

# 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

*H. E. Phillips*

P.O. Box 1631  
Lutz, FL 33549



### SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE

"... But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ. . ." (Eph. 4:15). The setting and context of this verse indicates that the "speaking in love" concerns the doctrine of Christ which provides the "Unity of the Spirit" and opposes that state of being carried about with "every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." This speaking in love also concerns the edifying of the body; the putting off of the old man and putting on of the new man. It involves the speech to "neither give place to the devil" (vs. 27).

What does Paul mean by the expression: "speaking the truth in love"? Does he mean that there can be no plain, condemning of sin; no language of rebuke should be used? Does he mean that "name calling" should never be used? How shall we determine what the apostle meant by the expression?

Before we look into the scriptures to determine what this expression means, perhaps it is in order to inquire how one tells when another is not "speaking the truth in love." What standard do men use to decide this? What do those who condemn one for not speaking in love mean by "speaking in love"? I think that some of them mean those who speak "boldly" are not speaking in love. Others mean that strong words of condemnation are not words spoken in love; some mean that when a brother's name is used in connection with a false doctrine or practice, it is not "speaking in love." Just how do we determine when one is "speaking the truth in

love"? Since the apostle Paul was the instrument of the Holy Spirit to pen these words, let us observe how he spoke and we will learn what it means.

It meant to speak boldly the word of God. "Great is my **boldness** of speech toward you. . ." (2 Cor. 7:4). It means to use **plainness** of speech. "Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech" (2 Cor. 3:12). It includes **rude** (unskilled, unpolished) speech. "But though I be **rude** in speech. . ." (2 Cor. 11:6). It means to make **manifest** or to reveal. "That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak" (Col. 4:4). It means to speak to **please** God and not men. "But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as **pleasing** men, but God, which trieth our hearts" (1 Thess. 2:4). "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to **please men?** for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10). It means to speak the truth **without fear**. "Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace" (Acts 18:9). It means to speak to put another to shame. " "I speak to your shame..." (1 Cor. 6:5). It means to speak the **truth** and only the truth. "Whereunto I am ordained a preacher, and an apostle, (I speak the truth in Christ and lie not;) a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and verity" (1 Tim. 2:7)."


It means to speak **sound doctrine**. "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine . . . Sound speech, that cannot be condemned . . ." (Titus 2:1, 8). It means not to speak in the **enticing words** of man's wisdom. "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom . . ." (1 Cor. 2:4). It means to **reprove** the works of darkness. "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11). It means to **rebuke** with all authority, sharply, and before all. "These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority" (Titus, 2:15). "This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith" (Titus 1:13). "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear" (1 Tim. 5:20). It means the **calling of names**. "Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme" (1 Tim. 1:20). "For Demas hath forsaken

me, having loved this present world. . ." (2 Tim. 4:10). "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil:, the Lord reward him according to his works" (2 Tim. 4:14). "But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. Then Saul, (who also is called Paul) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, and said, O full of all subtlety and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" (Acts 13:8-10).

What all "speaking the truth is love" means, it certainly includes speaking boldly, plainly, making manifest, speaking to please God rather than men, to speak without fear, to speak to shame evil doers, speaking only the truth, to speak sound doctrine, to reprove with all authority, sharply and before all, and calling names of those in sin.

Most of those who criticize for speaking boldly and plainly, think of the love as applying to that tender emotion toward the individual to whom the preaching is done. They view it as "loving sinners" so as not to hurt their feelings and expose their error too sharply. The real meaning of "speaking the truth in love" is to have that love for Christ, for the truth, for the lost souls of men to hold nothing back that would be profitable for them. True love does not rejoice in iniquity, but does rejoice in the truth (1 Cor. 13:6). I must love men so as to make them know the truth.

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**CONNIE W. ADAMS, Editor**

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# Editorial

*Connie W. Adams*

P.O. Box 69  
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## "WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?"

Not long ago I received a notice in the mail of a "Medical Evangelism Seminar" to be conducted January 3 and 4 in Dallas, Texas. The advertising makes it plain that the medical "missions" being conducted by liberal brethren are viewed as an evangelistic outreach. It also showed that churches are involved in sending and supporting doctors, nurses and technicians.

Before someone even asks, let me make it clear that I am not opposed to sick people receiving medical attention in this country or around the world. They that are sick need a physician. But it is not the mission of the church, for which our Lord gave his blood, to build and maintain hospitals, clinics, nor to support doctors and nurses in the practice of medicine anywhere. This practice grows out of the social gospel concept that the church must minister to "the whole man." Jesus said "my kingdom is not of this world" (Jno. 18:36). Paul said "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 14:17).

That Christians have a right to build roads, dig wells, help people with soil conservation, engage in gainful employment, operate gymnasiums for physical fitness, teach school, run day-care centers, or practice medicine is not in dispute. What is in question here is the role of the church as a collective body to underwrite such activities. This is an extension of the same concept set in motion in Japan, Germany and Italy after World War II when efforts were made to convert people with pasta, rice and clothing. The only power God has given us to use in saving the lost is the gospel of Christ. That alone is the "power of God unto salvation" (Rom. 1:16). The use of anything else betrays a lack of confidence in the power of the gospel. The New Testament is silent as to such activities in the methods used by the apostles of our Lord, even though one of the traveling companions and co-laborers with Paul was Luke, the beloved physician. If he set up medical clinics in Philippi, Thessalonica or Corinth in order to reach people with the gospel, then the New Testament says nothing about it.

Back to the advertising of the Dallas seminar, much may be learned from the program arrangement. One man was to discuss "Current Happenings in Medical Evangelism." Another was to discuss "How Medical Practice and Evangelism Fit Together." Reports were

to be heard from Nigerian Christian Hospital, Cap Haitien Clinic, Haiti, Clinica Christiana, Guatemala, Belize, Ghana, Chamala Mission Hospital in Tanzania (given by the elders of the Springtown, Texas church) and other works. One was to speak on "Involving the Church in Your Mission." There were to be group meetings to discuss how colleges could help prepare medical doctors, nurses, dentists, lab and medical technicians and other medical professionals for such mission work. One was to speak on "Psychological Testing." One session was to be devoted to "How Three Churches Are Involved." The closing session was aptly entitled "Where Do We Go From Here?" Indeed, where?

According to the New Testament, local churches are to support the truth (1 Tim. 3:15), edify themselves (Eph. 4:16) and relieve their needy members (1 Tim. 5:16; Acts 6:1-6). From that simple and noble work, brethren have gone far afield in building every conceivable kind of institution standing between the churches and the field of work. There have been missionary societies, church supported colleges, relief societies for children, old folks and unwed mothers, and now for many years in foreign fields, hospitals and clinics all funded by churches. When N.B. Hardeman, in 1947, said the church support of orphan homes and colleges stand or fall together, in an attempt to get churches to accept the principle of church support for the colleges, I am sure he had no idea what tall oaks would grow from such little acorns. Trends, once established, are hard to reverse, or even slow down.

A few of the men are still living who planted these acorns of error three decades ago. Some of them are now standing in a forest of tall trees with a hatchet trying to undo what they have set in motion. It will not work. Let's get back to basics. Let the church be the church. Let it do the work God gave it and be content therewith. Let us all be careful about the trends we set. "They have sown the wind; they shall reap the whirlwind."

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(Rom. 4:3)

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### COMMITTEES

**QUESTION:** *I've heard a lot about churches without elders appointing committees to carry out certain responsibilities. For example, I know of one church that has appointed a preacher-selection committee with it's chairman. Is this scriptural?*

**ANSWER:** A church cannot function properly unless someone (or ones) is delegated to act on behalf of the church. When a benevolent need arose in the Jerusalem church, the apostles called the church together and told them to select seven men "whom we may appoint over this business" (Acts 6:1-3). These seven servants coordinated the work and saw that distribution was made to the needy widows.

When a benevolent situation arises today, some brethren would have to be chosen (assuming the church is not fully organized with elders and deacons) to look into the matter and make some evaluations and suggestions to the church. Then these men could be authorized to take whatever steps are necessary to alleviate the problem. These men might be called the "benevolent committee."

There is nothing wrong in calling those who act for the church a "committee." Webster defines the word, "a body of persons delegated to consider, investigate, take action on, or report on some matter." Hence, a "committee" in the church is a body of men who have been delegated or authorized by the congregation to consider, investigate, report and to take action. There is no usurpation of authority or no arbitrary function. The committee acts by delegation of the church.

In the selection of a preacher, the whole church cannot get on the phone and inquire as to what preacher is available and interested in locating with them. This work must be done by agents for the church. Two or three brethren may be chosen to make an investigation, and even authorized to invite a man to come for a "try-out." To have a chairman among the group is simply to coordinate its function. The group might be called the "Preacher-selection committee." The church would make the decision as to whether it wanted the preacher to come and work with them.

Many times churches in a building program appoint a "building committee." Men are selected who have experience in finances and building construction. They work toward finalizing the blueprints for the building, contact contractors, receive bids and seek bank financing.

Final approval would be the responsibility of the church in a business meeting.

Whenever a committee's job has finished and the need fulfilled, then the committee is to dissolve. A committee does not (and it must not) take the place of elders. Men cannot be appointed as a committee to rule and oversee the church. A committee acts for the church and is amenable to the wishes of the church.

Sometimes elders, at their discretion, select a committee to expedite a work. The committee would conduct itself the same way in this situation as it would where there are no elders. The only difference here is the committee would report back to the elders instead of the congregation.

Delegation of responsibility is needed for a variety of things in the church, and whether the groups given assignments are called "committees" or not, they certainly function as such.

### Leaving God's Presence

**QUESTION:** *The Bible teaches that God is omnipresent, that is, He is every where (Psa. 139:7-12; Jer. 23:23-24). Yet, we read that Cain went out from the presence of the Lord" (Gen. 4:16). How could Cain go out of God's presence if He is everywhere?*

**ANSWER:** Cain did not leave God's presence in the sense that he went beyond His jurisdiction or awareness. Rather, Cain was rejected by God because of his sin, and he went out, separated himself, from God's protection and heavenly blessings.

When God was chastising Israel by the Syrian king, Hazael, He preserved them by His grace from annihilation, "and would not destroy them from his presence as yet" (2 Kings 13:23). Ultimately, however, the Assyrians conquered Israel and took people captive, removing them from God's sight (2 Kings 17:18). Being removed from God's sight (presence) was rejection by God, losing His protection, and standing defenseless against their enemies.

Later, God cast Judah out from His presence (2 Kings 24:20), allowing the Babylonians to take them captive. This was called, "removing them out of His sight" (2 Kings 24:3).

Jehovah will punish the disobedient with "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord. ..." (2 Thess. 1:9). This is not only banishment from His immediate presence, but a rejection by God of His blessedness, glory and honor in an eternal fellowship.

Hence, Cain's leaving God's presence is his separation from God's fellowship and His providential care. John W. Haley takes a different view. He states that the "presence of the Lord" from which Adam hid himself, and Cain and Jonah fled, was the "visible and special manifestation of God to them at the time; or else it denotes the place where that manifestation was made" (*Alleged Discrepancies of the Bible*, p. 58).

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*Rodney Miller*

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### ISAIAH SAW IN THE TEMPLE WHO TO TRUST

"In the year of King Uzziah's death, I saw the Lord... with the train of his robe filling the temple." (Isa. 6:1). When Isaiah "saw the Lord" the stage was set for the entire book of Isaiah. Within Chapter 6 there are some of the most powerful lessons for today that could be found anywhere. This was the turning point in the life of Isaiah when he was called from his comfortable surroundings of the palace to the white-hot heat of a spokesman for the eternal God to a wicked and rebellious people.

Uzziah was, next to David and Solomon, the most powerful of the Judian Kings. He had ruled for 52 years when he died, giving the troubled nation a breath of security amidst turmoil. In his 52 years he had been blessed as a successful warrior and been given many victories. He had built a great war machine. He was popular and well thought of by the nation. Yet, amidst his domestic popularity and military strength, the lengthening shadow of Assyria fell over this small Judaic nation. The mighty and dreadful Assyrian giant was about to flex its muscles and overrun Jerusalem. But, as long as the rulership of Uzziah kept Judah at peace with herself and the Egyptians remained a faithful ally, Assyria might be held off.

Yet now for Isaiah, a righteous young man, it was time for a call to a deeper level of commitment than he held prior to Uzziah's death. There were lessons to learn for Isaiah and for us as well.

#### **I. Isaiah had to learn who to trust.**

It has often been said, "show who you put your trust in and you will reveal the face of your God." V. 1, "I saw the Lord sitting on the throne." God wanted Isaiah to see that even though his personal friend and his object of national stability was dead, the **THRONE WAS NOT EMPTY**. God is sitting on the throne... that God is still in control! Isaiah had to have the foundation that if Jerusalem was to survive the terrible cruelty of the Assyrians, that the real power was in the king on the throne in Heaven and not in the king on the throne in Jerusalem. Isaiah needed to see the correct object of his trust.

Do not we of today's world need to see the Lord "high and lifted up" or "lofty and exalted" in order to know that our own existence as well as our own success comes

from Him and not our own **programs, pep, and propaganda?** The spiritual growth of individuals and congregations does not come from **OUR** programs of training or gospel meetings, or buildings, bulletins and budgets, but from the **eternal God**. Our feverish activities are **NOT TO BE THE OBJECT** of our trust! If we think we can get the work off the ground by jumping high enough, the only thing we will get is tired or burned out.

There was an entire political party in Jerusalem that said their survival was found in the alliances with Egypt or Babylon. 30:1-2: "Woe to the rebellious children . . . who make alliances . . . who proceed down to Egypt without consulting me, to take refuge in the safety of Pharaoh and to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt." Again in 31:1: "Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help and rely on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many in horsemen, because they are very strong, **BUT THEY DO NOT LOOK TO THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL NOR DO THEY SEEK THE LORD!**" Isaiah could feel what he preached: "On whom do you trust," because he had learned his lesson as well. Both we and Isaiah need to remove our eyes from **WHAT WE CAN SEE**, and focus on **WHAT WE CAN'T SEE!** In II Cor. 4:18: ". . . we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." If we trust in the "seen world" we are in trouble. If we trust in our husbands or wives, or in our children, and then marriage problems occur or the children turn out to be unfaithful, we are left with an empty throne. If we trust in our ability to teach the class or preach the sermon and then everything doesn't turn out successfully in our resources, be they talent or money, one day the throne will be empty.

We must see the unseen throne of God and His greatness, "lofty and exalted." Only then will we never have an empty throne but an eternal, all powerful, loving, glorious God who is the object of our total trust. There is no "back up plan" in case He isn't able to take care of us. It is just **HIS GLORY** that we look upon.

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### **QUESTIONING THE POPE'S AUTHORITY**

The foundation of Roman Catholicism is the contention that the pope is a successor of the apostle Peter and the Vicar of Christ on earth. If that be true (and that's a big IF), it would be reasonable to believe that the pope is infallible in matters of doctrine and has absolute authority over the Catholic Church. That is what Catholics are supposed to believe without question or reservation. But do they?

As I write this (Dec. 2, 1985), a special synod of bishops is assembled in Vatican City to "assess the impact of the reforms of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65)." According to news reports, there is much discussion, disagreement and rebellion in the Catholic Church, even among the bishops and between them and the pope.

Speaking of news, as usual, the news media is covering the actions and decisions of the assembly of bishops. The NBC television network had a special report last week on the synod. In addition to all of this, National Geographic of December 1985 has 56 pages of beautiful color on Vatican City and its treasures. This causes us to feel that our efforts are a drop in the ocean, but we must continue to speak out against this false yet powerful system.

The NBC report focused on the serious and increasing shortage of priests in the United States. They attributed that primarily to celibacy and the life-style demanded for priests. If they would only accept the teaching of the Bible they would understand that all Christians—both men and women—are priests (I Peter 2:5, 9; Rev. 1:6).

The following quotations by the Associated Press in Vatican City will give us a fair representation of the subject under consideration:

"Canadian bishops, adding their voices to Austrian and Japanese prelates, suggested that a way be found to allow divorced and remarried Roman Catholics to receive communion.

"I feel a tremendous sympathy for persons in that situation and I would certainly like to be able to reach out to them and come to their aid," said archbishop James Martin Hayes of Halifax.

"The church does not recognize divorce, and Catholics who marry again without an annulment are excluded from communion.

"What I am asking for is that either the synod or

another group look at the theological principles involved there and see if the discipline we now have really interprets in the best way for the good of the persons concerned and especially the rights of the persons concerned," Hayes told a news conference.

"Hayes spoke a day after prelates from Austria and Japan suggested to the extraordinary synod of bishops that divorced and remarried Catholics be allowed to participate fully in the church."

"Archbishop Karl Berg of Salzburg, called for 'more understanding' for Catholics who are divorced and remarry.

"Berg suggested that 'perhaps after a period of penance they might be readmitted to the sacraments'."

"A recent poll of American Catholics conducted by the New York Times and CBS News showed 73 percent favor the acceptance of remarriage.

"At a closing session of a 1980 bishops' synod on the family, Pope John Paul II said divorced Catholics who marry outside the church 'can and ought to participate in the life' of the church but cannot receive communion unless they abstain from sexual relations.

"The Austrian prelate also touched on the issue of the Vatican's teaching on birth control. Berg questioned the teaching, which bars artificial contraception, or was asking that it be better explained."

"Bishop Malone (James W. Malone of Youngstown, Ohio) said he was encouraged with the synod, the dominant theme of which appeared to be 'universal support for Vatican II; universal agreement that the council was and remains a great gift of God to the church.'

"That assessment, Bishop Malone said, 'seems to be coupled with realistic recognition of the many questions and problems that we have 20 years after the Council'."

In view of what has been reported, the principle point of this article is: If Catholics truly believe what they teach about the authority of the pope, why don't they ask him for the facts about these controversial matters and then accept what he says? If the system operates like they teach that it should, there should never be any controversy or questions as to what Catholics are to believe and practice.

Have you noticed that in all the reports about the synod of bishops, as well as all such meetings, not one word is said about any reference to or concern for what the Bible teaches? Remember, the Catholic Church teaches that it is responsible for giving the Bible to the world. Why then don't they at least check to see what it teaches about priests, bishops, birth control, divorce and remarriage, etc.?

True Christians accept Christ alone as the head of the church and understand that he governs and guides His people today through His written will, the New Testament. Without any synods, councils or controversy, they know now what to believe and practice and the same will be true next year and for as long as the church is on the earth! They do not merely claim to accept His authority, but they demonstrate that they do by having no creed but Christ and no book but the Bible.

We plead with our Catholic friends to turn from that system of confusion and inconsistency and come into

the true body of Christ where He has all authority. The apostles never one time questioned that, and when there was any doubt about what was right they were concerned only with learning and following that which was the will of the Lord. That will stand the test of time, and guide the people of God unto all good works (2 Timothy 3:16, 17).

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## **"THE SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER" (2) RESPONSE TO RADER**

**Robert Waters  
P.O. Box 601  
Mt. View, AR 72560**

The Jan. issue contained an article entitled "The Security of the Believer" which was written by me and was reviewed by Donnie Rader. If you have not read them please do so before continuing. Elsewhere in this issue is a response to this article. Please study it along with this one. In dealing with his review I shall use the headings as he used them.

**WHAT IS THE ISSUE:** I must take exception to the wording of some of what Donnie says the issue is not. He said, "This issue is not a question of security or confidence". The Christian should have confidence but the question is does he when he should? My reason for writing is the fact that the confidence of many Christians has been shaken due to the teachings of certain preachers over the last few years.

Then brother Radar said, "The question is not whether or not the Christian can live perfect. Neither of us believe that he can." Even though he admits that a Christian cannot live perfectly (several prominent men of his persuasion are saying one can), his doctrine necessitates that one do so to have confidence and security. You see, he believes that every sin, without qualification, causes God to sever his grace and fellowship, leaving one to walk in darkness. So according to him, if one is in the light he is perfect, in the sense of sinlessness. Therefore, if one has confidence and security he must believe that he is sinless. Thankfully though, they do not practice this doctrine. For example, when they preach a funeral for a faithful Christian they assure the family and friends that their loved one has gone to a better place, regardless of the real possibility that the deceased may have inadvertently sinned and died before wording any kind of confession. Another example is that they wait until a brother refuses to repent, rather than withdraw fellowship from him as soon as his sin becomes known. I wonder if it is alright to practice something the Bible doesn't teach.

Note that my brother didn't deny holding an extreme position. Brother Rader, isn't truth always between extremes? He concluded this section by saying, "The charge that brother Waters makes . . . is no different

than the charge made by Calvinists . . ." Calvinists teach apostasy is impossible; the Bible teaches that it is possible, but Radar teaches that it is inevitable. Incidentally, in the Woods-Nunnery debate that was mentioned, Woods responded by saying that the position that Nunnery was making fun of was "bald legalism". Woods holds the position that I do.

**CONFIDENCE, HOPE AND SECURITY:** Under this heading brother Rader makes his first of a number of quotes of things I have written elsewhere. I thought he was supposed to review my article, not everything I have ever written on this subject. I would like to reply to everything, especially the quotes he took out of context, but unfortunately space will not allow me to do so at this time.

Donnie implies that I believe a Christian may continue in sin, or practice sin, because I have said that the cleansing of 1 Jn. 1:7 is "continuously applied." But what he apparently failed to notice is that I have consistently taught that the one who has the blood continuously applied is faithful and diligent—a true Christian.

Next he wrote, "However he believes that confession is a general acknowledgement that we are not free of sin." Well that's only partly true. I taught that 1 Jn. 1:9 is a general confession as opposed to a general denial of sin (not necessarily a worded confession), but in the same sentence I made it clear that there is a "specific" confession of known sin (Acts 8). More than that, the Christian should ask forgiveness for sins of which he is unaware (Psa. 19:12). Continual repentance, confession, and prayer on the part of a faithful Christian is essential if he is to "walk in the light". It is something that the Christian does while in the light. My brother's problem is that he thinks repentance and confession of sin is something the Christian does while out of the light. (Really though, and who is not "in the light" is not a Christian, since he would not be Christ-like). Rather, repentance and confession are a practice of the Christian. One brother wrote, "If he is walking in the light, he is not guilty of sin and does not NEED to confess anything" (J.L.Z.). How far from the truth! The Pharisee in the parable in Luke 18 didn't think he needed to confess anything but look what happened to him. This will continue to seem contradictory to men like Rader until they accept that "walk in the light" doesn't mean "sinless living".

My friend next said, "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." No, that's not what I believe. That's what you teach, unless you think all sins have to be specifically confessed. Which is it, brother Rader?

**WALKING IN THE LIGHT:** Note how our brother dealt with this section. He quoted from my article and booklet in the first paragraph, but that was about it. Then, rather than deal objectively with what was said he built a straw man. He wants to know "what sin does not separate one from God", and, "If *one* sin doesn't separate one from God, then just how many does it

take?" I say he built a straw man because I have never said there is a sin, or particular deed, that will not separate one from God, nor have I said that one sin will not do it. His question, "just how many does it take?", is not the issue with Calvinists nor with our discussion. With Calvinists it is not a question of how many, but will any do it. And as far as we are concerned it is not a question of how many, but attitude—what will he do about it when he learns of it.

In using Gal. 6:1 Donnie teaches that "a fault" causes one to fall from grace. He has concluded that the word "restore" has reference to fellowship—that fellowship is lost when one is overtaken in a fault. (We've already seen that he doesn't practice this idea). His exegesis of the passage is that if you have a fault you are lost. But if that is true it is most unfortunate for all of us. What about you brother Rader, do you have a fault? We who are spiritual are to seek to correct the faults of brethren. The fault may be one that has resulted in spiritual death or it might not.

The next point I think worthy of reply is his statement, "Brother Waters suggests in his article and in his booklet that to deny his position is to contend for perfection." Is it not true that if we always fall from grace when we sin then sinlessness is essential to security (or at least thinking that we are sinless)? In view of this theory, we deny our sins if we express confidence of salvation.

**BLOOD CONTINUOUSLY APPLIED:** In my first article I said, "The text teaches that one who walks in the light has the blood continuously applied." Brother Rader said, "The text doesn't say that." Well then, if my statement was wrong, then one who walks in the light does not have the blood continuously applied. He said, "That's an assumption of Robert Waters." Well I'll let the reader decide who is doing the assuming. Here it is: "But if we walk in the light... the blood ... cleanseth..."

Yes, the blood cleanseth as we confess; the confession being a part of the "walk". But the word "cleanseth" of 1 Jn. 1:7 is continuous. Vincent said, "The cleansing is present and continuous." But, of course verse nine gives a condition, which is that we confess our sins. We are forgiven of sins as we confess, or "if we confess", in the same sense that we are forgiven "as we forgive our debtors" (Mt. 6:11-14). The context of verse nine indicates that this confession is in opposition to denying sin in our lives (or thinking that we are "without sin"). Specific confession of known sin is of course taught in Acts 8.

1 Jn. 1:7 does teach that the blood is continuously applied to those who "walk in the light". That is what it says. Of course confession is essential to that walk, but so is repentance, forgiveness, love, etc.

**SPECIFIC CONFESSION:** Now he wants to know who teaches that each individual sin must be confessed specifically. I wish he hadn't asked that because I would rather not call names and give quotes of anyone who can't respond. But since he asked I feel obligated to answer. Of course writers have been careful not to come right out and say "all sins must be specifically con-

fessed", nevertheless, it is apparently believed and taught. You judge from the following quotes (emphasis mine): 1) **Marshall Patton**—"When in public prayer we pray 'Forgive us our sin,' such presupposes repentance on the part of **each individual of what he is guilty**. Public prayer is no place to identify each individual's private sin." (GOT, July 4, 85, p. 401). **John Welch**—"When a man does not confess his sin, the guilt of it is still with him and he is walking in darkness." (F&F's, Jan. 81,;10). **Donnie Rader**—implied it when, in ridiculing a Calvinist who asked, "Can a person be in error on simply one point of Bible doctrine and still go to heaven?", he said, "Doesn't that sound like some of our brethren today?" Rader implied that he believed any "one point" must be specifically confessed. If "one point" of Bible doctrine then every sin (F&F's, Jan. 81, p. 30). **James Zachary**—The consequence of sin is spiritual death... The only way to avoid such a consequence is to do something about **that particular sin . . .**" (The Epistle, May 85). "When I commit a sin, I have done an unrighteous act. That makes me unrighteous . . . As long as I have the guilt of **that sin**, I am walking in darkness. **The moment I repent, pray and confess** The Lord forgives me and I once again walk in the light. To be in 'darkness' is to have **sinned and not yet confessed.**" (**Know the Truth**, May 5, 85; published by C of C, Winchester Rd., Memphis, TN). **Mike Willis**—"I believe that any time a Christian commits a sin, he stands condemned (Gal. 2:14) or he dies spiritually (Gen. 3). In order to be forgiven of **that sin**, he must **repent of his sin**, confess it, and pray for forgiveness from the Lord." (GOT, June 6, 85, p. 368). (Mike now denies believing what he said).

Brother Rader, if you believe in confessing categories of sin, what if you did not know of or forgot to specifically confess a certain category? Or do you believe a general confession such as, "forgive me of all past sins", will suffice in such cases.

**QUESTIONS** (asked by Rader): 1. "Why will your position not work on the pious unimmersed?" Answer: The "Pious unimmersed" have not had the blood of Christ applied and thus are not walking in the light. 2. "What about the homosexual who doesn't know he is wrong, is he in fellowship with God?" Answer: It would be rare indeed that a Christian not know that such was wrong. Our society in general has come to look upon this sin as a great sin. If we were to judge according to human standards and reasoning we would have to say, "that man is definitely in darkness", but we are not the judge. Judgments on hypothetical examples that involve ourselves are necessary (to an extent), to our having confidence. But whether the individual in the "what if" case is in fellowship with God or not in God's business. **IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH US.** Churches no doubt have fellowshiped sexually immoral persons, but if a church is aware of it, it must withdraw fellowship. So really, the question, and others like it, are irrelevant and prejudicial. 3. "What sin (give some examples) can a child of God commit and not be separated?" Answer: A child of God is not permitted to commit any sin willingly. But we all sin as my brother



has admitted.

**RADER'S CONCLUSION:** He concludes with a quotation of Ezek. 33:12, but why I do not know. All that I wish to say about it is to ask you to read the whole paragraph and any commentary (if you choose), and you will readily see that it lends no support to that which brother Radar is advocating.

**QUESTIONS FOR BROTHER RADER:** 1. Is a thing sin if the one guilty is ignorant of it (consider Lev. 5:17)? 2. If a man who had been preaching the gospel and serving God faithfully for 40 years inadvertently or ignorantly sins and dies before he becomes aware of it and before any confession can be worded, would he go to hell in every instance? You can answer this one because it may happen to you. 3. Is it not true that "sins of omission", (failure to do, Jas. 4:17), is sin just as sins of commission? If yes, then if I must be without sin to walk in the light and in fellowship with God, that means that I must always do everything I know to do that is good. Do you?

### Conclusion

If I believed the way brother Rader believes I would be too scared to open my mouth to teach even after diligent study. You see, if he is teaching error on even one Bible subject, regardless of what it is, he is separated from God and would be eternally lost if he died while teaching it. I once showed a preacher an error that he made in a sermon, thinking that it might help him to see that there was no security in his position. But he said, "that was just unfortunate". It was unfortunate alright. But what is more unfortunate is the fact that brethren are denying their sins rather than confessing them.

If the reader has difficulty understanding what this is all about you can go to Luke 18:9-14 where the Lord summed it up in one short parable. There was a Pharisee who was self-righteous and who denied his sins and there was a tax collector who said, "God be merciful to me a sinner!". Clearly we can see that there is a wrong attitude and a right one here. And surely the lesson is that after we have been diligent in our service to him, we are not perfect or sinless (Ecc. 7:20; 1 Ki. 8:46; Prv. 20:9; Psa. 143:2; 2 Chron. 6:36; Rom. 3:9-19; Jas. 3:2,8), but sinners in need of mercy for sins aside from what we are able to recognize and specifically confess.

Brethren, don't lose sight of the fact that we who "do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the spirit", have been made "free from the law of sin and death" by "the law of the spirit of life" (see Scheme of Redemption, by Wharton pp. 17-23, on Rom. 8:1-4).



## A REVIEW OF "THE SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER" (2) RESPONSE TO WATERS

*Donnie V. Rader*

4724 E. Manslick Rd.  
Louisville, KY 40219

I appreciate the good attitude with which brother Waters is carrying on this discussion. When such is the case, the discussion can only be profitable.

### Things He Didn't Answer

1. Our brother didn't tell us which sins separate from God and which do not. I think brother Waters will agree that this is the issue. I asked him about the man who may be guilty of lying, adultery or worshipping with the instrument. Do these sins separate from God? He didn't tell us. I'm asking again, brother Waters, please tell us **what sin(s) does not separate from God?**

2. Since he believes that (a) some sins do not separate, (b) the blood is continuously applied, and (c) one is not condemned until he demonstrates that he will not repent—then what about the one who commits adultery in weakness or ignorantly worships with the instrument, why do they not have the same confidence that you have? I've asked that before. Why didn't he deal with it?

3. Though he made reference to it, he really didn't address the point that he has no more confidence than he claims we have if he believes any kind of repentance, confession and prayer is essential, for one would be condemned until that repentance, confession and prayer was made.

4. He didn't really answer the question that I asked about how many sins it takes to separate from God. If one sin committed in ignorance or inadvertence doesn't separate then would two, three, four? Just how many? He didn't tell us.

5. He didn't deal with the eight examples of one sin (some of ignorance, weakness and inadvertence) separating from God.

6. I asked him why 1 Jno. 1:7 included sins of ignorance, weakness and inadvertence (as far as sins that do not put us out of the light) but doesn't include all sins. He didn't tell us.

I plead with our brother to deal with these points as well as those that I shall make in this article.

### The Article

What I teach gives no reason for a lack of confidence as brother Waters tried to indicate. I have already shown that his teaching doesn't provide any more confidence. Even if some sins do not separate, we still would have no more security because we would need a list of all the sins that do and don't separate, a perfect knowledge of that list and a perfect knowledge of self.

Brother Waters, just who are the several prominent men who say one can live perfect? We would like proof of his statement.

Our brother said, "So according to him, if one is in the light he is perfect, in the sense of sinlessness." While one is in the light he is without sin, just as one who rises from baptism is sinless at that point, though he is not and will never be perfect (there are many virtues in which he can continue to grow, for example love, knowledge, patience and self control). However, he will sin (1 Jno. 1:8) which is a step out of the light (1 Jno. 1:5). The Christian who asks for forgiveness is then in the light and is sinless at that point. If not, the prayer was ineffective.

He said that I would preach the funeral of a man and give assurance to the family not knowing if he died with a sin of inadvertence unconfessed. Thus he says I don't practice what I preach. Brother Waters, do you preach funerals and give assurance to the families? If so, do you know for sure that they didn't commit a willful sin that was unconfessed. Do you know that any sin they did commit and didn't confess was one of inadvertence? Do you know that they didn't sin in attitude and didn't confess it? Then concerning a church withdrawing fellowship, there is a difference in the point at which a church withdraws from one and the point at which he is separated from God. Withdrawal is the last step, not the first.

He says that I teach that apostasy is inevitable. I do teach that all sin separates (Jas. 1:15). That doesn't mean that when we sin (1 Jno. 1:8) we will become wholesale apostates and be the man of Heb. 6. I'm confused on how he uses the term "apostasy". I generally use it to mean a complete abandonment of the faith. However, if he means that I teach that the Christian will sin (1 Jno. 1:8) and that sin will separate him from God and he denies that such is inevitable, then he is the one that affirms the possibility of sinlessness.

He denies that his teaching that the blood was "continuously applied" means that a Christian may continue in sin without separation. If the Christian who sins ignorantly or inadvertently is not cleansed as long as he may ignorantly or inadvertently sin, then the blood is not continuously applied.

He says that I believe that repentance and confession are done outside the light. If the brother who has sinned is still in the light, then why does he need to repent and confess? Is sin equated with darkness or light in the N.T.? What about the faith, repentance and confession on the part of the alien sinner, are those done outside the light, or is he already in the light as he meets the conditions in God's law of pardon?

Our brother denies that he believes that one stands condemned until a general repentance, confession and prayer is made. Then why does he claim to teach that repentance and confession are essential? If one doesn't stand condemned until he repents and confesses, then these are not essential to forgiveness. I wonder if he doesn't believe that one's past life give future forgiveness. Consider his question about the preacher who faithfully served God for 40 years then inadvertently or

ignorantly sinned and died before confession. Brother Waters, do you think that his 40 years of righteousness granted him forgiveness of these ignorant and inadvertent sins? Suppose the things were turned around and for 40 years he had been a wicked sinner and then the day before he died he was baptized. Do the 40 years of sin mean his baptism is of no avail? Why not, if 40 years of righteousness means that those sins were of no avail?

He said, "I have never said there is a sin, or particular deed, that will not separate one from God, nor have I said that one sin will not do it." He has told us that some sins do not separate (See Searching The Scriptures, Jan., 86; The Expository Review, Aug. 83; his booklet, The Security of the Believer, pp. 8,10,11,12,13,14,16, 18).

We are told that it isn't a question of how many sins, but attitude. Suppose the man is ignorant of the right attitude and sins, is he separated? According to him, one sin in attitude will separate one from God. Now I wonder even more about that preacher who served God for 40 years and then commits one sin (wrong attitude). Does his 40 years of righteousness take care of that sin?

In his reference to Gal. 6:1 he confuses "faults" as we normally use the term today and "sin" as it is used in the passage. He said that the fault may result in spiritual death or it may not. If it doesn't separate from God, then why does he need to be restored?

He says that in 1 Jno. 1:7 that "cleanseth" is continuous. While that is true, it is only as frequent as we confess (1 Jno. 1:9).

I had asked for the names of men who taught that we must specifically confess every instance of sin as brother Waters said some taught. None of the men quoted believe that. He misrepresented every one of them! None of the quotes say what I was asking and he knew it as evidenced in his statement just previous to the quotes.

He asked about confessing categories of sin and what if one forgot to confess a certain category. I pointed out in my first article that 1 Jno. 1:9 says we must confess our sins (of what we are guilty). That doesn't mean every specific instance of sin. If he is guilty of lying, though he may not remember every instance, he must confess that he is guilty of lying.

### My Questions

1. He didn't answer the question. If some sins don't separate, then why doesn't that work on the pious un-immersed?

2. It seems that he had trouble answering about the homosexual. He said he would judge from human standards that the homosexual is in darkness. Why? If some sins of ignorance do not separate from God, why will it not work here? He said it would be a rare situation for a Christian not to know it was wrong. Well, tell us about that rare case.

3. He didn't answer this question either. I know you believe that a child of God cannot willfully sin, but I was asking for some examples of those sins that do not separate. Surely, surely you can just name a few.

### More Questions

1. If a Christian sins, are there any conditions for forgiveness? 2. Should we fellowship all the saved? 3. Is it possible for a Christian to lie (as Abraham did) and not be separated from God? 4. Is the man who ignorantly worships with the instrument guilty of a sin that separates him from God or is that a sin that doesn't separate?

### Questions For Me

1. Yes (1 Tim. 1:12-16). 2. Yes, so far as the word of God teaches (the old prophet—1 Kings 13; Ezek. 33:12). What is the likelihood of a faithful servant of 40 years not knowing that he had sinned? 3. Yes. (Matt. 25:31-46).

### Absolute And Relative Matters

It will help in this issue if we better understand that not all of God's requirements are of the same nature. There are some areas that are absolute. In these we must be perfect. There is no room for growth. One is either guilty of adultery or lying or he is not. In this area we can attain unto God's perfect law. There are other areas that are relative. Our obedience to these commands is determined upon our time, opportunity and abilities. There are varying degrees of patience and knowledge. These commands we never keep perfectly. We always fall short of perfection. But, that lack of perfection is not necessarily sin. The key is a "diligent" effort (2 Pet. 1:5). (For more study on this see Marshall E. Patton's excellent articles in *Searching The Scriptures*, Sept., 74 and Jan., 79).

### Constantly Sinning?

Underlying this idea that some sins do not separate is the concept that the Christian constantly sins. That's why some have to believe some sins don't separate, for if all sin did separate we would be hopeless because we sin all the time. Where is the passage that shows that the Christian is in and out of sin regularly? Oh, I know he will and does sin (1 Jno. 1:8), but that doesn't say that he can't help but sin every hour of the day. I just don't believe we are all that sinful; do you? If we are, we are a sorry and hopeless bunch! I realize that we all will and do sin, but lack of perfection is not sin. Neither is every misunderstanding a sin (Rom. 14).

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*Herschel E. Patton*  
7637 Fleming Hills Dr. S.W.  
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### WIND AND CLOUD WATCHERS

Nothing keeps people from the Bread Of Life more than neglect or procrastination. There may be a few isolated cases of people neglecting to eat food, because of being too involved in something or because of some emotional or psychological problem. Most people, however, do not look for excuses for not eating to sustain physical life. It is in the spiritual realm, involving the Bread Of Life, that the problem is mountainous.

Failure to do because of neglect and procrastination, and the consequences, are figuratively pictured in Eccles. 11:1-6. "Cast thy bread upon the waters: for thou shalt find it after many days." The imagery seems to be that of merchants sending forth their ships with goods and return laden with great profit. There could never be profits if the ships stayed in the harbor. They must venture forth. The next verse is an exhortation to benevolence, "give to seven and also to eight" (fully and then some) without regard for what results or consequences may follow your action. The one who acts-ventures forth-gives, being unhampered by fears of what might happen (over which he has no control) is the one who prospers—"receive bread back after many days". Perhaps this divine principle is the basis for the popular adage "nothing ventured, nothing gained".

### Threats

There will always be hazards or possible happenings in any endeavor. It may rain or hail on your sown seed or it may not. The tree will be where it falls and there is nothing you can do about it. One thing is certain, if one never cuts wood because the tree may fall where it shouldn't, damaging some thing or person, he will never have lumber with which to build or wood for warmth in winter. If the farmer fails to plant because he fears it might rain too much, not rain, hail on tender sprouts, enemy sow tares or set fire to his field, he will never reap. The one who allows these unforeseen things, that could or may happen, to keep him from duty-from venturing forth-is the one who "observeth the wind and regardeth the clouds" who never sows or reaps (vs. 4). A man can no more know about these "might happen" things than he can know about the way of the spirit (wind), unseen things, or the growth of the embryo in the womb (vs. 5). Man's duty, in view of all this, is to "sow thy seed in the morning and in the evening withhold not thy hand" without being influenced by "might be" things that you cannot know (vs. 6).

### Spiritual Wind and Cloud Watching

We have far too many wind and cloud watchers in the church when it comes to doing those things that constitute feeding upon the Bread of Life." As a consequence, many starve and never reap eternal life. These are the "fearful" of Rev. 21:8 who will "have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone". They failed to do God's bidding because they feared what men might say or do, or what the results might be if they acted.

The need for PERSONAL EVANGELISM is urgent for every child of God (Jno. 9:4-5); Matt. 28:19; Mk. 16:15; 2 Tim. 4:2), but with many it never gets done because "they might resent my efforts," "offend me," "I might be criticized," "conditions might be better later on," "I'm too busy now," etc.

All followers of the Lord know that VISITING those in need (sick, bereaved, fainting) is a must if we please the Lord. In fact, doing this or not doing is a determining factor in our eternal destiny (Matt. 25:32-45; Jas. 1:27; 2:15-16; 1 Jno. 3:17-18; Rom. 12:10, 13-15). If one is not doing this, he is not partaking of the sustaining Bread of Life. Why are you not constantly engaged in this activity? Is it not because "the time is not right" for you? You are too busy with other things? You assume that others will supply enough? You fear they might not appreciate your effort or some might criticize? Because of such cloud and wind watching the work is not done and reaping is made impossible.

PERSONAL EDIFICATION or spiritual growth is a matter of constantly feeding upon the Bread of Life. The necessity of this is emphasized in such passages as 1 Pet. 2:2; 2 Pet. 3:18, 2 Tim. 2:15; Heb. 5:12; 10:24-25. How many times have you promised yourself-made a resolution-to start reading the Bible more; to begin going to Bible classes; to stop forsaking the assembling of saints; to spend more time in prayer; to make greater sacrifices for and in the Lord's work? Why did you not carry through with these noble resolutions and why are you not now engaged in such personal edification? More than likely you have been, and are, cloud and wind watching—looking for the "right time". Right now you don't like the teacher, preacher, or some of the brethren, so you are waiting until things are more to your liking. Too, maybe you are so involved in your work, sports, and other entanglements that you just don't have time. Maybe, later on, there won't be so many demands on your time, then you say, "I will launch forth". Such casting about for excuses for not "sowing thy seed in the morning and withholding not thy hand in the evening" means you never get done what is necessary and, therefore, can never reap eternal life.

It is this folly of being wind and cloud watchers that keep many people from obeying the gospel and confessing their sins. Instead of obeying the Lord or confessing sins as soon as convicted, many begin to look for, or envision, what others may say or do, the things they may have to give up, or a more convenient season. Usually they end up never obeying.

### NEW CONCERNS ABOUT AN OLD PROBLEM

**C. G. "Colly" Caldwell**  
**209 Mission Hills**  
**Temple Terrace, FL 33617**

As each new generation arises, young people must be taught and older ones reminded of great Biblical truths. Not only so but special care must be taken to APPLY those truths properly. Sometimes in great zeal to accelerate growth and to excite brethren to stronger commitment and more enthusiastic spirituality, Christians fail to test activities by the Word of God and lose sight of principles clearly taught by the apostles.

No concept is more important to efforts to avoid the ever-present tendency toward denominationalism among brethren than a clear view of God's pattern for the organization of brethren functioning collectively as the church of Christ. No organizational issue lies closer to the heart of potential compromise of New Testament Christianity than the issue of church cooperation. Can churches cooperate with one another. If so, in what and how can they cooperate?

Some in influential positions in churches at the present time have no firsthand experience with specific issues which divided brethren in churches of Christ twenty-five or thirty years ago. Some of them have not studied those issues nor the history of apostasy and divisions caused by misunderstandings concerning cooperation authorized in the Scriptures. As a result, I see what I believe to be compromises and I greatly fear that those compromises will increase in number setting dangerous precedents. The brethren's intentions are good but we are responsible to realize what we are doing when we open doors which lead to apostasy. Our greatest problem may be that we are unwittingly leaving impressions upon younger untaught babes in Christ who may march right on off into institutionalism because they cannot see the difference (if there is any) between what we are practicing and what liberal brethren have done all along!

#### Some Current Concerns

I travel much each year both in my work as a preacher of the gospel and in my secular work as an educator. I also live in a large city in which there are many congregations which oppose institutionalizing the church. Many brethren are aggressively working to overcome lethargy and to help the kingdom to grow. I have become aware, however, of some recent activities which cause me to be concerned. Two examples should be sufficient to raise the issue and hopefully to cause some to remember and think.

This last year the needs among Ethiopian Christians became widely known among brethren in America. Institutional churches supported the needy in Ethiopia

through sponsoring churches in Louisiana and California. Some of our brethren in congregations which do not support human institutions suggested that we should send aid through those sponsoring churches because of the special political difficulties of getting aid into the country. One brother who preaches even suggested that the church where he worships should send through a denominational church organization which was gathering up funds. Certainly a church in America can send directly to a needy church(es) in Ethiopia. Some in Tampa and elsewhere did. We **NEED** not **DO NOTHING**. We **MUST** not, however, violate New Testament authority and compromise Truth!

I am concerned also about some brethren in metropolitan areas using language which indicates that they view their lectureship programs, gospel meetings, and singings which attract large audiences as "city-wide" or "area-wide" worship services in which churches come together with "sister congregations" to be edified. There is no problem with a church inviting Christians other than the members of that local congregation to worship with it as **INDIVIDUALLY** they have opportunity, but it is another thing for elders to arrange worship and/or work for many **CONGREGATIONS**. Would there be a difference in principle in doing that when they meet at the same time in the same building and when they do not? The next step, of course, would be for two sets of elders to jointly plan these meetings. The distinction between a church planning and executing its own work or worship and a church deliberately planning and executing a program for all the churches in its area must be clear in our minds, in what we say, and in what actually happens. Again, it is time for us to go all the way back and review the pattern so that we don't unwittingly get carried away and violate the Lord's will. It is certainly in that spirit that these words are penned.

### Biblical Church Cooperation

The purpose of this article is not to argue at length the question of church cooperation. Our purpose is primarily to encourage caution and study before we engage in questionable activities in the name of positive, aggressive, active, enthusiastic effort to cause the church to grow. Some essentials on church cooperation would perhaps be helpful here, nonetheless:

1. God planned the church before the earth was formed (Ephesians 3:8-11).

2. The church must conform itself to God's plan (His will and purposes) and subject itself to Christ in all things (Ephesians 5:24).

3. God's will is stated in the Word inspired by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:9-13) and that Word, revealed in the New Testament, is the pattern or blueprint for all things pertaining to the church (Hebrews 8:5; 1 Corinthians 4:14-17; 14:33-34, 37; 2 Timothy 3:16-17).

4. The pattern provides for no organization through which the universal church can function.

5. The pattern does not provide for any collective larger than the local congregation for church activity.

6. The pattern provides only for functioning in local

churches and for the appointment of elders in each church who oversee the work and watch for the souls of the saints who compose that church (Acts 14:23); Hebrews 13:17; Philippians 1:1).

7. The elders are to take heed to the local church in which they have been made bishops and their oversight is limited to that congregation (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2).

8. Nowhere in the Scripture is there authorization for one church to serve as the sponsoring church through which other churches act.

9. When two or more New Testament congregations supported the same preacher out in the field, each sent its contribution for support directly to him (2 Corinthians 11:8; Philippians 1:5; 4:15-17).

10. When another church sent to a church in need, it sent its own contribution by its own messengers to the elders of the receiving church who oversaw distribution of it (Acts 11:27-30; 1 Corinthians 16:1-4; Romans 15:25-26; 2 Corinthians 8, 9).

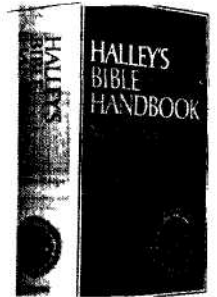
**CONCLUSION: NO PASSAGE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT AUTHORIZES TWO OR MORE LOCAL CHURCHES TO FUNCTION TOGETHER AS COLLECTIVE BODIES MERGING OVERSIGHT OR MEMBERSHIP TO DO ANYTHING (WORK OR WORSHIP)! NOR DID ANY CHURCH PLAN OR EXECUTE THE WORK OF OTHER CHURCHES! INVOLVED IN THIS IS THE VERY ESSENCE OF THE NATURE OF CONGREGATIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND AUTONOMY. CONCERN ABOUT IT MUST NOT BE NEGLECTED!**

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## A MORMON CRITICISM OF THE BIBLE

**Dudley Ross Spears**  
2081 Old Scottsville Rd.  
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The late Bruce McConkie, in a fireside satellite transmission, made the following critical remarks about the Bible.

The Bible of the Old World has come to us from the manuscripts of antiquity—manuscripts which passed through the hands of uninspired men who changed many parts to suit their own doctrinal ideas. Deletions were common, and, as it now stands, many plain and precious portions and many covenants of the Lord have been lost. As a consequence, those who rely upon it alone stumble and are confused and divide themselves among churches, all based on this or that interpretation of the Bible. (Ensign, December 1985, p. 55).

While no one will deny the existence of denominational and sectarian division among those who rely on the Bible alone, to charge the Bible as the culprit responsible for such a bad situation is less than honest. It is not the Bible that causes the divisions, but works of men—just about as human as the Mormon "scriptures" (Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price.) The Bible alone will produce unity—it is only the admixture of human interpretations and alleged revelations that produce division.

But the books that Mormons claim are far superior to the Bible have a rather sorry track record in regard to what is produced. The claims that are made for it border on bibliolatry. In the same speech, McConkie said,

On the other hand, the Bible of the New World, as I choose to designate the Book of Mormon, has been preserved for us by a divine providence which kept the ancient record in prophetic hands. Written by inspiration on plates of gold (which were mysteriously pirated away to heaven allegedly, DRS) it was hidden in the soil of Cumorah, to come forth in modern times by angelic ministration and then be translated by the gift and power of God.

After the translation, the voice of God, speaking from heaven to witnesses chosen beforehand by him, declared two things—that the translation was correct and that the book was true. We, of course, believe the Bible as far as it has been translated correctly, but we place no such restriction on the Book of Mormon. And so it is that there has come into our hands a book that is as perfect, or near perfect, as mortal hands can make it. It is a divine book, a book like none other ever written, translated, or published. (Ibid.)

While the Bible can stand the test of manuscript

examination and is overly proven to be true by archaeological findings, no such claims can be truly made for any Mormon document, claiming to be the word of God. The Bible has stood up much better than any other document claiming to have been revealed from the Almighty. But the point here is that the Mormon books have done much more to cause division than the true and living word, the Bible.

Steven L. Shields, is a scholar and fifth-generation Latter Day Saint, of the Salt Lake City variety. His scholastic work has been focused on the history of those who followed the dreams and visions of Joseph Smith, Jr. He is editor of a paper called, "Restoration." He also is author of an extremely accurate book on the history of division among those who follow the Book of Mormon and other Mormon scriptures. His book is called, *Divergent Paths of the Restoration* and is published by Restoration Research, P.O. Box 547, Bountiful, Utah 84010. The book lists well over a hundred factions of Mormonism. His paper continues to update recent divisions among Mormon followers.

The major division in Mormonism is between the "Latter Day Saints" (commonly known as the Utah group) and the "Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints," with headquarters in Independence, Mo. I will not attempt to list all the differing factions. The interested reader can purchase the book and read personally the basic characteristics of each faction. It is of some use, however, to notice that there is even one homosexual group listed among those of the diverging paths of what they call "the Restoration." This group was organized in 1972 in the Denver, Colorado area.

One of the most intriguing groups is called commonly, "the Strangites." James Jesse Strang came forward immediately after the death of Joseph Smith, Jr. with a letter in hand from the prophet personally which named Strang as the next prophet and seer of the saints. He even claimed that he had been shown plates, and when he translated them with the Urim and Thummim, of all things, they named Strang as the successor to Joseph. And, as if that were not enough, he claimed that an angel appeared to him on the very day Smith died, confirming his successorship. With such "incontrovertible" evidence (?) Strang led some of the Mormons away. It is amazing that some Mormons believed his personal testimony of angelic visitations, hidden plates and the letter Smith allegedly wrote, but others rejected it. I have always wondered why they would reject Strang's story, but accept the one Joseph told. It is strange.

Another group, seldom heard from, are called Hedrickites. This is the small group that has title to the "Temple Lot" in Jackson County, Missouri, which had been designated by the prophet Smith as the precise place where the great temple was to be built. Notwithstanding the fact that the original prophecy of this event alleged that it would be accomplished forthwith, it still remains unfulfilled. Smith had claimed that God revealed to him that the temple would be completed in the lifetime of those early saints. (Doc. & Cov. 84:2-5).

But alas, all those have gone to their reward with no fulfillment of this prophecy. The reason that the fulfillment is not likely to take place soon is that the Hedrickites do not have the money to build the temple, and will not sell the deed to the property. But, they adamantly claim to be "a remnant of the Church of 1830, bearing the same name, teaching the same doctrine, believing the same truths, practicing the same virtues, holding the revelations as originally given and enjoying the same spirit(.)" and deny they are a mere faction.

Some honest Mormon may be able to see the folly of the McConkie claim, but those wedded heart, body, soul and pocketbook to Mormonism will likely never change. Honesty is rare among those who are deluded by dreams, visions and angelic visitations. An honest examination of the Bible and the Book of Mormon can produce only one thing. There is no comparison between that which is demonstrably factual and true and that which is patently false. Only those who have a strong delusion will continue to make such baseless charges against the Bible and hold on to that which, by their own scholarship, is obviously the single and only instrument that has caused the rampant division among those claiming that the Holy Spirit has personally shown them the truth about Smith and his books.

The next time you have the opportunity, ask the representatives of the LDS, RLDS, et. al. if, at the time they got their "testimony" about the Book of Mormon, the Holy Spirit also revealed to them which faction of Mormonism they should join. It is important also to remember that this is the way the whole Mormon fantasy began. Smith went to a wooded area to find out which church to join, and the voice told him to join none, but to start his own. Surely, some Mormon should want to know which branch of that one now to join—don't you think?

## SIMPLICITY IN CHRIST

*P. J. Casbolt*

P.O. Box 1487  
Chiefland, FL 32626



### "SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM"

"Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine" (Pr. 3:9, 10). "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Mt. 6:33).

These two statements were separated by hundreds of years, and spanned two dispensations of time, but the principle is the same: give God what belongs to him, and

you will receive your share in return. When we rob God, we rob ourselves (Mal. 3:8-10). The first quotation was tried and proven in the land of Canaan; the second has been vindicated by faithful children of God in our time, and will ultimately bear fruit in heaven (Mt. 6:20; Col. 3:1-4).

But, Israel invariably departed from God in the midst of prosperity and plenty, supposing that such prosperity was of their own power (Dt. 8:17,18). So it is today. Some brethren will not even give the Lord their first-fruits, much less anything more.

Besides their first-fruits, which were already the Lord's, the Israelites gave tithes to the poor, dedicated things to the Lord, and divested themselves of sundry offerings and sacrifices. They could not duplicate the first-fruits and other offerings, by lumping them together (Lev. 27:26). Neither could they escape their responsibilities to the Lord or to man by hiding behind the years of release or the year of jubilee (Dt. 15:9). But, they still tried. And, so do we.

We are to present our bodies (Rom. 12:1), our spirits (1 Cor. 6:19, 20), our time (Col. 4:5, 6), and a portion of our material prosperity unto the Lord (1 Cor. 16:1, 2). But we rob God at every turn, keep for ourselves, and give more to the world than we do unto the Lord. If we had authority to build jails for spiritual robbers, they would outnumber our meeting houses.

Brethren could begin by offering the first-fruits of the week unto God—the first day of the week. Assemble with the saints as often as possible, as long as possible. This is the Lord's day. Then, arrange the other six days to the glory of God in honest labor and doing good. Let even acceptable rest and relaxation be in proper proportion to other activities. Be not "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God" (2 Tim. 3:4).

Study your Bible, renew the inward man at every opportunity, and leave time for prayer and meditation. Assemblies of the church at the local place of worship, with other congregations in gospel meetings, and informal gatherings of saints in homes will afford opportunities to do this. Some will miss their assemblies on Sunday or Wednesday to attend a gospel meeting in the area, thus "killing two birds with one stone." Make sure the birds you kill are not the unfeathered kind, without wings. If some did not show up at home or at work any more often than they do at the meetinghouse, they would be guilty of desertion, or added to the rolls of the missing and runaways.

When we fail to "seek first the kingdom" we not only rob God, but we rob ourselves, and rob our families, friends and brethren of needed encouragement, and a good example which would point them to "the Lamb of God" (Jno. 1:29).

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# THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

*Send all News Hems to: Connie W. Adams, P.O. Box 69, Brooks, KY40109*

## J. T. SMITH TO EDIT TORCH

The December, 1985 issue of TORCH announced that J. T. SMITH would become the new editor of the magazine with the January, 1986 edition. We regret that health considerations have caused JAMES P. NEEDHAM to make this decision. Brother Needham is a hard working preacher who speaks and writes out of deep conviction and is totally fearless even in the most heated controversy. His work load for years has been such as would have caused lesser men to collapse. He has not only edited, printed and published TORCH (along with the help of his good wife) but serves as an elder where he preaches, conducts a number of meetings a year and teaches a class at FLORIDA COLLEGE. His research, writing and speaking on Humanism has made a vital contribution to the fight against this Godless philosophy. He has plans to publish some books which he has not had time to write and we look forward to the fruit of his work in that area. His book on PREACHERS AND PREACHING remains a classic in the field. We wish for him better health and success in his work for the Lord.

J. T. SMITH has been a long-time friend. For many years he has written a column for SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES which has contained much valuable material. He has been a writer who would write without having to be coaxed. We have worked together in meetings, debates, traveled to the Philippines together in 1971 and spent many enjoyable hours together usually discussing the Lord's work. He is a tireless worker. He is one of the ablest debaters I know and does his homework carefully. He has notified me that he will not be able to continue his column in STS because of the added work editing TORCH will place on him. We regret this but certainly accept his judgment about it. We have every confidence that his work as editor of TORCH will be well done and that it will be a fair, but militant, instrument for good under his direction. His wife, Brownie, will be an able assistant to him in this work. We wish for them good health and many years of fruitful effort in publishing TORCH. Subscriptions to TORCH are \$6 a year and may be sent to J. T. Smith, P.O. Box 698, Lake Jackson, Texas 77566.

**MIKE SCOTT**, P.O. Box 53, Middletown, IN 47356—We have been working here since July 1982. The work is slow and hard, partly because the people of the community regard us as some kind of cult. We have about 25 members and have had one baptism and two resto-rations. It would help us greatly if some members could move here and help create more impact in the community. Even one family would help.

**MRS. W. C. SAWYER**, 132 E. Mason Ave., Danville, KY 40422—Since October 25, 1985, Cecil has been bedfast with Guillian-Barre Syndrome. He is unable to get up or walk. This disease, which usually follows a viral infection, destroys the linings of the nerves and causes paralysis. He will recover but Doctors say it could take from six months to a year. Recovery is very slow as the body must grow the nerve linings back before he can walk and use his arms and hands more freely. He has received so many cards, letters and calls. We appreciate all the kindness and prayers and concern shown from friends far and near.

**THOMAS HOGLAND**, South "S" and Jenny Lind Sts., Ft. Smith, AR 72901—After about eight years with the Southside church in Sulphur Springs, Texas, I will be working with the Park Hill church in Ft. Smith. My first meeting for 1986 will be in Oklahoma City. Please note my change of address and visit us when in western Arkansas.

**MIKE HUGHES**, P.O. Box 75, Joaquin, TX 75954—We have been working with the church here since September 1st and enjoy the work. Home studies and a Bible correspondence course are under way. Attendance had picked up from 42 to 55. We still lack about \$700 a month in needed support which has hindered us from getting a tele-

phone and other needed things. One time help would be appreciated, but we also need commitments on a regular basis. For references you may contact: J. T. Smith (409) 265-2191; Eugene Britnell (501) 375-8200; B. J. Thomas (318) 742-4557; Vernon Love (813) 937-6867.

**FERNANDO P. VENEGAS**, Casilla No. 122 C.C. 5500 Mendoza, Argentina, South America—In October I was in a meeting at "Moreno" in Buenos Aires in which 7 teenagers obeyed the gospel. Their faith was first planted in them by their parents. In a meeting with the "Florida" congregation in Chile, one man obeyed the gospel. There are 25 faithful members at Moreno where Timoteo Guaymes is doing good work. They are in a comfortable building. The men share teaching and preaching responsibilities. At Florida, Ivan Valdes and Sergio Pino are working regularly. However, this year Ivan and family will be moving to La Serena, Chile to start a new work, the first, in the northern part of the country. In Mendoza we recently baptized a man who had visited us often from Chile. Each time he came here we had good discussions and each time I gave him tracts to study when he went back to Chile. We recently had a meeting with Tom Holley of Buenos Aires. He did an overview of the book of Revelation which helped us all.

## BRIGHTON, ENGLAND

**BONNY L. MELTON**, 5643 Newberry Rd., Wayne, MI 48184—Brethren are seeking help in Brighton, England where a congregation has been meeting for over 95 years. Brighton is 55 miles south of London, and has a city population of 150,00 and 200,000 with adjacent towns. The building is in an excellent central location, within walking distance from the city's core, several large shopping centers, bus terminals and the main train station. The church is small but with recent addition of several members, realizes the need for full-time workers. I have been personal friends with these brethren for many years. They have invited me and my family to work full-time with them.

My wife Angela and I have just returned from a three week evaluation trip. We found an active concern toward evangelism and resolving problems, an eagerness to utilize the funds they have and a receptiveness to new converts and new found talents—put plainly, a willingness to "beat the pavement." The churches in London and a congregation of 30 in Bristol are growing. The church in Brighton has seen their progress and wishes to enjoy a similar steady growth.

For the past year, I have been working with Phil Morr in the Detroit, Michigan area. Phil spent several years in Australia and at least two years in England evangelizing London with much success. I plan to implement the same efforts in Brighton. The door is open and I ask congregations or individuals who may wish to help to contact me.

**EFRAIN F. PEREZ**, Casilla 1317, Valparaiso, Chile, South America—In 1986 we are expecting Glenn Rogers of McAllen, Texas to come and work with us in March in special classes and gospel meetings in both Chile and Argentina. Brother Rogers has more than 40 years experience in the Lord's work with 30 years in the Spanish work. I presented a preacher training class in three congregations in 1985.

## REPORT FROM INDIA

**JOHN HUMPHRIES**, 8705 Wooded Glen Rd., Louisville, KY 40220—Thanks to the Father and to you for prayers and support, Tom Moody, David Watts and I safely completed nearly six weeks of India work. We arrived home in fairly good health and believe much good was done. Tom and David were wonderful co-workers. To cover more territory and do more teaching, we split up at times. For example, David went alone to Kazipet where English was spoken while Tom and I preached in the Secunderabad area. Once I went to Guntar to study with some denominational people who expressed interest in the New Testament church and salvation. I studied with a number of Baptist



preachers and leaders, taught and answered questions concerning the church of the Bible, baptism and other matters. A letter was waiting for me here in the USA from one of the preachers in Gun tar requesting more information and asking me to return there for more teaching.

We preached in the remote village of Julapalem in Andhra Pradesh where there is a congregation of 25-30 Christians. When Tom Moody and I were there last year, we were told that we were the first white men in that village in fifty years. In the evenings several hundred gathered to hear us preach. Due to the help of a number of concerned individuals here in the USA, many Bibles were given to poor saints and we were able to help a number with medical attention and needs. Some typewriters and mimeograph machines were provided for gospel preachers to print gospel messages for distribution. There is a great need for tracts and Bibles. It takes nearly a week's wages to buy a Bible in India. Bibles cost about \$2 in our money. Village Indians only make about 32-644 a day.

I don't know how much longer the door will be open to us in India. We plan, with the Lord's help, to continue going and preaching the gospel in Christ. I plan to go again in 1986 with Bill Beasley and Jerry Parks. Many slides of the work in India were made and I would be glad to show these to those interested in the work in India. We need the prayers and support of faithful brethren here at home to be able to accomplish what needs to be done. We were thankful to see 14 baptized into Christ during the trip.

**LESLIE MAYDELL**, P.O. Box 12201, Rep. of South Africa—Since the first of the year, I have been allowed to make 10 minute talks each Monday morning in our daughter's school where there are six teachers and 120 students. I have been teaching simple lessons on evidences and the importance of God's word. Also I am going to a school for black children and teaching on Wednesday and Fridays and alternate Mondays. Contacts here have resulted in studies with two teachers, one of whom translates for me. He obeyed the gospel three weeks ago. He has put me in touch with two other black schools and I am now teaching at one on Tuesdays and the other on Thursdays.

When the trouble in the black suburb of Tembisa began hindering me from going there on Sunday mornings, I began teaching at Brixton in Johannesburg on Sunday morning and Wednesday evenings and several are now attending a special training class on Tuesday evenings taught by Ray Votaw, Alan Hadfield and myself. Two strong families

have recently moved to the Briston area, a factious brother has been scripturally dealt with and I feel that much good can be accomplished at Brixton. Now that troubles are settling down, my black brethren at Tembisa are pleading with me to return to work with them again. Truly brethren, there is plenty of work here, but the laborers are few.

#### **PREACHERS NEEDED**

**PAYETTE, IDAHO**—**DANNY F. THOMPSON**, P.O. Box 791, Payette, ID 83661—Since I am to begin working May 1st, 1986 with the church at Blackfoot, Idaho, the church here in Payette will be looking for a faithful preacher of the gospel. The church is small, with about 30, but is comprised of faithful, God-fearing brethren who are a joy to work with. The church can supply only limited support. Those interested should write to the church at: S. 9th and 2nd Ave. S., Payette, ID 83661.

**WEATHERFORD, TEXAS**—The church here is in need of a gospel preacher. At present only partial support can be provided. If inter-ested, call Dr. Keith Roland at (817) 594-2077.

#### **PREACHER AVAILABLE**

**DAVID HAWTHORNE**, 374 E. Tompkins, Columbus, OH 43202—I am a young preacher 28 years old, married and with 2 children. I have been preaching on a part-time basis for two and a half years and am eager to work on a full time basis as soon as possible. References will be gladly supplied. If interested, you may write me at the above address or call (614) 262-7376.

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#### **IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH**

<b>BAPTISMS</b>	<b>177</b>
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