

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

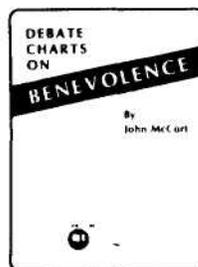
Sometime in the spring or early summer we plan to publish in one issue of this paper the text of three sermons on the Holy Spirit which were presented several years ago by Franklin T. Puckett at the Thayer Street Lectures in Akron, Ohio. We have the first two speeches ready and are waiting now for the 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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Social Security Number _____

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give name and address of local congregation, preacher and/or elders _____

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

On the back of this form, please explain your present circumstance and tell exactly what kind of assistance you request.

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

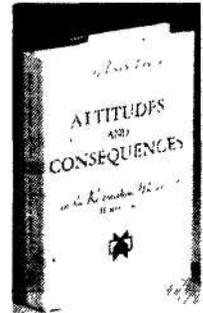
May we learn these valuable lessons from the contest on Mount Carmel. Let us have the courage and faith of Elijah to stand with God. The end will be rewarding.

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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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)

When you renew, why not subscribe for a friend? All new subscriptions are \$7.
