a part of today's commerce and trade. And I'm tired of people losing their temper and then excusing it by saying, "I'm only human." Folks, lying is sinful (Rev. 21:8). So is drunkenness (Gal. 5:21). To lose control of yourself is wrong (Rom. 12:21). Forgiveness is God's prerogative and we do a sloppy job of self-justification.

I'm tired of laziness. Of people who won't work. And it's not a matter of their being unable to work. It's a

matter of they don't want to! And they are not all on welfare rolls. Some of them have jobs and still don't work. Or if they do, they do just enough to barely get along. And sloppy workmanship is commonplace today. It used to be that "Made in U.S.A." meant quality and "Made in Japan" meant a poor copy. No longer! How sad that we have lost the pride of workmanship it takes to do a good job. God expects it (Eccl. 9:10; II Thess. 3:10; Eph. 6:5-6;), you know.

I'm tired of dirty language. It's everywhere—at the dime store, on the news, in the magazines, at the cleaners, the bank, the post office. And all ages do it. I heard enough filth explode from the mouth of a little boy about six years old a while back to do me from now on. And women do it. Boy, do women do it! A lady in her late twenties was seated with several men at the table next to me at the coffee shop the other day. The only difference between her filthy language and that of her male companions was the pitch of her voice! I don't know how I must have looked, but I thought I saw my donut blush!

And I'm tired of fussing and fighting. Of people who "know" other people's motives, who equate soundness with disagreement. It seems to me that we are going to have enough trouble while trying not to! And yet some seemingly think that the only way the work of the Lord progresses is by controversy. Now I guess some folks are already saying I'm soft. But I just believe the work of the Lord is superior to our trivial personality differences and our semantical syndromes. Yes, I know we are to oppose false teachers and expose their doctrines, but some of the time what is passed off as fulfilling these obligations is merely personality pride. Instead of looking for trouble, we should "seek peace and ensue it." And has it never occurred to some of us that we can "earnestly contend for the faith" and still be kind?

I feel better already. Thanks for letting me get that off my chest. Maybe next time I'll listen to you, ok?

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F. B. Srygley was a contemporary of David Lipscomb, James A. Harding, F. W. Smith, M. C. Kurfes, T. B. Larimore, J. C. McQuiddy, and many other stalwarts of two generations ago. F. D. Srygley (Filo B.'s brother) was thought by many to have been a better scribe than the younger brother. F. D. Srygley had died about the turn of the century. I do not recall having ever personally met F. B. Srygley, though I saw him once or twice. He was a watchman for trends among churches with reference both to organization and doctrine and never hesitated to use his pen to call attention to tendencies and trends away from the New Testament pattern. The article below reflects his thinking in the Gospel Advocate of July 4, 1935.

INDIVIDUAL WORK IN THE CHURCH

F.B. Srygley

Most of the work Christians are commanded to do is individual work. There is no organization in the church through which very much can be done, except to meet together to teach and be taught and to worship God. The disciples came together upon the first day of the week to break bread, and Paul preached unto them.

The New Testament has no organization through which its members can work except the local congregation. Of course, much of the work of a Christian is, and of a right ought to be, individual work. To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction is pure, practical religion, and can be, and should be, done by individual Christians. Congregations are made up of individuals, and the whole congregation is benefited by the work of its members.

There is little for the congregation to do as a congregation except to congregate and worship God. The greatest power in the congregation is the power and work of its members, even when they are not congregated. The spirituality of a church consists of the spirituality of its members.

Institutions are established with the expectation of their support by the churches, without any offer of control, unless it be by remote control. Large churches are sometimes advocated, I fear, to give some one or something control over the church when the contribution is accessible. The number of Christians composing a local church is not given in the New Testament, except in the language of Christ when he said; "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. 18:

20.) This passage does not teach how many may be gathered together, but it does teach how few can do it with his approval.

It seems that in small congregations the work of the congregation as a whole can better be thrown on the individual than it can in larger churches. The closer the individual Christian can be brought to the public worship the better for the membership as a whole. What is called the organization of the church, if there is such a thing, is exceedingly simple. The New Testament does not use the word "organize" in connection with the planting of the truth in any locality. The church in the New Testament is represented as a building, but not as an organization. Individual responsibility to God is one thing that is emphasized in the New Testament. Too many people are trying to save others by controlling them rather than by teaching them the gospel and allowing them to be controlled by it. We are servants, even bond servants, to Christ; but we are free men, as far as man is concerned. "We shall be delivered from bondage into the glorious liberty of the children of God." "For why is my liberty judged of another?" On the question of liberty the apostle gives a caution that should not be overlooked: "Take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to them that are weak."



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SPECIAL FEATURE

INSTITUTIONALISM: THE GROWTH YEARS

James L. Yopp
1 Caroline Ave.
Lake City, FL 32055

During the period immediately following World War II, the returning soldiers who were members of the church of Christ brought back to the states a concern for the spiritual needs of humanity. As they viewed the teeming millions of lost souls scattered throughout Europe and Asia, they were moved by their condition and longed to do something for their spiritual well-being.

The ravages of war were also being felt in a physical way. People without homes, without sufficient food, and lacking necessary clothing provoked the compassion of the soldier as he viewed their destitute condition. He felt, and would lead many others in the states to so feel, that something must be done.

The reactions to the pleas of those who viewed the horrors associated with war and the need for the gospel in other places were not immediate. It takes time to formulate and execute programs to satisfy the apparent needs of those living beyond our border. The effect of seeing the needs of foreigners also provoked new efforts within our own country. As brethren started thinking in terms of relieving needs, their sensitivities grew and they began to do more and more toward helping others. An example: In 1950, there were 10 orphanages operated by churches of Christ; between 1950 and 1960, 17 more were established. From a single institution founded in 1909 (Tennessee Orphan Home), the growth rate accelerated after the war.

The social consciousness that took root encouraged the brethren to give attention to meeting the spiritual and/or social needs of others. Trying to evangelize Germany with food to raising the living conditions in the East with "Cows for Korea," programs sprang up during the twenty years following the war that would set the pace for the work being done today by many churches of Christ.

An additional social factor entered the picture when, in the early fifties, communications (radio and television) coupled with the mobility of the people to pave the way for large, cooperative efforts, as the Herald of Truth. The new and easily accessible means of communicating with others made it easy for ambitious men to sell their programs to an eager brotherhood.

With a deep concern for the needy, the easily gained knowledge of other churches (and their activities), and an ambitious breed of men who wanted to "do something," a shift in emphasis and direction for the church started to surface. But one cannot change direction until he changes his thinking. So the next step

became apparent: No longer was an appeal made to the Bible for authority to act, but rationalization, emotionalism, and humanitarianism took over. With cries of "you cannot teach a man when he is hungry" or "what could be wrong with attracting a person through some recreational or social program while teaching him the gospel?" the stage was set, the players were ready, and the audience would listen. What was only a trickle in 1950 would become a raging torrent by 1970.

Three Main Concerns

During the two decades following the war, three main concerns would surface among churches of Christ: Evangelism through cooperation, benevolence through cooperation, and an enlargement of work of the church beyond evangelization, edification, and benevolence.

Evangelization through cooperation. The most often used approach during this period, except for the local congregation, was the sponsoring church. In this arrangement, one church would take upon herself the oversight of preaching the gospel in a certain locality. This sponsoring church would oversee the preacher(s), solicit the funds for the work from other churches, and take a maternalistic pride in protecting her "territory." This type of arrangement was also utilized in certain works, for instance, in the Herald of Truth (national radio and television program), as assumed by the Highland Avenue church in Abilene, Texas in the early 50s (the program had originated in another state, but was transferred to the Highland elders).

Benevolence through cooperation. Institutions that care for the needy grew rapidly (orphanages, old folk's homes, etc.). These cooperative efforts were executed primarily through two types of organizations: A board of directors and local elderships. The board of director arrangements had most of its support east of the Mississippi and the eldership approach found its following primarily in Texas. Both arrangements served as a way for local churches to contribute their funds into a central treasury, activating something larger than the local church.

The work of the church was enlarged beyond evangelism, edification, and benevolence. The recreation craze took over churches. From the seemingly innocent "dinner on the ground," brethren rationalized into a full scale community organization where "fun, food, and frolic" could be found. Also, the church became a funding agency for certain enterprises (as colleges). (Note: Brethren had been doing many of these things, i.e., supporting schools and involving themselves as community action organizations, in other countries long before being proposed and practised on such a wide scale in the United States.)

The Emerging Voices

The emerging voices that would change the face of the church of Christ reflected a new mood. No longer content to stick with Book, chapter, and verse, their writings demonstrated a dependence upon human

reasoning that had not been used since the division that created the "Christian church." One of the publications, Questions and Issues of the Day (A reprint of three sermons preached by Batsell Barrett Baxter at Hillsboro church of Christ, Nashville, Tennessee, during November and December of 1963), was widely circulated during the period. Where some had only touched the surface, bro. Baxter would, under the guise of giving a scriptural answer, open the floodgates for even more apostasy. (Reference will be made to these sermons (tract) throughout the series).

With the growth of inter-congregational cooperatives, justification was sought for such efforts as the Herald of Truth, World Radio, Cows for Korea, etc. In order to sell the brethren, it would be necessary to destroy the belief in the independence of the local church. So, in his tract, Baxter said,

The very heart of Christianity is love which ties people together rather than separates them. The emphases of Christianity stand solidly in favor of removing barriers and walls of separation in favor of unity and oneness. Only because of geographical necessity were there separate congregations of the Lord's church. (Baxter, p. 7).

In this subtle statement, a seed is sown that would activate the universal church. There is nothing in the New Testament that indicates separate congregations existed because of distance. All that we know is that God made elders only elders in one church (Acts 20:28), and that any cooperative effort that places elders over the work of more than one church violates the pattern set forth in the New Testament. Those who would reshape the church had their tools working.

A further attempt to justify the grand schemes of the new visionaries became apparent in such statements as,

There are some works too big for a single, local congregation to do. (Baxter, p. 11).

This argument was borrowed from Campbell and others who authored the missionary society concept of years gone by. It is nothing new, only a way to erode confidence in the Lord's way. It seems somewhat surprising that apostolic congregations failed to realize they were not big enough to do God's work—they just went ahead and did the work anyway!

When gospel preachers pointed out the distinction between the work of a local church and the work of an individual Christian, some tried to break down the Bible distinction in their responsibilities.

Any "good work" which the individual as a Christian, is obligated to support financially, the church is equally obligated to support financially . . . If it is a good work, which the Lord wants done, the obligation falls equally upon individuals and upon the church, for individuals are the church. (Baxter, p. 23).

It seems unnecessary to point out that 1 Timothy

5:16 makes the very distinction that Baxter denies exists. It is difficult to explain why those who have preached the gospel for years, taught Bible classes on a college level (in schools operated by brethren), and served in so many areas missed that passage. Unfortunately, once a person starts his path into liberalism, he seems to possess an exceedingly bad memory.

While denominations have for many years operated hospitals and other welfare institutions, churches of Christ have been aloof from such efforts. The rising cries of the two decades under consideration would begin to paint a new picture that could open the doors for such institutions.

If there were no hospitals or other means of caring for a sick person, the church would then be obligated to establish some method in order to carry out the responsibility that God has given us to care for the sick. Such was the case at Nowhe Mission in South Africa. (Baxter, p. 24).

What brethren would not do in America, others were doing in Africa. It would seem that earlier preachers, in fleeing the seed of denominationalism, missed the boat altogether. Instead of preaching the gospel, saving souls, and establishing churches, they should have been building hospitals. The social consciousness that was provoked following World War II is beginning to have its effect.

During the early part of the period we are considering, many brethren suggested that a battle was being fought on the orphan homes issue in order to put the colleges into the church budgets. After the initial ground work, it did not bother Baxter to say,

If Christian schools are needed and can be used by the church to train its young, does this not establish a strong implication that the church might have some responsibility in starting such schools and causing them to be available when young people have need for them? (Baxter, p. 27).

The fruit of that position has borne several elementary and secondary schools supported by churches (over 100). While they may refuse a direct contribution from the church treasury, they often meet in church buildings, use church busses, and utilize other facilities paid for and maintained by local churches. Churches of Christ in various communities DO support secular schools.

Do not assume that churches had never supported schools before. It is apparent that David Lipscomb College has, through the years, accepted church donations.

The contribution at Charlotte Avenue Church on March 29, toward the support of education at David Lipscomb Collete, amounted to \$1,329.85. (Gospel Advocate, April 16, 1969, p. 252.).

Yet, the opposition before the fifties had been for-

midable and only a smattering of such support could be identified. Nonetheless, once the principle had been accepted, that is, churches may support human institutions from the church treasury, colleges could attempt to get "their part."

Seeds Taking Root

As brethren increased their efforts to try to restructure churches in such a manner as to allow the support of human institutions, as well as the enlarging of the scope of the work of the local church, arguments were made designed to teach that orphanages and secular schools stood or fell together. The emotional appeal of a needy child would become the springboard from which support for colleges would be launched. Some brethren had predicted that such would happen and it became a reality when Baxter wrote,

Some who are agreed that the church can contribute to an orphan's home are not convinced that the church can contribute to a Christian school. It is difficult to see a significant difference so far as principle is concerned. The orphan's home and the Christian school stand or fall together. (Baxter, p. 29).

All denials notwithstanding, when it was put in black and white by one of the "leaders" of the institutional movement, none could ignore the implications. Increasingly, more cries went up for churches to begin supporting schools from their treasuries—for, after all, if you can do one, why not the other? Really, why not?

A further erosion of the work of the church took place when recreational pursuits became accepted practices in many churches. One of the churches that presently bemoans the growing liberalism among some churches of Christ was herself one of those who set the pattern of behavior. The Getwell church in Memphis, Tennessee, now sponsors seminars, publications, a paper, and other efforts that attempt to stop the growing tide. BUT—look at the following, lifted verbatim from her bulletin.

OUR THANKS to every one who helped the boys and their ball teams . . . All the young people who went to the ranch parties Monday and Tuesday nights thoroughly enjoyed every minute of the outing . . . The teen-age girls class will present a short play this coming Tuesday night, August 1st, on "Love, courtship, and marriage." . . . There was a good group of men and boys who went on the camping trip last week . . . Our boys are really playing good ball this year from the Pee Wees to the Juniors. (The Getwell Reminder, July 20, 27, and August 31, 1961).

Those who are screaming so loudly against the modern problems had better check their history—they set the pace and men who were even more visionary took the ball and ran (no pun intended).

When a church had determined that it intends to integrate various programs into the local work, there is a demand for facilities. These facilities will become the key to the type of work in which that church engages. It is also a way of seeing the attitude (spiritual or secular) that a congregation possesses.

Preliminary work of construction of a high school student center for the Broadway church of Christ to be located at 1808-12 Main St. has been started by Claude Martin / Son, with the cost estimated at \$53,000 . . . The floor space of 6,200 feet will embrace a large recreation room, snack bar, lounge, kitchen, storage and mechanical rooms, two offices, and restrooms. (Eugene Britnell in Shocking Quotes, p. 2).

Such facilities had been unknown among churches of Christ prior to this time because the churches of Christ had not engaged in work that necessitated such. When men secularize the church they must have buildings that further secular ends. The simple structures maintained by most congregations (auditorium, classrooms, study, storage, and restrooms) indicate a desire to fulfill the work God assigned to the church and NOTHING MORE. Any facility that makes provisions for the church to do something the church is not authorized to do IS WRONG.

When the seeds of the social gospel are beginning to take root, there is a new emphasis upon relieving the needs of a physical nature with less and less time and energy spent on the spiritual man. The two decades under consideration produced arguments that indicated more interest in the physical man than spiritual man. Let us face the fact squarely: the New Testament church had more concern about ministry to the needs of humanity than we do, and New Testament Christians accorded more money and effort proportionately to benevolence than do we. The primary financial concern of the New Testament churches, the Lord's Day contribution, the inter-congregational relationships were primarily centered on benevolence. And the church grew tremendously. (Childhaven News, December, 1964, article by Gale Oler.).

How one who had preached the gospel for years could ever come up with a notion like this is dumbfounding. But when brethren are intent on building their own welfare institutions, they will grasp the last straw to keep from going under. What Oler did was to undermine evangelistic responsibility. Contrary to what he said, the early church grew because the gospel was preached in its purity and simplicity and NOT because someone was fed (Colossians 1:23). This is not to discourage scriptural benevolence, but it must be kept in its proper perspective.

The voices that would change the face of local churches and the work that God had given them were not silent during the 50s and 60s. With vigor, they ac-

cused the antis of everything from being "orphan-haters" to "anti-Christ." But in the 80s, some of the very ones who were so aggressive are beginning to reap what they have sown. Apparently, there are even those among the more conservative minded that would make overtures to the despised "antis." But let them remember who is at fault and who it was that warned of the impending spiritual disasters. Even while they enthusiastically advocated inter-congregational cooperatives, altered the work of the church, and changed the face of the local congregation, there were Christians throughout the land that cried against their schemes. Perhaps it is possible for all involved to take an unemotional and unbiased look at the efforts to halt the rising tide of liberalism and honestly judge why the "antis" cried out against the teachings and practices of some.

Resistance Evident

During the period in which church supported institutions were growing by leaps and bounds, there were voices that cried against the practices. Those who opposed the modern schemes used every means at their disposal to bring brethren back to Bible principles. As is true in every controversy, some listened and some did not. For that courageous few who dared to speak against the powers of the day, we are indeed thankful. Many of them suffered financially (lost their jobs and had meetings cancelled), others found their families alienated by their stand for truth, and the pressures of friends were felt in nearly every quarter. Only those who lived during that period can fully appreciate the circumstances. But what was it they stood for that made them stand against the new wave of activity and thinking?

Elders, preachers, and brethren emphasized that every practice, every idea, and every principle must have Bible authority. Such a position was based on Colossians 3:17, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." This placed them in conflict with the ones who said we did many things for which we have no authority or we do not need authority for all we do. How foolish not to realize that once we abandon the principle of having Book, chapter, and verse for everything we do in religion, we have abandoned the only standard available and there is no stopping place. The modern leaders in some churches of Christ have accepted the consequences of the earlier refusal to seek Bible authority and gladly accept practices (instrumental music, societies, recreational programs, church support of schools, etc.) because they have been so conditioned. The seeds sown in the 50s and 60s have produced some corrupt fruits.

In an attempt to stave off the sweeping tide of apostacy, brethren pointed out that each church was self-governing and the elders looked after the needs of the local flock. Paul had said as much in Acts 20:28, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Please note they were

over the flock—not the work of several flocks. The apostle Peter was even more emphatic when he said, "Tend the flock of God which is among you" (1 Peter 5:2). Tending the affairs of many flocks (thru acceptance of contributions) or overseeing a work thousands of miles away violates the principle of the passages just quoted. While the desire of many was to see that more heard the gospel, it is significant that by following the apostolic pattern the early church effectively carried the gospel (without TV, radio, and newspapers) into the civilized world (Colossians 1:23). Brethren who lose faith in God's way soon convince themselves that God's way will not get the job done. How faithless!

As a spiritual institution, the church of our Lord has specific works that she is to perform. Each local church engaged in these works. They are named in Ephesians 4:11-12, "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Three words may effectively describe what the church is to do: Evangelism, edification, and benevolence. The new wave of the 50s and 60s enlarged these responsibilities to encompass all kinds of social programs, taking over responsibilities that belonged to the family and to the government. Many disciples pointed out the truth as to the church's obligations and chided those who would corrupt the spiritual nature of Christ's body. Again, some listened and some did not. Brethren continued to attempt to bring those who were rushing headlong into apostacy back to the Bible. We have no right to bind more upon the local church than did the apostles of Christ.

Once it was clearly shown that Christ intended the church to engage only in that work she, had been assigned, certain teachings that would regulate that work became apparent. The longer we search the truth, the more obvious are the principles of truth. A careful search of the New Testament proved the following.

1. Each church was responsible to use its own funds in preaching the gospel. No funds for evangelism were surrendered to sister churches to preach the gospel.
2. No funds were sent from several churches to one church to enable it to do more preaching.
3. No funds were sent **through** any congregation to preach the gospel.
4. All funds for preaching went directly from the treasury of the local church to the evangelist (Philippians 4:15-16; 2 Corinthians 11:8).

Therefore, no church has the right to become the evangelistic agency for several churches (This is the error in sponsoring churches and the Herald of Truth). Not only is it scriptural for each church to do her own evangelism, it is more effective and efficient.

WHAT IS IMPRESSIVE TO THE WORLD DOES NOT NECESSARILY IMPRESS God. While certain ones seemed to be relishing "our" national

programs and the new image that could be presented by "the church of Christ," we were losing sight of our main obligation: Pleasing God. How can we believe that God is happy with us when we disrupt the autonomy of the local church, involve the local congregation in works that are not mentioned in the New Testament, and restructure the church after our own image of what the kingdom should be like?

Another area in which there was a responsibility for both Christians and the church was that of benevolence. Certain principles were called to the attention of those who would engage the church in general welfare practices. Not only do those of us who lived through the 50s and 60s need to be reminded of the Biblical practices, each new generation must be informed.

1. Each individual was commanded to meet his obligations in the care of the needy. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).
2. Each congregation was to relieve those needy within the local church that were objects of the church's help (Acts 6:1-7).
3. Any destitute church (one that could not care for the needy for whom she was responsible) could receive help from a church with abundance (Acts 11:27-30).
4. No permanent organization for funneling money from several churches to one church existed.
5. Each local church took care of her own needy and did not set up some kind of institution to permanently relieve the needy of the community and/or of other churches.

When Christians meet their responsibilities to the needy (1 Timothy 5:8), and churches meet their responsibilities to the needy (Acts 6:1ff), all needy for which disciples of Christ are responsible will be relieved!

Liberalism: a definition

The preceding background has been presented so that we might be able to define, in a clear and lucid manner, liberalism. It is evident that what brethren refer to as liberalism is not the same as the way in which the world uses the term. Bulletins of churches that would charge many with liberalism are themselves guilty of liberalism. To properly define it for our understanding as brethren, please note the following two characteristics of liberalism.

1. Liberalism is the result of people expressing and/or acting by their own choosing. It is the unrestrained disposition to abandon Bible authority (Book, chapter, and verse) and to determine to act upon some other standard ("it works," "it is a good work," "I don't see anything wrong with it," "How can something accomplishing so much be wrong," etc.).

2. Liberalism is the result of an attitude toward the word of God. Those who follow its principles do not completely abandon the New Testament, but they make allowances for activities that please them without due consideration as to the New Testament order.

As Alexander Campbell rationalized the missionary society, so some of the 50s and 60s rationalized their projects and institutions into acceptance. A conservative approach to an understanding of the Bible will never result in one losing faith in the need of sticking to the book; a liberal approach will inevitably lead one away from Bible authority.

Over the years we are considering, brethren lost faith in the New Testament pattern (some ridiculed the idea of such). Yet, God had always emphasized the necessity of respecting a pattern, even telling Moses, "See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed thee in the mount" (Hebrews 8:5) when he is to build the tabernacle. Over one hundred years ago, John T. Welsh wrote,

I think it is an undeniable truth, that men never departed from primitive Christianity until they lost faith in it. And no Christian ever yet adopted human systems and appliances until his faith becomes weak in the divine; . . . We want more faith and less machinery, more work and less talk, more faith and less planning. The Lord has given us the plan, and bids us go work in his vineyard; but instead of going to work with the tools he has furnished, we spend all the day in making new ones which in our wisdom, we think will work better. Let us quit it and go to work with a hearty good will. Sound advice indeed!

Once a person has abandoned faith in the New Testament order, there is no stopping place.

It is interesting to observe that Dr. L. L. Pinkerton, who formally opened the Kentucky Female Orphan School at Midway, Kentucky, the first week in October, 1849, served as Chairman of the Convention which established the American Christian Missionary Society the third week in October, 1849. From the beginning both of these institutions drew contributions from churches. Pinkerton was also credited with introducing the melodian into the Midway church just ten years later (1859) and then denied verbal inspiration of the Bible within another ten years (1869). —James R. Cope For those of you who have been members of the Lord's church since the early fifties, think of whether the congregation in which you now hold membership is like the one in which you were a part in the 50s. Can you not see what we are saying?

Those who weakened the respect of younger brethren for God's order are now paying the penalty. The far-out

churches of Christ are but the logical conclusion of the arguments that were presented to justify church support of orphanages and schools, and the Herald of Truth and sponsoring churches. Instead of bemoaning the present situation, why not resolve to go back to the fundamental teachings of such passages as Colossians 3:17, 2 Peter 1:3, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, and every other passage that emphasizes the necessity of authority? It is not too late for some—it is not too late for you—but some basic changes in attitude must be made.

Only a profound respect for God's order can solve any issue and/or problem among those who would be disciples of Christ. If you still believe this, you are our friend.

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"WALKING IN THE LIGHT"

"This is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:5-9).

A great deal is being said these days about this subject by different brethren.

(1) Some are taking the position that each time one commits sin that he ceases to walk in the light, breaks his fellowship with God, falls from grace, and is therefore lost until he recognizes such sin, confesses to God, and prays for forgiveness.

(2) A second position is that the Christian can live a humble, penitent, and prayerful life, making a sincere effort to obey God at all times, and that although he may sin, he is forgiven and can stand in God's grace (Romans 5:2), remain in the light, and in fellowship with God and Christ.

My convictions are that both of the above positions carry the subject to extremes, and the truth is included in a modified combination of the two.

1. I believe that sin separates one from God. "Behold the Lord's hand is not shortened, that he cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that he cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you

that he will not hear" (Isaiah 59:1-2). Therefore all sin, of which we have knowledge, must be repented of, confessed, and forgiveness sought by asking God to forgive us. I know from I John 1:7 (quoted above) that the Christian has access to that which is efficacious in remitting sins (the blood of Christ is WHAT remits sins), and we are promised they will be forgiven us IF we confess them. (Thus, the time we confess our sins is WHEN they are cleansed by the blood of Christ v.9). It is interesting to note that the words "cleanse" and "cleanseth" are used in both verses (7 / 9) to describe what takes place when the efficacy of the blood is used as a "propitiation for our sins" (I John 2:2).

2. If we are walking in the light (endeavoring to live the Christian life) will not the efficacy of the blood be applied to our lives unconditionally whether we are able to know all of our sins or not? NO! "But," someone says, "because the word that is used in connection with the blood is present tense, it is therefore stated that the 'cleansing' is a continuing process, and not just a "one-time occurrence." With this statement I am in complete agreement. However, the continuation of the cleansing by Christ's blood is conditioned on two things, walking in the light, and a recognition of, and confession of, one's sins.

There are a number of things I know about walking in light and darkness because God has revealed them. However there are some things I cannot know because God has not revealed them. For example:

(1) I know that the word "walk" is present tense and doesn't mean a one time act but a continual taking of steps and would therefore in the context under consideration mean one's manner of life.

(2) I also know that one may say he has fellowship with God and be walking in darkness. John said, "He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now" (I John 2:9). At the point he began hating his brother did he take his first step in darkness? If not, how long did he have to hate his brother in order to be considered walking in darkness? There are many who profess they know God and are walking in the light. However Jesus said, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me (Matthew 15:8). And Paul said, "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him. . ." (Titus 1:16).

(3) The idea, according to the second position at the beginning of this article, is that one "stands in God's grace (Romans 5:2)." My understanding of the passages is simply that according to Romans 5:1 we are justified (absolved of all guilt) by faith, (by the figure of speech called "synecdoche"—a part put for the whole. Thus the word "faith" encompasses all man is required by God to perform to be justified, Hebrews 5:9). Thus by God's grace and our faith we stand justified. However, this seems to me to be all that God is saying in I John 1:7-9. By God's grace we have the efficacy of Christ's blood, and by our faith we believe His Word and seek His forgiveness when we sin.

3. Brethren then begin to categorize sin. What

about sins of ignorance, willful sins, sins that are caused by weakness of the flesh? Are there any other kind? I believe that about covers the entire spectrum of sins that one may commit.

But what happens when man sins, in God's scheme of things, for those who are endeavoring to live the Christian life? to "walk in the light" if you please? The only way I would be able to answer these questions would be to give you God's explanation IF He had explained it—which to my knowledge He hasn't.

There are some things which He has said that I can explain.

(1) He has said one can be justified—absolved of all guilt (Romans 5:1-2).

(2) He has commanded that I be Holy for He is Holy (I Peter 1:16).

(3) He has told us of David's request to be forgiven of "secret faults" (Psalms 19:12), or as my understanding of the passage is, faults (sins) of which David was unaware.

(4) That Simon in Acts 8, even though a new convert, was told when he tried to buy the gift of God with money, that his heart was not right with God. He was then instructed to "repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of thine heart be forgiven thee" (Acts 8:22). This tells us how God expects us to deal with those sins of which we are aware.

(5) That Jesus taught his disciples to ask God to "forgive us our trespasses. . ." (Matthew 6:12); and when the publican prayed unto God, ((God be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13), Jesus said he was justified. This shows that as I understand that I am a weak and sinful creature and ask God to forgive me of my sins of which I may not be aware, and to be merciful to me as a sinner that He will do so.

(6) I am to "pray without ceasing" (I Thessalonians 5:17). Now noting that John said our fellowship with God is conditioned on our walking in the light (I John 1:7), our walking in the light is conditioned on our being justified (Romans 5:1-2), and our being justified is conditioned on repentance and confession that our sins might be forgiven (Acts 8:22; I John 1:9), while all of this is made possible through the efficacy of the blood of Christ,

Conclusion

Now let me suggest something to you as you read the conclusion of this article. If you have not already, make up your mind now that whatever you learn from God's Word that constitutes sin, whether of commission or omission, you will give it up. Ask God to forgive you of any sin of which you may not be aware. If you know of any sins you have committed but have not repented of, repent of them and ask God to forgive you. Now, if you have done these things, if my understanding of the things I have presented in this article is correct, you are forgiven of every sin whether of ignorance, willful, or caused by weakness of the flesh. (Of course I, like John in our text, am speaking of Christians). If you died now, this instant, would there be any sin on your record? No! Because when you have

been justified you are absolved of all guilt—of every sin. And if you continue to practice the above mentioned things that brought about your justification by the blood of Christ, you can remain in that justified condition.

Neither Judge, Jury, nor The Son of God

"But," someone asks, "what about the Christian who has lived a good Christian life for 25 years and while speeding gets killed in an automobile accident while breaking the laws of the land who does not have time to repent?" There is no revelation from God, of which I am aware, on such a situation. Thus neither I nor anyone else can tell you what God "may do" under such circumstances. If I told you what I thought, that is exactly what it would be, my "think-so." And we tell those in the denominational world that their "think-sos" do not count with God.

Since I am neither judge, jury, nor the son of God, nor is anyone else on earth today, let us all just say what God has said in His Word. We will be forgiven of our sins when we repent of known sins and confess them, ask God to be merciful to us as sinners and forgive us of sins of which we may not be aware. Let us do what He would have us do in studying His Word and living the Christian life, and be what He would have us be, righteous, justified, and holy, as we go about daily "praying without ceasing." Thus we can be justified, live justified, and die justified. In the words of Eugene Britnell in the *Gospel Guardian*, Volume 19, Numbers 8 / 9, Page 14, when he was reviewing some things said by Jimmy Allen of Harding College, "In his Harding speech, he said that one does not have to 'be right in every point to go to heaven,' but that one 'must be right concerning the way of salvation.' I have always thought that the 'way of salvation' was the way to heaven!

"He stated that he did not believe 'that one unrepentant sin will send one to hell.' Now that is a strange statement for a gospel preacher. In debate with Baptist preachers they want to know how many sins will cause one to be lost. We reply that it is not a matter of how many but rather will any sin condemn us, and conclude that one unrepentant sin will condemn. Maybe we have been wrong!

"One sin kept Moses out of the promised land! One sin killed Nadab and Abihu! One sin killed the prophet who was sent to Bethel! Read James 2:10 and Acts 17:30. "Allen asked, 'What about unknown sins?' and then cited Psalm 19:12. That verse doesn't help him. David realized that even 'secret faults' could condemn him, and surely he repented or he would not have been praying. Remember, Jimmy taught that an unrepentant sin would not send one to hell! He said, 'God's way takes care of us' and gave I John 1:7 as proof. But are we walking 'in the light' and in 'God's way' when we refuse to repent? Luke 13:3 doesn't sound like it! I don't believe the blood of Christ will cleanse us of all sins if we are not penitent of all sins." (And this expresses exactly what I have been saying throughout this article JTS).

FAMILY TOGETHERNESS

Luther A. Bolenbarker
1020 Maxey Rd.
Houston, TX 77015

God's people are called His family (Eph. 3:15). We are a member of His family because of love; His and ours. One of the most important attributes for a successful family is love. We are to love our mates and our children (Eph. 5 & 6). This love also is to carry over into the brotherhood (church). We are brethren (brothers and sisters) and Peter says we are to love this brotherhood (1 Peter 2:17). Love in the family (both personal and church) pleases God.

When a member of our family is sick, it should cause concern in the whole family. So it is with the family of God. We should weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice (Romans 12:15). Should one in our family not show up at lunch time when expected, it should be a matter of concern to the rest of the family. The same should hold true when one of our family misses worship. It should concern us all.

Most families enjoy being together; yearly reunions are held, vacations are taken, great distances are traveled just so we can get together as a family. Parents yearn to see their parents and their children and loved ones as often as possible. It should be the same in the family of God. A love for God's family will cause us to desire to be together, and yearn for the "fellowship" (spiritually sharing together—not dinner on the ground) that can be found only within the body of Christ.

The Scriptures speak often of spiritual fellowship, the sharing together which comes about by our being a close-knit family. Luke tells us in Acts 2:42,46 that some were together even daily. Togetherness keeps the earthly family close. This is also true of God's family, the church. The more we are together the more we want to be together, thus the more love we will have for one another and God. Togetherness is cemented by our love, our common goals and our like precious faith. When our togetherness is motivated by love then religion is real, meaningful and fulfilling. Are you contributing to or hindering the togetherness of your family (both personal and spiritual)?

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OF FOOL-HARDINESS AND FORTITUDE

On August 17, 1969 Hurricane Camille aimed its furious force at the Gulf Coast of Mississippi. Hours in advance of the storm's arrival, state troopers knocked doors in the endangered areas warning residents to flee for their lives to higher ground. Some "brave" souls, however, refused to evacuate. One group of swingers, in particular, remained in their beachfront apartments. Planning a "hurricane party" for that evening. None of them lived to see the light of the next day. Courage in the face of danger? No, fool-hardiness in the extreme.

There is a world of difference between genuine fortitude and mere fool-hardiness. The braggadocio and bravado of the latter is only a cheap imitation of real courage. It swaggers and scoffs at danger, making a showy pretense of its "strength". It is foolishly adventurous and rash. It carelessly disregards even the worst dangers, and thinks itself invincible.

In contrast to this recklessness, true strength never underestimates danger and never runs unnecessary risks. With an understanding of its own vulnerability, it has a healthy respect for threatening circumstances. It has a sober vigilance, an alertness to harm which keeps it clear of peril whenever possible. It has no need to display itself, and does not go out of its way to show how much it can "handle".

In worldly matters, fool-hardiness can be life-threatening, but in spiritual matters it can be even worse; it can be eternally disastrous. The person who courts dangers to his soul, contemptuously disregarding warnings, is bound to pay the price sooner or later. He may temporarily "get by" showing off how many spiritually-threatening things he can involve himself in without his being overcome spiritually, but ultimately he will be dismayed to find that his "strength" was insufficient.

Examples of spiritual fool-hardiness abound. How many young, unmarried Christians have engaged in intimate sexual petting, rationalizing it by thinking they were spiritually "strong" enough to handle it? How many Christians, young and older alike, listen daily to music the lyrics of which are ungodly and impure, believing themselves to be spiritually "strong" enough for it to have no harmful effect on them? How many engage in mixed swimming on the grounds that they are spiritually "strong" enough not to be influenced by near-nudity? How many take a

"social drink" when it fits the occasion, thinking they are spiritually "strong" enough to avoid the pitfalls?

How many Christians believe they can take filth into their minds at the movies or at home on TV and not be polluted by it? How many believe they can listen to and laugh at profanity and dirty jokes on the job or among friends and it not rub off on them? How many believe they can have their closest associations among non-Christians and not be influenced by them? How many believe they can miss services of the church and not be weakened by it?

These questions could go on almost indefinitely, but there is one other question begging to be asked: "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned" (Prov. 6:27)? Only the fool (or the incredibly naive) would answer "yes". And only the spiritually foolhardy would claim that the activities mentioned above do not "bother" him. The fact of the matter is that even the strongest person, physically or spiritually, needs to "take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12). No one is so strong spiritually that he can afford to disregard danger.

The person who excuses his involvement in morally dangerous situations by defending his ability to come out unscathed is rarely the person who really is spiritually strong. Ironically, it is almost always the spiritually weak person who talks of all he can do and not be hurt. The Christian who does indeed have enough strength to withstand heavy temptation is most often the person who stays as far away from it as possible. He understands the reality of spiritual dangers, and he has no need to display his strength by flirting with unnecessary risks.

Worse yet is the often disdainful way the spiritually foolhardy person treats those who warn against his morally perilous lifestyle. He is impressed with his more "mature" way of thinking, and he is proud of the way he can handle himself in situations that would be the undoing of old-fashioned Christians. He has outgrown the need for sermons on worldliness. He considers those "legalists" who would question his activities and he flouts their admonitions. Like Lot, he is sure he can "pitch his tent toward Sodom" and not be corrupted.

The Bible has a good bit to say about "fleeing" certain things. After discussing several moral dangers, Paul warned Timothy, "But thou, O man of God, flee

these things" (1 Tim 6:11). In his second letter, Paul advised, "Flee also youthful lusts" (2 Tim. 2:22). To the Corinthian Christians who lived in what was reputed to be one of the most morally degraded pagan cities of its day. Paul wrote that they should "flee" fornication and idolatry (1 Cor. 6:18, 10:14). There is nothing any more cowardly about fleeing for ones spiritual life than there is fleeing for ones physical life before a killer hurricane. The question is not one of courage, but of common sense.

To think that we are not "bothered" by the corruption and immorality which literally engulfs us today, is to underestimate the power of temptation and of Satan himself. Surely nothing would please him more than to have us become complacent about our "strength". He understands, though we may not, that fools rush in where angels fear to tread. Christian friend, whoever you are and however capable you may think you are at holding out against temptation, please be advised that there are limits to even your strength. You think do you, that you are of the few who can handle fire without getting burned? Who are you fooling?

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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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FIELD REPORTS—FOREIGN

CARLOS A. CAPELLI, Casilla #83, 1665 Jose C Paz, Buenos Aires, Argentina. By the Lord's kindness I was permitted to return again last month to Bogota, Columbia in South America. I preached there

back in 1978 and there were fourteen souls baptized then. This congregation continues to grow. While there this time (29 days) there was much interest and five souls were baptized and two restored. This congregation was begun in 1978 through the work of Wayne Partain and Carlos Restrepo. Also the Lord continues to

bless the work at the San Miguel congregation here in Argentina. While I was away there were two souls baptized into Christ. In the Joes C. Paz congregation things continue well too. While away there were two souls baptized there. I hope that you can see the progress in the Spanish work. May we all take courage and continue to spread the gospel. God bless you all.

PETER McPHERSON, Box 254, Airdrie, Alberta, Canada. After moving to Airdrie, Alberta in August of 1981, I must report that for the sake of my family I must move back to Ontario. Our parents are aging fast and are in need of our care. So we must go and take care of that responsibility for the present. As a result of our move the church here will be looking for a preacher. You may write to Allan Michaud at the box number given above.

FIELD REPORTS—U.S.

RAY F. DIVELY, 425 Dippold Ave., Baden, PA 15005, The year 1981 was another busy year for me. Besides the local work, I was privileged to preach for nine congregations in seven states. Also, I preached in Canada. The Baden church helped support three preachers in foreign fields. One each in Mexico, India, and the Philippines. Also, we helped a little with the work in Japan and another preacher in Mexico. We continue to put in weekly teaching articles in the newspaper offering a correspondence course. I continue to write letters to the editor on Biblical subjects. We are getting some responses from all of this. We also sent several Bibles, tracts, etc., to brethren in different countries in 1981.

HERBERT FRASER, 2920 Michigan St., Sarasota, FL. Following five years work with the church in Osprey, FL, I recently began with the young church in Sarasota. This church had its origin about two years ago, resulting from a desire for scriptural harmony—a condition sadly lacking in former congregational ties. For many years there had been a need for a congregation in Sarasota clearly committed to Divine truth. Paul Branch, of Bradenton, worked with these saints during those two years. Good growth, in both numbers and morale, has been evident since. Outlook of the present and prospects for the future are encouraging.

MICKY GALLOWAY, Box 126, Piggott, AR 72454. Concerning the debate here in Piggott between Keith Sharp and Vernon Barr (May 31-June 4), we have secured a bigger facility than was formerly announced. The debate will take place in the Middle School Gymnasium on S. Taylor Ave., just off Hwy. 62 E. The debate will deal with the subject of baptism the first two nights and Premillennialism the last two nights. For more information please contact me at the above address.

DERREL SHAW, 5927 Spruce Forest, Houston, TX 77092. I have bound volumes of the GOSPEL GUARDIAN from 1949 to 1970. These are volumes 1-21. I would like to sell them for \$600 or best offer received by May 1, 1982.

PREACHERS NEEDED

SELMA, AL—The church that meets on Poplar St. is in need of an evangelist. There are approximately 25 to 30 meeting at this time. Those interested should contact David Barlow, 2519 Hwy. 14 E., Selma, AL 36701. Or phone (205) 872-3822.

MALVERN, AR—The church that meets at 923 Wilson St. in Malvern is in need of a preacher as of June, 1982. Experienced preacher is desired. Must be willing to give book, chapter and verse for all that he teaches. We are self-supporting and have an average attendance of 55-60. Those wishing more information may write Howard Soma at 1426 Pleasant St., Malvern, AR 72104. Or call (501) 337-1233. Or Wendell Williams at Rt. 1, Box 210-B, Malvern, AR 72104. Or call (501) 332-2664.

NEW SMYRNA BEACH, FL—The Central church in New Smyrna Beach is seeking a full-time minister. We are a small congregation of about 35 active members. The man we are seeking must demonstrate the willingness and desire to be extremely active in the

Lord's work. At this time, we are able to provide only \$225 per week toward support. We also provide a small, two bedroom home. Any other monetary support would have to come from other sources. If interested contact the Central church of Christ at P.O. Box 231, New Smyrna Beach, FL 32069.

OKEECHOBEE, FL—The Westside church of Christ here is looking for a preacher. Contact Franklin Varson at (813) 763-2023 days, or 763-3462 evenings for more information.

SANFORD, NC—The church that meets in Sanford is in need of a preacher. Some outside support would be necessary. Interested individuals should contact Eugene Edwards at (919) 944-1409; Tom Gray 776-0373; or Tom Dickerson 483-5723.

KALISPELL, MT—The church in Kalispell, MT needs someone who can devote full time to studying and teaching the scriptures. He will have to be willing and capable of teaching Bible classes nearly every day of the week. This is a very challenging work in a very beautiful valley. For more information call (406) 755-9779 or write the church c/o 170 Wilson Hts., Kalispell, MT 59901.

SUPPORT NEEDED

ROBERT W. TRASK, P.O. Box 178, Cedar Key, FL 32625. I am in need of \$1,000 to \$1,200 per month support in order to continue laboring with the congregation in this place. My family and I have been in Cedar Key for almost two years. During which time we have seen the church grow from 15-18 on Sundays, to 28-30. With the Lord's help we will continue to grow. We are the only faithful congregation for thirty miles. For references, please contact Joe Wilder, the former preacher here, at P.O. Box 356, Cedar Key, FL 32625. Or phone (904) 543-5159. All responses will be answered and appreciated. Also all prayers will be appreciated, for without the Lord's help none of us can do anything, but with His help we can do all.

A GOOD NAME LIVES ON

CECIL DOUTHITT, 3215 London Derry Rd., Fort Smith, AR 72903. There are several excellent gospel preachers in my family tree. My father, William Lawrence Douthitt, preached during parts of my life; also two great uncles, Ira Douthitt and Boone Douthitt, as well as my grandfather, Cecil B. Douthitt. On January 6, 1982 I made a decision to start preaching. I will preach in the Fort Smith area wherever and whenever asked. At this writing I am preaching three Sunday mornings a month for the brethren that meet at Midland, AR. Later this month I will meet with another congregation in the area to discuss preaching for them on Sunday evenings.

The reason I am writing this is because there are many fine brethren over the country that have felt I have some ability to preach and teach but they were concerned about my lack of interest in doing all I could for the cause of Christ. I want them to know that God has granted me the time and maturity to repent and to resolve to spend the future in this service. In my possession are all of Cecil B. Douthitt's sermon outlines, many of his writings and a large portion of his library. For many years this wealth of information has lain idle in boxes but now they are going to be used as Pop would have them used. God has blessed me by allowing me to grow up in the home of Cecil B. and Mary Douthitt. He has blessed me with excellent health; a beautiful Christian wife and two teenage children of whom I am immensely proud. The least I can do, the very least, is spend the future telling others about Him. This is the first time in a long time that an article has appeared under the name of Cecil Douthitt. With God's grace, it will not be the last.

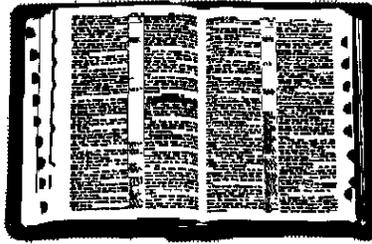
IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

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(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)

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 XXIII

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EXPOSITION: TEXT and CONTEXT

Weldon E. Warnock

491 E. Woodsdale
Akron, Ohio 44301



BAPTISM --- WHO, HOW, WHY

One of the most controversial subjects is baptism. Why there should be different views on a topic that is so plainly taught in the Bible has always been puzzling to me. There are three aspects of baptism that we will discuss in this article. (1) Who may be baptized, (2) How to be baptized, and (3) Why be baptized.

Who May Be Baptized?

1. **The taught may be baptized.** "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 28:19).

2. **Believers may be baptized.** Jesus said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16).

3. **Penitent believers may be baptized.** The apostle Peter said: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).

4. **Men and women may be baptized.** "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women" (Acts 8:12).

CONCLUSION: Only those old enough to be taught, to believe and to repent are to be baptized. There is no place for infant baptism in God's plan. Babies cannot be taught, neither can they believe or repent. Thus, they are not subjects of baptism. Baptism must be preceded by teaching, faith and repen-

tance, or it is null and void. Baptism by itself will save nobody. Those who sprinkle (they call this baptism) babies have a gross misconception of Bible baptism, as well as the spiritual state of the babies. Children are without sin (Matt. 18:3; 19:14). Baptism is for alien sinners (Acts 2:38). Therefore, babies are not to be baptized.

Furthermore, alien sinners should be baptized and not saved people. Notice in the above texts that salvation is AFTER baptism and not before it. Paul wrote that newness of life comes after baptism. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4). Those who advocate baptism for the saved circumvent what the Bible teaches.

How To Be Baptized

1. **Baptism is a burial.** "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death. . . ." (Rom. 6:4). "Buried with him in baptism" (Col. 2:12).

2. **Baptism is a going down into the water.** "And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him" (Acts 8:38).

3. **Baptism requires much water.** "And John was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there, and they came, and were baptized" (John 3:23).

4. **Baptism is immersion.** The reputable Greek scholar, W. E. Vine, said of baptism that it is "consisting of the processes of immersion, submersion and emergence" (Vol. 1, p. 96). Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon states, "immersion, submersion" (p. 94).

CONCLUSION: Sprinkling and pouring will not fit the action of baptism. In fact, in the Bible sense, sprinkling and pouring are not baptism at all. They are human substitutes without one iota of divine authority.

James Gibbons, a Cardinal in the Catholic Church, wrote: "For several centuries after the establishment of Christianity, baptism was usually conferred by immersion, but since the twelfth century the practice of baptizing by infusion (pouring, wew) has prevailed in

the Catholic Church, as this manner is attended by less inconvenience than baptism by immersion" (*Faith of our Fathers*, p. 266). Here we see why sprinkling and pouring became substitutes for baptism—simply a matter of convenience. Remember, Jesus said, "immersion."

Why Be Baptized

1. **One should be baptized to be saved.** "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. . ." (Mark 16:16). "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us...." (1 Pet. 3:21).

2. **For remission of sins.** "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...." (Acts 2:38).

3. **To wash away sins.** Ananias told Saul of Tarsus: "And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

4. **To get into Christ.** "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27). "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death" (Rom. 6:3)?

5. **To reach the blood of Christ.** Read Rom. 6:3 again in the above paragraph and notice that Paul said we were "baptized into his (Christ, wew) death." Jesus shed His blood in His death. We are baptized into the benefits of His blood and thereby cleansed from our sins by His blood in the act of baptism.

6. **To get into the one body.** "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free..." (1 Cor. 12:13). Regardless who we are, all of us come into the one body, the church, by the same process—baptism.

7. **To be born again.** "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). In the spiritual birth the Spirit begets us through the seed (Luke 8:11), the Word of God (1 Pet. 1:23) and the birth is consummated in baptism.

8. **It is commanded.** When Peter was at the house of Cornelius, the divine record states: "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10:48).

CONCLUSION: The inevitable conclusion, in view of the foregoing Scriptures, is that baptism stands between the alien sinner and his salvation. Hence, baptism is most essential and necessary. We had just as well omit faith or repentance as to leave out baptism. The same Lord who said that we must believe, also said that we must be baptized in order to be saved. Woe unto the man that changes it! Those who reject it have "rejected the counsel of God" (Luke 7:30).

I trust you will honestly and sincerely consider these Scriptures and observations on baptism. May you have the courage and faith to do what the Lord demands. Let's forget what men teach and go back to the Bible for the basis of our beliefs and actions.

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Editorial

Connie W. Adams

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THE CHANGING OF THE GUARD

Last month we carried an announcement of the selection of Bob F. Owen as the new President of Florida College upon the retirement of James R. Cope in July, 1982. At this juncture in the history of Florida College, I wish to make some observations which will be of interest to many of our readers.

The Role of Florida College

The ideal on which the school was founded and has survived is a simple one. Those responsible for its existence believe that the parental duty to bring up children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4) includes providing for the education of our young. Much of what is offered on the college and university level today is saturated with humanism. Faith destroying philosophies and attendant moral permissiveness often confront young Christians in their educational pursuits. It has been the goal of those who operate Florida College to provide quality education in a moral setting where the leaven of godliness may spread unhindered from both teacher and student. The editor and his wife both benefited greatly from the opportunity provided by this institution. Both of our sons received similar benefit. Through the years we have encouraged many young people to take advantage of what the school has to offer and we have seen many positive results.

Florida College is a human institution. It is not the church. It neither solicits nor accepts funds from churches. It is not perfect. It has freckles and sometimes warts appear. It has friends and it has enemies. Some of its friends are naive as to its faults. Some of its enemies are overly critical. While the editor is an alumnus and has served for a number of years on the school's National Council, he has tried to be a friend with enough objectivity to speak his mind to the administration, board and staff. This has been done on many occasions.

I do not believe that Florida College is the only alternative in educating young people. There are many sound, productive Christians today who received their college training elsewhere while retaining their convictions and character. Some have been able to attend school near excellent congregations which have provided wonderful services to such students in Bible teaching. The 12th St. church in Bowling Green (and other area congregations) have been a great blessing to students at Western Kentucky State University.

Mound and Starr in Nacogdoches, Texas has done fine work with students of Stephen F. Austin State University. The College View church in Florence, Alabama has rendered similar service to students at the University of North Alabama at Florence. Some students are situated so they can live at home and attend schools in their own city, as do a number in Louisville. As parents, my wife and I looked upon Florida College as a bridge between leaving home and further education for our sons beyond what Florida College offered. It gave them independence from home but in a setting where similar standards prevailed. While we recognize weaknesses and flaws in a human enterprise, it is our persuasion that the ideal is worthy of preservation,

James R. Cope

The editor was a student at Florida College the year James R. Cope came to serve as President. He brought with him some brilliant young teachers who were soon to leave the mark of their influence upon students. Brother Cope himself was a fearless, articulate teacher. In my judgment, the teaching of the school was weakened when administrative duties took him out of the classroom. He began his tenure with several old buildings in poor repair. A number of the teachers lived under similar (if not worse) conditions to the students. From a meager beginning, the school has increased in enrollment, new facilities have been added and the financial condition of the school greatly improved.

In the late 50's storm clouds burst over the school and a determined effort was made to wrench it away from the hands of men who stood in opposition to the liberal tendencies manifesting themselves throughout the nation. Loss of students and revenue threatened to close the doors. But men and women of conviction who could not be bought won the hearts of grateful patrons who tightened their belts and saw it through. It is the belief of the editor that had it not been for the courage and reputation of James R. Cope, the school would have folded. His staff shared in the sacrifices of those lean years.

The stature and influence of James R. Cope has left its mark on Florida College. For 33 years he has been its most visible symbol of strength, courage, devotion to principle, and unwavering loyalty to the Lord in personal life and teaching. While some have joked about his tenderheartedness and quaint stories and expressions, it has been these very qualities which have bridged the gap between academic aloofness and the genuine warmth of real folks. The most unlearned parent has felt comfortable with "Jim" Cope. He has personally gone to bat to help find ways for students to pay their bills and remain in school. Through the years, in his role as a gospel preacher, brethren have not had to wonder where he stood. He was the first editor of the PRECEPTOR and all who read that knew what he believed touching issues of great moment to Christians. He wrote tracts and booklets which cut across the grain of popular opinion. In the "open forums" of an earlier time, he stood his ground and

spoke his piece without any thought or fear of the consequences. For these, and numerous other reasons, many of us have felt that the school was in safe hands.

We are confident that we speak the sentiments of thousands in expressing to James R. Cope our sincere thanks for his countless contributions to the enrichment of the lives of so many of us. As his life and work take on new dimensions, we wish for him and his beautiful wife, Georgia Dean, health, long life and fruitful service as we all move nearer the inevitable hour.

Bob F. Owen

Now comes the changing of the guard. Bob F. Owen came to Florida College as a student the same year James R. Cope came to be President. Though of a little younger generation, he has been a witness to the struggles through which the school has passed. And not only a witness, but a participant. Soon after completing his own college work, he joined the staff of the school where he has remained an integral part of the day-in and day-out operation of the school for nearly three decades. He and his wife, Janelle, met while students at Florida College. My wife and I double-dated with Bob and Janelle on numerous occasions. We have been good friends through the years.

Brother Owen has asked the present staff to continue under his presidency. That he knows as much about the inner workings of the school as it is possible for one to know, is beyond question. There is a natural tendency to take a "wait and see" attitude when such a change in leadership is affected. While rooted in the ideals on which the school began, well versed on its daily functions, yet every man has his own personality, his own style and deserves space to work within that context. No man should ever be expected to fit the same mold as those who have gone before. Bob F. Owen is not James R. Cope, nor should he be expected to be. We are sure that we join other friends of the school in wishing for him a successful and fruitful tenure of service as President of Florida College.

Looking Ahead

We do not know what the future holds for this institution. That it presently fills a need we confidently believe. Some have complained that some things are changing at Florida College. Perhaps so. But we are convinced that many of the perceived changes are but reflections of changing times and standards among patrons of the school. The school is sometimes caught in the crossfire of idealism on which it was founded and which is so strongly cherished by older patrons and the loosening attitudes and moderating influences of a younger clientele. Some students and parents seem to choke on rules and restraints which they have never applied at home. The moral permissiveness of the age has infiltrated the lives of more Christians than some wish to admit. This is reflected in the speech, dress and standards of acceptable conduct within a student body.

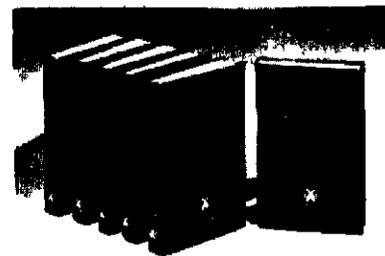
The second generation is always crucial in any enterprise. Schools are no exception. Maintaining a

balance between changes which are innocent and which improve, and holding the line where principles of right are concerned are not always easy. No school is ever safer than the quality and character of those who make up its board. When a board takes into its number men of uncertain sound and conviction, their attitudes will filter down through the personnel they employ. We take this public means of urging the Board of Directors of Florida College to continually exercise care as to the standards they set for those who shall occupy that board, as well as those who administer and teach in the college. Should money and influence be the dominant criteria? Is a prospective board member known to be sound in the faith? Or does he ventilate doctrinally loose attitudes? Is he a trouble-maker and sower of discord? Is he a business "hot dog" rather than a man of mature and stable judgment? Is he a "wheeler-dealer" who uses his money as a club to get his way? These are considerations of great moment. The future of Florida College is ultimately bound up in them. The school has suffered at times from lack of care in choosing board members. A number of the present board members are personal friends of the editor and I am convinced will appreciate what is said here. I speak as a friend who wants to see the school succeed and persevere to serve another generation of parents and youth.

Thanks to James R. Cope for a job well done. Our prayers and good wishes are with Bob F. Owen as he assumes his new responsibilities. "I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth" (3 John 2).

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THE
LITTLE ROCK TRIAL

Eugene Britnell

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Little Rock, Arkansas 72215



In March of 1981, the Arkansas Legislature passed a bill and Governor White signed it into law (known as Act 590) authorizing the teaching of what they called "creation science" whenever the theories of materialistic evolution are taught in the public schools. Almost immediately, the American Civil Liberties Union filed a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the legislation. In December, 1981, a trial was conducted in Little Rock before Federal District Judge William R. Overton. In January of 1982, the judge ruled in behalf of the plaintiffs and declared the law unconstitutional.

Due to the widespread publicity and interest in the trial and the subject discussed, and since I was in the courtroom when the trial began and heard much of it, the editor of this paper has requested that I present this account of the trial as I saw it. We hope that this will be of interest to our readers, who, in most cases, received distorted reports by the news media. Due to the local interest and promises we made to radio listeners, we are presenting much of this material in our church paper. Brother Adams understands that this is a unique situation, and that it is both difficult and useless to try to write different accounts of the same event.

The Judge

Let it be understood that I have deep respect for our laws and judicial system, and I have no desire to speak disrespectfully of Judge Overton, but I must make some observations about his role in the trial. Mr. Overton is a Methodist. One of the first witnesses called by the ACLU was the Methodist Bishop of Arkansas. I thought then and still think that the judge would have been more than a normal person not to have been unduly influenced by such testimony. The judge questioned and argued with some of the state's witnesses. This and other factors caused us to feel that the judge was not completely unbiased during the trial. It wasn't too difficult to predict the outcome.

The Attorney General

Although I have some problems with some of the attitudes and actions of State Attorney General Steve Clark, perhaps he did as well as one could expect. I think that he should have used some experienced counsel which was available to him, and pressed some

points more than he did and challenged more of the arguments of the opposition.

As I see it, his major problem was being in the awkward position of trying to defend creation without acknowledging a creator. This is not only inconsistent, but impossible. His effort was to avoid any reference to God. The ACLU recognized this problem, and made every effort to make it a religious issue. Someone suggested that they gave Mr. Clark an anvil and told him to swim with it. And that's not easy to do!

The American Civil Liberties Union

The ACLU was founded in 1920 by Elizabeth Flynn, William Foster, Louis Budenz and Roger N. Baldwin—all loyal members of the Communist Party. When Baldwin died not long ago, he was hailed as "a life-long champion of individual freedom." He said many times that he was for socialism, disarmament, social ownership of property, and that "Communism is the goal."

The ACLU expends much of its time and money in defending murderers, homosexuals, drug peddlers, flag-burners, draft-dodgers, Nazism, pornography, and criminals of all kinds. They are against anybody and anything that is for God, Christianity, pure morality and true Americanism. The ACLU is the legal arm of the humanist movement in America. It is apparent that they are more interested in promoting atheism, humanism and communism in this country than they are in what children are taught about creation in the schools. They seek every opportunity to take advantage of social problems and emotional issues.

When you see the ACLU defending some person or movement, you may reasonably conclude that the person or movement is unscriptural, unethical or un-American. Righteous people should oppose the ACLU whenever and wherever possible! During the Little Rock trial, someone suggested that A-C-L-U should stand for Anti-Christian Lunacy Union.

The challenge of Act 590 in Arkansas is a perfect example of the arrogant hypocrisy of an organization that claims to fight for civil liberties while at the same time actively repressing views contrary to its own preconceived notions. While piously proclaiming that it is the guardian of religious liberty, the ACLU seeks to force all the people of the United States to accept atheistic, evolutionary humanism as their court-decreed state religion!

The ACLU Witnesses

The attorneys, witnesses and supporters for the plaintiffs enjoyed the publicity and rejoiced in their feeling of victory. They used about 20 lawyers, including some highly adept volunteers from a New York law firm.

Among their witnesses were several members of the "clergy" and they were happy about that. There were priests, rabbis, and Bishop Kenneth Hicks of the Methodist Church. As I listened to his testimony and realized that he was standing with the atheists, agnostics and humanists, it was hard for me to realize

that he even claimed to believe the Bible. The truth is, he does not believe all of it. He doesn't even understand the meaning of "buried" in the Bible (see Rom. 6:3; Col. 2:12). And where in the Bible would he find authority for a state bishop over many churches? He was followed by a witness who said she was an atheist, and frankly, I appreciated her honesty more than I did the bishop's hypocrisy.

The State's Witnesses

We agree with a statement in *Discover* magazine of February, 1982, which said: "The defenders of creationism were their own worst enemies." The state senator who introduced Act 590 stated on the witness stand that God called him to do so. I didn't believe it, and doubt if anyone in the courtroom believed it, including the judge. I wondered then why God didn't also speak to the judge and tell him how to rule on the case.

Then there was the witness (a preacher) who was made to testify that he believed in UFOs and that they were the work of Satan. How he knew that I don't know. And what did UFOs have to do with the issue under consideration? Nothing! But the ACLU people introduced and dwelt on such to make the creationists look ridiculous—and they succeeded.

All of this reminded me of what I have known for years, and that is: if truth is defended and error refuted on any subject it will be left to true Christians—members of the body of Christ who believe all of the Bible, know what it teaches and how to apply it—to do so! The church was the only organization to challenge the evolutionists (mentioning Dr. Carl Sagan and Dr. Stephen Jay Gould by name) to debate the subject.

First Amendment Dualism

As a writer for the Los Angeles Times observed in a syndicated article, there are two major points in the First Amendment, the Establishment clause and the Free Exercise clause. He quoted a California law professor as saying, "There is an inherent tension of conflict between these two provisions. The court's pattern has been to perceive the cases as falling either under one clause or the other and then either totally ignoring the other clause or disposing of it in a very summary and often dissatisfying way."

The First Amendment reads: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. . . ." If creation is taught in a public school, does that mean that Congress has established a religion? No, of course not! The Amendment was so worded as to prohibit the Congress from establishing a state religion or respecting one denomination over and above all others. We are for that.

Have we reached the point that God cannot be mentioned in the classroom (unless one is cursing), and there can be no reference to the Bible? If so, then children cannot be taught the Mayflower Compact, the Declaration of Independence, or the Gettysburg

Address. In those famous works, God is mentioned, and even as Creator. Why is it legal to teach children about God from such sources and illegal to teach them the same thing from Genesis?

Our Congress opens with prayer to God. So does the Supreme Court. Our coins and currency bear the inscription "In God We Trust." When the Federal Court opened in Little Rock on Dec. 7, 1981 to try the creation bill, a Federal Marshall declared: "God save the United States and this honorable court." In many ways, this nation has acknowledged God.

Which Way Are We Headed?

Are we going to turn this great nation into an atheistic society? Are we going to allow a radical and unbelieving minority to rule and declare what our children are taught?

An Associated Press/NBC News Poll in November, 1981, revealed that 76% of the people believed that creation should be taught when evolution is taught in the public schools.

An editorial in the Wall Street Journal in January of this year made some interesting observations. Having expressed disapproval of the Arkansas legislation, they said:

"But having said that, we cannot find much sympathy either for those forces who run to the law courts at every slightest hint that a teacher might want to use the words God or church. We suspect that efforts to break down societal mores and standards of conduct that have a religious base are more than a little bit responsible for the fundamentalist backlash. We would be doing the Arkansas legislators a disservice if we did not acknowledge that if caught between the relativists and the fundamentalists, we ourselves might often be tempted to side with the fundamentalists, at least those who are concerned, as we are, about a decline in the moral order. While the principle of church-state separation is useful in preserving a liberal and pluralistic society, we are not sure the courts have considered what it might be like if they insist on divorcing government entirely from spiritual thought. . . we hope the forces who have won this narrow battle in court won't labor too long with' the notion that they have scored some major victory against religious belief."

Amen! It is certainly true that there is some connection between philosophy and conduct. Many of us can remember when children could read the Bible and pray in the public schools. Did that result in a union of church and state? Was it a violation of the Constitution? Of course not! In those days there was very little violence, rebellion and immorality in the schools, and we didn't know what dope was. Now that prayer, the Bible, and the teaching of creation have been removed from our schools, look at conditions. Look at the crime, vandalism, violence (even murder), illegitimacy, drug addition, etc. Were conditions better then, or are they better now? We all know the answer.

How Must We Interpret the Bible?

During the trial, we heard much from the ACLU lawyers and witnesses about the Bible "as literally interpreted." Certainly there is figurative language in the Bible, but that is not true of the creation account. If the Bible doesn't mean what it says, does it say what it means? If not, how are we to know what it means or whether it means anything? We understand that the evolutionist—atheistic or theistic—cannot allow the Bible to mean what it says, but we believe that it does. And remember also that the Lord and the inspired apostles endorsed the creation account as recorded in Genesis (see Matthew 19:4-6). Were they ignorant or deceived about the creation? Certainly not!

Kelly Seagraves of Creation-Science Research Center, who thinks the Arkansas trial was a victory for creation, made the following statement: "If Creation cannot be taught because it is held by religious people and is based on a literal view of the Bible, then Evolution will also be banned, because all those who testified in the trial for the ACLU stated evolution was consistent with their faith, thus making evolution an essential element of their personal religious faith which is based on a non-literal interpretation of the Bible."

Both creation and evolution are systems of faith, and neither can be established scientifically. One is the religion of Christianity and the other the religion of humanism. Why should one religion be taught in the public schools and the other denied?

Why Are We So Concerned?

Why are Christians so concerned about children being taught the inspired account of divine creation? Simply because it is impossible to separate our concepts of our origin from our concepts of our nature, duty and destiny. The scriptures, common sense and human behavior throughout recorded history all confirm this to be true. The apostle Paul knew this, and as he addressed the philosophers and scientists from Mars' hill in Athens, he emphasized these facts.

1. Origin. He said, "God that made the world and all things therein. . ." (Acts 17:24). That confirms our origin.

2. Nature. "And hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth. . ." "For as much then as we are the offspring of God. . ." (verses 26, 29). God has made all men (not men and animals) of one blood, and people are the off-spring of God. Did He ever say that to or about a monkey?

3. Duty. "That they should seek the Lord. . ." "we ought not to think that the Godhead is like..." (verses 27, 29). To say that I "ought" is to say that I owe. If there are things which I "should" and "ought" to do, then I have a duty to perform.

4. Destiny. "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained. . ." (verse 31). Man, not animals, has an appointment with God at the judgment, and an eternal destiny awaiting him.

Using the SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

Ken Green

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THAT'S THE WHOLE POINT

Alistair Cooke, urbane host of "Masterpiece Theater" recently dropped a quotation that is worthy of some thought. He said, "Somebody once said to Hugh Weldon, who was the managing director of all BBC television then, 'But how can you do it that way? Don't you risk failure?' And Weldon said, 'of course, the whole point of television is not to avoid failure at all costs, but to give triumph a chance.'"

That line is too noble to be applied to television. It's true of all life. If we don't risk failure, triumph will never have a chance.

Many folks never become Christians because they fear failure. "But I don't believe I can live it," we're often told. Here's someone who understands what God's conditions are and what wonderful blessings the faithful are heirs of, but he cops out because of the possibility of failing to continue faithful. One thing for sure, To never begin is to guarantee failure. One does not refuse to start a trip until he is guaranteed of arriving safely at his destination. If he did, he would never arrive at all. Let us encourage people to give triumph a chance.

Then consider the use of our talents. The "one-talent man" of our Lord's parable (Matt. 25) was determined to avoid failure at all costs. As a result, he never gave triumph a chance. If we fear failure to the point that we refuse to try our hand at teaching a class, or preaching a sermon, or leading a song, or a prayer, we are bound to fail. Triumph doesn't have a chance.

The same is true of striving to win souls. Oft times members of Christ's body do not share the good news because they fear rejection. Triumph doesn't get a chance. The gospel goes unmentioned to neighbors, friends, relatives, and co-workers because of the possibility of failure. Our attitude should be like Paul's "... or **do I seek to please men] for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ**" (Gal. 1:10).

The whole point of life is not to avoid failure at all costs, but to give triumph a chance.

AN INTERESTING DEDUCTION

It's been probably ten years since W.L. Wharton mentioned something to me about enjoying Mark Twain's "The Innocents Abroad." I purchased a paperback edition shortly thereafter. The 75 cents price-mark confirms that it was bought some years ago. I only recently read it. The "innocents" were Twain

and his fellow passengers who embarked on a trip to Europe and the "Holy Land" on June 1, 1867, only two years after the end of the Civil War.

As anyone familiar with Mark Twain might suspect, he had no sympathy for the sacred cows of tourism in these antique lands. Still, we do not sense the utter skepticism and out and out blasphemy in this work that we find in much of his later writings.

I found some of his remarks concerning Rome and the Vatican of special interest:

"No prayer is offered to the Saviour, who seems to be of little importance anywhere in Rome; but an inscription says, 'Blessed Peter, give life to Pope Leo and victory to King Charles.' It does not say, 'Intercede for us, through the Saviour, with the Father, for this boon', but, 'Blessed Peter give it us.'

"In all seriousness, without meaning to be frivolous, without meaning to be irreverent and more than all, without meaning to be blasphemous, I state as my simple deduction from the things I have seen and the things I have heard that the Holy Personages rank thus in Rome:

"First: 'The Mother of God', otherwise the Virgin Mary.

"Second: The Deity.

"Third: Peter.

"Fourth: Some twelve or fifteen canonized popes and martyrs.

"Fifth: Jesus Christ the Saviour (but always as an infant in arms).

"I may be wrong in this—my judgment errs often, just as is the case with other men's—but it is my judgment, be it good or bad."

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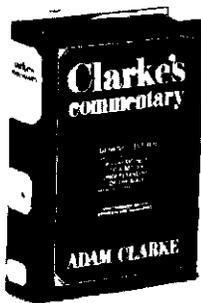
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NEHEMIAH: LET US RISE UP AND RESTORE THE PLACE OF HISTORY IN SPIRITUAL REVIVAL

In our last article we looked at the need for Spiritual Revival. We are living in a day when the church is plagued by five great ills. First of several, as we noted last month, was the zero growth rate. In far too many congregations, we are not baptizing enough people to replace the ones that are dying and those who fall by the wayside. Second, the church faces the problem of fragmentation into sectarian parties that insist that they are the only ones with the key to truth. Third, is the monster of materialism that tells us that the prestige of our jobs, or the money from our jobs, is more important than the Lord's work. Materialism tells us that football, camping and hunting are more important than the Lord's work, or more important than being present to teach a Bible class, which we cannot do when we are regularly out of town. Materialism is not what we possess, but simply our attitude toward what is important. Fourth, a great need of the church is for stability in the homes of Christians. How many preachers are now divorcing; how many Bible class teachers are lost to the Lord because they have become guilty of adultery and have destroyed their marriages? The Devil does not have to make atheists out of us; he can simply destroy our marriages and render us ineffective in the Master's cause. The fifth great ill of the Church today is the lack of an inner fellowship with the Lord. We worship the institution of the church, instead of the Savior of the church, Jesus Christ. We spend no time with Him in prayer and meditation and our concept of "faithfulness" is how many times a week one comes to the building.

Now with such great needs before us, we can easily see that our need for spiritual revival is not just imagined but very real, so real that we stand at the crossroads of our place in the kingdom of God. Just as the Lord took the kingdom away from the Jews and gave it to the Gentiles, He may ever so easily take it from us and give it to a more dedicated people. The question before us in this article is: what does Nehemiah teach us about this process of implementing spiritual revival? The thrust of Nehemiah 9 is to demonstrate the place of history in spiritual revival.

The Place of History in Revival

We have seen that the leaders of Israel were serious about teaching the people. In Chapter 8 the people gathered together and read and studied the word of God for hours on end. When the law was read, it produced conviction in the hearts of the people of God and the people forsook their sin by repentance. The institution of the day of atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles sought to bring the people back to their God on their knees in agony for their sins and in gratitude for His goodness. But yet, as wonderful as this was, it still was not enough. The people needed to feel the obligation of a covenant between them and their God. We all know what it means when a start is made toward renewal but if it falls short, the heart is calloused and may never be touched again. So Ezra and the Levites did not want to see this spiritual fever slip away into the failures of the past. Therefore, it was time to invoke history as an object in spiritual renewal. Nehemiah 9 is a recounting of history of the Israelites and will provide a fitting prelude to the signing of the covenant in Chapter 10. Chapter 9 can be divided into three sections: Verses 1-4 PREPARATION OF THE PEOPLE; Verses 5-31 PRAYER FOR THE PEOPLE; and Verses 32-38 PROMISE FOR THE PEOPLE. The main section is the middle section of Verses 5-31, which is a prayer for the people and which recounts the history of God dealing with Israel. It covers the redemptive scheme of God for His people from Adam to the Babylonian captivity.

This history is divided into four sub-divisions: (1) Adam to Abraham, 5-8. (2) Egyptian captivity to the Red Sea deliverance, 9-15. (3) The wilderness wanderings to the occupation of the Promised Land, 16-25. (4) Finally, from the Judges to the Babylonian Captivity, 26-31.

As the Israelites came together for this solemn assembly they did so with fasting, a symbol of their devotion, and with sackcloth as a symbol of their inner humility. Then for one-fourth of the day, that is for three hours, they stood as the word was expounded. Then for another fourth of the day, three hours, they spent in worship and confession. What group of God's people do you know that would be willing to spend six hours on any given Sunday to worship God and confess their sins to Him? We are all well aware of the "clock-eyed" brethren that cannot sit for three minutes past what they consider "overtime", without a smoke or with jockeying in line with the Denominational crowds at the cafeteria for lunch. All of this six-hour activity was simply PREPARATION for the prayer which the Levites were to lead.

This prayer was to point toward God's faithfulness in each of the divisions: Adam to Abraham; Captivity to the Red Sea; Wanderings to the Occupation of The Land; and the Judges to Babylonian Captivity. In each case God was faithful and delivered what He promised to man when man was humble, submissive and obedient. Yet, in each case when Israel rebelled in the lust of her heart she was abused by her enemies. Over

and over the point is made in the prayer that if you will obey, God will bless; and to make this abstract principle concrete, the Levites pointed to historical examples that all the people knew were true. Reject God and He will reject you from His favor. Turn to God and He will turn to you with His favor. All of this was in preparation for the signing of the Covenant which would be placed before them. This prayer is to take the religious zeal and turn it into firm commitment to the one whose favor they seek.

Our Use of History in Revival

Barber quotes Patrick Henry as saying, "I have no light to illumine the pathway of the future save that which falls over my shoulder from the past." So, there are several great lessons that can be learned from history that will aid us in our push for spiritual revival.

First, the church has never been persecuted to death. Please take the time to read this lengthy quotation from Alexander Campbell in his opening address with Robert Owen, the infidel, concerning the ability of the Christians to withstand persecution. This is the greatest, most moving speech that I have ever read, and it ought to speak volumes to us today.

"You must not think, my friends, that Christianity has come down to our times without a struggle; nay, indeed, it took the nation at first by the irresistible force of its evidence. It was opposed by consolidated ranks of well-disciplined foes. Learned, cunning, bold, and powerful were its enemies. But experience taught them it was not only foolish, but hurtful to kick against the goads.

Never was there such a moral phenomenon exhibited upon this earth as the first establishment and progress of Christianity. The instruments by which it was established, the opposition with which it was met, and the success which attended its career, were all of the most extraordinary character. The era of Christianity itself presents a very sublime spectacle: the whole world reposing in security under the protecting wings of the most august of all the Caesars; peace, universal peace, with her healthful arms encircling all the nations composing the great empire which was itself the consummation of all the empires of the ancient world. Polytheism, with her myriads of temples and her myriads and myriads of priests, triumphantly seated in the affections of a superstitious people, and swaying a magic scepter from the Tiber to the ends of the earth. Legislators, magistrates, philosophers, orators, and poets, all combined to plead her cause, and to protect her from insult and injury. Rivers of sacrificial blood, crimsoned all the rites of pagan worship; and clouds of incense arose

from every city, town, and hamlet, in honor of the gods of Roman superstition. Just in this singular and unrivaled crisis, when the Jew's religion, though corrupted by tradition and distracted by faction, was venerated for its antiquity, and admired for its divinity; when idolatry was at its zenith in the pagan world, the Star of Bethlehem appears. The marvelous scene opens in a stable. What a fearful odds! What a strange contrast! Idolatry on the throne, and the founder of a new religion and a new empire lying in a manger!

After thirty years of obscurity we find him surrounded with what the wise, the wealthy, and the proud would call a contemptible group; telling them that one of them, an uncouth and untutored fisherman, too, had discovered a truth which would new-modify the whole world. In the midst of them he uttered the most incredible oracle ever heard. I am about, says he, to found a new empire on the acknowledgment of a single truth, a truth, too, which one of you has discovered, and all the powers and malice of worlds seen and unseen shall never prevail against it. This is our helmet, breastplate, and shield, in this controversy. What a scene presents itself here? A pusillanimous, wavering, ignorant, and timid dozen of individuals, without a penny apiece, assured that to them it pleased the Ruler of the Universe to give the empire of the world; that to each of them would be given a throne from which would be promulgated laws never to be repealed while the sun and moon endure.

Such were the army of the faith. They begin their career. Under the jealous and invidious eyes of a haughty Sanhedrin at home, and under the strict cognizance of a Roman emperor abroad, with a watchful procurator stationed over them. They commenced their operations. One while charged with idolatry; at another with treason. Reviled and persecuted until their chief is rewarded with a cross, and themselves with threats and imprisonment. A throne in a future world animated them, and a crown of glory after martyrdom stimulated them. On they march from conquest to conquest, till not only a multitude of the Jewish priests and people, but Caesar's household in imperial Rome, became obedient to the faith. Such was the commencement."

As you can see, the church never has been put out of business by persecution. Not history alone, but also the Book of Acts gives us that truth. But, on the other hand, the church often faces extermination during time

of plenty and prosperity. Rev, 3:17: "You say I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,". It was in the era of prosperity that Laodicea was about to be cast out of the Lord's mouth. Israel, in its day of plenty, forsook the Lord, and never seemed to have time to remember. It was not until adversity came that they could turn back to the Lord. So our greatest enemy is not famine, but the feast of prosperity and plenty. As Campbell said, the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the church.

Secondly, we can learn from history that God is actively in the affairs of man for the benefit of His people. The Revelation of Jesus Christ to John was to inform him that those who sought to destroy Christians would themselves be destroyed. We clearly understand that Christ is the head of the church because many scriptures tell us that He has all power and authority. We are told that He is the head of the body and that forcefully indicates that He is the Head of the church. But, for a moment, look at Ephesians 1:22, "head over all things TO the church" is the reading in most versions. But checking in the NIV, we find, "appointed him to be head over everything FOR the church. . ." Notice the difference between "TO the church" and "FOR the church." We know that both statements are true no matter how the verse is translated. Yet, the NIV rendering gives the impression that the world is ruled by Him as the Head of the church FOR the benefit of its existence. History tells us that God ruled in the Old Testament in behalf of His saints and He now rules in Christ for or in behalf of His saints. No matter our faithfulness or unfaithfulness God's Plan will be worked because He is ruling and active in the affairs of man for His cause.

Learning and appreciating His action in the world for His cause, we ought to be diligent in prayer and communion with Him concerning the growth and development of His kingdom. God is not like the deist who winds up the clock never to touch it again! He acts, works, and participates in the world of His saints for the redemption of mankind. This is why we must develop a living, communing relationship with our God on a daily basis if we are to be effective in His world. It is by prayer and His will that the kingdom grows, not by my cleverness in answering argument. Not by oratory, not by my tireless door knocking, and not by the sweat of my brow. When we do the work we are too much like Nebuchadnezzar of Daniel's day,—"is this not Babylon which I have built?" Brethren, we stand in His strength and His power. He rules the world for the benefit of the salvation by the gospel plan. There is no other purpose to man's existence in His mind. He is long-suffering and willing that none should be lost but all should come to repentance.

In conclusion, spiritual renewal is built on a sense of HISTORY OF WHAT GOD HAS DONE, and we can gauge WHAT HE WILL DO IN THE FUTURE by that Divine record. In the near future we will study more about our need for spiritual renewal.

SET FOR THE
DEFENSE OF
THE GOSPEL

T. G. O'Neal

P.O. Box 723
Bessemer, Alabama 35021



THE STANDARD OF SOUNDNESS

What is the standard by which one is determined to be sound and what is the basis upon which a church may be said to be sound? Upon what basis can we say that one is faithful or that a church is a faithful church?

Soundness, either in a person or in a church, is not determined by what the majority of people are doing. The masses of people are traveling down the broad way that leads unto eternal destruction. Jesus said so in Mt. 7:13-14. A church or a person may be in the limelight of the world and having the world praising them for their religious activity, but such does not constitute soundness and faithfulness.

Soundness, either in a person or in a church, is not determined by what the "brotherhood" thinks. By the term "brotherhood" I mean what the brethren in general think. The brethren may give some congregation or preacher the name of being sound, and at the same time the preacher or the congregation may be weak and sickly as it is possible to get and still remain alive.

Soundness, either in a person or in a church, is not determined by what project we support. Brethren and churches today have all kinds of projects that they have invented to take up their time in service to God. The one I may support or the church supports does not determine soundness. We need to learn not to support projects and get back to supporting the work of the Lord.

Soundness, either in a person or in a church, is not determined by the preacher the church has or by the preacher one likes to hear. A church can have a preacher who will preach the truth, but the church will not subscribe to the truth he preaches. A person may have a favorite preacher he likes to listen to, and that preacher may preach the truth, but the person will not accept the truth when it is preached. A person can pat the preacher on the back after the services, but that doesn't mean he is sound.

Soundness, either in a person or in a church, is not determined by either their approval or disapproval of any particular radio program. One could approve a certain radio program or TV program and not be sound in the faith. The approval or disapproval of any TV or radio program is not the basis upon which soundness is

had. A church could disapprove of some radio program and still be sound in the faith. Or a church could approve of a radio program and be unsound in the faith.

Soundness, either in a person or in a church, is not determined by either their subscribing or not subscribing to any religious journal. Too often, and one time is one time too often, brethren will attempt to determine faithfulness or soundness of a preacher or of a church by whether they subscribe to a particular paper or not. If you do not subscribe you can be faithful to the Lord, and if you do subscribe you can still be unfaithful to the Lord. When subscribing to any religious journal is the basis upon which to determine soundness and faithfulness, a standard has been set that the Lord does not recognize.

When the standard of faithfulness is determined by subscribing to a religious journal, a pressure campaign is being used to force people into going along with a particular program or else being labeled by official pronouncement as being unfaithful and unsound.

There is one good reason why all of the "standards" I have mentioned do not determine faithfulness to the Lord—none of them is found in the New Testament. If these do not constitute the standard, then what does constitute the standard for faithfulness and soundness to the Lord?

The Apostle Paul said, the standard of faithfulness was that which was according "to sound doctrine; According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust" (1 Tim. 1:10-11). Paul left Timothy at Ephesus that he might "charge some that they teach no other doctrine" (1 Tim. 1:3). Further Paul told Timothy in 2 Tim. 1:13 to "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." Again, Paul told him in 2 Tim. 4:2-4, to "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the *truth*, and shall be turned unto fables."

Paul wrote Titus to "... speak thou the things which become **sound doctrine**" (Titus 2:1). And of certain ones Titus was told to "... rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith" (Titus 1:13). Paul told Titus that one of the qualifications of elders was to be "that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers" (Titus 1:9). Titus was to teach young men to use "sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you" (Titus 2:8).

Paul, in writing to the Corinthians said, in 2 Cor. 13:5, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; ..." How shall we make an examination of our lives as to whether we are in the faith? Or, if you want to apply the question to a congregation, by what standard will a congregation measure itself to see if it is faithful unto the Lord? Will the standard be whether we subscribe

to some religious journal, or whether we endorse a particular radio program, or whether we have the right preacher, or by the projects or institutions we support, or by what the brotherhood thinks of us, or by what the majority of people are doing?

I want to say something that needs to be said very badly and we need to learn it: **no man has any SCRIPTURAL right to set up a standard by which either individuals or congregations will be judged as to their faithfulness and unfaithfulness!** Sometimes men get puffed up with their own self esteem and think that whatever standard they set up, the Lord just automatically will recognize and if men do not bow to the man-made standard that the Lord will reject all who do not subscribe to man's standard.

The standard for truth and error, right and wrong, faithfulness and unfaithfulness, sin and righteousness has been determined a long time ago and the standard is permanent. David said in Psalms 119:89, "Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven," We do not determine the standard here, it already has been settled by Jehovah God in heaven.

Sometimes when a person does not go along with what someone thinks, an official pronouncement is given that a certain person is unsound. If everyone else does not accept the official pronouncement, then whoever does not is immediately marked as being unsound. The same thing is true concerning congregations. If a congregation does not bow down to some official degree, then it will be declared to be unsound, and with no more authority than the will of man.

The standard of soundness is set forth in the SCRIPTURES. The inspired writer said it was "sound doctrine", "sound words", "sound speech", "truth", and the "gospel" that was the standard for determining if either a person or a congregation is sound in the faith. When one makes a condition of soundness more than the inspired writer, he has added to the word of God. This no man can do without bringing down the curse of Almighty God (Gal. 1:8-9).

The 5th Avenue church of Christ with which I labor publishes a bulletin which we mail to people who are willing to receive it. If, after they read it, they want to pass it along to a friend, that is fine with us. Its purpose is teaching. Therefore, there are those that receive our church bulletin that we know do not agree with what we say in it. But that is all right. After studying and considering the evidence we have to present over a period of time in the light of New Testament teaching, they may come to us and say that they see what we have been saying is the truth. If so, we are glad. If they do not see the things we present as being taught in the Scriptures, then we do not want them to accept them. We have had those that did not agree with what we were teaching in the bulletin when they first began to receive it, but as they studied and read it in the light of what the Bible taught, we have had many from far and near to express their appreciation for the paper either orally or in letters to us.

Now what would you think if I were to declare that

all the faithful Christians were receiving this bulletin? You would think that I was determining who is faithful to the Lord and who is unfaithful to the Lord. You would probably ask yourself the question, "Does he think that he is the one that determines who is sound and faithful and who is unsound and unfaithful just by saying so?" Would the fact that I said so, make it so?

People should not be deceived by the standards of men and think that because they measure up to the human standards that the Lord recognizes such. I remember that the Lord wrote a letter to some who said they were "rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing". This was their estimate of themselves, but the Lord said, "knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked": (Rev. 3:17). This was unto the church in Laodicea. The church of the Lord at Sardis had "a name that thou livest" (Rev. 3:1). If anyone had questioned the church in Sardis, she could and would have said we have the name of living. The name men had given this church was not the name the Lord had given her. The Lord's estimate of her was, you are "dead" (Rev. 3:1).

May we always learn and know that the standard for soundness is determined by the Lord Jesus Christ as we measure up to the divine standard—the gospel of Christ or sound doctrine and not the standards set by men themselves. When men set their own standards of soundness, it is an admission that they do not want to measure up to the high standard set by the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, they will lower the standard of soundness to one that meets their approval and measurement.

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UNCTION FROM THE HOLY ONE

QUESTION: What is the "unction from the Holy One" in 1 John 2:20? Is this "unction" the same as "the anointing" in verse 27? Is this "unction" and/or "anointing" received by Christians today? If so, do we not have guidance from within in addition to the word? John said concerning "the anointing" (and because of it), "ye need not that any man teach you" (v. 27).—L.S.

ANSWER: The words "unction" and "anointing" (KJV) are from the same Greek word "Chrisma," and, therefore, are the same in meaning. It is consistently translated "anointing" in the ASV. The word is used metaphorically in these verses. The allusion is to the anointing of kings and priests in the O.T. when oil and aromatic herbs were used in such appointments (Cf. Ex. 28:41; 29:7; 40:15; 1 Sam. 10:1; 16:13). W. E. Vine says that it is used "by metonymy, of the Holy Spirit, 1 John 2:20, 27 twice" (W. E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary Of New Testament Words*, p. 59).

There are two possible views concerning the verses in question both of which harmonize with truth.

Number One: Those under consideration in verses 20 and 27 had received an anointing from the Holy One (Christ), and, as a result, John says, "ye know all things" (v. 20); "ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him" (v. 27). These had received the Holy Spirit (by metonymy) from Christ under whose guidance they were able to discern truth and error—even false teachers, called the antichrist (v. 22). These false teachers, formerly of them (v. 19), were trying to seduce the faithful and thereby occasion their apostasy. No wonder John said, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1).

In the absence of the New Testament, there were those among the early saints possessing spiritual gifts by which they were able to discern spirits, know truth, and reveal it. These gifts varied and were bestowed through the laying on of the apostles hands, but were not always given to all Christians (1 Cor. 12:1-11; Acts 6:5-8; 8:14-20; 1:5,6; Rom. 1:11).

From this view point some difficulty exists in this chapter (1 John 2) in determining just when John addresses saints in general and those possessing spiritual

gifts in particular. Such must be determined in the light of all else revealed and the immediate context. From such source we do know that while not all saints possessed such gifts some did and were in the midst of nearly, if not all, congregations. The early Christians were dependent upon such for divine guidance. The inspired word resided in them and they spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

Number Two: The phrase "in you" (v. 27) is plural (Gr., en humin), and is often translated "among you." Thayer says, "esp. with dat. plur. of persons, as en hemin, en humin, among us, among you, en allelois, among yourselves, one with another" (p. 210). Consider the following examples:

Lk. 1:1, "which are most surely believed among us" (en hemin).

John 1:14, "The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (en hemin).

1 Cor. 3:18, "If any man among you" (en humin) "seemeth to be wise in this world."

1 Cor. 5:1, "...that there is fornication among you" (en humin).

According to this view, John says that the "unction" or "anointing" received from the Holy One is among you. John wanted his "Little children" to know that they had an "unction" or an "anointing" which abided in their midst in the persons who were recipients of spiritual gifts. From them they were to learn the truth on all issues. John said that this "anointing teacheth you of all things." They needed no further instruction from any other source. Such instruction involved the curse of heaven (Gal. 1:8,9).

Both of these views harmonize with truth which in this instance is:

1. The words "unction" and "anointing" are used figuratively, meaning power within those endowed with spiritual gifts.
2. This "anointing" was present among the early saints.
3. The early saints were to rely on such for divine guidance.

Since miracles have ceased and the gifts of the Spirit no longer exist (Cf. 1 Cor. 13:8-13), we have none among us who have been "anointed." We do have, however, the results of that "anointing," namely, the inspired word—"the perfect law of liberty" (Jas. 1:25). We have no need for further teaching from any other source, either from within or without. This word is inspired, perfect, complete, all-sufficient, and final! (Jas. 1:25; 2 Tim. 3:16,17; Jude 3).

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HOW ELUSIVE IS TRUTH?

Pontius Pilate will not be the first or last to try to evade the impact of truth. When our Lord said, "He had come to bear witness of truth," Pilate evaded the affirmation by saying, "What is truth?" This implies at least two things: first, truth is so elusive one cannot find it and second, if he finds it, he cannot understand it. This seems to be the easy way out for many in the world.

Back in the early fifties, the late and beloved W. Curtis Porter engaged a Mr. Billy Sunday Meyers in a debate on the scripturalness of the Church. On page 26, Porter pressed Meyers for an answer to this question, "Is it possible for any man to take the Bible as his only creed?" Reluctantly, Myers answered, "No, not in a concrete sense, because a man's creed is his personal interpretation of the Bible and not the Bible itself." Brother Porter replied on page 41 with these words: "There, you have it. My friend does not even claim to take the Bible for his creed. He says it is impossible for him to do it. That will explain, I suppose, some of the things he teaches. To Moses, God said, 'Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it.' Deut. 4:2. But Myers says it could not be done—Moses would have to add his personal interpretations. Isaiah said: 'To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.' Isa. 8:20. But my friend says it can't be done—they would have to speak 'according to their personal interpretations' of the word. Paul said, 'preach the word.' 2 Tim. 4:2. But my opponent says that such is impossible—that a man must preach his 'personal interpretations' of the word instead of the word itself. And Peter declared: 'If any speak let him speak as the oracles of God.' 1 Pet. 4:11. But Mr. Myers declares it is utterly impossible to do so—that no man can speak anything but his 'personal interpretation' of God's oracles."

After Porter had all but annihilated Mr. Myers on this question, he comes back on page 53, with this question, "Will God accept one's personal interpretation in preference to another's?" Meyers had to come up with some kind of an answer and here it is, "Yes, because some interpretations allow sin in the life, a thing which God cannot tolerate." Porter then pointed out that Myers was meeting himself coming

back because if he couldn't understand the Bible he couldn't know what SIN was in the first place.

I print this brief exchange to prove that many preachers do not really believe the Bible. About the only thing they believe is "their own interpretations of the Bible." They are of the school of thought, that the TRUTH is so evasive and relative that no one can really master it.

The Lord said, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (Jno. 8:32). But I am told that I cannot know the truth because it is relative. I am told that I cannot know the truth because it is illusive. I am told that I cannot know the truth, only my personal interpretation of the truth. So what shall I do? I cannot be free from sin and servitude until I know what I cannot know! What a shame.

The truth about the matter is that one can know the truth and be made free. Notice the Lord did not say one had to know ALL the truth to be saved, but he must know the truth. In Heb. 5:12, Paul says, "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat." The writer tells us that babes drink milk and others eat meat. But both milk and meat are truth. One isn't required to drink milk and consume all the meat at the same time. Since milk deals with first principles, it means one must know ALL the truth on the PLAN OF SALVATION or he cannot be saved. However, this is a far cry from saying he must know ALL truth. Since our salvation from sin is predicated on faith, repentance, confession and baptism, it is axiomatic that we must know ALL the truth on the plan or we cannot be saved. One cannot leave off anything God has commanded and be saved. One doesn't have to have the acumen of Solomon to see the difference in knowing ALL the truth on a specific subject and knowing ALL the truth on everything!

When Paul said, "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part" (1 Cor. 13:9). Just what did he mean? Obviously the pronoun "we" has as its antecedent the apostles and inspired writers. This means that no ONE apostle had a complete revelation. Therefore, the apostles most of whom will make it to heaven did not know ALL truth. This proves that one can make it to heaven without knowing ALL truth but it does not authorize error. Although Paul said he "knew in part" he blasted the Judaizing teachers for bringing in false doctrine (see Gal. 5). When one takes the writings of Peter, Paul, James, John and others, he has a complete revelation of God's will. However, no ONE writer gave us a complete revelation. When Paul told the Galatian brethren that some had fallen from grace (Gal. 5:4) how did he know this? The answer is that he knew the TRUTH on this subject and when they deviated from that truth, they had fallen from grace.

I do not fall out with the Calvinist when he says, "No man knows it all." Neither do I become disturbed when he tells me that I am ignorant on many things in the Bible. This, I humbly confess. But when he tells me that God will overlook my ignorance on "right and

wrong", "black and white" or "sin and salvation," I come out fighting! Some things in which I may be ignorant have absolutely nothing to do with my salvation. For example, I may be ignorant of "the location and size of heaven," but what difference does it make? I may be ignorant of "Paul's thorn in the flesh," but what difference does it make? I may be ignorant of "the details of judgment day," but what difference does it make? On the other hand, the Bible says if I am ignorant of the plan of salvation, I cannot be saved (Rom. 1:16). If I am ignorant of how God wants to be worshipped, I cannot be saved (see Matt. 15:9). If I am ignorant of the laws concerning adultery, lying, stealing the Bible says I cannot go to heaven (see Gal. 5). If my attitude toward my brother is not right and I call him a fool, the Bible says I am in danger of hell fire (Matt. 5:22).

So kind friend, don't be deceived by Calvinist doctrine. I plead guilty to ignorance and I admit I do not know it all but ONE thing I do know and that is I MUST know the difference in RIGHT and WRONG, BLACK and WHITE, SIN AND SALVATION OR heaven cannot be my home. When a man tells me that God will overlook matters of RIGHT and WRONG, he is whistling in the graveyard.

In summary kind friend, remember this, when God wrote the Bible, he made some things simple. He wrote it so you may know the difference in "RIGHT and WRONG". Other things do not really matter. The entire Christian system is predicated on one's knowledge of the truth. For example, if one cannot know the truth, how could one know and rebuke the false teachers? Yet, Paul warned the elders at Ephesus about grievous wolves who would enter in among them (Acts 20:29). If one cannot know the truth, he could not differentiate between a wolf and a sheep. Actually, the wolf could ostentatiously say he was a sheep. Then with a great deal of audacity, he could claim that it was all a matter of interpretation. Friend, when Paul told Timothy to "preach the word" and that some would "turn their ears from the truth" if one can't know the truth, how could he preach it and how would he know when one turns his ears from it?

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"ACCEPT JESUS CHRIST AS YOUR PERSONAL SAVIOUR"

I want to discuss with you the expression that is stated in the title of this article, for I hear it everywhere almost every day. "Accept Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour, and let him come into your heart, and you will be saved." I have also read many, many articles and tracts which conclude with the same sort of statement. "Jesus will save you if you will let him by accepting him as your personal Saviour." However, when you turn to the book of The Acts of the Apostles in the New Testament, as we have done in some of our recent articles, and read what is said about the different cases of conversion, it seems incredible, in view of the above statement, what one finds in the Scriptures. Notice the list as we observe how God actually saved these people.

1. The Pentecostians—Acts 2:14-41. . . heard, believed, repented and were baptized.
2. The Samaritans—Acts 8:5-13. . . heard, believed, confessed, and were baptized.
3. The Eunuch—Acts 8:35-39. . . heard, believed, confessed, and was baptized.
4. Cornelius—Acts 10:34-38. . . heard, believed, and was baptized.
5. Lydia—Acts 16:13-15. . . heard, believed, and was baptized.
6. The Jailor—Acts 16:30-34. . . heard, believed, repented, and was baptized.
7. Saul (who later became the apostle Paul)—Acts 9:17-18; 22:16. . . heard, believed, confessed, and was baptized.

There they are, multitudes of Bible examples who have been saved. And yet, **not one single example** of those who were saved being told to "accept Jesus Christ as their own personal saviour. On the contrary,, in every example of conversion we have in the New Testament after the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, people saved the Bible way were told to hear, believe, repent, confess and be baptized!

Not In Scriptures At All

Another interesting thing is that though many people (many preachers included) in the world today quote the title of this article to people telling them what to do to be saved, **the statement is nowhere found in the Scriptures.** If so, WHERE?

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NEWS EDITOR HAS NEW ADDRESS

WILSON ADAMS, 6334 Auburn Ave., Riverdale, MD 20737. After three and a half years with the Georgia Avenue church in Roanoke, VA, my family and I have accepted the invitation to move and begin work with the Wildercroft church of Christ in Riverdale, MD, a suburb of our nation's capitol. Our work will begin there on April the 18th. The Wildercroft congregation has three fine elders, a good program of work, and a bright outlook for the future. We invite any of the readers of STS to stop and worship with us when visiting Washington or passing through the area. For times of services, please see the ad in the back of the paper. The building is located near the Beltway Exit of Hwy. 450 (Annapolis Road). NOTE: FROM NOW ON ALL NEWS ITEMS FOR THIS PAPER SHOULD BE SENT TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS. Also, all those who put out church bulletins please make a note of the change.

FIELD REPORTS

JAMES A. BRUCE, 430 St. Marys Place, O'Fallon, MO 63366. After three years with the good church in St. Peters, MO, we plan to relocate as of July 15th of this year. I have preached twelve years full time and twelve years part time. We enjoy personal work and have realized good growth in all areas while working with the brethren here. The church is at peace and is willing to provide references to those who may be interested. Please contact me at the above address or phone (314) 272-8002 nights, or 278-2666 during the day.

ROBERT DOZIER, P.O. Box 4127, Grand Junction, CO 81502. I would like the readers of STS to know that the Valley church of Christ is now meeting at 136 N. 5th St. in Grand Junction. The church formerly met at 760 Winters Street. The church then merged with the Mesa Ave. church of Christ after joint study between the two groups brought unity upon the belief that the New Testament does authorize Bible classes (Mesa Ave. formerly opposed such). However, the members of the Valley church were not able to remain at Mesa Ave. due to an unwillingness to study in an effort to resolve other serious differences that existed among them, primarily concerning marriage, divorce, and remarriage.

I have been working with the Valley church since August 14, 1981. We met in a home of one of the members from August until January and have been meeting in the local 100F Hall since January. Phil Thompson is now working with the Mesa Ave. church. Phil and I have spent several weeks studying together on the marriage question but have not come to an agreement. Phil believes that the teaching of Jesus (Mt. 5:32; 19:9; Mk. 10:11-12; Lk. 16:18) applies only to Christians. He agrees with the basic position of

James Bales as set forth in his book, *Not Under Bondage*. Others at Mesa Ave. hold various unscriptural positions regarding marriage, divorce and remarriage. I believe that the teaching of Jesus applies to all and that fornication is the only scriptural grounds for divorce. The Valley church of Christ is united upon the New Testament teaching on marriage, divorce and remarriage.

This is not written with a spirit of animosity or with ill intent, but with a desire to inform those concerned with the cause of Christ in this area as to the present situation and to let brethren who may travel in this area know where we are meeting to worship. Anyone wishing to contact us may write the church at the above address or call me at (303) 245-5079.

KEN GREEN, 2212 Jordan Lane S.W., Huntsville, AL 35805. The Jordan Park church in Huntsville, AL lost its building to an arsonist's fire last July. Fortunately, for me, the annex on the rear of the building which housed the church office and most of my books and materials, was saved from the fire. An attaché case with all my preaching outlines and records of past meetings was stolen. (Someone said, "It must have been somebody who'd heard you preach.") Our address plates were destroyed. For this reason we have not mailed a bulletin since the fire. With the steep increase in postal rates, it's doubtful that we will resume a church bulletin. The Jordan Park church is now meeting in the Security Federal Savings and Loan building at 300 Clinton Ave. West in downtown Huntsville. We have classroom facilities at this location and have been having near capacity crowds of 200 and over. We hope to be in our new building sometime this summer. On Feb. 16, we began a call-in telecast on CA-TV 9.

The "What is Written" program airs from 8 to 9 p.m. on Tuesdays. This cable company has over 30,000 home subscribers, about two-thirds of the homes of Huntsville. Response has been overwhelming with calls on the line constantly. We believe that much fruit will result through this medium.

JOHN F. HUGHBANKS, 2932 Carter Ave., Ashland, KY 41101. Since moving here in the middle of October, the church has progressed spiritually and numerically. We baptized one precious soul so far this year. Two people have been restored to God, and two families have placed membership with us. The church is self-supporting in all ways. Our attendance averages 30 to 35 on the Lord's Day. The church is at peace and we look forward to much success in the vineyard of the Lord in the coming years. If any of the readers of STS know of any contacts in this area, please send us their names. Ashland has a population of 27,000 people. I would estimate that within a fifteen mile radius of Ashland (including Huntington, WV) the population would be in excess of 150,000. So

there is much work to be done. If you are in this area, stop and worship with us. We assemble at 2950 Carter Ave. with services on Sunday at 10 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. Our mid-week service on Wednesday is at 7:30 p.m. My phone number is (606) 325-3565.

WORK IN GERMANY

DANIEL HUBER, Box 253, 602nd ASOC, APO NY 09107. In September 1981, the churches in Phorzheim and Heilbronn, W. Germany, decided it would be best to unite and form a single, but larger, congregation. We are meeting in Heilbronn, and at the present time, have twelve members and several children. The work of preaching and teaching is divided among the five men. We are fortunate to have so many willing to put forth the effort necessary so that no one or two persons are burdened with all the work. We also have two Bible classes for the children taught by several of the women. We have very few expenses at this time, so we do have a limited amount of financial support available to any preacher of the pure gospel of Christ that is in need. If you have such a need, or know of someone that needs financial support, please let us know. Please send references and any information regarding your work. For more information about us contact: Heilbronn Area—Tom Foster, HHC 101st Ord. Bn.,

APO NY 09176.

Karlsruhe Area—Ron Miller, 69th PSC, APO NY 09164.
Stuttgart Area—Dan Huber, Box 253, 602nd ASOC, APO NY 09107.

INFORMATION ON CHURCHES NEAR THE WORLD'S FAIR

ALEX OGDEN, Rt. 4, Box 249, Rockwood, TN 37854. May 1 through October 31 of this year is the World's Fair in Knoxville, TN. It is estimated that 11 million people will attend the Fair during this period of time. Many of you that are members of the Lord's church will be among that number. However, some may not be aware of the different congregations within the Knoxville area. Thus, I would like to take this opportunity to inform you of those faithful congregations within a feasible driving distance of the Fair site.

West Knoxville church of Christ
9048 Middlebrook Pike
Knoxville, TN 37923

Services: Sun. 9:00,10:00, 6:00 Wed. 7:30
Phones: 690-8410 or 693-8939
Approximately 25 minutes.

Chapman Hwy. church of Christ Corner
Chapman Hwy. and John Sevier
Knoxville, TN 37920

Services: Sun. 10:00,10:55; 7:30; Wed. 7:30
Phones: 577-8781 or 546-6523 Approximately
25 minutes.

Smokey Mountain church of Christ
717Cates Street

Maryville, TN 37801
Services: Sun. 9:30,10:30,6:30, Wed. 7:30
Phones: 984-1730 or 984-1523
Approximately 30 minutes.

Loudon church of Christ
707 Ward Ave.

Loudon, TN 37774
Services: Sun. 10:00,11:00, 6:00, Wed. 7:00
Phone: 458-5043
Approximately 45 minutes.

Oak Ridge church of Christ
225 N. Purdue Ave.

(P.O. Box 331)
Oak Ridge, TN 37830
Services: Sun. 9:00,10:00, 7:00; Wed. 7:00
Approximately 30 minutes.

Post Oak church of Christ
Post Oak Road
(Rt. 2, Box 525)
Rockwood, TN 37854
Services: Sun. 10:00, 11:00, 7:00; Wed. 7:30
Phones: 354-4435 or 354-4099
Approximately 1 hour.

We will be looking forward to meeting several of you during the summer months.

NEW CONGREGATION

CLARKSBURG, WV—There is now a faithful church meeting in Clarksburg, WV. We are currently 14 people strong including children. We met in our homes for several weeks but are now meeting in the conference room at the Town House West Motor Lodge, located one mile west of Clarksburg on Rt. 50. Due to scheduling problems where we are renting, we can only meet there once a week on Lord's Day morning at 10:00. The nearest scriptural congregation to Clarksburg is either Morgantown or Middlebourne, both several miles away. We ask the prayers of our many brethren in our efforts here in this area. For more information about our work, contact: David Cochran at (304) 782-2132 or Ronald Logan at 842-6134. Or write us at 13 Meadowcrest Lane, Bridgeport, WV 26330.

DEBATES

HOGLAND-JACKSON DEBATE: The elders of the Van Dorn St. church in Grenada, MS have asked Ward Hogland to meet Bill Jackson in a two night debate on June 25th and 26th of this year. Brethren from the Elliott church challenged the Van Dorn brethren with reference to the proposition below. The Elliot brethren selected Bill Jackson of Austin, TX to represent them in the discussion. On the first night Ward Hogland will affirm, "The Scriptures teach that a congregation, from its treasury, may not provide benevolent aid to sinners and to those who are safe." Bill Jackson will deny. The second night Bill Jackson will affirm, "The scriptures teach that a congregation, from its treasury, may provide benevolent aid to sinners and to those who are safe." Ward Hogland will deny. The debate will be held in the City Auditorium in Grenada, MS each evening at 7:00. Grenada is about 100 miles south of Memphis, TN and 100 miles north of Jackson, MS on I-55. For more information contact Bill James at 175 Van Dorn St., Grenada, MS 38901.

SMITH-BALLARD DEBATE—J. T. Smith has been contacted by the brethren in Grants Pass, OR to meet Bro. Voyd N. Ballard on the subject of how many drinking vessels may be used in the distribution of the fruit of the vine in the Lord's Supper, and whether or not the church may have an arrangement of Bible Classes in which both men and women may do the teaching. The debate will be conducted in Grants Pass, OR on May 17,18,19, 20. For more information write or call: George Garrison at 2602 Hamilton Lane, Grants Pass, OR 97526. Or phone (503) 479-8077.

PREACHERS NEEDED

BELFAST, VA—The Belfast church of Christ, located in the southwestern part of Virginia, is in need of a full time preacher. The congregation has an average attendance of 30 to 35. We are able to provide \$400 a month support. Other support would need to be raised from outside sources. If interested contact Dover Stacey, Jr., at Rt. 2, Box 358-C, Cedar Bluff, VA 24609. Or call (703) 963-9431, 964-5139, or 964-2744.

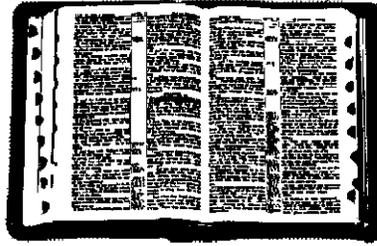
SHEBOYGAN FALLS, WI—The church here needs a mature, full time preacher for a challenging work. Middle-aged preferred. Contact Mabrey Tayse at Rt. 1, Brigewood Rd., Sheboygan Falls, WI 53085.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	273.
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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 XXIII

JUNE, 1982

NUMBER 6

SLOPPINESS

Ronny Milliner

P.O. Box 371
Middlebourne, WV 26149



The father was trying to teach his son to be more aware of his messy eating habits. "You eat like a pig, son," said the father. Then remembering that his city-bred son probably didn't know what a pig was, he asked, "You do know what a pig is, don't you?" The little boy scratched his head and answered, "Isn't that a hog's little boy?"

Now there may be some ways in which we are like the "hog's little boy." Let's take a look.

Sloppy Dress

"So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, 'Put away the foreign gods which are among you, and purify yourselves, and change your garments; and let us arise and go up to Bethel; and I will make an altar there to God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and has been with me wherever I have gone'" (Gen. 35:2-3). Notice that when Jacob took his family to an altar to worship God, they were told to "purify yourselves and change your garments."

In Ex. 19:10-11 the Lord gave instructions to Moses on what the Israelites were to do to come into His presence. He told him, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments; and let them be ready for the third day, for on the third day the Lord will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people." To come into the presence of the Lord meant something special to these individuals, and they showed it by their actions in preparing for it.

How unlike Jacob and the Israelites are some mem-

bers of spiritual Israel. Today the dress of some Christians suggest they see no greater difference in worshipping God than in attending a sporting event. To come into the presence of God is just another casual, everyday-type of event with no great importance.

What do you mean preacher? Do you mean to say that a man has to wear a suit and tie before the Lord will accept his worship? Does a lady have to wear at least a \$30 dress before she shows respect for the Lord? Are you saying it is a sin to wear blue jeans to services? NO!

The point is that dress manifests attitude. There is a type of dress which suggests labor (Jno. 21:7). There is a type of dress which suggests royalty (Gen. 41:42). There is a type of dress which suggests harlotry (Prov. 7:10). Why would a person wear one type of clothing to eat lunch at McDonald's, and another type of clothing to dine at the White House?

Now what does our clothing say about our attitude when we worship God? God has always demanded the first and the best. I may not have a suit to wear, but I can wear the best I have. One can appear neat and clean, and thus show that he did put a little effort into preparing to come before the Lord. When we come to worship God let's "dress up" instead of "dressing down" because of the fact that we are coming into His presence.

Sloppy Actions

And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. Then Ezra blessed the Lord the great God, And all the people answered, 'Amen, Amen!' while lifting up their hands; then they bowed low and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground" (Ezra 8:5-6). Why did these people stand up, answer "Amen, Amen," lift up their hands, and bow low to the ground? It wasn't because they were in a Richard Simmon's exercise class. All these actions were expressions of reverence for God.

We see a lot of these same actions today in our worship assemblies. We see people standing up to leave early. We see people answering those who are

whispering to them. We see people lifting up their hands over the seats to pass children back and forth. And we see people bowing low their faces to the ground in pursuit of children crawling under the pews. Yet even though the actions seem to be the same, something appears to be lacking in the modern assemblies.

Why can a child sit in school for three hours with one trip to the rest-room, but he can't sit in a church building one hour without three trips to the rest-room? And why does a child always have to go out during the invitation song?

It's amazing what a preacher or teacher hears while trying to teach the Word of God. He hears people talking (even two or three pews back from him), the constant clipping of fingernails (I believe some people must have fifteen fingers), and children racing their cars on the pews ("Boss Hogg will never catch the Dukes"). No wonder a fellow occasionally has a lapse of memory.

It's also amazing what a preacher or teacher sees while trying to teach the Word of God. There's always a few folks just looking around as if they are bored to death. Then there are those who consider this period their siesta time. And space doesn't permit us to consider all the funny faces of gumchewers and the antics of children.

What shall we say? "Let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:28-29).

Sloppy Manners

"Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others" (Phil. 2:3-4).

How much do we consider "the interests of others" while we are in the church building? Do we talk and disturb the worship of others? Do we bring cookies for our children to eat, and let them crumble them up into 8000 little pieces without ever offering to clean up the mess? Do we push and shove our way out of the building because of our eagerness to depart? Do we help to care for the building and the church's property, or do we contribute to its abuse and disfigurement?

Let's practice the Golden Rule at all times. "And just as you want men to treat you, treat them in the same way" (Lk. 6:31).

Conclusion

The Proverbs writer said, "I passed by the field of the sluggard, And by the vineyard of the man lacking sense; and behold, it was completely overgrown with thistles, Its surface was covered with nettles, And its stone wall was broken down' (Prov. 24:30-31). The sluggard's sloppy field was representative of his own sloppy character. We may say more about ourselves by our outward appearance and actions than we wish to declare. Let's clean ourselves up!

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Editorial

Connie W. Adams

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THE MAILBOX ON THE CORNER

When brother Yater Tant proposed his "box in the vestibule" idea twenty-five years ago, as a possible solution for keeping brethren together who differed over church support of various projects competing for funds from the church treasuries, we wondered then why that should ever be necessary since we already had the mailbox on the corner. Anyone who wanted to support a college, benevolent institution or other such project, was at perfect liberty to do so without the administration of funds left by the same individuals in a box in the vestibule. Now that brother Tant has proposed the same thing again, and there is considerable discussion in the papers about it, we cannot help wondering the same thing now we did the first time around.

Then and Now

The world has turned many times since the early stages of the division among brethren over the relation of the church to private enterprises. No longer do the "issues" involve two or three easily identifiable practices. The practical differences are many today. Joy buses with reward motivation, puppet shows, fellowship halls, church owned camps, gymnasiums, acrobatic demonstrations, special singing groups performing for local churches and going "on tour", are common fare these days. Who can seriously believe that a box in the vestibule is even a beginning place to resolve differences of such magnitude? Then, as now, the basic problem comes down to Bible authority. Is the New Testament a pattern by which churches today must be regulated? What constitutes scriptural authority? How is it expressed? Is the silence of the scriptures permissive or prohibitive? The whole issue involves the nature, work and organization of the church. The distinction between individual and collective church action underlies much of the difference.

How are such differences to be resolved? The solution is the same now as it has always been: A RETURN TO THE TEACHING OF THE WORD OF GOD. The answer is EDUCATION. Not boxes in the vestibule. Not proposals of compromise. Ever since these issues intensified, there have been honest souls who wanted to know and practice only what the Bible authorizes. There have been whole congregations which have taken a stand in favor of work which is clearly authorized in the Bible and in opposition to

anything they cannot find there. In one five-year period the editor had a part in helping twenty-five congregations get off the fence they were delicately trying to straddle. Since that time there has been an increasing number of sound, active and growing churches in that part of the country. How did that happen? Teaching, my brethren, teaching. There were public debates, gospel meetings in which faithful men of God laid it on the line, church bulletins which effectively taught truth and caused brethren to study for themselves and periodicals which dealt with the issues. Let me tell you how it was NOT done. It was not done by compromise. It was not done by just preaching principles without specific application. It was not done by passing by opportunities to teach the people. It was not done by public speaking which entertained the audience and drew repeated laughter while failing to address serious issues and problems. It was not done by deception. It was not done by leaving the brethren with the impression that we approved of what we really did not approve.

Narrowing the Gap

Brother Tant speaks of both sides attempting to "narrow the gap." Very well, that implies that each side has something to discard and throw into the chasm so it can gradually be closed and a causeway built. What will the "conservative-minded pro-institutional" churches have to give up to fill in the gap? Will they not have to abandon every congregational practice for which there is no divine authority? Has any of that really changed? Now, on the other side of the gap, just exactly what is it that our brother thinks we have to give up? What item in either teaching or practice can he sacrifice? Is he ready to give up on the distinction between the individual and the church? What error do we practice in church cooperation? Is it still scriptural for churches in evangelism to cooperate concurrently by supporting preachers directly in the field? If so, shall that practice be sacrificed to the sponsoring church arrangement? What in our worship and work is unscriptural? What shall we discard into the chasm to fill it up?

On the other hand, if our brother really does not mean to give up anything, then is not his whole proposal an exercise in deception? From discussions now going on among some of the "pro-institutional" folks it is being bruited about that some of us are ready to give up the fight and "come home." What is the source of this impression? Were the liberals right in saying it was all a big noise about nothing? I do not think so. The underlying differences are as serious as they have ever been. The issues must be resolved scripturally or they cannot be resolved at all. There is a place for negotiation and concession in politics, but not in the religion of our Lord where unchanging principles are involved. "Thus saith the Lord" is still the final gap closer in every dispute. We are as ready now to strike hands with honest brethren on "that which is written" as we have ever been. We are as ready to discuss the word of God at every fair opportunity as we have ever been. But we are no more ready to accept

unscriptural teachings and practices now than twenty-five years ago.

Who Speaks For Whom?

This editor has never thought that he spoke for "the brotherhood." I can only speak for myself. The same is true for brother Tant. He does not represent anyone but himself. He most certainly does not speak for me. And judging by the unusual response of letters, phone calls and personal remarks we have received from over the country since our March editorial appeared, brother Tant evidently does not represent the thinking of a good many others. Judging from the articles appearing in other papers of late, it is evident that he does not represent a number of other writers. We have seen and heard sentiments among brethren which range from shock to sadness to outrage over these proposals and their implications.

Our brother has no corner on willingness to talk and study with sincere brethren of a different persuasion. What we have never been willing to do is to even suggest the possibility of compromise where any point of truth was at stake. But now, brother Tant has proposed that congregations may support and work with both preachers who endorse institutionalism and those who oppose it, that they may share the pulpit, and that these same churches may alternate meetings with preachers who both favor and oppose these objectionable practices. The evidence of this is in his VANGUARD editorial of February, 1982 entitled "Almost!—But Not Quite." In this editorial he detailed efforts of two churches in Birmingham to merge. One was "pro-institutional" and the other "anti-institutional." They sought merger on a nine-point basis which included his box in the vestibule idea. Consider the following items:

"3. Both preachers will be retained by the new congregation, alternating in their preaching assignments. ..."

"4. For five years following the merger, preachers invited for gospel meetings will be asked on an alternating basis—first one from 'pro' group, then one from the 'anti' group."

"8. Meetings of other congregations (both 'pro' institutional and 'anti' institutional) in the city shall be announced without discrimination..."

What was not detailed in these items was what liberties the preachers involved should have in their pulpit work. Was a blanket of silence to be imposed so that years would go by without the congregation receiving any teaching on scriptural authority, the nature, work and organization of the church and the difference in individual and collective action? What of "sound speech that cannot be condemned"? Would the "whole counsel of God" have been welcomed? Or were there to have been limitations imposed on these preachers? If so, what self-respecting men could have been a party to such human bans? No wonder the effort failed. The proposal raised more questions than it answered.

An Appeal to Brother Tant

We bear no malice or ill-will of any kind toward Tant. We have known him a long time, enjoyed his company

in our home, been aided by him in many ways over the years, and have read everything he has written for the last thirty-five years. I respect Paul's admonition to Timothy to treat the aged men as fathers (1 Tim. 5:1). But as a student of the Bible and a preacher of the gospel, I have learned that men sometimes err grievously in the sunset years of life. Solomon is a case in point. We have seen men of our own time spend their declining years lending their names and influences to causes which they opposed with clarity and effectiveness earlier in life. Thus they closed their early sojourn under a cloud which tended to darken their influence for good. I hope our beloved brother will not be offended by my citing the following: "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience" (Titus 2:1-2). My dear brother, I publicly appeal to you not to leave the next generation with another mess to clean up over the same issues which divided the Lord's people thirty years ago. As to your proposal, we do not need a box in the vestibule. We already have a mailbox on the corner. What we all need is book, chapter and verse for all that we teach and practice.

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"THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE..."

The conflict between the Jew and the Gentile is as old as Abraham. The conflict between the Jewish mind and that of the Gentile is obvious in New Testament scripture. In an effort to show that all men are under the condemnation of God, Paul wrote in Romans chapter one concerning the total decadence of the Gentiles, in chapter two of the arrogant hardness of the Jews regarding the same principles, and finally in chapter three that "there is none righteous, no not one" (vs. 10) and "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (vs. 23). In showing that both Jew and Gentile were under the same curse of sin, he could then show that all men have need for a common Saviour and that "the gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, to the Jew first and also to the Greek" (Rom. 1:16).

Early on, when the gospel was first preached, the Gentiles were excluded from it. This in spite of the fact that its first spokesman, Peter the Apostle, had stated in his Pentecost sermon that "the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:39), a clear reference to the Gentiles' acceptance before God. Peter was later convinced by a miracle from God that "God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness is accepted of him" (Acts 10:34-35), and resultantly the gospel was extended to include the Gentiles with the baptism of the household of Cornelius (Acts 10:47). Oddly enough, even after such a bold assurance, Peter was troubled about the acceptance of the Gentiles into the fellowship of the saved, for when certain of the Jews came to Antioch from Jerusalem in Gal. 2, Peter, who had formerly freely associated with the Gentile brethren, withdrew himself from their presence, causing even Barnabas to disassociate himself as well. The action incurred a severe rebuke from his fellow apostle Paul for his hypocrisy.

Paul, who describes himself as "the apostle to the Gentiles," (Rom. 11:13) has much to say about the Gentiles' acceptance by God in the letter to the Ephesians. Says he, "But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off (Cf. Acts 2:39) are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us..." (Eph. 2:13-14). He further argues this point to the Romans by saying, "For they are not all Israel which are of Israel, neither, because they are

of the seed of Abraham are they all children..." (Rom. 9:6-7) and "He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart..." (Rom. 2:28-29).

The irony of all this is seen in the fact that even though the gospel first came through the Jews and the Gentiles were at the beginning excluded, almost the opposite later became the case. The Gentiles were far more receptive to the gospel message than were the Jews and even today it is a rare occasion when one of the children of Israel accepts Christ as the chosen Messiah. Paul gave strong indications that such might be the case when he argued, "and if some of the branches be broken off, and thou (Gentiles), being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them (Jews), and with them partakest of the root and the fatness of the olive tree; boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee" (Rom. 11:17-18). "And they also (Jews), if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted, for God is able to graft them in again" (Rom. 11:23).

I preached in a gospel meeting recently at the fine Expressway church in Louisville, Kentucky. At the first service I was introduced to a young man named Bob Darnell. He was a handsome lad with a thick tuft of black hair crowning a distinctively olive complexion. Soft-spoken, mild mannered, his friendliness did not at all detract from his obvious humility. I had seen him in the audience and had judged already his interest by his unusual attention to the lesson. Following the services my friend Connie Adams told me about the young man and his rather distinctive case.

"Bob Darnell is Jewish," brother Adams said, "he is bright and intelligent and is interested in what is right." As he continued his explanation I caught a gleam in his eye that bespoke of his concern and interest in the young man. "Jerry Parks and I, along with others, have been studying with him for almost two years and have found him to be very perceptive and concerned about our differences." He went on to say that the young man had requested a Bible study with the two of us following the services on Wednesday evening.

I continued to watch him with much interest, like all of us are prone to do with those not of our persuasion or nationality. His natural warmth and respect were obvious and his comments concerning the sermons were not as lavish as they were sincere and I was impressed. I was likewise impressed with his attitude toward the Bible, particularly his willingness to study the New Testament. I wondered if the situation were reversed whether or not I would have the same kind of objectivity and lack of bias. Upon further investigation I learned that he readily admitted that Jesus was an historical figure and that he was an outstanding one at that. He was greatly impressed with his teachings and could not account for the fact that a mere man could so influence the entire course of mankind just by what he said and the way he lived. Furthermore, he was at a complete loss to explain how

that this Jesus fulfilled so many of the Old Testament prophecies contained in his own Jewish Scriptures. His own personal honesty had lead him to confront his Rabbi with such fulfillments and he freely admitted that his Jewish mentor had not dealt with them to his satisfaction. The Scriptures were at work on his heart!

When Wednesday night came he was anxious for the class, showing his anticipation by reminding both brother Adams and myself about our commitment following the services (little did he know that we were as anxious as was he). When the time came and most of the people had departed the building, we entered one of the classrooms and took our seats. He had several questions concerning forgiveness and its relation to the sacrifices in the Old Law. Brother Adams fielded each question with kindness and verve, all the while making sure that the young man read the answers for himself out of the Bible, and adding simple but forceful illustrations to further enhance his understanding of each scripture. Before long it became obvious to me that Bob had reached the stage in his learning that he no longer could withstand the signs of the Messiahship of Jesus. The gospel had him upset with his current state of affairs!

Brother Adams told me, now in his presence, about how they had researched the Scriptures and had seen the many prophecies therein as they were fulfilled in the birth, life, teachings, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. The recollection of it seemed to wipe away every objection he had had to the reception of Jesus as the Messiah. We then went to the conversion of Saul of Tarsus and showed this young Jewish man how that there were similarities between his case and that of his Jewish ancestor. He was visibly shaken by the comparison. We sought to show that, like Paul, he must show his courage and deal for himself with Jehovah and that without regard to ancestry, heritage, or religious background, he must now regard what Jesus said, that "he that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me."

His eyes filled with tears; his jaw became rigid and set; he looked past both of us and into himself. I quickly called his attention back to the conversion of his countryman Paul. I asked him to consider carefully the question put to him on this occasion by the preacher: "And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized and wash away the sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

Again the flush of tears filled his eyes. There was a prolonged silence, the kind that is thick, pregnant with important reflections because of the specialness of the occasion. You could almost hear the heartbeat of the two concerned Gentiles, and the Jewish lad who was so intently contemplating his future. Could he? Dare he turn his back on his religious training at the synagogue? Could he again face his parents? Would there be expulsions because of this decision? How would such a decision affect his future? I am sure all these questions flashed before his mind as he stared straight through us.

Suddenly, with great courage and a determined look,

he said, "I am ready!"

I can hardly speak of the occasion without the feeling of joy rushing through my mind. It was a rare occasion. I have seen many people obey the gospel and I have rejoiced at each and every one of them. But there was a specialness to this one. The confession never had more meaning to me than it did now. Connie W. Adams, a Gentile preacher, a man dedicated to the cause of Christ, a preacher of righteousness, asked this young Jewish lad, "Bob, do you believe with all your heart that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?"

"Yes sir, I surely do!" came the answer.

And he baptized him into Jesus Christ.

As they dressed I could hear the conversation plainly as I stood and waited. "You realize," said the new brother in Christ, "that I will need you now more than ever?" Brother Adams' assurances were tender, kind, believable. As they came out we all embraced. I asked if I might read a passage.

I could almost hear the voice of another Jewish convert nearly 2,000 years ago, as I read, "For we are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." We prayed; as brethren in Christ are wont to do.

I left the building that night with greater faith in the gospel, with a new realization of the power that is in it, with a renewed zeal for its proclamation, and with a new brother in Christ, a Jewish man named Bob Darnell.

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One of the common characteristics of the so called "Latter Day Revelations" is their accommodating nature. Usually the recipient of such revelations is conveniently told to do the thing he or she desires to do or has already predetermined to do. It seems that it always works in such a way as to accommodate the receiver. Often, a person is seeking some kind of approval for his or her belief or action, thus either wittingly or unwittingly, conjuring up a revelation from God to give His stamp of approval on that which the person has already decided to do.

This is typical of those involved in various types of charismatic religions. Yet it certainly is not something new. Throughout the years there have been a certain number of people who could be persuaded to follow some man because they believed that God was giving "Latter Day Revelations" through that person. Who could forget Jim Jones and the Guyana tragedy! How could he get such a following? Simple, he convinced people that God was speaking through him. Think of the infamous "Rev. Moon". How could he acquire such a following of naive and idealistic young people? Again, the answer is the same. He convinced these people that God was speaking and working through him in some special way. Why is there such an attraction for the "PTL Club" and the "700 Club"? The answer is always the same. They have convinced a certain number of the populace that God is speaking through them.

In each of these cases, God supposedly told the individual to do the things the person wanted to do. Thus, Jim Bakker builds a resort in North Carolina; Oral Roberts builds a university in Tulsa; "Rev." Moon acquires a fortune in property in New York as well as other parts of the world; and Jim Jones travels to Guyana to create his Utopian society.

Let me assure you, this type of accommodating revelation is not new. The master of this type of manipulative activity would have to be Joseph Smith, the Mormon "prophet". Without a doubt, Joseph Smith had one of the most creative minds in all the world. Because of his clever audacity and brazenness, Smith would often find himself backed into a corner with seemingly no way to remedy his problems. His answer was always the same. A revelation from God justifying his conduct or requiring his followers to accommodate his need.

Most latter day revelators follow a similar pattern. They start out with rather ambiguous and conservative revelations. Smith's revelations were no different. The Book of Mormon, his first attempt at recording his revelations, has been described as "chloroform in written form". In this revelation, he claimed that God gave him the inside story on the origin of the early inhabitants of the American continent. But as we get into some of the later revelations, such as "Doctrine and Covenants", it becomes apparent that Smith became more and more glib and quick on the draw with his accommodative revelations. Permit me to give you a few colorful and perhaps even humorous examples of what I am talking about.

In September 1830, shortly after Joseph Smith started his church, his power was challenged by his associates, Oliver Cowdery, one of the witnesses of the golden plates, thought there should be a sharing of the apostolic gifts and that he, like Smith, should give revelations. How was Smith to treat this threat? Simple, Just get another revelation saying that he was the only one that should receive the revelations. That is exactly what he did. Thus we find recorded:

"Behold I say unto thee, Oliver. . .no one shall be appointed to receive commandments and revelations in this church, except my servant Joseph Smith Jun., for he receiveth them even as Moses. . . .But thou shalt not write by way of commandment, but by wisdom: And thou shalt not command him who is at thy head, and at the head of the church."
(Doctrine / Covenants, Sect 28).

Thus, if there had been any doubt as to who was the head of the Mormon church, Smith quickly removed the doubt along with the threat by this accommodative revelation.

Next, let us turn back the time to August, 1831. Smith, along with Sidney Rigdon and a few others, were traveling back to Kirkland, Ohio from "Far West" (Independence, Mo.) where he had dedicated the "Temple Lot". This is where the Mormon temple was to be built in that generation, according to Smith's prophecy, which never came to pass. They were making the trip from Independence to St. Louis by canoe on the Missouri River. For some unstated reason the canoe that Smith and Rigdon were riding in was overturned and the two of them almost drowned, whereupon Smith received the following revelation on the bank of the Missouri River:

"And now, concerning my servants, Sidney Rigdon, Joseph Smith Jun., and Oliver Cowdery, let them not come again upon the waters, save it be upon the canal, while journeying unto their homes; or in other words they shall not come upon the waters to journey, save upon the canal."
(Doctrine / Covenants, Section 61).

I believe I might also receive such a revelation if I found myself going down for the third time. Now I ask

you, is that not a revelation of convenience?

Now let's proceed a few years to August, 1936. At this point Smith was in deep financial trouble, which wasn't all that uncommon for him. In addition to the \$13,000 debt on his Kirkland Temple, there were other debts totaling over \$40,000 that were about due. About this time Smith read an article in the Painsville Telegraph concerning a vast treasure buried beneath an old house in Salem, Massachusetts. This is where Smith had spent his childhood days treasure hunting; so the article was intriguing to say the least. In his childlike simplistic approach to things, he evidently felt assured that he could find the treasure and thus solve all his financial woes. Realizing that it would be viewed by his followers as unseemly for him to be off on a treasure hunt, he made the trip under the pretense of a "missionary tour" back to Salem. When they arrived in Salem he was faced with the awkward task of explaining his true objectives to those who were traveling with him. How was he to solve this problem. Easy, just conjure up another revelation, which he quickly did.

"I, the Lord your God, am not displeased with your coming this journey, not withstanding your follies. I have much treasure in this city for you, for the benefit of Zion. . . . I will give this city into your hands, that you shall have power over it, insomuch that they shall not discover your secret parts; and its wealth pertaining to gold and silver shall be yours. Concern not yourself about your debts, for I will give you power to pay them. . . . And inquire diligently concerning the more ancient inhabitants and founders of this city. . . ." (Doctrine / Covenants, Sect. 111).

Smith searched for over a month to no avail. Finally, when the true nature of the trip was revealed, his followers shook their heads in disbelief. One Mormon writer later wrote, "We speak of these things with regret." Eventually, the incident was forgotten, but obviously on this occasion, his revelation of convenience got him into a lot of trouble.

None of this, however, slowed Smith down, and the revelations continued to pour out whenever they were needed. Such was the situation in July, 1843. Smith was now living much more dangerously. He and his followers had been run out of town after town, finally ending up in Nauvoo, Ill., where he built his "Mansion" as he had done in Kirkland. By this time, the practice of polygamy, or "Celestial Marriages", was well under way. The "Mansion" served to house many of these "lady" guests. Emma Smith, Joseph's real wife, was well aware of his indulgences, but never approved. As a matter of fact, on a number of occasions she became very hostile about the matter. Back in Kirkland, for example, in 1835 she furiously drove Fannie Algers (Joseph's first plural wife) from the house when Miss Algers was no longer able to conceal the consequences of her "Celestial" relation

with the prophet. On another occasion, Emma caught Joseph embracing Eliza Snow in the upstairs hall of the Nauvoo mansion. Emma went into a rage chasing Miss Snow down the hall. In her flight, Miss Snow fell down the stairs, seriously injuring herself. Emma pursued, chasing the frightened young lady out of the house in her night clothes.

Well, obviously something had to be done. Joseph was not about to give up his sensual night prowling, so what was he to do? Or need we ask? You guessed it, there was need for another revelation. But this revelation would have to be a real gem if he was to convince his skeptical wife. So this time he outdid himself with his revelation, even mentioning Emma by name. He started out laying the groundwork:

"Therefore, prepare thy heart to receive and obey the instruction which I am about to give unto you. . . For behold, I revealed unto you a new and an everlasting covenant; and if ye abide not that covenant, then are ye damned; for no one can reject this covenant and be permitted to enter into glory."

Smith goes on in the revelation to mention the plural wives of David and Solomon stating that "in nothing did they sin," Then the revelation goes on to mention Emma:

"And let my handmaid, Emma Smith, receive all those who have been given unto my servant Joseph, and who are virtuous and pure before me. . . And I command mine handmaid, Emma Smith, to abide and cleave unto my servant Joseph, and to none else. But if she will not abide this commandment she shall be destroyed, saith the Lord; for I am the Lord thy God, and will destroy her if she abide not in my law." (Doctrine / Covenants, Sect. 132).

Emma was not very happy with the revelation, but the Lord had spoken, so there wasn't anything for her to do but to try to bear up under a very disheartening situation. The revelation goes on but this is sufficient to make our point concerning revelations of convenience.

We cannot help but wonder how people can be so gullible as to be led away from the word of God by such foolishness. But such actions are common and the cause must either be ignorance of God's word or else a lack of faith in God' word. The New Testament claims to be a complete, sufficient and final revelation for man. Jude says that it has been once for all delivered unto the saints (Jude 3). Other passages to consider would be Jno. 14:26; Gal. 1:8,9 2 Tim.3:16,17; 2 Pet. 1:3,4; 2 Jno.9. Let us simply have enough faith to be obedient to the gospel that God has entrusted to us.

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THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST—TEACHING

Paul said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, the just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:16-17). There are several declarations that the Apostle makes in these verses.

(1) One is that **he is not ashamed of the gospel of Christ**. Many today could not make that statement because they are afraid and ashamed of Christ and of his gospel. Paul affirms that the gospel is God's power. These verses show that salvation is conditional upon man's part, that is, he must believe, which is used here to embrace all that is necessary to becoming a child of God. The universal plan of salvation is shown in these verses, because the gospel is God's power to save both the Jews and Gentiles.

(2) Since this gospel is God's power to save, it suggests that someone is lost. That one who is lost is man—you and I. When man is lost and One can save him, it is good news to him. Since man is lost in sin and Jesus Christ came to save him, it surely is good news to the human family that the gospel is its hope of salvation. The Scriptures call the gospel "glad tidings" or good news. In Rom. 10:15, the record says, "... how beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things"!

In verse twelve Paul said, "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him."; and then in the next verse he quoted a passage from Joel 2:28, when he said, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." He proceeds to show that one cannot call upon the name of the Lord in whom he does not believe, and that he cannot believe in him of whom he has not heard, and that one cannot hear without a preacher. A preacher cannot preach unless he is sent with "glad tidings" to preach. Paul's language is, "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all

obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, 'Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God (Rom. 10:14-17).

(3) The gospel which is good news or glad tidings to the sinner must be taught. Jeremiah prophesied the gospel was to be taught in language like this, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt: which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord; But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jer. 31:31-34). The Hebrew writer quotes this in Heb. 8:8-11.

In giving the great commission, Jesus commanded his disciples to teach his will unto people. In Mt. 28:18-20, Christ said, "... All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." This shows that Christ wanted his gospel taught unto men, and even after they had obeyed it, he wanted them taught some more. Christianity is a teaching process. No man, regardless of who he may be, gets to the point that he cannot learn more of the will of the Father. Mark records this incident in language which is found in Mark 16:15, "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."

(4) The gospel is not only God's power unto salvation, but **it is also the medium through which God draws men unto himself**. In John 6:44, Christ said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." To come to Christ, he said the Father must draw men unto him. But I raise the question, "How shall God draw men to Christ?" The answer is found in these words in the next verse, which is quoted from Isaiah 54:13, "It is written in the prophets, And they shall be taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." Please note, that they were to be **taught** of God. When they were **taught**, they would **hear**, then learn and then come unto Christ. The thing they would hear and learn was the thing which they were to be taught, which was the gospel—they were to be **"taught"** of God.

Teaching, hearing, and learning appeals unto the mind of man. They appeal unto that part of the mind known as the intellect.

Ours is a world in which many want to appeal to the lost with something besides or in addition to the simple gospel story of a crucified and risen Lord. Instead of making an appeal with the gospel of Jesus Christ which is able to save the soul (Jas. 1:21), lost humanity is being appealed unto with what is called the "social gospel". The emphasis is being put on the social; not the gospel of Christ.

The result of the social gospel is seen in the attempts that are being made to draw a large crowd with anything other than the gospel of Jesus Christ. Some try to draw a big crowd with ice cream suppers, hamburger suppers, big buildings, big named preachers, social position and distinction, celebrities, coffee and donuts in the "fellowship hall" which is nothing but a kitchen and banquet hall. These are but a few of the efforts that are being made to get people to attend the services of some so-called church claiming to belong to Christ. All have heard of efforts to get people on the church rolls with chicken suppers, ice tea and ice cream and cake. If an effort of this kind is successful, those who are gained are as dead as the chicken, cold as the ice cream, and weak as the tea. Furthermore, to draw people with these means also means that they will have to be kept with these means. If people are drawn to Christ with food and entertainment, they will have to be kept with food and entertainment. When the food and recreation stops, so will those drawn by such.

One can read in the New Testament of great multitudes that followed Christ. Of those in the multitudes very few followed Christ because of his teaching. Many were present to get a meal. Of some, Christ said, "... verily, verily, I say unto you, ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled" (Jno. 6:26). When the going became a little rough for some of them, the record says, "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him" (Jno. 6:66). It was upon this occasion that Jesus asked his disciples, "Will ye also go away" (Jno. 6:67)? Yes, the Master had those following only for the loaves and fishes.

All have heard the saying that "the way to a man's heart is through his stomach." Many young ladies have won their husbands by appealing to the stomach. While this may and will work to get husbands, **it will not work in the kingdom of God!**

Men are foolish indeed to attempt to win people and convert them to Christ with anything but the gospel of Christ. The material things of this earth are but for a time, but the word of God, which is the gospel of Christ will remain when the worlds are on fire and the elements melt with heat.

I challenge your attention to investigate the book of Acts and see how the church grew rapidly in the first century. The contributing factor was that the gospel was preached wherever the disciples of our Lord went. It is interesting to note that there is not the first case of conversion recorded in the New Testament in which the word of God was not at first preached unto those who were lost.

The gospel is God's power unto salvation. Man was not able to save even himself. He could not direct his own steps (Jer. 10:23). By his own wisdom, he did not even know God. Paul said, in I Cor. 1:21, "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."

Since man is not able to save himself; he did not even know God through his own knowledge, it would seem that man should be willing to let the Lord direct him in the salvation of his precious soul. Man's will and wisdom will not save his soul. The gospel of Christ is the salvation that Jesus Christ provided and it will save the souls of all the lost of earth if they will but turn unto the Lord and be willing to be saved upon the terms set forth by Christ in the gospel.

MY SERVANTS THE PROPHETS

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NEHEMIAH: RISE UP AND RESTORE The Place of Prayer in Spiritual Revival

In the last several articles we have seen Nehemiah as a leader in spiritual restoration. To make application of that principle we have examined several of our needs for spiritual restoration and revival in the kingdom today. We have catalogued at least 5 great needs in the church today: (1) zero growth, (2) fragmentation in parties, (3) materialism, (4) stability of the home and marriage relationship, and (5) the development of an inner relationship with the living Lord. It is this last need that we wish to examine in this article. Nehemiah 9 is a record of the prayer, from Verses 5-31, that the Levites had for the people. Needless to say, the heart of an inner relationship with the Lord is built on prayer. Yet, for the prayer life of a believer to be what it ought to be there must be something much deeper in the heart to produce a vital and living fellowship with the Father. This basis for a living relationship with God is also seen in this 9th Chapter. Now, let us begin our study together this month by defining what we mean and what the need is for this knowing of God.

The Need to Know God

The fact that we can be so very busy in the work of the Master and never know Him comes as a surprise to many. Yet, it is the truth, as we shall see. Our God is a people orientated being. He made man in His own image, and He walked with him in the garden in the cool of the evening to have fellowship with him. But man's sin broke that fellowship and man hid himself

from God. As Nehemiah points out in Verse 7, God sought out Abraham because God wanted fellowship with man. It was His desire to develop a nation from which we could enjoy a special and unique fellowship, as well as bring a Savior into the world so that all men might overcome the sin that severs the fellowship. Then, as Nehemiah continues the history, we see God in Moses building the Tabernacle. Why? So that God might better dwell with man and might have fellowship with him. Then, as the Kingdom of Solomon with its glory reached its zenith, God fellowshiped man in the Temple with its rites, ceremonies, pomp and splendor. Even that was still incomplete, so in the fullness of time, God did the ultimate to have fellowship with man. God came in human flesh and tabernacled with us. All of this was Heaven's gradual plan to bring man into fellowship with Him. Still, all through that period of time and up until today, it did seem as though the harder God tried to fellowship man, the less interest man had in his heart in knowing this God who was seeking him so cleverly. The heart of the Jew was always turned toward the doing of a ritual and never toward knowing his God. Yes, over and over the Jew was condemned for doing the right thing in religion. Why? Because his sin was that he never ever loved or sought to be near his God.

Maybe we can illustrate our plight in the church today with this crude example. My wife and children think I am the best thing since sliced bread. So, one day I come home from holding a gospel meeting and they do not even look up when I walk in the house. "Well, what's everybody doing," I ask? "Oh, we are writing a book about how great you are!" they all reply. Of course, I am somewhat amazed. But, I wait around for everyone to quit what they are working on and sit down and talk to me. Alas, they do not have time to talk to me about it. Finally, after several days have passed, they have finished their little book, and now I just know they are going to sit down with me and talk to me about what was going on while I was away. But now, they have all started to memorize it, and they are going around all the time quoting what they have written about me. Before too long they start making outlines and giving expository explanations of what certain paragraphs meant. At this point I have just about had it. I plead with them to stop what they are doing and sit down with me, and tell me what is going on in their lives. "Well, we can't do that now," they reply. "We have to start the door-knocking campaign." "What?", I ask. "Sure, we are going to start telling everyone in the neighborhood what a great fellow you are." Of course, before too long people are meeting in the living room and they are all talking about me, and more and more people are coming. My wife has not had time to put her arms around me in months and my children have not climbed up to sit on my lap for ages. Nobody even knows that I live in this house any more. Oh, they wave as they come and go. But, nobody cares that I want to spend some quiet time with them and share thoughts and our love for each other. Well, before too long, you

would probably not be surprised to hear me say, "I hate your stupid little book, and your going, and your telling, and I wish you would just forget it all."

Do you suppose that this might possibly have been the feeling of the Lord when he said in Amos 5:21: "I hate, I reject your festivals, Nor do I delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer up to me burnt offering and your grain offerings, I will not accept them; I will not even look at the peace offerings of your fatlings. Take away from me the noise of your songs; I will not even listen to the sound of your harps. **BUT LET JUSTICE ROLL DOWN LIKE WATERS AND RIGHTEOUSNESS LIKE AN EVER FLOWING STREAM.**" Their worship here was not an idolatrous worship, but nevertheless it was condemned. It was even the right kind of worship, but the people didn't really care anything about the object of their worship. It was only a self-righteous worthiness of performing their ritual. They were a generation of people that were so busy playing religion that they could never take time to know their God! Now, are not our own lives too often just like this? We are so busy with a combination of material events and ritualistic religious acts that we too never have time to sit down daily and read, study, meditate and pray with our God? Our Lord longs to be with people. Am I too busy getting up a Sunday morning sermon to spend an hour with the object of that sermon? I am going to teach a Bible class, but I do not have time to spend in preparation, and anyway, so what if I have no time to spend in prayer that I might know God?

We have substituted a multitude of things for knowing God. We have substituted doctrinal soundness for knowing God. We have substituted singing without a piano for knowing God. We have substituted personal evangelism for knowing God. We have substituted the Lord's Supper for knowing God. The Jews didn't care if they knew God or not; they just wanted to be sure they were doctrinally correct on the subject of the Sabbath day. A woman, according to the Talmud, could not pluck a hair from her head on the Sabbath because plucking hair was a lot like plucking wheat, and plucking wheat was reaping, and reaping was work which was forbidden on the Sabbath. Also, you could not move a footstool on the Sabbath because the woman might find a particle of dust under the footstool, and if she did, she might want to remove it. If she removed the dust, that was the same as digging in the dirt, and digging in the dirt was the same as sowing seed, and that was work which was forbidden on the Sabbath day. Do you see why the Lord would say, "I HATE YOUR SABBATHS! You do not care about me, the only thing you care about is legalistic approach to your ritual." Would it be possible that we could be guilty of the same thing? Would it be possible that our lack of prayer, which Nehemiah saw so necessary in spiritual revival of the people, has been unacceptable? Could it be that we too are so concerned about things that are right and good within themselves, that we have forgotten what it is like to spend time with the Lord in a quiet, meditative moment?

How much do we pray? Would we spend an hour each day in prayer? Maybe some do. Would we spend an hour every day reading our Bibles together with our families? Maybe some do. Would we have a place, a time, and a desire to give a part of every day to talking with the Lord about the large and small things of our lives? God desires us TO COME TO HIM! Worship is defined as "to kiss toward." Also, as a small child that climbs to the lap of its father or mother to share some quiet private moments of love and devotion. Do we think of our God as our Father?

Because we have spent so much time trying to get members of the church to attend services three times a week, we have by default fallen into the trap of defining a "faithful Christian" as "one who attends three times a week." But some do go farther, such as "he or she is one who attends and teaches a Bible class." Still others, even farther, such as "one who does personal work." But you see in all of our definitions we are leaving out the heart of man seeking to know and express his thanksgiving, praise, adoration and love to a God who is his Father. Yes, we all know what it is to talk with our earthly fathers about life when we are disturbed and perplexed. But until we can develop that yearning that Jesus exhibited in His life to talk to the Father daily about every aspect of his earthly life, we have not really defined "faithfulness." Isn't it strange that if we could develop such relationship with God, our assembling three times a week would take care of itself? No, not really. We can never direct the hand until we motivate the heart.

Our next article will discuss a necessary ingredient that makes this relationship possible.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT RELIGIOUS DEBATES?

**Tom Oglesby
Rt. 2 Box 98
Hohenwald, TN 38462**

It seems that in recent years religious debates have fallen out of fashion even among the people of God. In view of the commands to ". . .be ready always to give an answer..." and "...earnestly contend for the faith.." (1 Pet. 3:15; Jude 3) as well as the examples of Jesus, Paul, Stephen and many other disciples, this is a discouraging and unprofitable development. In this article, we will attempt to uncover some of the reasons people in general (and some brethren in particular) are opposed to religious debates. We encourage each reader to examine his own attitude while seeking to conform his mind to the word of God.

Some people oppose religious debates because of the mistaken notion that such violates the teaching of the Bible. They point to passages such as Romans 1:29 and 2 Corinthians 12:20 in which "debates" are condemned. However, a study of the context and the meaning of the Greek words translated "debate(s)" in the King James Version will reveal that honourable discussion and debate are not under consideration but rather strife motivated by contentious aims! A religious debate could degenerate into what these passages condemn, but it certainly shouldn't and doesn't have to. Far from condemning debating for truth, the Bible encourages and commands it!

Others oppose religious debates because of the abuses they have witnessed or heard about. It is true some preachers use debates to showcase their egos and are not so much interested in defending truth as in promoting self. It is also true that some debaters, **even those defending truth**, conduct themselves in an unworthy and un-Christian manner. Such ought not to be, and those who perpetrate such abuses will have to give an account of themselves to God. However, these abuses do not negate the fact that honourable debate engaged in by **gentlemen** is an excellent and scripturally approved way of seeking and determining truth! The church, elders, and the Bible are abused, but we do not dispense with them on that account.

Some people, including some brethren, oppose religious debates because their minds are closed, and they do not want to hear the "other side." They have made their choices and wish to hear nothing further, even further study from God's word. They are not like the noble Berean Jews who ". . .received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily. . ." (Acts 17:11) You may find this hard to believe, but there are probably those whose minds are so closed that they will not even read this article. Hearing truth and error side by side is an excellent way of learning truth and discerning error. Public debates provide such an opportunity.

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Connie W. Adams

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Some preaches and other religious leaders oppose debates because they recognize that their practice and teaching is unscriptural and cannot stand the test of public investigation. If one is unsure of the authority of his position, he may find it easier to ignore rather than debate those with whom he disagrees. Such insecurity is evident in a refusal to find some respectable forum for public discussion.

Christ and His disciples debated both privately and publicly (Mark 12:18-27; Acts 6:8-10; Acts 15:2-7; Acts 17:1-17; Et Cetera). In following their example, we must always be careful not to abuse public debate and to conduct ourselves in the proper manner whether as disputants or members of the audience.

Would you like to hear public discussions of religious controversies? Does the opportunity to hear both sides of an issue with open minds and open Bibles appeal to you? Let us never be so smugly satisfied that we do not continually and eagerly search for Truth. How about it, brethren and friends! Are we building walls to protect our little religious fiefdoms, or are we diligently seeking the truth? Think about it!

DISAGREEMENTS AMONG THE DISCIPLES

Frank Himmel

134 Janet Dr.
Destrehan, LA 70047



Unity is stressed in the Scriptures. Jesus prayed that all who believe might be one, that the world might come to believe (Jn. 17:20, 21). Paul exhorted the Corinthians "that you all agree, and there be no divisions among you, but you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10). In spite of these encouragements to singleness of mind, disagreements frequently occur. How shall we react? Perhaps a study of some New Testament cases of disagreements among the disciples will help.

Doctrinal Differences

The disciples differed on circumcision (Acts 15). This was among the first doctrinal disputes in the Lord's church. The question of whether Gentiles (the uncircumcised) were to be accepted as subjects for baptism had recently been settled. Now certain brethren contended that circumcision and adherence to the Law of Moses were essential to salvation. How was the issue to be settled?

It was determined to have a meeting of the elders of the church at Jerusalem (whence the advocates of circumcision came) and the apostles to look into the matter. After much discussion, Peter took the floor and related his experience at Cornelius' house (Acts 10). Since God had made no distinction between Jew

and Gentile with reference to their hearing the word of the gospel, giving them the Holy Spirit, and cleansing their hearts by faith, Peter could only infer that for the disciples to make such a distinction would be wrong. He further reminded those gathered of the practical impossibility of being justified by the law; that all who are saved are saved by grace. Paul and Barnabas followed, relating signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles. Finally James spoke, quoting direct statements of Scripture, reminding his audience that several of the prophets had foretold the days when the Gentiles would be named among God's people. He concluded, "Therefore it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles" (Acts 15:19).

How shall we settle doctrinal differences? Certainly not through conventions or councils. Some appeal to Acts 15 as their authority for such. But this meeting was not composed of delegates, nor does the Bible even hint that any kind of voting took place. The decision was made by inspiration, not election. Whatever doctrinal differences exist among the disciples today will only be settled when we go to the inspired word of God and accept what is written therein. Whether by direct statement, approved example, or necessary inference, we must have "book, chapter, and verse" for all that we practice and teach.

Have you noticed that no new revelation was needed to settle the question of circumcision? The decision was made on information already available. Truly God "has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness" (2 Pet. 1:3).

Judgmental Disagreements

Not long after the meeting in Acts 15 Paul suggested to Barnabas that they return and visit the brethren in the cities where they had preached on their first tour. Barnabas was desirous of taking John Mark along with them, but Paul refused because John Mark had earlier deserted them. "And there arose such a sharp disagreement that they separated from one another, and Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus" (Acts 15:39). No point of doctrine was involved here. It was a matter of judgment regarding how best to do the Lord's work.

Many such judgmental matters arise within a congregation: which preacher(s) to support, what means of teaching to employ, how best to divide and schedule Bible classes, what order to follow in the public assemblies. Unfortunately brethren often disagree on these things. Even in churches with elders, those overseers may not always be in accord as to what is best.

How shall we settle these disagreements? Here are a few suggestions. First, we must always give attention to any Biblical principles involved (e.g. *God's* view of the qualifications and work of the preacher, or the orderliness He expects in public worship). Then we need to consider the overall purpose or goal we are trying to accomplish. Consideration should also be given to what suits our particular situation: what we can afford, what skills we have to utilize, what special

needs we may have. The fact that a thing works well at one place does not guarantee its success at another. Listen carefully to the voice of experience. One of the fallacies of majority rule in the church is that it gives the novice the same voice (vote) as the most seasoned veteran in the Lord's army. And by all means, "Let the peace of Christ rule [act as arbiter] in your hearts" (Col. 3:15). Finally, we need to learn not to pout or rebel if we do not get our way.

Personal Disputes

"And an argument arose among them as to which of them might be the greatest" (Lk. 9:46). The disciples' disagreement was not over a doctrinal question, nor did it involve matters of judgment about the Lord's work. It was simply a personal dispute as to which of them would be the greatest in the kingdom. As is often the case in such disputes, all were in the wrong. Jesus pointed out that unless they were converted and became as little children, they would not even enter the kingdom, much less become great in it.

According to Matthew's account, Jesus went on to explain how His disciples are to settle personal disputes (Mt. 18:15-17). The first step is for the offended party to *privately* seek reconciliation. That rules out bitterly holding a grudge and waiting for the other fellow to make the first move, as well as slandering him at every opportunity. Elsewhere Jesus taught the one who had wronged his brother to seek reconciliation (Mt. 5:23, 24). If these efforts fail, one or two witnesses should be called in. If that fails, it is to be told to the church. If the one in the wrong still refuses to listen, he is to be withdrawn from.

Paul dealt with the same problem in 1 Cor. 6. He suggested selecting a wise brother who would be able to decide the case. In any case it would be better to suffer the wrong and be defrauded than to submit the matter to unbelievers for judgment.

May God help us to minimize our differences. When they do occur, let us resolve to go about settling them as God would have us do.

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WHAT IS A CHILD WORTH?

"In New York City, where I grew up, a child is worth \$25,000 a year in welfare payments to an institution. If that child gets adopted, he is worth exactly nothing to them. So New York has the lowest adoption rate in the country."

The man who said that is Glenn Hester. His book, *Child of Rage*, speaks passionately of what the foster care system in the United States did to one human being, according to a review in *The Tennessean*, Oct. 1, 1981. It's not a pretty picture.

Hester was born out of wedlock and by the time he was three, he had been in four orphanages in New York City. At eight, he became the victim of a homosexual rape by a staff member of one of these orphanages. By ten, he had gone through a couple more institutions and four foster homes.

"By the time I was a teenager," he relates, "I had seen and been the victim of so much violence, I became violent myself. At thirteen, I was put in a juvenile detention center. At seventeen, I was in a place for the criminally insane. The guards entertained themselves with violence. I was the youngest person there."

"Murder would go almost unpunished there. There was no such thing as justice. One time, I spent two months in solitary confinement in chains. I could go to the bathroom at 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. They fed me mush. I had dysentery. They would clean up the place only every two or three days."

Hester, whose survival is described as "something close to a miracle," (Though I deplore the practice of equating *the remarkable* with *the miraculous*, I'm almost moved to concur with that description.) now has a heating and air conditioning business and is using every opportunity to cry out against the foster care system.

"They are interested in that money," he states. "They aren't interested in the welfare of the child. He isn't going to get any emotional support. He isn't going to get any love. We are just raising children who will fill our prisons."

Whether you agree or disagree, that sentiment is from someone who's been there. Perhaps we should add our voice to his and demand that legislation be passed to change this abusive system.

What is a child worth?

"\$25,000 a year to an institution."

The ancient prayer of David may appropriately

grace our lips: "Thou hast seen it; for thou beholdest mischief and spite, to requite it with thy hand: the poor committeth himself unto thee; thou art the helper of the fatherless . . . Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: Thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear: To judge the fatherless and the opposed, that the man of the earth may no more oppress" (Psalm 10:14,17,18).

Things Most
Certainly
Believed

Julian R. Snell
4724 E. Manslick Road
Louisville, Kentucky 40219



A MODERN THORN

Does forgiveness of sin for the alien require faith, repentance and baptism? Seems to be an elementary question for the average member of the church as an affirmative answer is immediately given. In application, however, there is growing difficulty for some, the issue becomes quite thorny. The troublesome area involves divorce and remarriage. Must one involved in an unscriptural second marriage, one formed while the former mate is yet living and where divorce resulted from something other than sexual infidelity, dissolve that marriage in order to become a Christian? Is baptism valid in the absence of repentance and does repentance require dissolution of all unscriptural second marriages?

Repentance is a prerequisite to scriptural baptism and involves a quitting and turning away from sin. Such is worked by "godly sorrow" (2 Cor. 7:10) and produces a changed life moulded in the righteousness of Christ. As one repents there is a complete turn around affected with the penitent's will being submitted to the will of God in all things. One who is a gambler will have to quit, a prostitute will have to cease and desist in her pursuits and an adulterer will have to quit committing adultery. Now that is pretty simple, repentance demands this kind of change. Where these known activities are established as sin, quitting is essential to baptism, if such is to affect remission of sins.

Conceivably, one might be justifiably refused baptism. When one refuses to repent of admitted sin and persists in a sinful course there is no need to baptize. Let us suppose the local gambling czar presents himself to be baptized after learning the fundamentals of the gospel. In the course of discussion he informs he has no intention of curtailing these activities because this is his living and besides this, he is not convinced it

is sin anyway. Would there be any need to baptize him? An admitted prostitute wants to be baptized but declares her intention to continue making her living in this way. Any need to baptize her? A couple in an unscriptural marriage, a second with no scriptural ground for divorce and with the former mate yet living, admitting such is the case and refusing to end the relationship, maybe arguing they are not sure it is wrong if they continue to live as man and wife. Any need to baptize them? The issue is in reality repentance. Will baptism wash away sin which is unrepented? Scripturally, we must answer, no!

Does this conclusion require an investigation of these or other specifics, where they do not present themselves as obvious, as a prerequisite to scriptural baptism? No. It does, however, admit to certain actions and relationships which indicate obvious rebellion to God's will and unwillingness to conform. Where such is the attitude, God's plan is of no effect, it is nullified.

The consequences of unscriptural divorce and remarriage are multiple and far reaching. Problems from such are a constant experience in most congregations. These are not relieved nor resolved by compromise of truth, neither by ignoring or putting the matter on hold until a consensus of judgment is reached. The fact of different positions does not justify a maintaining of open minds or a refusal to accept plain and simple conclusions demanded by Scripture. If this has merit we would be undecided about baptism, instrumental music, and any number of other matters which continue mooted. Dedication to truth and safety within its unchallenged precincts necessitates conviction and a position. We need to quit grinding any personal axe, trying to justify what we have already decided, serving self in this matter, if such is the case, and accept the truth and the consequences of it. The Lord still said, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matt. 19:9). I believe just what he said, don't you?

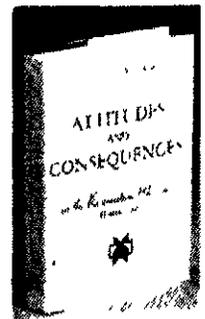
Attitudes and Consequences in the Restoration Movement

By Homer Hailey. The aim of this work has been to trace the development of two attitudes toward the Scripture authority in the Restoration Movement: that of the early spirits in the movement, and another which grew up within it, leading ultimately to division.

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To: all men attending the monthly business meetings. Subject: saving time when discussing various

proposed programs, ideas, projects, etc. or when asked to perform some task. Much of our time is taken up in expressions of disagreement to ideas brought forth. In order to save time, from now on instead of a lengthy verbalization of those objections, please simply refer to the number of said objection listed below (each man will be given such a list, with extra copies going to those most likely to wear them out). Example: Brother A says "I'd like to see us buy some

filmstrips" Brother B says "Number 1" and his point is made.

LIST OF OBJECTIONS FOR USE IN ALL BUSINESS MEETINGS (to be expanded as new objections are raised)

- #1—Jesus and/or the Apostles never used those things and they did all right without 'em.
- #2—We've never done it that way before.
- #3—We've always done it this way.
- #4—We tried to do it that way once before and it didn't work.
- #5—People/things are different nowadays-that won't work.
- #6—I just never have been any good at it.
- #7—I'll do anything else but don't ask me to
- #8—I don't do anything unless I'm told. I got chewed out once for steppin' out on my own.
- #9—I forgot all about that,
- #10—I just don't think that that is that important. #
- 11—Get somebody else this time. #12—I'm so busy I can't get to it right now. Maybe later.
- #13—I thought I told somebody else to do that.
- #14—Let's discuss it in detail at the next meeting—we're out of time. The above is free to use to the glory of God!

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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

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FIELD REPORTS

PAUL A. BRUCE, 502 Main Avenue, St. Maries, ID 83861. The church here in St. Maries, Idaho has now been in existence for ten years. This is the only church in this area that stands up for the truth and opposes the doctrine of institutionalism. Presently we have 16 members with attendance in the twenties. We have several visitors coming to our services and have many Bible studies going on during the week. The brethren here have a good attitude and are growing spiritually. However, I have had to inform the brethren here that unless I receive more support in the near future that, because of my financial obligations to my family, I will be forced to move. When we discussed the situation of the needed support with the congregation, they all voiced their hopes that we would be able to remain. Several of the members are now writing letters and calling churches in other parts of the country to see if they could help us. They expressed their concern that brethren elsewhere might not want to or be able to help, and they are afraid that once again they will be without a preacher. To some of you who have heard many preachers, you may be thinking that they can get someone else in a few weeks. This is not the case here, where they have had only one other preacher before me. He only remained here for one year. Now they face being alone again. It's discouraging, and makes them feel that they might not be important enough to merit help. I have grown to love these people as my own family. This work **MUST** go on, but it will only if you can help. My family and I have sold almost everything we had to be able to come here. The members have given us food, money, and clothing to help us. My family of six has lived on \$500 to \$700 per month for the last several months. But the Lord has helped us through the toughest months. Can you possibly help us? For more information you may call: Barney Cargile of Post Falls, ID at (208) 773-9734, or Samuel Dawson

of Amarillo, TX at (806) 352-2809, or Henry Kirkland of Napa, CA at (707) 253-0215. Or you may call me at (208) 245-2698. For your careful consideration, I thank you.

JIMMY TUTEN, 7911 Country Dr., Mobile, AL 36609. The first of April finds the work at Tillman's Corner moving into full swing. More involvement on the part of the brethren in the work is evident. We have completed some work on the building and on the land. We are at peace. During the first three months of 1982 we baptized three and had three restored. Also six identified with us, Come visit us! Phone (206) 666-5769.

KEITH WARD, Rt. 2, Box 736, Lake Butler, FL 32054. On January 1, 1982, I began work with the Danville church near Lake Butler, FL. Danville is two years old, young in membership, but positive in outlook. We have begun a weekly article in a local paper, put a tract rack in the laundromat, begun door knocking, and improved our class teaching. As a result, we have had some visitors and a greater interest by our own members. I am interested in hearing about some inexpensive methods of getting the gospel out to people. At this time I am still short \$400 a month in support. If you can help, please contact me.

LOREN T. STEPHENS, 325 Kessler Blvd., Seymour, IN 47274. After five and a half years with the church here in Seymour, I will be moving to work with the West Main St. congregation in Easley, SC the first week in June, 1982. The work here has been encouraging and profitable spiritually. During the last five years there have been 18 souls baptized, 45 confessions of sin, and 34 to place membership. There was an overall increase in membership from 56 to 75, with a similar increase in contribution. The congregation now has

elders and deacons, and is for the most part peaceful and working for the continual growth of this local church. The elders have asked Bro. Jerry Sayre, of Johnson City, TN to come and work with them here. Should you be traveling between Indianapolis and Louisville please stop in and worship. We are located on the east side of I-65 at U.S. 50. Our services are at 9:30 a.m. and 6 p.m. on Sundays and 7:30 p.m. on Wednesdays.

TROY ADAMS, P.O. Box 506, Ellsworth, ME 04605. I have been back in Maine since last November and am still in need of additional support. It has been a tough winter for my family of seven (our heating bill in January was \$350). I presently am in need of \$1,500 per month. If you cannot help on a continual bases, please consider helping on a temporary basis. For references please contact: Ralph Smart, 516 Union St., Bangor, ME 04401; The elders of the Temple Terrace church of Christ, 501 Bullard Pkw., Temple Terrace, FL 33617; The elders of the Hillview church of Christ, 7550 Charlotte Rd., Nashville, TN 37209; The elders of the Highland church of Christ, 1226 Highland Blvd., San Antonio, TX 78210; of the elders of the Annandale church of Christ, 4709 Ravenworth Rd., Annandale, VA 22003. You may phone me at (207) 667-9661.

KENNETH E. THOMAS, 401 24th St. W., Bradenton, FL 33505. The Manatee County church of Christ has had a weekly radio program for several years now. We have a fifteen minute taped sermon followed by a live call-in portion of 45 minutes. Often we wonder how much good a radio program is accomplishing since we rarely see the attendance increase by any large amount.

Some months ago following a series on liberalism, I received a call from the preacher for a congregation of our black brethren in Sarasota, FL, inquiring if I would be willing to preach in a gospel meeting there for a week, I replied that I would be happy to if I could "declare the whole council of God." The preacher assured me that he had talked it over with the elders and they wanted to be as he stated it, "A model New Testament church." The preacher's name is J.W. Green.

Knowing a little about their background in "liberalism" and their association with others of the more liberal congregations in the area, I was shocked and happy to know that the radio program had made them re-evaluate their position and to make the decision to turn back from any and all unscriptural activities. I pulled no punches during the week, I preached on the organization and work of the church, the difference between individual and collective responsibilities, fellowship, marriage, divorce and remarriage, masonry and some first principle lessons. Several from the "liberal" church at South Trail in Sarasota came several evenings until the preacher from South Trail came one evening. He and I had a mini debate at the back door where he sought to justify the "sponsoring eldership" with the foolish statement about "no authority for fertilizer on the preacher's grass either but we do it anyway" argument. He had been called on to lead prayer that evening. The next night I told them about our discussion at the back door of the building and showed them why they should not ask him to participate in their services as such is bidding God-speed to his error. I fully expected to be called during the meeting and asked not to return to finish out the week. I even stated such and then commended them for their willingness to accept the rebuke and study every action in the light of truth.

Two firsts took place that week. (1) I was the first white man to preach a meeting there, and (2) this was their first meeting to run through a Saturday night. There was no doubt another first as members of the Manatee County church as well as members from Palmetto, Osprey and Sarasota (where Herbert Fraser now preaches) turned out to support the meeting. They asked the preacher from Palmetto, Ken Weliever, to speak up the last evening of the meeting if he wished. He did and admonished them to continue to seek truth and commended them for having me in the meeting.

Recently, the Manatee County church had a black brother for a meeting—F.O. White. While he was here he visited Bro. Green. Bro. Green talked of the pressure the "liberals" were putting on him, but affirmed that he was going to stand for the truth to put it in his words, "If I have to eat dirt." I asked if they had discontinued

having social function in the building annex. He showed me a letter signed by the elders and himself to the effect that this was no longer to be a part of their functions.

We believe they intend to be a faithful congregation and are seeking to be scriptural in all their activities. They continue to listen to our radio program and have stated their desire for me to preach in another meeting. Yes, radio programs do good! We have seen other examples of the good the program is doing. There are still good and honest hearts out there who will respond to the truth of Christ if only we will preach it plainly, without compromise and in love.

The Manatee County church has experienced good growth and has an active program of work. We are in the first phase of our building program. Potential for future growth looks good! Anyone visiting in the area is invited to come and worship with us.

FOREIGN WORKS

CARLOS CAPELLI, Casilla #83, 1665 Jose' C. Paz, Buenos Aires, Argentina. I was invited to preach a gospel meeting in March in Valdivia, south of Chile. The church there is well with 25 members who are zealous for the Lord's work. I had to provide the expenses for that meeting from my own pocket. Following the meeting we visited the Efrain Perez family in Vina del Mar. We had not seen them for seven years. Also I visited the Santiago church along with the congregation in Puente Alto. Back in Argentina at Mendoza there was a meeting with Bro. Partain. The attendance was around 30 each night. Three were baptized. The congregation here at Jose' C. Paz continues to do well and is at peace. The Hueytown, AL church has notified me that they will have to discontinue their \$200 monthly support in May. So I will need to seek additional help for my support. May God bless each of you.

CHARLES HOUSE, P.O. Box 1031, Douglas, AZ 85607. We are happy to report that one was baptized in March at the congregation at Agua Prieta, Sonora, Mexico. Membership at Agua Prieta is 41 with Sunday attendance running around 100. Many visitors are coming to the services.

PREACHERS NEEDED

COOKEVILLE, TN—The Jere Whitson Rd. church is looking for a full-time preacher to begin working with them around August 1, 1982. House and support are available. Anyone interested may write the church at 329 Jere Whitson, Cookeville, TN 38501. Or call (615) 823-2258 or 528-5382.

RICHLAND, WA—The Tri-City church of Christ in Richland, WA needs a preacher. We are a new congregation and can furnish partial support. Contact Sterling Harper at (509) 547-8027 or Joe Bricker at 588-3307.

PREACHERS AVAILABLE

STAN WENCK, 2700 W. 96th PL, Evergreen Park, IL 60642. I have part-time experience and am interested in getting into full-time work. I am 36 years old. Phone (312) 422-8746 after 5 p.m.

DAVID L. WALDRON, 5643 Newberry St., Wayne, MI 48184. After working with the small church in Clare, Michigan for eight years, I came to work with the Palmer Rd. congregation in Westland, Michigan last November as a "fill-in" until Bro. B.G. Echols could move up from Texas this summer. As of July I will be able to work elsewhere. I have been in full-time work for over 11 years, and part-time work 12 years prior to that. I have worked mainly with small congregations where outside support was necessary, but would be glad to talk with any church in need of a preacher. I am able to provide a portion of my support by means of Navy retirement. Phone me at (313) 326-0690.

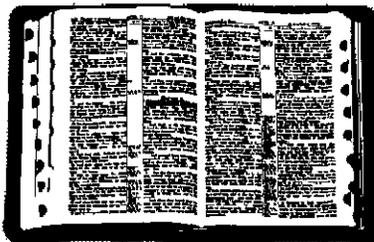
IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

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RESTORATIONS	162

(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)

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 XXIII

JULY, 1982

NUMBER 7

THE CROSSROADS

"PRAYER PARTNERS"

P. J. Casebolt
313 S. 4th Ave.
Paden City, WV 26159

The practice of having "prayer partners" (a junior partner, and a senior partner), as advocated by the Crossroads Church of Christ in Gainesville, Florida, and as implemented into the curriculum of satellite groups throughout the country, is based on a perversion of Jas. 5:16. The practice has caused me to take a second look at a sermon which I have been preaching for some thirty years. I used to call the sermon "One Toward Another", but for the purpose of this article, only the title has been changed, and that not to protect the innocent, but to spotlight the guilty.

The philosophy in the "prayer partner" concept is for a new convert to be paired off with a senior "partner", and have the "junior" partner confess his (or her), sins and shortcomings to the senior confessor. Aside from the fact that such a practice is based on a blatant perversion of Jas. 5:16, I would encourage no one to be unequally yoked in such an arrangement. I would insist on such a partnership being equal—"you tell me your dreams (in this case, sins), and I'll tell you mine."

We could even use the following verses as a reference back to Elijah and Elisha, the older and younger prophets of 2 Kings 2, but we would find no such "prayer partner" arrangement as is inherent in the prayer partner concept of modern theology. The same could be said of other "partnership" examples found in the Bible, such as Paul and Timothy.

If the admonition of James to "confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another" requires (or even permits), such an arrangement as the modern

prayer partner concept, then just try to imagine the implications we face when making the same application to similar passages of Scripture. Maybe those who would pervert one passage of Scripture are not too concerned about what they would do with any other passage, but I believe there are still those among us who are not only concerned about a statement of truth in context, but are also concerned from the standpoint of consistency. Let us examine a few parallel passages which employ the "one another" concept.

We are to "have love one to another" (Jno. 13:35). Does this imply that we are to have "love partners" in order to carry out this divine injunction? We are to "consider one another to provoke unto love and good works" (Heb. 10:24). Does this sanction a "consideration partner" (junior and senior, of course), in order to provoke one another to love and good works? How about an "assembling partner" arrangement for Heb. 10:25? Did they have such a system in Old Testament times when "they that feared the Lord spake oft one to another" (Mal. 3:16)? Or, would these passages allow "exhorting partners" as we endeavour to "exhort one another"?

Now that we are beginning to get the hang of this "partner" business, it won't take us long to find "teaching and admonishing" partners in Col. 3:16, "comforting partners" in 1 Thes. 4:18, "hospitality partners" in 1 Pet. 4:9, "forgiving partners" in Eph. 4:32, "fellowship partners" (to go with our "fellowship halls") in 1 Jno. 1:7, "burden-bearing partners" in Gal. 6:2, and "care partners" in 1 Cor. 12:25!

We have by no means exhausted the possibilities of forming various partnerships based upon the perversion of Jas. 5:16, but these are sufficient to keep even our more liberal brethren busy for a few years, and discourage those who would not intentionally wrest a passage of Scripture to justify anything. And, I have no intention of backing off in my efforts to persuade people that we do have a wonderful relationship in the family of God as we do together those things which are designed for our mutual good. I would also advise other brethren not to become "gun shy" when quoting the above mentioned passages, and deprive themselves of the fellowship they enjoy one with

another, just because some among us are placing an unscriptural emphasis on the "one to another" phrase found in Jas. 5:16.

The following poem, which I wrote in 1961, expresses my sentiments toward my fellow "partners" in Christ, and I don't expect another twenty years to change that sentiment.

TOGETHER, WITH ONE ANOTHER

Let us "consider one another", "care for one another," too;

Hebrews ten and twenty-four, part of this tells us to do.

First Corinthians, Chapter Twelve, verse twenty-five the rest imparts;

Peter says, "Love one another", this we'd do with all our hearts.

"Bear ye one another's burdens", from Galatians we derive,

Assemble, we, ourselves together (Hebrews ten, verse twenty-five).

Exhortation for our brother, in this verse, our duty's seen;

Hospitality, toward each other (Romans twelve, and verse thirteen).

"Pray for one another", too (James Chapter Five, and verse sixteen),

Striving always all together, from Philippians this we glean.

Now, if we do the things here stated (James this knowledge also gave),

We'll have cause to be elated, for our brother we may save.

Some day, if faithful, we will be, caught up together in the sky;

(From Thessalonians this we see), there to meet the Lord on high.

Then heirs together we shall be, as here together we have been;

With Romans eight this will agree, so let us strive the prize to win.

P. J. Casebolt



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Editorial

Connie W. Adams

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THE PUCKETT MATERIAL ON THE HOLY SPIRIT

With this issue we present the first of three lengthy articles by the late, lamented, Franklin T. Puckett on the subject of the Holy Spirit. We thought it good also to include in this issue a tribute to Franklin T. Puckett written by Hoyt H. Houchen. I consider my acquaintance with brother Puckett to have been one of the richest, most rewarding experiences of my life. He left us at the age of 66, long before we were ready to give him up. He left an example for other gospel preachers worthy of emulation.

He was a self-made scholar. His study was both deep and wide. His preparation, on whatever subject, was meticulous. He sought to know his subject fully and left no stone unturned when it came to refuting error. He stopped every leak, looked at every possible objection. He was eminently fair in his treatment of those who opposed him. His knowledge of the Hebrew and Greek text was extensive. His memory was remarkable and we have heard him quote whole chapters without ever opening his Bible. If you read along, you would find every word in place. We point out these things in case some of the younger men who did not have the pleasure and profit of knowing him, should think that his material was carelessly thrown together. While he was just a man, he was a godly, scholarly man who did his work well. What he said on any subject was worthy of serious consideration.

The subject of the Holy Spirit has always been difficult. Deity is infinite and we are finite. Historically, brethren for the most part have stood together in opposition to denominational dogma which demanded a mystical concept of the Holy Spirit and His work in the conviction and conversion of sinners. We have stood as one against the Pentecostal-type sects with their purported tongue speaking and claims of miraculous healing. But brethren have not always agreed on the subject of how the Spirit indwells the Christian.

For many years, I did not agree with the position occupied by Franklin T. Puckett on the subject of the indwelling. We discussed it many times, including the last few times we saw each other. I had always opposed the denominational concept of direct operation of the Spirit in conviction and conversion and the Pentecostal claims of miraculous gifts today. I have had three public debates with denominational preachers dealing with this subject and if the brethren were

dissatisfied with my work, they did not indicate it. But, in common with a number of men past and present, it was my conviction that the Spirit somehow indwelt the Christian separate and apart from the agency of the word. The last time I ever saw Franklin T. Puckett was about three months before he died. We had lunch together and once again the subject of the Holy Spirit and his work in the Christian came up. He said some things on that occasion which opened doors of understanding for me which I had not considered before and that resulted in a change of view once I had time to sort it out.

The material from him in this and the next two issues of *SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES* was presented by him in the Thayer Street Lectures in Akron, Ohio about a year and a half before he died. The first two articles were so thoroughly outlined, often with complete sentences, that it was not hard to put them in manuscript form. The third article was taken word for word from a tape recording. We will delete in that article some rather extensive personal remarks he made at the beginning of the speech. This we will have to do in the interest of space. We are indebted to Thomas G. O'Neal of Bessemer, Alabama for the suggestion that this material be printed in the paper and for much of the work in getting it ready. We also wish to thank Cecil Norman of Birmingham, Alabama for helping to decipher this material and for typing the manuscripts. Her work, as usual, has been expertly done.

The *GUARDIAN OF TRUTH* has published in booklet form the outlines of these three speeches and they may be ordered from them or from Religious Supply Center. In view of the recent interest among brethren in this subject, evidenced by rather extensive writing by some on the subject and by one written debate on the indwelling of the Spirit, it is our persuasion that this material not only ought to be preserved, but that it constitutes a worthy addition to our source materials in probing into the matter. The nature, person and work of the Holy Spirit is thoroughly considered and we ask the readers to study the material carefully. Franklin T. Puckett would have been the first to urge that nothing be accepted as truth just because he said it, but that each individual should weigh the subject in the light of the living oracles.

GOSPEL MEETINGS

Thus far (through the month of May) this year we have been privileged to preach the gospel in nine meetings. All of these meetings have been well attended. We have preached to a number who were not Christians. There have been fifteen to obey the Lord in these meetings with many doors opened for further study after the meetings ended. We have found some good brethren who are hard at work for the Lord. Every place is unique as to opportunities, attitudes and local problems.

In January we presented a series of lessons on *Dangers Facing the Church*. This was at Madison, Indiana where Gary Sandusky continues to do an excellent work. In March we worked with Frank Himmel

and the Metairie, Louisiana church. They have some talented members and are working together harmoniously. Some brethren came from great distances to support the effort and a good number of non-members attended. Also in March, we were privileged to work again with the strong and growing church at Middlebourne, West Virginia where Ronny Milliner preaches. There are four excellent elders who shepherd this flock. They have growing pains and have plans to erect a new and larger meeting house. I spoke 14 times that week.

In April I worked again at Gulfport, Mississippi where Glenn Melton is laboring diligently. While the church there is small, there is the most optimistic attitude there we have seen in that place. Telephone canvassing has produced a number of students for a Bible correspondence course and many home studies have grown out of that. Members worked hard and brought a number of acquaintances to the meeting.

Also in April I preached in a meeting at Shepherdsville, Kentucky, just five miles from our home at Brooks. Rick Christian is the energetic preacher. He ably directed the singing in the meeting. A good number of community people, including some business acquaintances, attended. This church is served by two elders. Also in April it was a pleasure to work with the fine church at Olney, Illinois in the southeastern part of the state. They have about 160 in attendance with four able elders and with Roger Hillis, who resigned his work as a Pharmacist, serving as a local preacher. Several men in that congregation are preachers of ability and do much good work in the surrounding area. I spoke 14 times that week, also.

In May we were with the Wildercroft church in Riverdale, Maryland, in the Washington, D.C. area. Our son, Wilson Adams, had just moved there to work as local preacher. They are served by three elders who are obviously men of knowledge and competence. Their attendance runs about 110 on Sunday mornings. They are blessed with excellent facilities for future growth and with a number of talented members. Again, in May it was my pleasure, along with Gene Frost, to present four lessons during the week of the Rader-Massey debate at Manslick Road in Louisville, Kentucky. Gene Frost presented four excellent speeches on Humanism and I was asked to present four lessons on Premillennialism. The debate was well attended, as were the morning sessions. Donnie V. Rader, local preacher at Manslick Road, had prepared well for the debate and ably presented and defended truth. The debate was a good one with perfect order prevailing. My last meeting in May was at Christian Chapel at Kettle, Kentucky. This is located a few miles south of Burkesville, Kentucky and about a mile from Dale Hollow Lake. Raymond Castillo left his advertising business to enter his first full-time work. He is capable and hard working. Three elders oversee this flock. This is the congregation with which the late Ross O. Spears was working at the time of his death. On Friday night of the meeting a severe thunder storm knocked out the lights just before service was to begin. We conducted

the whole service with only the light of two candles and a flash light. The lights came back on during the closing announcements.

The gospel is still the power of God to save the sinner and to build up the saint and I am thankful for every open door to preach it. We must work while it is day for the night cometh when we shall work no more.

Death Claims Two Excellent Preachers

CONWAY SKINNER

After a long struggle with cancer, Conway Skinner, beloved Florida preacher, passed from this life on June 2. Harry Pickup, Jr. spoke words of comfort and encouragement at the services in Jacksonville on June 5.

Though most of his work was done in the southeast (South Carolina, Georgia and Florida), brother Skinner touched the lives of many people for good. He left us while only in his early 50's. We mourn the loss and express our deepest sympathy to his good wife and children. A more extended notice written by James R. Cope will appear in next month's paper.

WILLIAM B. MURRELL

Our beloved "Billy" Murrell passed away while yet in his mid-50's. He had suffered with heart disease for some years but was thought to be recovering and had just returned to fulltime work with the Marrtown Rd. church in Parkersburg, West Virginia. His work in Indiana, Illinois, Alabama, England and West Virginia as well as other places, was faithfully and energetically performed. Funeral services were conducted in Montgomery, Alabama on June 11 by Bob F. Owen. He leaves behind two sons: Bill (who teaches at Athens Bible School) and Steve (who preaches at Steele, Missouri) and his beloved Thelma. Our hearts ache with these who grieve, though we sorrow not as others who have no hope.

We thank God for the faithful lives of these good men. Let us all work while it is day.

The Ranks of gospel preachers are being thinned. We must do more to equip young men to take up the torch so ably borne by those who have gone before. Let us watch and be sober.

—Editor

FRANKLIN T. PUCKETT—

WHAT HE LEFT US

Hoyt H. Houchen

1838 S. Fairplay St.
Aurora, Colorado 80012



Our beloved friend and brother in Christ, Franklin T. Puckett departed this life on January 16, 1975. Although seven years have passed since his departure from this world, those of us who knew him, loved him and respected him are still mindful of him. His body which lies in the silent grave had housed our dear brother in the Lord for sixty-six years. But this is not all of Franklin Puckett that remains upon this earth.

Franklin T. Puckett was a personal friend of our family, and our lives have been enriched by having known him. Sentiment makes it difficult to write about a true friend. He was kind, gentle, yet unwavering in his convictions.

Never shall we forget our earliest association with this great man. In 1953 I was preaching for the Central church in Amarillo, Texas. We invited brother Puckett to preach for us in a meeting. The church there was in a crisis over the issues of the sponsoring church arrangement and church supported benevolent institutions. Brother Puckett did his usual splendid job of preaching, and he devoted one night during the meeting to a study of the "issues." At the close of that particular service, a brother who had become most hostile because of what brother Puckett had preached, vented his contempt in the foyer by abusing brother Puckett in a loud and boisterous manner. Brother Puckett, the gentleman and Christian that he was, silently placed his finger over his own lips as a signal to the vociferous brother to hold his voice down. During all of the brother's ravings and rantings, brother Puckett was kind and smiling. This was an incident which exemplified his courteous demeanor and coolness of temperament under such agitating circumstances.

I shall never forget our farewell at the train depot on the last night of that meeting. Our firm hand shake, our tear-filled eyes and his words of encouragement stand out in my memory. We both knew that my time at Central was short. Across the nation the issues had reached a serious crisis. What a sad occasion it was as he boarded the train on that lonely night. As I watched the train pull slowly away I thanked God for such a man. Even after twenty-nine years, I choke with emotion as I recall that sad farewell. A few days later I was asked by three of the elders who were for the things I was opposing to leave. Two others elders were conservative and did not go along with their decision. Although brother Puckett's sermon was the climax of

what had already been developing, in the years that followed we would joke about him getting me "fired." In January of 1975 when the news of his death reached us, my wife and I sat for a few moments weeping together, sharing his memory.

Franklin Puckett left more than a silenced tongue in the grave. He left a lot of sunshine and happiness. He had a good sense of humor. When we would meet on different occasions he never failed to mention some humorous incidents concerning our boys when they were small children.

He left us the memory of a pure life, a noble character, and a true friend. He has left us the radiating influence of a Christian and the work of a faithful gospel preacher. Where this man lived and worked, souls have been saved and churches have been made stronger. He was a friend of young people and endeared himself to many of them across the country. All who knew him, young and old alike, cherish his memory. Yes, he has left us far more than a cold motionless body in a quiet cemetery.

Seven years have passed and Franklin Puckett is missed. The writing of this short tribute expresses some appreciation of brother Puckett's life but it also reminds us that the influence and work of a great character will continue to live long after he has departed. The examples of those who have gone before us should instill within us a greater determination to please our Heavenly Father as we continue our march toward "Zion, the beautiful city of God."

The spirit of Franklin T. Puckett has departed to be with God but he has left far more upon this earth than a decaying body. He has left a memory that will long continue in the hearts of us who knew and loved him.

Foy E. Wallace Jr. *Publications*

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SPECIAL FEATURE

THE HOLY SPIRIT

by
Franklin T. Puckett

Introduction—The Person of the Spirit

Many different theories are taught concerning the Being and functions of the Holy Spirit. Until recently little has been said on the subject within our own ranks, leaving us with hazy, ill-defined ideas concerning the Spirit and His work. Now, we find ourselves rather suddenly drawn into all kinds of controversy over matters once considered fully understood among us. If anyone had suggested a few years ago that churches of Christ would be troubled by the alleged mystical influences, emotional experiences, inexplicable powers, and miraculous operations that have always characterized Calvinistically oriented sects, I would not have believed it.

Some are claiming and defending certain mystical operations of the Holy Spirit in the Christian which are separate from and in addition to that which He accomplishes through His teaching in the gospel. Consequently, we have been caught unprepared for the barrage of claims made and arguments presented in affirming these operations, and must now re-examine our concepts in the light of Biblical teaching. It is fitting, therefore, that we study this subject carefully and prayerfully.

I want to thank the elders of Thayer Street church for arranging this program and for inviting me to speak. In this first lecture, I want to discuss the Holy Spirit as a divine Person. This will necessitate some investigation of the godhead.

The Godhead

The term "godhead" is found three times in the King James version (Acts 17:29; Romans 1:20; Col. 2:9). In Romans 1:20, the term is rendered "divinity" in the American Standard version. While three different Greek word forms are used in these passages, all of them are derivations of *theos*, and denote "Deity, divinity, the divine nature, the divine majesty, that which pertains to God, godhead." They define the quality or character of the essence, substance, or being of one who is God. The godhead (or godhood), therefore, is made up of such Beings as are of divine nature and possess divine majesty. Illustrate: Manhood, childhood, etc.

The term "God" is frequently used in the general sense of the godhead or deity. Things attributed to God are often attributions made unto deity rather than to some particular personality. The Scriptures reveal a plurality of beings in the godhead (Gen. 1:1). "Elohim" is plural in form. Plural meaning: "The gods." Singular meaning: "The deity." (Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon).

The plurality of deity is seen in the pronouns of Genesis 1:26.

The divine personalities constituting this plurality are Jehovah (The Father), Jesus Christ (The Word-Son), and the Holy Spirit (Mt. 3:16, 17; 28:19; Romans 15:30; II Cor. 13:14). Each of these individual Beings possess all the qualities and attributes of divinity, and each is individually called God (I Cor. 8:6; Titus 2:13; Acts 5:3, 4). The Father is not the Son, and the Son is not the Father, and neither the Father nor the Son is the Holy Spirit. Each is a separate, distinct Being possessing all the qualities of deity. All of these divine Beings together constitute the one God, or the godhead. As there is one man (humanity, or mankind), even so there is one God (divinity, or godkind); and as there are individual beings in that one humanity, so there are individual Beings in that one divinity. The Holy Spirit is one of these divine Beings.

The Identity of the Holy Spirit

(1) The Holy Spirit is not:

Some mystical, indefinite, undefinable, ethereal-like substance that enshrouds and permeates the universe like a fog or the atmosphere.

A mere "influence," or a vague, impersonal power released in response to human needs.

The mind, temper, or disposition of God or Christ.

The Bible, or the New Testament, or the written word of God.

The Holy Spirit revealed the Bible. The Holy Spirit is the Revelator; the Bible is the Revelation. The Bible is the product of the Spirit, but it is not the Spirit.

(2) The Holy Spirit is:

God (Cf. Acts 5:3 with Acts 5:4; Mt. 12:28 with Luke 11:20). Eternal (Hebrews 9:14). Omnipresent (Psalm 139:7-10; I Cor. 6:19). Omniscient (I Cor. 2:10,11; John 16,13,14). He possesses divine power. He creates (Gen. 1:2; Job 26:13; Psalm 104:30). He works miracles (Mt. 12:28; I Cor. 12:8-11). He inspires prophets (I Peter 1:9-12; II Peter 1:19-21). He teaches men (John 14:26; I Cor. 2:13). He possesses divine attributes of power, holiness, grace, goodness, knowledge, will, judgment, and truth (Romans 15:13; Hebrews 10:28; Neh. 9:20; I Cor. 2:9-11; 12:11; Acts 15:28; John 14:16, 17; 16:13). These attributes are not the Being of the Holy Spirit, but the Being possesses the attributes and performs the actions which are affirmed of Him.

We must clearly discern this distinction between the attributes of the Holy Spirit and the **Being** of the Holy Spirit. Lying back of all attributes is the one to whom they belong. We have to think of the Holy Spirit as existing before we can attribute to Him modes of activity and qualities of character. He to whom these qualities and powers are attributed must of necessity be a divine Person, for such can only be attributed to one possessing both divinity and personality.

The Person of the Holy Spirit

Webster defines person as: "A being characterized by conscious apprehension, rationality, and a moral

sense." The Holy Spirit is an individual character, and possesses conscious apprehension, rationality, and a moral sense; therefore, the Holy Spirit is a person. Actions are attributed to the Holy Spirit which can only be performed by a person. He hears (John 16:13). He shows (John 16:13-15). He speaks (I Tim. 4:1). He bears witness (John 15:26; Romans 8:16, 17). He gives commandments (Acts 13:2; 16:6). He delivers law (Romans 8:1, 2). He can be grieved (Eph. 4:30). He can be vexed (Isaiah 63:10). He gives life (Gal. 6:8). He glorifies (John 16:14).

The Holy Spirit, therefore, possesses personality and is a Person. Personality requires individuality, and individuality demands locality, and locality necessitates separation and distinction.

The Scripture distinguishes the Holy Spirit from both the Father and the Son. He is a separate, distinct, individual Person in the godhead (Mt. 3:16, 17; 28:19), and as such possesses definiteness of Being and the distinctiveness of locality, or sphere of operation (John 14:26; 15:26; 16:7).

In order that we may have a better understanding of what the term "person" means, I want to deal with its definitions more extensively. Person—Originally it designated a mask, and was derived from per (through) + sonare (to sound, hence, "to sound through." In its etymology, it developed through the following meanings: "Mask, actor, character acted, any assumed character, then, to anyone having character or station, and finally to any individual having rational being." Person—"A character, individual, body" (SKEAT, **Etymological Dictionary of the English Language**, p. 436).

Person—"A character or part, as in a play; a specific kind or manifestation of individual character." "A being characterized by conscious apprehension, rationality, and moral sense" (MERRIAM-WEBSTER, **New International Dictionary**, p. 1827). Person—"An individual substance of a rational nature" (Substance, Being, Existence). Substance is used to exclude accidents. Substance is used in two senses—primary and secondary. Primary substance—Concrete substance as existing in the individual (Father, Son, Holy Spirit). Secondary substance—Abstract substance as existing in genus and species (Godhead).

Person is predicated only of intellectual beings. A person has: **Substance**—Being, Existence, Reality. Completeness—whole, that which is a part does not satisfy the definition. **Self-existence**—Continue by, of, or in one's self—not in another. **Individuality**—Excludes the universal. **Rationality**—Excludes the non-intellectual. (A. VAN HOVE, **Catholic Encyclopedia**, Vol. XI, p. 726). According to this source, there are five marks which are necessary to make or constitute a person.

Personality—"Quality or state of being personal, or of being a person and not a thing or abstraction; that which makes a being a person: personal existence or identity" (MERRIAM-WEBSTER, **New International Dictionary**, p. 1828). It is "a term applied in philosophy and also in common speech to the iden-

tity or individuality which makes a being (person) what he is, or marks him off for all he is not" (**Encyclopedia Britannica**, Vol. XXI, p. 255). "The natural sense of the word 'person' is undoubtedly individuality" (Ibid.).

Personal—"Of or pertaining to a particular person; affecting an individual." "Done in person, without the intervention of another; direct from one person to another." "Exclusively for a given individual;; as a personal letter" (MERRIAM-WEBSTER, **New International Dictionary**, p. 1828). Notice the particularity and individuality of any being that can be defined as a person. In all of these definitions emphasis is placed upon a person being an individual, one possessing individual identity. The substantive term "individual" is defined: "A particular being or thing as distinguished from a class, species, or collection." "An indivisible entity" (WEBSTER, **Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary**, p. 428). "An indivisible entity or a totality which cannot be separated into parts without altering the character and significance of these parts" (MERRIAM-WEBSTER, **New International Dictionary**, p. 1267). Richard Whately, English theologian and logician of the XIX Cent., says: "An object which is in the strict and primary sense one, and cannot be logically divided, is called an individual" (Ibid.).

Now let us see what we have learned. The Holy Spirit is a divine Person. A person is an individual, rational being. That which is an individual is an indivisible entity.

So, the Holy Spirit as a person can no more be divided into parts and parceled out in bits among thousands of people, or diffused into an abstract force or impersonal power, and each portion still be the divine Person, than a man can be cut into pieces and scattered in chunks over the earth, or incinerated and the ashes thrown into the wind or sown upon the bosom of the seven seas, and each particle still be the human person. According to the meaning of the term person, any attempt to divide the divine Being (Person) among thousands of people will result in altering the character and changing the significance of every feature of the Holy Spirit.

There must, then, be an explanation of the work of the Holy Spirit in convicting and converting the alien sinner, and of His influence and power in edifying and comforting the saved, that will not call for a distribution or diffusion of the divine Person among all those affected. Without it a true concept of the divine Person (Holy Spirit) will be destroyed and He will be reduced to an impersonal power. The Holy Spirit as a Person is not and could not be a measure of the Spirit, whether "baptismal, miraculous, or ordinary." Unless we can see the difference in the person of the Spirit, and the gifts and powers which He bestows, we shall end up in total confusion.

The Person Of The Holy Spirit And The Omnipresence Of Deity

When this definition of the term "person" is made, someone is always sure to raise the question: "But what about the omnipresence of deity?" Omnipresence does not equate omniperperson. If omnipresence means

omniperson, and if the presence of God is everywhere and in everything, then, the person of God is everywhere and in everything. If the divine Being, or person, is diffused everywhere and found in everything, this adds up to the pagan doctrine of Pantheism. If Pantheism be not true, then, the divine Being is not omnipresent in person! May I point out that while God is omnipresent in some senses (Psalm 139:7-10; Proverbs 15:3), He is not omnipresent in other senses (Gen. 4:16; II Kings 13:23; 24:20; Jer. 23:39), and in no sense is the divine Person omnipresent.

The Presence of the Holy Spirit

There is a difference in person and presence. While there are circumstances and places where it could be said a divine Being was present in person, it does not follow that one's person must be in a place where it is said His presence is found. Illustration: Vespasian, et al. God's presence is found in many places through the medium and instrumentality of His creations, laws, works, agents, appointments, etc., while His divine **PERSON (the eternal Being Himself)** is in heaven.

God called unto Moses from the burning bush (Ex. 3:4), but He did it through an angel (v. 2). The Lord saved Israel (Ex. 14:30; Psalm 106:8), but He accomplished it through "the angel of his presence" (Isaiah 63:9). The Lord went before Israel in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night to lead them in the way (Ex. 13:21), but He led them through the medium and instrumentality of an angel (Ex. 14:19). It was not God Himself who was in the pillar of cloud, but His angel whom He had sent; yet that which was accomplished through the angel of His appointment, was attributed unto Him. In the Mosaic dispensation, God was said to dwell between the cherubims (Ex. 25:21, 22; Num. 7:89; I Sam. 4:4; II Kings 19:14, 15), but who would say that the divine Being in person dwelt in that physical location? The Jews referred to this dwelling of God between the cherubims as the Shekinah, which is defined as follows: "Shekinah, she-kai-na (Talmudic Hebr., 'abiding (of the divine presence)');" (SHAFF-HERZOG, **Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge**, Vol. X, p. 389). This should be sufficient to show a difference **in person and presence**.

Christ promised to be present in every assembly of those who are gathered in His name (Mt. 18:20), but who would say the Person is literally in every assembly? The assembly is by His divine appointment (Mt. 18:20; Acts 20:7; I Cor. 11:33; 14:23; Heb. 10:25). While assembled we are to sing and make melody in our hearts to the Lord (I Cor. 14:26; Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). In the assembly we pray unto God (Acts 12:5). There we observe the Lord's supper, which is a **communion of the body and blood of Christ** (I Cor. 10:16). When we contribute to the work of the Lord, we give unto God (II Cor. 8:1-5; Phil. 4:17, 18). When and wherever we serve the Lord, whether as individual Christians or as local congregations, we do so **before His divine presence** (Col. 3:17-24; Mt. 28:20), but He **in person** is in heaven at the right hand of God (Eph. 1:20; I Pet. 3:22; I Tim. 6:13-16).

Now, if both God and Christ can be present through the instrumentality of their agents, works, and appointments, without being present in person, why cannot the Holy Spirit also be present through the instrumentality of His teaching, influence, work, gifts, and appointments, without being present in person? More will be said about the unity and oneness of the Holy Spirit as a divine Person in subsequent lectures.

The Holy Spirit Collaborates In The Work Of Deity

In the physical creation God (Jehovah) planned it (Jer. 51:14, 15); God (the Word-Son) executed it (John 1:1-3; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:1, 2; Cf. I Cor. 8:6); God (the Holy Spirit) assisted in it (Gen. 1:1, 2; 2:7). He garnished the heavens (Job 26:13). He renewed the face of the earth (Psalm 104:30).

In the spiritual creation God planned it (Eph. 1:8-11); Jesus executed it (John 4:34; Eph. 1:3-7; II Tim. 1:9, 10; I Pet. 1:18-20); the Holy Spirit revealed it (John 16:13; Luke 14:49; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4; I Cor. 2:9, 10; Eph. 3:1-4).

Conclusion

The Holy Spirit is a divine Being—one of the godhead or godhood. As a divine Being, He is a **Person** possessing all the qualities of personality. Personality requires individuality, and individuality demands separation and distinction. As a Person, He possesses power and influence.

Power and influence are attributes of the Holy Spirit, but not the Holy Spirit Himself. His power and influence may be relative and distributive; they may be universal or local. Distributions of power, bestowal of gifts, and exercise of influence, may, by metonymy, be referred to as the Holy Spirit. Such references are to be understood in the sense in which they are used, and not made to do violence to the basic meaning of the terms employed. In such cases, **the presence** of the Holy Spirit through the medium and instrumentality of means is to be understood, rather than the **person** of the Holy Spirit Himself. As an individual Being, the Holy Spirit cannot be divided into bits or distributed in measures without destroying the very concept of personal identity. As a divine Being, He cooperates with other members of the godhead in carrying out the divine will.

NEXT MONTH—The Gift of the Holy Spirit

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S.B. HARTSELL

**Jefferson David Tant
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As the years rush by, we are reminded time and again of the fact that our stay here on this earth is but a temporary arrangement, "for we know that if the earthly house of our tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal, in the heavens" (II Cor. 5:1).

Early on the morning of April 21, 1982, S. B. Hartsell peacefully laid his armor down and went to be with the Lord, having spent nearly 84 years and two months in his fleshly tabernacle. I have felt honored to have this man as a father-in-law, a brother in the Lord, and a friend.

He was born to Alexander Bradford and Mary Frances (Crump) Hartsell February 23, 1898 in Haynesville, Louisiana. He lived in that small community all his life, but his influence reached into far places. He married Nicie Sue Davis May 21, 1921. Ten children were born: Ardece (Sanders), Anne (Iverson), S.B., Jr., Floy (Fitze), Huey, Earl, Horace, Flora (Tant), Glenn and Carmen (Allen).

Part of the godly influence of S.B. and Nicie Hartsell can be seen in the fact that three sons are (or have been) gospel preachers. Huey (Mt. Olive, Alabama), and Earl (Broadmoor, Nashville, Tennessee) now preach. Horace is now president of Pensacola Community College (Florida). Three daughters married preachers. Anne (to John Iverson, College Station, Texas), Flora (to this writer), and Carmen (To Cal Allen, who has done full-time work with the church). It was a dream come true when these six men worked together in a gospel meeting with the Haynesville church in 1969. A grandson, David Hartsell, and a grandson-in-law, Gil Johnson, also preach.

Papaw has always been a friend to men who stood for the truth, encouraging them any way he could. Such were oft the recipients of Hartsell hospitality. More than once have I sent some preacher and his family, traveling across the country, to the old homestead, knowing they would be well received. And although the records are in some forgotten drawer, we believe brother Hartsell's service as an elder spanned some 40 years.

Only God can measure the fruit of this man's life. The Haynesville church was a strong influence for truth when institutionalism swept away most area churches. He converted others to Christ (including his wife and others in her family), who have now brought forth other generations.

Among loved activities was attending gospel meetings, and though slowed by age in recent years, the Hartsells still went to meetings in Arkansas and Louisiana as they were able. Another great love was

story-telling. Papaw enjoyed gathering the grandchildren (42 in all), the great-grandchildren (24), and anyone else who would listen, to tell of the adventures of by-gone years, often adding a moral at the end of the story. These stories are so rich that our son, Jeff, recorded several a few years ago. There was no "generation gap" between this old gentleman and his descendants, but rather a mutual love and respect. Gospel singing also characterized family gatherings.

I was truly sorry that I was not with the family as Lloyd Atherton spoke to virtually all the family and a host of brethren and friends who gathered on April 23, but Papaw wanted me somewhere else—preaching the gospel to a small congregation in distant Chico, California. Eight of the grandsons (David, Scott and Steve Hartsell, George, Bill and Bob Sanders, Randy Smith and Jeff Tant) bore the earthly remains and placed them beneath the pine forests of northwestern Louisiana to await the final call. Papaw's faithful wife of over 60 years is now living with a daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. George Sanders at 300 Gary, Haynesville. These few words are wholly inadequate to tell of a humble servant of God, but I did want to share them with you. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord..." (Rev. 14:13).



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ANOTHER LOOK AT THE LORD'S SUPPER

J. David Powlas
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Many Christians believe that the Lord's supper may be served in both assemblies (assuming a morning and evening service) for worship on the Lord's day. However, after much study, I have reached a different conclusion on the matter. Now, I am convinced that only one serving of the Lord's supper is authorized by the Holy Scriptures.

Unfortunately, those of us who oppose the "second serving" are often misrepresented by the brethren who practice it. Therefore, before I explain my position on the issue, let me first state what my position does not require:

1. It does not require that the Lord's supper be served before the sun goes down on Sunday. In fact, my position allows it to be served anytime between mid night Saturday and midnight Sunday, i.e., anytime on "the first day of the week" (Acts 20:7).

2. It does not require that every member of the local church be present before the Lord's supper can be served in an assembly for worship on Sunday. However, it does require that every member (who is present in an assembly when the Lord's supper is served) be assembled for the purpose of "breaking bread", i.e., partaking of the Lord's supper (Acts 20:7; I Cor. 11:33).

3. It does not require that the "second serving" of the Lord's supper be withheld from those who must partake of it to avoid violating their conscience. But, my conscience will not permit me to serve it to them in the second assembly (Rom. 14:23).

4. It does not restrict the number of assemblies, i.e., forbid more than one assembly on the Lord's day. The authority for more than one assembly on Sunday is established by other passages (Acts 2:46; 5:42).

5. It does not require that the "second serving" be discontinued because some brethren miss the 1st assembly for no valid reason knowing that they can partake of the Lord's supper in the 2nd assembly. That particular abuse is not the real issue; rather, the issue to be resolved is whether there is divine authority for the "second serving" (Col. 3:17).

Here are two arguments that support my conclusion that only one serving of the Lord's supper on Sunday is authorized by the Word of God. Please study them carefully:

1. ARGUMENT ON ACTS 20:7—

- Paul preached only one sermon ("speech"-singular) in Troas "on the first day of the week".
- He preached that sermon "when the disciples came together to break bread", i.e., when they assembled to partake of the Lord's supper.
- Therefore, the disciples in Troas assembled

only one time to partake of the Lord's supper. 2. ARGUMENT ON THE EXCLUSIVE EXAMPLE IN ACTS 20:7—

- Acts 20:7 records only one serving of the Lord's supper on the Lord's day.
- This is the only passage that establishes the frequency for partaking of the Lord's supper.
- Therefore, only one serving of the Lord's supper on Sunday is authorized by this passage.

Along with these arguments, please consider the following questions which have a direct bearing on this issue. It is my hope that those on both sides of this matter will diligently search the Scriptures to find the answers to these questions:

1. If more than one serving of the Lord's supper on Sunday is taught in the Bible, why were the Corinthian brethren commanded to "tarry one for another" (wait for each other) when they assembled to eat the Lord's supper (1 Cor. 11:33)?

2. In what way is the divine authority for the "second serving" established: direct statement or command? approved example? or unavoidable conclusion?

3. Why do some of those who practice the "second serving" appeal to the Old Covenant (Num. 9:6-13; etc.)—which has been done away in Christ (2 Cor. 3:7-14; Col. 2:13-17; etc.)—for their authority rather than to the New Covenant?

4. What passage authorizes one saint (or a few saints to partake of the Lord's supper in an assembly where other saints are present but are not partaking with him (or them)?

5. Does the phrase "the disciples came together to break bread" mean that only some of those assembled came to partake of the Lord's supper, or does it mean that all who "came together" did so for that purpose (Acts 20:7)?

6. If the brethren are obligated to serve the Lord's supper in a 2nd assembly for those who missed the 1st assembly on Sunday, why aren't they also obligated to serve it in a 3rd assembly for those missing the other assemblies who are still able to partake late on the first day of the week? How about a 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, etc., assembly for those unable to partake in the earlier ones? What passage authorizes two servings but not more than two servings?

7. If the brethren are authorized to serve the Lord's supper more than once on Sunday, why isn't each Christian also authorized to partake of it more than once on Sunday?

My position on this matter requires me to refrain from partaking of the "second serving" under all circumstances. Also, I cannot serve it to those who wish to partake of it in the 2nd assembly, lest I be guilty of helping them to do what I consider to be wrong (2 Jn. 9-11). However, I do not forbid others to serve it to them if they so desire.

I am not attempting to force my position on this issue on the brethren who disagree with my conclusions. In like manner, I do not wish to have them force their views on me. Let all of us follow the principle found in Romans 14:5—"Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind"!

THE
"NO-SECOND-SUPPER"
DOCTRINE EXAMINED

J. Edward Nowlin
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LOOKING AT "ANOTHER LOOK AT
THE LORD'S SUPPER"

It is obvious that what we shall say has to do with an article by Brother David Powlas which is included in this issue of SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES. In the outset, please know that this writer has no enmity toward Brother Powlas, but counts him as a friend. In fact, we, here at Perry, helped support him from March-December, 1977, in preaching the gospel. He is a good, sincere Christian; but we believe he is wrong on this matter and wish only to help him to see his error, while at the same time hopefully helping others. We certainly have no desire to misrepresent him in order to make his position look worse. It is bad enough as it is when stripped of all the five points which he says his position does not require. In eliminating these five points he makes our task easier in replying.

We take our stand on this axiomatic statement: **ANY INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE WHICH ALLOWS A CHRISTIAN TO IGNORE AND DISOBEY A COMMAND OF THE LORD WITH A CLEAR CONSCIENCE, IS ERRONEOUS!** If Brother Powlas is unable to attend the morning worship, and is able to attend the night service, he will ignore that opportunity to commune with the Lord. In so doing, he puts himself in blatant disobedience to the Lord's own command, "This do in remembrance of me" (Lk. 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:24), since he admits in his number one thing not required by his position that "... **it may be served anytime between midnight Saturday and midnight Sunday, i.e., anytime on 'the first day of the week' (Acts 20:7).**" Hence, the above axiom being true, David's interpretation of Acts 20:7 is erroneous because he says in plain English in his point number 3, "But, my conscience will not permit me to serve it to them in the second assembly (Rom. 14:23)." Also, in the next to last paragraph of his article he says, "**My position on this matter requires me to refrain from partaking of the 'second serving' under all circumstances.**" Hence, my brother's position on this matter forces him into contemplated direct disobedience, with a clear conscience, to our Lord's command. His interpretation of Acts 20:7 is erroneous!

We are glad to see that Brother Powlas did not in his article claim, as some who hold his position do, that he would be "excused" for the entire week if he could not attend the morning service. The scripture nowhere says so. Neither did he seek refuge in some imaginary

"providential hindrance," of which there is no such thing. God does not oppose God. (See my article in March, STS)

Now, to Brother Powlas' two arguments on Acts 20:7. He uses an old fashioned syllogism in his first argument to prove that the disciples assembled only **one time** to partake of The Lord's Supper. **This is all any disciples do today**, except in one place we heard of, brethren require all present at both services to partake. Only those who assemble for that purpose, do so. It is a first opportunity for all who assemble for that purpose. Hence, there is no such thing as a "second serving!" It is a straw man, easily demolished.

His second argument is another syllogism intended to prove the exclusiveness of the Acts 20:7 example. It is, in reality, proving the same point as his first syllogism, but calling it by another name, "only one serving" instead of "assembled only one time to partake." We object to the word, "serving," when applied to the Lord's Supper. It is the language of Ashdod, invented by these brethren to use in fighting a straw man. They know that we do not contend for a second partaking by anyone; yet, he speaks of being misrepresented. "Serving" is a confusion of terms implying a servant apart from a partaker, but since all assembled to partake are partakers, there is no servant. Some of these brethren try to make the church the servant, but the church is the sum of all the partakers. This makes the servant serve itself!

But syllogisms are tricky things and can be used to prove almost anything. A classic example is: (1) No cat has 8 tails. (2) One cat has one tail. (3) Therefore, since no cat plus one cat equals one cat, and 8 tails plus one tail equal 9 tails, one cat has 9 tails! Now, try this one for size:

ARGUMENT ON ACTS 20:7—

- a. Paul preached only one sermon ("speech"- singular) in Troas "on the first day of the week."
- b. He preached that sermon "when the disciples came together to break bread," i.e., when they assembled to partake of the Lord's Supper.
- c. Therefore, the only time a sermon can be preached on the first day of the week is when the disciples come together to break bread!

Who will buy this conclusion? Who needs a syllogism to prove that the disciples came together to break bread? Acts 20:7 says so; but the syllogisms are needed to get the words "all" and "only" in the text. This is sophistry, and illustrates the extremes to which brethren will go in an attempt to support an erroneous position.

Now, to Brother Powlas' questions as numbered by him:

1. We have already registered objection to the term "serving," but to answer his question, only one serving to each disciple is taught, and those in authority in the congregation have an obligation to provide the opportunity for every member. At Corinth, they were commanded to "tarry for one another" because he was rebuking them for turning the Lord's Supper into a common meal and eating like animals in a disorderly

manner.

2. There is no such thing as a "second serving" taught in the Bible. When absentees from the morning service assemble to partake at the evening service, it is the "first serving" for them. It is authorized by direct command (Lk. 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:24).

3. The Passover was a type of the Lord's Supper. We simply provide for the absentees from the morning service, just as Moses provided for absentees from the 14 Nisan Passover. Why do these brethren appeal to O.T. examples of obedience in Abraham, Noah and others, to examples of disobedience in Adam, Cain and Israel, to the gopher wood in the ark in opposing instruments in worship, to the "strange fire" on the altar in opposing instruments in the worship and substitution of water for wine on the Lord's Table, and then balk at the example of Moses in Num. 9:6-13? When Brother Powlas answers this question, he will have answered his own number 3 question. We do not go to the O.T. for authority to do anything; we go there for example of methodology in doing what we are commanded to do in the N.T., just as Jesus did when he appealed to David's example (Mt. 12:3; Mk. 2:25; Lk. 6:3), and as Paul when he appealed to Israel's example (1 Cor. 10:1-11).

4. Communing with the Lord in the bread and cup is an individual duty for citizens in the kingdom (Lk. 22:15-19), regardless of the presence or absence of others.

5. Acts 20:7 says "the disciples came together" meaning the disciples who came together; no more, no fewer. To read "all" into it is to pervert the passage. The expression, "to break bread" is an incidental descriptive phrase used by Luke to record the events of the occasion, equivalent to "went to worship" or as some say, "went to church." Brethren err when they use it in an exclusive sense, for it is obvious from the context that in addition to breaking bread, they heard Paul preach and prayed in giving thanks for the bread and cup. Paul taught the Corinthians and Galatians to give on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:1, 2), and since this act of worship is confined to the first day of the week the same as the Lord's Supper, who is to say that the Troas disciples did not contribute also? If so, singing would be the only one of the five acts of worship left off, if they did not also do that. Why exalt partaking of the Supper above the other four acts of worship?

6. Acts 20:7 does not limit the number of assemblies. No passage authorizes "servings."

7. The "brethren" are not **authorized** to "**serve**" the Lord's Supper. "Brethren" has been studiously used by Brother Powlas instead of "church," with obviously the same meaning. It is not the **brethren's Table**; it is the Lord's Table. The scripture is silent as to partaking more than once on Sunday, and every argument in favor of such can be with equal force applied to giving. Those who do it should double their contributions!

In conclusion, we have no desire to force Brother Powlas to do anything. We would like to persuade him

to abandon an interpretation of Acts 20:7 which forces him to disobey Lk. 22:19 with a clear conscience. With Adam Clarke, we observe "how unbecoming this sacred ordinance to be the subject of dispute, party spirit, and division! Those who make it such must answer for it to God." (Commentary on First Corinthians, Vol. 6, 1843)

CHILDREN IN WORSHIP

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"Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence" (Matt. 19:13-15). On one occasion the disciples came to Jesus with the question about who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. "And Jesus called a little child to him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:1-10).

It would be good if more faithful workers in the Lord's vineyard would remember that little children can be taught and encouraged to some day be faithful workers in the vineyard of the Lord. In fact, adults must have the teachable nature of the child to be reached with the gospel. It is a very serious thing to cause a child to be influenced to go astray as he matures. It is also very serious to cause a man with a child-like humility to be led into religious error or ungodliness. It would be good for us all to read the first ten verses of Matthew eighteen again and again.

Some fortunate little children have parents who are Christians. These concerned parents see that the little ones attend worship regularly. There are teachers to teach them the wonderful words of life. Why are so many of these children of church members lost when they become adults? Something goes wrong, and whatever it is is a serious error. Let us do a little searching for the rock of stumbling because we all want to know. We love our children, or do we?

Some parents may fail to teach at home, expecting teachers at the meeting house to take that responsibility. There is no way to take the duty from parents (Eph. 6:4; Col. 3:21; 1 Tim. 5:14). Parents have the children more. They must not get "too busy" to talk to their children about Jesus, the apostles and prophets, and all other Bible characters. Principles of righteousness and the facts of the Bible stories should

be impressed on each child's mind (2 Tim. 3:15). It is amazing what children can learn if they have a good teacher. It is very important that the teaching be done in those early tender years.

When should Bible stories be told? They can learn Bible stories as early as nursery rhymes can be learned. If not, why not? They can learn the stories and many bible verses before they are mature enough to grasp all the meaning that is there for them. They learn early to believe and love the stories, and the meaning and application to their lives will come when the need arises. Train up a child in the way he should go (Prov. 22:6). Let preachers, class teachers, and especially parents work to fill the young minds with truth.

If children have had stories read to them from pleasant little children's books they may object to your getting a Bible story book. They want you to read from one of their little books that they have heard so often. The Bible story book will become just as precious to the child if it is read from regularly. You are capable of turning your child's mind to such a book, are you not? Maybe you wish now that the happy reading period had first been from the Bible story book. Remember that you can tell Bible stories as well as read them. You may still read their other little books. Much reading to a preschool child helps him become a good pupil at school, and time thus spent gives the sense of awareness of your love. It gives the little one a wonderful sense of security. Talk to your child. Read to your child. Listen to his questions and comments. There is real joy for the parents in this, too.

Children grow up in a short time. They are soon old enough to go to school. What are you to do with them during worship? Many provide paper and pencils for them to take notes on the sermons. Please remember that this is a difficult assignment. Without parental guidance and oversight this will hinder their learning rather than help. I have seen some young people do an amazing job of grasping the thoughts and writing them. Mothers, you may not realize how foolish their writings may be as they entertain themselves rather than listen if you do not see their papers. Do you watch them as they look at one another's papers and laugh, missing the sermon and developing irreverence?

Some seem to think that sermons must be boring to children. Children listen to teachers at school, do they not? Imagine an adult class in which the pupils are given something to color while the teacher talks. Would the coloring hinder the learning process? I wish for the children's attention when I try to teach them. I have spent hundreds of hours in Bible drills with children. The children were encouraged to have nothing in their hands but to look at me and give me their undivided attention. If such a class keeps moving, the children can stay with you and learn much. It is my advice that children be taught to listen to sermons with open eyes and empty hands.

It would be a wonderful thing if children would sit in front of their parents if not with them. If children could form the habit of sitting near the front early in

life it could be pleasant on through their youth. In gospel meetings occasionally a church is found in which a fine group of young people sit at the front and listen. This is pleasant to see. When the adults, including their parents, are sitting behind them they are more likely to listen. Beware when the young sit at the very back. Remember that we all are to serve God with reverence and godly fear (Heb. 12:28). Young people can be good listeners.

THE COURAGE TO SAY "NO"

Mackey W. Harden
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Indianapolis, IN 46226

Indianapolis, Indiana, the city where I presently live and preach, has its share of drug problems. During the months of September, October, and November of 1981, an extensive campaign was waged to counteract drug abuse. An article appeared in the November 1981 issue of *Indianapolis Monthly* magazine, written by Sharon Pearcy. The following quote reveals the intent of the drug abuse campaign: "To curb abuse in the Indianapolis area, Marion County Prosecutor Steve Goldsmith and the Hook Drug Company joined forces on a 10-week public service campaign which began September 8 . . . Created by MZB, Inc., Advertising and Public Relations, the campaign message 'Drugs: It Takes Guts To Say No' has been aired on local television and radio stations, newspapers and bill boards. Estimated value of services and time given by the media is \$400,000."

Indeed drug abuse has reached astronomical proportions in our society—among young and old alike. Our youngsters have peer pressure exerted upon them on almost every front: at school, play, on the job, etc. It takes a lot of courage for them to say no! Perhaps here would be a good time to make a comment about the use of the slang word "guts," as is used in the slogan at the Indianapolis Campaign Against Drugs. It means *courage, stamina, endurance*. I shall not use it again but substitute it with one of the synonyms just mentioned. Gospel preachers, elders, deacons, teachers, Christians in general, need to be very careful in the use of the slang terminology that is so prevalent in our society today.

Not only does it take courage to say no to the use of drugs, alcohol, tobacco, etc., but a number of other things that Christians and their children are confronted with in this wicked society. We must learn to say no to a good number of things and teach our children to do likewise. The word *no* "expresses dissent, denial, or refusal." Observe with me just a few of the things we must say no to.

DRUGS

More needs to be said about this problem because of the danger involved with our children. As time goes by, younger and younger children are experimenting with all kinds of dangerous drugs. Sharon Percy stated in the aforementioned article: "Recent studies indicate that by the time Indiana high school students reach their senior year, 63 percent have experimented with illegal drugs. Many begin using drugs at or before the age of 11." It is interesting to note a word that Paul groups among *"the works of the flesh"* (Gal.5:19-21). That word is *"witchcraft"* (vs.20). It is derived from the Greek PHARMAKIA (English pharmacy). By definition it has the connotation of medicine or drugs used in conjunction with sorcery and the occult. With the increased use of drugs we have seen the rise in the occult and those who practice Satan-worship. By all means we must implore our children to stay away from such, saying no to drugs and the awful consequences they bring—both physical and spiritual. Paul said concerning the works of the flesh, *"that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God"* (Gal. 5:21).

TEMPTATION

It is an undeniable fact that we must learn to say no to temptation. James said, *"But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed"* (Jas.1:14). We cannot blame God because He *"cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man"* (Jas.1:13). Temptation proceeds from none other than the Devil himself (Cf.Matt.4:3; I Thess.3:5). When our Lord was tempted by the Devil He said no on every occasion (Cf.Matt.4:1-11). We have the great example of Jesus in saying no to the temptations that arise in our lives. *"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin"* (Heb.4:15). We also have the encouraging words from the pen of the apostle Paul. *"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it"* (I Cor.10:13).

PLEASURES OF SIN

Paul revealed to Timothy several things that men would be doing in the last days, when perilous times would come. One of these was that some would be *"lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God"* (Cf. II Tim.3:1-5ff). The majority of folks today are intent on fulfilling their sensual appetites and enjoying physical pleasures. "You Only Go Around Once In Life," is the modern rendition of the old Epicurean philosophy of "Eat, Drink, And Be Merry." Christians must learn to say no to the danger of participating in the pleasures of sin. We read in the New Testament a good example of someone who had the courage to say no to the pleasures of sin. *"By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a*

season" (Heb. 11:24-25). Let us go and do likewise, having the courage and stamina to say no to the pleasures of sin.

PARENTS TO THEIR CHILDREN

It is an awesome responsibility for fathers and mothers to rear their children in an acceptable manner, one that pleases the Almighty Father (Cf.Eph.6:1-4; Col.3:20-21; Titus 2:4-5). One thing that we as parents must learn to do is say no to our children when the situation warrants it. I see many parents who can not (or will not!) say no to their children regardless of what it is they want. This is a tragic mistake. Some parents let their children go *anywhere* and do *anything* they want. This is not good and such parents must learn to say no on certain occasions, if they are to *"bring their children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."* Do you have control of your children or do they have control of you? Do you have the courage to say no when you know something is not in their best interest? May God help us to wake up and say no more often.

ARE YOU SAYING NO?

It is a surety that Christians, those of us who have been washed in the blood of the Lamb, must say no to many things in life. Are you doing so? Am I? Or, have we begun to give in and say *yes* to things that will surely bring about our spiritual demise? Let us not wave the white flag of surrender but have the courage to say no to the temptations the Devil hurls in our path. Let us instill in our children the courage and stamina to say no whenever they are tempted to do wrong. Let us strive to bring up a generation of young people who have the determination to resist the Devil. *"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil"* (Eph.6:11-11ff).

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THE STING OF DEATH

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Death is pictured in a variety of ways in the Bible. Often it is called a "sleep" which pictures the not so unpleasant aspect of death. But death is pictured in the scriptures as unpleasant and undesirable. Paul wrote, "The sting of death is sin; and the power of sin is the law" (1 Cor. 15:56). There is an image captured in those words of a horrible beast that has a fatal sting. That sting, Paul called "sin". Sin is a poisonous stinger that kills. This is very similar to saying, "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23).

Sin is the world's greatest fatality and at the same time it is the least feared danger men face. Men sin with impunity. Sinners continue their course of life, knowing the condemnation pronounced on them by God. Christians justify sin in their own lives and tolerate it in those they favor. But there is nothing worse than sin. Name all the illnesses and diseases common to mankind and nothing is as bad as sin. There are several ways it stings.

1. **There is the sting of physical death.** The sinner has no hope at death. He may hope that God will overlook the sins he or she has committed but there is absolutely no promise of such. Sadness and sorrow surround the death scene of a sinner. His loved ones and his friends, who pled for him to leave sin and get right with God, shed tears of sorrow, the bitter fruit of the sting of death. One who escapes the condemnation of sin by obedience to God eliminates the sting of physical death—for though they die physically, they live, their lives being hid "with Christ in God" (Col. 3:3).

2. **There is the sting of the fear of death.** There used to be an old song, "Everybody wants to go to Heaven, but nobody wants to Die!" How true that is. But all men will die. Death is the common and ultimate terminus of all humanity. There is a fear of dying that we all experience, at least at some time in our lives we do. Perhaps it is because it is an experience one has but once and none has the power to tell us what it is like. The fanciful stories of those who claim they were dead and were brought back to life have no more authority than human testimony of any kind. The word of God does not tell us. But it does tell us that we do not need to fear death. The Hebrew writer affirms that Christ destroyed the one who had the power of death, Satan, and delivered "all them who through fear of death were all their lifetime, subject to bondage" (Heb. 2:15). When one is right with the Lord, the fear of death is ob-

viated by the Lord Himself.

3. **There is the sting of a guilty conscience.** The sinner has a guilty conscience which results from sin. Paul affirmed that the whole world is guilty because of sin, saying that the world will "be brought under the judgment of God" (Rom. 3:19). The feelings of guilt in sinners eliminates any reply to God. No one can claim God is responsible for sin. Once an individual sins, the guilt of conscience begins to sting. This is God's arrangement for motivating the sinner to remove that sting. The conscience is cleared only by the blood of Christ and by obedience to Him. The Hebrew writer again said, "let us draw near with a true heart in fullness of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience: and having our body washed with pure water" (Heb. 10:22). That washing of the body is the command to be baptized. Peter comments on this passage: "that aforesaid were disobedient, when the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water: which also after a true likeness doth now save you, even baptism, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the interrogation of a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 3:20-21).

4. **There is the sting of spiritual death.** Sin stings with a poisonous effect on the soul, separating it from God, thus making life impossible. (See Isa. 52:1-2). This is the death of which Paul speak to the Ephesians. He said, "And you did he make alive, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins, wherein ye once walked according to the course of this world" (Eph. 2:1-2). These are appropriately called "unburied dead," who are dead through the sins and trespasses they have committed. This death is not final. Men may receive life from God by obedience to the Lord's requirements. Paul spoke of those believers who turned from the weak and beggarly elements of the world as walking in a "new life." The act which turns man in to this new life is baptism (Rom. 6:3-4).

The sting of death is removed when sin is removed. The removal of sin from one's life is done by the Lord through the blood of Jesus Christ (Rom. 3:24-26). The conditions men must meet in order for the stinging poison of sin to be nullified include obedience to every command God gave. Starting with faith in Christ and culminating in baptism for remission of sins, one is free from sin. The stinger of death is removed and one lives anew. This is what Paul called "victory". "But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:57).

Let each of us who read think long on the question of sin. Nothing is more final than death. Nothing is more sure than death and the judgment (Heb. 9:27). Nothing is sadder than one standing in God's divine presence filled with sin and iniquity. Remove the sting of death now.

Please Renew Promptly

WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO "PSALMS, HYMNS, AND SPIRITUAL SONGS"?

Ralph P. Atry
107 Belford Drive
Dickson, Tennessee 37055

It is not pleasant to recall the sixties when the "Hippie" element was rebelling against "the establishment." But there was coincidental with the youth rebellion, one against scriptural authority by the majority of our brethren in the church. True, the second rebellion had its guerilla tactics reaching back more than a score of years earlier. The spiritual rebellion came out with aggressive forces and joined battle with their opposition in the sixties. To me it is evidence there was another rebellion in the camp of "sound" brethren in the area of the caption of this article—a revolt against the hymn books published by "unsound" brethren resulting in the departing from scriptural guidelines of psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. I shall cite a few examples from one hymn book.

PSALMS

A psalm is a "sacred song" used primarily in praise to, and to the glory of God. How does "I want a gold mansion that's silver lined" fit the definition and purpose of a hymn? The sentiment bespeaks the fulfillment of earthly cravings for material things that one has never enjoyed. Too many songs are light if not bordering on the flippant and do not meet the definition of psalms.

HYMNS

Hymns, too, are "songs of praise addressed to God". Songs focusing primarily on the self satisfaction and glorifying the singers miss the characteristics of hymns. Take notice of how many songs give more prominence to the singers than to God and Christ.

SPIRITUAL SONGS

"Spiritual songs are the songs of which the burden is that which is revealed by the Spirit". So the first demand of "spiritual songs" is that they must be totally scriptural. Too many songs are obviously unscriptural. "Saints Go Marching In" reminds us of the wickedness of the Mardi Gras and the athletic teams of New Orleans. I verily believe a few song leading brethren would lead "Yankee Doodle" if the publisher included it in its book. Too many songs have no scriptural lesson to "teach and admonish". Songs so fast and complicated the parts cannot keep up are fit only for quartets and other entertaining groups and are bereft of any spirituality.

Why Are So Many Unscriptural Songs Published?

Not even "poetic license" can make such songs meet the scriptural demands. Some attempts at editing unscriptural sentiments out of songs are often crude, and with a familiar song are disconcerting to one who knows the original wording. First, let us look at the

listed publishers and authors. In the hymnal I studied Stamps-Baxter Music Company are publishers and owners of seventy-nine of the songs. Since pre-television days these people have been public entertainers. Just have some hint of some scripture related thought for appeal to the public and they could care less whether their songs meet scripture guidelines. Consider their song, "Kneel At The Cross", verse 1, "Kneel at the cross and pray and 'begin life anew'" teaches salvation in answer to prayer. The fine print explanation under the title, "The Christian's prayer" just might be noticed by one in a hundred. "For my sin-sick soul Jesus heard and answered prayer, now I'm walking free as air", verses one and two. "Hand In Hand With Jesus", another Stamps Baxter production.

Using Other Publishers' Songs

Other song publishers noted in the book I examined are The Rhodeheaver Co., Nazarene Publishing Co., Church of God, E. L. Jorgenson, Standard Publishing Co., and other denominations and private publishing companies.

Other Unscriptural Teachings In Songs

"Why Do You Wait?", verse three, teaches feeling the Spirit. "Take My Hand And Lead Me", verse three, says, "Let me each day thy Spirit feel". Editing out the capital S does not change the message intended by the writer. "I am coming now to receive the anointing divine", a gift of the apostolic age, is found in verse four, "O To Be Like Thee". "It Won't Be Very Long" teaches (verses one and four), "It won't be very long till we all die, Jesus comes again, and the earth will be destroyed". This same message is sounded forth by pre-millennialists and denominational prophets. I do not have "Precious Memories" of angels visiting my soul (verse one). Little if any spirituality is found in such songs as this. "Just a Little Talk With Jesus", verse still says, "I was lost in sin and a little talk with Jesus made me whole". Jesus commanded to "preach the gospel to every creature" but the chorus of "On The Jericho Road" says, "There's room for just two, no more and no less". This is another example of antiscritptural sentiments. And no wonder when we consider the publishers.

Brethren, I do not write to be hypercritical. But I fear for the future of the Lord's church in respect to its vocal music in view of present day trends. The hymn book I reviewed has some wonderfully spiritual songs. But I decry what the unscriptural ragtime songs are doing for our worship now. And if such a trend continues I predict some one will ape the denominations in introducing "Hard Rock Gospel Songs" into worship by the saints to God. We cannot continue to borrow and adapt unscriptural songs from denominations and entertainment groups and have "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs" in our worship to God.

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FIELD REPORTS

DENNIS H. WILSON, Box 2740, Florida College, Temple Terrace, FL 33617. After quitting my secular job in Owensboro, KY last year, my family and I moved to Florida College so I could get some training in various Bible subjects. However, I financially cannot remain in College another year and must look to begin full-time work in preaching the gospel I am 24 years of age with a wife and two children. I have preached in the Tampa area at North Street and also in Florida at Lake Okeechobee and at Punta Gorda. For references please contact brethren: Dick Blackford, Owensboro, KY; Ken Green, Hunstville, AL; James Cope, Temple Terrace, FL; or Colly Caldwell, Temple Terrace, FL.

LYNN D. HEADRICK, 1503 Coffman Dr., Athens, AL 35611. Beginning July 1, 1982, I plan to leave secular work in order to devote full-time to preaching the gospel. Since August 1, 1969, I have served as Dean of Students at Calhoun State Community College. Concurrently, I have preached in the Athens-Decatur area. For the past ten years I have worked with the church on Jackson Dr. here in Athens. This faithful congregation is presently assisting fourteen preachers in various parts of the world. In addition to these preachers, the church will begin in July to support me so that all my time and energy may be used to teach and preach the word. For this I am thankful and pray for the wisdom to conduct myself as becometh a preacher of the gospel. I am also thankful for a faithful wife to encourage the work. Malcolm Andrews, Bennie Lovell, and Billy Lovell serve as overseers at Jackson Drive.

WENDELL M. POWELL, 2121 Edna Dr., Savannah, TN 38372. I desire to relocate with a sound work. I am 38 years old, married, and we have three children. I am in my eleventh year of full-time preaching. Contact me at the above address or call (901) 925-6006.

LESTER COMSTOCK, 1111 Hickory Lane, Cocoa, FL 32922. After completing five years with the church in Punta Gorda, FL, the decision was made to relocate. We left the congregation there in unity and good standing. We began our work on April 4, 1982 with the congregation that meets at 512 S. Plumosa St., in Merritt Island, FL. This is a sound congregation and the future looks bright. The work presents many challenges but there is harmony within the body and there is a willingness to get the work done. At present time attendance runs in the sixties. We have a fine meeting house that will seat upwards to 120. There is a classroom annex with rooms for all ages. With the help of God, our zeal and prayers, this congregation will grow. When in the area please worship with us.

DAVID PATTERSON, 9018 E. 74th Terr., Raytown, MO 64133. At this writing I am in need of \$400 per month support. We are a small church of about 35 just east of Kansas City. We are the only sound church in this city of 40,000. Due to the collapse of the auto industry, the church here is no longer able to continue my support at the present level. Although the work is small, much good has been done and we have high hopes for the future. Our goal is \$1500 per month total support. My wife and I live in a modest home in Raytown near the building. We have a daughter who is two years old and a baby on the way. I'll be glad to furnish references to anyone interested in the work. Please call (816) 353-3816.

KEITH CLAYTON, 55 East St., Bristol, VT 05443. After nearly two years of meeting in the living room of Jay and Marlene Vrooman (at 71 Mountain St., Bristol, VT), the Addison County church of Christ has moved to new, rented quarters. We now rent an upstairs room on Route 116, just east of Bristol Village, 4/10 of a mile from a landmark known as the Lord's Prayer Rock. Although we receive few visiting brethren, we felt that those who do come our

way ought to be made aware of the new location. We have signed a two year lease and expect to remain there until we outgrow the facility. Our worship and Bible study times are Sunday at 10 a.m. (worship), 11:15 a.m. (Bible study), 6 p.m. (worship), and Wednesday at 7:30 p.m.

REPORT FROM ARGENTINA

FERNANDO VENEGAS, Casilla 122 C.C., 5500 Mendoza, Argentina, South America. We want to report that we had a good gospel meeting in February with Bro. Efrain Perez doing the preaching. As a result of this effort two persons were baptized. Then in March we had a weekend meeting with Wayne Partain from San Antonio, TX, We are happy to report that during this meeting three were baptized. Brother Partain presented good sermons that were of great spiritual benefit to all. I continue to have Bible studies in different homes.

A word about Argentina... Argentina is in a conflict at the present with Great Britain over the "Malvinas Islands." The nation is in suspense for the danger of war. Until now all is calm, and we pray that there will be peace. We have other problems that demand solutions such as unemployment and inflation. Please help us pray for our country and for our rulers.

PREACHERS NEEDED

SUCCASUNNA, NJ—The church which meets in Succasunna is seeking a preacher to work with them on a full-time basis. This is a small congregation with an average attendance of 30-35 and will be able to provide partial support. If interested you may contact the brethren here by writing to the church of Christ, P.O. Box 683, Stanhope, NJ 07874. Or you may call any of the following men: Clint Kingsley (201) 347-2046, Wally Ottersbach (201) 361-3357, or Mario Costa at (201) 398-7187.

MEMPHIS, TN—The congregation that meets at 3090 North Trezevant St. would like to have a full-time preacher. We are self-supporting with an average attendance of about 45. We prefer an experienced man who can organize personal work and devote a great deal of time to it. If interested please contact the congregation at the above address or call Richard Jackson at (901) 372-6187.

A NEW CONGREGATION

BILL DODD, Rt. 5, Box 142-A, Oxford, MS 38655. A new congregation was started late last summer at Glen Allen, AL, five miles east of Winfield. The attendance is running in the twenties. Their contribution is very good for a small group. Brother Carlos Barnes has resigned as an elder at Pleasant Grove in Birmingham, AL, and is now working full-time with the new group. He is doing a very good work. Glen Allen is my home territory, and I know of the tremendous need for a sound work there. Gus Nichols and V.P. Black helped to lead most of the area into apostasy.

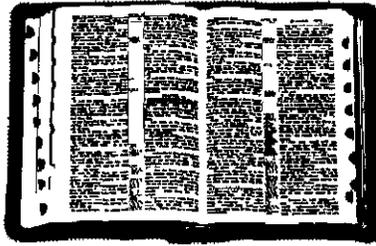
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SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

"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"

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EXPOSITION: TEXT and CONTEXT

Weldon E. Warnock

491 E. Woodsdale
Akron, Ohio 44301



THE SAVED CAN BE LOST

Some believe "once saved, always saved." In fact, we are told that if a child of God dies while drunk, or while in the act of adultery, he will be ushered right on into heaven. But the Bible does not teach such strange doctrine. It teaches that the saved can be lost. Let us notice how it can be done.

By Becoming Immoral

Saved people can be lost by becoming immoral. Listen to Paul: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness. . . and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21). What could be more definite and emphatic than those who practice the works of the flesh shall not go to heaven? The same thing is stated in 1 Cor. 6:9: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" The apostle then proceeds to catalog some works of unrighteousness.

You may have heard it said that saved people would not commit immoral acts. But Noah, a preacher of righteousness (2 Pet. 2:5), got drunk (Gen. 9:21), and righteous Lot (2 Pet. 2:7-8), also got drunk and while in a drunken stupor, committed incest with his daughters (Gen. 19:30-38). "Yes, but God would not let his children die in such condition," we are told. Then, get drunk, stay drunk, and live forever. Nonsense! Immoral conduct will send a child of God to hell.

By Not Bearing Fruit

Saved people can be lost by not bearing fruit. Jesus said: "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away" (John 15:2). Observe that the branch was IN Christ. The Bible teaches that only the saved are IN Christ. We read: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. . . ." (2 Cor. 5:17). We conclude, therefore, that the child of God (branch) loses his spiritual relationship with Christ by failing to bear fruit and thereby becomes lost. Jesus proceeds to state: "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned" (Jn. 15:6).

By Failing To Endure

In the parable of the sower, Jesus said: "They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away" (Luke 8:13). Notice that Jesus said these "hear, receive the word and believe." They are saved people. However, their salvation just lasts for a short while. In time of temptation they FALL away. How much plainer can it be revealed that saved people can be lost?

Jesus said to his disciples at Smyrna: ". . . be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10). This implies that they could cease being faithful before death and forfeit the crown of life. Paul said: ". . . for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9). Repeatedly, the Bible teaches perseverance in the life of the Christian. Peter wrote: "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 1:10-11). If the Christian adds to his life virtue, knowledge, temperance, etc. (2 Pet. 1:5-7), he shall never fall. But what happens if he fails to add these fruits of faith? He shall fall, and, consequently, he will not be allowed to enter into that heavenly kingdom.

By Ceasing to Believe

Saved people can be lost by ceasing to believe. The Bible teaches that believers can become unbelievers,

and we know that unbelievers cannot be saved. ". . . but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). The writer of Hebrews stated: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (3:12). These were "brethren" that were addressed and they were warned about becoming unbelievers and departing from the living God.

Faith can be cast off, bringing damnation. Paul said of some of the younger widows: "Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith" (1 Tim. 5:12). Faith can be cast off or set aside, and when such happens, the end result is damnation. Faith can be shipwrecked. "Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck" (1 Tim 1:19). A person whose faith is shipwreck is in the clutches of Satan. Faith can be overthrown. Paul said of Hymenaeus and Philetus: "Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some" (2 Tim. 2:18).

Those who destroy their faith draw back unto perdition and have no hope of everlasting life without a trusting and active faith. "But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul" (Heb. 10:39).

Trying To Be Saved By the Law

Saved people can be lost by trying to be saved or justified by the law of Moses. When the people of God turn from dependence on His grace in the forgiveness of their sins to a self-dependence of perfect obedience to law, they fall from grace or favor with God. Man can only stand in covenant relationship with God by being washed in the blood of Christ for the remission of his sins. Whenever he repudiates that arrangement, and tries to save himself apart from it, he severs himself from God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Such was the potential problem in the Galatian churches due to the influence of the Judaizing teachers.

Listen to Paul: "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (Gal. 5:4). All of those who were about to return to the law of Moses in an attempt to be justified before God would be removing themselves from the grace of Christ. "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel" (Gal. 1:6). People of God can abandon Christ and when they do, they are lost—fallen from grace (cf. Heb. 6:4-6; Heb. 10:26-31).

In conclusion, let me point out that although one may fall away, he can come back to God, on His terms, through Jesus the Christ. James said: "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (Jas. 5:19-20; cf. Acts 8:22; 1 Jn. 1:9).

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Editorial

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THE QUALITY OF OUR SINGING

For several years now this writer has been concerned about the quality of singing which is found in so many congregations. It is difficult to speak of this without colliding with someone's sacred cow. But at the risk of aggravating some, we seek to provoke others who are willing to give thought to what is presented here.

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3:16). This verse links singing with the truth of the word of Christ. We ought not to sing that which is contrary to truth. Since singing not only is "to the Lord" but in order to teach and admonish one another, then it is possible to teach either truth or error in song. There is a paucity of scriptural truth in some of the songs popularly used among many brethren. Yet, Paul said the word is to dwell in us "richly." Not only "richly" but "in all wisdom." Wisdom involves the practical use of that which we know.

The injunction to "teach and admonish one another" places singing in our gatherings, else how would we hear and heed the admonitions taught? Since we are dealing with that which is public in nature, then other New Testament guide lines must be considered which concern public worship. "Let all things be done unto edifying" (1 Cor. 14:26). "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Cor. 14:40). What is decent and orderly does not have to be cold, stiff and lifeless. In fact, Paul's instruction to the church at Corinth was in a context of the use of spiritual gifts. On the other hand, public worship should not be so casual as to lose reverence for the Almighty into whose august presence we have come.

What shall we sing? Whatever is sung in these gatherings must classify either as a psalm, hymn or spiritual song. A psalm is a sacred song, usually an Old Testament psalm chanted or joined with a melody all could follow. Not every psalm would be appropriate in the worship of Christians though many present unchangeable features of the character and workings of God which are always true and uplifting to contemplate. Psalms approving the use of incense, animal sacrifice, instrumental music or the expressed desire that enemies and their little ones be dashed against the wall, would certainly be unsuitable to be set to music and sung in gatherings of Christians. A hymn is a song of praise, an ode expressive of adoration and awe.

Some think that Paul employs elements of popularly used hymns of early Christians in some of his letters, as in Eph. 5:14, 1 Tim. 3:16 and 2 Tim. 2:11-14. The term "spiritual songs" is more general and would include sacred poems the sentiments of which are according to the word of Christ and which, when sung, manifest reverence toward Deity and offer safe and encouraging teaching to all present. Song leaders would be well advised to keep these terms in mind, with their stated objectives, when selecting songs for use in worship assemblies. We truly fear that these guidelines are often neglected.

The praise offered and the admonition given must emanate from hearts full of the grace of God. We are to sing "with grace in your (our) hearts to the Lord." Since it is "to the Lord"; then that means we must offer the best that is in us. If it is not from the heart then it is an empty mockery and creates a stench in the nostrils of the Lord of all. We see people terribly amused (some laughing aloud) when the most solemn themes are being sung. We see some standing defiantly with tightly sealed lips as if challenging anyone to even try to get THEM to sing. You can tell a great deal about the zeal of a congregation by the way its sings, or does not sing.

Whatever happened to the singing school? Why have brethren left it to the public school to teach boys and girls how to sing? Good congregational singing is a valuable asset to gospel preaching. When brethren wonder why we don't have meetings "like we used to", they might well consider their singing as a starting place. Have we allowed song leaders (or those who think that is what they are) to become so petty and jealous that they will create dissension should the elders invite a capable brother to come and give some singing instructions, and maybe lead the singing in a gospel meeting? Why should brethren think it acceptable to send away for a preacher to preach for a week (when they already have a local preacher) and think it might promote division to invite a talented song leader from another place to come and lead the singing? Are local song leaders more jealous than local preachers? Should brethren cater to such cheap attitudes? Local song leaders might even learn a few things from the talents of another.

For several years now we have been much concerned about the quality of songs selected to be used in public worship. We realize that all do not have the same tastes as to expressions of thought. The song that appears light to one may have greater expressive value to another. What some consider a beautiful song, others may regard as too "down-home", or corny. That is why it is good to have variety of scriptural songs. But since brethren have been using SACRED SELECTIONS by Ellis Crum, many congregations have been victimized by song leaders who prefer only the show-off quartet type songs, mainly of the Stamps-Baxter variety. We certainly do not object to all of the songs published by this company. But in a book with well over 600 songs, why must a congregation be limited to about 75 songs while some of the greatest songs of faith are never

used?

In the last 10 years of meeting work, every time "The Old Rugged Cross", or "Amazing Grace", or "Tell Me the Story of Jesus" was sung, I have had to ask for it. There are many songs which are reverent in tone, melodious to the ear, and expressive of rich spiritual thought which are not written on such a scale that it would take a trained opera singer to manage them. Recently, at a Sunday afternoon singing during a meeting in which I preached, I asked brother Theophilus Cook of the West End church in Louisville to lead "When Peace Like a River." He did so, very capably. Some came to me when it was over and said they had never heard that song. Some said they were moved to tears while they were singing it. Good singing lifts our spirits, points us toward heaven, challenges us to do better, encourages the broken hearted, fills us with awe at the thought of the great I AM.

I am not disposed to be a chronic censor of the song book. While there are some songs which are unscriptural (and we have never seen any song book totally exempt from all criticism), we certainly do believe in poetic license. It is possible to become so literal in our understanding of words that it would be impossible for some of the brethren to ever understand the book of Psalms or some of the prophetic writings where figures of speech abound. But for the life of me, it is hard to derive much spiritual food from "The Jericho Road", "Let Us Have a Little Talk With Jesus", or "I'll Be Somewhere List'ning For My Name." Some of the songs which the brethren seem to glory in, were written for Pentecostal-type camp meetings and were designed to show off bass, alto or tenor leads. The start and stop, hold your breath, let it out, pat your foot, up, down, in, out type of song seems to be what many of the song leaders prefer. Meanwhile, we have reared a generation of young people who do not know the great songs of faith. They are being greatly deprived and impoverished and we have many of our song leaders to blame for it.

During the Southside Lectures at Pasadena, Texas the first week of June, R.J. Stevens led the congregational singing. In addition to morning services and evening speeches, there were 30 minutes of congregational singing each night. Brother Stevens is not only an able preacher, but is one of the finest song leaders of our generation. He is capable but not a "show-off." And he leads singing—he does not make speeches. Deliver me from song leaders who do not know the difference! During that week I heard and joined in the singing of songs which I had not heard since I was a child. They were rich and expressive. Each night when the singing was over, I wanted more than ever to go to Heaven. There are a number of excellent song leaders who are capable of directing singing schools which would enrich any congregation. Good singing would help the preaching. It is hard not to do your best when you arise after a period of heartwarming psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Good singing teaches all present and is a powerful boost to evangelism.

We don't need choirs, quartets, or special performances. But we do need scriptural singing welling up from hearts that are awed by the grace of God. Whatever is done "unto the Lord" should be done to the best of our potential. Brethren, let's do something about the quality of our singing.

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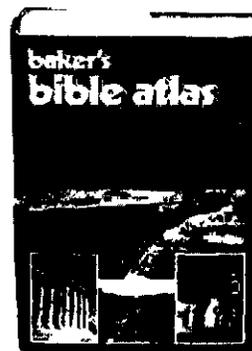
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SPECIAL FEATURE

THE HOLY SPIRIT

by
Franklin T. Puckett

THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (Acts 2:38)

The study of the Holy Spirit is so extensive and comprehensive that a thorough investigation of the subject would be impossible in the limited time we have. I have chosen **The Gift Of The Holy Spirit** as the subject for study this morning. The precise meaning of the above expression in Acts 2:38 is rather controversial.

What does "gift of the Holy Spirit" in this passage mean? Some confidently affirm that the "gift" is the Holy Spirit Himself. Others confidently affirm that the "gift" is a "measure" of the Spirit. Still others just as confidently affirm it is a blessing which the Holy Spirit bestows. It is quite evident that all of these answers cannot be right. The correct answer must come from the Bible, but what answer does the Bible give? This is the problem. In Biblical expression there is of-ten a great deal of ambiguity in the terms and word-forms employed. Many of the forms and thought-patterns found in New Testament writings were commonly employed by Old Testament prophets, and their meaning and proper use were quite familiar to the Jews of the First Century. We should, therefore, seek to project ourselves back into their time and circumstances, that we might better understand their use of such terms and expressions. The way they used them is the way we must understand them.

An Exegetical View Of The Passage

First, we must approach the study of the passage grammatically. We need to see what the text says—and what it does not say! In verse 37, those who were pricked in their heart cried: "Men, brethren, what shall we do?" The object of their question was to learn what they should do. The Holy Spirit responded through the Apostle Peter by saying: "Repent, and be baptized." This then, is what they should do. The action commanded extended to "every one of you." Obedience to the command must be "in the name," or within the authority, of Christ. The purpose, or design, of the action was "for (eis, unto, in order to) the remission of sins." The clause "Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit," declares the blessing promised to those who obey.

The passage says that those who obey the conditions stipulated "shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." That is all it says! It does not say they "shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit—as a **Person** to dwell **directly**, **immediately**, and **without means** or in-

strumentality, in your physical bodies." **This is what it does not say!** The point must not be merely assumed! For that conclusion to be established, positive proof of its correctness will have to be produced, and the proof is not in the passage itself.

What is the gift of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:38? Grammatically it may be either the Holy Spirit Himself, or it may be that which the Holy Spirit gives. The grammar does not determine whether the Holy Spirit is the gift or the giver. Some have labored diligently to prove that the grammar of the Greek text requires **tuu hagiou pneumatou** be recognized as a Possessive Genitive, in which case it would be either attributive or subjective (Wallace). Others have as diligently sought to prove that the phrase is an Objective Genitive, or an Appositional Genitive (Roberts, Robertson, et al.).

The truth of the matter is the grammatical structure does not reveal the kind of genitive involved. While it is possible for it to be an Appositional Genitive, the classification of the governing noun (gift) to which it is related would more likely make it either a Subjective Genitive or an Objective Genitive. When the Genitive is used with Nouns of Action, it "indicates the thing to which the action is referred, either as subject or object of the verbal idea" (DANA AND MANTEY, **A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament**, Sec. 5, p. 78). Gift is a noun of action, hence, the rule may apply.

When it is subjective, the genitive produces the action in the verbal noun to which it is joined. In this case, the Holy Spirit would be the giver of the gift received by those who meet the condition stipulated. When it is objective, the genitive receives the action in the noun to which it is joined (Ibid.). Here the Holy Spirit would be the gift bestowed on those who repent and are baptized.

An illustration of both the subjective and objective use of the same genitive form. Subjective Genitive (2 Cor. 13:14). Objective Genitive (John 5:42). When viewed solely from the grammatical structure, **tuu hagiou pneumatou** might be either a subjective or an objective genitive. "Some phrases are susceptible of either a possessive (attributive, subjective) or an objective signification" (GREEN, **Handbook to The Grammar of the Greek Testament**, Sec. 269, p. 218). In either case, the form would be the same, but the kind of genitive would have to be decided on the basis of accepted exegetical and hermeneutical rules. It cannot be arbitrarily assumed!

According to Greek lexical authorities, the precise meaning of the Genitive case in this and other similar passages must be determined on the basis of doctrinal truth rather than on grammatical form. "It is obvious from the preceding considerations that the distinction between the Subject and the Objective Genitive depends, not on grammatical, but on doctrinal reasons, and that these are to be carefully deduced from an accurate comparison of parallel passages" (WINER, **Grammar of the New Testament Diction**, Part III, Sec. xxx, p. 199).

This would make the conclusions of denominational

scholars at least subject to question, for they do not understand doctrinal truth. If they did, they would not be what they are. I am not, therefore, impressed by their conclusions, unless they can establish by Scriptural reasoning a sound, logical basis for such conclusions.

Let us examine some comparative passages where the same grammatical form is found. (1) The "gift of God" (John 4:10); (2) the "gift of Christ" (Eph. 4:7); (3) the "gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). In the first two passages the genitive (God, Christ) is clearly the giver of the gift, and in the third passage the genitive (Holy Spirit) could be the giver of the gift rather than the gift itself.

When it has been determined that a genitive is either subjective or objective, one is still faced with the problem of deciding whether it is to be understood literally or metaphorically. If it could be proved that the gift in Acts 2:38 is an objective or appositional genitive, it would not necessarily follow that the Holy Spirit when considered as the "gift" signifies the divine Person of the godhead. The term "Holy Spirit" could be metaphorical rather than literal. The names of persons are often used in the Scriptures metonymically.

In discussing metonymy, Dungan says: "God and Christ and the Holy Spirit are frequently mentioned, whereas the result of their efforts in the redemption of the race is intended" (DUNGAN, **Hermeneutics**, Sec. 59, p. 271). Fairbairn says, "for the sake of point and brevity, the object or person is identified with the result, or with the natural cause and instrument of effecting it, as if they were one and the same" (FAIRBAIRN, **Hermeneutical Manual**, Sec. viii, p. 160). Berkhof says that metonymy "indicates such relations as cause and effect, progenitor and posterity, subject and attribute, sign and things signified. Paul says in 1 Thess. 5:19, 'Quench not the Spirit,' when he refers to the special manifestations of the Spirit. And when in the parable of Dives and Lazarus, Abraham says, 'They have Moses and the **Prophets**,' Luke 16:29, he naturally means their writings" (BERKHOF, **Principles of Interpretation**, Chap. V, pp. 83, 84).

Bullinger presents several passages of Scripture, where Spirit, or Holy Spirit, is put for the gifts and operations of the Spirit. "John 3:34—'For God giveth not the Spirit by measure to Him:' i.e., the gift and operations produced by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a person, and cannot, therefore, be measured out or given by measure. The 'measure' must consequently mean the measure of His power or gifts bestowed." "Eph. 5:18—'Be filled with the Spirit:' i.e., not with the Person of the Holy Spirit surely! but with His operations: i.e., with the gifts which come through the ministry of the Word; as is clear from Col. iii. 16, where this effect is produced by the same cause: viz., occupation of the heart with God—the Word of Christ dwelling richly within us." "1 Thess. 5:19—'Quench not the Spirit:' i.e., do not hinder in yourself or in others the use of spiritual gifts" (BULLINGER, **Figures of Speech**, p. 540).

Since Bullinger was a Calvinist and believed in a direct operation of the Holy Spirit in a person separate and apart from the word of truth, and since his monumental work was reprinted and is distributed by Baker Book House—a Calvinist oriented press, his testimony on the point involved takes on even greater weight and should provoke thought on the part of some of our own brethren.

So, even if it could be proved grammatically that the genitive in Acts 2:38 is objective and not subjective (a thing that can never be done), the "gift of the Holy Spirit" most certainly could refer to an **effect produced** by the Holy Spirit rather than to the Holy Spirit as a divine Person. The true meaning of the phrase, therefore, cannot be determined on the basis of grammatical structure or terminology, but must be decided on the ground of doctrinal truth logically and Scripturally established both contextually and in uniformity with the totality of divine revelation. This calls for exegesis and interpretation. Again, that very fact makes the theological conclusions of denominational translators/commentators on the point in question at least suspect of error. To quote some new translation or Calvinian commentary does not settle the issue! I want to know the exegetical and hermeneutical principles that produced these translations and commentaries.

The Holy Spirit Is A Giver Of Gifts

While in some passages the Holy Spirit is the gift bestowed (John 7:39; Acts 10:44,45; 11:15-17), in others He is the bestower of gifts (1 Cor. 12:4; Heb. 2:4). When the Holy Spirit is spoken of as a gift bestowed, the reference may not be to the divine Person Himself, but, by metonymy, to the operations and effects produced by the Holy Spirit. In such cases, these operations and effects, together with the Spirit who produced them, are considered as a gift bestowed from God. When the Holy Spirit is spoken of as the bestower of the gift, the reference is to the identity of the divine Being who produced the operations and effects. In the first instance, emphasis is placed on the effects produced; in the second, emphasis is placed on the producer of those effects.

There is one Spirit (Eph. 4:4), but different gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:4), any one of which would be "a gift of the Spirit," and when specifically marked out, would be in its distinctive limitation "the gift of the Holy Spirit." Objection! The word for "gift" in 1 Cor. 12:4 is not the same as in Acts 2:38. True! But the difference lies not in a distinction between kinds or classes of gifts. Both words may be and often are used for the same gifts. No matter what kind or how many the gifts may be, there is but one Spirit. That one Spirit cannot be divided up into "measures" and distributed out into bits and parcels, but He divides and distributes gifts to men "as He wills" (1 Cor. 12:11; Heb. 2:4).

There are different kinds of gifts which the Spirit bestows. There is **The baptism of the Holy Spirit** (Acts 1:5; 2:1-4; 10:44,45; 11:15-17). There are only two cases

of this gift being bestowed (Acts 2:1-4; 11:15,16). Study its nature and purpose. Miraculous powers were imparted through the laying on of apostolic hands (Acts 8:14-20; 19:1-6; Cf. 1 Cor. 12:7-11). These gifts ceased with the completion of divine revelation and the death of the last apostle and those upon whom they had laid their hands (Cf. 1 Cor. 13:8-10). Then there is the "ordinary" gift to those who repent and are baptized (Acts 2:38). This gift, whatever it may be, will be bestowed as long as men believe in Jesus Christ as Lord, repent of their sins, and are baptized in His name for the remission of sins. This gift does not belong to either of the preceding classes and is not miraculous or supernatural in its nature.

What Is The Gift Of The Holy Spirit in Acts 2:38?

Is it the Holy Spirit Himself as a divine Being bestowed on those who repent and are baptized? Or is it something which the Holy Spirit bestows on those who repent and are baptized? The answer cannot be decided on the basis of grammatical structure or possible definitions, but will have to be determined contextually and according to doctrinal truth.

A study of verse 39, which is a part of Peter's answer can be of help in understanding what the gift is. The conjunction **gar** (translated "for") connecting this verse with the preceding one is most commonly used to introduce the reason for or to give an explanation of that which precedes. If follows, then, that the reason for the statement "ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit", is "the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Whatever the promise is, it extends to the Jews and their posterity, and to all the Gentiles (Cf. Eph. 2:11-13). There are many promises, but this is a particular promise extending to successive generations of both Jews and Gentiles, and given to those who meet the conditions upon which the gift promised is predicated.

Now, what is "the gift of the Holy Spirit" involved in this promise? Is it the gift of "Holy Ghost baptism?" Question: Do all who are "called of God" receive Holy Ghost baptism? No! Such was never promised "unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

Is it the gift of "miraculous powers?" Certainly not! Such were imparted through the laying on of apostolic hands (Acts 8:16). While the gifts of Holy Spirit baptism and miraculous powers were promised, they were not and could not be the gift of Acts 2:38.

Is the gift, then, the third Person of the godhead, the divine Being Himself, to dwell—actually and literally, directly, immediately, and without medium, completely separate and apart as a person in the physical bodies of all who repent and are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins? If so where is that promise found? Give me the passage. I want to look at it and see what it says and what it does not say.

Is the gift a **blessing** given by the Holy Spirit, and bestowed in keeping with a definite promise upon those who meet the conditions stipulated? Gram-

matically it could be; definitively it could be; doctrinally it is! Furthermore, this blessing extends to "as many as the Lord our God shall call."

Well, what is "the promise" referred to in verse 39? Is it "the promise of the Spirit" in verse 33? Here again we are faced with the necessity of deciding whether this is a subjective or an objective genitive. Does it refer to a giving of the Spirit Himself, or to a promise given by the Spirit? Remember, it must be determined on a doctrinal basis in keeping with both contextual and analogical truth. Now, if it refers to the Spirit Himself, the gift was manifested in what was being seen and heard. But they were seeing miraculous demonstrations and hearing divine revelation. So, this could not be the gift of Acts 2:38, for this was never promised to all who repent and are baptized. If it refers to a promise made by the Spirit, that promise was fulfilled in the resurrection and exaltation of Christ to the throne of David as foretold by the Spirit through the prophets (2 Sam. 7:12; Psa. 16:8-10; 89:35-37; 132:10-12; Cf. Psalm 110:1-4; Zech. 6:13). This I am persuaded is the true meaning of Christ receiving "the promise of the Spirit" in verse 33.

Having been raised from the dead and exalted to the throne of David as promised by the Spirit, Christ now sheds forth this supernatural manifestation in keeping with His promise to the apostles (John 14:16,17,26; 15:26; 16:7,8,13; Acts 1:4,5). But the promise of Christ to the apostles, was not a promise to "as many as the Lord our God shall call," therefore it could not be the promise of verse 39.

In the supernatural manifestation of the Spirit on Pentecost, the promise of God through the prophet Joel became a reality (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:16-21). Acts 2:16-21 is an inspired rendition of Joel 2:28-32. Peter was speaking as the Spirit gave him utterance (Acts 2:4). Joel says, "It shall come to pass afterward;" Peter says, "It shall come to pass in the last days." It follows that "afterward" in Joel's prophecy means "in the last days," or in the gospel dispensation. The prophecy, then, has a dispensational fulfillment.

Joel says, "I will **pour out my Spirit** upon all flesh;" Peter says, "I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh." To pour out the Spirit was to pour "out of" or "out from," the Spirit. It was not the Spirit Himself that was poured out, but God poured out something from the Spirit. The preposition of is from the Greek apo, which is defined as "from signifying now Separation, now Origin" (THAYER, **Greek-English Lexicon**, p. 57). Winer says, "Apo is used to denote simply the point from which motion (action) proceeds" (WINER, **Grammar of the New Testament Diction**, p. 382).

Notice it is God who does the pouring. He pours out of (from) the Spirit, denoting the point from which that which is poured out proceeds. He does not pour out the Holy Spirit Himself, but the blessings and effects which proceed from the Spirit. These blessings and effects are as follows: (a) Prophetic revelation (Joel 2:28,29; Acts 2:17,18); (b) miraculous demonstration (Joel 2:30,31; Acts 2:19,20); spiritual salvation (Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21).

These can be correctly called gifts of the Spirit. The Spirit gave prophetic revelation to the apostles, and through the laying on of their hands the same power was given to others; the Spirit gave the power of miraculous demonstration to the apostles, and through the laying on of their hands the same power was given to others; the same Spirit also gave deliverance to the "remnant whom the Lord shall call," or salvation to those who "call on the name of the Lord" (Acts 2:21).

Deliverance equates salvation, and the remnant whom the Lord calls is made up of those who "call on the name of the Lord." One calls on the Lord for salvation through obedience to the conditions upon which salvation is offered (Rom. 10:13-16). So, salvation is a gift of (or from) the Holy Spirit, poured out along with and at the same time when divine revelation and miraculous demonstrations of the Spirit were given to usher in the gospel dispensation.

The supernatural gifts were poured out for a limited time upon a select few for the purpose of inspiration, revelation, and confirmation, but salvation is a spiritual gift poured out for all time upon all who obey the gospel, whether Jew or Gentile. This, then, is the gift contained in "the promise" of Acts 2:39, which extends "unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." And, as suggested by the use of the conjunction *gar*, herein lies the reason for and the explanation of "the gift of the Holy Spirit" in verse 38.

The charge of redundancy and repetition is made against this position. Answer: "Remission of sins" and "salvation" are not equivalents. Remission of sins is a condition of and precedent to salvation. Salvation is a consequent result of remission of sins. Hence, there is no repetition or redundancy in saying that in this passage salvation is "the gift of the Holy Spirit," which those who "repent and are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" shall receive. The charge is false and should be repudiated. This position is completely harmonious to the Abrahamic covenant of promise, the predictions of the prophets, and the revelations of the gospel.

A Study Of The Abrahamic Covenant Of Promise

God gave many promises to His people, but there was one promise, which, in the Jewish mind, stood out far above and beyond all others. This was the promise made to Abraham that through him and his seed all nations would be blessed (Gen. 12:1-3; 18:18; 22:16-18; Gal. 3:16-22). The blessing is declared to be an inheritance (v. 18), and is conditioned upon faith (v. 22).

This promise is said to be fulfilled in and through Christ (Gal. 3:16). The fulfillment was foretold by the prophets (Acts 3:24-26). Let us look at one of the prophecies (Psalm 2:1-8). It was fulfilled in the opposition to and rejection of the Christ (vv. 1-3; Acts 4:23-30). It was fulfilled in the resurrection and exaltation of the Christ (vv. 4-6; Acts 13:26-33; Heb. 1:1-5; 5:5). It was fulfilled in the blessings extended under an everlasting covenant—the gospel of Christ (v. 7;

Acts 13:34; Isa. 55:3; Heb. 13:20,21). The "sure mercies," or the "holy and sure blessings" (ASV) of David, were the forgiveness of his sins (Rom. 4:6-8; Cf. Psalm 32:1-5). This forgiveness was made possible only through the sacrificial blood of Christ (Heb. 9:22; 10:1-4; 9:13-17).

It was fulfilled in Christ's inheritance of the heathen (nations, NASV) for a possession (v. 8; Eph. 1:15-18; Acts 10,11 chs.). The promise and the inheritance are joined together (Rom. 4:13-16). When the inheritance is gained, the promise is fulfilled. The inheritance to be gained is imputed righteousness (Rom. 4:20-25), but righteousness is imputed to the man who through the obedience of faith obtains the forgiveness of his sins (Rom. 4:4-8). When one complies with the conditions of pardon, he obtains the blessing (is accounted righteous, not guilty, pardoned) in fulfillment of the promise.

Notice how closely the facts preached, the commands delivered, and the promise extended in Acts 2, harmonize with the outline of Psalm 2.

How Is The Promise Fulfilled To Abraham And To His Seed?

Who is the seed? "And to thy seed, which is Christ" (Gal. 3:16). There is one seed—not seeds. This could hardly refer to the personal Being of Christ, although it is through Him as a personal Being that the fulfillment of the promise is made possible. Paul says, "They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of promise are counted for the seed" (Rom. 9:8). The seed and the children of God are equated. The children of God constitute the body of Christ (Rom. 12:4,5). That body is one—not many (1 Cor. 12:12,20). Therefore, we conclude that this one body of Christ, though composed of many members, is Abraham's seed to whom the promise was made.

The promise, then, is fulfilled to Abraham, and to his seed (the spiritual body of Christ), who through the grace of God and a faith like that of Abraham obtain the forgiveness of their sins (Rom. 4:3-8,16). Consider the nature of Abraham's faith. What is the blessing promised?

It is the blessing given to Abraham upon the ground of his faith (Rom. 4:3,22). That blessing is being accounted righteous, or being justified (accounted not guilty, innocent, pardoned) (Rom. 4:5). Justification by faith is the blessing promised to Abraham and his seed (Gen. 12:1-3; Gal. 3:7-9). This justification by faith (being accounted innocent, not guilty, pardoned), is the blessing graciously bestowed upon those "whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered" (Rom. 4:6-8). Let it be remembered that forgiveness of sins is conditional, and he who would obtain the forgiveness of his sins in order that he might be justified, must obey the conditions upon which such forgiveness is predicated. The grace of God will grant forgiveness of sins to those who meet the conditions stipulated, but the grace of God in the forgiveness of sins is not promised to those who fail to meet those

conditions. This blessing (justification by faith) was accounted to Abraham on the basis of his faith (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:3), and is also granted to his seed (the children of God), who walk in the steps of Abraham's faith (Rom. 4:9-12, 22-25). Notice this blessing extends to both Jews and Gentiles (vv. 11b, 12; Cf. Acts 2:39). It was "witnessed by the law and the prophets" (Rom. 3:21,22), and is fulfilled "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (v. 24), to those "who believe in Jesus" (v. 26), whether Jew or Gentile (vv. 28,29).

How was the blessing made possible? Not by law (Gal. 3:10-12), but through the sacrificial death of Christ (vv. 13,14). Remember the "blessing of Abraham" is justification by faith (v. 8). This blessing was promised by the Spirit to Abraham and his seed (Gen. 12:3; Acts 3:24-26). Since inspired men spoke by the Spirit, the blessing foretold is a "promise of the Spirit" (v. 14). The "promise of the Spirit" does not refer to the Holy Spirit being given as a divine Person, but to the promise which the Holy Spirit gave of a blessing to Abraham and his seed.

The "promise of the Father" does not refer to the Father Himself being promised, but to a promise given from the Father (Acts 1:4). How and where is the blessing obtained and enjoyed? We become the children of God and Abraham's seed "by faith" and "in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26). The phrase "in Christ Jesus" refers not merely to the object of our faith, but to inclusion in the spiritual relation denoted by that phrase. This involves union with and oneness in Christ. This can be seen from the reason and explanation (introduced by the preposition *gar*) in v. 27, of what was said in v. 26. Here it is, "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (v. 27). Therefore, those who by faith are baptized into Christ are the children of God in Him. In Him all the children of God are made one (Abraham's seed) and "heirs according to the promise" (vv. 28,29). Heirs of what promise? Clearly it is the blessing of justification by faith promised to Abraham, and to his seed (Gal. 3:8,16). Notice how these doctrinal truths contextually established fit in precisely with what is actually said in Acts 2.

CONCLUSION

The "gift of the Holy Spirit" in Acts 2:38 cannot be determined on the basis of either grammatical or definitive arguments. When considered contextually and in harmony with Biblical teaching concerning "the promise," the conclusion is reached that the "gift of the Holy Spirit" is justification by faith or spiritual salvation. This conclusion can be further strengthened by a contextual study of John 7:37-39; Acts 3:19-26; 5:27-32; Eph. 3:1-6. I only ask for an honest, prayerful, and fair treatment of the things I have said. I pray God that truth and only truth has been taught.

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ON BEARING BURDENS

QUESTION: A recent discussion in our Bible class on Gal. 6 left some problems unresolved for me. Please harmonize verses 2 and 5 and explain verse 4.—LD.

ANSWER: In order that these verses may be seen in the light of their context, let us read verses one through five:

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden" (Gal. 6:1-5).

Verse two obligates us to be of help to one another in the varied problems, trials, and necessities of life. If one is burdened with guilt, we are obligated to help him see his guilt and encourage him to cleanse himself of such in harmony with God's will. If he is depressed in spirit, full of sorrow, and in a state of despair, we are obligated, commensurate with our ability, to speak words of encouragement and comfort and perform deeds that will lift him from despair and relieve the pressure of whatever may be his burden. Thus, we are to "bear one another's burdens."

Verse five teaches us that we must bear our own burden of responsibility in "fulfilling the law of Christ." No one else can do it for me! You cannot obey the gospel for me. You cannot visit the sick for me. You cannot minister to the needy, speak words of truth and comfort for me. I must bear my own responsibility in such matters. Hence, different burdens are under consideration in verses two and five. In the original text (Greek) different words for "burden" appear, namely, "**Baros**" (V. 2) and "**Phortion**" (V. 5). The former primarily means that which is heavy while the latter simply means that which is carried. This variation in meaning is most fitting according to the use of the words in verses two and five.

Verse four can best be understood in the light of verse three which warns against self deception. We often deceive ourselves because we prove our work by the wrong standard. We bring others ("another"-V.4) into the picture and judge ourselves to be all right because

of their approval and praise. This, however, does not necessarily follow. Jesus said: "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets" (Lk. 6:26). We also deceive ourselves by measuring ourselves and our work by others. I have observed that when such is done, we usually measure ourselves by one who gives us a definite advantage. Paul warns against this, saying: "For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. . . . For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth" (2 Cor. 10:12,18).

Paul is teaching in verse four that if one would truly "prove his own work," he should leave others out of the picture and measure himself in the light of the proper standard. If you would see yourself as you really are, then stand yourself up beside the Lord. When one's life harmonizes with the Lord and His word, he shall "have rejoicing in himself alone (in the light of the true standard—mep) and not in another (without regard to others, either by comparison or by their approval and praise—mep)."

Restoration Footnotes

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THE LAST OF THE "OLD GUARD"

More than four decades have passed since the voice and pen of F. B. Srygley were stilled by death. But what R. L. Whiteside wrote of him at the time is historically accurate: "It can truthfully be said that there is not, there was not, another like him in all the earth." He meant that Srygley was so unique in character that the adherents of New Testament Christianity never saw but one of his kind.

Back in the 1880's when Srygley was beginning his evangelistic ministry in the hills and hollows of Northwest Alabama, he was already recognized as "a clear and original thinker, a deliberate and forceful speaker, and a free, social commingler with the people." (Larimore and His Boys, p. 171.) These and other qualities, natural and acquired, blended to make him the exceptional preacher Whiteside knew him to be.

Srygley's public life spanned the period of digression and division that diverted the once-unified restorers of "the ancient order of things" from their original goal of restoration and unity upon the Bible alone. The "progressive" leaders among his brethren, generally better educated and financed than their "conservative" counterparts, were already carrying many of the restored churches toward denominationalism when he began preaching. And by the time of his death in 1940, the disciples of Christ were permanently separated into two "brotherhoods" usually distinguished as "Disciples of Christ" or "Christian Church" (progressive) and "churches of Christ" (conservative).

Circumstances threatened for a time to thrust young Srygley into the "progressive" camp. But he had commenced his Christian life under the preaching John Taylor, T. B. Larimore, and James M. Pickens, men committed to "the Bible only" as their authority in religion. His godly parents had also accepted this standard and instilled devotion to it in their children. These early influences, together with his own study, led him to take his stand for the "old paths" and he never departed from it.

Srygley's remarkable life and work is enhanced by the fact that he was, insofar as the Gospel Advocate is concerned, the last of the "Old Guard," as the men of that journal were called in the heyday of its battle with digression and sectarianism. This distinction was acknowledged by younger co-workers of Srygley who themselves soon followed him across the dark river.

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These men saw his death as removing from the editorial staff of the Advocate what John T. Lewis described as "the last of that galaxy of men who for more than fifty years made the Advocate a tower of strength for the 'old paths.'"

But it was not longevity that endeared the grand old warrior to his brethren; it was rather the special nature of his' spiritual service. This is evident from the measured praise he received from his associates on the Advocate.

Whiteside said: "Occasionally there arises a man whose life, character, and work are so outstanding that we do not see how we can get along without them. Such a man was F. B. Srygley."

In the view of L. L. Brigrance, Srygley was "a great balance wheel" who "kept the rest of us from flying off at a tangent."

"Those who read his editorials," H. Leo Boles wrote, "can bear testimony that he waged a relentless warfare against every encroachment on the truth of God and against the enemies of the church of the Lord."

B. C. Goodpasture, editor of the Advocate at the time of Srygley's death and the one under whose guidance the journal later became a leading promoter of institutionalism, correctly described Srygley as a man who "would not wink at error in the practice of anyone, not even his most intimate friends."

And W. E. Brightwell saw Srygley as a person who "possessed all the essential elements of greatness, except the promotional proclivities of leadership." (Quotations from the Gospel Advocate, except as noted.)

There can be little doubt but that the departure of Srygley, "the last of the old guard," removed a major restraint from the Advocate's leftward drift. The 1940s saw the conservative voices in the paper gradually replaced by promoters and defenders of institutionalism, sponsored cooperation, and elements of the social gospel. No balance wheels were permitted a place on the staff and the Advocate's pages were closed to dissent, while the liberal "tangent" was pursued to the division of the churches across the land.

But whatever the Advocate became afterward, it was in no way due to weakness on the part of Srygley. He was a warrior to the very end "against every kind of encroachment on the truth of God." He did not spend his final days chasing rainbows and tiptoeing through the tulips with digressive brethren who had been his opponents in earlier times.

He was not only the last of the "Old Guard," but he was the "Old Guard" to the last.

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NEHEMIAH: LET US RISE UP & RESTORE The Place of Prayer, in Spiritual Revival—(Part 2)

In our last study together we saw in Nehemiah 9 the place of prayer in restoring the spiritual health of God's people. Then we made specific application to the needs of God's people today. One of the greatest needs of the church today is to develop this vital and living relationship with the Lord. We made the point that we need to know God in the most intimate way possible. We have substituted many things for spending time with God in prayer.

In years gone by, when life was slower and less complicated, our grandparents would rise early in the morning and spend an hour or two reading, studying, and praying to a God whom they knew, as did Moses, face to face. Then they would go to the fields to work: to plow, till or harvest. All day long these passages would be turning over and over in their minds as they meditated on spiritual matters. Was it any wonder/then that Christianity was a growing, meaningful and dynamic part of the lives of a generation or two now past? Our grandmothers would put on the back burner of the stove a pot of stew, which would simmer all day long until its contents had cooked down low. The smell would fill the entire house, and it would be ready just about the same time as the corn-bread was ready to come out of the oven, thus proving that success takes many key ingredients, the most important of which was TIME.

Today we live in the age of "micro-wave Christianity." We put the same ingredients in a paper bowl, and place it for 35 seconds in the micro-wave oven, and thus we have stew. But, you do not have the same stew that grandmother used to make. Why? You used the same ingredients, but not enough time was spent or allowed for producing the same result. So it is with our religion today. We live in a world of telephone poles and push-button phones, asphalt, chrome, double-knit, plastic and polyester for at least 16 to 18 hours a day. We spend little or no time in the spiritual realm of Paul's unseen world (II Cor. 4:18), and we wonder why the church is materialistic and worldly.

Our first proof of how far we have slipped is seen in our collective attitude toward prayer. Consider what we used to call our Wednesday evening gathering. We used to call it "prayer meeting." Now how many public meetings do we have each week devoted to prayer? Oh,

not a meeting called for some other purpose with a long prayer at the beginning and a short prayer at the end, but rather for the purpose of praying collectively for our needs? To my knowledge, there is only one congregation that assembles regularly, on Monday night, for the purpose of prayer. Brethren, that is SAD! Nehemiah, in Chapter 1, Verse 4, "sat down and wept and mourned for days; and was fasting and praying before the God of heaven." Then in Chapter 9, he seeks to pass on this ability to draw near to God in prayer to the people

Stop for a moment and analyze the needs of the congregation where you attend. Are there members who have grown cold and left the faith? Are there weak members who are not growing? What about the elders and the decisions that they need to make which will affect every member? What about their actions as to being examples and leaders in each phase of such work? What about the preacher and his lessons, sermons, and his family? What about the growth of the church and the salvation of souls in home Bible studies? What about opportunities to teach the gospel to friends and neighbors? What about the work of the men we support who are working in difficult areas? What about the division in the church over doctrines and personalities? In various places congregations are rocked to their foundations by division over decisions, qualifications of elders, and personalities. Usually, one hot business meeting after another explodes on Sunday afternoons. Sometimes, we get out our Bibles and try to study the Word, but usually that ends in more heated arguing. In such cases, what would have been the results if at the beginning of troubles, these "business meetings" had been replaced with "Prayer Meetings?" Or, where hours of bitter arguing had been replaced with hours of fervent prayer? YOU supply the answer!

Secondly, we can see just how far we have slipped individually by counting the days or nights that we have set aside an entire period of time for prayer to our God. Society has given us a phrase in relation to parenting: "It is not the quantity of time, but the quality of the time we spend with our children." Such is one of the dumbest things I have ever heard! Tell that to a teenager who has just fallen in love: "it's not the quantity, but the quality" and then limit the phone calls to 3 minutes. Even a teenager can and will remind you that "you can't have quality without quantity!"

So it is with God. We can't have quality time with God without the proper quantity of time. This is a daily process and even beyond. The need to get away for an extended period of time, as did Nehemiah, Daniel, Moses, Paul and the Lord, is ever before us. We not only have neglected our collective responsibility in prayer, but we have also neglected our individual responsibility. When is the LAST TIME YOU SPENT ALL DAY, most of the day, or even a greater part of the day in prayer? Our honesty is primary, because the Lord already knows! But what would we do in a whole day of prayer? Maybe we have failed here because we don't realize the need, or maybe because we are un-

certain as to what to do. The assignment to pray for more than 20 minutes would result in panic for most of us. What then should be the purpose for planning a day in prayer?

1. **It is a time for extended fellowship with God.**

In Mal. 3:1, the Lord gave attention to those that feared Him and had spoken to each other about Him. God seeks our fellowship. This we discussed in the last article. The poem of G.A. Studdert, after discussing what happened to Jesus when they nailed Him to a tree having crowned Him with thorns, says:

"When Jesus came to our town, they simply passed him by;

They never hurt a hair on him, they only let Him die.
For men had grown more tender, and they would not give him pain;

They just passed down the street and left Him in the rain."

Just so is our attitude when we ignore fellowship with Him.

2. **It is a time for a renewed perspective.**

From time to time we need to take inventory and see things from a different perspective. We need to sharpen our vision of the unseen and to give only the proper priorities to the tangible and material world. The Lord told the zealots in John 6: "to labor not for the meat that perishes, but for that which gives eternal life. It is during such periods of evaluation that we can determine the perishing from the imperishable.

3. **It is a time for intercession.**

Remember there is but one Mediator, and we know that our prayers and intercessions on the behalf of others are vital! The elders are charged with the care and feeding of the sheep, and what is more important concerning such care and feeding than prayer by each of us for them. Ask in any Sunday morning assembly who among those present does not need the fervent prayers of the Elders in his/her behalf? Now, another question: How often, as an Elder, do you spend time in what is most effective in answering those needs, — PRAYER? How much effort is put into praying for the marriages that are about to fail, for the besetting sins to be overcome, for the success of evangelistic efforts? The intercessory prayer for those in need demands days and nights be spent in prayer by those in places of spiritual leadership. How can preachers, elders, Bible class teachers neglect prayer and still hope to be effective?

4. **It is a time for adequate preparation.**

It was during this time of prayer (Neh. 1:4), that the Lord put in his heart what to do concerning Jerusalem (Neh. 2:12). In response to the prayer of this mighty man, God placed in his heart the wisdom to know what to do concerning Jerusalem. What a tragic thing it is not to be prepared to do what God gives us opportunity to do. We must be ready to give the answer, and that takes study. Beyond that, it is strength of providence that only God can give. The life of Joseph is a beautiful illustration of this principle. Gen. 39:21: "The Lord was with him . . . and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden." Isn't that what we

need over and over again? Simply, for the Lord to be with us and grant us favor in the eyes of people we are trying to teach or to serve? Why is it, when we teach a lesson, preach a sermon, or make a personal work presentation that people like it? Simply because of the power of God in the Gospel, and that He has "granted favor in their eyes."

Now, the question of purpose is behind us, and the question of HOW lies before us. How do we go about this type of activity?

First of all, it takes a place of privacy where one can be totally alone and without interruption or distraction.

Secondly, we should divide the day into three basic parts:

A. Worshiping & Glorifying The Lord. We need to read His word to help prime our spiritual pump. The Psalms are excellent to set the tone of the day, thanking Him for everything He has done for us in our lives. After expressing everything possible in specific words, we ought then to seek cleansing of our lives, for we are still sinners before Him who is perfect. Psalms 51 & 32 are examples of such cleansing. Here we need to examine our relationship with our brethren and note specific wrongs that we intend to correct and set right. Finally, a part of this day is for praise and worship. Psalms 103, 111, and 115 are wonderful examples. Or, seek to visualize Revelation 4 and 5 as praise to Him. Then take your song book and read/sing some of the more meaningful hymns to Him, as you make a "joyful noise to the Lord."

B. The Second Part of the Day Will Be The Prayer For Others.

Read Paul's prayer for the Ephesians and Colossians. This is the time for interpersonal prayer. Pray for others what you are praying for yourself.

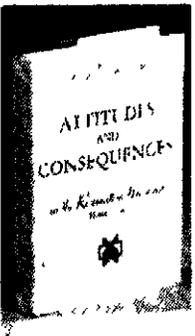
C. The Third Part of the Day Will Be Prayer For Yourself. Of course space prevents us from completing this discussion of what we need in this prayer. Yet, in general, we are looking for prayer of concern in your personal life, for spiritual growth, for God's presence, and for God's protection.

These are some of the necessities for spiritual renewal.

**Attitudes and Consequences
in the Restoration Movement**

By Homer Hailey. The aim of this work has been to trace the development of two attitudes toward the Scripture authority in the Restoration Movement: that of the early spirits in the movement, and another which grew up within it, leading ultimately to division.

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CONWAY SKINNER PASSES

by James R. Cope

After a lengthy bout with cancer Conway Skinner, in his early 50s, passed this life in a Jacksonville, Florida, hospital June 2, 1982. One of five children, with two sisters and two brothers, one of whom is a preacher, Conway was tremendously influenced by the great faith of his devout and aged mother who reared her family in Montgomery, Alabama, and who survives him, as do his devoted wife, the former Roberta Ledford, and three children, Darrell, Diane and Dale.

Though his geographical travels were not particularly widespread, his influence in the areas where and among the churches with which he labored was great and always for good. Most of his ministerial life was spent in the Southeast. He began preaching at age 16. He graduated from Alabama Christian College in 1951.

I first knew Brother Skinner when he labored with the Air Force Base Church in Valdosta, Georgia. In more recent years he worked with churches in Beaufort, South Carolina, and Tallahassee, Florida. He served as an elder at Westside in Tallahassee. Less than two years ago he began with Lakeshore in Jacksonville.

Brother Skinner never aspired to great personal recognition. He labored where he felt he was truly needed, whether in cities or among rural people. He held many gospel meetings for rural churches. He had a great interest in and an unusually strong sense of caring for the physically and financially unfortunate. An optimist of the first order, spreading sunshine was a part of his very being. Though very forthright in expressing his conviction on religious issues, he was exceedingly patient and charitable toward those of differing views. He was without egotism and reluctant to put himself forward. He was strictly a Bible preacher, conservative in his approach to Bible interpretation and life itself, yet he was most generous in the giving of himself in whatever his heart and hand found to do. He had a level head and was especially strong at ameliorating differences between brethren.

Whether at work or play, Conway gave himself unreservedly in the feat demanding his immediate attention. He sought to keep a strong and healthy body as a tabernacle for a strong and healthy spirit. He was a participant in sports and particularly enjoyed tennis. He was ever supportive of those who give themselves to strengthening the moral and spiritual fiber of youth while they train the mind in secular areas along with the physical body.

It was my privilege to be an honored recipient of the hospitality extended by Conway and Roberta on many occasions in different places. Truly "to know him was to love him" fits well the life and memory of this intelligent, capable, modest, sincere, godly gospel preacher. I loved him much. I shall miss him greatly.

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WILDERCROFT NEAR WASHINGTON, D.C.

During March 21-26 of this year I was with the Clintwood, Va. church and brother Jimmy Thomas in a Gospel Meeting. I have known both this good church and preacher for a good many years. Since my last meeting there, several years ago, much progress has been made by the church and I rejoice with them to see such.

On March 28 I preached for the Wildercroft Church in Riverdale, Maryland. This is just Northeast of Washington, D.C. The address of the meeting house is 6330 Auburn Avenue, Riverdale, Md.20737.

I was born in Washington, D.C. and it was a joy to return home, visit with brethren most of whom I had not met, and renew friendships with several I had known in other parts of the nation. I was much impressed with the Adult Bible Class that Lord's Day morning, both with its teacher, Jim Vaughan, and the way the class entered into the discussion of the topic of Bible Authority as they used brother Billy Moore's book on this subject as a guide. The congregation is overseen by three elders, Vernon Klemm, Sid Miller and Jim Vaughan. I was impressed with their desire to follow the Scriptures and lead the congregation in the Scriptural way as we spent an entire afternoon discussing current church problems.

The late, beloved Denton Neal preached for them for several years and laid a foundation upon which they are building for the future. I received the bulletin from this church for several years. In this bulletin, brother Neal often would write a short article on some subject.

The bulletin, *The Open Door*, of the Church at Grant and Summits Sts. Portsmouth, Ohio, of June 7, 1967, quoted from his pen as follows: "A LETTER OF JUST LAST WEEK from the "Women's Auxiliary for Christian Education of Alabama Christian College" reads: "Alabama Christian College, a Church of Christ related College, is planning to publish a new cookbook. We are collecting recipes from Church of Christ women. . . ." **THIS PROVOKES SEVERAL QUESTIONS** in my mind —and I hope in the minds of many others.

"1. How is this, or any other, college "Church of Christ related?" What is the "relation" to "the" or any "Church of Christ?" How did it get "related?"

"Is it related in the same way an AAMCO Transmission Shop might be "related," that is, members of the church of Christ operate it? If so, let's keep the

"relation" the same between the church and both the transmission shop and the college —and ALL HUMAN INSTITUTIONS.

"2. Does their solicitation of "Church of Christ women" exclude some "Christian" women, or do they just want to be sure to include some who are not Christians?!

"They will be offering "FAVORITE HOMEMAKERS RECIPES FROM THE CHURCH OF CHRIST" they say.

Will the "CHURCH OF CHRIST" Imprimatur on a book of recipes assure the same success, gastronomically, as the "meat," "bread of life" and "milk of the word" which it dispenses effects spiritually?

"THE CHURCH IS DIVINE, it has no "relations." Let's keep our speech "as the oracles of God".

An article from his pen appeared in *Guideposts*, the Wildercroft Bulletin, of Aug. 8, 1971, in which he said, "BRO. BATSELL BARRETT BAXTER, of David Lipscomb College, in a Nashville Tennessean newspaper ad and a widely mailed letter makes "AN Appeal to Churches of Christ." He notes that the college "must raise in contributions more than \$363,000 just to teach the Bible, over and above what the students pay for this service," and adds, "The only possible source from which it is reasonable to expect to raise this amount of money for this purpose each year is THE CHURCH." (last emphasis mine, dmn).

"After further noting that "to teach the word of God . . . is the primary mission of . . . the church" he says his appeal is "for churches of Christ to pay the actual cost of a service rendered to David Lipscomb College. Clearly asking "the church" to pay a human, secular institution to fulfill the "primary mission of the church." Maybe the church could hire the college to do its Bible school work too, and send its preachers to foreign fields—or the Missionary Society! No difference.

"Even this appeal is a pathetic commentary on our times and the state of the church of the Lord. It states that "Since 1891 churches of Christ have supported David Lipscomb College financially." But ONLY NOW HAVE THEY DARED to make a public appeal to churches for contributions. They knew that previously any such appeal would have been slapped down by the brotherhood—as was done by Bro. G. C. Brewer a number of years ago.

"The CHURCH IS GOD'S DIVINE institution and the gospel the divine, exclusive commodity of it and its individual members for doing God's divine work. Let no human institution presume to "sell" the commodity or the service to the divine institution to which it was given by the Lord."

In April of this year, Wilson Adams and family, the older son of the editor of *Searching The Scriptures*, moved to work with the brethren at Wildercroft. In May the elders invited the editor of this paper to preach in their spring Gospel Meeting.

My impression is that Wildercroft with the Wilson Adams family among them will make much progress in

the future. Wilson is a young man with much ability and maturity above his youthful age. I envision a strong, growing, faithful work at Wildercroft under the faithful preaching of this young evangelist and overseen by three good elders whose mature judgment has a good influence upon the congregation.

I urge the readers of *Searching The Scriptures* to visit this congregation when in the Washington area. You can worship God, encourage a young preacher, hear a good Bible lesson from him, and be uplifted in visiting some of your brethren in the area of the nation's capital and know something of what they are doing.

AN UPDATE ON THE WORK IN ITALY

Harold Fite

Several articles have been written over the past ten years on the work in Italy. I assume, therefore, that the Italian work is familiar to the readers of this paper. This article is an update on the work in that country.

From May 15 to June 10, my wife and I visited the faithful churches in Italy. We spent several days with the brethren in Rome, Poggiomarino, Trieste, Udine, Aprilia and Pomezia. The work has made progress since our first visit in 1977. With the return of Gianni Berdini, Stefano and Arrigo Corazza to Italy from the states three years ago, the work-force doubled. This has enabled the work to be expanded, with more opportunities being presented. Through radio, television and the printed page the word is being spread and people are beginning to take notice.

Arrigo Corazza is the preacher at Via Sannio in Rome. He is a young man with ability and does a fine job preaching the gospel. His father, Alessandro Corazza is now giving most of his time to publishing his paper *Sentieri Diritti*, and to translating and printing religious material for the brethren. The work with the paper involves correspondence and some travel. His mailing list for *Sentieri Diritti* has grown to 900, and he has approximately the same number receiving the correspondence course.

While brother Corazza has made some enemies through the paper, he has made many friends. He is receiving laudatory comments and agreements from unexpected sources. The paper is doing a lot of good.

In Poggiomarino, Vincenzo Ruggiero continues to do a fine work. The response from his radio broadcasts is most encouraging. He broadcasts three times a week from Poggiomarino and twice a week from Salerno. The requests for tapes of his lessons are growing.

Brother Ruggiero—with the help of his brethren—is building a studio in his parents old house which is located behind his house.

In addition to the work in the St. Martzano-Poggiomarino area, he is driving to St. Felice every Sunday afternoon to preach to a small group of brethren numbering 20 to 25.

The Lord's church is firmly planted in Poggiomarino, and is well known in the area. Brother Ruggiero has many friends outside the Lord's family. We pray that these friends will eventually become more than friends—brethren in the Lord!

Gianni Berdini is the evangelist in Trieste. Trieste is a city of 300,000 people. The brethren have an adequate place to meet in the heart of the city. The building contains an auditorium, two classrooms, office and foyer with an attractive tract rack. Their attendance runs around 25. Gianni writes and prints an excellent teaching bulletin.

Eighteen are receiving the correspondence course. Information about the church is attractively displayed in a glassed-in case on one of the main thoroughfares downtown, near a busy bus stop. Posters about the church are also located on public busses.

Udine is a small city of 100,000. One local family and an individual, and two American families make up this congregation.

Stefano Corazza is working in this area. In addition to the regular services, he is having two classes a week with two individuals, and has 16 taking the correspondence course.

Stefano is a hard worker working under the handicap of not having a public building in which to meet. The brethren meet in a private home. Building owners in Udine will not rent space to the church! And people are reluctant to attend a religious service in a private home. Some have said, "When you get a building I will come." It is my opinion that the potential of the work in Udine cannot be properly evaluated without a building. Plans are being formulated for a building. We pray that these plans will be realized in the near future.

Roberto Tondelli is the faithful evangelist in Pomezia. Roberto is a talented young man and a diligent and zealous worker. He has a radio program and helps his father-in-law (Rodolfo Berdini) on his television program. Several are taking the correspondence course offered by this congregation. Roberto looks for any opportunity to talk to people about Christ, and is an able interpreter.

The future of the work in Italy is encouraging when measured by the likes of Roberto Tondelli.

Rodolfo Berdini continues to do an excellent work in Aprilia. The brethren in Aprilia are a well informed and stable group. Brother Berdini has a weekly television program, professionally done, and with a punch! He presents strong and pointed lessons opposing the Catholic Church and its teachings.

While we in this country like to enunciate our right to free speech, there is no way brother Berdini could preach on American TV the way he is doing in Italy. He is receiving many favorable responses to his broadcasts.

Generally speaking, the brethren in Italy are assuming more and more of their financial responsibilities. Congregations are now having short meetings using the aforementioned preachers. The seven preachers have baptized approximately 25 in the past three years. Now that may not seem many ac-

ording to our standards, but in a country dominated by Catholics, it is a big step in the right direction.

An excellent foundation is" being laid, not only for the next generation, but for generations yet unborn.

URGENT

Rodolfo Berdini has lost, rather abruptly, \$125 per week of his support.

Gianni Berdini has lost \$400 a month of his support.

It is imperative that this amount be replaced. I plead with churches which are able, to give some consideration to the work in Italy. If interested, you may contact me (Harold Fite, see address on article) or write

Rodolfo Berdini
Viale Olivi, 79A
00040 Lavinio, Anzio
(Roma) Italy

Gianni Berdini
Via dei Moreri No 7
34133 Trieste, Italy

**SHOPPING AT
THE LORD'S STORE**

Frank Himmel

134 Janet Dr.
Destrehan, LA 70047



Laodicea was a proud, wealthy city. Its location, along with its garment industry and production of "Phrygian powder," an eye medicine, made it a center of commerce and banking. When struck by severe earthquakes in A.D. 60, its citizenry refused outside help in rebuilding the city. That same self-sufficiency characterized the church there. The Lord threatened to spit them out because they said, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," not realizing they were wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. He suggested they go shopping to buy three things from Him (Rev. 3:18).

1. *Gold refined by fire.* The Laodiceans needed to understand the nature of real wealth. It is not composed of houses, land, securities, or other material goods, but "the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:2,3). Solomon, one of the wealthiest men of all times from a material standpoint, counseled, "Buy truth, and do not sell it, get wisdom and instruction and understanding" (Pro. 23:23). Such riches can be purchased only from the Lord.

But how can the poor buy gold? God said through Isaiah, "Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why do you spend money for what is not bread,

and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and delight yourself in abundance" (Is. 55:1,2). Come and listen. We need no money; just a willingness to exchange our pride, self-sufficiency, and ignorance for the truth that will enable us to lay up treasures in heaven.

2. *White garments.* Would that more people would buy their clothes at the Lord's store! His sportswear department does not have rack after rack of shorts and halter tops, nor the latest in alluring swim-wear. He carries no split skirts, tight pants, or low-cut blouses; nor does He specialize in "gold or pearls or costly garments." His men's shirts feature automatic buttons for those who cannot seem to remember to button up. His worshipwear section has only such attire as reflects the seriousness of the occasion of worshipping God.

Of course Jesus is speaking here of spiritual garments. White is the symbol of purity and holiness (Rev. 3:4). These white garments, like the gold, are only available from the Lord. Our garments are made white by washing them in the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 7:14); by putting on Christ in baptism (Gal. 3:27). They are maintained by our walking in the light to receive the continual cleansing of Jesus' blood (1 Jn. 1:8).

3. *Eyesalve.* These disciples could not see their own condition. They needed medicine for the spiritual eyes, to "look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4:18). This eyesalve corresponds to the discernment that Paul included in his prayer for the Philippians (1:9); the ability to apply the knowledge already purchased.

Perhaps many of us could use a good dose of eyesalve to better perceive the status of the congregation of which we are a part. We may need to wake up like Sardis, repent like Pergamum, or return to our first love like Ephesus. That eyesalve would also help us bring our personal lives into focus. It is so often difficult to see our own weaknesses and shortcomings, or recognize when our priorities are confused; when instead of "fixing our eyes on Jesus" (Heb. 12:2) we are looking aside. A little salve might open our eyes to opportunities, too: opportunities to teach, to encourage, to lend a helping hand.

The poor, naked, blind brethren at Laodicea needed gold, garments, and eyesalve which only the Lord could provide. Let us look to Him for all our spiritual needs.

**VETERAN FLORIDA
PREACHER GOES HOME**

We have just learned of the death of **BYRON CONNELLY**, veteran Florida gospel preacher. Brother Connelly labored fervently for many years and established many congregations in the state of Florida. We extend our sympathy to his good family. A more extended notice will appear later.

THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

Send all News Items to: Wilson Adams, 6334 Auburn Ave., Riverdale, MD 20737

FIELD REPORTS

JIM DEASON, 1200 Nashville Hwy., Columbia, TN 38401. I have been with the Jackson Heights church in this city for about 17 months. I have never enjoyed a work so much. In 1981 there were eleven baptized and seven restored. Three godly men oversee the flock at this place: Rufus Clifford, Jr., Reedy Nicholson, and Myron Thomas. Eight deacons serve: Hugh Stacey, Harold Vernon, Bradley Dugger, Morris Boshers, Charles Goolsby, Arthur Hanes, Larry Yeager, and Wayne Garner. In addition to these, many others are active in the work at this place. We have set up a Bible Class format whereby each member can study through the entire Bible as well as a number of topical studies in a five to seven year period. Home Bible Studies with both members and non-members are in progress regularly. We have had several to place membership and, sadly, we have had to withdraw from a few.

I am scheduled to meet Milton Paulk of the "Calvary Jesus Name Tabernacle" in public discussion the first week in October of this year. We will be discussing the subject of Holy Spirit Baptism for four nights. If you would like to attend, you can contact me at the above address or phone (615) 388-6811 or 388-7278. I will try and make arrangements for a place for you to stay. When traveling in the area, we would like to have you stop by and worship with us. There is easy access to the building off I-65. May God bless all of you in your labor in the kingdom.

DAVID L. ODOM, 2108 Ella, Beatrice, NB 68310. The reason I am writing is because I have somewhat of an emergency on my hands. The congregation which has supported me with the majority of my support since I have been laboring in Nebraska for the past five years can no longer support us due to internal problems there. This means that next month (July) we will be \$1450 short! If there is any way that anyone would be able to help us we would be grateful. The brethren here at Beatrice, and in Grand Island, where we travel every two months in order to work with them, want us to stay in Nebraska. We want to stay in Nebraska and help these small churches be built up. As you know, it is not easy to get men to come to such areas as this and stay for a long period of time, but we believe that this is what is needed, and are willing to do just that. For references about myself and the Nebraska work, contact: Harold Fite, Leon Odom, Floyd Thompson, Brent Lewis, and Roland Lewis.

BILL GASTON, c/o Wickett church of Christ, P.O. Box 24, Wickett, TX 79788. I have been working with the church in Wickett, TX for one year. I have been driving 65 miles each way twice a week while holding down another full-time job. The church in Wickett needs someone to work full-time with it. They can provide some support, but I still need \$1300 per month to make ends meet. If you could help it would be greatly appreciated. The church at Wickett is the only sound congregation in a forty mile radius. Much work needs to be done here. Write to me at the above address.

MIKE THOMAS, 1254 S. Enota Dr. NE, Gainesville, GA 30501. The church of Christ in Gainesville, GA has two sets of song books, Christian Hymns II and Christian Hymns III, that they will gladly donate to any brethren who would have need of them. There are approximately 60 books available in each set. If interested please write me at the above address or call (404) 536-4871. Postage would be appreciated.

PREACHERS NEEDED

SALEM, OH—As of August 1, 1982, we will be needing a preacher. Please write: church of Christ, 484 Georgetown Rd., Salem, OH 44460. Or call Ed Marino (216) 547-7431, or Tom Scott (216) 332-0895. The church can provide full support.

ROSE HILL, VA—We are a small congregation and are in dire need of a preacher. We have only about five to ten members. Most support would have to come from other places. If interested please write to the church at Rt. 1, Rose Hill, VA 24281.

THAYER STREET LECTURES

The Annual Thayer Street Lectures will be conducted September 20-23, 1982. Bill Feist will speak three times on "Satan"; Morris Hafley will present "Studies in Ecclesiastes" (3 periods); Tom Icard will deal with "A Christian and his Recreation, Job, and Possessions"; Phil Morr will speak on "Woman's Role in Society", "Remember Thy Creator", and "Family Responsibilities." Jeff Corey will speak on "Joshua"; Craig Meyer on "Samson"; and Steve Smith on "Elijah." Three evening periods will be devoted to congregational singing led by Lewis Willis. Some sleeping accommodations are available for out of town visitors. Write to: Church of Christ, 640 Thayer St., Akron, Ohio 44310.

NEW CONGREGATION—LYNCHBURG, VA

WILSON ADAMS, 6334 Auburn Ave., Riverdale, MD 20737. As you are aware, churches of the Lord along the eastern seaboard are few and far between, and Virginia is no exception. For years there has been a critical need for a work in central Virginia. On July 25th, that dream will become a reality as a new congregation will meet for the first time in the Larry Powell home at 1203 Westridge Cir., Lynchburg, VA 24502. Two fine and faithful families from the Georgia Avenue church in Roanoke will form the nucleus of the new group. Along with these, some others from the digressive Seven Hills church in Lynchburg have let it be known that they are leaving Seven Hills to join in with the new scriptural work.

Bro. Phil Holman and his family have agreed to move and begin work in Lynchburg in late August. Phil presently preaches for the Trezevant Avenue congregation in Memphis, TN, is in his thirties, and he and his wife have three boys. Phil told me that he has always had a desire to move to a place and help begin a new work. I have spent some time with Phil, heard him preach, and discussed at length several things with him pertinent to the new work. I was highly impressed, with not only Phil, but the entire Holman family. At this writing he has raised half of his needed support. The new congregation has committed themselves to doing all they can toward his support. Could you possibly help; either on a monthly basis or a one time basis? Yes times are hard economically. Yet, here is one willing to go to a place where a church is badly needed. Lynchburg has a population of nearly 100,000 and lies on the main route between Roanoke and Richmond/Norfolk. The work has all the potential for growth and stability. For more information on the new work contact Larry Powell at the above address, or phone (804) 237-3445. Bro. Holman's present address is 5294 Scrivener Dr., Memphis, TN 38134. Phone (901) 388-2751. For references as to Phil's work in the past you may contact:

Wilson Adams, Riverdale, MD
Julian Snell, Frankfort, KY
Ed Bragwell, Fultondale, AL
Boyd Sellers, Humbolt, TN
Lowell Blassingame, Pine Bluff, AR
Elders of the West Booneville church in Booneville, MS

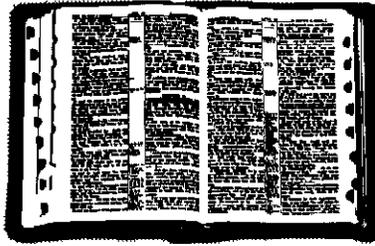
IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	308
RESTORATIONS	107

(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)

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 XXIII

SEPTEMBER, 1982

NUMBER 9

THE TEMPTATIONS OF JESUS

Frank Himmel

134 Janet Dr.
St. Rose, LA 70087



The writer of Hebrews said, "For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15). What were some things Jesus was tempted to do?

1. *To trust in Himself.* The first recorded temptation of Jesus followed a forty-day fast. Jesus became hungry. The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread" (Mt. 4:3). The attempt was to persuade Jesus to rely on His own power to sustain Himself rather than trusting in God. Jesus understood the temptation and replied, "It is written, 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'" The Lord had given Israel manna when there was no bread, to teach them to trust in Him. Jesus was confident God would provide for Him, too.

Nothing would please Satan more than to persuade us to turn our trust from God. He would have us be like the Pharisees, "who trusted in themselves that they were righteous" (Lk. 18:9). He would have us be like Judah, who trusted in her own fame and fortune (Ezek. 16:15). She forgot God and trusted in falsehood (Jer. 13:25). He would have us trust in anything except God, who richly supplies us with all things. How shall we escape this temptation? By remembering what is written: "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God."

2. *To make a display.* Satan did not concede after one setback. He took Jesus to Jerusalem, stood him on the

pinnacle of the temple, and said, "If You are the Son of God throw Yourself down." He added credibility to the suggestion by quoting Scripture, showing that the angels would not allow Jesus to be harmed. Perhaps the tempter suggested this as a test of the confidence in God Jesus had affirmed in the first temptation. Besides it would be a great way to show the Jews that He was the Son of God. But this was neither the time nor the manner in which the Savior wanted to reveal Himself. Neither did He want any part in testing God. Which one of us has not been tempted to make a display of our religion to be seen of men? Jesus said those who sound a trumpet when giving alms are hypocrites (Mt. 6:24). So are those who pray long and loud in public places (vv. 5-7). Sometimes preachers have this problem. We ought to be like Paul, who "... did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, ..." but "... in weakness and in fear and in much trembling" (1 Cor. 2:1,3). Our lights must shine so others can see our good works. However, there is a vast difference between others seeing our good works and our doing good works to be seen by others.

5. *To seek a right thing in a wrong way.* The devil was to make one more attempt on this occasion. He took Jesus to a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, then made his proposal. "All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me." This temptation was different from the others. There was no deceit and no mention of Jesus' Sonship. It was a bold, forthright proposition. Jesus had come to establish a kingdom, one consisting of people from all nations. Satan stood ready to expedite the effort. His method would not have necessitated the suffering and shame the Savior was to face. But his price was too high. Jesus replied, "Begone, Satan! For it is written, 'You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only.'"

Jesus did not reason that the end justifies the means. He knew better. But some are satisfied with that line of reasoning and, like David, are building "new carts" with which to do God's will. In efforts to preach the gospel to a lost world, a right and much-needed work, churches have been persuaded to cooperate in ways not authorized by God. Food and fun has become the order of the day. Some act as

though the gospel could not appeal to sinners without it. Numerous fund-raising activities, all foreign to the Scriptures, have been concocted to finance these programs. Surely we can spread the good news without bowing to Satan and employing his methods.

4. *To speak inadvisedly.* Satan had struck out but he was not through. Luke said he departed until an opportune time. One of the snares Jesus had to avoid on many occasions was saying something He should not. His enemies would come testing Him, trying to entrap Him (e.g. Mt. 19:3; 22:15, 23, 35). Yet He "committed no sin, neither was any deceit found in His mouth" (1 Pet. 2:22).

The tempter is well aware of the difficulty we have with our tongues. He would have us fill our mouths with unwholesome speech, or speak angrily in a rage. He likes to hear us talk off the tops of our heads, speaking of things about which we understand little. The Preacher said of such an one, "The beginning of his talking is folly, and the end of it is wicked madness. Yet the fool multiplies words" (Ecc. 10:13, 14). Have you ever been asked a question and instead of saying, "I don't know," tried to bluff your way through it, only to put yourself in some ridiculous position with no graceful way out? Have you noticed that the discussion of problems with the tongue in James 3 follows the statement, "Let not many of you become teachers?" Let us be careful not to speak inadvisedly and play right into Satan's hand.

5. *To take the easy way out.* It was time for the con summation of God's plan. The Son of God was about to render Satan powerless. It was time for one last confrontation between the Accuser and the Redeemer. Jesus, acutely aware of the suffering now only hours away, fell to the ground in prayer. "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me" (Mt. 26:39). It was possible. And it would have been to the delight of Satan. But it would have defeated the purpose of Christ's coming into the world and disregarded the will of God. "Yet not as I will, but as Thou wilt." The Son of man would not take the easy way out. Even as He hung on the cross the suggestion was still confronting Him. "If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." Perhaps unknowingly, these mockers were echoing Satan's sentiment. "Come down—take the easy way out."

Thanks be to God that He did not. Would that we had the same strength and courage. In the face of even slight persecution or ridicule we all too often fail to stand. Some take the easy way out by compromising truth rather than defending it and suffering a few unpleasanties. Do you allow bad weather, traveling, or social activities to preclude assembling with the saints? Do you permit peer pressure to lead you to immoral conduct? Has an objecting family member prevented you from obeying the Lord? If so you are taking the easy way out, a way our Savior would not go.

Satan's appeals have not changed since Adam's day. Let us not be ignorant of his schemes.

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Editorial

Connie W. Adams

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NEW TESTAMENT EVANGELISM

The church is the body of the saved. But what are the saved supposed to do? The saved ought to worship God. The saved ought to live godly lives before the world. The saved ought to teach the gospel to the world. That brings us to the work of evangelism—heralding the good news to dying humanity. Paul said the church is "the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15). The Lord identified the churches of Asia as candlesticks, hence, bearers of light (Rev. 1:20).

The Early Church in Evangelism

The book of Acts tells the thrilling story of how the apostles became witnesses in Jerusalem, all Judea, Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth (Acts 1:8). On the Day of Pentecost in Jerusalem "they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (2:41). A short time later it was said "Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed; and the number of the men was **about five thousand**" (4:4). They did not decide the church was too big but pressed on in their teaching. "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples **multiplied** in Jerusalem **greatly**; and a **great company** of the priests were obedient to the faith" (6:7).

Persecution scattered many from Jerusalem but this only resulted in greater evangelistic effort as they "went everywhere preaching the word" (8:4). Samaria was next reached (8:12) and then many villages of the Samaritans heard the gospel (8:25). Later it was stated "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied" (9:31). Several years after the persecution which scattered the disciples from Jerusalem, the church there was still large and thriving and referred to as "the multitude." "Then all the **multitude** kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul.. ." (15:12).

Beyond Palestine proper, the work flourished. Regarding the efforts in Asia Minor, Luke wrote "And so were the churches established in the faith, and **increased in number daily**" (16:5). At Thessalonica in Greece "some of them (Jews) believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a **great multitude**, and of the chief women not a few (17:4). At Corinth "Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue,

believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized" for God had "**much people**" in that city where Paul continued for a year and six months, "teaching the word of God among them" (18:8-11). At Ephesus there were **many** who believed and "so mightily grew the word of God and prevailed" (19:18-20).

From these accounts it is evident that the early disciples took the Great Commission seriously. They had a compelling sense of urgency in this work. While they were busy teaching and converting the lost, they also made provision for the functioning of local churches in meeting their own needs for spiritual development and for discharging their responsibilities to the needy among them. In Acts 6 special servants were appointed to provide the needs of Grecian widows while the apostles gave themselves to the ministry of the word. In Acts 14:23 Paul and Barnabas "ordained elders in every church" they had established in Asia Minor. The church at Jerusalem had elders (Acts 15:4,6) as did the churches in Judea (Acts 11:29-30). But the lifeline of the church was evangelism.

Two Means of Evangelism

The Local Church. Jerusalem sent Barnabas to help the new work at Antioch (Acts 11:22-24) and this resulted in "much people" being added to the Lord. The church at Antioch developed a great and successful teaching program (13:1). It was from this live and growing church that the gospel launched a major assault on the Roman Empire. Paul and Barnabas were sent forth with the blessings of these brethren who maintained a great interest in their work, for they came back and "rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles" (14:27). The church at Thessalonica, though a new congregation with growing pains and many trials to overcome, had caught that spark of urgency which motivated Paul and Silas so that within a year of the beginning of the work there Paul wrote them and said "For from you sounded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but everywhere your faith to Godward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak anything" (1 Thes. 1:8). Churches in Macedonia supplied wages to Paul to sustain his work at Corinth, even though all those congregations were made up of new converts (2 Cor. 11:8). The church at Philippi sent once and again to support Paul in his preaching at Thessalonica (Phil. 1:5; 4:15-16). It is not difficult to see where these congregations placed the emphasis. They were not in the business of hoarding money. They did not argue "the heathen are all at home." They needed facilities in which to meet, worship and edify each other. But they knew, above all else, what the primary work of the church was.

The Individual. Scattered disciples did not wait for an eldership with an organized personal program to assign them cards for visitation. They found lost people on their own and taught them the gospel (Acts 8:3-4). They were self-starters. Philip did not wait for some church to "call" him to the work. He went to Samaria and preached the gospel and started the work.

Then he taught the Ethiopian treasurer and sent the gospel into that country by means of that devout man. Then he was found at Azotus and preached all the way up the coast to Caesarea. Every child of God was challenged by Peter to "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you, a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. 3:15). Every Christian is to study so as to be an unashamed workman (2 Tim. 2:15) and is to learn how to "teach faithful men who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2).

Let each congregation do all it can to sound out the word of the Lord at home and abroad and let each individual rise to his potential and take hold of every opportunity to teach the word to the lost.

Motives to Prompt Us

There are ample reasons why both congregations and individuals should be busily engaged in the work of evangelism. "For if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost" (2 Cor. 4:3-4). The gospel is God's power to save a lost world. It is the universal remedy for the universal malady of sin (Rom. 1:16). Paul said "for I am debtor" (Rom. 1:14-15) and said he was ready to meet that obligation "as much as in me is." He wrote "For woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:16). In 2 Cor. 5:10-14 there are three compelling motives set forth which should move us all to greater activity in saving the lost: (1) the judgment to come; (2) the terror of the Lord; and (3) the love of Christ which ought to constrain us. The knowledge that all men shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ and that those who stand there unprepared will go away into everlasting punishment should so overwhelm us that the love which the Lord had for us and the knowledge of what his love can do for all, should impel us to overcome every excuse and rise to the occasion.

Prior Assumptions

All who teach the gospel must approach that work with certain presuppositions. First, people need what we have to offer. They may not even know that. Next, people **can understand** the gospel. Then, we ought to teach it **in hope**. Optimism must characterize us. We should **expect** to see people obey the truth once they understand it. Further, we must understand that our efforts are often more successful than we think they are. We look always for "visible responses." Let us prepare the ground, sow the seed and water it, and then leave the rest to the Lord who gives the increase. Finally, we must work with the genuine conviction that the salvation of one soul is worth more than all the world (Mt. 16:26).

It is time to stop worrying about congregations getting "too big" and get on with the work of the gospel. Some of us have become so obsessed with real estate and with providing enough places to gratify the ambitions of those who are determined to lead, whether they are qualified or not, that we have lost sight of what the saved are supposed to do. "Speaking the truth in love" will cause the church to edify itself. It will also result in the saving of the lost and that is our

chief business. When we attend to that with all diligence we will have no time to fuss.

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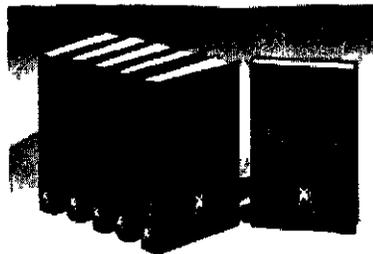
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SPECIAL FEATURE

THE HOLY SPIRIT

by
Franklin T. Puckett

HOW THE SPIRIT INDWELLS

In the previous lessons we have talked about the Holy Spirit as a divine being, the third person of the godhead. We have talked about the gift of the Holy Spirit referred to in Acts chapter 2 and verse 38. I tried to point out some things which the Holy Spirit is not, also some things which the Holy Spirit is, that you may be able to better identify this divine personality of the godhead. I believe that the Holy Spirit is a person and as a person he is one being and cannot be divided up, distributed out, or diffused throughout the universe as a person. Remember, we drew a line of distinction between person and presence. The presence of one may be where the person is not and I think we established that in the outline I trust will be of benefit to you.

I know it isn't logical or always reasonable to talk about the presence being the person. The presence is through instrumentality, medium, it is not direct and immediate in and of itself. I'm satisfied that the representatives of our government oftentimes carry the very presence of the chief executive into foreign lands when the person is in the White House in Washington, D.C. And I use Vespasian as an illustration, a simple statement taken from a historical writer, a book entitled "Imperial Rome" which said that the presence of Vespasian was in every part of the empire, but it was through the instrumentality of his laws, his legions, his monuments, his establishments, and in this way his presence was felt everywhere, but his person was in the imperial city. I believe there is a vital distinction that needs to be recognized.

Furthermore, while God is omnipresent in some senses, he is not omnipresent in all senses, and because in some senses we read of the omnipresence of God we need not conclude that he is omnipresent in all ways. There are certain limitations which God himself has set. I do not believe that God is omnipresent in his dwelling among his people. I think his presence there is limited to his people. I do not believe he dwells in that sense among those who are not his people and so it is with Christ and the Holy Spirit. It is possible for one to go out from the presence of God, just keep that in mind and that will have a part to play in our study this morning. So, as Christ said he would be with the saints even though only two or three had gathered together, he'd be there in their midst, I do not believe that he is in the midst of every assembly of people. How He dwells among those who are his, and so there is limitation even to the presence of God in certain fields

or areas and that needs to be recognized.

I have sought to give you some principles of interpretation by which to be governed and guided in doing your own research and study. I approach the study of a passage first of all, grammatically, learn what it says. Look at it, read it and reread it. In some of the classes that I used to teach in Florida College, I would require the boys in that class to read a passage 10 to 25 times before they even attempted to outline or to tell me what they thought it meant, so that they would become familiar with every part. I wanted them to know what the passage says and what it doesn't say.

Furthermore, study words, their meaning and their usage. A lot of words have different meanings in different usage. So what does the word mean as it is used in the passage you're studying? Get down and study, if you don't know, learn.

And then, not only must we study it grammatically, learning everything we can about the words and the phrases and clauses that are involved, the limitations, the modifications that may be attached, but then when you have done that, study it historically. Project yourself back to their time to see what it meant then, when it was written. Whatever it meant then is precisely what it means now. Whatever the writings of this book meant in the day when the book was written—that's exactly what those statements mean now. Now principles may be deduced that would be applicable to twentieth century circumstances and problems. But we need to learn that the meaning of the word of God hasn't changed since John laid down the pen of inspiration and heaven's will was completed. We're not trying to define terms on the basis of twentieth century meanings, but what did they mean when they were penned, and what did they mean to the people who received them. So study from a historical standpoint.

One would study it as I believe Berkhof would probably say analogically, another theologically. I don't particularly like to even use that word, but study it in the light of the totality of divine revelation. I don't mean that there's anything wrong with the word "theology" when properly used but it is so misused so often that it might present an unscriptural idea to somebody. But study whatever you're seeking to learn in the light of the totality of divine revelation and remember this, a fundamental rule of interpretation is that no interpretation or construction can be placed upon a passage of scripture that does violence to, or runs counter to what is taught somewhere else. The word of God is harmonious, so study it carefully.

Now this subject that we're dealing with this morning is possibly the most misunderstood and controversial lesson of all of those that I've endeavored to present. The leading, guiding, indwelling and comforting of the Holy Spirit have always been battlegrounds of dispute and controversy. It's not the fact that the Holy Spirit leads, guides, indwells or comforts, but in each of these actions the precise point of the issue is the manner or means by which he does these things.

Now I want us to consider the denominational view and I take it all of us have been pretty well united in our understanding of the position and are in opposition to it. There has been the denominational view through all the years of the past that the Holy Spirit operates upon the sinner guiding, leading that sinner to the salvation of his soul through the word, but in addition to the influence wielded through the medium and means of divine revelation, the Holy Spirit also by direct action and through the use of immediate power, without media but in all omnipotent power to operate also in addition to the word to convict and to convert the sinner. Now, we've stood opposed to that. We've seen the difference. There isn't a preacher here this morning but who would affirm that every sinner converted has been taught, instructed, moved, motivated, led, guided, to the salvation of his soul by the Holy Spirit. But that it has been accomplished by, through, the teaching which the Spirit has given and we have denied that in addition to that any power is needed, or that any power is used, directly, immediately, without medium, in the conviction and conversion of the alien sinner. I take it that we'd all stand united on that ground. Now, when we point out that we believe that the Spirit convicts and converts the alien sinner, but does so through the power of the word, denominationalists charge us with not believing in the operation of the Spirit.

In the Tingley-Porter debate that was held in Birmingham, Alabama (and I attended that debate, was there when this statement was made) Tingley opposed what Porter had said about the means and methods by and through which the Holy Spirit convicts and converts the sinner and he said, and this is a direct quotation from him, "The question is not how he operates, the question is, does he operate, in any way, through and directly upon the sinner as well as through the word of truth or the gospel of Christ?" Well, Tingley's wrong. It is a question of how he operates. There's no question but that he operates. We do not deny the operation of the Spirit but the question is how, by what means does he operate? Now, it is admitted and Tingley admitted that he operated through the word, but Tingley said if you don't believe he also, in addition to that, operates directly, immediately, and without the medium of his teaching, you just don't believe in the operation of the Spirit.

Denominationalists have always charged us along that particular line. It's just not so. We believe in the operation of the Spirit, but we do not believe in this additional, separate and apart from, operation that is maintained by the denominationalists. Now, on this concept developed the mourner's bench system of getting religion, which bore fruit that is completely unknown unto the word of God. A wrong concept can produce wrong results whether they intend it or not. So this system of praying for God to send the Holy Spirit down to convict and convert the sinner and make him receive the word of divine revelation whether it be in coming to the mourner's bench, or the seeker's altar, or the angel seat, or, even according to Billy Graham's method, coining down there to the

rostrum where he's standing, and making a decision. Whatever it may be, this whole thing stems from this concept of a direct operation of the Holy Spirit in addition to, and separate from, the influence which the Spirit exercises upon the sinner through the teaching and medium of the gospel which is God's power unto salvation.

Now, we have today the view existing among many good brethren who are friends of mine (I just don't think they understand all that's involved. They think they do, of course), but they admit now that the Holy Spirit operates through the word, in the life, development and edification of the Christian, but then say that in addition to that the Holy Spirit as a divine person, in his eternal being, separate and apart from the influence wrought in the life of that Christian by the teaching of the word of God, comes in and dwells in the physical body of the Christian to become a power of spirituality in his life. Now, I don't see much difference in the two concepts. Maybe you do, but I don't. About the only difference I can see is that the denominationalist holds the view of this additional operation of the Spirit before one becomes a Christian and some of us hold the view that it's after one become a Christian. So the difference is not in method of operation, but rather in point of time, and subject, of operation.

Now, I bid you think about that as we continue on. In addition to this indwelling, comforting and strengthening of the Holy Spirit through the influence of His word, He also, separate and apart from the word, comes personally by direct, immediate, personal impact into the body of the Christian and gives aid, comfort, and assistance to him as a consequent result of this personal indwelling which he does not and cannot have through the medium of the word.

I want to read a statement here that I copied from *The Christian Chronicle* written by Stafford North, dean of instruction of Oklahoma Christian College and it appeared October 6, 1967 and he makes the same difference on this that Tingley did over here. He says the difference here has been over whether the New Testament teaches that the Holy Spirit dwells personally as a dynamic in the Christian, to work with the written word, or whether the Spirit's indwelling is solely the word working in us. Well, that's a point of controversy. And now then, those who hold that position oftentimes will charge that if we do not accept this additional operation, we just don't believe in the indwelling of the Spirit, or you just don't think there is any Holy Spirit. Now, no matter how much we stress the influence and power and work of the Holy Spirit through the medium of the word, if we don't accept this additional thing, we have among us those who will say, "You just don't believe in the indwelling of the Spirit. You just think it's the word." No, my friend, I've pointed out that the Holy Spirit is not the Bible, it is not the New Testament, it is not the written word, but here the word revealed is the product of the Spirit, and the means that the Spirit uses. It's the sword of the Spirit, by which He convicts and converts the alien sinner and edifies, builds up and comforts the child of

God, the means the Holy Spirit used. But because we do not accept that other, there are those who'd say that you just don't believe that the Holy Spirit dwells in us at all.

James Bales wrote a book getting all over Pat Boone because Pat accepted the ultimate consequences of this, separate and apart, mysterious, not understandable, indwelling of the Spirit in all omnipotent power, went on to produce the fruit that would be the consequence. Bales got all over him, but Bales holds this same view and I think it becomes the tap root for the development of these other things. Now, not everybody who holds that view is going to be like Pat Boone. Don't misunderstand me. There are a lot of good men who hold that view that certainly are not going into that kind of thing and should not be charged with those consequences because it would be a misrepresentation of them. They know too much truth and I have some good personal friends who would disagree with me that that would be just as much opposed unto the tongue-speaking and the prophecy-delivering and miracle-working people like Pat Boone and others. But personally, I think that this is the tap root that yields that fruit.

Now, I have here a little booklet put out by Mac Lay ton and he says, "but if we say the Spirit is in us only through the word, we say the Spirit does not dwell in us at all." Then again, "if the Spirit does not dwell in us personally, then how can we know that God and Christ dwell in us." And again, "is it impossible for the Spirit to dwell in us because of a lack of power?" Certainly not, why nobody would so claim. That's just like the questions that the Pentecostals and all others raise about divine healing when they talk about Jesus Christ the same yesterday, today, and forever. Has God lost any of his power? Can't God perform miracles? Yes, He can, if he chooses to do so, but is he? No, I don't know of anybody that's saying it is impossible for the Holy Spirit to dwell in us in some supernatural way, but, nevertheless, the question is, is that what he's doing? Then again on page 40, "The Spirit leads the Christian to a deeper spiritual life just as he leads the sinner to salvation, by the word of God. The Spirit leads by speaking. When we follow the New Testament, we are led by the Spirit. He leads in no other way."

All right, now then, he is admitting the very thing about the Spirit's operation through the medium of the word. So, he admits all that the word of God says about it and there he raises this question which is nothing but a straw man, "Why does man resist the inspired message of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament today. Have you heard anyone say the New Testament is only paper and ink and mere book?" Well, I wonder if he doesn't think so when it comes to the indwelling because he'll say, "Aw, you just think it's only a book." No, and I think the Holy Spirit has done it through the medium and instrumentality of the word.

Now, then, when we come to talk about the indwelling of the Spirit, the fact of this proposition will

hardly be disputed by anyone. For instance, in Romans 8:9-11 we read, "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his, and if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."

In First Corinthians 6:19 "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." Now, in Second Timothy 1:13-14, "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us." Now, brother, I believe everything that's said in those passages. I believe precisely what the passages say.

I want you to notice that the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit, and the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead are all made to equate each other. They all refer to the same thing. Now, I believe what the passages say, so the Spirit of God that dwelleth in you can be referred to as the Spirit of Christ, or as Christ dwelling in you, or just simply the Spirit dwelling in you, or the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead.

In this passage, Romans 8:9-11, you have these all used to refer unto the same thing, so I believe what the passage is saying, that the Holy Spirit dwells in us, Christ dwells in us, but these passages neither state nor imply that the Holy Spirit as a person, the divine being himself, the third person of the godhead, actually and literally dwells in the physical body of each Christian. Now that's what the passage doesn't say. Now, we have already established the fact that oftentimes terms are used metaphorically, or as metonymy of cause, whereby the names of God, Christ and the Holy Spirit are put for the effects which they produce.

Now, let's look at some of the alleged modes of the Spirit's indwelling, things that are affirmed today. I have here a little booklet entitled, *The Spirit in Spirituality*, by J. D. Thomas, who is head of the Bible department at Abilene Christian College, and he, of course, would connect the Holy Spirit's personal indwelling with spiritual development, but I want to read rather extensively from this book this morning to show you that most all of those who hold to this separate and apart indwelling will readily grant the very position that I occupy, that is, that the Holy Spirit can indwell the child of God by or through the medium or influence of his teaching contained in his word. That is admitting the position I occupy is really not the position being challenged.

Here on page 28, Thomas says, "It is true that all three members of the godhead dwell in us through the

word and this is no small matter, (right, Brother Thomas, it's no small matter). "The teachings of Christ are a powerful influence in our lives, but they are imparted by the Spirit and authorized by the Father so when the influence of the word exists in our lives, there is no doubt but that in a real sense each member of the godhead dwells in us in that manner." Now, that's exactly what I believe.

And then, on page 29, he says again, "The word does dwell in us and all members of the godhead do truly dwell in us through the word." So the position I occupy is not being challenged. But now then, he is not satisfied with what here he admits, he wants to go and get in this additional, mysterious indwelling, by direct indwelling of the Spirit. So he says the argument obviously seems rather over-simplified but indeed it can be true up to a point. Well, that's a little bit amazing to me. If it's true, just say it's true, don't say up to a point. It can be true, it isn't a matter of it can be true, it is true. It isn't a matter of being true up to a point, it's just true, that's all. But he goes right ahead to say "one thing wrong, however, is that there is nothing here to indicate that this is the only, exclusive way that deity can dwell in humanity which is a necessary conclusion to some who hold this point of view."

It isn't a question of what deity can do, it's a question of what deity does, and so, Thomas admits the very position that I occupy. By the word is meant the gospel of divine revelation—the Holy Spirit is not the word, I emphasized that, the word is not the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit uses the word as the means by which he accomplishes his work in conviction, conversion and sanctification. The power for the conversion of the alien sinner, and we have all argued this, has been placed in the gospel of Christ. Romans 1:16, "I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth." In First Corinthians 4:15, Paul says, "I have begotten you through the gospel," and then in James 1:18, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth," and First Peter 1:22-25, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. For all flesh is as grass, and the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you." So through the medium and power of the gospel, the Holy Spirit affects the conviction and conversion of the alien sinner.

Now, my friend, I want to suggest unto you that the power for the sanctification, edification, development of the saved is in the same gospel. In John 17:17, Jesus said as he prayed for his disciples, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." They were sanctified through the word of truth. Now I want to read a statement over in First Thessalonians 4:1-7, "Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us

how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more. For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: that every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: that no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness." The word of God, the revelation of divine truth has called upon us to live lives of purity and holiness and sanctification, telling us how to live those lives. We don't need some additional influence. Spirituality is not developed within us by some mysterious, separate and apart indwelling of the Holy Spirit, but is developed within us through the power of the teaching of the word of the Lord. That word of God is sufficient to instruct us in everything that is needed to make our lives and our characters exactly what we ought to be. Not only have we been called "not to uncleanness but unto holiness", but I want to turn and read another statement this time from Second Thessalonians 2:13-14. "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto he hath called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." God calls us to sanctification and purity and to holiness without which no man should see God but the call is delivered through the power of the gospel, friends, and it's sufficient to accomplish it.

Over in First Thessalonians 2:13, Paul said, "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which he heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe." It works and it works effectually, it gets the job done, brethren, all we need to do is get this teaching of the Holy Spirit down, learn it, accept it, imbibe it, and let it take control of us and the work which God wants accomplished and the work that the Spirit does accomplish will be accomplished in us.

And so the power for the conviction and conversion of the alien sinner is in the gospel, but the power for the development of the saved, the development of spirituality is in the same gospel.

And, then, furthermore, in First Peter 2:2-3, we read "as newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious." Now ye may grow thereby—thereby what?—by the word of God and its teaching. In Ephesians 4:17-21, the apostle Paul wrote to them and told them not to walk after the manner of the Gentiles, "in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to

work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye have not so learned Christ; if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus." Now when you learn Christ, is when you learn his teaching and here is the teaching that teaches us how to become children of God and how to live as children of God and what we need to do is to accept that word in genuine faith and let it have its proper effect in our daily activities and the job will be accomplished.

But now we could enlarge upon that a great deal. Some, however, argue that the Holy Spirit as a personal being also inhabits personally the body of the Christian and operates in him and on his behalf in ways separate and apart from His influence. Now, where do they read about that? Where do they read about a personal indwelling separate and apart? It's a bit difficult to figure out what the advocates of this doctrine think the Holy Spirit does as a result and the means of this alleged personal indwelling.

Now, Thomas says that he gives no revelation of God, furnishes no religious knowledge and he seems to think that takes care of it. "Oh, I don't claim that this Holy Spirit gives any additional revelation in the personal indwelling." Why, my friend that's exactly what John Calvin has taught through all these years and I can read it in his Institutes. John Calvin ridiculed the idea that God would have to reveal anything by the operation of the Holy Spirit when He came to convict and to convert them. He said that all the instruction we can ever receive concerning what we are to do must come from the holy scriptures already revealed and he said God doesn't have to re-reveal that which is already revealed. He never claimed that by this direct operation that the Holy Spirit revealed anything to the one that he came upon but it simply warmed his heart, prepared his heart, to receive the scripture as already revealed and gave him a sense of the divinity of the origin of the scriptures so that he would see that they ought to be accepted. He didn't claim to reveal anything and I can produce a statement from the Institutes along that line. Now some of his followers, some who have accepted forms of Calvinism, probably hold to the idea of some additional revelation, but Calvin didn't. And when brethren today, and I know of an instance where a brother was being pressed with what was the Holy Spirit doing—he said, "Well, he just warms my heart and my soul, and makes me feel so good and makes me just want to accept the scripture." That's exactly what John Calvin taught.

A lot of brethren haven't come to realize that, but that's exactly what he taught. Well, he says he provides no power unto salvation. Well, what power do we need, except power unto salvation? He produces no faith, the word is exclusive in this function. Then what does he do? What is the benefit of it? Well, he either does something, or he does nothing. If he does nothing by this alleged separate and apart personal indwelling, it isn't worth anything and God doesn't work that way. If he does something by this separate and apart indwelling I want to know what it is. Name it. Now, I don't think that every operation of God or of Christ or of the Holy Spirit equates the word, but the effect

produced in the mind and in the lives of people by the operation of the Spirit can also be attributed unto the influence and power and teaching of the word. But now then, he does something or he does nothing. If he does nothing, he isn't worth anything, and if he does something, what is it? I know of one man, a good brother, who is alleged to have said, Well, he didn't know, said he might just lie there dormant. Well, if he lies there dormant, what's the benefit? Where is the value?

And now then, I have here some statements from Garth Black in the Word of Life Series and he's talking about the Holy Spirit and he says the argument that there isn't any work that the indwelling of the Spirit could perform that isn't done by the Spirit acting through the word, plainly contradicts the teaching of the New Testament." All right, now then, where is the passage? I want to look at it, see what it says and what it doesn't say. And he says the strengthening of the inner man by the indwelling Spirit is a work that cannot be completely accomplished by the Holy Spirit through the word. That is strange. You've got to have some power in addition. Then what's accomplished through the word can only be accomplished through the Holy Spirit. It is only through the help of the indwelling Spirit that man is able to overcome the flesh and tendency to sin.

Now, brethren, whether you realize it or not, that's Calvinism! A man is born depraved. He can't do anything for himself and before he can accept the teaching of the word of God, he's got to have this operation of the Holy Spirit, separate and apart from it, to enable him to overcome sin and see the divinity of the scriptures, so the doctrine is practically the same.

Then, again, another work of the Spirit that obviously cannot be accomplished through the word is his work as an intercessor. The word cannot pray for the child of God. This can only be done or achieved by the personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Now, I challenge your thinking, brethren. Where is the passage that shows that any intercession of the Spirit on our behalf is conditioned upon a personal indwelling. Now, Christ intercedes for us, but I don't know of many who'd say that Christ personally indwells the Christian. But where is the passage? The point is assumed.

But now then it's getting closer home. I have here a series of lectures on the Holy Spirit delivered by our friend, Carl Ketcherside and as he talks about the Holy Spirit and the Christian, and what he does he says, "this is exactly what the Holy Spirit is to do for us. The Holy Spirit does not reveal unto us anything that is not contained in the word." (Well, Calvin said the same thing.) "But the Holy Spirit gives us a new insight into His word. The Holy Spirit dwells in you and He projects your mind into the word of God as far as it is capable of going with your mental power if you will allow him to do so." Well, he talks about how he used to be the most radical of the radicals and he plays on that tune a lot. And I'll tell you this, he was closer to the truth then than he is now. But then, he says that he changed and he said, "the reason I did is because the

Holy Spirit dwelling in me when I began to really talk to God and pray to Him and allow Him to lead my life and to guide it, opened up new insights into the things contained in this book."

Now, then, that's nothing in the world but the old Calvinistic theory and so, here we begin to see the fruits of a wrong concept of the way the Spirit operates in the life of Christians. Not everybody is going to bear that fruit, but we see it born by some.

Thomas says that the Holy Spirit operates in the realm of providence and I believe in the providence of God. I want that understood, but how God operates and what he does in the realm of providence I don't know and it isn't revealed in the book. Now let me suggest unto you, my friend, that whatever operation, or whatever the Holy Spirit, or Christ, or God may do in the realm of providence, there is no passage that indicates that such operation is conditioned upon the Holy Spirit personal indwelling and that's assumed. So be not deceived about it. We have proved, and it is admitted that the Holy Spirit not only can, but does, dwell in the Christian through the instrumentality of His teaching and his word. Now, why go beyond that and assert a position that cannot be established by the testimony of a single passage of scripture anyway?

And so, I'd like for us to close with this additional point. We've talked about God, the godhead, divinity, and their personalities in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Now we can show how God dwells in His children. I call your attention to some statements found in John 4:15, "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." Now, how do we come to confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of God? It's through the testimony delivered by the divine revelation—the Spirit, to convict us of the reality of His sonship. In that way we are enabled to confess, acknowledge that he is the Son of God, but through that means God is said to dwell in us.

Now look at verse 24 in the third chapter, "He that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us." Through keeping his commandments, we have assurance that the Spirit is dwelling in us and God dwells in us.

But then again, down in chapter 4:12, "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit." We dwell in him, he dwells in us. Now, if he is literally in us, we are literally in him.

Well, now then in verse 16, "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love." Now, how did we come to believe the love that God has toward us? Through the testimony of his divine revelation. So we know and believe the love that God has to us. "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God."

Over in the 5th chapter, "If we receive the witness of man, the witness of God is greater. Now, this is the witness of God which he hath testified of His Son."

Where do we have it? Right here. That's the testimony and only testimony we have that God has delivered concerning His Son unto us. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in Himself." He has received that testimony with his heart and life, he has the witness in Himself. "He that believeth not, God has made him a liar because he believeth not the record," or the witness of God. Now, here's the testimony, here is the teaching, you can believe it or disbelieve it, but if you say it's not so, then you make God a liar because he's testified that it is so, but if you receive it then the witness dwells in you, not the divine person of the Holy Spirit, but the witness dwells in you. That's what the record says and that's what we need to receive "and this is the record that God hath given to us—eternal life and this life is in His Son," The testimony of life in the Son is the means by which we've come into the direction of the blessing.

In Ephesians 3:17, it is said that Christ dwelleth in our hearts by faith, but how does faith come? In Galatians 2:20, Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." Faith is believing, the faith is that which is believed. Now Paul said, "I died and Christ lives. Christ lives in me and the life which I live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me." Brethren, when I live by the faith, that system of teaching the gospel of Christ, then Christ lives in me. That's not talking about just having some passages of scripture memorized. That's nothing in the world but a misunderstanding of the whole thing, that when I receive that testimony into my heart I believe it with my whole heart. I let it become the controlling influence in my life, to direct me in what I am to do and how I am to live. I trust implicitly in His promises and I walk day by day with my hand in God's, then God dwells in me, Christ dwells in me, the Holy Spirit dwells in me, but neither of them directly, immediately, or without medium. The way that God and Christ dwell in us is the way the Holy Spirit dwells in us. Having learned how one divine being indwells us, we can see how the other one indwells us. Now, we need to understand that.

Oh, my friends, we need to draw close unto God and walk with Him. Christianity is not merely a name to be assumed—it is not simply something that is to be done in a ritualistic way, but letting these divine powers be in us through the instrumentality of the divine revelation of God and of His will, we walk with him day by day in the doing of His will and that's what it means to be in God and in Christ and for them to be in us. When he talks about that he's not talking about space indwelling or anything of the kind. If you'll read John, chapters 14 and 15—they can help you. Jesus said "abide in me, and I in you" and then he goes ahead to say "if ye abide in me and my words abide in you." When the words of Christ abide in us, remain in us, Christ is dwelling in us. This simply means unity, oneness, harmony, fusion, togetherness, not special location. May God bless all of you, may we all together

come down to the business of studying more diligently the divine will as revealed in the divine words and consecrate our hearts and souls unto the practice of it so that when this life is past and we come to the end of the way we'll all be gathered home to dwell with God forevermore. It's been a joy to be here. May God bless you in your studies.

EXPOSITION: TEXT and CONTEXT

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ELDERS MUST BE LEADERS

To be an elder in the church is a grave and serious responsibility. Some take the office lightly, treating it as some glorified position to hold rather than a work to be done. The Bible states: "If a man desire the office, he desireth a good work" (1 Tim, 3:1). A man who is motivated to become an elder simply to control the church, or for honor, esteem and prestige, has the wrong attitude. He has no business being an elder.

One of the musts for being an elder is the ability to lead. The Bible states: "Obey them that have the rule over you. . . ." (Heb. 13:17). The word "rule" in this passage means "to go before, to show the way, to guide, to lead" (cf. *Vine & Thayer*). Hence, an elder is to be a leader, a guide, a ruler. Competent leadership necessitates the following things:

Regular Business Meetings

Before elders can know in which direction to lead, they must make plans. This requires business meetings. Some of these meetings must include the preacher, deacons, teachers, and other members, as all play a part in the growth of the church. Some places, elders never have any meetings with anybody. There is no way that a good working relationship can be realized between the elders and preacher, or the elders and deacons, or the elders and members, without meetings to discuss the work of the church.

Some places, even the elders meet infrequently, and then the time may be consumed talking about material things. Or, they huddle in a corner for a few minutes after or before worship and try to discuss the work of the church. A few matters might be decided in a huddle, but no serious and in-depth plans can be worked out to move the church ahead.

Too, all the time necessary should be devoted to a business meeting. Some limit a meeting to an hour, regardless of the problems to deal with. Any unfinished business is postponed until the next meeting, perhaps a month or two later. Thirty to sixty days have been procrastinated simply because some men did not think enough of the Lord's work to spend the

amount of time needed to get the job done. Elders are to rule diligently (Rom. 12:8) and not slothfully (Rom. 12:11).

Vision

Someone said: "A leader sees three things: what ought to be done, what can be done, and how to do it." Elders need this kind of vision. They need to see the opportunities to stimulate, both the spiritual and numerical growth of the church.

L.R. Wilson wrote: "In most instances the evangelist will supply the vision, but the elders will have to translate it into concrete terms. The evangelist will generate the power, but the elders will have to harness it and put it to work. The elders are to the congregation what the governors are to a machine. Sometimes the preacher catches the vision, generates the power, and gets the congregation all steamed up, but the overseers fail to properly direct the accumulated energy; instead they try to throttle it, and the inevitable happens—an explosion takes place and the congregation is torn to bits. Elders who are not interested in making any progress should always select a minister who is content to drift along" (*Congregational Development*, p. 30).

Initiative

After seeing what can be done to promote the good of the church, they then must initiate the plans. Too many elders have to be goaded into nearly everything that is attempted. It is so easy to stay in the rut and be satisfied with the status-quo. Elders should initiate teaching and training programs, new and better methods of work, visitation programs, changes in order of worship occasionally, better facilities and equipment by which to work, etc. In other words, they should lead in a positive manner and not always have to be prompted to take every step forward. They should be the leaders and not the led.

The story goes of a man flagging down a motorist and asking: "Mister, have you seen a group of people down the road anywhere?" When the motorist replied in the affirmative, the man said: "Well, I must hurry on down there, cause I see their leader." They had already run off and left their leader.

Distribution of Responsibility

God gave elders the authority to rule the church, but this does not preclude distributing work to the other members. In fact, delegation of responsibility must be made to others if the work gets done. This is good leadership.

Deacons need to be given the job God authorized them to do, that is, take care of the physical responsibilities, and the elders can devote their time to the spiritual aspects of the church (cf. Acts 6:1-4). Some elders take over the deacon's work and the elder's work goes wanting.

Members can be given the task of checking absentees, visiting some of them for the elders, writing letters, helping in Bible classes to see that supplies are adequate and several other things. Some elders seemingly do not know how to systematically assign

duties to others. They either try to do everything themselves or it is not done at all. All members should be made responsible in some duty or other.

Communication

A good leader has a harmonious relation with his followers. He takes them into his confidence and at times asks their advice. All the brains are not in one man—not even a preacher. He informs them of his plans and stimulates them to serve by saying, "Let us rise up and build" (Neh. 2:17). Elders cannot expect cooperation by aloofness and an air of "bossism." The attitude: "We are running things around here and it is none of your business what we do," will not work. Elders are members of the congregation, too, and it is God's heritage, not theirs. They were chosen by the members to lead, guide and coordinate the functions of the church. The church deserves some consideration.

"Elders are not autocrats. They should rule in much the same way that a wise father rules his house (1 Timothy 3:4-5). In the Model Church, G.C. Brewer said, 'In all cases where no principle of right or wrong is involved, the elders should have due regard for the wishes of the congregation.' A father ought to involve his wife and children in the decision-making process if he expects to succeed. In like manner, it is appropriate for godly elders to be careful to not ignore the wishes of the congregation. When the people have something to say about the affairs of the church, they will be more likely to support the decisions that are made. In matters concerning building, schedules, who shall preach (assuming he is sound), how money is to be used; elders who have a scriptural attitude will consult the wishes of the congregation. If they do not, they may not long have a congregation. Elders are hindrances when they stifle the interest of people by ignoring their desires and handing down decisions without regard for the desires of those they are supposed to lead. When elders consider the feelings of the congregation, the people will understand and respect the decisions which the elders must finally make. Nothing is any more out of order than eldership jealous of its authority, secretive about what is being planned, and condescending in its attitude toward the congregation. Men who act in an arbitrary and highhanded manner are not qualified to be elders, for an elder must not be self-willed. (Titus 1:7.) Godly elders rule by the power of example and by the authority of the word of God. When correctly understood, the only rulers whom God has approved for the church are elders. No rule is anarchy; majority rule leads to digression; minority rule becomes crank rule; one-elder rule is tyranny; but eldership rule is scriptural" (Ross. W. Dye, *Gospel Advocate*, June 3, 1982, pp. 324-325).

May elders of God's church everywhere strive to properly govern its affairs, adequately manage its interests and suitably promote its welfare. The church for which Jesus died deserves nothing less.

WHEN YOU MOVE—Please allow two months for change of address notices. We have a cut-off date for changes each month. Thanks for your help.

Using Great Plainness of Speech

J. T. Smith

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IS GOD THE AUTHOR OF RELIGIOUS CONFUSION?

When I hear people talk about "modern-day revelations," I am always faced with the same problem. What modern day prophet and revelation is true? The Roman Catholic Church believes that the Pope is the modern-day prophet of God, and that which he receives ex cathedra in matters of faith and morals is from God. They also believe that the Pope is the head of the church on earth.

The Mormons believe that Joseph Smith is the head of the church on earth (Doctrine and Covenants 28:6). They also believe that their prophets are still receiving revelation today from God.

In the magazine *Plain Truth* published by the World Wide Church of God with headquarters in Pasadena, Ca. I read in the February, 1977 issue where Herbert W. Armstrong said regarding God's church on earth today, "Therefore, God used me first in raising up HIS Church of this era, to stand loyally back of me, making it possible. The parent church was 19 members. That was August, 1933. I had really been given the GREAT COMMISSION in mid-July of that year when I was 40. I was not elected: I was appointed by Jesus Christ, the HEAD of the Church. How may that be known? BY THEIR FRUITS—BY THE FACTS, which cannot be contradicted."

Also, even though the Bible forbids women having authority over men (I Timothy 2:11-12), and in the days of the apostles women were not allowed to speak in the assemblies (I Corinthians 14:34-35), Mary Baker Glover Eddy says in the preface of *Science and Health*, page 11, "When God called the author to proclaim His Gospel to this age, there came also the charge to plant and water His vineyard." And in connection with this, Ellen G. White also claimed the power of the Holy Spirit, plus hundreds of different religious sects all claiming the power of the Holy Spirit in leading them to teach and practice what they do. But this would make God the author of such confusion. Who is right? God is! And as I shall point out in our next article, if all believed the Bible, they would know that the New Testament is complete and there is no need for modern-day revelation.

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DOES GOD CAUSE SICKNESS AND DEATH?

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Quite frequently people are heard to exclaim: "God took him!", or "God had plans for her elsewhere!", or "She was needed in the heavenly choir!" I, for one, cannot go along with this idea that God picks out one person, and removes them from earth's stage of action. Please let me suggest some Scriptures that may provide you with food for thought.

God Is Not A Respector of Persons; No Partiality Is Shown.

"Peter said: "I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him" (Acts 10:34-35).

"For there is no partiality with God" (Romans 2:11).

"And, masters, do the same things to them, (slaves. LWM.) and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him" (Eph. 6:9).

"My brethren, do not hold your faith in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with an attitude of personal favoritism" (Jas. 2:1).

The foregoing passages prove without question that God does not show favoritism or partiality among his children, or among nations. In another passage, we are told that He causes the rain to fall upon the just and upon the unjust. Again, no favoritism. However, if God caused this person or that person to develop an illness and die, certainly He would be guilty of showing partiality or favoritism.

Who Then Causes Sickness and Death Among Men?

You are no doubt familiar with Genesis record of Eve's and Adam's sin in the Garden of Eden. Eve gave heed to the temptation of Satan, who communicated with her through the serpent, the serpent being more crafty than any beast of the field. In turn, Eve contributed to Adam's downfall. . . they both disobeyed God! Note please, the penalties that were visited upon the man and the woman, because of their sin!

The serpent was punished for having permitted Satan to use him; the serpent would go upon his belly and eat dust. A dual application might be stressed also, that the seed of Satan (servants of the Devil) and the Seed of woman, pointing to Christ, would be enemies... that the serpent's or Satan's head would be bruised (a head-wound is serious), while the injury done to the Seed of woman would be minimal, a bruised heel. The second possible portion of this enmity between the woman's seed and the serpent's seed, might be shown by the well nigh universal hatred of snakes by mankind.

Woman would be punished by the pain of childbirth, yet her desire would be for her husband, and the husband would rule over the woman.

Man would be punished by the ground being cursed, and in toil would man eat of the produce of the earth; thorns and thistles would be a continuing penalty for man as he tilled the soil; man would be required to labor, (the sweat of his face) in order to eat.

Both man and woman were punished with physical death. . . "Till you return to the ground, because from it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return." The writer of Hebrews reminds us that "It is appointed unto man, once to die, and after that, the judgment" (Heb. 9:27).

So, the penalty brought upon the human race by Adam's and Eve's sin, is universal.

Notice, please, that Satan caused them to sin . . . he induced them, or seduced them; he tempted them . . . and God does not tempt us! "Let no one say when he is tempted, I am being tempted by God; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust" (James 1:1-14).

The Devil Causes Sickness and Death!

"Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself (Christ-LWM) likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him (Satan-LWM) who had the power of death, that is, the devil;..."(Heb. 2:14).

Jesus was tempted of the devil (Matt. 4).

In the parable of the good grain and the tares, Jesus explained it by teaching . . . "the enemy that sowed them (the tares-LWM) is the devil" (Matt. 13:39).

The woman who was healed by Jesus on the sabbath day, had been deformed or crippled for eighteen years. Luke wrote that she "had been bound by Satan, Lo these eighteen years" (Luke 13:16).

When Judas Iscariot determined to betray Jesus... then entered Satan into Judas" (Luke 22:3).

When Christ foretold Peter's three—time denial of Christ, our Master stated: "Satan has desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat" (Luke 22:31).

"The devil having now put into the heart (mind-LWM) of Judas, to betray Him" (John 13:2).

When the covetous Christians, Ananias and Sapphira lied about the price received for the property that they sold, Peter said: "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit, and to keep back some of the price of the land" (Acts 5:3)?

The Apostle Paul referred to his physical ailment, whatever it was, as being "a messenger of Satan to buffet me." He also referred to his problem as being a "thorn in the flesh" (2 Cor. 12:7).

Paul wrote to the Ephesian Christians . . . "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Eph. 6:11).

Paul told the Christians at Thessalonica, that he would have come their way more than once, "but Satan hindered me" (1 Thess. 2:18).

Paul warned the young man Timothy concerning "the condemnation of the devil, and the reproach and snare of the devil" (1 Tim. 3:6-7).

Peter wrote concerning the vigilance needed,

"because your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

Summary and Conclusion.

- Who caused the first SIN in the world? Satan!
- Who prompted our first parents to sin and thus brought DEATH into the world? Satan!
- Who "bound the woman" with a crippling illness for eighteen years? Satan!
- Who hindered Paul in his efforts? Satan!
- Who has the power of death? Satan!
- Who was the enemy that sowed the "tares" in the field? Satan!
- Whose "Messenger" was Paul's illness? Satan!
- What adversary appeals to the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life? Satan!
- Since God does not tempt us, who does? Satan or those who serve him!
- Since God does not show favoritism or partiality among His children, or between the just and the unjust! Who does? Satan!
- The devil is the author of all evil, sin, sickness and finally death for the human race. So, please, let's not falsely accuse God of the things that Satan is responsible for.

miraculously and not by Joseph. She and Joseph had other children called brethren of Christ.

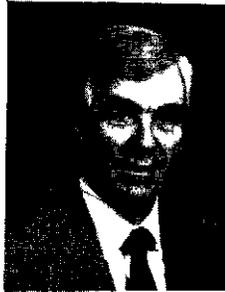
In the New Testament times when someone was called "brother" it often meant a national kinship. Ananias called Saul, "Brother Saul" before Saul became a Christian and it is evident that they were not born of the same parents. They were brothers in a national sense, inasmuch as both of them were Jews. More than that could not be said. The term was applied sometimes to a "neighbor" (Matt. 7:3) but the most significant and frequent use of it in the New Testament applies to the family relationship in Christ, the church.

You may call someone a brother and by this imply that the individual is a Christian, a member of the family of God, the church of Christ. This is, by far, the most extensive use of the term in the New Testament. Anyone can take a concordance and run the references on "brother" "brethren," and "brotherhood" and see how it applies only to those in the family of God. If you call someone a brother, you imply that such a person has been born again (John 3:5) and is God's child (Gal. 3:26-27). You also imply that they are members of the New Testament church. Paul addressed the church at Colossae as "the saints and faithful brethren" (Col. 1:1). Everett F. Harrison wrote, "It is clear from the Book of Acts and from the Epistles that 'brethren' was the common mode of designation for fellow believers." *Baker's Dictionary of Theology*, page 106

If you call someone a brother, and that person is not a Christian, a member of the church or a child of God, you have misled that individual and others into thinking that you believe he is saved and is God's child. However, if you know that individual has never obeyed the gospel of Christ, and has no intention of being a member of God's only family, to call such a one a brother is wrong. Be careful, when you call someone a "brother" to be sure you do not imply more than God would. We may call some our brethren who are not God's children and in so doing take more authority on ourselves than God ever allowed anyone. He and He alone has the right to identify people as His children, and God has no children outside of His family. The means of getting into the family are simple: Faith to become a child of God (Gal. 3:26) and obedience, including repentance and baptism (vs. 27) are the requirements for membership in God's family. One is by this procedure, "born again." Then to remain in the family and remain a brother in Christ, that one must be faithful, even unto death (Rev. 2:10)

**WHEN YOU CALL
SOMEONE "BROTHER"**

Dudley Ross Spears
Alvaton, KY



Calling another "brother" is a practice that often is taken for granted and done without much thought. The word can be made into a sort of unofficial title. A man who is called on to lead prayer in the assembly is called "Brother so-and-so" and after services are ended he is just "plain Joe." When the preacher for a congregation is introduced to a stranger, in order to identify the man as a preacher, he is called, "Brother so-and-so". Otherwise, he also later becomes just plain old "so and so." It is good to consider what is implied when you call someone, "brother."

It may be that you are referring to your own family when you call someone brother. The word means, "born to the same parents." It is used this way in the New Testament. Of those children born to the parents, Joseph and Mary, it is said they were the "brethren" of our Lord (Luke 8:20-21; John 2:12; 7:3-5). It is evident that Jesus had more family than His mother and father. Actually He had the same mother but not the same father, for Joseph was His father, only in a technical and legal sense. He was simply the husband of Mary; Mary became pregnant with Christ

Porter Sermon Outlines

By W. Curtis Porter

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DAILY BIBLE STUDY

Donnie V. Rader
4724 E. Manslick Rd.
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Luke's record of Paul's travels mentions something special about the Bereans. "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, Emphasis mine DVR). They stood out because they were willing to take the time to study. I remember studying this passage once in a Bible class when the teacher explained that "daily" didn't mean every day. He obviously didn't see the need for studying our Bibles every day. I asked him if the doctor told him to take his medicine "daily" would that mean every day or every other day or once or twice a week. I have before me *Webster's Elementary Dictionary For Boys and Girls*. It defines the word "daily" as "Happening, done, or issued every day; as, a daily bath; a daily newspaper.—adv. Every day; day by day.—n;" p. 165. Hence if the Bereans searched the scriptures "daily" that means they did it every day.

Shall we let the Bereans condemn us? If those who are not Christians can do it, why can't we? Could it be said of us that we are somewhat different in that we study our Bible daily? Why can't we have the attitude of the man David described saying, "But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night" (Psa. 1:2).

Many Christians do not study their Bibles every day. I've known of some who couldn't even find their Bibles when time came to go to worship. They leave their Bibles in the car or at the meeting house all week without ever picking it up except on Sunday and Wednesday night. We can find time to read the newspaper every day, watch our T.V. programs and the evening news every day, but we can't always find just a little time to spend with our Bibles.

May I suggest to you a few reasons why you should study your Bible daily (every day).

(1) You just might learn something. I'm impressed as I read Neh. 8 with the fact that we might and can learn something that we did not know or have forgot ten by just simply reading. When Ezra read from the "law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded Israel" they found "that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month" (Neh. 8:14). This they had not been doing. So their reading helped them to learn what they needed to do. (See also Neh. 13:1)

(2) The scriptures tell us more about Jesus. Jesus said to some unbelieving Jews, "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (Jno. 5:39). Here Jesus was speaking of the Old Testament scriptures (the law and

prophets) which were a witness to the fact that indeed Jesus is the Son of God. The N.T. also testifies to that fact. The more we study (either O.T. or N.T.) we will see more and more evidence of the Deity of Christ.

(3) This is how we obtain faith. We ought to study our Bibles daily to increase our faith. Our faith comes from hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17). The more we read and study the greater our faith will be. Suppose one Christian only studies his Bible on Sunday and Wednesday. Another Christian studies his Bible every day. Which one do you suppose would have the greater faith?

(4) We will be judged by this book. Suppose you were about to be tested, and if you pass the test you will win a million dollars. Your test will be over the material in a certain textbook. How often would you study that book? Once a week? Twice a week? Or every day? My friend the time will soon come when we will be judged by the words of Christ (Jno. 12:48). However the thing we anticipate is far greater than all the money in the world—HEAVEN!

(5) To see if the things we hear are so. That is the very reason the Bereans studied every day. They wanted to see if what they heard from Paul was true to the scriptures (Acts 17:11). That ought to be our attitude. Don't accept a matter just because some preacher or Bible class teacher may say it is true. If we would just have the attitude, "Let me see if my Bible teaches that before I will believe it and practice it", many problems and divisions will be prevented in the Lord's body.

(6) Because of the love we have for and the delight we have in the law of God. This was David's attitude all the way through Psa. 119. David had a superb love for the law of God. He loved it above fine gold. Notice a few of these verses in this chapter (Vs. 16, 24, 35, 47, 70, 72, 92, 127, 165). If we had that same attitude toward the law of God—I think we would find ourselves studying our Bibles day by day. Listen to David, "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day" (v. 97).

Many other reasons could possibly be given, but this will suffice for the Christian who wants to please God. I am bothered by the fact that many Christians do not see the need to study their Bibles every day. Let us learn to spend some time with our Bibles before we ever lay our heads down to sleep. After all, what reason would you have for not studying your Bible daily?

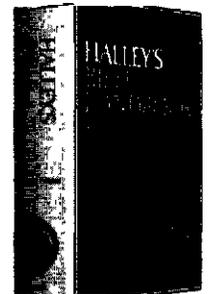
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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

*Send all News Items to: Wilson Adams, 6334 Auburn Ave., Riverdale, MD 20737***FIELD REPORTS**

GARY P. EUBANKS, 313 Washington Ave., Valparaiso, FL 32580. At the beginning of 1982, I began work with the Twin Cities church in the Niceville-Valparaiso area of Florida. The church is small with only sixteen members, but we plan to grow. The church had its beginning just two years ago. As a whole, we are opposed to the church supporting human institutions and other such human innovations introduced by brethren in recent years. We meet in Room 3 of the Mitchell Building which is located in Valparaiso on Hwy. 20/85. We extend a cordial welcome to all who might be able to visit with us. We meet at 9 and 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. on Sundays and at 7 p.m. on Wednesdays. My phone number is (904) 678-5596.

MICHAEL GARRISON, 1100 3rd St. G.A., Andalusia, AL 36420. I've just returned from a week's gospel meeting with the church in Ash Fork, Arizona. The church is currently made up of four faithful sisters who are standing for a "thus saith the Lord." The work is slow and somewhat disappointing, yet these faithful sisters continue to meet to worship God several times a week. Ash Fork is about one and a half hours drive south of the Grand Canyon. Our saints vacationing in the area might work it out so they could attend the worship with the Ash Fork church. If you are a brother, be ready to preach, lead singing, etc. Your presence would certainly be encouraging. Remember them in your prayers. You can call sister Irene Toliver at (602) 637-2433 for more information.

MARK NITZ, 917 Fourth St., Cincinnati, OH 45215. My family and I have been with the church in Lockland approximately two and a half years. The work has been going well with some success in reaching the lost. Several may be interested in the approaches we have been using to evangelize the area.

Most of our efforts center around our Bible Correspondence Courses (four courses, each becoming more advanced). We have "pushed" the course through many different avenues of advertising. By far the most successful has been a thirty second television advertisement (approximately 200 requests in two weeks). Surprisingly, this was not as expensive as you might think. We have also mailed the first lesson of our course to the surrounding community (18,000 households) with instructions to complete and return if desiring to enroll in the course. This was followed up with a bulletin mailed monthly to the same 18,000. Not only are many enrolled in the course but we have visitors at nearly every service (some with bulletin in hand). We have also advertised the course through radio and newspaper. Of course, the BCC is only a means to an end. Conversion comes when the personal contact is made. When the course is completed we personally return the last lesson and try to set up a home Bible study. Most of our conversions have come through this means.

For the past six months we have had a daily radio program ("call-in" format). Wayne Chappell, evangelist at the Springdale church of Christ, and myself serve as moderators. Cable Television has recently come to town providing us with the opportunity of taping a series of 21 programs and airing them absolutely free, it has taken a lot of work but the potential is tremendous. The company liked the programs enough to offer us time on a much larger station. Those interested in similar work, liking more information, feel free to

write. Our "Dial-A-Bible-Message" has been an inexpensive but effective tool in reaching many. Using a simple telephone answering device along with a daily ad in the classified section, we receive as many as 100 calls a day. We close each message with an invitation to take the Bible Correspondence Course.

There are several large congregations in town that support institutions. We are making an effort to teach the truth on these issues by means of a written discussion between brothers Robert Turner and Gaston Cogdell, a local evangelist. When completed, we plan to mail the discussion into the home of every family identified with these groups. We greatly desire unity among the saints in Cincinnati and hope that this might be a step in the right direction. We would love to have anyone passing through to visit with the church in Lockland. We are just one block off I-75. Call for directions; (513) 821-0410 or 769-4016.

H.E. PATTON, 7637 Fleming Hill Dr. SW, Huntsville, AL 35802. After forty five years in local work, with ten churches, I am retiring from local work, but NOT from evangelism. Reba and I will be moving to a home we have in Huntsville, Alabama. From there I hope to hold meetings and work with brethren at various places where my services are desired and needed. Presently my strength is not abated and my desire to do all I can in the Kingdom is just as fervent as ever. If I ever retire from preaching, physical incapacity and/or the brethren by not inviting me will have to do it. The five years with the Gay Meadows church here in Montgomery have been some of the most satisfying and fruitful of my life. With some of the finest folk to be found anywhere, together we have seen the Gay Meadows church double in attendance, contributions, facilities, and we pray spiritually as well. I appreciate all those who have been, and are now, a part of this congregation. Many have "passed through" (lived here for a while) this congregation. There seems now to be prospects for more "permanency" among the member than ever before. The church is scripturally organized with elders and deacons, and is composed of many men and women (young and older) with great talent and devotion to the Lord. Prospects, therefore, for continued growth and work on the part of Gay Meadows are great.

MIKE S. SCOTT, P.O. Box 30, Williams, IN 47470. Beginning July 22nd, I will be laboring with the brethren in Middletown, Indiana (11th & Locust St. church of Christ). The congregation is quite small and can only provide a portion of my support. Two sister congregations have agreed to assist me while at Middletown, but my family and I feel that we will still need around \$100 to \$200 more per month. Recommendations will be sent upon request.

WILLIAM C. SEXTON, 1937 Judson, Manhattan, KS 66502. Beginning June 30, 1982, the church that formerly met at 1112 Pierre St. shall be meeting in the basement of my house at 1937 Judson, in Manhattan, Kansas. Our former building (a renovated dwelling house) was really inadequate for us. We rejoiced that recently a lady, with whom we had been studying, was baptized. Then, the next Sunday we baptized her husband. Possibly, then, we are beginning to break through to some of the local people. Anyone coming to Manhattan should take note of the change in meeting place. Remember us in your prayers.

RALPH SMART, 516 Union St., Bangor, ME 04401. A little news about the work in Maine. Bruce Hudson, who for the last three years has been with the Milbridge church, is moving to Caribou to help the local preacher, Luke Flynn, in an effort to build up that congregation composed mostly of military personnel. I have agreed to work with the Milbridge church until October. I plan to move to the Portland area by then. I will work with the small church in Scarborough between any trips I may make. I will be working to establish a congregation in Portland. There are now two families who drive through Portland to get to Scarborough. Bill Calame is the new preacher in Bangor. The work there seems to be going well. At present, I am in a gospel meeting in the little town of Prospect (about forty minutes from Bangor). There are three members of the Bangor church who live here. Bro. Calame knocked doors with me and is leading the singing. We had 32 last night for the first service. Troy Adams and I had two gospel meetings recently. One in Blue Hill where we had a good meeting considering there are no Christians in the area. High attendance was 52 with several visitors from the community. Another meeting at Sullivan where the attendance ran in the thirties with three visitors from the community.

ROBERTO SPENCER, Box 452, Odessa, TX 79760. The Spanish church of Christ (Iglesia de Cristo) has increased in number recently. We have had a family to place membership with us and also we recently had one baptism and one restoration. As you can imagine we are very happy. We are a small congregation of about twelve members. At this time we are in the process of buying a building to meet in. I ask for the prayers of all the saints for the work of the Lord in this city among the Spanish speaking people.

WORK IN MEXICO

(Taken from *Along The Border* by Glenn Rogers, 408 La Vista Ave., McAllen, TX 78501) Mel Rose who lives in Oregon, made a trip into western Mexico during the month of May, accompanied by Samuel Gonzales who is a member of the Spanish-speaking church in Hillsboro. The trip took five days each way. The first meeting was in Ojo de Agua (water spring) where they had services four nights. One person was baptized there. The next four days were spent in Vicente Guerrero. There were two more baptisms here. The final four days were spent in Constanca, where Jose Luis Arroyo preaches. One was baptized in this effort. We are happy to report that elsewhere in the country of Mexico there have been twelve baptisms of late that have been reported to us.

PREACHER AVAILABLE

DAVID BECK, 5108 43rd Ave., East, Bradenton, FL 33508. After much prayer and planning, I have decided to leave my secular job of sixteen years and turn my full attention to preaching. I am 35 years old, married, and we have four children. I am blessed to have had some experience already in preaching. For the past two years I have co-moderated with Kenneth Thomas on the "Bible Speaks" radio program. This is a live call-in program of one hour length heard every Sunday morning in this area. I have also had other radio preaching experience. During the last several years I have "filled in" at the Manatee County church and have also spoken at Cortez, Palmetto, Sarasota, Okeechobee, and Jennings, Florida and in Franklin, North Carolina. My desire is to serve the King in His Kingdom using my talents in whatever ways I can. If you desire further information please feel free to contact me, or one of the following men from this area who know me.

Kenneth Thomas	Kenneth Weliever
(813) 746-2237	(813) 729-2922
746-7014	722-1307

Herbert Fraser
(813) 365-7628

J. Paul Branch
(813) 748-5592

PREACHERS NEEDED

CAMILLA, GA Eli and Mary Ann Goodwin are two faithful saints who live in Camilla, Georgia (between Albany and Thomasville). Mary Ann has crippling arthritis. They presently drive to Thomasville to worship with the faithful brethren there, but that is some thirty miles one way, and is difficult on Mary Ann, and is get-

ting more difficult all the time. They want to start a work in Camilla (population 12,000). They need someone to move there and do the preaching, either full-time or part-time. If full-time one would have to secure needed support. Eli owns a grocery store, and for a man who would be capable of preaching and working in the store, he could pay him \$275 per week plus insurance. The Godwins have two children. At the present there would be potentially twelve who could meet regularly if someone could come and work with them. The church in this area of Georgia is small, but is making strides. There is a small liberal group in Camilla which ousted the Godwins when they voiced opposition to their unscriptural work and organization. Eli and Mary Ann are fine people. Could someone possibly help them? If you feel you could meet the need of this situation, please write or call Eli Godwin at Rt. 2, Box 1-AA, Camilla, GA 31730. (912) 336-0684.

VALDOSTA, GA The North Valdosta church of Christ needs a preacher. We can provide partial support. Contact Jack Dawling at (912) 559-6436, or Bascam Parham at (912) 244-1574.

MILBRIDGE, ME—The church that meets in Milbridge, Maine is in need of a full-time preacher. They can provide some support. Anyone interested may contact Owen Beal on Kansas Road in Milbridge, ME 04658. Or phone (207) 546-7046.

ELDERS AND DEACONS APPOINTED

EDGAR E. HOLCOMB, 263 Massachusetts Ave., Elyria, OH 44035—It gives me great pleasure to report that the church in North Ridgeville, Ohio is once again fully organized as the New Testament directs. Carl Conrad and Tom Lahman were appointed as elders and Herb Hiser, Ken Coleman, Dana Warner, Bruce Dean and Dave Hageman were appointed as deacons. We thank our Father for His great blessings bestowed upon us. Our spirits are gladdened and our hearts rejoice to see these fine families in the body of Christ living exemplary lives. When visiting our area stop and worship with us. We will make you feel welcome.

NEW CONGREGATION

ALLAN R. FERGUSON, Rt. 1, Box 77A, Wilbur, Washington 99185—We wish to inform the readers of *SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES* that a new congregation has begun to meet at 703 E. Pope in Wilbur, Washington. We met in my home for the first time on July 11, 1982. There were three families in attendance. Wilbur is a small farm town 21 miles east of Grand Coulee Dam, on highway 2. For information you may contact me at the above address or phone (509) 647-5860 or 647-5451.

B. G. ECHOLS, 5643 Newberry, Wayne, Michigan 48184—After two years in a small town in Texas we have returned to a large metropolitan area to work with the Westland church in suburban Detroit. The need among the millions of this area and all of Michigan is great, but the brethren have a desire to reach others with the gospel. Attempting to work in Texas was poor judgment on my part. We pray that the years we have left will be better utilized in His service.

JACK H. KIRBY, 2300 W. Pioneer, Irving, Texas 75061—For the past four and one-half years I have been working with the Panlener Street church in Las Cruces, NM. We have resigned this work, and in August began work with the Westside church in Irving, Texas. Our mailing address will be: 1425 Schukar Ct., Irving, TX 75061. During our work at Las Cruces 46 were baptized, several were restored to duty. Our membership tripled, with record attendance of 139 set twice this year. Our budget increased correspondingly. The brethren have not yet selected a man to move there. When in Irving, please contact us. If any reader knows of any in Irving that are not faithful, please let us know and we will encourage them.

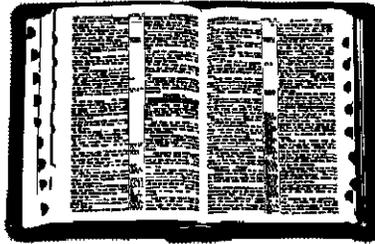
IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	290
RESTORATIONS	102

(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)

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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VOLUME XXIII

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ANSWERS for our hope

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Marshall E. Patton
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WHO DID SIN?

QUESTION: In John 9:2 the disciples asked Jesus, "Who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" How could the disciples reason that some sin of the blind man caused his blindness, since he was born blind? Does God afflict people in anticipation of sin in their life? Does God punish us in this life for our sins? If so, how do we distinguish between such and suffering that is not caused by our own sins? Also, please explain the latter part of verse three: "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."

ANSWER: Answering the above questions involve "filling quite an order." Nevertheless, they are good questions and are indicative of careful study and good reasoning. Indeed, they merit Bible answers.

Scholars point out varied theological views which may account for the questions of the disciples. There was the doctrine of Metempsychosis (transmigration of souls) which affirmed that as just punishment for sin the soul after death was made to pass into another body and suffer commensurate with evil done. Another view was that one could sin before he was born—even in his mother's womb. An appeal was made to the struggle of Jacob and Esau (Gen. 25:22). Here it is affirmed that Esau tried to commit murder before they were born. Then there is the ever popular view that God afflicts individuals with tragedies, sufferings, and misfortunes because of their own sins. Still another view is obvious from our text, namely, that God afflicts individuals because of the sins of

their parents.

For the sake of brevity and space, I pass over the doctrine of Metempsychosis and the matter of sinning in the womb by saying that such concepts are simply unwarrantable assumptions. Should one affirm otherwise, then attention will be given to it.

Concerning the view that God afflicts individuals because of the sins of parents, the Bible does not teach it. In fact, the Bible teaches otherwise. However, the view was one of long standing among the Jews. No doubt this concept grew out of a misunderstanding of the following passages: Ex. 20:5; 34:7; 1 Kgs. 21:29.

The references in Exodus refer to consequences of sin on the part of parents. Children today suffer such, i.e., the children who suffer hunger, abuse, etc., because of a life of dissipation on the part of a parent. This, however, differs from that inflicted directly by God as punishment for sin. The latter reference involves a specific instance in a time when God dealt directly in particular instances for the purpose of developing and executing His scheme of redemption. This was not the rule by which He dealt with His people.

Ezekiel dealt with this misconception (punishing children for the sins of parents) which the Jews expressed in the form of a proverb: "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge" (Ezk. 18:2). The error of this concept is refuted throughout Ezk. 18, especially in verses 20-24: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him....."

There is suffering that comes in this life as a consequence of our own wrong doing. Often we reap what we sow in this life (Gal. 6:7, 8).

There is suffering that comes from natural calamities in life. This is true because of the immutable laws of nature. Such comes upon the just and the unjust alike. Such calamities are like the rain (Matt. 5:45). Such does not evidence wickedness or righteousness on the part of the recipient.

Then there is suffering which we experience because we are Christians—by virtue of our relationship to Christ. This involves ridicule, slander, persecution, etc.

Such comes from the enemies of truth. Consider the following: John 15:18, 19; 2 Tim. 3:12; Matt. 5:10-12; 1 Pet. 4:12-16. This is the suffering set forth figuratively by the word "scourges" in Heb. 12:6. Such is part of the chastening of the Lord which is "for our profit" (Heb. 12:5-11). The context shows the nature of the suffering under consideration and demands the conclusion that both suffering for right as well as words of reproof are included.

The Bible does not teach that God punishes directly in this life for our sins. While there have been exceptions to this rule (in time of miracles, when for specific purposes such was done), such were just that—exceptions—not the rule. Otherwise, it necessarily follows that God is a respecter of persons and, in the final analysis, a terrible monster.

That God does not punish directly for sin in this life is evident from instances in the personal ministry of our Lord. Jesus took issue with this concept in the case of the blind man: "And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents" (Jno. 9:2, 3). Again, Jesus took issue with this concept as shown in the following verses: "There were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Lk. 13:1-5).

The book of Job affords us perhaps even a clearer refutation of this concept. Job's three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar accused him of sin. Throughout the book of Job they argue that such suffering as experienced by Job was evidence of sin on his part and of justice on God's part (Cf. Job. 4:7; 8:1-7; 11:1-6). Job, however, denied their accusation, affirmed his innocence, and exposed their inconsistencies. In the end he was vindicated by God (Job. 42:7-9).

We live in a world where injustices prevail, irregularities are in evidence, the wicked often triumph and the righteous often suffer defeat. We need to remember that "pay day" does not come in this life. In the judgment justice will prevail, wrongs will be made right, the wicked will be punished, and the righteous will be rewarded.

Concerning the latter part of verse three "but that the works of God should be made manifest in him, "Jesus turns their attention from the cause and purpose which they attributed to this misfortune, i.e., punishment for sin, to a nobler purpose which the blindness now served, i.e., manifesting the works of God (miracles) in Jesus. While God allows such suffering (from whatever cause), He has the power to overrule such to His glory. In this instance such was used to confirm the deity of Jesus of Nazareth.

Searching The Scriptures

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Editorial

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THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE

"For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (Rom. 8:24-25). In this statement, Paul dealt with the essential elements of hope as it is presented in the word of God. What we hope for we do not now see. Hence hope always looks to the future. Yet there is within us an earnest longing for that coupled with the expectation of realizing this future aspiration. Thayer says that hope is "Expectation of good; joyful and confident expectation of eternal salvation." Webster defines the verb form as "To long for with expectation of obtainment, to expect with desire; trust, expect."

It is possible to desire what we do not expect to have. As a boy I found it entralling to look through the Sears and Roebuck catalog at the pictures of shiny new bicycles. But those were lean years and I never expected to have one. On the other hand, it is possible to expect what we do not earnestly desire. Discipline was a fact of life in our home. When I was caught doing what I should not do, I fully expected to receive my "just recompense of reward" but let me tell you I did not earnestly desire it! But the Christian's hope combines a longing look to the future with fervent expectation. Someone said that hope is "faith pointed to the future."

Hope distinguishes the Christian from the unbeliever. Paul wrote the Thessalonians that they should "sorrow not even as others which have no hope" (1 Thes. 4:13). Hear the words of the renowned infidel Voltaire near the close of his life.

"Strike out a few sages, and the crowd of human beings is nothing but a horrible assemblage of unfortunate criminals, and the globe contains nothing but corpses. I tremble to have to complain once more of the Being of beings, in casting an attentive eye over this terrible picture. I wish I had never been born....The box of Pandora is the most beautiful fable of antiquity. Hope was at the bottom."

Contrast that to the radiant joy expressed by Paul even when he was chained to a Roman guard under house arrest in Rome. "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice" (Phil. 4:4). Hear Paul near the end of his life as he faced martyrdom for the cause of Christ. "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my

departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:6-8). Do you not see the contrast between the despair of Voltaire and the radiant, confident hope of Paul?

The Basis of Hope

Is the Christian merely a dreamer? Does he seek "pie in the sky" without any substance to his expectation? I submit that hope is reasonable. Peter said "and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Pet. 3:15). The farmer plows and plants in hope of harvest. Even the forest sheds its leaves and bares its branches to the cold breath of winter in hope of the renewal of spring. It is even more reasonable that the Christian hope for that which he does not now see.

(1) The Christian hopes because God cannot lie. Our hope is as certain as the very character of God himself. "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began" (Titus 1:2). The Hebrew writer said it is "impossible for God to lie" (Heb. 6:18). God's performance in the past is the guarantee of his promises for the Christian. He said "let there be light" and it was so. He said of man in the days of Noah "his days shall be an hundred and twenty years." Then came the flood, for God had spoken. Through his servants the prophets God foretold many things concerning the Messiah, all of which came to pass. Even the word which he spake by angels was steadfast. It is therefore reasonable to expect God to fulfill his promises to the Christian for God cannot lie.

(2) The Christian hopes **because Christ was raised' from the dead.** "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept." "Firstfruits" implies later fruit. In his own victory over death he secured the keys of Hades and death (Rev. 1:18). Thus he "delivered them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2:14-15). The sign of all signs was the resurrection of Christ from the dead. That was the crowning victory which forever settled his claim to be the Son of God with power (Rom. 1:4). It is reasonable therefore to put our trust in him who has "all authority in heaven and on earth" (Mt. 28:18).

(3) The Christian hopes because of the **gospel assurances** offered by the witnesses of the resurrection. After his resurrection he was "seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time" (1 Cor. 15:5-8). These witnesses repeatedly spoke of "the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel" (Col. 1:5).

The Results of Hope

(1) Hope **protects** us. We wear "for an helmet, the hope of salvation" (1 Thes. 5:8). Helmets are worn to protect heads. The head is the source of direction for the body. It is our intellectual center. Rob man of his hope and you have deprived him of his noblest aspirations.

(2) Hope **purifies** us. "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (1 Jno. 3:3). A constant awareness of the hope set before us is a deterrent to sin. One of the greatest avenues of escape from temptation is the remembrance of the "home over there." The brilliance of our hope is calculated to outshine the cheap glitter of momentary pleasure.

(3) Hope **stabilized** us. "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest forever after the order of Melchizedek" (Heb. 6:19-20). Anchors fasten ships to unseen foundations. Even so, "we have an anchor" in an unseen world which keeps us from being "tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine" and which gives us confidence amid the turbulence of human life. We all have our storms to weather, our moments of despair, the unmistakable ache of disappointment, the wrenching moment of uncertainty when we cry out "What are we going to do now"? But, brethren we have an anchor cast in yonders world and it is this blessed assurance which gives us endurance. Indeed "tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed" (Rom. 5:3-5). It is for this reason that we are able to "gird up the loins of our (your) mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 1:13).

The Objects of Hope

(1) We hope for **eternal** life. What is eternal is never ending. Life here is short, uncertain and its thread is often fragile. Death is the common lot of all. The ominous certainty that we shall die makes us sigh for a higher and better existence where the second death "hath no power." It is difficult for our finite minds to grasp the sublimity of a vast expanse of unending bliss in the presence of the Lord.

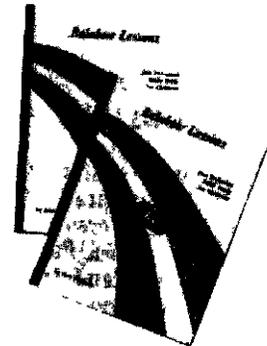
(2) We hope for **glory**. We sing about it often. "Oh that will be glory for me." "Just over in the glory-land." We long for the splendor and beatific happiness of heaven. Peter wrote about our "living hope" assured by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, in terms of "an inheritance that is incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Pet. 1:3-5). Here the new decays and becomes old. Wood rots. Metal rusts and corrodes. Paint dims, cracks and peels. We are subject to corruption. But in heaven nothing will ever rot or rust or grow old. We hope for an **inheritance incorruptible**. Here the cleansed becomes unclean. The spotless becomes stained and soiled. But in heaven there will be nothing unclean to defile. We hope for an inheritance

undefiled. Here the most gorgeous corsage withers and dies and we cannot even tell what color it was. We also fade. The glow of youthful cheeks succumbs to the relentless passage of time and is replaced by the pallor of old age. Youthful vigor is supplanted by the aches and uncertain steps of the aged. But there, nothing fades. Thus we sing of the "Land of fadeless day" "where we never grow old" and where "the roses never fade." We sigh for an inheritance that **fadeth not away**.

(3) We hope to **see Jesus**. We do not know what form he will have nor what we shall be like but John assures us that "when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 Jno. 3:2). Paul said "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" (Col. 3:4). What a glorious expectation to see the Word of life, the Lamb of God, the Lion of Judah, the Bright and Morning Star, the Saviour, the Redeemer, the Head of the church, the Alpha and Omega! What rapture to be in the presence of Him who has been our High Priest, our Advocate and our Mediator! What inexpressible bliss to be able to thank him forever for his grace, mercy and love!

"But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." (Rom. 8:25). "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20).

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by Jane Britnell

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PICKING AT THE THORN"

In the June 1982 issue of this paper, page 135, there appears an article by this writer, "A Modern Thorn." We urge readers of this article to refresh your memory by reading the original piece again. In that article we are punctuating the need for repentance on the part of alien sinners prior to baptism for remission of sins. Our application sets forth a severing of any and all adulterous unions in the case of multiple marriages. James D. Bales has replied to this article via letter and I would like to offer his reply for the further study of the reader along with my response. Brother Bales is often quoted, not only regarding his position on marriage, divorce and re-marriage, but on other matters and is highly respected for his scholarship and influence. He has written a widely circulated book in defense of his position, "Not Under Bondage." Here is what he said in the letter about the article.

"Since the Lord does not hold marriages involving aliens to the same standard to which He holds Christians, those divorced and remarried in the world do not violate Matthew 19:9 for they are not under it. Therefore, they have nothing to repent of concerning their second marriage.

"Paul said Christ did not speak on marriages involving aliens (1 Cor. 7:12). Why do brethren insist that He did? Paul did not apply Matthew 19:9 (1 Cor. 7:10-11) to marriages involving aliens. Why do some brethren insist on binding on marriages involving aliens what Paul refused to bind? It is this simple.

"The position I occupy is as old as Paul and also as old as A. Campbell."

Our brother advocates this position: (1) The Lord does not hold marriages involving aliens to the same standard he holds Christians. (2) Those divorced and remarried in the world do not violate Matt. 19:9 for they are not under it. (3) They have nothing to repent of concerning their second marriage. These contentions argue two standards for marriage, one for aliens and one for Christians. Is this the only place where two laws or standards apply? If the alien is not subject to the standard for marriage, what about God's standard for anything else? And if not amenable to God's standard in all, why in anything? If nothing, then such are not sinners and have no need of the gospel. Fact is, the standard of God for marriage originated with the first man and woman and has upon the basis of that monogamous relationship continued

with His approval. Such constitutes the divine foundation and moral fiber upon which home, family and society rests.

Matthew 19:9, "And I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery." Here Jesus sets forth the only circumstance, fornication, under which one with a living mate may marry without sin. This presupposes understanding that such justification is for the innocent party only. Jesus is answering the Pharisees, as they posed what they hoped would be a question to trap Him, referred them to the Scripture setting forth the original design of marriage.

A second question is then directed to Jesus, "Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorcement, and to put her away?" Answer: Moses suffered, or allowed, because of hardness of heart. No longer, however, was this to be tolerated under the New Covenant but the strictness of the original law would be restored. Thus, Jesus in establishing the New Covenant incorporated the original law of marriage applicable to all men.

Our original article concluded repentance necessitates a quitting and turning from sin on the part of the alien. Fornication (adultery) is sin that must be repented by the alien for the blood of Christ to cleanse along with lying, stealing, murder or anything else contrary to the Law of God. Such is to be mortified, put to death to avoid God's wrath upon those who live in them (Col. 3:1-10). Those divorced and remarried, in the world (non-Christians) violate Matt. 19:9 when such is without grounds for the innocent. Any second marriage is a living in sin and all such stand in need of repentance. Repentance is quitting and turning from sin.

Now, the part about Paul and Christ and the contention that Paul did not apply Jesus' teaching to marriages involving aliens. Jesus taught that all who divorced for any reason except fornication and marry others are living in adultery. Paul taught that people can "live in" adultery in Col. 3:5-7. Now Jesus spoke as the Father gave him the words (John 12:49-50; 17:8) and he restored the law concerning divorce and remarriage to that which was from the beginning. He taught that fornication on the part of one's mate is the only reason for divorce and remarriage while the other is alive. Does this not agree perfectly with 1 Corinthians 7?

1 Corinthians 7 deals with a relationship where one is a Christian and one is not. The Christian is to give up the marriage partner rather than give up Christ and the hope of eternal life. Not give up the unbelieving partner to be married again but to live a life of celibacy as there is no justification involved here due to fornication. He is simply saying the believer is not bound to the unbeliever that he must give up Christ to hold that unbeliever. Paul is telling the believer to hold to Jesus even if it means the loss of the unbelieving companion. No conflict with what Jesus has previously

taught and no change of application as far as the original principles stated in Matthew 19:9. Same standard, universal application, saint and sinner alike. So, we are right back where we started, to square one. "And I say unto you whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery." Let each "examine self" (2 Cor. 13:5) and guard against being guided by heart instead of by the Scriptures.

SHARON CHRISTIAN

It is with much sadness that we take note here of the untimely death of Sharon Christian, wife of Rick Christian who preaches at Shepherdsville, Kentucky. Herpes encephalitis was the cause of death. She passed away eleven days after giving birth to their second child, a baby girl. Sharon was 26 years old. She leaves behind her husband, Rick, and a daughter aged 2, besides the baby.

Funeral services were conducted on September 29 in Louisville by the editor. Graveside services were conducted at Ravenswood, West Virginia by Mike Willis, who had baptized Sharon a few years ago. Our hearts ache for this young brother and his two small children. While we sorrow, we are comforted by the fact that she was faithful to the Lord. Indeed, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them" (Rev. 14:13).

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BIBLE CLASSES AND WOMEN TEACHERS

NOTE: The material for and/or the charts themselves have been gathered from a number of sources. I claim no originality for any of the material.

Even though there are two different subjects mentioned above, when discussions are held with anti-class brethren, they usually insist on including both issues in the same proposition. But for the life of me, I cannot understand why. For, it should be obvious to any thinking person, that unless one can be convinced that Bible classes are scriptural, there would be no reason to discuss whether or not women may teach in some of them.

In this study I want to present some of the material that I have used in discussions with brethren who oppose the use of classes and women teachers.

1 Clarifying The Issue

We Are Not Discussing:

1. WHETHER THE INDIVIDUAL HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY TO TEACH.
HE DOES ! II Tim 2:2
2. WHETHER THE CHURCH HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO TEACH.
IT DOES ! I TIM. 3:15
3. WHETHER A WOMAN HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY TO TEACH.
SHE DOES ! II Tim. 2:2 Titus 2:1-3
4. WHETHER WE CAN HAVE A "SUNDAY SCHOOL ORGANIZATION."
WE CANNOT !

WHAT IS THE ISSUE ?

MAY THE CHURCH HAVE AN ARRANGEMENT OF CLASSES IN WHICH THE WORD OF GOD IS TAUGHT, WITH WOMEN TEACHING SOME OF THE CLASSES ?

Attitudes and Consequences in the Restoration Movement

By Homer Hailey. The aim of this work has been to trace the development of two attitudes toward the Scripture authority in the Restoration Movement: that of the early spirits in the movement, and another which grew up within it, leading ultimately to division.

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In the above chart the issue is set forth. You can readily observe that the questions under consideration involve general authority. But as you can also see, individuals (both men and women) are commanded to teach; and the church is also the "pillar and ground of the truth." (There will be a separate section at the end of this study concerning women).

All who are Christians readily agree that scriptural authority may be established in three ways, statement of fact or command, approved example, and necessary inference or conclusion. This is seen in the following chart.

How To Establish Scriptural Authority

2 PHIL 4:9
SEEN -- EXAMPLE HEARD COMMAND
THE LORD'S SUPPER

1 EXPRESS COMMAND THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME '1 COR 11:23-24

2 APOSTOLIC EXAMPLE -- AND UPON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK WHEN THE
Tells The Time DISCIPLES CAME TOGETHER TO BREAK BREAD
ACTS 20:7

3 NECESSARY INFERENCE - FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK
Frequency of Observance Remember Sabbath

EXPEDIENCY - ANY HOUR WITHIN THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK
Human Judgment

'PROVE ALL THINGS, HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD '1 THES 5:21

In the above chart we see that baptism is commanded. We also have an example of a baptism being performed; and when Philip preached unto the people of Samaria, although there is no mention of baptism being included in his sermon, the conclusion we must reach is that Phillip preached baptism or else they would not have known that they needed to be baptized.

Not only is authority established by command, but we must understand that commands may be either general or specific.

	GENERAL	SPECIFIC
3 "GO" MARK 16:15	*	
"PREACH" "	*	
"GOSPEL" "		*

4 General Command

INHERENT IN A GENERAL COMMAND IS AUTHORITY FOR WHATEVER IS NECESSARY METHODS AND AIDS IN THE CARRYING OUT OF THE COMMAND.

METHOD: "A SYSTEMATIC MODE OR MANNER OF ACTION. REGULAR OR ORDERLY PROCEDURE."
Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary
Vol 1, Page 1064

AID: "TO HELP, TO ASSIST, TO SUPPORT, EITHER BY FURNISHING STRENGTH OR MEANS TO AFFECT A PURPOSE." IBID Page 37
Build An Ark; Go; Sing; Teach

It should be obvious to all that a general command includes methods (how done) and aids.

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5 Generic Command How Done Things Necessary

"Go" Mark 16:15	WALK, RIDE, RUN, SWIM	LEGS, FEET, HORSE, CAR PLANE, WATER
"Preach" Mark 16:15	ORAL, WRITTEN, SIGN LANGUAGE	PREACHER, HEARERS, TIME, PLACE, MESSAGE, AN ARRANGEMENT
Edify Eph 4:11-16	ORAL, WRITTEN, SIGN LANGUAGE	PREACHER, HEARERS, TIME, PLACE, MESSAGE AN ARRANGEMENT
Teach II Tim. 2:2	ORAL, WRITTEN, SIGN LANGUAGE	TEACHER, HEARERS, TIME, PLACE, MESSAGE AN ARRANGEMENT

It is impossible for example, to TEACH without a teacher, a student, a time, a place, material, and an arrangement.

An Arrangement

Why bring up all this? Because, Bible Classes are simply an arrangement of the church to expedite the general command to teach, and nothing more. God has loosed the arrangement.

What About Arrangement?

6 GOD LOOSED!

ACTS 20:7 -- PREACHING
ACTS 19:9 -- DEBATE
ACTS 28:30-31 -- INFORMAL DISCUSSION
GAL. 2:2 -- GROUP TEACHING
COL. 4:16 -- EPISTLE READ

Even though most of the arrangements shown on the above chart are arrangements used by individuals, I contend that any arrangement that may be used by the individual in carrying out the general command to teach may be used by the church in carrying out the general command to teach. You cannot do a right thing in a wrong way, and you cannot do a wrong thing in a right way.

On the above chart you will note that they had preaching (Acts 20:7). An individual may use this arrangement for spreading the word, and the church may use this arrangement.

In Acts 19:9 (and Acts 14:26 - 15:2) we find the apostle Paul disputing daily in the school of Tyrannus. The church may also use this arrangement to carry out the general command to teach.

Next we find Paul sending for the elders of the church and having an informal discussion with them. The church may also use the informal discussion arrangement to teach.

Fourth, Paul said he went up to Jerusalem and communicated unto them the gospel, but to them which were of reputation. Thus we have Paul not only discussing the gospel with the brethren in Jerusalem, but also privately with a few. Thus we have segregation and classification in this example of individual teaching. So, just as this arrangement can be

used by the individual, it can also be used by the church.

And finally on our chart, we observe that an epistle was to be read by the church. But just as the epistle can be read by the church, so also the individual can use this arrangement for teaching.

These examples from the New Testament set forth the fact that God has **loosed the arrangement**, and therefore these and any other arrangements deemed expedient may be used by both the individual and the church.

Objections

Those who will not use the class arrangement because they cannot find it **specifically mentioned** in the New Testament are willing for the church to use other arrangements that are not specifically mentioned. They are, in fact, willing to use such arrangements as radio and TV programs for teaching. But I believe those who are not blinded by prejudice can see from the following chart that an arrangement such as a radio or TV program and the Bible class arrangement are parallel.

7 These Are Parallel!	
RADIO BROADCAST	BIBLE CLASSES
1. ELDERS OVERSEE	1. ELDERS OVERSEE
2. ELDERS MAKE ARRANGEMENTS	2. ELDERS MAKE ARRANGEMENTS
A. TIME	A. TIME
B. PLACE	B. PLACE
C. REGULARITY	C. REGULARITY
D. TEACHERS	D. TEACHERS

On a number of occasions those who are opposed to the church using the Bible class arrangement use the words "privately" and "publicly" to describe the kind or manner of teaching. The truth of the matter is the adverbs "publicly" and "privately" are always used in the New Testament to describe PLACE not kind or manner of teaching; and God hasn't bound the place.

8 God Hasn't Bound The Place	
Both Public & Private	
PUBLIC	PRIVATE
IN TEMPLE -- Acts 2:46	TO EUNUCH -- Acts 8:28
PUBLICALLY -- Acts 20:20	PRIVATELY -- Acts 20:20
IN SYNAGOGUE -- Acts 18:4	JAILOR -- Acts 16:31
CASTLE STAIRS -- Acts 21:35-37	APOLLOS -- Acts 18:26
PLACE NOT BOUND!	

Many argue that the only arrangement to be used by the church for teaching is the church assembling together in one place. However, assembling is not an arrangement. After brethren assemble, then whatever arrangement is to be used in teaching must be decided upon. Besides, many who oppose the Bible class arrangement teach that the church may use such

arrangements as radio programs, TV programs, the church buying and making arrangements for tracts to be passed out for teaching, none of which a person may specifically read about in the New Testament. How then, can such arrangements be used by these brethren since they are **not specifically mentioned** in the New Testament? Because brethren are simply carrying out the general command to teach.

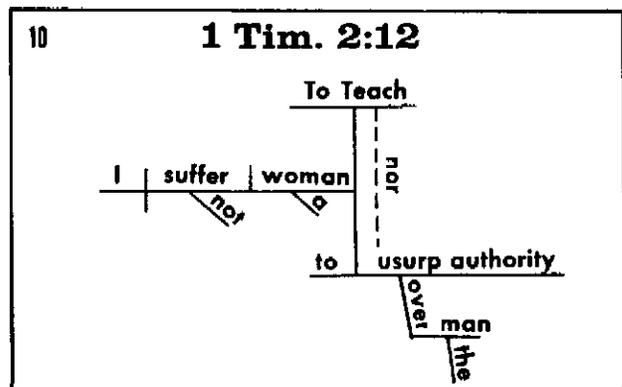
The objection is always raised, "Is it scriptural to worship without having Bible classes"? The answer is obviously yes. However, the problem arises when brethren make that into a law and say that those who use Bible Classes as an arrangement for teaching are sinning. It would be just as wrong for those who have Bible classes to say that the only arrangement that can be used is Bible classes and no other arrangement (radio or TV programs, etc.) can be used.

WOMEN TEACHERS

In view of the fact that the Bible Class Arrangement may be used for teaching the Bible, what about women teaching some of the classes?

9 CLARIFYING THE ISSUE	
1. WOMEN ARE COMMANDED TO TEACH. Titus 2:3 Tim.2:2	
A. THE WORD "ANTHROPOS" THAT IS TRANSLATED "MEN" IN II Tim. 2:2 MEANS: "WITHOUT DISTINCTION OF SEX, A HUMAN BEING, WHETHER MALE OR FEMALE. THE PARTICULAR MAN UNDER CONSIDERATION, WHO HE IS FROM THE CONTEXT." THAYER Pages 46-47	
2. WOMEN DID TEACH. Acts 18:26	
3. A WOMAN MAY TEACH:	
A. ANYONE	
B. ANYWHERE	
C. ANYTIME	
AS LONG AS SHE DOES NOT VIOLATE I Tim. 2:12 !	

We see from the above chart that women are commanded to teach. We learn this from both general (2 Tim.2:2) and specific (Titus 2:3; Acts 18:26) authority. In fact, a woman may teach anyone, anywhere, anytime, as long as she doesn't violate 1 Timothy 2:12. As you can see from the following diagram of 1 Timothy 2:12, both infinitive phrases, "to teach" and "to usurp authority," are modified by "over the man."



Also, you can see from a passage (Acts 4:18) that is parallel in construction to 1 Tim. 2:12, that both "to speak," "nor teach" are both modified by "in the name of Jesus."

11	PARALLEL PASSAGES
<p>"COMMANDED THEM NOT TO SPEAK AT ALL → in the name Acts 4:18 NOR TEACH → of Jesus."</p> <hr/> <p>"CUSTOMS NOT LAWFUL FOR US TO → RECEIVE, NEITHER (NOR) TO OBSERVE → being Romans." Acts 16:21</p> <hr/> <p>"BUT I SUFFER NOT A WOMAN TO TEACH → over the man." 1 Tim 2:12 NOR USURP AUTHORITY →</p> <hr/> <p>THERE IS NOT A VERSE OF SCRIPTURE FROM GENESIS TO REVELATION THAT TELLS A WOMAN NOT TO TEACH !! 1 Tim 2:12 TELLS HER NOT TO TEACH OVER THE MAN !!</p>	

Thus Paul said that a woman is not to "teach over the man" (that is be in authority over a class of men) "nor usurp authority over the man" (which is an unlawful seizure of power or authority).

Some have argued that 1 Timothy 2:12 is speaking of a woman in the assembly. They are forced to take this position because they deny that both "to teach" and "to usurp authority" are modified by "over the man." They would have the passage read, "But I suffer not a woman to teach"—period, which would mean she could not teach at all and would have Paul telling Timothy one thing in 1 Tim. 2:12, and contradicting that in 2 Tim. 2:2 and Titus, 2:3. Thus they are forced to say that Paul is discussing the assembly and paralleling it with 1 Cor. 14:34-35. However if you read the text itself in context, you will see that such a conclusion is not warranted. There is no indication of the assembly—unless women are to be modestly clothed, etc. only in the assembly, which is nonsense. But let's read 1 Cor. 14:34-35. "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church."

The Word "Silence"

But, it is observed, Paul tells the women in his letter to Timothy and to the brethren at Corinth that they are to be silent. However, the word "silent" is not the same.

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12	"Silence" Not The Same
<p>The Word "Silence" Of 1 Tim. 2:12 & 1 Cor 14:34-35 Is Not The Same</p>	
<p>In 1 Tim 2:12 The Original Word Is HESUCHIA, "Descriptive Of The Life Of One Who Stays At Home Doing His Own Work, And Does Not Officiously Meddle With The Affairs Of Others "</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Thayer, Page 281</p>	<p>In 1 Cor 14:34-35 The Original Word Is: SIGE, SIGAO. "To Keep Silence, Hold One's Peace, To Be Kept In Silence, Be Concealed "</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Thayer, Page 574</p>
<p>Also</p> <p>"It Is Not Permitted Unto Them (women) To Speak " The Word "Speak" Is From The Original Word: LALEO. "To Make Vocal Utterances, To Babble, To Talk, N T Absolutely To Exercise The Faculty Of Speech "</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Bagster's Analytical Lexicon, Page 245</p>	

The word "silent" (silence) is used in two passages in 1 Cor. 14:28,34. Both times it is used it means absolute silence.

As one can see from the context of 1 Cor. 14:34-35, Paul is having reference to the wives of the prophets. For, he said, "if they would learn any thing let them ask their husbands at home" (v.35). Thus we see that he is not speaking to all women, for all women do not have husbands; and second, if this passage is applicable to all women, none could learn "any thing." So, according to the no class, no women teacher people, a woman could not speak or teach in the assembly (which would forbid her singing, since she speaks and teaches when she sings), and she would not be permitted to learn "any thing."

The fact of the matter is simply this. Paul was giving instructions to the Corinthians to regulate an assembly where spiritual gifts were being practiced.

13	Critical Analysis of 1 Cor. 14
<p>1. Starts And Stops With Spiritual Gifts. 2. Mentions "Tongues" 19 Times; "Prophecy" 12 Times. 3. Regulates: (A) Tongue Speakers vs. 27-28 (B) Prophets vs 29-30 (C) Prophets' Wives vs. 34-35 4. Gifts Done Away ... Regulations Done Away</p>	<p>5. Principles Still Obtained: (A) "All Things Be Done Unto Edifying" v. 26 (B) "God Not The Author of Confusion" v. 33 (C) "All Things Done Decently And In Order" v. 40 6. Does Not Regulate Teaching Program Of The Church. 7. Does Not Condemn A Woman For Teaching A Class Of 6-Year-Olds</p>

Thus as can be seen from the above chart, though some principles are still obtained from the chapter, it does not regulate the teaching program of the church today, and it does not condemn a woman for teaching a class of six year olds. In fact, let's notice this very point on the next chart.

14 Definition of the Word

"PRIVATE"

"CONCERNING A PARTICULAR PERSON OR GROUP OF PERSONS"

"AWAY FROM PUBLIC VIEW" Webster's New World Dictionary

"PERTAINING TO OR AFFECTING...A SMALL GROUP OF PERSONS"

"REMOVED FROM PUBLIC VIEW" The American College Dictionary

"OUT OF PUBLIC VIEW OR KNOWLEDGE" "NOT OPEN TO THE PUBLIC IN GENERAL" The American Everyday Dictionary

"BY ONESELF APART FROM OTHERS, SO OF AN INDIVIDUAL ALONE---OF SEVERAL APART FROM OTHERS"

Thayer and Robinson

AUDITORIUM
PUBLIC TO
ALL

A Private Place
Where Public
People of All Ages
Is Invited.

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WHEN A WOMAN TEACHES A CLASS OF 6 YEAR OLDS, WHAT SCRIPTURE DOES SHE VIOLATE ??

As you will recall, we have already noted that the words "Public" and "private" in the New Testament, as they are used in connection with teaching, refer to place and not manner of teaching. However if you granted everything that is said by the no woman teacher advocates on 1 Tim. 2:12 and 1 Cor. 14:34-35, a woman would be violating neither of the above passages even according to their arguments if she taught a class of six-year-old children. For, she is neither in the assembly, nor is she usurping authority over the man, for there are no men present.

In view of the facts that a woman is commanded to teach (2 Tim. 2:2; Titus 2:3); and since we have examples of women teaching (Acts 18:26); and since the only restrictions are that a woman cannot "teach over a man" "nor usurp authority over a man," I still maintain that she can teach anyone, anywhere, anytime, as long as she does not violate 1 Tim.2:12.

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NEHEMIAH: LET US RISE UP & RESTORE

The Place of Faith in Spiritual Revival

In our last article we studied the need for prayer, if the people of God are to be restored to Him. Nehemiah 9 is one long prayer that serves for the foundation of our study in this issue. There are several phrases that are the keys to understanding what is necessary for proper prayer. It is not enough for us to know that we ought to pray. Who among us would deny that need? Yet, while we all know we ought to pray, the question is why don't we do what we know to be right? There is no person among us who would not say that we needed to pray more often and more fervently, so why don't we? Let us begin our study with some key phrases that will help to give us what we need to motivate us.

Verse 8, "You (God) have kept your PROMISE because you are righteous." Then in Verse 32, "Now, therefore, O our God, the great mighty and awesome God, WHO KEEPS HIS COVENANT of Love ____" Notice in these two phrases we find two statements concerning God's ability and willingness to KEEP His Promises and His Covenant. God has kept His part of the Covenant, and it was done to motivate the Israelites to become what they ought to be before Him. God makes promises to us because of concern and love for His people. These promises are for our benefit and nourishment. Almost every page of His word has some kind of promise in it that He has pledged to do for His children, if we are willing to meet the conditions. Now, let us move directly from the context of Nehemiah 9 and the statements concerning God keeping His promises to broader field of Scriptures, in order that we might show examples of His promises to us on the subject of prayer.

The Promises of God

Mark 11:24 is one of the glorious promises of God concerning prayer. "Therefore, I say to you, ALL THINGS for which you pray and ask, believe that you HAVE RECEIVED them and they shall be granted you." Oh, as we read that, it seems too good to be true. What a promise! So immediately we begin to explain away the verse as not meaning what it says, because it goes contrary to all human reason and experience. But, before we give away the promise, let us remember that Nehemiah said that God Keeps His Promises. Notice the verse said, "Believe that you have received." Faith is necessary in this verse,—a faith so great that we

must believe we have already received the answer even as we pray! An example of this is in Daniel 9, where Daniel began to pray and the Lord sent an Angel to answer his prayer before Daniel even finished it. So it should be with us. We need to believe that we have received the answer before we finish praying. The context of Mark 11 will show us it was the last week of the Lord's life and He was coming and going from Bethany to Jerusalem. On one of the trips into the City of Jerusalem He passed a fig tree that was barren and cursed the tree so that it died. Peter, the next morning, noticed that it was dead. Jesus responds in Verse 22, "Have faith in God. Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'be taken up into the sea', and does not DOUBT in his heart, but BELIEVES that He says it is going to happen; it shall be granted him." Again in THE CONTEXT IS THE NECESSITY OF FAITH, and if there is faith a mountain can be cast into the sea. This is the wonderful promise! Yet, if we are not careful, we will explain it all away. John 14:12-14 speaks of all things given to the believer. The same of John 15:7, if we abide in Him and His word in us, "ask whatever you wish, and it shall be granted." The Promises Of God are so rich and full, and still I live my life so as to be empty and weak. Why haven't we risen above our level of accomplishments in growth, development and labor in His cause? Notice again Romans 8:32. If He did not spare His own Son, will He not give freely to us "ALL THINGS." The point is that if Heaven didn't hold back the most precious gift of all, the Son of God, why would Heaven hold back anything that we need and ask for? Yet, there is an interesting comparison in the statement of the Roman letter in 8:32 concerning the gift of His Son and the answer to our prayer. The gift of His Son was unconditional and without strings. The gift of His Son did not depend on my goodness or ability. The Son was given without conditions, but the gifts to us in answer to our prayer are not Unconditional, but conditional. They are conditional on our FAITH. As we have seen in each of the previously mentioned passages, the answer to prayer was conditioned on our faith.

The Promises and Faith

The reason why we do not pray more is that we do not believe as we ought to. Faith is: "being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see" (Heb. 11:4 NIV.). Our prayer and the ability to obey any of the commands of God is based on our Faith. Israel lost confidence in the promise of God and they ended up in Babylonian captivity from which they were struggling to recover. If we need to consider some of the examples of faith and on what their faith was founded, which Nehemiah mentions in this prayer, the first example is that of Abraham. Oh, we know the story well, and sometimes that means that we can just skip that part, but follow along as Nehemiah says that "You (God) found his heart faithful to you."

The first event in the life of Abraham was his calling to leave Ur of the Chaldees. Ur was a pagan city and there probably was not one worshiper of Jehovah in the entire city. Abraham may never have heard of

Jehovah before himself, but after that one conversation he was willing to leave his homeland and to go to a place that he had never even heard of or seen, nor ever talked with anyone else who had ever heard of it before. He took about 400-500 people with him on this journey. Palestine was only 600 miles due west, but the Arabian desert was directly in between, and he could not travel across the desert. So, it meant a lengthy journey of at least 12 months from Haran after his father Terah died. Finally, when he got there he had to live in tents and found the land full of Canaanites and famine. "Do you mean this is what the Lord brought me all this way for?" Many of us would have been on the American flight back home to Ur. Finally, when he was 99 years old, God told him he would have a son. Sarah laughed and denied it, and God told her to name him Isaac, which means laughter, and Abraham believed God! Finally, the same voice that told him to leave Ur and that he was going to have a son, told him in Genesis 22 that he was to kill the son as an offering to Jehovah. In Genesis 5:22 Abraham tells the servants at the foot of Mount Moriah to wait there and "WE will worship and return to you." WE will worship? Yes. But how could WE come back? Abraham was fully committed to killing the boy! This act was against every moral principle that God had ever enacted. It was murder, and only practiced by the pagans. Yet, because God spoke, Abraham was willing to kill the boy. Notice that he said, "WE will return to you." How could this be?

Romans 4 speaks of the heart of Abraham and his manner of life. Notice 4:17. He BELIEVED, even God who gives life to the dead (the dead womb of Sarah), and calls into being that which does not exist." (Just as we begin in Mark 11:24, God caused to come into being before it even existed); V. 18, Abraham believed. . . "that which had been spoken;" V. 20, the "promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief, but grew strong in faith;" V. 21 being assured that what He had promised, He was able to perform."

The point of all of this is simply that: Abraham heard the promise of God, (1) I'll take you to a land, (2) I'll deliver you a son to make a nation out of, and (3) you kill him. Nevertheless, Abraham believed the promise so strongly that he knew God would fulfill His promise, even if he killed the boy he loved so very much. That is the power of faith. Moses is an example that Nehemiah uses, as well as others, but space here allows us to use only Abraham to make our point. We pray in faith KNOWING that the promise which God has made will be fulfilled, even as we speak the words. That does not mean the answer is immediate, for Abraham died without inheriting the land. However, the fact that it would be given to his seed was just as sure and certain the moment God spoke it, and Abraham believed it even though it would be hundreds of years later before he would receive this promise.

Our Need For Faith

As we read the book of Acts, we see the power of the New Testament church. First, in growth. They turned civilization upside down. In Acts 5:28 they turned the

City of Jerusalem upside down. Then in Acts 9:31 they turned Palestine upside down, and finally, in Acts 17:6 they were accused of turning the world upside down. Consider that as compared with the impact which we, as 20th century Christians, have made on our world. Next, consider the sacrifice of the first century church. They sold their homes in Acts 4:32. Finally, consider their dedication in the face of imprisonment, beatings and death. Now, what motivated them to do all this? What was the force which propelled this growth, sacrifice and dedication back in their day, when in our day we can't even get members of the Lord's body away from the television set on Sunday night if there is a 4:00 P.M. football game telecast. When we see Bible class teachers take to the woods in droves to hunt all weekend, if it is deer season? Again, how did they succeed and we are failing? The answer lies in one word, FAITH! It was in the power of their faith. This, of course, was no accident because the original 12 disciples were the products of the Lord's earthly training ministry, and what they received from Him they passed on to the large body in the aggregate.

The Development Of This Faith in The 12

When the Lord called the disciples, he called them from their boats and nets, or from the tax-collecting booth, or from whatever occupation they happened to be engaged in for their daily sustenance. They were to leave their wives and families and travel with Him for the next three years. After putting together the body of the 12, He integrated the ministry with the Sermon On The Mount. Then they followed and watched for a year, as they lived hand to mouth and day by day. They saw the dead raised, the blind given sight, the deaf made to hear, and they saw their daily needs cared for without their worrying about them. Finally, the time was right and the 12 disciples became the 12 Apostles in Matt. 10:1 and Mark 6:7, and were sent out two by two in the first Commission. It was limited to the Jews and the instructions were rigid. They were to carry no extra money, no extra staff, no extra sandals. In other words, without any natural provisions whatsoever for this journey. They also had to go out penniless and depend on the Lord to support their needs daily. This was the beginning of the fulfillment in Matt. 6:33 to "seek first the kingdom of heaven and all these things will be added to you." This was the Lord's promise and on this limited scale He was going to show them and us that He always keeps his promises! Consider what would be needed to go on this journey. Just as Abraham left Ur with faith in the promise of God, these men started to walk about Galilee with no provisions for their daily needs. How many of us would start out on the Interstate with nothing but one tank of gasoline and a Bible to preach God's truth? Look at what they did. But the hand of the Lord is not short and He was able to keep His promise to care for them. This training exercise was but the beginning of many that build the type of faith in the promises of God that would lead this rag-tag group of disciples to the Roman arena to die for their Master. It was FAITH. That FAITH was transferred to the New Testament

Church so that they would not worry or care about tomorrow either, but only proceed to do His will.

In conclusion brethren, we are impotent today because we have not spent the time in prayer and meditation that we should have and could have spent. Therefore, we do not really know our Lord. We don't know because we have never walked out on the cutting edge of sacrifice and dedication where only He holds the key of life or death. Faith is a stone wall. This is the way that the wall will indeed become a mighty fortress. Nehemiah noted to all of Israel the promises of God. We have noted the promises of God today, and as Nehemiah inferred, if God keeps one promise He will keep all His promises. We need that kind of faith! Without our faith we cannot please Him. Why? Because without it, there will be no prayer, no obedience, no commitment and no sacrifice! **ALL ARE NECESSARY IF WE ARE TO SERVE HIM.**

So, if one prays believing the answer is already given, can he move mountains? Absolutely! That verse means exactly what it says. Abraham's life was far greater than any mountain to be moved as he became the father of a nation that is still with us today. Moses' life was far greater than any mountain ever moved as he was the deliverer who went before the mightiest nation in the world with a shepherd's staff and brought out 4 million slaves that were the economic backbone of that kingdom. He did far greater things than moving mountains, and so did the New Testament disciples, BY FAITH. The next time someone says in Bible class that faith cannot move 20-ft. trees into the sea, or move mountains into the sea, humbly point them to Abraham, Moses, and the New Testament Christians. Nehemiah would, if he were holding a meeting where you preach today.

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PRAYER POSTURE

Several years ago an area author set forth in a tract, **The Posture In Prayer**, the idea "I believe the posture of the body is an index of the attitude of the heart" (page 3), but the scripture that was supposed to teach this was not given in the tract. Again, the reader of the tract was told "I believe a Christian can breathe a prayer as he works on his job, as he drives the highways, or as he lies upon his bed at night; but when he takes a position to pray in public meetings, or before the public, I believe he should kneel before God" (page 5). But again, while the tract mentions Scriptures, it gives no Scripture that teaches the above.

Paul said, in Rom. 10:6-8, "the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above;) Or who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach." We would like to know where the "word of faith" preached by the Apostles of Christ said one must kneel in prayer in public. Paul further said the 'Spirit of faith' which he had was "according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak" (2 Cor. 4:13). Where is it written that when one "takes a position to pray in public meetings, or before the public.. he should kneel before God" because the "posture of the body is an index of the attitude of the heart"?

If one wants to believe and practice such, that is fine; but it is an altogether different matter when one thinks the Bible teaches such and leaves the impression with people the Bible teaches these ideas, which it doesn't. If someone wants to kneel, or stand, or sit, or whatever, when they pray, that is fine; for them to try to make the Bible teach any one of these positions to the exclusion of all others, I must take exception.

This tract further teaches there is a difference in "prayer" and "thanks" by quoting a preacher in the last century that said "there is a difference between "giving thanks" and "prayer;" "the latter may include the former, but to give thanks cannot be properly called a prayer" (pages 11-12). As we examine these ideas, it will become clear why the arbitrary distinction is made between "prayer" and "giving thanks."

Men

In Scripture some men are called "elders" (Acts 20:17), called "overseers" (verse 28) and "pastors" (verse 28—"to feed") and these all refer to the same men, but from different points of view.

Prayer

Paul said in 1 Tim. 2:1, "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks, be made for all men." The tract we are noticing says we are to kneel for public "prayer" and stand for "thanks." What we are to do while involved in "intercessions" and "supplications" we are not told. Does God care about the position of our body during "thanks" and "public prayer" but is not concerned about "intercessions" and "supplications"?

(1) **Prayer.** This is the general word for prayer used in the New Testament. It is "prayer addressed to God" (Thayer, page 545).

(2) **Intercessions.** These are "a petition, supplication. . . used of prayer to God" (Thayer, page 218). In his little tract on the subject of prayer, **What The Bible Says About Prayer**, the late, brother Bennie Lee Fudge defined "intercessions" as "appeal in behalf of others." How often have brethren made an "appeal in behalf of others" for the forgiveness of sins just as Simon asked Peter, "Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me" (Acts 8:24)? Was Simon not asking Peter to "appeal in behalf" of him? What position should Peter have taken to make intercession for Simon?

(3) **Supplications.** Of supplications, brother Fudge defines them as "earnest entreaty." Thayer says "a seeking, asking, entreating, entreaty, contextually, of prayer imploring God's aid in some particular matter" (page 126). Paul said, "there was given to me a thorn in the flesh. . . for this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me" (2 Cor. 12:7-9). Was not Paul making an "earnest entreaty" "imploring God's aid in some particular matter"? When Paul made supplication, what position did he get in? If it makes a difference, what verse tells us the supplication position?

(4) **Thanks.** Concerning this brother Fudge defines thanks, as an "expression of gratitude." Thayer says "thankfulness. . . the giving of thanks" (Page 264). Paul wrote the Philippians, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now" (Phil. 1:3-5).

Our tract teaches one should kneel in public prayers and stand for thanks. Paul said "in every prayer of mine" "I thank God for you." How did Paul kneel when he prayed publicly and stand when he gave thanks, and do both at the same time?

Men Divided and Uncertain

To quote men on a religious question is often to find them divided on what to do on one hand, and uncertain on the other.

Our tract quotes J. W. Jackson of the last century as saying in "prayer" it is kneeling and Alexander Campbell is quoted that kneeling is always preferred. Yet, Jesus didn't always kneel because on the cross he prayed "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Lk. 23:34). If Jesus did not always kneel when he prayed in public, neither must we.

This tract quotes (1) Alexander Campbell as saying when giving "thanks" one "stands" and (2) J. W. Jackson as saying there is "no rule" when one gives "thanks" saying some stood, some kneeled but standing is preferred.

Jesus

While it is true Jesus did kneel in prayer (Lk. 22:41), Jesus did not always kneel (Lk. 23:34). While some say we should stand when giving thanks and others say kneel, we read of Jesus sitting. Jesus "sat down with the twelve" and "gave thanks" (Mt. 26:20, 27; see also Mk. 14:18, 22, 23, and Lk. 22:14,17,19).

One can read that Jesus "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15) and that he "did not sin" (1 Pet. 2:22). If Jesus did not always kneel in public prayer, did not stand when he gave thanks and was "without sin" because he "did not sin," then you and I do not have to kneel in public prayer nor stand during thanks. One follows Jesus when he sits during thanks and when he prays publicly without kneeling.

The theory of our tract says one should kneel in public prayer. Yet, an examination of the prayer life of Jesus shows he didn't always kneel in public (Lk. 23:34); and he did sometimes kneel in private (Lk. 22:41-45). "He was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed." Jesus kneeled when theory says one does not have to kneel; when theory says one should kneel, Jesus didn't. I have never known a theory but what Jesus Christ and His apostles disputed it by their teaching, or their practice, or both.

Jesus Said

In Lk. 18:9-14 Jesus told of two men going up to the temple to **pray**. Both men stood and **prayed**. One man, the Pharisee, "exalted himself" (v. 14) by saying, "God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess" (verses 11-12). The other man, the publican, said, "God, be merciful to me a sinner" (verse 13). Jesus said, of this publican, "this man went down to his house justified" (verse 14). Thus, we have Jesus saying a man (1) **stood** in the temple, thus, in public, (2) **prayed**, and was (3) **justified**. When Jesus said a man stood in public, prayed and is justified, I am content to teach the same thing. Why wouldn't anyone else?

If it be said that "stood" means "take a position" why didn't Jesus say these men "took a position?" The fact that Jesus didn't say these men "took a position" means Jesus didn't intend to convey the idea they just "took a position." He intended to convey they "stood" for that is what he said.

If it be said that Solomon stood on his knees when he prayed at the dedication of the temple, one should understand (1) Old Testament practice is not authority for New Testament worship, (2) Solomon also made supplication when he prayed, so why not contend that one should kneel when they make supplication? (3) If "standing" in prayer is the same as "kneeling," why does the Old Testament text add "on his knees"? If "on his knees" were not added, one would not know that he was on his knees just from the word "stood." When Jesus walked on the water (Mt. 14:25) all understood he walked on his feet for that is the normal way to walk. If one walks on his hands, something from the context must indicate it, otherwise one would gather that he walked on his feet for that is the usual and normal way to walk. (4) If Solomon standing on his knees is authority for New Testament worship, why do not people stand on both knees? Solomon did. Why can one stand on just one knee when Solomon stood on both? Solomon also prayed "with his hands spread up to heaven" (1 Kgs. 8:54). If one uses Solomon as authority for kneeling in prayer today, why not for spreading both hands toward heaven when they pray? If one is going to use Solomon as authority for kneeling in prayer today, why not use him for both (1) kneeling in prayer on both knees and at the same time for (2) spreading the hands out toward heaven? If Solomon is our authority, why not take him for our authority all the way?

Rule Exploded

From this tract we learn one is supposed to **kneel in prayer and stand to give thanks**. A look at some Bible passages will now show that is not what was done in the Bible.

In **prayer**, (1) Hannah **stood** (1 Sam. 1:9, 10, 26), (2) David **sat** (2 Sam. 7:18), (3) Jesus **fell on his face** (Mt. 26:39), and (4) Jesus said stand (Mk. 11:25). This shows one does not have to kneel to pray.

When giving **thanks**, (1) Daniel **kneeled** (Dan. 6:10), (2) a leper **fell on his face** to thank Jesus (Lk. 17:16) and (3) Jesus **sat down** (Lk. 22:14-19).

Now if the rule is kneel to pray and stand to give thanks, if I can find one exception to this and the exception is pleasing to God, I have destroyed the theory. Let me illustrate; faith plus baptism equals salvation (Mk. 16:15-16). Jesus said this. Now if I can find an exception to this, then the rule is invalid. If I can find one having faith without baptism being saved in the New Testament, then I have destroyed the rule of Mark 16:15-16. I search the New Testament completely and can not find an exception to the rule of Mark 16:15-16; therefore Mark 16:15-16 stands. I search the Bible through and find exceptions to the rule that one must kneel in public prayer and stand to give thanks. Therefore, I know such is a human rule.

Our tract quotes A. Campbell as saying "Kneeling in prayer is always to be preferred, if it can be made convenient. Imagine a gospel preacher saying "Immersion in baptism is always to be preferred, if it can be made convenient."

A question is raised in the tract: "I wonder if those preachers who teach there is nothing in the posture of prayer ever have prayed in their homes, and if so, do they sit in their seats, before their children, to pray to the eternal God?" Now if kneeling in prayer is only necessary in public, there is nothing wrong with not kneeling in the privacy of your home. If one must kneel in the privacy of the home, then it is not public prayer in which one must kneel, but all prayer. Which is it?

In our tract J. W. Jackson is quoted as saying, "But says one, if we must kneel in offering prayer, then no prayer is acceptable unless offered in that posture? We do not offer such a negative, but only affirm that according to all common sense rules of exegesis we have authority of the Lord Jesus Christ for "kneeling in prayer". If all that is insisted is that one has authority to kneel, no one I know would object. Our objection is that when whatever is said leaves the impression that the only scriptural position for public prayer is kneeling, that is a thing the Bible does not say.

When one considers the evidence from the word of God, there are several positions not just one that the Bible sets forth. (7) There is standing (1 Sam. 1:9, 10, 26; Mk. 11:25), (2) standing, with head bowed (Lk. 18:13), (3) standing, hands spread (1 Kgs. 8:22), (4) Bowed heads (Gen. 24:48; Ex. 12:27; 2 Ch. 29:30), (5) Bowed heads, uplifted hands (Neh. 8:20), (6) Kneeling (2 Ch. 6:13; Psm. 95:6; Lk. 22:41), (7) hands spread and/or uplifted (Psm. 141:2; Isa. 1:15; Lk. 24:50), (8) Uplifted eyes (Psm. 121:1; 123:1; John 11:41; 17:1), (9) falling down, face on the ground (Dt. 9:18, 25, 26; Josh. 5:14; Lk. 17:16).

Out of all of these why one would pick just one and try to bind it as the one exclusive position for public prayer is hard to understand. Why pick kneeling? Why not pick out falling down with ones face on the ground or standing with bowed head?

That one may scripturally kneel in public prayer, or any other, none deny. To try to make kneeling the one exclusive position taught in the Scriptures is to teach that which the Bible does not.

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Sandwiched between the exhortations to not despise prophesyings and to abstain from all appearance of evil is the urging: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (I Thes. 5:21, 20,22). The phrase *panta de dokimazete* (prove all things) is of the utmost importance and yet, as we shall see, is one of the most neglected commands in the New Testament. The verb *dokimazo* (prove) is defined, "To test, prove, with the expectation of approving. . .," **Expository Dictionary Of New Testament Words**. *Dokimazo* is translated "discern" in Luke 12:56; "approve," Rom. 2:18; "examine," I Cor. 11:28; and "trieth," in I Thes. 2:4 (KJV).

The command, intelligent reader, to "prove all things" presupposes a standard or means to prove or establish. Many in the early church enjoyed the ability to miraculously ascertain the truthfulness of what was being presented through the gift of "discerning of spirits" (I Cor. 13:8-10, cf. Jas. 1:25). The means, I submit, by which we can "prove all things" is the gospel of Christ. "But when I saw," Paul writes concerning the hypocritical conduct of Peter and others, "that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel. . ." (Gal. 2:14). Paul was able to determine the correctness or incorrectness of their behavior by the "truth of the gospel" (cf. John 12:48, 2 Tim. 3:16,17, and Jude 3). Hence, God's word (New Testament) is the standard or criterion which we must use in "proving all things."

WE MUST PROVE ALL THINGS IN DOCTRINAL MATTERS. The truth is essential and necessary to salvation (Jn. 8:32; Rom. 2:6-9; Acts 17:11). It behooves us, therefore, to prove or establish what is truth. Regarding the plan of salvation for the alien we must, by the scriptures, prove what is required. When one searches the New Testament one will find involved in the plan of salvation the matter of belief (Jn. 8:24), repentance (Acts 17:30), confession of Christ's deity (Rom. 10:10), and water baptism for the remission of sin (Acts 2:38).

When we examine the word of God relative to Jesus' church we discover and "prove" that Jesus did build his church (Acts 2:47); there is only one body or church (Eph. 4:4, cf. 1:22, 23); she wore designations which honored her owner (I Cor. 1:2, Rom. 16:16); salvation is in Christ or his spiritual body, the church (Eph. 1:3, 2 Tim. 2:10); and we gain entrance into that body through or by water baptism (Rom. 6:3, I Cor. 12:13, and Gal. 3:27).

As we seek to "prove all things" we find that the Christian has duties enjoined upon him: attendance (Heb. 10:25), prayer (I Thes. 5:17), teaching others (Heb. 5:11-14), pure speech (Eph. 4:29), and holiness of life (2 Cor. 7:1).

Also, concerned reader, keep in mind the purpose of our proving: "To test, prove, **with the expectation of approving..**" (all emphasis mine, dm). We are not to examine doctrine with the object of **disproving** but with the design of **approving!** About the only time some study God's word is when they want to disprove a matter. (Of course, in primarily studying to establish truth we also, in the process, establish error.)

PROOF IN GENERAL. I do not believe we are abusing the command to "prove all things" by generally and broadly applying it. When you have people, you are going to have problems. People are going to be envious and spiteful one of another. Some, then, are going to seek to ruin others through accusations and slander. What guide or preventive is there against such? "Prove all things." Churches are being needlessly divided and troubled because the instruction to "prove all things" is being neglected. Under the law of Moses **proof** was required before charges could be established (cf. Deut. 19:15; 17:6). Beloved, we find the same teaching in the New Testament. Regarding accusing an elder Paul instructed "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three

witnesses" (I Tim. 5:19). Elders and all who are "public," such as preachers, are subject to character assassination. However, to "prove all things" the accusers must have solid proof (witnesses). Consider all the problems which would be averted and solved if the procedure of Matthew 18:15-17 were always followed.

Friend, **require** proof. In doctrinal matters, have every tenet firmly established by God's word. Regarding proof in general, demand that everything be unquestionably substantiated. After you have positively determined truth, tenaciously hold to it: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

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FIELD REPORTS

JAMES C. JONES, P.O. Box 348, Standish, ME 04084. August 15, 1982 marks the conclusion of our twelfth year with the Lord's church in the Portland, Maine metro area. Lord willing, we have no plans to leave. We have been meeting in our building in Scarborough for three and a half years. Three people have been baptized into Christ since January 1st. Virtually every family here prepares for and engages in home Bible studies with non-Christians. We are bound together in love and unity. Attendance on Sunday averages 25-30 with the contribution averaging \$185 per week. We look forward to having Bro. Ralph Smart, formerly of Bangor, join us in the work here around October. Please note our ad with directions to the building and worship with us when you are in northern New England.

P.J. CASEBOLT, 313 S. 4th Ave., Paden City, WV 26159. During the winter months I preached for the Northeast church of Christ in Gainesville, Florida and I enjoyed the work with this good congregation. Since April 1, I have been working with the church at Fly, Ohio, and conducting meetings in the area. Beginning the first of November, I shall work once again with the congregation at 210 Cedar Ave. in Moundsville, West Virginia.

J.T. SMITH, 14250 N. Miami Ave., Miami, FL 33168. In my July meetings some unusual things happened. The first week in July I was in a meeting with the Riverside church near Booneville, Kentucky. Brother Gary Marshall is the preacher there. He, and a number of other brethren in that area have done a great deal of work, much of it by riding motorcycles in to places where they

cannot go in automobiles, and having classes with people and inviting them to come to the services. As a result of this, one fine man, who was an elder in the Presbyterian church, along with a part of his family, have been converted to the truth. During the meeting with everyone working, we had every seat filled, with a total of 94 present. During the meeting we had a presbyterian elder, and a number of people who were members of denominational churches present, including a Baptist preacher and his wife. Since I left, I understand the Baptist preacher is circulating a letter trying to get brother Marshall run out of the county for "bringing a fellow like Smith to this county to hold a revival," Methinks brother Marshall won't run. Two were baptized during that meeting.

Then the third week in July, I was with the Spring Warrior congregation near Perry, Florida. Brother Gary Hargis is the preacher there, and everyone who knows Gary knows that lots of personal contacts are going to be made whether a meeting is going on or not. On Sunday, the first day of the meeting, we broke an attendance record with 142 present, with 24 visitors from the community. Then on Thursday evening, after having announced all week that the lesson would be on Divorce and Remarriage, the attendance record of the past Sunday was broken again with 160 present. This necessitated some extra chairs. Three were baptized during the meeting, one more on Saturday after the meeting, and two more on the Sunday following. I am sure, after becoming acquainted with the brethren there, that they, along with Gary and his family, will reach many more souls for Christ.

FERRELL JENKINS, 9211 Hollyridge PL, Temple Terrace, FL 33617. Earlier this year I was sought out and challenged to a debate

by Randy Vining, an Unitarian-Universalist minister. The debate on the topic "Is Christianity Credible?" was conducted at their building on April 25, 1982. Vining styles himself as an agnostic and an apostle of non-belief. The 75 minute discussion is available on cassette tape from The Spoken Word, P.O. Box 127, Greenville, IN 47124 for \$3.98.

After three years of work with the Temple Terrace church in a special teaching program I have begun preaching for the Carrollwood church of Christ, 13345 Casey Rd., Tampa, FL 33688. Due to efforts of others, the differences that once existed with the Seminole church have now been resolved. For this we thank God. My work as a Bible professor at Florida College, conducting tours, and holding meetings continues as usual.

ROY FUDGE, 1402 Buchanan, Corinth, MS 38834. On July 23rd my wife and I flew to Portland, Oregon where our son Raymond and his family met us. I was there to conduct a meeting at White Salmon, Washington. The church there is composed of six families with a membership of fourteen. It was a very enjoyable meeting. One night there were more than forty present. We had visitors from as far away as seventy miles as well as from the community. The church meets in the community building on Suncay at 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. Their mid-week service is on Tuesday evening. They would be happy to have any traveling in that area to stop and worship with them. The members there seem to be very close and show much interest in the work. Three men share the preaching. Interest was good and we hope there will be results from it. The work here in Corinth goes on in an encouraging way. We appreciate the privilege of working with dedicated members. When in the area, plan to worship with us here at Meeks St.

LARRY DEVORE, 7872 Cleveland Rd., Wooster, OH 44691. Since my last report in STS, I have kept one or more preaching appointments at the following places: Berea, Dover, Mt. Zion (near Wooster), Perrysville, and Burbank Rd., in Wooster, all in Ohio. On June 25th, it was my honor to unite in marriage our daughter, Kimberly, to Craig Meyer, the preacher at Burbank Rd. church in Wooster. On July 11th, it was my privilege to baptize our oldest son, James, into Christ. I have some time open for Lord's Day preaching appointments. If I can be of service, call me at (216) 345-5330.

GARY COLES, 403 E. Parkview Ct., Round Lake Park, IL 60073. Things have been going very well at Hainesville Rd. In the past two years there have been thirty baptized, eighteen restored, and six to place membership. In one week this past June we broke all records for every service. Our attendance has been averaging in the mid 80's and our contribution has been averaging around \$700 per week. The consistency of attendance at all the services has been encouraging. There have been times when the Wednesday night crowd exceeded Sunday morning's. I must commend the brethren here for their willingness to get involved in personal work. There have been occasions when we have had as many as eight personal work classes in progress each week. Recently a Men's Bible Study Class was started and this September a Ladies Bible Class is scheduled to commence. In addition to this, there are several other specialized classes on the drawing board. Hainesville Rd. is by no means perfect and has her share of short-comings. However, if the forward momentum continues I feel she is in store for a very bright future.

WENDELL M. POWELL, 6 Sth Winds, St., St. Peters, MO 63376. As of August 16th I began working with the good church that meets in St. Peters, MO. If you are ever in the St. Louis area, drive out a few miles and be with us. The church building is located just a few miles off I-70W. We are looking forward to several years of good and happy work with the brethren. The church is at peace, and ALL are interested in spreading the Gospel of Christ.

PEDRO RAMIREZ, P.O. Box 21, Douglas, AZ 85607. Since my last report there have been two baptisms at Agua Prieta, Mexico just across the border from Douglas, Arizona. We continue to have visitors at all of our services. Please pray for us. Also I have lost some support recently and need to make this up if possible.

FERNANDO VENEGAS, Casilla #122 C.C. 5500 Mendoza, Argentina, South America. It is a privilege for me to share with you the good things that God has done with us. To find people who are always interested in the truth is not always easy. However, there are people who are thinking about spiritual things. We contacted six people who had the disposition to study the scriptures. Our study lasted for two to three months. On Sunday, June 6th when we offered the invitation, these six responded to be baptized. It was a special day for the church here. I will be going to Chile soon to do some preaching among three different congregations who have invited me. Please remember us in South America.

KENTUCKY DEBATE

JIMMY THOMAS, P.O. Box 746, Clintwood, VA 24228. Olan Hicks of Searcy, Arkansas and Rick King of Cromona, Kentucky have scheduled a public debate to be conducted October 25, 26, 28, 29 in the circuit courtroom of the Pike County courthouse in Pikeville, Kentucky. Sessions are to begin at 7:30 each evening. The propositions are as follows:

1. The scriptures teach that one who puts away his mate and marries another, except for fornication, continues to commit adultery as long as he lives with the second mate.
Affirm: Rick King Deny: Olan Hicks
 2. The scriptures teach that couples who commit adultery by unscripturally divorcing and remarrying may be forgiven of that adultery without separating.
Affirm: Olan Hicks Deny: Rick King
- Motel accommodations are available in town and at nearby Breaks Interstate Park.

CHRISTIANS IN ROCHESTER, NEW YORK?

BILL HALL, Jordan Ontario LOR ISO. We are hoping to begin a Bible class in Rochester, New York soon. We would appreciate it if any of the readers of STS could provide any information concerning Christians in that area or interested individuals. Information should be sent to Bruce Bakker, 439 Kilbourn Rd., Rochester, NY 14618.

NEW CONGREGATIONS

FORT WORTH, TX—The North Fort Worth church of Christ began to meet in April of this year with attendance averaging in the 60's. Since that time the attendance has averaged in the 80's. All of the families, except one couple from the Castleberry church, have come from the Haltom City church. Approximately 80 of the members live north of Loop 820 which encircles Fort Worth. This work has been in the planning stages for some time. Land is available for our use in the Summerfield subdivision on North Beech St. about two miles north of Loop 820. Currently we are meeting in a rented building off North Beech St. about two miles south of Loop 820. The address is 4112A Garland St. The Summerfield area is a growing area. There is presently no church of any kind in this area, and extensive door-to-door canvassing has already begun. At least four home studies are already underway with one couple from the area already baptized. If you know of any in the area that might be contacted for study or information, please let us know. Robert Gabhart began to preach for us on June 6, after eight years with the Haltom City church. His number is (817) 282-7996. You may also contact Jim Hendrick at 232-5287, Bob Jobe at 485-0070, and Dwyane Davis at 232-1477. Bro. Gabhart's address is 1302 Driftwood Dr., Euless, TX 76039.

WACO, TX—There is a new congregation in Waco meeting at 3017 Parrott St. Services are on Sunday at 10 and 11 a.m. and 6 p.m. Wednesday evening Bible Study is at 7:30. Bro. Ray Mayse is the preacher. You may contact him at (817) 752-0071.

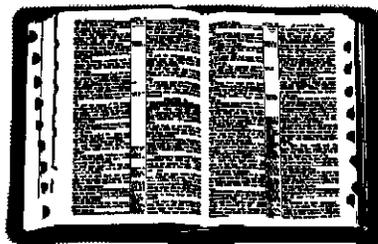
IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	214
RESTORATIONS	105

(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)

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"

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Using the SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

Ken Green

2212 Jordan Lane, S.W.
Huntsville, Alabama 35805



SAVED BY FAITH ONLY

Curtis Hutson, editor of "The Sword of the Lord" since the death of John R. Rice, published a sermon in the February 12, 1982 issue of that paper entitled "By Grace Alone, Through Faith Alone." Hutson is an old time Baptist, is proud of it, and abundantly demonstrates it. Total depravity is affirmed in the sermon and such scriptures as Psalm 58:3, Psalm 51:5, and Romans 5:12 are misused to establish it. The Baptist theory of imputed righteousness is affirmed, and Romans 3:22 is mentioned as supporting evidence.

There were a couple of matters that were especially interesting to me in this sermon.

1. Under the heading, "A man is not saved because of what he does", Mr. Hutson quotes Titus 3:5 and Ephesians 2:8,9. He then comments: "**Some argue that the book of James teaches salvation by works, quoting James 2:24, 'Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.'** A good rule of thumb to follow in Bible interpretation is never to use an obscure passage to contradict a number of clear ones.

"For instance, Ephesians 2:8,9; Romans 5:1; Titus 3:5, and many other passages plainly teach that man is not saved by works.

"When the Bible says in James 2:24 that man is justified by works, you must consider the context. Verse 18 of the same chapter states, 'Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.' Notice carefully the teaching here. James said, 'Shew me thy faith without thy works, and

I will shew thee my faith by my works.' The believer can only demonstrate his faith to others by his works. Since faith is invisible, you cannot know whether I am trusting Christ as Savior unless I show you by my works. So when the Bible speaks of being justified by works, it has reference to being justified before men, not before God. We are justified before God by faith, but we are justified before men by works."

It appears to me that anyone smart enough to make an argument like that is smart enough to know better. His "rule of thumb" is a good one. But his application of it is difficult to follow. Why would one consider James 2:24 an "obscure" passage? It is quite as clear as the other references he mentions.

And if James is speaking merely of being justified in the sight of men, why does he use Abraham's willingness to offer Isaac as an example? In James 2:21-23 we are reminded of how Abraham's faith was made perfect (complete) by his works when he offered Isaac upon the altar. "Ye see then," James continues, "How that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."

Before what men was Abraham justified on that occasion? It was the angel of the LORD who said, ". . . now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from me" (Genesis 22:12).

The truth of the matter is that man is not justified by works of the law of Moses, nor by works of righteousness which he has devised (Titus 3:5; Ephesians 2:8,9; Romans 4:1-4); but works of humble obedience are a specified and essential part of justification (James 2:14-24).

2. In speaking of salvation "By Faith Alone", Mr. Hutson seems to be somewhat bothered by the matter of repentance. If salvation is by faith only, then where does repentance fit in? He tries to solve this problem as follows:

"Repentance is not a separate act from believing. It is included in the Bible word 'believe'."

He then quotes John 3:4, 14, 15, 16, 18, and 36 and says, "Since Jesus did not use the words 'repent' or 'repentance' in his conversation with Nicodemus, therefore, we must conclude one of three things:

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repentance is not necessary to salvation or Jesus didn't really give the clear plan of salvation to Nicodemus or repentance is necessary to salvation and is included in the word 'believe' which Jesus did use. I conclude that repentance is necessary to salvation, but it is included in the word 'believe', found 99 times in the gospel of John."

But how and why does Mr. Hutson reach the conclusion that "repentance" is included in the word "believe"? It's not part of the definition of "belief." It is nowhere mentioned or implied in the context. I submit that he would have never thought of repentance in this chapter were it not for the fact that repentance is commanded in other passages.

Now, if he can include repentance in the word "belief", why can we not also include baptism in the word "belief". Baptism is not found in the context either, but it is as clearly commanded in other scriptures as repentance is (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21). It is purely an act of obedient faith, not a work of our own righteousness, nor a work whereof we may boast of having earned salvation.

Saved by "faith only?" Well, maybe so, on man's part, if we understand that the faith that saves is the faith that humbly submits to every command.



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"BE THOU AN EXAMPLE"

One thing which convinces me that the church is a divine institution is the fact that it has survived the sorry example set by so many of its members, and especially some who set themselves forward as preachers of the word. If ever there was a crying need for the admonition which Paul gave to Timothy to "be thou an example of the believers", surely that time is now.

"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity . . . **Take heed** unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Tim. 4:12-16).

Timothy's youth could not be discounted when his teaching was fortified by such character as to make him a worthy example of what every believer ought to be, whether young or old. Note that Paul instructed him to take heed to himself as well as to the doctrine. Faithful servants of God ought to preach the truth and nothing else. But they ought to LIVE the truth as well. Failure to do that blunts the force of truth in human hearts and causes the name of God to be blasphemed among unbelievers. It has a devastating effect upon the hearts and lives of the weak and tender children of God.

The Preacher and His Conduct Toward All

Paul continued his instruction concerning the need for Timothy to set a right example and take heed to himself as well as the doctrine: "Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren; The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity" (1 Tim. 5:1-2). The "elder" of verse one is not the elder (overseer) of the congregation, but a reference to the deference toward age which youth should show. Treat older men as a father. Younger men should be treated as equals (brethren). Give to older women the respect due mothers. PLEASE OBSERVE THE NEXT ADMONITION: "the younger as sisters, with all purity." What was the need for that qualifying phrase? Need we ask? It was needed for the same reason Paul wrote in his second letter to Timothy "Flee also youthful lusts" (2 Tim. 2:22).

Bad Examples of Believers

(1) Debt evaders set the wrong example. While

churches should be taught to adequately provide for those who devote their lives to the work of the gospel, faithful servants of the Lord must learn to live within their means and to do so graciously, without murmuring. Things bought on credit should be paid for. Desire for "things" should never outweigh sanity and financial ability. How embarrassing it is for a congregation, or its elders, to be approached by local businessmen for satisfaction of an unpaid debt after a preacher has moved.

(2) **Immature conduct sets the wrong example.** The work of preachers is sometimes beset with disappointments and frustrations. Pulpit fits and temper tantrums in business meetings are not calculated to inspire confidence and respect. Falling apart under pressure ill befits those who preach to others that they should "gird up the loins of your mind, be sober" (1 Pet. 1:13). Preachers who are too quick on the trigger to move, rather than see a problem through, often contribute to instability in the work they leave behind. Some have larger egos than the brethren are able to feed. One such preacher was reminded by an exasperated brother that "When we sing How Great Thou Art", we are not singing to YOU."

(3) **Gossip peddlers** set the wrong example. Preachers rail against gossip and its attendant evil about as much as any other infraction of divine law, yet many of us are the worst offenders of all. There is a 'brotherhood grapevine which swings from coast to coast and border to border which elevates the most unsubstantiated rumor to the status of hard, cold fact. Often fellow-preachers are the victims of the careless lips of suspicion peddlers who relish the fact that they are definitely "in the know." It becomes "common knowledge" that certain preachers are looking to move when they have never even thought of it, all because someone learned that the elders in another place called just to ask if they might be willing to consider a move. This writer has received several phone calls at times from places looking for a preacher all because somebody, for some reason, started the rumor that I was "looking" when there was not an ounce of truth to it. Brethren have been charged, tried and convicted in absence of doctrinal and sometimes moral deficiencies based on false reports spread by suspicious minds and wagging tongues. "Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself?"

(4) **Envious preachers** set the wrong example. "Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will" (Phil. 1:15). So it was when Paul wrote those words and so it is now. Some are eaten up with envy and jealousy because of the esteem in which some of their fellow-laborers are held. Even as in Paul's day, they may be spurred on to greater activity not so much for the love of souls as for the purpose of cornering a greater portion of the glory they feel cheated out of. Why should a preacher in a meeting feel a tinge of injury to hear local brethren speak words of praise for the local preacher? Why should the local preacher feel hurt when brethren who hear him every week say kind things about a visiting speaker? In each case, why

not "rejoice with them that rejoice?" It is a blessing that all of us are not alike. Each has his unique way of presenting the truth. All any of us can really do is sow the seed or water that already sown by others. None of us has the power to give the increase. I read somewhere that it is amazing how much we can accomplish when we don't care who gets the credit.

(5) Preachers who become **too familiar with the sisters** set the wrong example. It is painful to speak of these things. The cause of Christ has suffered severe damage in the last few years through this very thing. There seems to be a virtual epidemic of this malady. The scenario is all too familiar. A good brother who is happily married, sets out to "counsel" with a sister who is having marital problems. He lets his guard down, violates his own rule to have either his wife present on such occasions or else,, one of the elders, or an older sister, so as to "provide things honest" in the sight of God and man, and the rest all too frequently becomes history. He feels sorry for her and in trying to help, imposes confidences from his own life. Additional "counseling" sessions are required and before long compassion merges into infatuation which is reciprocated, and there it goes. The news gets out and hasty resignations follow, or else firings, much to the dismay of the congregations involved. Even when sincere confessions of wrong are made, the aftereffects live on to embarrass the church and to haunt the involved preacher for the rest of his life. The wages are high. My brethren, **these things must stop.** The cause of our Lord is far too important for any of us to give in to such temptations to the destruction of our own families, the detriment of our own souls and the retardation of the greatest work in the world. We need less "counselors" and more preachers of the word who will tell troubled people what the word of the Lord has to say in a setting that is beyond reproach and which leaves no occasion for the adversary to speak reproachfully. We do not need to hear confidences and intimate information which our wives cannot hear, or one of the elders, or an elderly sister. If you are a single preacher and one of the elders is not available, or there are none where you preach, then ask one of the older sisters to go with you. You may, or may not, know more about the Bible than she, but she will know a whole lot more about life than you do and can merge her wisdom with your knowledge to help the troubled.

We cannot expect the churches to grow in number or spirit without faithful and fearless preaching of the word of God. That preaching must be done by men who believe what they are saying enough to practice it in life. Purity of character adds an extra earnestness and confidence which is missing from those who know good and well they are masquerading behind pulpits to cover serious character flaws. Oh yes, I know none of us is perfect in the absolute sense, but, fellows, surely we can do better than a growing number have in the last few years. "Be thou an example of the believers."

Behaving Oneself in God's House

J. Wiley Adams

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Warner Robins, Georgia 31093



THE WORK OF ELDERS—Introduction

The editor of *Searching The Scriptures* has asked this writer to prepare several articles on the work of elders. As much as possible practicality will be the keynote. The writer will be drawing on his personal involvement as an elder for about ten years. From that viewpoint we hope to present some down-to-earth observations of things as they are—not hypothetical observations.

Much has been said by others at various times relating to the qualifications of elders or bishops as taught in the New Testament. For purposes of these articles, we shall assume the qualifications to already exist and move from there to the day-to-day aspects of the work itself. There is a need for a practical study. Too much rhetoric already surrounds the subject. We need to grapple with the issue of the work itself and get the discussion down on the ground where we are all standing.

THE WORK DEFINED. The work of elders is to oversee and direct the affairs of the local church (Acts 20:28). The word "elder" emphasizes the age and experience levels essential to the performance of the work. The word "bishop" denotes the function of elders. They are "overseers". The flock or local church is that which is supervised or overseen. Thus we have a relationship—the supervisors to the supervised—the shepherds to the flock—the pastors to the sheep.

The eldership implies a work to be done. It is not a prestige office nor a status symbol. It involves a lot of work to be a good elder. It is a hard job. It cannot be carried out by the lazy, marshmallow type. It requires energy, vigilance, industry, and zeal. It requires not only a backlog of knowledge of the Word of God but a continuing, diligent study of the same.

Dedication must be a characteristic of those who serve as elders. The church needs men of conviction, men of strength, men of vision, humble men. firm but gentle men, to tend, supervise, oversee, the flock. May these studies serve to stimulate our readers with respect to the function or work of the eldership

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THE ABUNDANT LIFE THEORY: A PENTECOSTAL EVOLUTION

"An interesting and important development in the recent history of the United States is the rise of numerous holiness and pentecostal denominations. For many years little interest was shown in this development and 'holiness people' were seen as relics of the nation's frontier past. Recent developments, however, have resulted in a mounting interest in both perfectionism and pentecostalism by theologians and the public alike. Perhaps the greatest interest has been generated by the rapid growth of the 'charismatic' movement inside the traditional denominations within the past decade. Virtually every major denomination now has its own pentecostal element, including the Catholic church."¹

In the first paragraph of his work on the revivalist movement of the 1950's and following, Dr. David Edwin Harrell says, "Once the object of derision, in the 1970's pentecostal religion became almost fashionable. Many judged the charismatic movement the most vital single force in American religion. The gifts of the Holy Spirit (Charisms), speaking in tongues (glossolalia), and divine healing were subjects studied in nearly every American church, and cells of charismatic believers appeared in most American denominations. By 1975, perhaps 5,000,000 or more Americans were taking part in the charismatic revival."²

It is an undeniable fact that the newly invigorated charismatic movement has invaded religion today—and with amazing ease. The theories have pervaded the ranks of even the Baptists and Churches of Christ considered by most to be the most fundamental and conservative among so-called "mainline" churches. Tongue speaking, Holy Ghost baptism, and other evidences of the charismatic leavenings are being heard in various locales. Many of the teachings have been popularized by the media evangelists on radio and television in what is obviously a sophisticated extension of the revivalist movement of the 1950's. During that period such men as William Branham, A. A. Allen, Jack Coe, Gordon Lindsey, and Oral Roberts sounded out the promises of miraculous healings and financial prosperity in exchange for faith in God and regular tithes to their ministries. Their places have been more than adequately filled today with such latter-day pentecostal ministers as Jimmy

Swaggart, Derek Prince, Kenneth Hagin, John Osteen, and Bob Mumford. The FGBFI, or Full Gospel Businessmen's Fellowship International, with Demos Shakarian as its leader, has given a certain dignity to the movement, along with such class evangelists as Rex Humbard and Kathryn Kuhlman and of course the most popular of all the religious superstars, Oral Roberts, who gave the world a look at pentecostalism through the eyes of well-conceived and immaculately produced television specials. Television programs such as the PTL Club and the 700 Club have been the tool for giving the movement a constant contact with the people through their daily religious talk-show broadcasts.

The Pentecostal concept of the atonement has its roots in the holiness movement of the mid to late 1800's. The father of Methodism, John Wesley, introduced to his followers the idea of what he called "entire sanctification," or the need for something after the acceptance of Jesus Christ as Savior. Much of what Wesley brought back to England after a rather unsuccessful tenure as a missionary in America were concepts he gained from associations with the Moravians in the state of Georgia. He quickly incorporated these concepts into his teachings upon his return to his native Britain. He taught that even when a person had accepted Christ and had been "saved," there remained a "residue of sin" which required a "second work of sanctification." It became a widely accepted doctrine among the followers of Wesley and his efforts to achieve "entire sanctification" following conversion resulted, in part, in his being referred to as a "Methodist."

Pentecostal theology was changed somewhat from 1870 to 1875. The Keswick Conventions in Keswick, England began to affirm that sanctification or the "second blessing" as it had become known was actually the baptism of the Holy Ghost. From about 1906 to 1914 a huge controversy arose in the holiness movement over the doctrine. Some converts from churches which did not have the Arminian background began to come into the movement, mainly from the Baptist church. They thought of conversion as involving both the initial acceptance of Christ and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They denied that a "second work of grace" was necessary, stating instead that the entire work was accomplished at the conversion of the sinner. This caused a split in the ranks of the holiness movement with about an equal number subscribing to the "second work of grace" and the so-called "finished work" groups. The factions requiring a "second work of grace" were mainly Methodistic and the groups advocating the "finished work" theories were mainly Baptist. This is actually the beginning of the division into "holiness" and "pentecostal" groups. It is the new version of these doctrines, a kind of diluted pentecostalism, that forms the basis for the neo-pentecostal movements among the mainline churches today. The old guard pentecostals refer to them as "neo-pentecostal" while those actually involved in the movement today prefer the name "charismatics."

"The pentecostal movement arose as a split in the holiness movement and can be viewed as the logical outcome of the holiness crusade which had vexed American Protestantism for over forty years, and in particular the Methodist church. The repeated calls of the Holiness leaders after 1894 for a 'new pentecost' inevitably produced the frame of mind and the intellectual foundations for just such a 'pentecost' to occur. In historical perspective the movement was the child of the holiness movement which in turn was the child of Methodism. Practically all the early pentecostal leaders were firm advocates of sanctification as a 'second work of grace' and simply added 'pentecostal baptism' with the evidence of speaking in tongues as a 'third blessing' superimposed on the other two. Both Parham and Seymour (early pentecostal pioneers, credited with founding the movement, db) maintained fully the Wesleyan view of sanctification throughout their lives.³

Like all man-made religions, the holiness-pentecostal movement has passed through stages of evolution. The emphasis of the 1890's and into the new century was obviously on the doctrine of entire sanctification. The teaching for this doctrine was promoted primarily by a tract called "A Plain Account Of Christian Perfection As Believed And Taught By The Rev. John Wesley." Interestingly, by 1915 the emphasis had switched from the doctrine itself to that which came to be thought of as the evidence of the entire sanctification, the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Still later, the Holy Ghost baptism gave way in preference to speaking in tongues which was considered to be an evidence of Holy Ghost baptism. By the time of the organization of the Azusa Mission in Los Angeles in 1906, thought by many to be the prime instigator of modern pentecostalism, the old time, poorly educated colporteurs who had planted the seed and organized such groups as "The Church of the Living God for the Evangelization of the World, Gathering of Israel, New Order of Things of the close of the Gentile Age," had given way to more closely organized groups. "By the turn of the century there were at least a dozen major holiness bodies that were well organized. Most conspicuous among the Southern groups were the Church of God, the Pentecostal Holiness Church, the Fire-Baptized Holiness Church, and the Church of God in Christ"⁴

By the 1950's the movement had undergone radical changes and at least some of the emphasis had changed from small local congregations which usually had some sort of annual meetings at some loosely organized national headquarters to the slick-tongued, fancy dressed, independent evangelists. These independent ministries were one-of-a-kind organizations which usually had one man, a highly skilled and very articulate organizer, at the helm and in addition to the traveling tent revivals, their ministries were most always promoted by some sort of periodical which advertised their huge crowds and promoted the miracles they performed in great and glowing claims. While "the abiding possibility and importance of the supernatural element . . . particularly as contained in

the manifestation of the Spirit,"⁵ still dominated the vital thrust of the movement, there was a new kind of pentecostalism emerging. The tent revivalists, drawing huge crowds and sporting an almost carnival-like atmosphere, with their screaming, highly motivating, mournful monotones were preaching a new brand of pentecostalism with the emphasis on healing. "Heal!" became the cry of the movement in the '50's. The testimony of the healed became the tool for the bringing in of expectant crowds sometimes in the thousands and the ever-present claims, ranging from the possible (in the case of some psychological healings) to the ridiculous (one lady was said to have worn the same pair of hose for six months) gave impetus to the now burgeoning pentecostal society. "The common heartbeat of every service was the miracle—the hypnotic moment when the Spirit moved to heal the sick and raise the dead."⁶

Today we see a new emphasis. While the supernatural of various sorts still forms the basis for the pentecostal theology, there has again been a radical shift in emphasis. Tongue speaking is still the popular manifestation of the possession of the Holy Ghost, and the miracle of healing still holds the spotlight at most Holy Ghost revivals. But there is a new, more subtle and possibly even more appealing theory being promoted by the charismatic groups. It is the Abundant Life theory. It has been around on the periphery of the movement all along. It enjoyed some measure of success in the '50's and '60's with the use of A. A. Allen, who claimed that one dollar bills were changed into 20's by his prayer for prosperity. You can almost see the evolution of it. Synan says, "Carrying the idea of sanctification and perfection to its ultimate conclusion, he (Parham, an early leader, db) taught that 'sanctifying power reached every part of our body, destroying the root and tendency of the disease!' Just as John Wesley taught the possibility of entire cleansing from sin, Parham taught entire cleansing from disease' in the experience of sanctification."⁷ And today, through the same type of evolution and the entire sanctification has taken on a new dimension and has been extended into not two, but three parts—atonement, or the forgiveness of sins; health, the freedom from disease; and prosperity, the freedom from financial woes. In its pure form it is a doctrine of health, wealth, and salvation, usually presented in that order. "American Christianity is rapidly being infected by an insidious disease, the so-called wealth and health Gospel—although it has very little of the character of the Gospel in it. In its more brazen forms (Brother Al, Reverend Ike, etc.) it simply says, 'Serve God and get rich (or healthy).' In its more respectable, but more pernicious forms, it builds 15-million dollar cathedrals to the glory of affluent suburban Christianity. Or it says, 'God wills your prosperity (and health).' The message goes like this: 'It's in the Bible. God says it. So think God's thoughts. Claim it. And it's yours!'"⁸

It will be our purpose in four short articles to examine this doctrine of the Abundant Life. It is obvious that in such a work we cannot make an

exhaustive examination of this most complicated and involved doctrine. But since very little work has been done in this area, and since the doctrine is gaining momentum in all quarters of the religious world, we feel that the need for such information is pressing. The material in these articles was gathered as a result of an assignment given me by the Timberland Drive church in Lufkin, Texas in 1981. I am indebted to them and to Jim Poppell who is their preacher for causing me to look into the doctrine and it is my most firm belief that the exposure of this doctrine to the principles of God's word will show it to be false, dangerous, and in need of immediate refusal by all who hear it. And if you have some notion that it is not capable of pervading the thinking of the people of God, wake up and look around! Who would have thought that any sort of pentecostal doctrine could invade the confines of the Lord's church? But it has! And this will too, if we do not take notice of it.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 *THE HOLINESS PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES* by Vinson Synan, published by William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1971. Pg. 7
- 2 *ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE* by Dr. David Edwin Harrell, Jr., published by Indiana Press, Bloomington, Indiana, 1975, Pg. 3
- 3 *THE HOLINESS PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT* op. cit., Pg. 115
- 4 Ibid, Pg. 92⁵ Donald Gee, from *WIND AND FLAME*, as quoted in *ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE*, op. cit., Pg. 11
- 6 *ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE*, op. cit. Pg. 6
- 7 *THE HOLINESS PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENT*, op. cit. Pg. 189
- 8 *THE DISEASE OF THE HEALTH AND WEALTH GOSPELS* by Gordon D. Fee, published by Word for Today, Costa Mesa, California, Pg. 1

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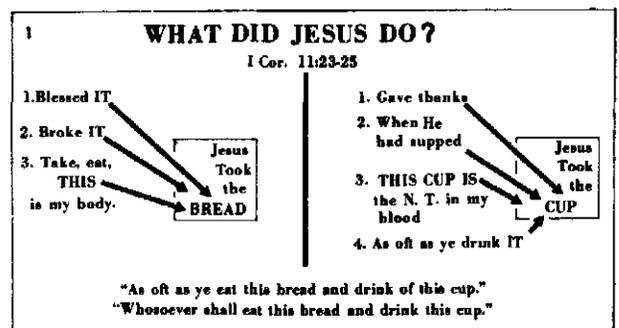
THE ONE CONTAINER ISSUE

We still have brethren today who contend for one container to be used in serving the Lord's Supper. They contend that "cup" in the Lord's Supper is the drinking vessel, and that Jesus used "one cup" (drinking vessel) when He instituted "The Supper," and therefore we should use only one.

They claim there are really three elements in the Lord's Supper: (1) The bread, which represents Christ's body, (2) The fruit of the vine, which represents Christ's blood, and (3) The cup (container, drinking vessel), which represents the New Testament. They say that since we have only one New Testament we therefore should have only one "cup" (drinking vessel) in the Lord's Supper.

There are only a few passages in the New Testament that discuss the Lord's Supper. We read about Christ instituting this supper in Matthew 26:27-29; Mark 14:22-25; and Luke 22:17-20. Then Paul discusses The Supper in 1 Corinthians 10:16,17,21; 11:23-28.

In our examination of this position, I want to first examine the texts and see just what the Lord and Paul said. (Since all of the passages used say basically the same thing, only one chart will be used to show what took place when The Supper was instituted).



Notice that the chart shows, in connection with the cup, that Jesus **gave thanks** for IT. Did he give thanks for the container? or was He giving thanks for **the fruit of the vine**? As you will observe, everything He did in connection with "the cup" points to the fruit of the vine. Thus, Jesus put the emphasis on the bread and the fruit of the vine.

Now, notice the following chart on the **Action, Things Significant, and The Things Insignificant** in the Lord's Supper.

2

THE LORD'S SUPPER

Luke 22:29-30

ACTION—Eating and Drinking

SIGNIFICANCE—Bread → His Body

Cup → His Blood

I Cor. 11:24-25

INSIGNIFICANT—Place

Table

Plates

Containers

THESE SIGNIFY NOTHING RELATIVE TO THE SUPPER!

Those who contend for the "one container" in The Supper, maintain that since Jesus took "a cup" with fruit of the vine in it, that it takes the cup with the fruit of the vine in it to have "the cup of the Lord." They assume that there was only one cup used when the Lord's Supper was instituted. However, in studying the context of the passages when The supper was instituted, we see that the Passover supper was being observed at the time the Lord instituted His Supper. Now notice the following statement regarding the Passover supper from the Jewish Encyclopedia, and Hasting's Dictionary of the New Testament.

CUPS IN THE PASSOVER SUPPER

3 "...AND JUGS OR BOTTLES OF WINE, WITH A GLASS OR OR SILVER CUP FOR EACH MEMBER OF THE FAMILY AND EACH GUEST, LIKewise ARE PLACED ON THE TABLE."

(JEWISH ENCY. Vol. 11, P. 144).

"A CUP OF RED WINE MIXED WITH WATER, WAS Poured OUT FOR EACH GUEST... AT THE PASSOVER SUPPER EACH PARTICIPANT HAD HIS OWN CUP TO DRINK FROM..."

(HASTINGS DICTIONARY OF THE N. T. Vol. 2, P. 326,27)

When brethren take a false position, the Lord usually sets a "road block" in their way in the Scriptures. If, as brethren say, it takes **both the container and contents** to constitute "The Cup of The Lord," then we would have to drink both the container and the contents in order to follow Paul's instructions in 1 Cor. 11:26. This, of course, reduces the position to an absurdity. When this is called to the attention of "the one container brethren," their reply is, "Oh Paul is using the figure of speech, metonymy, in this passage." This is true. In fact, in the New Testament, there are many figures of speech used. We can readily observe this by just using good common sense.

4

JUST USE GOOD COMMON SENSE

1. "They have Moses and the prophets" Luke 16:29
2. "I am the vine, ye are the branches" John 15:5
3. "Go tell that fox" (speaking of Herod) Luke 13:32
4. "How hear we every man in our own tongue" Acts 2:8
5. "Partakers of the Lord's table - table of devils"
I Cor. 10:21
6. "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I drink of"
Matt. 20:22
7. "The bed undefiled" Heb. 13:4
8. "Jacob, his children, his cattle, drank from the well."
John 4:12

There are at least two figures of speech used, not only by Paul in 1 Cor. 11:26, but in every passage that involves "the cup" in the Lord's Supper. One of the figures, according to Mr. E. W. Bullinger in his book, Figures Of Speech Used In The Bible, is a **metaphor**. A metaphor, according to Mr. Bullinger, "boldly and warmly declares one thing IS the other" (page 735). On page 741 he says this involves the Lord's Supper.

The second figure used in describing "the cup," is the figure **metonymy**. Metonymy is from two Greek words, meta, indicating change, and **onoma**, a name— thus metonymy is a change in name.

In his book on Figures Of Speech, Mr. Bullinger describes metonymy as "a figure by which one name is used instead of another, to which it stands in a certain relation" (page 538). Thus in connection with the Lord's Supper, "the cup" is named, but "the contents" (fruit of the vine) is what is meant.

The thing that seemingly is not understood by the "one container" brethren is the fact that every passage that discusses "the cup" involves the figure "metonymy" (Bullinger, page 577).

But now notice this. It is obvious that once a figure is established in metonymy the thing mentioned does not have to be present in order for the figure to be used.

5

FIGURE ESTABLISHED**"Rejoiced .. with all his house"****"That was a wonderful dish she fixed"****"She sure sets a fancy table"****"The Lord's Table"****"The cup of blessing"**

The figure, for example, "rejoiced with all his house." It is obvious here that one's house is his family and not the structure in which he resides. However, the literal thing mentioned—"house"—does not have to be present in order to use the figure, once it is established. "That was a wonderful dish she fixed." The word "dish" is used to describe the food that has been prepared. But once the word "dish" has been metonymically established to show that "dish" stands for "food," then a literal "dish" does not have to be present in order to use the figure. The food may be in a pot, and yet we would still refer to it as a "dish" and all would understand that we are talking about the wonderful food.

"She sure sets a fancy table." This could be said at a picnic lunch spread on a cloth on the ground without a literal "table" being within a mile of the place. The same thing is true of "The Lord's Table." This is a figure of speech used to describe "The Lord's Supper." That which constitutes the "Table of the Lord" is the unleavened bread and juice of the grape (fruit of the vine). Obviously a literal table would not have to be present in order to have "The Lord's Table."

However, those who hold the "one container" view are not agreed on this subject. One brother I met in a debate on this subject said a literal table would have to be present on which to set the bread and the fruit of the vine before you could scripturally partake of the Lord's Supper. Another said it would not. Obviously if you understand that when a figure is established that the thing mentioned does not have to be present in order to make the statement, then a literal table would not have to be present.

The same principle would apply to "the Cup of Blessing." Once the figure has been established, a literal cup would not have to be present in order to have "the cup of the Lord" any more than a literal table would have to be present before we could have "The Table of The Lord." In fact, the next chart shows that "The Cup of The Lord" can, and does mean, "the contents" and not the container.

From this chart we can clearly see that Paul, being in Ephesus, and writing to Corinth, referred to "The Cup of Blessing." You will notice the singular use of the word "cup." If, as some brethren teach, it took both the container and the contents to constitute "the cup of the Lord," then would not Paul have said "The cups of blessing (plural) which we bless"?

Not only does Paul use this expression in the singular (cup), but he also describes what this "cup" is of which he speaks. What is it? "Communion of the blood of Christ." But according to Jesus, that which represents His blood is the fruit of the vine. Hence, the "cup of blessing which we bless" is the fruit of the vine. Therefore those who agree with the above statement are the ones who really believe that all brethren everywhere bless, or give thanks for "the one cup." But that "one cup" is the fruit of the vine.

COMMAND	INCLUSION	PERVERSION	AIDS	ADDITIONS
7 SING Eph. 5:19	PSALMS HYMNS SPIRITUAL SONGS	ROCK & ROLL COUNTRY	BOOKS, LEADER ETC.	MECHANICAL INSTRUMENT (ANOTHER ACTION)
BAPTIZE MATT. 28:19	BURY BELIEVER IN WATER	BURY BELIEVER IN ROSE PETTALS	NATURAL OR ARTIFICIAL POOL	SPRINKLING (ANOTHER ACTION)
PARTAKE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER I Cor. 11:23-28	EAT THE BREAD AND DRINK THE CUP	EAT A COMMON MEAL	PLATES AND CONTAINERS	CAKE AND COFFEE

The above chart should help us to see that plates for the bread and containers for the fruit of the vine are only aids that assist us in serving the bread and the fruit of the vine.

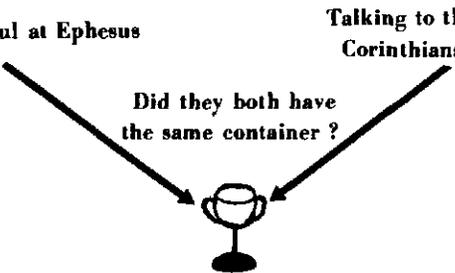
OUR BRETHREN ARE WRONG!

6 I Cor. 10:16

Paul at Ephesus

Talking to the
Corinthians

Did they both have
the same container ?



"This CUP of blessing which we bless"
What is the cup ? ?

"Communion of the blood of Christ"
What is the bread ? ?

"Communion of the body of Christ"

8 DOES IT MEAN ONLY ONE ?

If "THE" cup means we can have only one container, then what about "THE" vine ? Would that mean only "ONE" Vine ?

Would each congregation have to have its OWN VINE so they would know that the grape juice they are using came from "The Vine" ?

ALSO

Paul said we are to partake of "The Lord's Table," which is obviously a figurative expression. Since "The Table" is named, could we partake of the Lord's Supper without a literal table being present ?

I know of a number of occasions where the above question has been asked. I have never seen nor heard any real effort put forth to try to answer it. Obviously this simply sets forth the absurdity of the position.

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9 THE CONTAINER = NEW TESTAMENT

My Opponent Says :

1. A Cup = literal container Matt. 26:27
2. A Cup means ONE container
3. A Cup (literal container) is figurative of the New Testament.
4. If this is true, and you can have ONLY ONE CONTAINER present in each assembly-how can you consistently have more than ONE LITERAL TESTAMENT PRESENT ??

The one container brethren have all but made a "Holy Grail" out of the container. It is, they tell us, representative of the New Testament. However, if their contention is true, and we can have only one container per congregation, then why not only one New Testament per congregation?

10

One Voice

1. MAY HAVE SEVERAL SPEAKERS IN-AN AUDITORIUM !!
 2. MAY DISTRIBUTE THE ONE VOICE THROUGH SEVERAL SPEAKERS !!
- STILL JUST ONE VOICE !**

If you can see the principle set forth in the above chart, then surely you can see how we can have "one cup" (fruit of the vine) in many containers.

But even if the brethren are right in contending that Matthew 26:27 should be taken literally, and the container represents the New Covenant (new Testament), the passage itself shows they are wrong. For in their communion service, they have the blood (fruit of the vine) in the container. But the passage says "New Covenant (container) in my blood." So a literal application of the passage would have a container in the fruit of the vine. But observe from the following chart that the expression is figurative, and note also what the meaning of the figurative expression is, according to The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, and A. T. Robertson.

11 Exactly Backwards

LUKE 22:20 I COR. 11:25

"NEW COVENANT IN MY BLOOD"

CONTAINER FRUIT OF THE VINE

It Should Read:

"THIS IS MY BLOOD IN THE COVENANT"

"NEW COVENANT IN MY BLOOD i.e. IT IS A PLEDGE AND SEAL AND MEANS OF IMPARTING THE BLESSINGS OF THE NEW COVENANT I Cor. 10:16f - A COVENANT ESTABLISHED BY THE SHEDDING OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST" ISBE, Vol. 2, Page 766

"THE RATIFICATION OF A COVENANT WAS COMMONLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE SHEDDING OF BLOOD" (Plummer, Quoted by A. T. Robertson In Word Pictures, Vol. 2, Page 268)

Another argument that is used by the "one container brethren" is that individual cups were not invented and patented until 1894 by John G. Thomas. This is true. Also, it is argued that individual containers were not introduced into the communion service of the Lord's church until around 1915 by G. C. Brewer. This is also true. However, the implication left by these brethren in stating these statistics is not true. By stating these statistics, they are trying to set forth the fact that only one container was used in each congregation of the church of Christ until that time, and that is not true. Why even as a little boy, in the small country congregation where I attended before the individual containers were purchased, they had two water glasses which contained fruit of the vine. And in larger congregations where we sometimes attended, several glasses or goblets were used in serving the congregation. Thus the implication left by giving the above statistics is not true.

Drink "of" The Cup

Finally, the above expression, one container brethren tell us, means that to drink "of" a cup, all must put their lips to the same container. Many arguments could be made to show the untruthfulness of this position. However I believe to simply ask a rhetorical question will be sufficient to do this. Since the same expression is used by Paul regarding the bread in 1 Cor. 11:28 "eat of that bread," does that mean that every member has to put his lips to the bread? (Or would it be the plate that contained the bread?).

Conclusion

The fact of the matter is this. Brethren who hold to the "one container" view are making a law where God has made none, and dividing the Body of Christ in doing so. They are putting an emphasis on the container that God never put on it, and are thus adding to the Scriptures.

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SELF-EXAMINATION

Frank Himmel

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All of us undergo a variety of examinations in our lives: tests in school, physical exams, job reviews, etc. Sometimes we find them less than pleasant, especially when we see the results. But we take them because we understand they are for our good.

There are three New Testament passages that command self-examination, each with a different emphasis. But before considering them let us be reminded of the standard by which we must test ourselves. It is not our preconceived notions, feelings, or "I think so's." Paul said those who so test themselves are without understanding (2 Cor. 10:12). It is not the estimate of others. The same apostle said, "But to me it is a very small thing that I should be examined by you, or by any human court" (1 Cor. 4:3). That is not to say we should be unconcerned about others' opinions of us, but being approved by men does not guarantee approval by God. Nor is the standard tradition or custom. It is the word of truth by which we may present ourselves approved to God, hence that is the only reliable standard we may employ. Keep that in mind as we now consider the three tests.

1. Test to see if you are in the faith (2 Cor. 13:5). Some at Corinth questioned Paul's standing, especially his apostleship. He suggested they consider their own situation. If they passed the test and found themselves in the faith, it would confirm Paul as well since he was the one who had taught them.

The question posed here is a serious one. "Am I in the faith?" "Am I in Christ?" Before answering one must know how to be in Christ. "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ" (Gal. 3:26,27). The faith here spoken of is a conviction based on the word of God. Baptism is the immersion in water of a penitent believer for (unto) the forgiveness of sins (Rom. 6:3,4; Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38). If you have not complied with these conditions, you have failed the first test!

But observe that this command to examine self is addressed to church members, to those who at one point have obeyed the gospel. Let us not assume that initial obedience to God's word answers the question for all time. It is possible to stray from the truth (Jas. 5:19), be taken captive through deceit (Col. 2:8), go too far and not abide in the teaching of Christ (2 Jn. 9), or simply make shipwreck of your faith (1 Tim. 1:20). It is those who continue walking in the light that have the

promise of the cleansing of Jesus' blood (1 Jn. 1:7); only they pass this first self-examination.

2. Examine as you partake of the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:28). The Corinthians had turned the Lord's Supper into a common meal. Paul told them that in view of such conduct they would be better off not to come together. Lest they take him at his word, he proceeded to explain the proper place and significance of the Supper as a memorial of Christ's death. He then added, "Therefore [in view of its significance] whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup" (1 Cor. 11:27,28).

What are we looking for in this examination? Some would say to see if we are in the faith, to see if we are worthy to partake. It is true that Jesus placed the Supper in His kingdom (Mk. 14:25) and its citizens are the only ones who may rightly partake of it. But for one to be worthy to eat and drink means he is worthy of Christ's sacrifice, and none of us would qualify on that count. There must be some other interpretation. Paul explains what this examination is about in the next verse. "For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself, if he does not judge the body rightly." To partake in a worthy manner is to judge the body rightly—to understand the special meaning of this eating and drinking as opposed to sharing a common meal. That is what we must look to see if we are doing.

3. Examine your own work (Gal. 6:4). "For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another" (Gal. 6:3,4). Like the Pharisee of Luke 18, we sometimes take comfort in being "not like other people." But whatever "boasting" we do must be in our own work itself, not in comparison to what others are or are not doing. And my primary concern should be my work, not someone else's.

There are several questions we might ask ourselves in examining our work. First, "Is what I am doing pleasing to God?" Not everything in which we may be engaged is necessarily consistent with God's will. We are taught to "walk as children of light, . . . trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord" (Eph. 5:8,10). The Psalmist said, "Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it" (Ps. 127:1). Another good question is, "Am I doing what God intends?" One might avoid doing wrong and still be displeasing through a failure to do right. The Parable of the Talents teaches us to use the talents and resources God has entrusted to us in His service. Just how much are we contributing to the Lord's kingdom?

A third question that merits our attention is this: "How successful is my work?" Measuring success is difficult at best. In some cases we may not live to see the fruits of our labors. On other occasions what seems a success may in time turn out to be otherwise. And

there are many factors which may contribute to failure which are beyond our control. In spite of these complications, we would do well to examine our labors to see what improvements are possible in the way we do the Lord's work. Paul put it this way: "Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each Man's work. If any man's work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire" (1 Cor. 3:12-15).

These self-examinations are for our own good. They help prepare us for the day when God will examine us. Let us make good use of them that by His grace we may pass that final test and enjoy eternal life.

WALKING IN THE LIGHT: AN INQUIRY

Tom Oglesby
220 North Walnut St.
Hohenwald, TN 38462

In the past several months, several esteemed brethren have spoken and written on what it means to "walk in the light." Since I have respected the knowledge, wisdom and work of these men for many years, I have tried to pay careful attention to the results of their study and understanding of God's Word. I offer this article not as a review of these brethren or their articles but rather as a means of clarifying the questions and explanations under consideration.

First of all, I should state that in my own preaching I have never affirmed...

1. That God requires perfect and impeccable knowledge or behavior in order for an individual to be saved. Such would be impossible and would negate the necessity of grace and the shedding of Christ's blood. The very fact that there is a second law of pardon implies that even truth loving and truth seeking Christians would "miss the mark" from time to time.

2. That we must, in repentance and confession, specify each sin and imperfection. Again, such is humanly impossible and God nowhere even intimates such a requirement. There is no "prayer formula" which must be adhered to in order for God to acknowledge and accept our penitence.

3. That God will not provide in His providence time, opportunity and capacity for the faithful Christian to repent of his sins and confess them to those sinned against and to God Himself. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). God is not up in Heaven looking down on Tom Oglesby just waiting for him to make one of his frequent mistakes and then "ZAP" him into Hell Fire. I am persuaded better of the love of God and so is every conscientious Christian.

Those statements should eliminate some of the myths and straw men that have been erected in discussions of grace both in this generation and in those of the past.

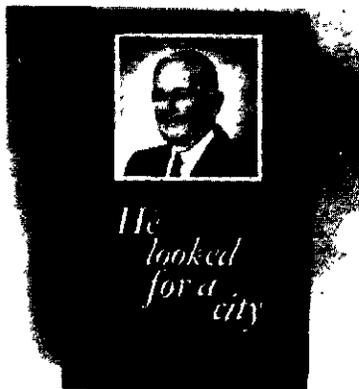
Having said that, let me move to some things implied in the above mentioned articles that have disturbed me because, so far as I can determine in my study, they lack the sanction and authority of God's Word. Are these beloved brethren affirming...

1. That the Christian stands in the grace (favor) of God, has uninterrupted fellowship with Deity, and is cleansed by the blood of Christ WHILE IN THE VERY ACT OF SINNING AGAINST GOD?

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2. That the forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ is obtained BEFORE and or APART FROM repentance (change of direction and will) and confession in prayer?

If these are the conclusions my brethren have reached and are sharing with others, I am ready to sign on the dotted line to deny them wholeheartedly. It is my conviction that such conclusions are unwarranted from the Scriptures and cannot be sustained by an appeal to scriptural authority.

The men referred to in this article have been and are spiritual giants and models to me in my preaching and service to the Lord. I would not even whisper a reproachful or disrespectful word in their direction, but in following their excellent example, I also must speak my piece. Hopefully, these thoughts will stimulate continued study on these subjects.

EVANGELISM IN MONON, INDIANA

Thomas C. Hickey
630 East Ash Place
Griffith, IN 46319

In the two weeks ending Saturday, August 21st, 1982 the Woodmar church of Christ in Hammond, Indiana, conducted a vigorous work of evangelism centering in the little town of Monon, Indiana, just seventy-five miles to the southeast. The work was fruitful and productive but, even aside from that, it had other very rewarding qualities as well. For one thing, I believe that the work was entirely scriptural and proper. For another thing, it involved almost all the members of the Woodmar church in one way or another, thus it allowed everyone the strengthening experience of being directly involved in church growth and evangelism.

The Woodmar church did not serve as a sponsoring church; it did not solicit and disburse funds for other churches. It evaluated an evangelistic opportunity, and planned and executed a work in a nearby community which resulted within two weeks in the establishment of another church of Christ.

How The Work Was Carried Out

Several months ago Chuck and Taddian Davis of the Woodmar church worked with a relative, Mrs. Sally Estill, of Monon, in an effort to convert her. They enrolled her in a Bible correspondence course offered by the Griffith church. Several weeks later, after the completion of this course, Mrs. Estill visited with Chuck and Taddian Davis in their home and was further encouraged to obey the gospel. Mrs. Estill was baptized into Christ at Woodmar at that time. After returning home Mrs. Estill had a difficult time worshipping since there was no local church of Christ. This necessitated her returning to Hammond or driving south to Lafayette.

Meanwhile, consideration was already being given by the Woodmar church to the fact that there was a sizable area in north central Indiana which had no known faithful church of Christ. Monon lay near the center of this area. Discussion continued for several months about how this need might best be met.

About a month before the actual work commenced, John Brewer, evangelist at Woodmar, and the elders, Paul Valentine and Howard Thatcher, began making trips to Monon for planning purposes. Local newspapers and business offices were contacted and people were interviewed in an effort to evaluate the need and assess community receptivity to the work which would be done. Local religious interest and affiliation was considered. One reason for choosing Monon over neighboring communities for the base of operations was due to its religious unrest. Many people in Monon objected to the "politics" within the local churches where each seemed to be run by a clique, and outsiders had little opportunity for input.

The communities were contacted to learn what was required for door-to-door solicitation to be conducted within the framework of legality. Newspaper articles were published in the *Monon News*, and the *Francesville News* beginning about two weeks before the survey was begun.

On about the 9th of August workers set up temporary residence in a campground just outside of Monon and began the task of surveying and interviewing as many as possible of the residents of Monon, Buffalo, Reynolds, Monticello and Francesville, Indiana. A gospel meeting was conducted beginning the 16th of August in a rented store front in downtown Monon.

After two weeks of survey work, home Bible studies and gospel meeting activity the workers returned to their homes leaving a newly formed church of twelve members and dozens of prospects.

A Teamwork Effort

An impressive thing about this effort was its teamwork! Most of the work was done by Woodmar members—old and young, experienced members and neophytes. A few preachers from other congregations lent a hand. The Woodmar workers consisted of the elders, Paul Valentine and Howard Thatcher, the preachers, John Brewer, Ron McBride and Tom Cains, and other members including Gerald Fraiser, Bruce Sheline, Ed Sheline, Calvin Sheline, Allen Sheline, Ron Daulton, Bob Starr, Rob Starr, Rick Hill, Ed Campbell, Herman Reed and Charles Davis. These are the ones who actually did the canvassing. In addition, they were assisted by Dennis Lynd of Lexington, Illinois; Art Adams of Portage, Indiana; Dale Pennock of Elgin, Illinois; Jeff Knutilla of Birmingham, Alabama, and Tom Hickey of Griffith, Indiana.

The planning for the overall project was done by the elders, Thatcher and Valentine, and by one preacher, Brewer.

Groundwork and physical maintenance for the project was extensive with the setting up of a campsite

and the renovation of the store front meeting place. Charles Davis loaned a Winnebago motor home, Bob Starr loaned a camping trailer and Ron McBride loaned a pop-up camper for use as sleeping quarters for those who were working. The renovation of the building included removal of store fixtures and partitions, repairing broken water lines, doing some electrical work, installing one partition, installing a baptistery, building furniture, setting up chairs, painting the interior and exterior of the building, painting and erecting signs advertising the church and general cleanup. Those who helped with the physical labor included Howard Thatcher, Paul Valentine, John Brewer, Chuck Davis, Ed Campbell, Herman Reed, Ron McBride, Dave Jamison, Pam Jamison, Bob Starr, Rob Starr and Dan Starr.

Many of the Woodmar women got involved in this work of evangelism, too! Florence Murphy, Taddian Davis, Rena Valentine, Colleen Thatcher, Margaret McBride and Eva Clark lived in the camp for two weeks and did the cooking and laundry for the men. Others who also worked in the camp for shorter periods included Maria Daulton, Dorothy Sheline, Dot Brewer, Maria Timez, Sister Sisnaros and Vicki Lynd. Besides these, since this work was being done reasonably close to Hammond, the ladies of the congregation who stayed at home cooked and prepared much of the food that was sent to the campsite. Maria Daulton coordinated the planning and sending of this food. Also, several women of the DeMotte, Indiana, church prepared food and sent it for one of the evening meals.

Results Of The Work

In addition to the strength imparted to the workers themselves, the following results have been observed:

1. A church was established in Monon beginning with Sally Estill.
2. Ten precious souls were baptized into Christ.
3. One erring member was restored.
4. One person made a definite commitment to place membership with the congregation. Others indicated an interest in placing membership as soon as they had fulfilled commitments made to other congregations.
5. Ron McBride will begin preaching regularly for the group there.
6. About twenty future Bible studies have been definitely arranged in Monon.
7. About seven future studies have been arranged in Francesville.
8. One study has been arranged in Buffalo.
9. Six studies have been arranged in Reynolds.
10. Thus far, ten studies have been arranged in Monticello. There is a prospect for beginning a study with a "charismatic study group" which has previously met in the area.
11. Twelve students enrolled in correspondence Bible courses (9 at Woodmar, 3 at Griffith). Dozens of other enrollment cards were distributed with prospects for many other enrollees.
12. Special classes will be conducted in Monon each week for new converts.

13. Approximately 100 serious Bible discussions were conducted in the area during the survey and the meeting. About 25 of these were detailed studies.

14. The possibility is being entertained for a religious debate on the subject of mechanical instrumental music. The disputants will probably be either Art Adams or Dennis Lynd meeting a Christian church preacher.

15. One denominational preacher attended the meeting, and brought a prospect with him.

16. There are serious prospects for four or five others placing membership with the Monon church.

17. The editor of the *Monon News* invited John Brewer to write a weekly newspaper article for his paper at no charge.

Community Response

There were absolutely no reports of unpleasant experiences by any of our workers—no one was cursed, no doors were slammed, no one was killed and no one was dog-bitten! Compared to the work of the apostles, this was a "piece of cake."

Many of the local business people expressed favorable comments about the nature of the work. The police department was cooperative and offered to help in any way they could. Many religious people thought it was "wonderful" that the people would give time to do that kind of work.

Cost Of The Work

It would be difficult to assess the monetary cost of the labor involved in this work, but the Woodmar church spent about \$2,000 in incidentals including advertising, building repair and cleanup, production of teaching materials for distribution, etc. Comparing these dollars with what churches often spend on other works of evangelism, this is readily seen to be a very cost-effective technique of preaching the gospel.

Skills Required

Emphasis has already been given to the fact that this was a teamwork effort of a local congregation. No special skills were required to obtain these results. There were no Bible-college professors involved in the work; there were no skilled debaters stalking the streets in search of polemic contestants. The work was done by average members of an urban congregation together with its elders, preachers and a few volunteers from other churches.

In this writer's opinion, the beauty of this system of evangelism lies in its simplicity, and in the fact that the Woodmar church has shown what a typical church can do when its members care about the spiritual welfare of others and manifest a working love for souls. I commend the zeal of this church as an example for others to imitate.

(This experience was not a new one for the Woodmar church. Every year for several years it has taken on a similar challenge with similar results in areas ranging from west Tennessee to Iowa to the northwestern United States to southwestern Canada.)

This writer feels he has profited immensely from a very limited association with the Woodmar church in

some of this work, chiefly in having had the opportunity to see what can be done when God's pattern for working through the local church is followed with zeal.

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ONE THING I HOPE TO SEE

H.M. Phillips

I may never see it, but that within itself does not keep me from hoping to see it. I, too, realize that the word "hope" carries in it the desire and expectation. I do not believe it to be impossible for this to happen. I know it would be a great thing if it did come to pass. Hundreds would rejoice with me. Much good would be done. The Lord would be pleased and the cause of the Lord would be exalted. Here it is for all to consider: **A discussion of some vital issue in which each of the speakers or writers would stick to the issue, and not deal in slurs and wisecracks against his opponent.**

Then, too, it would be well for them not to brag too much on self, or refer to the degrees, or the standing of prominence in his own profession; how much he knows and what a power he is in most all lines; or how he has so bewildered other opponents as to make it almost sure that no one need expect to get anywhere with him.

Then, in getting the discussion arranged, it will be pleasant to hear no background reference about the opponent, nor ridicule of his religion, or the people who honestly believe it to the best of their knowledge. This does not come within the issue.

I have heard many discussions and been in a few myself, and I am persuaded that it seems hard for most all to keep from saying or acting some way so as to lead from the issue. But that is a reason why that specific proposition should be stated, and then keep the issue clearly before the mind as the discussion proceeds. Let each one stay with the issue and answer the arguments made. I may never see this done, but it could be done, and it would cause people to like discussions instead of disliking them. Keep in a good humor, and do not abuse the opponent; discuss what you are supposed to; and let me know when you will do that—I want to be there. (Gospel Advocate, June 10, 1948).

THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

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FIELD REPORTS

J. WILEY ADAMS, 103 Ridgeland Dr., Warner Robins, GA 31093. Since February 1, 1982, the Westside church of this city has produced a weekly television program of 25-minute duration using the local cable TV channel 12. Believe it or not this time cost us \$5 per week. This opens up a lot of room for thought as to the possibilities in other areas where cable TV has a free channel for continuous weather, time and local advertising with stereo background music. All public services are free which include church functions such as gospel meetings. Commercial announcements cost \$1 per line up to four lines. This means that local people do watch such a channel or else advertisers would not spend their money on such. The Cox Cable Co. has told us there is a viewing potential of 44,000 people in this town of 50,000. Only cable subscribers will be able to view the program. We have an ideal time—5:35 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. At this time we are not competing with prime time programming on network stations. Our time is between Robins AFB report and channel 2 Atlanta news which uses the cable at that time.

We have purchased our own equipment and produce our own programs at the church building where we can arrange things like we want to. We had a young man here for awhile who had his own equipment and he introduced us to this type of program. He is now a student at Florida College but before he left he helped us to select and to purchase about \$2,000 worth of equipment and helped to train two young men to operate the equipment. They do a good job and other young men want to learn. It has generated some enthusiasm among the young as they naturally seem to understand this type of thing.

If the station produced our programs at the studio the cost would be \$100 per month which in itself is not bad. But by having our own setup we can in a year and a half own our equipment by what we save. This equipment has other teaching possibilities in conjunction with the local program of work. The video camera, power case and the video cassette recorder can be used to record gospel meetings, special subjects, and can be brought into homes and played back through one's own TV set. We pass this information on to readers of STS at the request of the editor. It just might be that some who read this can use this for their own local situation and will discover that having a local TV program is not out of range financially. If you desire further information please write to us.

DEAN BULLOCK, 1102 N. Mound, Nacogdoches, TX 75961. I have moved to Nacogdoches from the Tyler area (Lindale) to preach for the Mound and Starr church. Robert Harkrider continues with the congregation. However, he will devote more time (than in the past) to teaching advanced Bible courses, classes for university students, writing Bible class literature, speaking on lecture programs and in gospel meetings. I am glad to be in Nacogdoches, and to be associated with Robert Harkrider as a fellow preacher in the growing work at Mound and Starr.

STEVE DIAZ, Rt. 1, Box 1210, Leesburg, FL 32748. The Central church of Christ which formerly met at the American Legion building in Leesburg, now has their own building. It is located at 309 Michigan Avenue. This is two miles east of downtown Leesburg, just off of Hwy. 441. Because of this move we will be known as the Michigan Avenue church of Christ. For further information write the church at P.O. Box 2207 Leesburg, FL 32748 or call (904) 728-0715.

MIKE MILES, c/o New Bremen church of Christ, 17 S. Walnut St., New Bremen, OH 45869. This is to let the readers of STS know that there is a congregation meeting in New Bremen. We are located about 45 miles north of Dayton on State Route 66, ten miles west of I-75 between Sidney and Wapakoneta. To our knowledge there is no other congregation between Fort Wayne, Indiana and Columbus, Ohio, nor between Toledo, Ohio and Dayton which is standing for the truth. At present we have 17 Christians and 10 children. Our average attendance is in the thirties. We have been having good results from our Dial-A-Bible-Moment program averaging 20 calls per day. This work was started in September, 1981 by Walt and Marsha

Hazelwood and Jenny Baltes. They met for a year in the Hazelwood home having one baptism during that period. In August of this year a suitable location was obtained in which to meet and the first service held. Mike Miles moved to begin working with the congregation at that time. The building is located at 17 S. Walnut, one block east of State Route 66, and one block south of route 274. Our times of services are Sunday morning at 9:30 and 10:30 and Sunday evening at 6:00. Wednesday Bible Study is at 7:30 p.m. If you know of any in this area that need to be contacted, please call Mike Miles at (419) 629-2573, or Walt Hazelwood at 629-2171. When traveling, please come and worship with us.

DAVID ODOM, 2108 Ella, Beatrice, NE 68310. A few months ago we lost over 3/4's of our support. This had come from one congregation which had supported us for the past five years. We still lack \$1,200 per month in making up that support. My family consists of eight members and I have been driving a dump truck to make ends meet. The work in Nebraska is in need of men who will come and stay. We have been here five years now and are quite interested in staying. There are only four conservative groups in this state, two of whom do not have men to work with them full time. My family and I travel to Grand Island, 137 miles from Beatrice, every two months to work with the brethren there. They number approximately twenty. We here at Beatrice average in the thirties. During the past five years I have conducted sixty two Bible studies in private homes, and have baptized fifteen people, all adults. I try to keep an average of six home Bible studies going per week. The Lord's kingdom is small in this area, but there are many souls to be saved. If you can, please help us spread the "good news" here in Nebraska. You may contact me at (402) 223-4307 (after 10 p.m.) and for reference, Harold Fite at (713) 578-7163; 21339 Park Tree, Katy, TX 77450. Thank you so much for your consideration.

OLLEN T. ROMINE, 6532 Richard Dr., Brooksville, FL 33526. In April I started working full time with a group that met at the Civic Center in Spring Hill, Florida. This work was started back in 1980. In June of this year we rented a commercial building on Mariner Blvd., just one block off of Spring Hill Dr. We purchased some pews, speakers stand, seats etc. We only had access to the Civic Center for Sunday services. However, since moving into this location we have had considerable growth in numbers. The Deltona Corp., developers of Spring Hill, in west Hernando County, is giving us a four acre lot to build on. If there are any individuals (not churches) who would like to help us it would be appreciated.

CEDAR RAPIDS, IOWA

ANDY DE KLERK, 401 Bullard Parkway, Temple Terrace, FL 33617. My family and I (along with the family of Calvin Watson of Brilliant, Alabama) have decided to move in May of 1983 to the Cedar Rapids, Iowa area to spread the gospel. There are only five churches of the Lord in the entire state. There are 128,000 people living in the Cedar Rapids—Marion area. My great desire to move there is not as a result of what some seem to think, the "glamour of missionary work." I have done this kind of work for the past twenty years or more. I know what it is to be lonely, disappointed and discouraged. I also know what a thrill there is to see the seed planted and to see it grow and begin to blossom into a "fruit bearing tree"—a Christian. We've been in the barren fields of South Africa, and now after six years of labor in Tampa we yearn to return to the fields, but this time to the fields of Iowa. It is essential for Calvin Watson to move with us. Calvin is 36 years old and was an active member at Henderson Blvd. in Tampa where I have been preaching. Calvin now preaches in Brilliant, Alabama. Calvin left a \$4,000 a month job to devote his life to preaching. Both of us will need support for our families. Calvin will be working in the Marion area (pop. 20,000) and myself in Cedar Rapids. We will worship together in a central place. I will gladly furnish as many references concerning my work as requested. The brethren at Henderson Blvd. will welcome any enquiries. In regard to Calvin feel free to contact myself, Harry Pickup, Sr. at (813) 985-5772, the Henderson Blvd. church at (813) 876-2237, or the church in Brilliant, AL on Hwy. 129 By-Pass 35548. My number is (813) 985-5998. Pray for us and consider our appeal to you for support and please, if you can, make a favorable decision concerning our needs.

SOUTH AFRICAN DECISION

RAY VOTAW, P.O. Box 801, Springs, TVL. A couple of weeks ago I received a "summons" from the Chiawelo church in the huge black complex of Soweto outside Johannesburg. This church has been standing with the "liberal" churches in South Africa. I was instructed to bring white brethren with me for a "discussion on the division in the church of Christ." Dr. Almo Horn of the South African Bible School (liberal) was also instructed to come and bring whites with him. I invited Basil Cass, Jim Lovell, Les Maydell and Paul Williams to accompany me and we arrived at the assembly hall of the Phuthalushaka School in Chiawelo on the appointed day. I went prepared for a debate on the "institutional issues." Dr. Horn and his cohorts were very much in attendance. We all simply sat and awaited the developments. A faithful black brother from the Diepkloof church, William Bologo was called upon to speak. He delivered a good lesson on Unity and forcefully pointed out the innovations which had actually caused the division. I was surprised that William had been called upon to speak. Expecting a rebuttal I was really surprised when another faithful brother, Frank Ramovhuyo of Mofolo was asked to take the "second service"—Lord's Supper and contribution. In typical black fashion it was not difficult for Frank to turn this into another opportunity for an assault on "institutionalism." He lambasted the idea of taking the money of the church and building such things as Orphan's homes, homes for the aged and Bible Colleges. (I'm sure I saw Al Horn "duck").

Brother Petros Tshivhase, of the Chiawelo church then arose to speak and I sort of gripped my papers waiting for the debate to begin. But brother Tshivhase in essence said: "Thank you white brethren for coming. However, we didn't call you here to ask you anything. We called you here to tell you something." He continued by saying, "Back in 1965 brother Ray Votaw met brother James Judd in a debate in Benoni. In this debate things were introduced to the church in South Africa that we had not heard about—Human institutions and giving the money of the church to unbelievers. This brought about division. Until then the church was united. So we're going back to the way we were before this debate and without these "new" things we will be united—just the church of Christ." He then spoke—apparently in consensus with all the faithful black brethren present—and said, "You white brethren can go do what you think is best with this division among yourselves. We of Soweto are going to be one." The services were dismissed. They didn't even call on me for closing prayer. Ha!

Get the picture, brethren. This was something "engineered" completely by the black Christians in Soweto. We whites had nothing whatsoever to do with it. In their own way not only did they completely discomfit Dr. Horn and company but they also rebuked me and those with me for not doing more in bringing about unity. "How could they talk to us like that," you might ask? Easy. You see these brethren are free children of God and the faithful churches in Soweto are completely autonomous. None of the Christians there are receiving American dollars or money from the whites. What I'm saying is that we could hold nothing like support over their heads and thus "control" them. Thank God! May their tribe increase throughout the world! Yes, these brethren are aware of the fact that we whites brought the gospel to South Africa. They appreciate it and constantly demonstrate that appreciation. But "lackeys" they are not.

CARLOS CAPELLI, Casilla 83, 1665—Jose C. Paz, Buenos Aires, Argentina. On July 16-22, I visited the congregation in Mendoza (sixteen hours away by train) and stayed with brother and sister Fernando Venegas. I visited with all the brethren there and discussed the Lord's work in Argentina. Here at home the Lord has richly blessed our efforts. On August 15 another two souls were added to our spiritual family. These two had previously been with the Pentecostals. This family lives in Boulogne (40 kilometers from Buenos Aires). Boulogne has a population of ten million people and I am thinking that we should begin a church in this city. I ask your prayers. Also the church in Albany, Oregon notified me that they must discontinue their \$250 per month support. So I am in need of that support again. Could you help? If you have any question about

my work feel free to write and inquire. I will be happy to answer any question and supply references.

PREACHER NEEDED

LYNCHBURG, VA—The newly established Westside church of Christ in Lynchburg is in need of a full-time man to work with them. The church began meeting in this city back in July. Lynchburg is a beautiful city in the foothills of the Blue Ridge mountains. It is a very conservative area being the national headquarters of the Moral Majority and the residence of Jerry Falwell. There is much work that needs to be done in this area. Because we are small we cannot provide full support. If you are interested in this work please contact Larry Powell at 1203 Westridge Cir., Lynchburg, VA 24502, or call (804) 237-3445.

DEBATE TAPES AVAILABLE

VOYD N. BALLARD, 3046 North Ashby Rd., Merced, CA 95340—The debate at Grants Pass, Oregon between J. T. Smith and myself has been professionally recorded and is available to readers of this paper at my cost which is \$25.00 for the complete set of eight tapes. The first two nights were on classes and women teachers and the last two nights were on the cup question. We each had two 30 minute speeches each night, making a total of 16 speeches.

JIMMY TUTEN, 7911 Country Dr., Mobile, AL—Hoyt H. Houchen was with us in a meeting August 1-6 with interest and attendance at an all-time high. Everyone was edified, uplifted and filled with renewed zeal as a result of brother Houchen's efforts. I just closed a meeting with the Belfast church in the Richlands, VA area. Attendance was better than my three previous meetings in that area and the cooperation of the brethren at Richlands was excellent. Brethren came from throughout the tri-state area. Herb Braswell, who has preached in this area for several years is moving to Dexter, Maine in April, 1983. He needs \$300 a month support beyond what is now secured. Inquiries about him may be directed to Joe Wimmer, Cedar Bluff, VA (703)-964-5433. That means the Belfast church will need a preacher then. Any interested may contact brother Wimmer at the above address. Visit with us at Tillman's Corner in Mobile. Early Worship (9 AM and 10 AM) and easy access to M0 make is convenient to drop by on your way through Mobile.

PREACHER NEEDED

PISCATAWAY, NEW JERSEY—The Piscataway congregation has need of a full time worker for the Lord. We are a group of about 50 meeting in the suburbs of New York City, near the city of New Brunswick. We will be able to provide partial support. You may reach us by writing to: R. E. Pflaum, 3 Yorktown Rd., Somerville, NJ 08876 or calling 201-359-1928; or B. T. Jones 201-873-3286.

NEW MEETING HOUSE

DICK BLACKFORD, P.O. Box 225, Owensboro, KY 42302—After meeting in the Owensboro Junior High School for almost four years, the Westside church is now in a new building and is no longer at the mercy of the school-board. The building will seat 225, which gives us room to grow. September was especially good for the work here. Three elders were appointed and deacons will probably be appointed within the next two weeks. Four were baptized, three restored and one identified. Some of these came in a gospel meeting with J. F. Dancer. Several home studies are currently underway and the congregation began mailing a monthly bulletin called THE LAMPLIGHTER. A spirit of unity prevails among the members and things look brighter than they have looked during the short history of the congregation. Pray for us that we will not get sidetracked. The building is located on Highway 60 West, near the Wendell Ford Expressway. We like to have visitors.

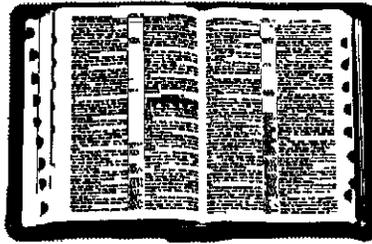
IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	267
RESTORATIONS	97

(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)

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 XXIII

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NUMBER 12

THINK ON
THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips
P.O. Box 17244
Tampa, Florida 33612



VANGUARD AND TANT'S UNITY PLAN

With this initial article of six, I step out upon the tight-wire of controversial journalism, with only the truth of God to give me balance. At this point in life it is not a delightful chore to challenge the pursuits, goals and methods of a seasoned veteran of religious journalism for over forty years. I have not jumped into this matter hastily, nor without thought. I do so with the prayer that good will result and God will be exalted because His word is honored.

I have read from at least twenty-six editors, staff writers and preachers who have written what they believe ought to be said in regard to Yater Tant's "box-in-the-vestibule" as a means to unity, and his association and endorsement of many phases of the Crossroads Church of Christ in Gainesville, Florida. I did not say much to anyone about my intention and efforts to prepare a response to what brother Tant has written as far back as October, 1981. I spoke to Connie Adams about my plans and he urged me to complete the articles as soon as possible for *Searching The Scriptures*. I began but was dissatisfied with each draft, largely because of additional and differing information that appeared in *Vanguard* and other papers each month. What I knew I had to write was more and more disturbing.

In April I went to Birmingham, Alabama to visit and talk with Brother Tant. We spent one day and a part of another talking about his proposal for a "vestibule box", the Crossroads Church, the problem of unity, and about his Open Letter to Guy N. Woods

and Reuel Lemmons. Our discussion was respectful and brotherly from both of us, but we spoke freely and plainly to the subject. We did not agree when we parted, but I think we understood one another a little better. There is no hostility between us as I write these words.

According to my notes of our meeting, we had discussed the following: the box-in-the-vestibule, the Crossroads Church in Gainesville, Florida, his idea of attaining unity as in his appeal in the Open Letter to Guy N. Woods and Reuel Lemmons, fellowship and when it must be broken between brethren, and how his unity plan compared to the Murch-Witty Unity Plan. We each said what we wanted to say, as far as I understand. I completely disagree with brother Tant in his analysis of the problems and the manner in which he thinks they can be resolved scripturally.

Upon my return from Birmingham I was resolved to write something on these subjects, but I was deliberate to be as true to facts as possible. From many sources came reviews, reports, and further information about Tant's activity, which were new to me since I had talked to him. He also wrote much more about some of the things we discussed. As I continued to rewrite articles to bring them up to date, I decided that it would be impossible to get anything into print and keep updating this material to try to make it as accurate as possible.

My Attitude in These Articles

There is probably no subject more thoroughly pursued by generations of preachers, elders, teachers, writers and editors than the subject of UNITY! I know of no more noble goal, no greater achievement for which one could reach than to endeavor to keep "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3). Jesus prayed for his disciples "that they all may be one; . . . even as we are one" (John 17:21, 22). "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity" (Psalm 133:1).

The interlock of human intellect and the stubborn will can forge some strange gods that wrest the hearts of multitudes from the solid foundation of truth. When the intermission between spiritual conflicts appears, various white flags go up and the official peace of-

fensive begins. This cycle of history is as ongoing as the seasons, and the often used clichés and slogans signal the compromising schemes by which the forces of truth and error are to "join right hands" and "learn war no more."

I am fully aware that Time, the Penman of History, will not allow one word of this paper to be erased. I shall bear the consequences of what I have written whether I like it or not. With that fact clearly in mind, I have cautiously approached this task with fear and trembling, with the consciousness that I must face God in the judgment, not only with what I have said here, but also with the motive and attitude of heart which prompted every punch of the keys of this typewriter.

I have a strong conviction about the unity of the people of God. It is one thing, however, to DESIRE the oneness of God's people, and quite another to FOLLOW SCRIPTURAL PROCEDURE to attain it. Some schemes have been advanced that create more divisions and problems in the church than can be resolved in a generation. I am sad that this is true. The cry of "Peace, Peace," when there is no peace is not new. I have observed the creeping fungus of false peace for the past twenty-five or thirty years. It is the opiate of the many who want peace at any cost. I do not think there is a single phase of life of a Christian that has not been tarnished by false peace.

Let this be understood: I allow no man to hold a greater desire for peace and unity among brethren in the Lord than do I. I will permit no man to do more than I, within the limits of my ability, to bring about the unity that is taught in the word of God. But I will follow no man into the murky, putrid waters of sectarian unionism, bound by that compromise of truth that produces no better than the unbelief of denominationalism. I stand for unity among all Christians, but *only upon the condition of the New Testament*, As far as I am concerned there is never an exception.

I assure you I do not envision myself a referee of brotherhood problems, I do not consider myself a venerable sage who has all the answers; I am sure I do not know all the questions. I do not speak for any church, paper, school, or segment of brotherhood thinking. I do not expect nor want any glory, power or honor for what is said in this and the following articles. I am simply speaking for myself and pointing out what I believe to be some very dangerous concepts relative to the unity among brethren in the Lord. Furthermore, all I read in papers and books represents only the views of the individual authors. No one can speak for a church or the brotherhood, and he certainly does not speak for me!

The Word of God—The Only Standard

The Bible is complete, an unchangeable book whose author is God. Neither time nor the customs and traditions of men will change one word of it. For those who become unhappy with the word exactly as it is revealed, they will certainly turn to their own law
(Continued on Page 6)

Searching The Scriptures

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Editorial

Connie W. Adams
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EDITORIAL STEW

This is our annual mixture of unrelated things which we prefer to call "editorial stew." We hope you will find something of interest.

Articles by James R. Cope

We have already carried several items sent by James R. Cope, though we have said nothing about the fact that he has agreed to submit several articles a year for the paper. Brother Cope is not only a preacher of great experience, and an educator, he is, as well, an excellent thinker and writer. He was the first editor of *The Preceptor*. His writings there had a great impact for good. We are pleased to be able to share material from his mature and seasoned background with our readers. We have asked him to submit some articles on things related to the family and he has consented. He has preached on the subject throughout the nation for a number of years. These articles are especially needed in a time when the very foundations of family life are crumbling. We might also mention that brother Cope is available for a little more meeting work now than he has had time for in the past. He would do any congregation good.

Exchange Students and the Church

Several times in the last few years we have been contacted by parents or friends of young people who have decided to enter a student exchange program in some other country. Such opportunities offer a rich educational advantage. The question we are asked concerns the presence of brethren in the country chosen where the student, who is a Christian, may worship during the year of study. Most of the time, the student is going to a place where there is no congregation known to be meeting anywhere near the place of study. We raise this question for you to ponder. Is anything really a good opportunity if it places you in a situation where you cannot assemble with the Lord's people and do with them what God requires of his own? Is it really an advantage at all when spiritual ties will be weakened and spiritual responsibilities ignored? "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Prov. 1:7).

P.O. Box Change

We have not moved, but our P. O. Box has been changed. In the Post Office at Brooks, Kentucky we have had new boxes installed. In the number sequence

our old box number was a small box, not large enough to hold the volume of mail we receive. So, we are P.O. Box 69 from now on. We have been using that new number for sometime in the paper though nothing specific has been said about it.

About Bobbie

In August it was necessary for my wife, Bobbie, to have a mastectomy to remove a malignancy. She is presently undergoing radiation therapy. She is doing very well and able to carry on many of her normal activities, including her expert help in getting the paper to you each month. We have received cards, letters and phone calls from all over the country and want all who have expressed interest and assured us of their prayers to know how much we appreciate these indications of love and concern.

The Condensed Bible

The Readers Digest has gone too far. For years they have published condensed versions of popular novels. Now that have brought out a condensed version of the Bible. That makes it a perversion and not in reality a version. When God gave the law to Moses to be delivered to Israel, he said "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you" (Deut. 4:2). The book of God closes with a warning against tampering with what he said. "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things written in this book" (Rev. 22:18-19). It is the essence of presumption to decide that a part of the word of God may be deleted. The word of God does not need condensation. It needs to be digested all right—ALL of it.

While on the subject, we observe in a few places some of the brethren bringing all sorts of new, modern speech versions, translations or paraphrases. Perhaps more teaching is in order on the difference between a translation and a perversion.

Foreign Preachers In Need of Support

There are three excellent native men in Italy in need of support. One lost \$300 a month recently, another \$400 and another \$650. All of these men are involved in good work which is making great progress in the land of popedom. Each one is preaching on the radio with increasing success and two of them have weekly television programs which are making major breakthroughs. The work in that land has had such an uphill struggle and it is a shame now to see the work curtailed and the efforts of these men stymied at the very time when their patience and faithfulness in work are beginning to bear much fruit.

We continue to hear from preachers whom we personally know and about whose work we have been aware for the past 12 years in the Philippines who have either already lost support or will soon be losing it. I

speak of mature men who have been faithful under trying times and circumstances. They will remain faithful now, but their work is being severely hindered. There are many congregations now on the remote island of Palawan. There are only six fully supported preachers on that island and now three of them are losing their support. Dedicated men on Luzon and Mindanao who have established scores of congregations in the last few years now must divert precious time from the noble work of stabilizing congregations of babes in Christ which they have established to secular work to supply the daily needs of their families. This is a tragedy. Unworthy men should not be supported anywhere in the world. But men who are true to the book, dedicated in personal life, godly in character, and who want to devote their time and energies to the full service of the kingdom, have a right to be supported, the philosophies and sociological opinions of some of the American brethren to the contrary notwithstanding.

Send News Items to Wilson Adams

Although every newsletter report in this paper begins with the name and address of Wilson Adams, who writes this column, some continue to send news items to me. That only delays things. Wilson lives in Maryland while I live in Kentucky. He has a cutoff date for his column to be forwarded to me each month. Anything received after that time has to wait until the next month. We also ask those submitting news items to condense as much as possible. Our space is limited. We do want to share your news with other people. It just helps when you boil it down.

Long Articles

While exceptions need to be made now and then because of the import of some material, we request writers to try and keep your manuscripts within a reasonable length. Three and one half pages double spaced fills one page of type in the paper. Some of our writers have been getting longer and longer with manuscripts. The material is usually excellent but it is not always possible to use long pieces. Please help us in this.

Winter Work

With 23 meetings behind us for 1982, we gladly anticipate three months of class teaching with the Expressway congregation in Louisville. In addition to Sunday appointments in the immediate area, I will present a ten week series on Humanism: Blueprint for Moral and Spiritual Destruction; Congregational Leadership Development; and the book of Revelation. We enjoy these winter studies more each year. Over the last seven years we have seen the interest grow until we had our best attendance of all last winter. The Friday morning class (Revelation) is a two hour study. Who comes? Well, last winter we had 55 to enroll in our Friday morning class on Ezra and Nehemiah. In addition to Expressway members who are free at that time, some come from area congregations, including, last year, 15 preachers. Oh yes, we hope to find some

time to sit by the fire and watch it crackle on cold nights.

Welcome, New Readers

We are receiving a substantial number of new subscriptions each month. We welcome these new readers. We have many friends who have been with us for years, some since the beginning of this paper in 1960. We consider you "family" and thank you for your encouragement over the years.

Religious Supply Center

We continue to enjoy the finest possible relationship with the good folks at Religious Supply Center. We carry paid ads from them in each issue of the paper. Their business helps us stay in business and we are glad to note that their volume of business increases each year. The paper and the book store are two separate businesses. Please do not address paper business to them nor book business to the paper. If you do not have one of their catalogs, they will be glad to send you one. They have an excellent stock of supplies, including class literature, maps, communion supplies, tracts, film strips and projectors, commentaries and books, books, books. Many are now taking advantage of their toll free number for customers outside the state of Kentucky. David Key, Phyllis Key, Mary Catherine (Wimpy) Threlkel and Marie Ricks are always ready to help you.

Books by R. L. Whiteside

For many years R. L. Whiteside was a favorite of many brethren. He was always a safe teacher. Though dead, he yet speaks through these excellent books:

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WILL GOD CONTINUE
TO BLESS AMERICA?

Wilson Adams

6434 Auburn Av.
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On the evening of July 4th, my family and I sat in a crowd of 400,000 people who, like us, had assembled on the national mall to view the highly acclaimed Independence Day fireworks spectacular. It was impressive. The National Symphony, positioned on the Capitol's west lawn, played such grand patriotic melodies as **America The Beautiful, Stars and Stripes, The Star Spangled Banner, and God Bless America**, while a gala display of colors exploded in rapid succession over the pinnacle of the Washington Monument. I must confess that I felt more than a tinge of national pride. As I viewed the scenes of that evening, scenes which etched a permanent place in my memory, I couldn't help but consider all the great blessings which God has so richly and gratuitously bestowed upon us as a nation. And, as I watched the pageantry of that night reflect itself into the eyes of my little girl, I just had to wonder about her future and I just had to think a little bit about the question—Will God Continue To Bless Us?

Do you realize that we are rich? We in the United States are living the most comfortable lives of any generation in the history of the world. We take for granted possessions which others can only dream about. We throw away more food in one day than some families have in a week. Even our dogs and cats receive better nourishment and medical attention than millions of people in the world. We have been richly gifted and abundantly blessed. And do you know that most of us take it all for granted? We seemingly are in such a constant rush that we can't spare the time to carefully and prayerfully consider God's goodness to us. We have a tendency to forget that God is the provider of all good things and that without His aid we would have nothing.

Preparatory to entrance into the promised land, Moses spake with the congregation of Israel concerning the dangers of affluence and opulence that they would face in Canaan. He warned them of the inclination they might have to forget God as the source of their blessings and he reminded them of the consequences of such forgetfulness and thanklessness (Deut. 8:7-20). We too would do well to take such admonition to heart lest we get so caught up in our own self-sufficiency that we forget our dependence upon God and lose the precious blessings we now enjoy in this our land of promise.

Will God Continue to Bless America?

1. *YES, if we humble ourselves and realize that no nation is indestructible!*

The Proverbial writer affirms that "the Lord will tear down the house of the proud" (15:25), and that "pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling" (16:18). While the above principle is true of individuals, it is also true of nations. In Obadiah verses 3-4 we find where the arrogance of Edom was the contributing factor to its destruction. Likewise, in Isa. 13:11; Ezek. 28:2; and 29:2-3 we note that the Old Testament powers of Babylon, Phoenicia and Egypt were brought down due to an over abundance of national self-worth. Even God's own people were removed as a nation because they sought to make alliances with other national powers instead of humbling themselves and expressing dependence upon God.

The Bible teaches, and human history shows it to be correct, that no nation is indestructible. And the thing that makes a nation great is NOT how many atomic bombs it has in its storehouses, or how many I.C.B.M.'s it has in its rapid deployment fleet, or the possession of a balanced budget to stabilize its monetary system, etc. What makes a nation great is when the people of the nation give glory and thanks to God. "Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it. Unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman keeps awake in vain" (Psalm 127:1).

2. *YES, if we return to the moral principles of God!* The

Bible says, "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a disgrace to any people" (Prov. 14:34). If sin disgraces a nation, may I suggest that we are a disgraced and reproached people. Historians inform us that it was internal moral decay which eventually led to the fall of Rome. Perhaps we, like Belshazzar of old, need to see the handwriting on the wall. Things like abortion on demand, pornography, homosexuality, gambling, drunkenness, and promiscuity are reaching epidemic proportions. And is it just I or have you also witnessed the gains that immorality and worldliness are making towards respectability among Christians? Things which used to be considered worldly and evil are now endorsed and defended as good by those making a claim of godliness. As Christians we must constantly fight the tendency of leniency toward the attitudes of the world. We must recognize that the distinctive plea of New Testament discipleship is not only to "speak where the Bible speaks and to be silent where it is silent" but to live pure and holy lives before the world. As Paul noted in Ephesians 6, we must wear the breastplate of righteousness next to our girdle of **truth**.

3. *YES, if there is a restoration of the home as God intended!*

The breakdown of the family unit in this country is unbelievable. Thousands live together without the sanctity of marriage and one half of all those married end up in the divorce courts. Edward Gibbons in his book, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, gave

as one of the reasons for the fall of Rome the "rapid increase in divorce and the undermining of the dignity and sanctity of the home." It's no wonder America is in trouble because the home, the very glue that bonds our nation together, is in trouble. And where do we turn to correct the problem? Do we seek solutions by building more day-care facilities where our children are raised by nine to five substitute mothers? Do we turn for help to the humanistic public school system? No, there is only one place to begin the corrective process and that is to start with our own families in our own homes and to start NOW. It's the only hope we have.

4. *YES, if there is a revival of dignity for man as created in the image of God!*

I am sure that you are aware of what Genesis teaches. Folks, either God is, or there is no God! If God is, then man is responsible to God, must abide by God's standard and will be judged by that standard. However, if there is no God, if man is just a product of chance, then the consequences we face are enormous. If there is no God then there can be no absolute moral standard and nothing could be classified as wrong. If there is no God, you are an animal in a chance world, a chaotic world. If there is no God there could be no such thing as love. Do you know why love has meaning? Love has meaning because God is and because God is love and because God made man in His image and gave man the capacity to love and to be loved. But if there is no God, love is reduced to simply a chance arrangement of molecules. And do you know why modern man has concocted this humanistic doctrine called "evolution?" It is because modern man in all of his so-called intelligence, can't imagine that there is any power greater than he. Yes, we must revive respect for man, the offspring of God.

5. *YES, if we realize that the God who created the universe is the God who rules the universe!*

Benjamin Franklin, in his eighty-first year, addressed the Constitutional Convention by saying, "I have lived, sir, a long time, and the longer I live the more convincing proofs I see of this truth: That God governs in the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, is it possible that an empire rise without His aid?" The fate of our country is not determined in the halls of Congress or through Senate legislation or at 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. in Washington D.C. The fate of this country rests in the hands of God. As long as we realize that, He will continue to bless us. However, when we forget, the Bible teaches, and human history can be called in to testify, that He will withhold His blessings.

6. *YES, if we restore New Testament discipleship! We*

must get the salvation message out of the four walls of the church building and into the hearts and lives of our associates. The early church didn't just meet on Sunday and that was the extent of their religion. They were a dedicated band of disciples who were convicted that Jesus needed to be preached. So they did and so must we!

The United States prides itself on being the strongest nation in the world. We have received the

impression that we are invincible and that we have such a reservoir of military fire power that we are indestructible. Are we? That all depends upon how you measure strength. Is the strength of a nation measured in terms of guns and missiles and armies? No, the strength of a nation is measured by the righteousness that manifests itself in the nation. What can I do, you say? The most loyal, patriotic thing you can do for your country is to be a faithful Christian. And if you do that, and if enough others join you in that, then maybe, just maybe, there will be enough salt, enough leaven, and enough light to preserve this great nation. *God Bless America!* I pray that He will continue to do so!

*A couple of major points are the same as those included in an article by Ken Weliever in the Gospel Guardian, Oct., 1976. I have not seen his article but was informed of it by Ronny Milliner. Credit to whom credit is due.

(Continued From Page 2)

making. The result is separation from those who consider themselves Christians. The question is: How shall UNITY be restored among those who are divided because some held to the word and some left it for their own laws? If we make the word of God our only standard, we must return to it alone for unity. Any other plan will not produce unity!

I have long appreciated those men who have spent years in the labor of preaching the gospel, most of them for little material remuneration for their labors. Many of the uncompromising warriors who bore the battle scars of many conflicts now sleep with their fathers. Some remain whose countenance reflects the deep concern for the compromising problems that a few among them are causing. Young men who have heard and read with interest of these battles for truth of which I speak are chagrined and bewildered at the obvious betrayal of the divine principles of unity among brethren by some whose age and experience ought to give them the knowledge and judgment to oppose every effort at compromise with error.

In the five articles that follow this one I shall try to fairly, honestly and scripturally examine Yater Tant's plan for unity in *Vanguard* and his attitude toward and work with the Crossroads Church of Christ in Gainesville, Florida. I believe he is wrong, gravely wrong, and will do the church of our Lord serious harm now and in the future. If I did not think so I would not write one word about it. This whole affair is a matter of faith with me, not a matter of judgment. That is why I must address myself to these issues now. Please be patient with me. If I am wrong, please show me from the Book and I will repent and turn.

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THE ABUNDANT LIFE AND ATONEMENT

The Abundant Life theory, briefly stated, says that when God promised to atone for man he promised to save him from his sins, to cure the physical diseases of his body, and to make financial prosperity a reality in his life. To reach this conclusion, the Pentecostals assume that the "curse of sin" is physical disease, financial distress, as well as spiritual separation.

The Abundant Life theory is the Pentecostal manner of viewing the atonement process. In its early stages the emphasis was on salvation, freedom from sin. By the middle of this century it had taken on an entirely new stress. Instead of showing man what to do to be saved and later to receive the "second blessing" resulting in his "entire sanctification," the Pentecostal preachers began to show the hearers that redemption included not just forgiveness, but the promise of health and wealth as well. "As we go back, to these books—or to the law—we find that the curse, or punishment for breaking God's law is threefold. It is poverty. It is sickness. It is the second death," says one of the popular proponents of the doctrine today. A radio broadcast monitored in December, 1978 from Baton Rouge, Louisiana featured David Nunn, who said, "Your salvation, your healing, your deliverance from financial poverty are all wrapped up in one ball of wax, the atoning death of Christ."² The argument is that since atonement is intended to rid the curse of sin it must have as its function the ridding of poverty, sickness, and the second death.

Atonement is just what the word implies, at-one-ment. "As applied to the redemptive work of Christ, atonement is variously used by theologians in the sense of 'reconciliation' 'expiation' according to the view of its nature."³ The Bible teaches the concept in many places, Matt. 16:21; II Tim. 1:8-10; I Pet. 1:18-19, showing in these verses what it is; and in such passages as II Cor. 5:21; Rom. 8:3; I Pet. 3:18; Heb. 9:26; Rom. 5:5-8 what it does. It should be carefully noted that atonement is necessary because man becomes separated from God by his sin (Isa. 59:1-2; Ezk. 18:20; Rom. 6:23) and that Christ came into the world to remove that which had estranged men from God. It is not poverty, mind you, that has separated men from God and it is not disease, either. It is sin. Atonement, therefore, is a system for the forgiveness

of sin. Notice that in each of the passages cited there is not one mention of man's poverty, or man's physical disorders. It is sin which is the subject of atonement and Christ came to make possible the forgiveness of sin because it was sin which had caused man to be separated from God.

That the atonement does not insure against health problems is obvious in Scripture. In II Tim. 4:20, Paul says, "Erastus abode at Corinth; but Trophimus have I left at Miletum sick." In I Tim. 5:23, Paul told Timothy, "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities." And regarding his own "thorn in the flesh," he said "And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities . . . "If the atonement included freedom from pain, an insured perennial good health, why these godly men's infirmities (a word which means sickness)?

Likewise, there is ample testimony in Scripture to show that the Bible doctrine of atonement did not promise wealth and prosperity as part of its benefits. In Acts 4:34, we are told, "Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them and brought the prices of the things that were sold and laid them at the apostles feet and distribution was made to every man according as he had need." In Acts 11:29, following the prediction of a great drought, the narrative says, "Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren which dwelt in Judea." If the atonement was for financial reasons, why were there poor saints in various places? To the Corinthians Paul says of Jesus, "though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." But the riches he mentions had nothing at all to do with their being relieved from their financial woes.

One of the passages frequently used by the advocates of the Abundant Life theory is Jno. 10:10-11 which says, "The thief cometh not but for to steal and to kill, and to destroy. I am come that they might have life and have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." The context in which this passage is set shows that the abundant life to which he refers is not physical at all, but eternal life. Later, Jesus (verse 28) makes the point emphatically clear when in the midst of a discussion, using the same figure of the shepherd and the sheep, he says, "But ye do not believe because you are not of my sheep, as I said unto you, My sheep hear my voice and I know them, and they follow me: And I give them eternal life . . ." The abundant life he here explains in the very same figure, and with a reference to what he had before said, is eternal life and does not refer to man's physical well-being.

I do not deny that God provides for his own, but I do vehemently deny that the abundant life he provides is one free from disease or devoid of financial distress. The Bible does not teach it.

Another widely used passage among the advocates

of the Abundant Life theory is 1 Tim. 4:8, "For bodily exercise profiteth little; but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come." The Pentecostal theory puts undue stress on "the life that now is" and gives it a meaning not intended by God. One must not read into it any reference to the provisions for health and wealth. I aver that the promises referred to here concern the godliness which furnishes us here in life whatever is necessary to insure for us those things we need in order to procure the life that is to come (Cf. II Pet. 1:3-4). For instance, God gives the gospel to save (Rom. 1:16-17); the peace of knowing you are right with God (Phil. 4:7); the way of escape from temptation (II Cor. 10:13); the encouragement to help overcome trials (II Cor. 1:7); the avenue of prayer (Heb. 4:16); and the church for our mutual provocation (Heb. 10:24). This sentiment is encapsulated in the Lord's enjoiner in Rev. 2:10. "Be thou faithful (in this life) unto death, and I will give thee a crown of righteousness (the life hereafter)." Besides, look again at the contextual setting of I Tim. 4:8. In verse 9 and 10 he says, "This is a faithful saying and worth of all acceptance. For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe." Does that sound like he is speaking of the relief of difficulties and the provisions of riches? I think not. He says we labor and suffer reproach, a clear reference to being uncomfortable because of living a life for God.

F. F. Bosworth, one of the early proponents of the Abundant Life theory once said, "Redemption is synonymous with Calvary, therefore we are redeemed from the entire curse, body, soul, and spirit solely through his atonement." But the question is not whether or not we are all to be eventually redeemed, body, soul, and spirit but when it is to occur. In I Cor. 15:42-43, we read, "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power." Notice that prior to the resurrection the body was in corruption, dishonor, weakness. It is at the resurrection that it becomes incorruptible, glorified, empowered. It is when the body is raised that the ultimate salvation of the body takes place. It is never promised on this side of the resurrection. Further testimony is given in the conclusion of the same context. I Cor. 15:53-56. "For this corruption must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin and the strength of sin in the law." When shall be brought to pass the saying? THEN shall it be; at the resurrection. We are redeemed in the body at the same time our eternal reward is realized. Until that time there is no assurance from the Scriptures that we will not be sick, or poor, or both, even though we have been redeemed from sin.

Some final statements are in order to make sure the

case is properly stated:

1. The atonement is that system or process which satisfied divine justice and made possible our reconciliation. In short, it is the death of Christ which in its effect secures for us a peace with God (Rom. 5:1-3). Atonement is the central theme of the Bible, the cardinal doctrine of Christianity (I Tim. 1:15). But the atonement of the Scriptures hardly resembles that being fomented by the proponents of the Abundant Life theory, for it never makes any reference to making provision for any sort of sickness or for the alleviation of any financial distresses which might have occurred or will occur in the future.
2. The abundant life of the Bible is in fact realized only as we, because of our faithfulness during our period of probation, are judged worthy of it in eternity through the grace of God. Paul so affirms in Rom. 6:22, "but now being made free from sin and become servants of God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." The abundant life, even if viewed as it relates to our physical existence, is abundant because we have "all spiritual blessings" because of our connection with Christ. Surely no life could be abundant which is devoid of that connection. But primarily the concept of the abundant life as portrayed in the Scriptures is that of our eternal life.

It needs to be understood that regeneration or salvation is not a miracle at all, but rather the effect of compliance with the stated spiritual truths contained in the word of God. Salvation consists of our trusting in God and obeying the gospel (Rom. 1:16-17). That word of God states for us both the ground of our salvation (atonement), and the conditions of it. There is nothing miraculous about forgiveness; it is merely the act in God's mind when, upon man's compliance with His stated conditions, He freely extends forgiveness, remembering man's sins no more. So, the abundant life is finally resolved in the forgiveness of sins and the eternal reward provided for the faithful.

¹ REDEEMED, by Kenneth Hagin, Published by Hagin Ministries, Ft. Worth, Texas, 1980, Pg. 19
² Radio Broadcast Monitored in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1980. ³
 THE OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY, Oxford Publishing Co., London, England
 CHRIST THE HEALER, by F. F. Bosworth, quoted in
 MODERN DIVINE HEALING by Waymon D. Miller, published by Miller Publishing Co., Ft. Worth, 1956, Pg. 133.

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BYRON B. CONLEY

BELOVED FLORIDA PREACHER

Born May 30, 1903, Byron B. Conley passed his earthly life July 9, 1982, shortly after entering his eightieth year. By common consent among those who knew him personally and who knew about him, this man probably taught and baptized more people in Florida than any other gospel preacher, living or dead, unless it was W. A. Cameron of St. Petersburg who came to Florida about the turn of this century and died at about age 90, almost 25 years ago. I mention this because I knew both men and was closely associated with Brother Cameron the last few years of his life and drank deeply of his reminiscences of experiences in the Sunshine State many years before I was born.

Byron Conley's Baptist parents were exceedingly religious and morally above reproach. He knew enough Bible to realize that they and close relatives, though sincere, were not following the doctrine taught and practiced by Jesus and His apostles. He could never "get the 'irresistible feeling' " that his family insisted he should have if the Holy Spirit took direct control of his own spirit. Nevertheless, he longed to know the mind of God.

His move to Tampa from Lawrenceville, Illinois, at age 23 in search of employment proved the turning point in young Conley's life. He obtained work at a dairy farm east of Tampa where he met a couple with whom he attended worship at Plant City—Homer Lewis and wife recently moved to the Brandon area.

Tolbert Beshong and wife also contributed much to young Conley's spiritual enlightenment and growth. Though he was giving one dollar out of every ten he earned to promote the gospel inquiring Byron did not obey it for another year. He studied constantly, questioned and learned. Under the protracted meeting preaching of Marshall Keeble in Tampa, Byron Conley became a simple Christian, being baptized December 25, 1927. Shortly thereafter he began making short talks in the Tampa-Plant City area.

Realizing that there was much to learn and much to do for his Lord, Conley felt that intensive schooling was the fastest means to that end, yet resources were limited. Somehow he attended Freed-Hardeman College for one year (1930-31) enrolling in the "Preacher's Course," and benefited greatly from the influence of the great teachers of that school. He often

remarked that both he and the brethren seriously wondered if he would ever succeed as a preacher. He felt keenly that he must make his own place by proving himself. In June 1931, he began work in Lakeland with the Central church. His tenure was about 18 months but he held some very successful meetings at Kathleen, Bradley Junction and two at Auburndale. More than 100 were baptized in the Auburndale effort and a church established in 1932. Other Polk County churches served over the years through Conley's preaching were Winter Haven, Mulberry, two in Bartow, Dundee and Fort Meade, the latter two established as a result of his efforts. In addition, he did much of the physical labor in building meeting houses at the latter two places.

In July, 1931, at Winter Haven, Florida, our brother conducted his first protracted meeting. Though he was not "in the market" for a wife, it was during this meeting the 28-year old Conley met the young lady who was later to become his companion for life and bear him five sons and five daughters. In June, 1934, Mary Lee Matthews wed Byron B. Conley. It is doubtful that there has been a more sympathetic, sacrificing preacher's wife within the last 40 years than Mary Lee Conley. This is not to ignore the hundreds of other faithful, unselfish women who have kept the home fires burning while their husbands sowed kingdom seed but it is to record and pay tribute to the name of one who bore the brunt of the burden in the heat of the day that, as she saw it, her beloved might fulfill his calling. One brother who has known the Conley family for 50 years observed that she "was a patient, longsuffering wife who sacrificed and took care of the family while he was away in the work of the Lord."

Following his Winter Haven meeting Conley was in tent meetings in the general Polk County area for the next four years. In 1935, he conducted a greatly successful meeting for the Nebraska Avenue church in Tampa which inspired Tampa brethren to hold many tent meetings. Nebraska Avenue, Seminole Heights, Howard Avenue and Gary became exceedingly active and used brother Conley repeatedly in such efforts. The old Sulphur Springs church resulted from a tent meeting held in 1935. The preaching continued nightly for nine weeks and resulted in 103 baptisms.

Thomas G. Butler of Lakeland, who knew brother Conley well and heard him many times made this observation about Conley's tent meetings in Central and Northern Florida: "These meetings were numerous. His early method of preaching was filling a blackboard with scriptural references numbering as high as 75 and quoting these scriptures. This method was very successful. He changed his method the latter years of his life and became less effective." Commenting on his strength and power, Brother Butler said, "His general appearance and speech of humility endeared him to most people. The wide use of scripture quoted impressed his hearers. His willingness to do physical labor in helping to build church buildings and

homes of members also brought him favor with the people."

Many and moving were the protracted preachments of this soldier of the cross. In Central, East and North Florida he labored abundantly. Much of this work was made possible by the Riverside church in Jacksonville which began supporting him in 1940. He was regularly in tent work in towns and other communities where the New Testament order was unknown or exceedingly weak. In 1946 he preached at Alma, Georgia. The results were a new church of the Lord in that town, brother Conley's moving his family to Alma, and, laboring with the Alma church, together they built a meeting house.

In 1949 the Conley family moved back to Polk County and built a house at Bartow. The Lake Wire church in Lakeland supported him for many years as he held gospel meetings in that area. During those same years he made numerous trips to Barbados for protracted periods of preaching. He felt that some of his most self-rewarding work was done here because the people were tremendously anxious to learn the truth and worship according to the Biblical plan.

The 1966-1977 period found Conley at Belle Glade for a year; Spring Warrior, near Perry, for three years; back to Fort Meade three years and Center Hill, near Trenton for four years. Failing health resulted in his return to the Main Street church in Bartow where he preached and taught Bible classes until his stroke on May 8, 1982. He was hospitalized for two weeks but, back home, he insisted on worshipping the following Sunday. This continued regularly for a month. He returned for surgery and was recovering nicely when pneumonia took over. His valiant heart gave up its fight and the spirit of this humble soldier left its earthly tabernacle forever in the early hours of July 9. Funeral services were conducted by Ed Britt, Jack Hobby and Thomas G. Butler on July 12 with family members and friends singing some of brother Conley's favorite hymns. An overflowing audience and a large number of floral designs bespoke the love and esteem in which many who knew of his passing held him and his family. Thousands have been blessed by the life of this humble servant of the Lord and many of those will learn of his passing upon reading these lines.

Brother Conley kept no record of meetings held, numbers baptized, miles traveled, cars, tents and tent trailers, attached to his autos, which were worn out by usage in the Lord's service. Nobody knows. Usually, however, when this man arrived in a town to begin a gospel meeting he had all things needful with him—tent, platform, seats, wiring, light bulbs, chalk board and song books. Inside his heart there burned a passion for souls seldom observed in today's world.

Brother Conley held views and some practices which some readers of these lines do not accept, though others accept some of them. Brother Conley believed kneeling to be the only acceptable prayer posture and that women should wear a man-made covering in worship assemblies. Some have thought that he opposed use of human literature comments in Bible

classes. Sister Conley says, "He preferred that teaching be done only from an open Bible, but that he used literature in his study." There are some who say he "gave comfort" to Joe Taylor, a Plant City preacher of more than thirty years ago, who was understood by many preachers and brethren to teach that there was a distinct difference between the church of Christ and the kingdom of Christ. I am one who understood this to have been brother Taylor's views and published an article opposing this position in *The Preceptor* of September, 1952. Upon asking Sister Conley about this allegation regarding brother Conley, she replied, "Byron believed the church and the kingdom were the same, but he also said, 'If one really understood what brother Taylor was teaching on the church and the kingdom he would find that he was not as far off as to some he might seem.'" I never had occasion to hear brother Conley speak publicly or privately on any of these matters.

Two of his longtime friends and greatest admirers—Edwin Britt of Plant City and Jack Hobby of Orlando—have made these observations about brother Conley:

Brother Britt:

"He was the kindest and most humble man I ever met. As he preached the gospel in his own kind way, he had a manner that forced conviction into the hearts of his listeners. He was at home with the hearts of those who heard when he came down from the pulpit into the aisles and there talked as a father to his children. He was never offensive in attitude or word but both were so simple and kind and piercing that you wanted to correct your mistakes. Through his preaching brother Conley brought more people to repentance than any man I have ever known. He, perhaps, has baptized as many people into Christ, helped straighten as many lives, and settled as many differences among brethren as any other person in Florida. When he led in prayer one could not but feel that he was lifted to the very throne and presence of God.

"To me and to others he was what Paul was to Timothy. He loved the truth of God and every lesson had the ring of sincerity and honesty that was unmistakable to all who heard.

"For 32 years, my wife and I knew and loved him and his good wife who made sacrifices for him and the gospel of which many never knew. He held many meetings for us at Cork where I have been preaching since I first heard him in a tent meeting at Plant City. The brethren at Cork, with cheerful hearts, were always willing to respond to his needs and often supported him in "hard places."

"There is an emptiness in my own and my family's life because of his death. We thank God for the opportunities to share so many pleasant hours with him and to learn from him."

Brother Hobby:

"My first memory of brother Conley is in connection with the 1950 Florida College Lecture program. Brother Cope, you did something quite unusual. You asked all preachers present to stand, state their names

and tell where they preached. He and several of his stair-step children sitting beside him arose immediately in front of Ruth and me (I had no idea he was a preacher but well I remember that scene as one of his boys put his arm around his father's waist while the entire row stood beside him). Almost, if not altogether apologetically, brother Conley stated his name and added, 'I guess you might say I preach most anywhere in the sticks of Florida.' When he said that something else unusual happened—brethren applauded! No doubt somebody from those Florida 'sticks' started it but we all joined in. An indelible impression was made upon me by Byron Conley that day. It has never changed but only deepened. Today it is a gorge, a canyon! Humility, dedication to the core, selflessness, godliness, earnestness, sincerity—God first with everything else way back in the pack!

"I am confident that he has planted more churches and made more Christians in Florida than any other person ever has or possibly ever will. Many share this opinion. As you know, he debated the great Baptist debater, Ben M. Bogard. Mr. Bogard would not have debated brother Conley had he not deemed him a powerful and effective force in converting souls to the cause he espoused.

"I have heard him in various meetings, hosted him in two meetings and held four or five meetings where he was the local preacher. That, i.e., those soul-stirring visits, was where my spiritual ship really came in! Let me give you an example.

"It was in the old house known as the Spring Warrior preacher's home. The walls were very thin allowing sound to pass with little interruption. After 'goodnights' had been said each evening I could hear the sound of brother Conley's voice in prayer. I have always imagined him and sister Conley on their knees beside their bed. I did not try to pick up his words but once when their youngest son was in the military in far off Korea and the news was quite upsetting though the international problems supposedly had been settled long since, I heard the tender voice of brother Conley plead, 'Be with our son on foreign soil.'. Do I need tell you that I fell asleep with wet cheeks that night?

"Of all his attributes Brother Conley's humility is the one that repeatedly tops my assessment list. With that quality, however, there was a 100 per cent firm, uncompromising, straight-ahead firmness. To illustrate, I recall the following incident. During a meeting I was holding brother Conley observed that there was a sister that we should visit in an effort to stir her support of the meeting but that she probably would not respond. Nevertheless, duty demanded an honest effort. The woman received us cordially, but momentarily excused herself from the room. As she returned brother Conley observed, obviously for the sister's benefit as well as mine, 'Brother Hobby, years ago sister _____ made a decision to go to heaven when she died but she has changed her mind. And I'm sorry because I need her to help me go.' He was noticeably sincere in every word he said humbly, in

undeniable love for an indifferent soul and, as I felt then, with all the force of a tornado! To myself I thought, 'Cure or kill!' But I was wrong. Neither was the case. Good spiritedly the woman said, 'Yes, I guess that's about right.' A pleasant visit followed but to no avail. She ignored our gospel meeting but held no ill will toward her reprover. Byron Conley combined humility and hard-hittingness far beyond most persons I've ever known.

"In both private and public teaching, one thing came through loud and clear, viz., that Byron Conley believed and loved the Lord and the word of the Lord which he preached. Whatever his subject and with no recognizable effort on his part, this quality shone through. In every syllable of every word, in every inflection of his voice, this man transmitted how much—how very much—how sincerely and how deeply he believed the Lord and the Word of the Lord which he preached."

As a preacher who began his ministry about seven years after brother Conley began his, I commend to one and all who read these lines the life of this man as worthy of reflection and pursuit in excellence of characteristics. "Be ye imitators of me as I am of Christ" was apostle Paul's exhortation. Brother Conley did and would place the same limitation on his own example. For younger preachers especially I would suggest the life of Byron Conley as worthy of careful analysis. "Truly, there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel" (2 Sam. 3:38).

It is my understanding that brother James Yopp, 1 Carolina Ave., Lake City, FL 32055, is writing a detailed biography of brother Conley. I am sure that he would appreciate receiving any bit of information any person might have about Byron Conley regardless of the little value such information may appear to be to its possessor. Often it is the heretofore untold stories which make biographies most meaningful and interesting. I am particularly indebted to Thomas G. Butler, Edwin Britt, Jack Hobby and Mrs. Byron Conley for most of the details of this article.—J. R. C.

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LEARNING TO WORK TOGETHER

Everyone has a different personality. When elders have been appointed you have two or more men not only learning to oversee the flock, but in doing so they must learn to get along with each other. This is absolutely essential.

In an eldership there may be an age span. When the youngest is about 45 years old and the oldest is about 65 or 70, this factor will affect the performance of all of them. These men will be from different generations and all the rest somewhere in between. Thinking will be colored by such a time span as this.

Do not look for perfect men. They cannot be found. Brethren often set a standard higher than the Lord did. The eldership will always be composed of **imperfect men**. Their function will be to oversee and guide a flock of **imperfect people**. Elders are men who, though imperfect, have reached a plateau of spiritual maturity. When combined with the exhibit of their family unit, such men have demonstrated their ability to govern a family with a high degree of success. In an eldership there is a plurality of such men who now must make another adjustment. They must learn to work together as elders in the best interest of the local church. There will be problem areas.

Personality Differences. In a group of elders you will have as many personalities as there are men. One may be a little on the slow side, another blunt and undiplomatic, another somewhat impetuous. Another may have a low flashpoint. One may be a businessman, another a farmer, professional man, factory worker or even a preacher. Varying occupations and background will give a diversity of viewpoints which, properly integrated, can result in wise and sound decisions. Remember that the variety of occupations and backgrounds also exists within the congregation itself. It therefore makes for a balanced structure.

It takes some men longer to reach a decision than others. Some do not know how to hurry. There is no way to get them to hurry. Such efforts would only confuse them and prolong the matter further. Some men have a penchant for fine points. They can drive the others up the wall. Yet this can serve a good purpose in causing the others to be more thorough. Sometimes a man has the unusual ability of seeing the whole picture quickly and makes a decision without too much delay. Others tend to be rash and move too quickly. The plurality of overseers is God's cross-check

at such times.

There will be differences. Since matters of faith have already been determined by the Lord, any differences that arise should surely be in the realm of judgment or opinion. Yet, in any given situation there is the possibility of good judgment or bad judgment being exercised. Personalities can be a strong factor in such matters. An unwillingness to yield in matters of judgment is a poor attitude to say the least and with but a little cultivation can position a man to become a Diotrephes and dominate both the eldership and the church. When tyrannical attitudes come upon the scene, trouble is just around the corner. Elders are not lords (1 Peter 5:3).

Openness Needed. Elders are to function as a unit. They have no right to politic the members or make spot decisions on their own. To do so is to encourage separateness instead of togetherness. When an elder is approached by a member about a church-related matter, he should introduce the matter to the others for consideration. It is natural that members will sometimes consult with one more than another. This is all right just so long as it is understood that it is not a secret and must be presented for consideration to the others. Clandestine efforts of members to have "confidentiality" on matters that are flock-related reflects a party spirit and tends to be divisive. If a matter is important enough to be brought to the elders, they all have a right to know all the details including the name or names of involved members. A member or an elder who is unwilling to do this brings natural suspicion upon themselves as to their motive.

This is not to say that elders cannot counsel and advise members who come to them about personal matters. It is quite proper that this should be the case. In such matters, of a personal nature and not involving the church as such, there can be confidentiality. Indeed, there should be. At times all of the elders may possess **personal information** that the others do not know about. It is a trust to be kept. People will not feel free to come with personal problems if they feel their right to privacy will be disregarded.

NEXT ISSUE: Rapport With The Flock

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THE "GOOD OLE DAYS"

"Say not thou, what is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this" (Eccl. 7:10).

Oh, for the good ole days! Apparently there has always been a tendency to so consider "the former days." I've heard young folks refer nostalgically to the good ole days. One of my children often stated, "I wish it was like it used to be." She was six or seven years of age and looked back on the time when she lived in the country next door to grandparents who bear the responsibility for spoiling her. She had a pony to ride. And she longed for the good ole days.

We often hear the same thing in the church. The former days were better. The church was more militant. "My, how we grew in the 40's and 50's!"

When I lived in Louisville, folks talked about the good ole days before the division at Taylor Blvd. Members were working back in those days. The church was growing back then. Good things were happening back in the good ole days.

Now when I go back some seem to think of the years when I was there with them as good ole days.

I'm not a real good critic of all this. You see, I'm afflicted with the same malady. I catch myself thinking of the good ole days. Back then they built a Ford and a Chevy to last ten years like they should. Music was really music back then. The Bible was read and the pledge of allegiance recited each day in school in those days. And radio had it all over T.V. For one thing, the pictures were better. Yes, in those days, things were a lot better. Tom Mix rode the range. Lash LaRue cracked the whip. Roy, Gene, and Hopalong kept law and order every Saturday at the old Shrine theater. And sometimes you could get in free with a boxtop from Hadacol.

Yet, Solomon advised us to "Say not, what is the cause that the former days were better than these?" So let's raise the question a bit differently and ask: Why do we think the former days were better?

Probably the main reason is that we fail to recall all the circumstances. We remember a few isolated, joyful, incidents, and we forget all the bad parts, as well as all the grumbling we did at the time.

One lesson that stands out in this is that a lot of things don't mean very much to us until we lose them. There are several things like that.

Our Youth

No one appreciates youth except those who have lost it. Isn't it a shame that youth is wasted on the young? Why by the time we really get into a position to appreciate it, it's gone!

Older folks can only shake their heads in dismay when they see young folks with so much potential wasting the precious moments and years, laying no foundation for the future, and paying no heed to older and wiser heads. It's always been that way.

The white head is viewed as old-fogey by youth and older folks have always looked upon youth as frivolous and foolish, expecting of them wisdom which is impossible.

I think of my own former years of youth and I must admit that I don't long for those days. I don't envy teenagers. I wouldn't want to go through those difficult years again. Youth is a time of uncertainty, insecurity, and confusion. Few of us liked ourselves in High School days. The greatest advice to you may be read in this book of Eccl., chapter 12, verses 1-5.

Rather than long for the days of youth, let us be as Paul, "Forgetting the things which are behind and reaching forth unto the things which are before, let us press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." We can't turn back. Those who try just make fools of themselves. Let us learn the meaning of the words: "Now is the accepted time. Today is the day of salvation."

Don't spend your years looking wistfully back. "... thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this." Use what you have right now.

Our Parents

Both the Old and the New Testaments teach us to honor our father and mother. Most people do not appreciate good parents until they are gone. After losing a parent, we often grieve over things we said or left unsaid. Then we long for the good ole days.

Those whose parents are yet living should realize that they'll not have a second chance to show them honor and respect. Don't wait until they are gone to realize what they mean to you.

But regardless of the memories, it's foolish to live in the past. I'm a parent now, and the laboring oar is in my hand. The best honor I can give to the memory of a good father who is dead and gone is to strive to be a good dad myself. Let us use today and strive to make our families what they ought to be.

Our Brethren

Do we recognize the blessing of Christian friends? Often we do not. We take them for granted. We do not love them as we should. We often fall out with them over trivial differences.

Jesus taught that spiritual relationships are far more wonderful and meaningful than physical ones (Matt. 12:46-50; Mark 10:29, 30). Several such relationships have developed in my life. There have been older couples who have taken my wife and me to their hearts and have been as a father and mother to

us. I think often of brothers and sisters in Christ who mean all the world to me, though the years and miles have wedged us apart.

These are blessings we don't think of until they are gone. Then we speak of the good ole days when we were together with so and so.

It's easy to sit back and dream of close ties of bygone years. But what about today? What am I doing with opportunities for service right now? I have brothers and sisters here now. Am I being a father to others? Am I bearing burdens as I should (Gal. 6:5)? Am I thankful for the fellowship? Or am I more interested in finding fault?

Our Freedoms

In this land there are many blessings and freedoms only dreamed of in much of the world. The freedom to assemble. The freedom to teach publicly and via the printed page. Many of us are concerned about freedoms being chipped away. Such is cause for concern. But what do we do with the freedoms we have?

Some are not as faithful as they ought to be. Relative few are actively proclaiming the good news to others. In a land of Bibles, how do we use such a blessing? Some might as well live where a copy of the Bible is illegal.

If we really love truth, why take it for granted? If we love the Lord, why fail to worship and serve Him?

It is unwise to think of the former days. What about today?

Our Souls

Our greatest possession is our soul. It is the only possession which shall last forever. Yet the vast majority will never appreciate their soul until they have lost it.

Jesus told us of a rich man who died (Luke 16:19-31). His soul did not mean much to him until it was too late. Neither did the souls of others hold any interest until he tragically realized that forever is a long time to be lost.

In Hell, lost souls will long for former days and opportunities they let slip by. But it will be too late. How foolish to put off until tomorrow the salvation of our souls.

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ASK YOUR PREACHER

In our effort to try to rightly divide the word of Truth as Paul instructs that we must do in II Timothy 2 :15, we have noted that after the death, burial, resurrection and ascension of Christ, everyone did exactly the same thing becoming Christians (which involved receiving the remission of sins or being saved) as we read from the Acts of the Apostles.

We have already studied the conversion of those on Pentecost (Acts chapter 2). The people heard the first gospel sermon in its entirety (that being the first time the death, burial and resurrection of Christ could be preached), believed what was preached concerning Jesus being made both Lord and Christ and wanted to know what to do regarding their sins (Acts 2:36-37). Having confessed their faith in Christ, they were told to—but before we go any further, **WHY NOT ASK YOUR PREACHER** if he believes these people were saved at this point. For, after all, many in the religious world today teach that when one **hears** the Word, believes the Word, confesses his faith in Christ, he is at **that point saved**. But notice that those who teach such completely **leave out verse 38**. **Ask your preacher** if he thinks those who are desirous of becoming Christians can leave out verse 38? Why according to Peter, the people needed to do those things found in verse 38 **for the remission of sins**. Let's read the passage: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Why were they to **repent and be baptized**? Peter said it was **for the remission of sins**. Oh, some preacher may say, **repentance** is for the remission of sins, but **baptism** is **NOT** for the remission of Sins. Is that what your preacher would say? If so, he is not telling you or others the same thing that Peter and the rest of the apostles told these people. For they placed **both repentance AND baptism BEFORE** remission of sins.

Why not ask your preacher why he doesn't tell people the same thing the apostles told people to do to be saved, **BELIEVE, REPENT, CONFESS AND BE BAPTIZED?**

Please Renew Promptly!

HAROLD F. HOUCHEN: A GREAT MAN
(1895 - 1982)

Robert A. Bolton
10550 Walnut St.
Dallas, TX 75243

Appropriate to the life he lived was the passing, on the Lord's Day, October 3, 1982, of Harold F. Houchen. Born July 6, 1895 in the community of Hess, near Altus, Oklahoma, he lived and died "in the Lord," having been "baptized into Christ" in 1907. While the family lived in Dill City, Oklahoma, Bro. Houchen was a student at Cordell Christian College from 1912 to 1915. On July 16, 1916 he was united in marriage to Laura Theresa Peratt who preceded him in death in 1975, after 58 years together. To this union was born one son, Hoyt H. Houchen, faithful gospel preacher and elder of the Boston Street church in Aurora, Colorado. Bro. Houchen served as a deacon in the congregation in Dill City from 1919 to 1922 when the family moved to Calexico, California. In May, 1923, the Houchens moved to Ontario, California where he resided until his death. He served as a deacon in the Ontario church from 1926 to 1931, and as an elder from 1931 until the death of his beloved wife in February, 1975. Employed by the city of Ontario in 1942, he served as Superintendent of Parks from 1960 to 1965, when he retired. In addition to his son, Hoyt, he is survived by three grandsons: Ron of Ft. Worth, Texas, Dennis of Aurora, Colorado, and Larry of Orange, California; eight great-grandchildren; and a host of loving brethren and friends. Memorial services were conducted in Ontario, California on Friday, October 8, 1982, after which his body was laid to rest beside that of his beloved Laura, in the Bellevue Cemetery, to await the resurrection. At the memorial service, Ford Carpenter of Montclair, California, a friend of the family for 42 years, spoke of the good influence of Harold Houchen, and I set forth reasons for his greatness which had been impressed upon me through 32 years of acquaintance and association with him.

Harold Houchen was a great man, not because of wealth, or fame, or political power, or popularity, but because he was a Christian. He was not only a "great Christian," but he was "great because he was a Christian." As a godly elder of the Ontario church for over 44 years, he left a rich heritage of example, worthy of the emulation of any man who may desire the office. He was a loving husband and a beloved son-in-law, a dutiful and caring father, and such a worthy example to his family that the name "Houchen" is destined to proudly survive ages to come.

As a faithful and responsible employee of the city of Ontario, he left the citizens a heritage of honesty,

integrity, industry, beauty and happiness. He was a great man because of the life that he lived before his neighbors and friends, many of whom he led to "the Lamb of God," and all of whom will cherish, in fond remembrance, his exemplary life.

He was a friend of so many gospel preachers, loving the Word of God and those who faithfully proclaimed it, always ready to encourage them by his presence, his prayers, and his support. Yet, he was just as forthright in his opposition to religious error and those who espoused it.

He was my special friend, a man that I could count on, confide in, and learn from. For nine years, as I preached the gospel in Ontario, he and I walked, talked, worshipped, prayed, studied, worked, played, laughed and cried, together. He was such an inspiration and encouragement to me for so long, in so many ways, that happy are the memories I shall always retain of this great man, my friend.

Harold Houchen loved God, the Lord, the Bible, the church purchased by the blood of Christ, the Ontario congregation especially, his brethren individually and collectively, faithful gospel preachers, his family, his neighbors, his city, his country, his fellowman, his life, and indeed, he loved life itself. He gave so much, for so long, to so many. He gave his life, himself, his all, in service to others as he served the Lord. We take comfort in our pleasant memories of such a beautiful life, in how fortunate we are to have known and loved him, and in our faith and his faith in the Word of God.

I believe that in the sight of both God and men, he was truly a great man, who "being dead yet speaketh." I shall miss him very much, even as shall his family and friends, but paraphrasing the words of a song sung by the congregation at his memorial service, because of him we "Count Our Many Blessings," and look forward to a glad reunion, in that great day, with Harold F. Houchen, a great man.

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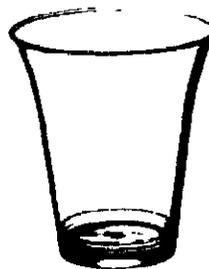
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For a number of centuries, the church of Rome has been gradually developing the worship (cultus) of Mary, the mother of Jesus. By the year 1913, the first use of the word "**Corede[m]p[tr]ix**" was used in a papal encyclical, **Sunt Quos Amo**, wherein the faithful Roman Catholics were instructed to include the name of Mary with that of her Son in their prayers.

In 1891, pope Leo XIII referred to Mary as a "Mediat[ri]x", that is, a female mediator, even though Holy Scripture stipulates "For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 2:5).

Perhaps the earliest effort toward elevating Mary to a position of deity, occurred in the early centuries when the Douay-Rheims Version of Genesis 3:15, read: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel." (Underscoring mine. L.W.M.) This use of the feminine pronouns, was first introduced by Jerome's Latin Vulgate in the late 4th century. There is NO textual basis whatsoever, for inserting the female pronouns in Gen. 3:15, yet this is exactly what Rome has tried to palm off on the World.

The Masoretic Text of Gen. 3:15, according to the Jewish Publication Society of America, reads "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; they shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise their heel." Notice that the Jews tend to minimize this as being a prophecy of the coming Messiah, Christ, by removing the masculine pronouns, and rendering it is neuter, plural, i.e. they, their.

Bagster's English Translation of the Septuagint Version, reads: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed, he shall watch against thy head, and thou shalt watch against his heel." Notice that this is singular and

masculine, i.e., he, his.

Kittel's **Biblia Hebraica**, gives no textual variant that would allow the change from "he" to "she" or "his" to "her". Also, from the standpoint of the context, it was a promise to Eve, that her masculine seed (Christ) would conquer and overcome Satan. The first man, by which sin came into the race of man, was Adam, while the "last Adam" was Christ, who brought salvation and eternal life to the race of man.

Let us check several other translations of the passage under study:

King James II Version

". . . . He will bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."

New American Standard

". . . . He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel."

Ferrar Fenton Translation

". . . . He shall wound your head, and you shall wound His heel."

New American Bible (Catholic)

". . . . He will strike at your head, while you strike at his heel." Note: This modern Catholic Version departs from the erroneous Douay-Rheims rendering.

Revised Standard Version

". . . . He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

American Standard Version

". . . . He shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

Conclusion

The Catholic Council known as Vatican II, embraced all the erroneous terms and expressions that tend to raise Mary to position of Deity. For evidence of this Catholic duplicity, I suggest that you read, "Documents of Vatican II", Edited by Walter Abbott, and published by Geoffrey Chapman, in London, 1967.

WHEN YOU MOVE—Please allow two months for change of address notices. We have a cut-off date for changes each month. *Thanks for your help.*

THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

Send all News Items to: Wilson Adams, 6334 Auburn Ace., Riverdale, MD 20737

FIELD REPORTS

ALAN BAILEY, 301 Huntington St., Huntington Beach, CA 92648. My family and I have, after much prayer, decided to move to work with the sound church in St. Joseph, Missouri. This congregation has been searching for a preacher for some time. They

are willing and ready to go to work and are in a situation which promises to be fruitful. The institutional church in St. Joseph has been practically taken over by a very liberal preacher that leans toward Pentecostalism. Because of this, several have withdrawn themselves from that congregation and have placed their mem-

bership with the sound church Perhaps you can see the need for some good sound teaching there At this time the church will only be able to provide me with \$800 per month I will be needing an extra \$1,200 of outside support I ask that you give this some very serious consideration Please feel free to contact the elders where I am presently preaching Ron Stewart at (714) 847 6796, or George Wright at (714) 848-0473 Also feel free to contact Ron Goforth in St Joseph at (816) 279-7552

GARRETH L. CLAIR, 729 E. Harmony Ave , Mesa, AZ 85204 The Southeast church had its beginning January 8th, 1978 at 711 Santa Ana in Mesa, Arizona From the time the congregation began we have been renting quarters in four different locations Now we are meeting in our own facility located at 312 N. Keith in Mesa We have purchased three lots with an adequate structure on the property for the congregation at the present We encourage all who are visiting or who plan to move to the greater Phoenix area to visit us You will always be welcome Also please note my new mailing address as given above Phone (602) 834-7483 Our meeting work this year has seen eight baptisms and one restored to faithfulness

JAMES L FINNEY, 1935 Pima Dr , Colorado Springs CO 80915 We left here for meetings in the south and east, July 25th The first was with the Central church in Charlotte, Tennessee Bro David Holder preaches for them and the average attendance was about 85 Next we went to Fair Lawn, New Jersey and preached there on Sunday, August 8th We had worked with them for over 22 years until moving to Colorado in February of 1981 On Wednesday evening we began in Brooklyn, New York and preached through Sunday (August 11 15) Bro. Sam Turrentine works with this congregation which started about three years ago The average attendance in this meeting was about 21 They are showing growth and may have a chance to purchase the building in which they presently meet From here we went to Vauxhall, New Jersey (August 15-18) to help in a new work where Bro Harry Persaud is now preaching They had three baptisms recently This work was started about three years ago The attendance averaged about 29 here The last meeting was in Cherry Hill, New Jersey (August 19-22) The attendance averaged about 22. Bro. Jon Drobner is preaching here and this is a new work. This looks promising along with the rest of these in the general New York area. It was good to see brethren again with whom we had labored so long.

J. C. MOORE, Rt 1, Box 126, Hermansville, MS 39086. This is to inform the readers of STS that the church no longer meets in Port Gibson, Mississippi. We are now driving to Vicksburg, a distance of 30 miles, to help with a new work. We meet at 3040 Halls Ferry Rd in Vicksburg. We have just bought and converted a residence into a meeting place. Bro Ed Brand is the preacher.

J. T. SMITH, 14250 N. Miami Ave , Miami, FL 33168 Many of you will recall the material I had in STS on the subject of Premillennialism Since it appeared in the paper, I have had it printed (just as it appeared, including the charts) into a 24 page booklet It may be ordered from Religious Supply for \$25 per hundred I believe it is material that can be understood and used by all

WORK IN ARGENTINA

CARLOS CAPELLI, Casilla 83—1665 Jose C Paz, Bs As, Argentina The word is preached and souls are saved in Boulogne¹ Another three precious souls were added to the body of Christ in this city All of them were members of the Pentecostal church, a false church begun in 1890 in the U. S., but now they are Christians This makes five Christians in Boulogne They have rented a small room and have begun to assemble However these brethren are very poor and are in need of chairs, Bibles, song books, tracts, etc Can you help? I have recently lost \$250 per month support and am in need of making this up as soon as possible Please let me hear from you Thank you for your fellowship, love, and confidence in us

FERNANDO VENEGAS, Casilla 3/8 122 C C , 5500 Mendoza, Argentina Recently I was in three meetings in the following places Quilota, Chile (August 2 8), Santiago, Chile (August 11 15), and Quilpue, Chile (August 13 15) I considered all the meetings a

success with many non-Christians in attendance At Quilota we set an attendance record with 65 present each night However, much more important was the conversion of nine precious souls to the Lord Please pray for us as we labor here in South America

NEW CONGREGATION

BRANDON, FL—Due to the tremendous growth in the Brandon area, which is 12 miles east of Tampa, and with the blessings of the Brandon elders, a new congregation began meeting on the first Sunday in March, 1981 The church is identified as the East Brandon church of Christ and is meeting in the Bloomingdale Civic Center, at the corner of Lithia-Pinecrest and Bloomingdale in Brandon

During the past eighteen months the newly formed church has made great strides The first gospel meeting was held by Ken Weliever from Palmetto, Florida. Many non-Christians attended the meeting in which there were crowds over 100 More recently another meeting was conducted with Charles Goodall A few months ago 2 1/2 acres of land was purchased as a possible site for a meeting place At this writing construction of the building is half completed The new building should be ready for services by the first of December The new location will be at the intersection of Miller and Ray Road which is south of Route 60 We have one need in which brethren might be able to assist, and that is church pews which are in good condition If any church has some pews that they need to dispose of, please contact Roy Weliever, at (813) 689-5112, or S. D. Hunt at 689-1157 The future looks bright for this congregation Attendance has grown from 55 to 85 during the past few months Charles Brackett is preaching part time for us Our services are as follows Sunday Bible Study, 9 30 a. m. Worship 10 30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. Please worship with us when in the Tampa Bay area

DEBATE

STEVE DIAZ, Rt. 1, Box 1210, Leesburg, FL 32748. There is a debate scheduled for January 10 and 11, 1983 at the Fine Arts auditorium of Lake-Sumter Community College in Leesburg, Florida I will be debating Marlin Kilpatrick on the question of whether or not it is scriptural for churches to support orphan homes (such as the one at Mt Dora) Because of the closeness to the Mt Dora orphan home (20 miles away) and the number of institutional churches in the area, we anticipate a good opportunity to teach the truth on this subject For further information, write the Michigan Ave., church of Christ at P. O. Box 2207, Leesburg, FL 32748. Or phone (904) 728-0715

PREACHER NEEDED

PARIS, KY—The Main St church of Christ in Pans, Kentucky is just slightly over six years old. We are looking for a full time evangelist as of January 1. Partial support can be provided, but some outside support will have to be raised. For further information, contact Don Bishop at (606) 987-1273, or James Sizemore at 234-9432.

PREACHERS AVAILABLE

PHILLIP BROWN, 3775 Parthema Ave , Louisville, KY 40215 I am 30 years old, married but with no children. I have been preaching part time for the past few years and am now working with Gene Frost and the Birchwood Ave church in Louisville. I desire to devote my life to preaching the gospel. Please give me a call at (502) 361-3038

FRANK INGRAM, 5511 Bruns Dr., Louisville, KY 40216 After five years of a most enjoyable work and relationship with both the elders and the congregation at Gardiner Lane in Louisville I am in search of another work If interested, you may write me at the above address or call (502) 448 9458 You may also reach one of the elders Bob Harbison by calling 969 3869 in the evening

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	362
RESTORATIONS	103

(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)