

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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THINK ON
THESE THINGS

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PREACHING CHRIST

It is amazing to note the various topics discussed and the manner of preaching that is being done in the "name of Christ." A week seldom passes but that I do not receive a brochure or letter trying to sell me something that will enhance my preaching. I am guaranteed to be more successful if I purchase their program. It is strange, but I never remember receiving one that directed me to the word of God, and urged me to simply "preach Christ and him crucified."

We hear on every hand the claim from denominational preachers that they are "preaching Christ," but by the New Testament standard there is far too much diversity in both their teaching and practice for it to be true gospel preaching. Much of the preaching of today is designed to elevate and honor the preacher instead of Christ. Appeals are made for money and "big business." The average denomination today is a big business, and it operates as such. Many churches of Christ are falling in line and becoming as secular as any denomination. This means that the people in the pews are no longer sinners who need the gospel, or saints who need to be edified. They are customers and clients who must be treated as such. Remember: "The customer is always right." To this slogan most conform in their preaching. Special honor is paid to fathers and mothers, special days are observed, special events remembered, great projects are developed, personal programs are created, etc., and just enough attention is given to Christ and his word to try to make it appear that "gospel preaching" is

being done there. In some cases more time is given to self-praise in their own glory and accomplishments than in telling what men and women ought to do to be saved and to honor Christ.

"Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word. Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did" (Acts 8:4-6). "And 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).

Gospel preaching must include the life, death, resurrection and authority of Jesus Christ. The only foundation upon which one can successfully build is the preaching that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. No other foundation can be laid but the preaching of Christ (1 Cor. 3:11). This foundation is the preaching done by the apostles and prophets (Eph. 2:20). When Philip preached to the eunuch he "began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus" (Acts 8:35). When he preached to those in the city of Samaria, he preached Christ unto them. In preaching Christ, Philip not only told them Christ was the promised Messiah and Saviour of the world, but he also preached about his kingdom: the kingdom of God. Gospel preaching, therefore, involves preaching about the kingdom promised by the Old Testament prophets and fulfilled in the days when the Holy Spirit came down from heaven and empowered the apostles to speak the authority of Christ to the world. This kingdom is the church of Christ. Preaching Christ must include the church over which he is the head. The kind of preaching usually today is far from giving the truth about the nature, organization, function and purpose of the church. Not many in the church today really understand this because too much preaching does not touch the subject.

There have been many theories and plans that have been preached concerning the nature, worship, work and organization of the church, all of which have contributed to the terrible state of denominationalism of the present day. The greed and sensual desires, with the material hopes of men have been expressed even in the

creeds, written and unwritten, that are the common topics of much preaching today. Premillennialism has been preached as "gospel preaching" concerning the kingdom of God, but this doctrine is unscriptural and anti-scriptural. Much of the preaching of the kingdom of God today is characterized by a false concept of the nature of the church. It has become more a social order and commercial business than the spiritual body of Christ. To preach Christ we must preach the "things concerning the kingdom of God" — the church of Christ; this involves its true mission, nature, organization, worship and discipline.

Furthermore, preaching Christ means to preach the "name of Jesus Christ." This name is all important because it is the only name given by which men must be saved (Acts 4:12). We are to do all that we do "in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ," and this includes word and deed (Col. 3:17). One cannot escape the authority of Christ when he preaches Christ as Lord and King.

The name of Christ involves the authority of Christ. All authority has been given to him, and when one does not respect his authority in all matters regarding the church and manner of life, he is a worker of iniquity. This authority demands that the gospel in its purity be preached to all men. It requires the believer to repent and be baptized for the remission of his sins (Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 2:38). The authority of Christ demands faithful obedience throughout life. When any preacher presumes to announce conditions and terms of service to God that are not taught by the authority of Christ, that preacher is not preaching Christ as it is revealed in the New Testament.

Perhaps the most serious consequences of failing to preach "the name" of Christ is appearing in the church today in the form of denominationalism and materialism. The church is made little more than a money supplying agent for many human projects invented without the authority of Christ. We can expect nothing better unless and until we really preach Christ and his authority. The very nature of the kingdom prohibits the kind of work being done in many areas throughout the world.

Paul instructed Timothy in his work of preaching Christ. "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:2). Preaching Christ requires straight and plain preaching that sometimes carries rebuke of error. Only the gospel of Christ will save the lost.

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Editorial

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WAR AMONG THE LIBERALS

It gives us no pleasure to observe the wars and rumors of wars raging within the more liberal churches of Christ. For many years now they have eschewed those of us they have disdainfully called "antis" and have preached our funeral several times. The reason they have to keep preaching the same funeral is that the corpse refuses to cooperate. As Mark Twain once said, "The reports of my recent demise are greatly exaggerated."

Of late, some who fought the "antis" furiously, claimed victory over the slain carcass, and lectured us about "where there is no pattern" and "binding where the Lord has not bound" are now sounding for all the world like the "antis" they claimed to have vanquished. Among those who stood in support of church financed private enterprises, sponsoring churches and at least modified forms of church related social and recreational activities, there is to be heard much weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. Now THEY are afraid of the "liberals." There has been an ultra liberal element for many years, represented by the sentiments expressed in such journals as MISSION. Now, Reuel Lemmons, erstwhile editor of FIRM FOUNDATION is publishing a new paper which is certainly much more liberal than the present FIRM FOUNDATION. That paper now is published by Buster Dobbs and edited by William Cline and is militantly opposed to what is going on by those who are farther to the left than they are. I notice announcements of lecture programs featuring speakers who are among the more conservative-minded still in the liberal camp. One thing that strikes me is the appearance of about the same group of speakers whether they are speaking at Getwell church in Memphis or somewhere in Texas or California. They are men, all of whom seem to be alarmed with what is taking place.

Articles are appearing in bulletins and periodicals on Bible authority. Some are even so bold as to ask for scriptural authority for "Family Life Centers" with their gymnasiums. Some are outspoken about the issue of divorce and remarriage and advocate quarantining such men as James D. Bales because of his position on the subject.

A Significant Development

Perhaps one of the most significant developments is the change of editors for the GOSPEL ADVOCATE, for years the leading voice of the brethren who came out in

favor of church support for benevolent organizations, sponsoring churches and through her news columns, a multiplication of unscriptural activities. Guy N. Woods, who served as editor until recently, gave the ADVOCATE a little more conservative flavor editorially than it had tasted in years. But he sealed his fate as editor when he took a strong and militant stand against the Joplin Unity Forum (and those which followed) in which preachers from the independent Christians Churches and those from liberal churches of Christ met to hold dialogue and attempt to bring about unity. In these efforts, there is no indication of movement away from the use of instrumental music by the Christian Churches. The movement has been on the part of those who have decided that they have practices which stand on the same hermeneutical base as instrumental music and there is no good reason why they can't work together. Guy N. Woods, to his credit, did a very good job in reviewing the matter and was apparently set to guide the so-called "old reliable" in a militant campaign against these unity efforts. But, some of the "powers that be" decided it was time for a change of editors.


Abruptly, it was announced that brother Woods was being replaced as editor by Furman Kearley. What is interesting about that is that Kearley had been one of the participants in the Joplin, Missouri Forum. One of the small group discussions in which he had a part was videotaped and excerpts of what he and others said were printed by some who were greatly alarmed at the sound of compromise. It is significant that in the very first issue of the ADVOCATE edited by brother Kearley, he found it necessary to try to clear himself of the odor of what he said. He claimed he was quoted out of context, avowed his opposition to instrumental music and has carried several articles on the subject since then. But it is still an expressed feeling among many in that camp, who are watching anxiously for future developments, that this change represents a definite swing to the left by the "old reliable."

I am neither a prophet nor the son of one, but from where I sit, it appears that the more conservative element among them is in the minority and has its hands full maintaining the status quo. Already we know of some in several places who have decided to investigate a nearby "anti" church. Some of these have bailed out and taken their stand with folks they would not even have considered before. They have been surprised to find thriving congregations, scripturally organized, engaged in divinely authorized work for the church. Some have been surprised to learn that these folks they had been taught to avoid actually have Bible classes and a plurality of communion cups, and that they even preach on the radio and television and support gospel preachers throughout the country and around the world. The fact that they are surprised to learn this is a commentary on what they have been told and raises serious questions as to the honesty of those who misrepresented the case and created these false impressions.

I can tell these alarmed folks where to go to find some excellent material on authority which will help to defeat those who are determined to run off into denomination-

alism. The first speech of Roy E. Cogdill in the published COGDILL-WOODS DEBATE, the material in WALKING BY FAITH by Roy E. Cogdill, and a good many other tracts, booklets and articles yet available, all published by the maligned "antis" will provide them with many scriptural arguments, clearly illustrated with charts that will give them unanswerable arguments with which to go forth and do battle with the liberals among them. But they are going to have to stop worrying about "where there is no pattern" and recognize that there is a pattern and then insist that it be honored. Of course, if they are consistent on that, they will wind up opposing much more than instrumental music, church gymnasiums and even church supported colleges. And they might as well get ready for it. They are going to be called "antis." In fact, a few of them are already being called that.

Now brethren, before we get too smug, let's look at some of the senseless dividing and sub-dividing taking place among some of US. How many churches have been splintered with a group pulling off to meet across town for no reason except a lack of the fruit of the Spirit and a desire to either run the thing or tear it up! James was right, you know, when he said "bitter envying and strife in your hearts" is not from above, but is "earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work" (Jas. 4:14-16).

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PRECEPTS AND PERCEPTIONS

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MAY CHURCHES OF CHRIST SUPPORT HUMAN INSTITUTIONS?

Much of the disturbance among churches of Christ in the last 40 years has been over the use of the money collected on the Lord's day. For what may these funds be used? May a congregation use its treasury only for those activities the church is authorized to perform? Or may a congregation commit its funds to activities and institutions apart from the work the Lord has commanded His church to do? It is my prayer that the things said in these articles here may help clarify these matters for sincere persons who read them.

What about church donations to self-created, independent enterprises such as schools, hospitals, benevolence homes, religious publishing and advertising businesses? Is the practice scriptural or unscriptural? Have you considered what the Lord says that answers the question?

What is a "church of Christ"?

Without arguing the point in detail, I submit that a church of Christ is an assembly or body (group, collectivity) of Christians voluntarily submissive to the authority of Christ in faith and practice. Every person entitled to membership in such an assembly has complied with the definite requirements set forth in the gospel of Christ, viz., has expressed belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, repented of his sins, and has been baptized for the remission of sins (Mk. 16:15,16; Rom. 10:13-17; Acts 16:31; 2:38; 3:19; Gal. 3:27; 1 Pet. 3:21). By virtue of these actions the baptized, penitent believer enters Christ (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:26, 27) and thereby enters Christ's spiritual family—His spiritual body—a spiritual kinsman of every other redeemed-from-sin person.

All of God's children are not physically located in one geographical area but in various localities. This is why we read of "the churches of Christ" (Rom. 16:16). There was a church in Jerusalem, in Samaria, in Antioch, in Ephesus, in Corinth, and in numerous other places in apostolic days. Each of these assemblies was the body of Christ in that location. To members of the church at Corinth apostle Paul said, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof" (1 Cor. 12:27). Individuals collectively equaled the whole body at Corinth.

This collectivity of spiritual persons is distinguish-

able from every other non-spiritual body of persons anywhere and everywhere and from others of the same nature in other geographical locations. Their distinctive marks are not physical but spiritual except for physical placement. Each particular assembly of Christians is the "house of God," the "household of God," the "household of faith" (1 Tim. 3:15; Eph. 2:19; Gal. 6:10) and Christ is its head, this body being subject to Him. He is also its Savior (Eph. 1:22, 5:23, 24). Christ bought the church with his blood that he might sanctify it, making it holy and without blemish (Eph. 5:27). No other body of people—religious or otherwise—can rightly make the claims which the holy scriptures make for this unique body of believers in Christ.

Regardless of its members, each congregation controlled by Christ as its lawgiver, through the teaching He commanded His apostles to declare, has been instructed to perform certain activities (Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:42).

How is Duty Determined?

Only in the apostles teaching—the New Testament—may one learn what Christ wants each congregation to do. We learn this by direct command, by approved apostolic example or by necessary inference.

1. We learn Christ's **will by reading or hearing read commands Christ issued** to a local church to obey. This is called "learning by direct command." An example of this is Paul's "order" to the church at Corinth "concerning the collection for the saints" (1 Cor. 16:1-4).

2. We learn Christ's will by reading or hearing read the account of local church **activity in response** to commands of Christ. This is called "learning from **approved apostolic example.**" A case in point is Luke's account of the Jerusalem church choosing special persons from its own membership to be "appointed over this business" of ministering to the needy members of the congregation (Acts 6:1-6).

3. We also learn Christ's will by reading or hearing read certain accounts of local church activity in connection with some commands of Christ and from this **draw certain necessary conclusions** that other commands, not specifically mentioned, were given by Christ. This is called "learning from **necessary inference.**" An example of this is observance of the Lord's supper by the disciples assembled at Troas on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). Luke makes the statement that it was "upon the first day of the week" that "we were gathered together to break bread." That there was a regular assembly of the saints for the purpose of eating the Lord's supper is clear from Heb. 10:25 and 1 Cor. 11:20-33. Putting all the evidence together we conclude that the Lord has **commanded the disciples to assemble on the first day of the week to eat the Lord's supper.**

What Shall a church of Christ Do?

Without attempting to exhaust the listing of activities in which a local church is to engage as determined from command, example or necessary inference we submit the following list for consideration:

—Assemble on the first day of week—Heb. 10:25, 1

Cor. 11:20-33; Acts 20:7.

—Observe the Lord's supper on first day of week—Acts 20:7.

—Receive the apostles' teaching—Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 7:17; 16:1.

—Pray—Acts 12:5.

—Sing—1 Cor. 14:15; Eph. 5:18,19; Col. 3:16.

—Choose qualified ministers of mercy—Acts 6:1-6; Phil. 1:1; 2:25; 4:15-18; 1 Cor. 12:28.

—Recognize qualified pastors to feed and tend it—Acts 14:23; 20:17, 28; Phil. 1:1; Tit. 1:5; 1 Pet. 5:1-4; 1 Tim. 3:1-7.

—Select and direct a messenger or messengers when communicating with others)2 Cor. 8:23; Phil. 2:25; 4:15-18.

—Relieve poor saints—Acts 2:45; 4:32-35; 6:1-6; 11:26-30; 1 Cor. 8, 9; Rom. 15:25, 26.

—Pay a preacher wages—1 Cor. 9:1-14; 2 Cor. 11:8.

This list does not claim to be exhaustive. We know that these things are to be done because there is scriptural authority for them.

Using the

SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

Ken Green

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A MONSTER OF FRIGHTFUL MIEN

"Atlantic City has never been known for its church socials. But in recent years the more than 20 million annual visitors who are drawn here by casino gambling have triggered a vice explosion, luring pushers, pimps, and prostitutes, plus an assortment of pickpockets, muggers and other miscreants." (Wall Street Journal, Aug. 27, 1985)

The casinos in Atlantic City, N. J. opened for business less than ten years ago. The Blackjack tables and roulette wheels were lauded as the golden goose for the state's financial woes and the city's decline. The publishing of some facts regarding that city's dream-turned-nightmare may serve to raise a few voices in the wilderness in other areas where the gambling interests are lobbying to get their foot in the door. (And that is every state in the country!) Much of the following data is from an article by William M. Alnor, *The Gamble That Lost*, *Eternity*, April, 1985.

The casino forces promised that they would remodel Atlantic City, Urban renewal would be a matter of top priority. They promised to help the old and the minorities. Former New Jersey governor Brendon Byrne promised that organized crime would not be welcomed in Atlantic City.

In fact, the only interests which have profited from gambling in Atlantic City are the casinos and organized crime. Former mayor Michael Matthews was sentenced last year to 15 years for accepting a \$10,000 bribe. The government charged that he had sold out to the Mafia and was attempting to obtain a hidden interest in a casino. Several Philadelphia and New York suspected Mafia chief tans have been slain over the past four years in an alleged power struggle over territorial rights to Atlantic City.

Professor George Sternlieb, director of urban policy research at Rutgers University recently published a comprehensive report on the first seven years of Atlantic City gambling and concluded that its costs far out-weigh its virtues. Some of its costs are:

CRIME: "Atlantic City is now the murder and crime capital of the Northeastern United States. And the crime rate keeps soaring." The only four cities with a higher homicide rate are: Miami (1 per 1,924 residents), Gary, Indiana (1 per 1,672), Compton, California in suburban L.A. (1 per 1,514), and East St. Louis (1 per 1,319). Atlantic City with a population of 38,738 has one slaying for every 1,937 residents. (F.B.I. Uniformed Crime Report, 1982).

Infant mortality, lead poisoning, venereal disease, prostitution, drug use, alcoholism, arson, and crime: all have increased in alarming proportions since 1976.

BALLOONED TAXES. Joseph H. Rodriguez, the Public Advocate of New Jersey reports that recent property re-evaluation in the city "resulted in an average proposed tax increase of 500 percent to homeowners throughout the city. Residents are being forced to sell out to make room for more casinos. Housing costs climbed over 200 percent from 1976 to 1982. Small businesses are on the verge of extinction.

RELIGION. Many church buildings have closed their doors. One has been converted into a bar. The former rector of an Episcopal Church told the New York Times, "Since casinos, it's just been horrible. We often have as many as 25 to 30 drunks and prostitutes outside the 8 AM Sunday service. It's not a good atmosphere for children."

MORALITY. The 35,000 casino workers make big money. But is it worth it? The divorce rate of casino marriages is about 80 percent. Wizberto J. Viruet, a former supervisor of blackjack in the tables of one of the major casinos for four years, said of the casino workers, **"They're into drink, use of drugs, immorality, and after one and a half years they're burned out... The bars here are open 24 hours and many can't go into work the next day—they're too hung over.**

"Everyone tries to be part of the high lifestyle. They're all looking for the pot at the end of the rainbow. The coldness of the people there is incredible. They don't care."

Viruet said that while he worked at the casino he began drinking excessively, gambling, and using drugs. He lost his job, wife, family, and self respect.

New Jersey recently opened its first clinic to treat compulsive gamblers. Are the casinos funding this community need? No way! No more so that they are sharing

a heavier burden in maintaining a 534-member police force, more than the size of police forces in many cities 10 times its size in population. The taxpayers are picking up the tab for these services. Estimates of the number of compulsive gamblers in New Jersey range from 65,00 to 375,000. Some say there may be as many as 12 million compulsive gamblers nationwide. Exorbitant amounts of money are embezzled by compulsive gamblers, much of which is paid off by insurance companies, banks, and ultimately by you and me.

Solomon wrote: **"By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted: but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked"** (Provides 11:11). Oh that citizens would awaken to the emptiness of the promises of high-powered public relations campaigns and the nonstop lobbying that is staged by the gambling interests.

They are not our friends.

THE SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER

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Considerable interest has been shown in the matter of spiritual security in the last four years. A series of articles have already appeared in STS but this shall be a little different approach. This approach denies all Calvinism but at the same time allows full assurance and confidence for the faithful child of God.

I have appreciated the way in which this paper has handled other controversial subjects and I am grateful to have been allowed space to present my views on this important subject (with the understanding that there may be a review published with it).

This subject is controversial, emotional (with some), and is confusing to many. But we really should have no difficulty in studying together on this matter because we practice the same thing. I might add that no one who knows the truth on this is going to advocate fellowshipping anyone or any group who does not practice the truth. Since our practice is the same there should be no talk of division or disfellowshipping anyone, or firing a preacher for what he believes and teaches on the matter. Regardless of which way a man believes if he presses this issue to the point of causing factions, he is a heretic. When brethren in a local church can't study this issue without ill feelings, it should be dropped like a hot potato. It is an important subject, but we should never force our opinions on such matters to the point of causing division.

When we talk about the security of the believer we have no reference to the denominational doctrine known by that name, also known as "once saved always saved". We believe this doctrine is one extreme on this issue. This denominational doctrine upholds the idea that children of God cannot fall from grace no matter

what they do or what their attitude or manner of life is. The other extreme upholds the idea that a child of God falls from grace every time he sins, and it matters not whether the sin was committed inadvertently or in ignorance, nor does it matter what the attitude of the child of God is. The truth has got to be between these two extremes because the first gives one a false hope and the second gives him no hope.

We are taught that we can and should have spiritual security. It is evident that the apostle Paul had this security as he said, "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. 3:7-8). He wrote of his confidence and in the same passage teaches that all those "that love his appearing" can also have it.

The writings of the apostle John are just as convincing. He said, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God" (1 Jn. 5:13). From looking at these passages alone we should have no doubts as to whether or not a Christian can know that he is in fellowship with God.

God has promised us (Christians) a place in heaven. If one does not have confidence that he will receive that promise then he displeases God (sins). You see, if one has no confidence he either doesn't believe God will keep his promise or he doesn't believe that he is a faithful servant. Hope plays an important part in our salvation (Rom. 8:24). The word "hope" means: desire plus expectation. One who has confidence that he will receive the promise of heaven, desiring to do so, has hope. One who has hope has security. If one has not all three (confidence, hope, and security), he displeases God.

What Security is Based Upon

There can be no true security without being a believer in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. A true believer is an obedient believer. To put it in a nut shell, our security is based upon God's grace (unmerited favor, Eph. 2:7-9), and our compliance to His conditions for obtaining it. Those conditions are discussed under the next heading.

What is Meant by "Walk in the light"?

John assures us that "if we walk in the light... the blood of Jesus ... cleanseth us from all sin." The word "walk" has to do with manner of life. One is either walking in the light or walking in darkness. Even though the faithful Christian sins from time to time his manner of life doesn't change—he isn't necessarily, by that sin, made to walk in darkness.

Let's study the context of the phrase, "walk in the light" (1 Jn. 1:6-2:1). The theme is fellowship with God and with one another. The eighth verse teaches us that fellowship is not based upon being "without sin". The ninth verse teaches us that, rather than deny the fact of our sins we must confess our sins. Then the next verse, "... these things write I unto you, that ye sin not...", is given to keep the brethren from misunderstanding and

taking what was said in verse seven as an encouragement to sin. That which was being taught in verse seven was just what it says and it is the truth between the extremes. However, some believe that the Christian does not sin while in the light. They believe that when one sins he is at that point, out of the light and thus out of fellowship with God and the brethren. But now there is a big problem with that. If the phrase "walk in the light" means "sinlessness" there wouldn't be any sins to be cleansed by the blood. So if one is walking in the light it would have to be because he is "without sin".

Some make a play on the words, "as He is in the light". Of course when they do, it is tantamount to admitting that perfection is essential to being in a saved condition. The question is not how we walk but where we are walking. Isaiah appealed to the house of Jacob: "Come let us walk in the light of the Lord" (Isa. 2:5). Certainly God is light, but we are merely imperfect humans. We must walk in the light of the Lord, which indicated the place. No man can live in the sun but all can walk in the sunlight. While on earth we cannot attain the same degree of purity, perfection, holiness, honesty and knowledge as God possesses, but we can walk in His light. God's condition for grace is not that we be like Him for His word tells us we all sin. One such passage is Ecc. 7:20: "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not." (Also 1 Ki. 8:46; and Jas. 3:2, 8).

Then someone says, "The blood is not continuously applied but is continuously available". Now is that what the text says? The text teaches that one who walks in the light has the blood continuously applied. If it is just "available" what are the conditions? Repentance and confession certainly are essential for one to walk in the light. But one says, "Each individual sin must be confessed specifically." Another says, "No, groups or categories of sin will suffice." And another says, "It is when we say the words 'forgive me of all my sins.' Brethren, what does the text say? It says none of the above. It says, 'If we confess our sins God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins . . .'. Although we should confess specific sins, as did Simon (Acts 8), the confession of 1 Jn. 1:9 is a general statement. Rather than deny our sins (vs. 8), we must confess them. Rather than "walk in darkness" we must "walk in the light". The two "walks" are opposites and both have to do with attitude and manner of life. Likewise, denial of sin and confession of sin are opposites and have to do with one's manner of life.

Conclusion

The cleansing for those who "walk in the light" is not "unconditional" and it is not "automatic" (without repentance and confession). Rather, it is conditioned upon one's continually repenting of specific sins, confessing specifically those sins of which he is aware and asking forgiveness for his "secret sins" (Psa. 19:12-13).

This view has not one shade of Calvinism and it lends no encouragement to sin. "These things have I written unto you that you sin not". The charge that this teaching leads to sinful teaching and practices is just as false and ridiculous as to charge that having a preacher leads

to the "pastor system". With this view our spiritual security is not based upon our having perfect knowledge of law and our being absolutely certain that we have recalled and confessed specifically every sin. With this view even the babe in Christ who is honest and diligent in his effort to learn, grow, and do God's will can have confidence that should he be overtaken by death suddenly, he will forever be with the Lord in heaven.

A REVIEW OF "THE SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER"

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The editor has asked that I review the article entitled "The Security Of The Believer" by Robert Waters found elsewhere in this issue. I do not know brother Waters personally, but I intend to treat him with all fairness and kindness in this review. I appreciate the policy of this paper in handling such disagreements as this. While the paper is open to discussion, the editor will call an end to an exchange after both sides have been given ample space and then move on to other matters.

What Is The Real Issue?

The first thing we need to do is to focus upon what the real issue of difference is. (1) This issue is not a question of security or confidence. Brother Waters and I both agree that the Christian has confidence. (2) The question is not whether or not the Christian can or must live perfectly. Neither of us believe that he can. (3) The issue is not a matter of specific confession of every instance of sin. Neither of us believe that is required. Thus we will waste a lot of time and space to deal at length with these points.

The real issue is: are there some sins that separate us from God and some that don't? Robert Waters tells us that there are some sins that do not separate us from God. I say that all sins separate us from God. That is the real difference.

Two Extremes

Our brother suggests that his position is between two extremes with reference to the security of the believer. The first extreme is Calvinism which teaches "once saved always saved." This provides a false hope. Then the other extreme that he gives is "that a child of God falls from grace every time he sins, and it matters not whether the sin was committed inadvertently or in ignorance, nor does it matter what the attitude of the child of God is." This he says provides no hope. Well, I just wonder what sin brother Waters thinks a child of God can commit and not stand condemned before God.

Brother Waters, would you please give us an example of such a sin?

It is interesting to me that this is the same argument that the Baptists have used to try to deny the possibility of apostasy. A. U. Nunnery said in his debate with Guy N. Woods, "According to his proposition (I don't know, whether every Christian that was here yesterday, whether you are a Christian today or not). He might have so lived or so acted last night, that he's a sinner this morning" (Woods-Nunnery Debate, p. 244). Nunnery further said, "They will have their names rubbed out every day and have them rewritten the next day, that will be a mess" (Ibid, p. 302). The charge that brother Waters makes concerning what I and those who agree with me teach is no different than the charge made by the Calvinists through the years.

Confidence, Hope and Security

A lot of space was used by our brother to cite passages that teach we can have confidence. Again I say that is not an issue. I believe that the Christian can and should have confidence, hope and security. We disagree on the basis for the confidence. The basis is not that there are some sins which do not separate us from God. If that were the case, then we would have confidence and security while we continued in sin. I believe that this is what our brother believes. He tells us in this article and in other writings on the subject that the cleansing is "continuously applied." He wrote in The Expository Review, "We must not overlook God's dealings with the nation of Israel. They were not rejected until they had demonstrated that they had no intention of repenting and walking again in the old paths (Jeremiah 6)" (August, 1983). I wonder why this works for some sins but not for others. Evidently from what we just saw above, one can have confidence and security even though he continues in that sin and hasn't repented or confessed. If that is not the case, then the blood is not "continuously applied" and God does condemn one before he demonstrates that he is not going to repent. Will that not work on the man who commits adultery? Will that not also work on the man who worships with the instrument ignorantly? If not, I want brother Waters to tell us why not. Why do these people not have the same confidence that he has? It seems to me that they would if the basis for the confidence that he has described be true.

The true basis for confidence is the grace of God (blood of Christ—1 Jno. 1:7) as we repent and confess our sins (1 Jno. 1:9) and serve diligently (2 Pet. 1:5-10).

To be fair to brother Waters, he does believe that a Christian must repent and confess. However he believes that confession is a general acknowledgement that we are not free of sin. If he thinks that any kind of repentance, confession and prayer is essential then he has no more confidence than the rest of us have, for if one sins, he stands condemned until that general repentance, confession and prayer is made.

I really don't understand how a man can contend that some sins do not separate us from God and the blood is "continuously applied" and at the same time say that

repentance and confession is essential. That seems to me to be contradictory. Brother Waters, which way will it be?

Walking In The Light

Our brother tells us, "Even though the faithful Christian sins from time to time his manner of life doesn't change—he isn't necessarily, by that sin, made to walk in darkness." He goes on to say, "However, some believe that when one sins he is, at that point, out of the light and thus out of fellowship with God and the brethren." He has told us before that "some unwillful sins do not cause spiritual death" (Expository Review, August 1983). Brother Waters has written a 36 page booklet also entitled "The Security Of The Believer". In it he says, "some sins result in spiritual death and some do not" (p. 10). "Sins that are committed, 'as we practice the truth', are sins that God does not consider rebellion against him and for which he does not sever fellowship" (p. 11). "Since some sins are an abomination to God, we must deduct that some are not as detestable" (p. 14). In his booklet he takes passages like Ezek. 18:4; Isa. 59:2; Jas. 1:15 and Rom. 6:23 which show that spiritual death is the result of sin and says that these do "not teach that every sin causes spiritual death" (pp. 17-18).

Brother Waters, please tell us **WHAT SIN DOES NOT SEPARATE ONE FROM GOD?** Name one. If it is a sin of ignorance or weakness, name some sins of ignorance and weakness that do not condemn the soul. Will he do it? We shall see. What about the sin of lying, does it separate from God? In a context of telling us that some sins result in spiritual death and others do not, he tells us that the difference in the mind of the judge is influenced by the attitude of the transgressor. "For example, Ananias and Sapphira lied and died (Acts 5); whereas Abraham lied three times (Gen. 12:13; 20:5; & 25:7) and he lived" (Booklet, p. 10). Well, I wonder if we can lie today and not be separated from God. What about adultery, does it separate from God? He said in **The Expository Review** that the sin of David and Bathsheba was one of those that is "not so severely punished" (August, 1983). Does that mean they were not separated from God? What about the fellow who commits adultery in a moment of weakness? Is he separated from God? And then I wonder about the man who ignorantly worships with the instrument. He never really knew that it was wrong. Why does he not have fellowship with God as the Christian who may commit any other sin of ignorance? And if he is in fellowship with God, why should we not also fellowship him? Are we better than God?

If one sin doesn't separate one from God, then just how many does it take? Will two? That's just one more. Three? That's just one more than two. Four? Five? How many does it take? The New Testament is filled with passages and examples that tell us that one sin is all that it takes for one to stand condemned. Will our brother tell us that all of these are willful sins? Will he say that none of these are cases of sins out of ignorance or weakness? Did none of these have an humble attitude? Consider the following: (1) Adam and Eve (Gen.

3); (2) Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10); (3) Achan (Josh 7); (4) Uzzah (2 Sam. 6); (5) David (2 Sam. 11); (6) Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5); (7) Peter (Gal. 2:11—the ASV says that he "stood condemned"); and (8) Simon (Acts 8). Brother Waters tells us that Simon didn't fall when he sinned. "These babes at Corinth, even though said to be carnal, were not fallen, and neither was Simon" (Booklet, p. 19). Nevertheless Peter said, "thy money perish with thee" (Acts 8:20, emphasis mine DVR).

Paul said, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye that are spiritual, restore such an one ..." (Gal. 6:1, emphasis mine DVR). How many sins are involved in "a fault"?

If brother Water's position be true, I just wonder how we are to determine which sins separate and which don't. There is nothing in the context of 1 Jno. 1:7 to limit sins to those of ignorance and weakness. If 1 Jno. 1:7 means that one type of sin doesn't separate from God, it means that no sin separates from God. If it includes sins of ignorance and weakness why will it not also include willful sins?

Whether answering Waters, Ketcherside or a Baptist preacher the point is still the same. Sins of ignorance separate like any other sin. Consider the case of the man of God who believed the lie of the old prophet (1 Kings 13:18-26). Saul persecuted the church ignorantly (1 Tim. 1:13). Jesus will say "depart from me" to many who ignorantly attempted to serve him (Matt. 7:21-ff). Those who crucified the Son of God did so ignorantly (Lk. 23:34).

Brother Waters suggests in his article and in his booklet that to deny his position is to contend for perfection. Such is simply not the case. Imperfection is not necessarily sin. Some areas are relative and thus we will never reach perfection. But, that doesn't mean that we are guilty of sin. A simple misunderstanding is not sin (Rom. 14). However when we do sin, to plead for repentance and confession is not teaching that we must be perfect.

Blood Continuously Applied

Our brother says that 1 Jno. 1:7 says that the blood is continuously applied. The text doesn't say that. That's an assumption of Robert Waters. Look at v. 9. The blood cleanses as we confess.

Specific Confession?

He tells us, "But one says, 'Each individual sin must be confessed specifically.'" Who teaches that? Would you please name a writer or speaker who has taught that. I don't know of anyone. Keep in mind that there is a difference in repentance and confession of what one is guilty and specific confession of every instance of sin.

We are told that the confession of 1 Jno. 1:9 is a general statement of one's manner of life. That's not what the text says. The text says we are to confess our "sins", not the fact that we are sinners.

Questions

1. Why will your position not work on the pious unimmersed? 2. What about the homosexual who doesn't know he is wrong, is he in fellowship with God? 3. What

sin (give some examples) can a child of God commit and not be separated?

Conclusion

"Therefore, thou son of man, say unto the children of thy people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression: as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness; neither shall the righteous be able to live for his righteousness in the day that he sinneth" (Ezek. 33:12).

**MY SERVANTS
THE PROPHETS**



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THE GOD OF ISAIAH

It has been said that there are two major pillars supporting the framework of God's revelation to man. One stands as the central support of the Old Testament and the other as the central support of the New Testament, thereby giving us the skeleton upon which to build the entire gospel system. They represent for us the supreme challenge for our study: one because of the sheer mass of material that it contains (66 chapters), as well as the depth of its meaning, and the other because of its essentiality to the process of justification and sanctification. The Old Testament book is, of course, Isaiah, and the New Testament book is, of course, Romans. Herein lies the heart of what we are and why we are! Thus, any misinterpretation drives us straight into apostasies, such as Premillennialism or salvation by faith only apart from obedience. Such is like walking along a narrow ledge on the side of a mountain and any misstep can be fatal.

It is not our purpose to approach the entire Book of Isaiah, for which there are many reasons. First is simply because I am not qualified to do so. After that, there are many other reasons as well. Rather, our approach here will be to look at some of the great lessons and applications from the Book to our daily concept of Christianity. Herein will be the center of our study. What would Isaiah say if he were to stand in the Par Street pulpit next Sunday and lift up his voice to God's people? What would he have to say if he were to come to "Average Avenue Church of Christ" for a gospel meeting? As we read his Book, given to him by God, there are certain themes that we can well surmise that He would address.

I. First, He would tell us of the indescribable Glory of God.

Isaiah had a vision of the greatness of God that we so desperately need in the 20th Century American church. "I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple" (Isa. 6:1). We will study Chapter 6 in more detail later but for now we will see this great point of Isaiah's reference—the Majesty of God! Brethren, it is not until we see the Majesty of God and understand as best we can with our limited abilities His Greatness, that we will ever know who He is. It has been said that there is only one thought of man that matters at all and it is: what we think of God. Isaiah's view of God was so large that it

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touched every aspect of his life and even the nations of the World.

Our own view of God is so small. We are not living 24 hours a day in a world filled with His Glory. Our worship services are not collective expressions that we have assembled in the presence of the most powerful force in all creation. We sleep and nap. We talk and wander in and out to the rest-room 2 or 3 times, we play with the babies,—our own or one belonging to someone else. We drag our singing, and the preaching has the enthusiasm of a corpse. If a visitor walks in nobody makes an effort to see that he feels comfortable. After all, visitors might be looking for a handout or might be a potential trouble maker wanting to place membership and take over the business meeting. There is such little joy and no enthusiasm. Zeal is reserved for the sales meetings at our businesses or the pep rally for some favorite team. We become a lot more excited about a girls soft ball team or a 12-and under soccer game than we become about our awesome, living God. When was the last time we prayed, "Lord, show us Your glory." Moses saw the glory of God and Jeremiah also. Ezekiel as well was overwhelmed by the glory of God, but to us He is far away, unreal and to be blamed every time something terrible happens.

II. Secondly, Isaiah saw not only God's Glory, but His Ever Present Providential Care.

Isaiah saw not only how great he was, but he saw that He was active in the lives of His subjects; that is, being alive, loving, involved and concerned. He is not "away on a journey" as the priest of Baal found out on top of Mt. Carmel. Rather, He is ruling and governing from His throne. The throne room of God is the busiest place in all the universe. That is where all the prayers in all of the nations from all the people, be they little people or be they kings, be they young or be they old, are being received. All the decisions for every prayer came from the throne room of God which Isaiah had seen in Chapter 6. Isaiah is privileged to be part of the pronouncements of God's providence, and His decrees against Babylon (Chapter 13), Philistia, Moab, Ethiopia, Damascus and Egypt.

Again, we need to see our God not only as powerful and supreme, but active and involved in the affairs of people and nations. A powerful God, but one who is detached from our lives is really no God at all. A God that doesn't answer prayer, that doesn't come to the aid and encouragement of His people, is like a father that will not support his family and especially his children. Even earthly fathers will do that, says Jesus in Matt. 7:11, so "how much more shall your father in Heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!" Such was not only the lesson of Isaiah, but also of my own father, who in his latter years sternly admonished me not to worry about the daily offerings for which he had lost a great deal of interest. "Son," he would say, "just let the Lord take care of it," when at times I would ask "what are we going to do about this or that." Yes, our God is alive and active in the world today. But our faith is built on our correctly viewing both His greatness and His nearness.

WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

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THE RESURRECTED BODY OF JESUS

QUESTION: *I heard a sermon recently in which the evangelist said that Jesus returned to the Father in the same type of body He had when He arose from the grave. What kind of body did Jesus take at His resurrection and did He enter into heaven with this same body?*

ANSWER: The following things we know about the body of Christ after His resurrection.

1. **It was visible to man.** Jesus said to His disciples, "Behold my hands and my feet" (Lk. 24:39). At the garden tomb, Mary saw Jesus standing, although she knew not it was He (Jn. 20:14). Not knowing Jesus' identity was probably because of the shadows of darkness (v. 1). Compare 1 Cor. 15:5-8.

2. **It was tangible.** "Handle me, and see," Jesus said (Lk. 24:39). "And they came, and held him by his feet, and worshipped him" (Mt. 28:9). To Thomas Jesus said, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side" (Jn. 20:27). Hence, Jesus was no phantom or apparition. He was real!

3. **It had flesh and bones.** Jesus said, "for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have" (Lk. 24:39). This was in response to the disciples supposition that they were seeing a spirit.

4. **It consumed food.** "And they gave him a piece of broiled fish, and of honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them" (Lk. 24: 42-43). He also dined with the two disciples at Emmaus (Lk. 24:30) and hosted a fish breakfast at the Sea of Galilee (Jn. 21:12).

5. **It bore the wounds from the crucifixion.** Thomas said, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing" (Jn. 20:25, 27).

On the other hand, the body of Jesus was transcendent, that is, it was beyond the limits of all possible human experience and knowledge. Jesus was not bound by the present conditions of material existence which we observe. He was not subject to time, space, or material objects.

1. **He appeared in a room where the doors were locked.** "Then the same day (resurrection day) at evening . . . when the doors were shut (locked). . . came

Jesus and stood in the midst" (Jn. 20:19). "And after eight days again the disciples were within . . . then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst" (Jn. 20:26).

Some try to explain these appearances, naturally. They say: (a) Jesus climbed up a ladder and through a window, (b) He descended from the roof down a stairway, (c) He sneaked into the house before the doors were locked, or (d) He was allowed to come in through the connivance of the doorkeeper. But there is no logical explanation other than that Jesus miraculously appeared (twice, one week apart) in a locked room in the presence of the disciples.

Jesus also disappeared just as quickly as He appeared. When He was dining with the disciples at Emmaus, Luke states that "he vanished out of their sight" (Lk. 24:31). This, apparently, was a disappearance without physical locomotion. We see, therefore, that Jesus appears where He desires to appear and disappears where He desires to have it so. All of this is wholly supernatural and completely incomprehensible to our finite minds. However, I cannot see any greater miracle in the appearance and disappearance of Jesus' body than I see in the miracle of Jesus walking on the water (Jn. 6:19). All are acts of the power of God.

As to where Jesus stayed during the intervals between His appearances during the forty days (Acts 1:3), we have no way of knowing. Jesus made twelve appearances (Albert Barnes' list) to His disciples before His ascension and one to Paul after His return to heaven. This is all we know about the matter.

2. Furthermore, Jesus ascended up into the air, defying gravity. "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight" (Acts 1:9). Obviously, Jesus did not continue rising into space, hidden by a cloud, but tunelessly, He was received into heaven in a glorified state.

From all of the preceding biblical statements and declarations, we conclude that Jesus was raised with an earthly, human, physical body—the same body that was crucified—and forty days later, at His ascension, His body took on the nature of the heavenly. Paul said that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 15:50), so we know that Jesus did not enter heaven with His human body.

I concur with Charles Erdman who said, "It was therefore at the time of the ascension that Jesus entered 'into his glory.' Then it was that his body was transformed, made deathless, 'spiritual,' celestial, immortal; and then he again began to share the divine glory which he had with the Father" (Gospel of Luke, p. 228).

Some claim that Jesus appropriated to Himself, at certain moments, a sensible, tangible form, which He afterwards laid aside. But this would make the resurrected body nothing more than a disguise. The visible prints were real—proof of a real, fleshly body.

John says "it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is" (1 Jn. 3:2). The

immortal nature of the resurrected body cannot be perceived in this life, but when Jesus returns in His heavenly body which he now possesses, the earthly bodies of all the redeemed will be fashioned after His glorious body (Phil. 3:20-21). Yes, we will have new bodies, resurrected bodies, adapted to an heavenly environment.

SIMPLICITY IN CHRIST

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SUPPOSITION AND SCRIPTURE

In the October, 1985 issue of *Searching the Scriptures*, an article of mine was published entitled "Car Wrecks And Orphans." Response to the article has been immediate, and I expect that more will follow, if early returns are any indication. This article which I am writing now is not intended to be a blanket response to the correspondence which I have received regarding the previous article, but rather a follow-up to my first article.

Personally, I appreciate the fact that someone takes the time to write to me, whether they agree or disagree with what I write. Each letter will be answered individually as necessary. That is, except those who won't sign their letters or provide a return address. One such letter was postmarked Sheffield, Alabama. Such anonymous offerings always indicate at least two things: the author has no confidence in his position, and doesn't want to hear the truth on the matter. Generally, those who disagree with me cause me to think and study more than those who agree with me, so I appreciate criticism for that reason.

One common factor among those who disagreed with my article on "Car Wrecks And Orphans," was that they complained because my article contained no scripture references. I'm glad that they noticed that fact, and they are exactly right. You cannot deal in **supposition** and **scripture** at the same time, and I'm glad that people are able to see that. Now, we are getting somewhere!

The very title of my article was based on the **supposition** which was invented years ago by those who were defending their church-supported institutional homes as opposed to individual action. That hypothetical car wreck was also supposed to prove that the collection for the saints (1 Cor. 16:1,2), could be used to make contributions to a human institution and generally provide relief to non-saints. Brother W. L. Totty and others

were the ones who started this supposition business without scripture, not I. (See Indianapolis Debate, p. 94).

In addition to the title of my article, I mentioned the term **suppose** (or a form of it), twelve times, and the term **hypothetical** once. I plainly indicated more than once that since some brethren wanted to deal in supposition, that is what we would do. Anyone who can read can see that. I must have done a good job, and those who started this supposition business must have gotten their fill of it. Now, they are wanting scripture! Well, I warned them in my article "that I can suppose as good as the next one when I take the notion," so they got a taste of their own medicine.

Do these brethren really want scripture, or do they just want someone else to use scripture while they use supposition? We shall see. For beginners, let individual Christians fulfill their opportunities and responsibilities toward the needy (Mt. 25:35, 36; Gal. 6:10; Jas. 1:26, 27). Let the home, a divine institution, fulfill its place in God's order of things (Eph. 5-6; 1 Tim. 5:4,8,16). Then, let the church be and do what God designed it to be and do (1 Tim. 3:15; Eph. 4:16; 2 Cor. 9:1). Leave the church as free as possible to devote her time and energies, and **resources**, to spiritual things (Acts 6:2-4; 1 Tim. 5:16).

Part of the format of this column is to keep it short and simple, so that is enough scripture to keep us all busy for a long time. There is more where that came from. And we can either be satisfied with the scriptures, or we can try to find something wrong with those passages cited, and return to supposing that we are going to be overwhelmed with situations which the scriptures will not cover. Take your pick, but be ready to give account unto God as to why you questioned his "wisdom and prudence" (Eph. 1:8).

When we quit this supposition business, and finding fault with the divine arrangement of things, the gospel will be preached and souls saved; the hungry will be fed and clothed and suffering relieved; God will be glorified through Christ and the church; and, peace and harmony will replace strife and division among brethren. If this is what you want, the scriptures can provide it (2 Tim. 3:16,17); earthly wisdom cannot (Jas. 3:14-18).

Don't say it can't be done, for it was done in the first century (Col. 1:23). A pretty good start was made in the early part of the nineteenth century, until some brethren **supposed** that their human societies and innovations could improve upon the divine arrangement of things. We live in the twentieth century, and that is exactly the time frame wherein our judgment shall be determined, for good or bad. I, for one, don't want to be found looking in the scriptures for something that isn't there, while overlooking something that is there, and all the while "supposing" that the Lord is with me (Mt. 7:21-23; Lk. 2:44). How about you?

THE CHURCH AND ITS ELDERS DEBATED BY HOLT AND SMITH

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West Columbia, TX 77485

The nature of the church and its elders was debated by Charles A. Holt of Chattanooga, Tenn. and J. T. Smith of Lake Jackson, Tex. in Lake Jackson on Sept. 30—Oct. 4, 1985. Terry Gardner of Indianapolis, Ind. moderated for Holt, Darrel Rowell of Dumas, Tex. displayed charts. Smith's moderator was Elmer Moore of Lufkin and Bill Robinson, Jr. of Ft. Worth handled the charts. The conduct of the speakers and the audience alike was exemplary. "The local ecclesia" in Holt's view is nothing but saints in a given area who, whether acting independently or jointly, are never "an organized, functional, institutional entity." Elders are "relatively more mature" members who lead somehow without formal appointment or authority. Smith taught that the local church is a distinct entity with a revealed work and formal organization, and that Christians must be a part of this body. A chart labeled "Others Get the Point" quoted F. Furman Kearley, Editor of the Gospel Advocate:

The upholding of his (Holt's position would basically bring to an end the church of our Lord Jesus Christ, and destroy all of the teaching, role and function of Biblical elders (July 15, 1985 letter).

Defining Terms

Since all duties are individual (Rom. 14:12), Holt objected to making "the local ecclesia" "something more" than saints by using terms such as "church" or "corporate worship." Neither does the Bible use "individually" or several words in Holt's propositions, Smith pointed out, but we may use such expressions to define and amplify our points if we show the concept itself is scriptural. Though Judgment is personal, not collective, we will be judged on our conduct in such functional units as the family (Eph. 6:1-4), the government (Rom. 13:1-5), and the local church (1 Cor. 11:17-34).

Smith defined several terms which bothered Holt. **Organized** is the systematic arrangement of Titus 1:5; **functional**, fulfilling a mission (1 Tim. 3:15); **institutional**, organized for charitable or educational work (1 Cor. 12:28); **entity**, existing independently (1 Cor. 12:27); and **body corporate**, a society capable of conducting business as an individual (1 Tim. 5:16). Smith showed that Holt's "local ecclesia" is an **institution** in the view of "Jesus People," an **organization** because of some systematic arrangement for assemblies, and a **functional unit** if able to work as a body. But no one in Holt's view can "prove that the local ecclesia consti-

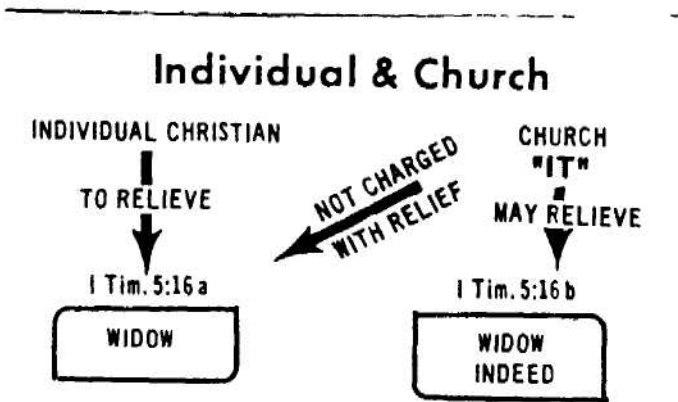
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tutes 'something more' than a group of saints."

No documentation was offered by Holt for his claim that ecclesia was translated "church" under the threat of death by an "edict of King James." The American Standard Version uses "church" and represents 101 of the world's finest Greek Scholars, far removed from King James!

Some Key Passages

Holt often stressed that a local church is "nothing more than disciples/saints" and asked Smith to prove it "something more." 1 Timothy 5:16 became a key passage: "If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed." Smith's "Individual & Church" chart distinguished action by individuals which is not local church action from the local church's work:



Notice that the church is not charged with the relief work performed by certain individuals, in order that "it" may be free to relieve "widows indeed." The church is a distinct entity with formal members and elders. Its mission and organization are clearly set forth in Scripture. But Holt insisted that the "it" here is in no sense "a body corporate or an institution." "It's just disciples together."

The treasury of 1 Corinthians 16:2 shows that the church can function as a distinct entity, but Holt interprets the verse as personal only: "Lay up by yourself somewhere." That contradicts the provision, "that there be no gatherings when I come." Acts 6:1-6 proves the church was organized with special servants, pooled funds, and a work to be done outside the assembly. Holt only said the church here was "not an organization or body corporate."

Smith argued that the three steps required in Matthew 18:15-17 reveal "something more" than individual or even group action. If our brother sins against us, we go to "him alone," then take "one or two more," then "tell it unto the church." Step two has saints acting together, but not as a local church. Step three pictures "something more"—take it to the church! Holt intimated that the "something more" here is just more witnesses and declared that even when saints function

together with "other members in assemblies," the assembly is not a functional unit. Only "individual Christians are the functional units."

The Eldership: What, How, and Who?

Smith's view of the church puts elders between man and God, Holt protested. Elders were compared to the Pope. "You give away all your rights when you submit to elders," said Holt. Smith asked if we should tell wives to get back to God and not have husbands over them. "She is under Christ when under her husband," Holt responded. He sees the principle in the home but not in the local church. Smith used many passages and definitions from Greek lexicons proving that **elders have a legitimate sphere of authority to lead in decision making in judgmental matters in the church, just as husbands do in the home.** "Rule" in that sense is used of elders and of **fathers** (1 Tim. 5:17; 3:4,12). Such authority is "delegated, not primary," and men must use it "as exemplary leaders, not harsh and hypocritical dictators" (1 Pet. 5:3-4), Smith explained.

Holt sees elders as mature brethren who encourage assemblies in "pure unstructured functioning" without the formation of autonomous congregations in various localities around a city. His concept is one "church per city, no matter how many meeting places exist. "Church" in Acts 20:28 and "flock" in 1 Peter 5:2 refer to God's people without limitation "to any segment, 'local church' or functional entity." To tend the flock "**among you**" means to tend "any and all (saints) you can find" from place to place. Smith said such passages limit the role of elders to a local church and observed that Holt was drifting from a city bishopric to a **regional**—or even universal—bishopric.

Anyone who matures is an elder by virtue of attaining the qualification and needs no "claptrap" of formal appointment, said Holt. When Smith argued that Matthias was qualified to be an Apostle but had to be appointed, Holt averred he was no genuine Apostle and his selection in Acts 1:15-26 was a mistake! Since Paul was qualified to be "an elder-bishop-pastor," he **was** one, as were Titus and Timothy. Smith noted that such broad concepts of "elder" must include **women**, and Holt did indeed leave the door open for women. Galatians 6:1 tells of an elders' work, Holt said, and, "If you can do that, you had better get up and do it my brother. Or **sister**, it doesn't make any difference!"

In view of different practices among brethren regarding the church, its eldership, instrumental music, church gyms, and marriage and divorce, Holt embraced unity-in-diversity. "That's what Romans 14 is all about," he added. Smith urged that we must obey "the teaching of Christ" on such matters in order to be united with God as His faithful children (2 Jn. 9-11).

For audio cassette tapes (\$10.00), contact J. T. Smith, P.O. 698, Lake Jackson, TX 77566. For video tapes (\$40,000, contact Chuck Ainsworth, 114 S. Magnolia, Lake Jackson. Charts are available from the disputants (C. A. Holt, P.O. Box 21584, Chattanooga, TN 37421). A repeat debate is set for March 3-7, 1986 in Chattanooga.

WHO THEN CAN BE SAVED?

*A. C. Grider*Rt. 4, 1671 Bill St.
Shepherdsville, KY 40165

Recently wife and I were driving by a large Denomination as the people were gathering for worship. A white haired man got out of his car with his bible in hand and headed for the front door. My wife remarked: Isn't it a shame to think that every last one of those people are going to be eternally lost." Indeed it is a shame. But the fact remains that indeed all of them are yet in their sins. It is hard to contemplate and it is hard for some, even of my brethren, to admit such. But, let's examine the matter.

Jesus (the Saviour) said "he that believeth and is baptized **shall be saved**" (Mark 16:16). But these people do not believe that. Nor does ANY member of ANY Denomination believe that. Everyone of them believe that one is saved BEFORE and WITHOUT water baptism. Peter (guided by the H.S.) said "Repent and be baptized everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). But these people do not believe that. They emphatically DENY that baptism is for the remission of sins! And Paul said we are "baptized INTO Christ" (Rom. 6:3 and Gal. 3:27). But these people do not believe that! Nor does any member of ANY denomination believe that we are baptized into Christ! "Baptism doth also now save us" (1 Pet. 3:21). Not so, say the denominations! We arise from baptism to "walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4). Not so, say the denominations! We are to be baptized to "wash away our sins" (Acts 22:16). Not so, say the denominations! So, anyway you slice it members of denominations DO NOT believe what the Bible says about baptism. But this is just the tip of the ice berg.

The Bible says the Lord adds people to the church as they are being saved (Acts 2:42). But members of denominations DO NOT believe such. They JOIN the church of THEIR choice and completely relegate Christ to the background. If the Lord doesn't add you to the church (and he does NOT add people to denominations) you are not in the Lord's church.

Again, the Bible says for one to enter into the kingdom of heaven, he must do the will of the father (Matt. 7:21). But denominational people do not believe that! The Bible says Christ became the author of eternal salvation to them that obey him (Heb. 5:8-9). But the people who comprise the denominations do not believe any such thing! The Bible says that people who are "servants" of sin" obey the form of doctrine delivered

and then they become "servants of righteousness (Rom. 6:17-18). But members of denominations do not believe any such thing! In other words these people deny everything the Bible says about obeying the Lord or doing his will. Oh, sure, they believe you should do the will of the Father in heaven. But they DO NOT believe that such is necessary to enter into the kingdom of Heaven. Sure, they believe we should obey Christ, but they DO NOT believe that obedience is necessary to becoming servants of righteousness. So, we must face the facts. If the Bible is true, **and it is**, then members of denominations are not in the kingdom of heaven. Christ is not their saviour (author of their salvation), and they have not become servants of righteousness.

We don't need a "dialogue" with these people. We just need to insist that they obey the gospel of God. We need to emphasize that to get into the kingdom of heaven one must DO THE WILL OF GOD. We need to let these people know that we love them and that we are interested in them, but that we DO NOT believe they are saved, short of obedience.

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KEVIN A. SULC, P.O. Box 463, Westfield, IN 46074—For the past five months I have been working with the church in Westfield, Indiana which is ten minutes north of Indianapolis on U.S. 31. Westfield has a population of about 4,000. The church has been meeting here for four years. I am the first full time preacher. We now have 24 members with 12 children and have grown in the past few months. One has been baptized and a family of six has begun working and worshipping with us and we have seen growth in knowledge and spirituality. For the most part, there is an eagerness to learn and become better disciples. While there are individual weaknesses, these can be overcome by patience and solid teaching. Nine other congregations help support us. In addition to public services and home Bible studies, I go every week to the State Reformatory at Pendleton, IN, to teach along with Alan Jones, Phil Morgan, Joe McCameron, Roger Shouse and Mike Scott. Alan Jones has been going since 1980 and Phil Morgan since 1981. The rest of us have joined in recently. There are presently three faithful Christians there. Two more are ready to be baptized. The administration makes baptism a difficult thing to accomplish. The man I am studying with now is also to the point of conversion. We are trying to arrange for the Christians there to meet on Sundays and partake of the Lord's Supper. Please pray for the work here in Westfield and Pendleton. If you are ever in this area, stop and worship with us. We are on State Route 32 (Main St.) at the corner of Cherry St. We meet on Sundays at 9:30, 10:20 and 6 and at 7 on Wednesday nights. My wife and I would love to hear from any of our friends. Our phone number is (317) 896-3897.

CLARENCE W. "BUTCH" FELL, III, 1812 Boston, Ft. Smith, AR 72901—After two years of part time preaching, my family and I decided to leave secular work on Nov. 27, 1985 and devote our full time to the work of the Lord. We will be working with the church on Highway 45 in Midland, Arkansas. Midland is a friendly community with good opportunities for home studies and other personal work and we are optimistic about the work of teaching the saving gospel. We ask for your prayers.

NEEDS CONTACTS IN IZMIR TURKEY

MARY WARD, PSC 3096, APO NY 09224—Since my husband is in the Air Force we have been transferred to Izmir, Turkey and I wish to make contact with any known Christians either already in that area or who might be coming. If there is no faithful church there, I would like to help get one started. I will have to depend on good preaching tapes and tapes of spiritual songs to keep me encouraged and help me grow. (Editor's note: This is the spirit that sparked the early church as "They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). Some of you brethren who tape sermons or Bible classes could render a valuable service by sending copies to this sister and to others in similar circumstances).

ANOTHER HOLT-SMITH DEBATE

There is, according to original plans, to be another discussion between brethren Charles A. Holt and J. T. Smith. The first was held in Lake Jackson, Texas, where J. T. Smith lives, Sept. 30-Oct. 4, 1985. The second one is to be held in Chattanooga, Tennessee where Charles A. Holt lives. The propositions will be the same as in Lake Jackson which included a discussion of the church as a "functional unit" and the "eldership." The dates will be March 3, 4, 6 and 7, 1986 nightly at 7:30. The church is North Hixon (Chattanooga area) has offered their facilities for the discussion. For further information regarding the exact location of the building, call Bill Walton at (615) 870-8029.

NEEDS HELP

Due to five years of medical problems and a serious chronic disease, **FRED MCKINNEY**, a gospel preacher in Northwest Indiana is struggling with overwhelming doctor and hospital bills. He does not have enough support to maintain hospitalization insurance. He has been

preaching 23 years. Those contacted thus far have not supplied sufficient help. For more information, contact **BOB STARR**, an elder of the Woodmar, Indiana church at 2330 E. Stager Rd., Crete, IL 60417. Phone (312) 758-2445. Or as a reference, you may contact **Leslie Dieseltkamp**, 1730 W. Galena Blvd. 102 W. Aurora, IL 60506.

PREACHERS NEEDED

BOWLING GREEN, OHIO—The church here needs a full time evangelist with a strong interest in personal evangelism. We are located in a large campus town with good teaching opportunities. Partial support is available. Contact **George W. Lambroff** (419) 352-8842; **Robert McCracken** (419) 352-1724 or write: Central Church of Christ, P.O. Box 82, Bowling Green, Ohio 43402.

NEW CUMBERLAND, WEST VIRGINIA—The New Cumberland Heights church is looking for a preacher. We would prefer a middle-aged man, or older. We are small with some moving away and retiring, but we are able to support a preacher fully for a couple of years before any outside help would be needed. If interested write: Church of Christ, Box 131, New Cumberland, WV 26047, or call evenings the following: **D. B. Wharton** (304) 748-8229; **Lloyd Gamer** (304) 723-1607; or **Robert Ridgeway** (304) 564-3864.

JONESBORO, TENNESSEE—The church here needs a full time preacher. We have about 50 in attendance. Some outside support would be needed but we can help with contacts to secure that. Those interested may call (615) 753-3475, or (615) 753-3540.

RALPH C. SMART, P.O. Box 56, Milbridge, Maine 04658—(From MAINE EVENTS)—At Milbridge, the building site is cleared and ready for construction to begin in the spring. One was baptized here recently. Three have been baptized lately at Ellsworth where **Troy Adams** preaches. There are reports here of growing interest from a mailing program. In Bangor, the work is recovering from a bout with liberalism. The 7th annual lectureship was held in November. Speakers were **Ken Williams**, **Bruce Hudson** and **R. C. Smart, Sr.** Work is progressing on the new building at Pittsfield. The old one was lost by fire. **Bruce Hudson** or I plan to go once a month to Fredrickton where a small group of women have kept a spark alive for several years. In October I was in a gospel meeting with the growing work at Hudson, New York and also in Bristol Vermont to take part in their lectureship along with **Larry Bailey**, **Ed Paquette**, **Rea Pennock** and **John Flannery**.

RUDY GUMPAD, Tuguegarao, Cagayan, Republic of the Philippines—The work here continues to prosper. We have baptisms monthly and are growing spiritually. Most of our men are now trained and can take part in public services in various ways, including some who can deliver sermons. Our radio program continues to make good contacts. Recently we baptized a preacher and his wife from the Christian Church who were reached initially through the radio program. We had some studies on instrumental music and other differences. Our work in the Cagayan Valley is hindered by liberalism, Premillennialism, the one cup theory and other errors. There are some groups which are very loose about smoking, drinking and dancing. Politically, our country today is hot due to the snap election in January, 1986. The insurgency rate is getting higher. There are killings and other crimes committed in every zone and our people are afraid. The military is always on "red alert." Please pray for our peace and order.

(Editor's Note: We are hearing from brethren in various places in the Philippines who report increased political turmoil. Crime appears to be rampant in many places, prices are very unstable and action from the New People's Army (a Communist guerrilla force) is on the rise. Many of the brethren are in fear. Pray for them. Help those who are worthy while you can, for the door of access may close there as it has in other places around the world.)

**EDITORIAL LEFT-OVERS
SOUR PICKLE RELIGION**

Even Christians who were servants, owned as property, in the first century, were instructed to "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things" (Tit. 2:10). Faithfulness with cheerfulness even under that adverse circumstance showed the beauty of the "doctrine of God" in terms of what it did to set free the human spirit. Joseph in Egypt could well have turned bitter, wallowed in self-pity, given up and become a surly, belligerent servant who did no more than he had to do. He did not succumb to the temptation. Peter wrote of Christians under trial of faith and in the same breath spoke of "joy unspeakable and full of glory" (1 Pet. 1:6-8).

The wise man said "A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken" (Prov. 15:13). Again "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones" (Prov. 17:22). There is a time to weep but it is not all the time. A sullen, morose spirit should not be the prevailing disposition of a Christian. It ill becomes us. Besides that, it certainly does not "adorn the doctrine of God." Come on, brethren, the world is watching us. Who is interested in a religion which produces sour pickle countenances and a bemoaning "poor me" disposition? Paul wrote "Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice" (Phil. 4:4). Oh yes, did I mention that when he said that, he was a prisoner in Rome, chained to a guard?

* * * * *

ALMOST PERSUADED

A few years ago, the father of a gospel preacher who is a good friend of mine, was visiting his son while I was there in a meeting. He was invited to eat with us every night. After the second night he said "Boys, almost I am persuaded to be a preacher." After the fourth night he was sick and had to stay home. He said "I don't see how you fellows stand it." Let's do a little figuring on that. If a man conducts 20 meetings a year (average six days per meeting) and eats two meals a day of the culinary delights our sisters prepare so graciously, that is the equivalent of eating Thanksgiving dinner 240 times a year. That is the reason I always ask the brethren to schedule only one meal a day for me during a meeting. You see, that way I get to eat Thanksgiving dinner 120 times a year!

PROSPECTIVE POLITICIAN

One of my favorite humorists is Bob Murphy, the lawyer from Nacogdoches, Texas who stays busy giving speeches around the country. He said once: "Now I don't know nothin' about foreign policy. I don't know nothin' about the balance of payment I don't know nothin' about deficit spending. In fact, I'm a little bit surprised that they ain't asked me to run for Congress." I don't know about you, but I think he would fit right in!

* * * * *

EDITOR'S MEETING SCHEDULE—1986

January 24-26—Northeast, Gainesville, Florida
March—Morris Rd., Gulfport, Mississippi (10-16)
West Columbia, Texas (23-28) April—Winchester, Kentucky (first week) Jordan, Ontario, Canada (20-25)
South River, Ontario, Canada (April 27-May 2) May—Lang Rd., Houston, Texas (25-30) June—Southside Lectures, Pasadena, Texas (June 1-5) Longview, Texas (8-13)
Green River Rd., Lincoln County, Kentucky (22-27)
July—Paducah, Kentucky 7-13
Sycamore, Gravel Switch, Kentucky (21-27) August—Eastside, Russellville, Alabama (10-15) September—Hickory Grove (Cumberland County, Kentucky 7-12) Expressway, Louisville, Kentucky 14-19) Lake Jackson, Texas (21-26)
October—Metairie (New Orleans), Louisiana (date to be worked out) Hodgenville, Kentucky (5-10) Marrtown Rd., Parkersburg, West Virginia (26-31) November—Paden City, West Virginia (2-7) Lawrenceburg, Kentucky (17-23)

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS 354
RESTORATIONS 70
(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)