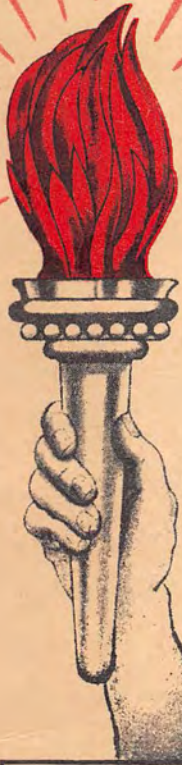


January 1975



TORCH

*We do not write to be understood,
but so we cannot be misunderstood.*

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TORCH, VOLUME 10, NUMBER 1, 1975

It is hard to believe that with this issue I begin my 5th year as editor of TORCH. The time has literally flown by. Since this is Volume 10, and the fifth volume I have edited, at the end of this year I will have edited the paper for half its history.

These have been eventful, and yet pleasant, years. They have brought me into contact with brethren I have not known perviously, and kept me in contact with many I have known, loved and appreciated for a long time. A big plus in these four eventful years has been my association and growing friendship with the Farris family, Billy K., Pat, Victor and LaJuana. We have worked together without a single disagreement, and the friendship grows ever stronger and more meaningful. We constantly have sought to improve the paper in every possible way, and from reader response, it appears that we have succeeded.

TORCH is in the strongest condition now that it has ever been in. It has the largest bonified paid subscription list in its history, the most solid reader support, and the most attractive physical make-up since it was revived in January 1967. (TORCH was originated by Foy E. Wallace, Jr. in July of 1950.)

As most readers know, all I do is edit the paper. I am not involved in the actual production and mailing of the paper. All this is ably handled by the Farris. This is a splendid arrangement because it gives me more time for editorial work.

James P. Needham

Volume X - January 1975 - Number 1

Editor

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Editorial

James P. Needham

The Fellowship Issue

In 1974, this issue really came to the top. It has received more periodical space than any other one issue, and maybe more than all others put together. It stems from the views of W. Carl Ketcherside who has been an issue maker ever since I have known of him. His name has served as a label for so many issues that it is necessary to inquire which one is under consideration when it is used.

The grace/fellowship theory is based upon an arbitrary human distinction between gospel and doctrine. Briefly, it says the gospel consists of the basics: the deity of Christ, the essentials of sonship, etc. Beyond this, everything else is "doctrine." Thus, when one meets the demands of sonship (believes, repents, confesses Christ, and is baptised for remission of sins), he is in grace, and in fellowship with all others who have done the same. The theory says this fellowship is not to be broken except for preversions of the "gospel," (deity of Christ, plan of salvation, etc.). Thus, they say it is wrong to break fellowship over such issues as: the name of the church, instrumental music, premillennialism, institutionalism, unscriptural congregational cooperation, neo-pentecostalism, etc., because these matters belong to "doctrine," not "gospel." The theory contends that God's grace will cover these shortcomings by imputing to sons of God the perfect righteousness of Christ. It says that when God looks down upon his children, He does not see their "doctrinal" errors, but only the perfect righteousness of Christ.

Characteristically, brother Ketcherside has developed his theory beyond what some of his disciples are willing to accept. He says he can fellowship even the "pious unimmersed" as "brothers in prospect." Some of his fellow-travelers can't buy the whole package just yet, and some never will. As in the past, some of

brother Ketcherside's disciples will: (1) become fixated with the basic theory, (2) others will become disillusioned with him and his theory and return to the truth (some already have done so), (3) some will take the theory to its logical conclusion as he has done.

The prominence given to this issue in "conservative" journals during the past years is justified by the fact that the grace/fellowship doctrine has been accepted by some rather able young preachers identified with "conservative" churches. Brother Edward Fudge has been made the symbol of this encroachment, and his writings have become the springboard of the growing controversy.

The discussion has been centered in two "conservative" journals: *Truth Magazine*, and *The Gospel Guardian*. *Truth Magazine* has justified its attack by its claim that a rather large number of young "conservative" preachers have accepted the theory (estimated at about 50), and that the acceptance is spreading (evidence of which I have not seen). *The Gospel Guardian* has been attacked because it had Edward Fudge as an associate editor (it has since changed hands). Brother William Wallace has been prominently involved in the controversy because he was editor of *The Gospel Guardian*, and refused to repudiate Edward Fudge, while denying his grace/fellowship positions (he labeled them "dangerous"). He has been accused of "harboring a false teacher," and of being soft toward the grace/fellowship positions. He has denied this, saying that he continues to "fellowship" other brethren with whom he disagrees, so why make a difference over this matter? He has maintained that the attack upon *The Gospel Guardian* was politically and commercially motivated (which charge he did not and could not prove conclusively), and that while he disagreed with Edward Fudge's positions on grace/fellowship, he placed it on a parallel with disagreements on such issues as the war question, the covering question, qualification of elders, etc., etc., and since brethren do not generally break fellowship over these matters, there is no reason to do so on this, Wallace contended.

The discussion has excited a great deal of bitterness. Wild charges and even wilder counter-charges have been hurled and remain unresolved. The precious principles of divine truth have been obscured at times in an avalanche of vitrolic diatribes in unfortunate efforts to win the battle on a personal level. In much that has been written it would be impossible to learn what the Bible teaches on the grace/fellowship subjects. Too often this has

been the case in "brotherhood" controversies. When such a battle is finished, the field is strewn with the bodies of the wounded, the weary and the worn who are yet ignorant of the doctrine of Christ on the issues involved, and many are the partisan followers of the commanding generals of the fray, rather than devoted subjects of the "captain of our salvation" (Heb. 2:10).

It is to be expected that in the heat of battle mistakes will be made by all who fight. All of us are human and vulnerable. Mistakes are bad and unjustifiable, but the spirit of intolerance and obstinance is much worse. Personal pride in one's position or "brotherhood" image is a great hinderance. Exaggeration (perhaps unintentional) is often characteristic of "brotherhood fights," and objectivity is frequently a forgotten virtue. All error must be opposed and exposed. In most cases, the proponents should be identified by name that brethren might "mark and avoid them" (Rom. 16:17). This does not mean character assassination and motive impugnation, but scriptural refutation. It is very often

The magnification of personal shortcomings and the publication of intemperate outbursts (with expletives not deleted!) . . . has nothing to do with whether one's teaching is right or wrong . . .

helpful to know WHO originated and propogates a given false doctrine, but it is much more important to know HOW to refute it with God's word. The former is worthless without the latter. The magnification of personal shortcomings and the publication of intemperate outbursts (with expletives not deleted!) under abnormal and stressful conditions has nothing to do with whether one's teaching is right or wrong, does not edify, and has no place in a discussion of doctrinal issues among brethren. Surely all of us know this, but we sometimes forget it when we lose sight of proper goals, and try to prejudice others against an opponent by calling attention to his personal shortcomings which are likely no worse than our own. We all need to learn to be as tolerant of others' shortcomings as we would like for them to be of ours.

Most brethren realize that plain and frank presentation of the truth is always necessary, but some need to learn the difference between this and a display of bad manners, and "spleen-venting." When personalities become more important than principles, and when one can read article after article dealing with an issue and never learn what God says about it, there is pretty good evidence

that we have lost sight of proper goals and need to change the direction of the controversy. Since grace and fellowship are Bible subjects, we need to know what the Bible teaches on them. If there is an effort — a movement — among us to teach error on these matters (and I don't doubt it), then those responsible need to be met head-on with scriptural teaching, but such a needed confrontation must never be used as an occasion for a personal or political fight masquerading as an issue fight, which it certainly is when there is more personality than principle in the pow wow.

THE PROPER DIRECTION FOR THIS CONTROVERSY

The fellowship issue is an old one, and one brethren have either avoided, or else "solved" in unscriptural ways. A few years ago I heard one of the leading principals in the current discussion say that he had advised brethren not to argue the fellowship question, "because it cannot be settled definitively." He may be right about the "definitive" part, but I know of no subject that presently needs more study. It is an issue many brethren have avoided because they think it can't be settled definitively. Brethren are usually content to mouth long accepted solutions which they do not apply consistently. Because of this they find it more comfortable to stick their heads in the sand hoping the fellowship problem will go away.

It is obvious, then, that the subject of fellowship is like many others: The scriptures set forth an ideal toward which we prayerfully strive, but never completely reach, or we have miserably misunderstood the subject. One of the other must be the case because it is clear that what most brethren preach about unity among brethren, we do not have. If what is usually preached about unity is what the Bible requires, then we don't have what the Bible requires! If what is generally preached is not what the Bible requires, then we have misunderstood the subject and we need to study it more, not less.

All of us must accept the fact that we have fellowship (live and work and worship with) brethren with whom we differ (sometimes radically) on many things. There is no way around it. It has always been true, and I think we all know it always will be.

The grace/fellowship doctrines being advocated and accepted by some are an effort to settle the fellowship problem. It is an unscriptural solution, to be sure, and therefore an unacceptable one. But the fact that we reject it, does not mean that we have settled the fellowship issue. Thinking this is likely one of the

greatest dangers in the present controversy.

For instance, brethren Cecil Willis and Jesse Jenkins recently had a debate in Pasadena, Texas on the right of college Bible departments and other such human evangelistic organizations to exist. Brother James Adams moderated for brother Willis, and brother Bob Craig moderated for brother Jenkins. Brother Curtis Torno, an elder of the Red Bluff church, was one of the main promoters of this study. All of these good brethren agree that the grace/fellowship positions of Edward Fudge *et al.* are in error, and must not be fellowshiped, but all of them strongly pled during the discussion for brethren to continue to fellowship each other in spite of positions on the Bible department issue that are no less diverse than their's and Edward Fudge's on the grace/fellowship issue. Here are some of the remarks made during the debate:

I want to make a plea in this first service for the unity of the Lord's disciples. Those of us who profess to be conservative Christians in this day of liberalism. I trust that nothing may be said or done in this debate that will in any sense adversely affect the unity of the Spirit that prevails among us. That is not the purpose of this debate. Such would be a perversion of its purpose. If this happened, we'd all be sorry we came here and engaged in it. We don't want this to happen. This debate is not to divide God's people, but to further unite God's people in the spirit of truth . . . I want to impress another factor on you that relates to the matter of unity. This question we are discussing or engaging in tonight is an individual matter. I mean by that, it does not affect congregational action . . . This question is like the war question, the artificial covering question. Many other things that are individual matters that have to be decided by the individual. They are among us. We do not all agree upon them, but we do not make congregational matters out of these things — that is most of us do not . . . Brother Cecil has been invited to preach at Denton, when this debate is over, where brother Jenkins preaches, and brother Cecil has extended an invitation to brother Jenkins at any time to fill the pulpit at West Side in Marion, Indiana where he is an elder.” (James W. Adams, introductory remarks, first night).

Some of us will individually arrange for a suitable meeting place. Let individuals do this and leave churches out of the arrangement. This is not a congregational

question because neither of us believes that congregations can support a school, and there should be no lines drawn between congregations over this issue. (Dr. Curtis J. Torno, quoted from a letter from Dr. Torno to Cecil Willis in James W. Adams' introductory remarks, first night).

I agree with the comments that were made in the introduction and appreciate them . . . As has already been pointed out, neither Cecil nor the moderators nor any one else that I have talked to, and I have talked with a good many preachers as well as other brethren, want to see this become a divisive thing among us. Every man I talked to whether he agreed with me or not on this particular question, said I would like to see a brotherly study on this, but I am afraid it will bring about division among brethren. Now that's Cecil's attitude and that's my attitude, and that's the moderators' attitude, and brethren, if that's the attitude with which everyone of us enters this debate, and I believe it is, before God, if we will end the debate in as much of the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ as we begin it with, we still have that same disposition, and I believe we can have it as a Bible study . . . I just believe we can debate it without causing division and go out with the same brotherly feelings that we had when we came, and I'll tell you quite frankly, if that is not the case, I'll be sorry I ever consented to it. I don't want to do anything that would cause further division among the people of God. I want to do all I can to help us come to better harmony in regard to these particular matters.

As has already been suggested, I sincerely invited brother Willis to preach next Sunday. I think he is going to be able to do that in Denton. He will go out of his way to do it, if he does, but I would like to have him and the brethren would like to have him, and that was not just to appease the feelings of brethren. It was a sincere invitation and I think it ought to have that effect of appeasing some feelings that brethren might have. (Jesse Jenkins, first negative).

I want to concur heartily in the introductory remarks that were made by brother Adams in regard to the conduct . . . and of course the good statements he made as to why we are here . . . we are certainly not here

to foment division and strife, but we are here to discuss a difference that has arisen among us. We are discussing it as brethren in Christ. Striving to present arguments, Bible arguments. Surely people can weigh this and arrive at a conclusion . . . we trust and pray that harm will not be done . . . We have many issues. Brother Adams mentioned the war question. What is commonly called the hat question. Things of this nature we hold to as individuals and try not to make these things matters of congregational fellowship. So we are hopeful that lines of division such as that; lines of fellowship, will not be drawn in particular, that they won't be drawn because of what we are discussing this week. (Bob Craig, introductory remarks, third night).

Now, I have the highest regard and respect for all these good brethren, and I concur wholeheartedly with their sentiments, but let us notice: The Bible department issue is sufficiently serious that they were willing to have a nationally advertised debate on it, and yet, calling upon brethren not to break fellowship over it. All the brethren involved in this debate have called Edward Fudge a false teacher, and have sought to mark him, and really, for all practical purposes, have "withdrawn fellowship from him." I am safe in saying that not a one of them would have him hold a meeting where they preach, yet brother Willis preached where brother Jenkins preaches the Sunday following the debate, and brother Willis has invited brother Jenkins to preach at Marion, Indiana where he is an elder. Now, here are brethren who believe each the other is teaching false doctrine so strongly that they had a nationally advertised debate on the matter of Bible departments, but in spite of this, still are able to "fellowship" and use each other; but neither of them would do the same with Edward Fudge. Obviously, then, the rule is that we can have fellowship in spite of opposite views on Bible departments, but we can't do the same on the grace/fellowship issue. We can use each other when we differ on the college question, but when we differ on grace/fellowship, we must call each other false teachers, publicize personal short comings, accuse each other of mounting a fight for commercial and political reasons. Who made this rule, and by what authority?

I ask, is there some subtle difference between these issues, or situations? Or is this one of our glaring inconsistencies on the fellowship question? The point made at Pasadena was that the Bible department issue is a personal matter. Is this the subtle difference? or, am I wrong in believing that "fellowship" is also a

“personal matter”? I know it can be a congregational matter, but so can the college issue. The brethren who are opposed to Bible departments believe they usurp the function of the LOCAL CHURCH? Is that “personal”? They compared the Bible department issue to the war question, and the woman’s covering issue, and averred that these are all PERSONAL matters upon which we can hold opposite views and still have fellowship. These brethren even went so far as to rent, personally, a public school auditorium for a debate on a practice which one side believes is a usurpation of LOCAL CHURCH function. How can that be personal? And if indeed it is, does this mean now that it is wrong to use the church building to discuss all issues that we label “PERSONAL”?

Now, I know that inconsistencies don’t prove anything but inconsistency, but they do demand explanations. The usual explanation for our inconsistencies is “The cases are not parallel,” or “That is different,” and well it may be in some cases, but unless we can show a scriptural difference, such expressions become “cop outs.” Is the difference we affirm a scriptural difference, or just a matter of convenience to protect our biased application of “fellowship” principles? (I am not making a charge, but asking a question). If the difference is scriptural, fine. But if it is just a convenience, it is frivolous and childish, unworthy of those who claim to be Christians, and most certainly, no solution to the knotty fellowship problem.

. . . we have not settled the fellowship problem YET, regardless of who may think we have! We have rejected a solution proposed . . . but what alternate solution has been proposed that is scriptural, workable and practical? . . . It has not yet appeared, and I think we all know it.

What I am saying is this: we have not settled the fellowship problem YET, regardless of who may think we have! We have rejected a solution proposed by Ketcherside, Fudge, *et al.*, but what alternate solution has been proposed that is scriptural, workable and practical? (One we can live with consistently). It has not yet appeared, and I think we all know it. We may be reluctant to admit it, but we must all know it. If all differences are not matters of fellowship, then someone needs to publish a scriptural list that distinguishes those which are and those which are not.

What am I saying? Am I defending brethren Ketcherside, Fudge, *et al.*? Certainly not! I believe their solution to the fellowship question to be based upon erroneous Calvinian concepts of grace. I admit that they propose a very easy, but false, solution to the fellowship question, and one which is very attractive from a human point of view, but we walk by faith, not by feeling. The Calvinian doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy is also attractive from a human standpoint, but it too is false.

At the same time, I cannot agree that the question is settled just because we have successfully opposed and defeated a false remedy. The nagging questions involving the consistent application of God's plan for unity remain unsettled, and the glaring inconsistencies and partisan practices some use in seeking to answer them remain embarrassingly obvious, even though some are unwilling to admit it. Our partisan applications of the principles of fellowship are never more obvious than when whether or not a dissident gets smashed is determined by who he is. If he is one of the elite, the wealthy, is big in education, and uses his wealth and influence to promote certain partisan projects, and has never challenged the powers that be, he can believe and preach views identical to those being smashed and never be touched. He may even be lauded as one of the greatest minds of the time. One's influence, association, wealth, or education often gives him spiritual immunity from persecution in spite of the fact that Paul said we should do nothing by partiality (1 Tim. 5:21).

One of the most glaring inconsistencies and hypocrisies among us on the fellowship question is for brethren to make elaborate claims that they don't make certain matters "tests of fellowship," when, in fact, they do.

One of the most glaring inconsistencies and hypocrisies among us on the fellowship question is for brethren to make elaborate claims that they don't make certain matters "tests of fellowship," when, in fact, they do. Preachers who believe alike on certain issues try to influence brethren to select preachers for meetings who agree with them. When they move they try to influence brethren to select a successor who shares their views. But they don't make these matters "tests of fellowship." They say they are willing to use those who disagree with them, but they don't! In many cases they will neither announce or attend a meeting held by those who disagree with them. Others will use every opportu-

ity to arouse suspicion against those holding views they say are not "tests of fellowship." Some have been known to spread rumors, gossip and falsehoods that travel around the world before truth can get its boots on. If this makes anyone feel uncomfortable, that's probably because it should.

It is both easy and correct to say that unity must be based upon the word of God. Just about everybody agrees with this, but upon whose understanding of it? Mine or yours? When we mention such issues as a college Bible department, the war question, the covering question, etc., it is very convenient to say this or that is a "personal matter," or it is not a congregational matter, or it is a matter of opinion, or it does not affect our salvation. These expressions may or may not be correct. In some cases they amount to "cop outs." Sometimes they are what we say when we don't know what else to say. Just what do we do when some say a matter is personal and others say it is congregational? Others say, "I just take the Bible for what it says." Well what does it say? That is often the real problem: determining what it says. Now, I am not saying that we *cannot* see the Bible alike; I am saying we *do not*!

I am certainly not contending that unity is impossible to attain. I am saying something is wrong with our understanding of it. I am saying that it surely does not consist of 100% agreement on everything, because we never have had and never will have this.

I am certainly not contending that unity is impossible to attain. I am saying something is wrong with our understanding of it. I am saying that it surely does not consist of 100% agreement on everything, because we never have had and never will have this. A great deal has been said in opposition to the "unity in diversity" concept of brother Ketcherside. Some have yelled rather loudly that these are contradictory terms, but, perhaps, without considering the fact that "unity in diversity" is exactly what Paul told the Roman brethren to effect among them on the matter of meats sacrificed to idols, and the observance of certain days (Rom. 14). I know these were matters of indifference to God, but the fact still remains that they were to have unity in diversity, and Paul told them to effect it in such a way as not to have "doubtful disputations." If we have unity today it is in diversity because I know of no two brethren who agree on everything.

It is obvious, then, that we need more enlightenment on the

unity and fellowship questions. Several questions need to be answered. Here are just a few: (1) Where is the locus of unity and fellowship? (Does it transcend congregational lines?) (2) What are its essential elements? (3) Of what does it consist? (does it consist of 100% agreement on everything? If so, where does it exist?) (4) If it can exist in absence of 100% agreement, then what disposition do we make of our disagreements? (5) By what criteria do we classify some disagreements as "private," "personal," or "nonessential," and others as "congregational," "essential," and "tests of fellowship"? (Are these matters settled by individual conscience, or does the Bible lay down clear rules by which to settle the matter?) (6) What part does one's attitude play in determining whether or not he can be fellowshipped? (7) Must the local church withdraw from every brother who persists in either believing or practicing anything the preacher and/or leadership consider to be "tests of fellowship," even though many consider it otherwise? (What about the covering? Smoking? Sunday night communion? Weddings and funerals in the church building? Qualifications of elders? Women teachers? Bible classes? Disagreements about how to attain unity? Can brethren have unity who disagree upon how to have it?) (8) Can we claim unity with those whose meetings we refuse to announce or attend and whom we could not use in the services where we attend?

These are some of the questions to which we need to address ourselves. Volumes have been spoken and written on this subject, but these questions never receive definitive answers, indeed they are seldom addressed, yet many continue to apply their dogmatic inconsistent rules on the matter of fellowship. Admittedly, it is much easier to apply the "rules" than to answer the questions. Too many are content to make high-sounding philosophical speeches about unity filled with pleasing platitudes all the while ignoring the fact that division is rampant all around us. The discussions of the past year have added almost nothing to our scriptural knowledge on the subjects of unity and fellowship. It has been a negative approach to the problems involved. Now we need some positive, definitive answers we can live with. I challenge able brethren among us to address the subject and deal with the problems that usually are left untouched. Most of us know what has been preached on the subject for the past hundred years. What we need most is some practical application of the principles. Show us the plan, but also give us the directions. We have had enough of preaching one thing and practicing something else; it is high time we begin harmonizing what we say with what we do, or what we do with what we say. And if we are unable to do either, stop acting like we have all the answers.

Ray Hawk Vs Theophilus

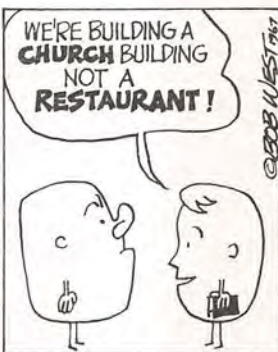
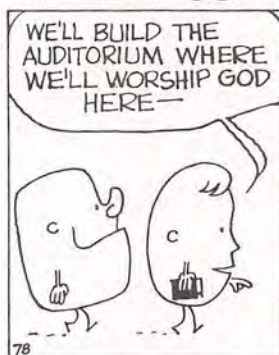
Chapter One: Ray "Draws" a Parallel

Bob West

In my July 15, 1974 mail I received a cartoon by Ray Hawk in response to one of my **Theophilus** illustrations. This initiated an exchange of correspondence between Ray and me on the subject of kitchens in the church building. The exchange was short-lived and abandoned by Ray to make a public attack on Theophilus and me in the August 25, 1974 issue of *Truth*, a paper published by the East Gadsden Church of Christ (Alabama).

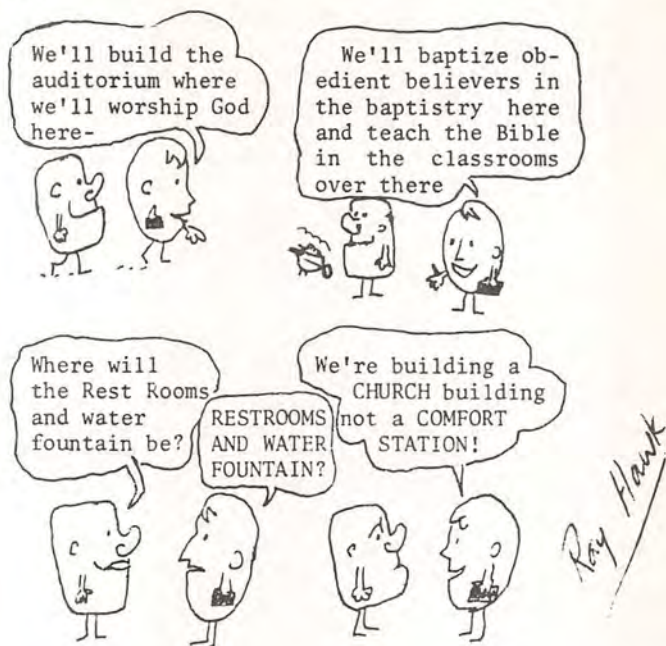
In his attack, Ray misrepresented and distorted my position and labeled me a false brother who is trying to become a god by binding man-made doctrine upon my brethren. Since I have been unable to get Ray to correct his mis-handling of my name where the attack was made, I was forced to look elsewhere in an attempt to defend myself publicly and to expose Ray's unjust tactics and unscriptural position. Brother Needham has been kind enough to offer space in **TORCH**.

THEOPHILUS



BOB WEST is a professional artist, and author of the now famous religious cartoon series: **THEOPHILUS**, and **OUR RELIGIOUS WORLD** which have appeared in religious periodicals for the past several years. He is also an elder in the Pine Hills church in the Orlando, Florida area.

According to his article, Ray saw the preceeding cartoon in a brother's bulletin. This prompted Ray to send me his version shown below:



The following correspondence resulted. First, my letter dated July 16, 1974:

Dear Ray:

So you're a cartoonist now. Well, I must say your efforts show potential. However, while I might give you a "B+" on Drawing, I would have to give you an "F" on Logic. I'm amazed that you think you have "drawn" a parallel.

Actually, your first two panels are quite good, but you have Theophilus acting completely out of character in the last two. Theophilus would never respond to the idea of a church having restrooms and water fountains as you have shown. He knows that the church has authority for those. The church is commanded to assemble. And, restrooms and water fountains are incidental to a public assembly, just like electric lights and pews.

On the other hand, Theophilus knows that a kitchen is *not* incidental to any work or act of worship for which God gave the

church a command, an approved apostolic example, or a necessary inference.

Give this subject some study and I believe you'll find that you owe Theophilus an apology. If you don't want to do that, at least change the characters and re-name your cartoon. Something like "Sophistus" would be appropriate.

Sincerely,

s/ Bob

Dear Bob:

A kitchen, as you call it, is just as incidental to the work of the church as restrooms and water fountains are to worship. Worship = edification. A kitchen = edification (Prepare Lord's supper). A kitchen = benevolence (feeding the poor). A kitchen = evangelism (feeding the preacher). A kitchen = edification (members eating together as they continue their fellowship).

s/ Ray

August 1, 1974

Dear Ray:

"What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in?"

Whereas we differ as to what constitutes the work of the church, your logic is valid on your first two points (to prepare the Lord's supper and to feed the poor). Paul answers your other two points in 1 Corinthians 11:22.

In your first two points you have the church at work. In your last two points you have the church at play.

Sincerely,

s/ Bob

Bob:

Feeding the poor involves a kitchen. You agreed. But, the poor when fed "eat and to drink." But, you have used 1 Cor. 11:22. If 1 Cor. 11:22 does not negate eating and drinking in cases of benevolence, it would not negate it in matters of evangelism or edification. Besides, did Paul, an evangelist, contradict himself by eating in the church building in Acts 20:11? If Paul could eat in the church building, why can't we? It is interesting that you disagree with Needham and others on this point.

s/ Ray

August 10, 1974

Dear Ray:

You said, "If 1 Cor. 11:22 does not negate eating and drinking in cases of benevolence, it would not negate it in matters of evangelism or edification." I say, "Why not?"

In benevolence, feeding *is* the work. When the feeding is done, the work of relieving hunger is done. Feeding the hungry and relieving hunger are the same. On the other hand, when you're fed the preacher, no evangelism has been done. Feeding and evangelism are *not* the same. (The laborer is worthy of his hire. The church pays the preacher for the work he does and then he feeds himself like other members who feed themselves with their wages.)

1 Corinthians 11:22 does negate a public assembly of the church to eat a common meal (equally applied to benevolence, evangelism, and edification). You don't need a public assembly of the church to feed the poor.

Because the church can clothe the needy in the work of benevolence, this would authorize, according to your logic, the church to have a "Church of Christ" Fashion Show and call it evangelism. After all, wouldn't the church have to clothe the preacher? And wouldn't there be a selection of garments involved, fitting, etc.? And then other members could assemble for the occasion (since they wear clothes too) and you could call it edification.

Notice that this is not a matter of what is done incidentally, such as a preacher, or any other member, who is working on church property eating a sack lunch there.

The above points have to do with your logic, not your premise. As I said in my last letter, we differ as to what constitutes the work of the church. But that is another subject.

So, in closing, I again say with Paul, "What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in"?

Sincerely,
s/ Bob

P. S. Would you explain to me how you determined from Acts 20:11 that Paul ate in a church building?"

It is at this point that Ray abandoned our discussion. Nineteen days later, on my birthday, I received the issue of *Truth* which he made his public attack. In the next issue of *TORCH* you can read his misrepresentations and my reply to him. Keep this part handy to refer to as you read "Chapter Two: On the Firing Line."
(To be continued)

Part I

Dealing with Mormonism

Robert H. West

The church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day saints heralds itself as being the fastest-growing religious body in the world. While we are not willing to attest to the accuracy of this claim, it is nevertheless evident that "Mormonism" is making rapid gains. Whereas, in the past, they have been rather isolated west of the Rockies, we now see them in increasing numbers in areas of the South, Mid-West, and North, where they were virtually unknown a few decades ago. More and more, brethren are called upon to meet with their missionary "elders" and deal with their rather peculiar doctrines. This writer preached for some fifteen years in Mormon strongholds of California and Nevada. He has had numerous opportunities to learn, first-hand, and many times by trial and error, the most productive methods of combating their doctrines. It will be the purpose of these articles to offer some advice on how to meet more effectively this false system.

It has been our observation that brethren sometimes exhibit certain ideas and attitudes toward Mormonism which substantially hinder their efforts to reach those who are caught up in that doctrine. Therefore, let us first suggest:

SOME IDEAS ABOUT MORMONISM WHICH NEED TO BE ELIMINATED

1. That their doctrines can be easily met. This is not to say that one who is knowledgeable in the Bible is going to be put to shame or let the truth suffer in a meeting with Mormon teachers. We are suggesting that in order to "get through" to Mormons, one needs to understand the rationale and rather unusual arguments he is likely to encounter. Otherwise, he will be in for a frustrating and fruitless study with a competent Mormon teacher. Meeting

ROBERT H. WEST, preaches for the 14th Avenue church in St. Petersburg, Florida. We asked him to write this series of articles on Mormonism because of his outstanding qualifications on the subject. He edited THE LDS DISCERNER for three years. It was a monthly publication devoted to an examination of Mormonism. He has also written two tracts on Mormonism, and has held numerous lecture series on the subject and engaged in public debate with Mormon representatives. This will be one of the most outstanding and practical series of articles we have published in TORCH.

Mormon doctrine is, in our opinion, more difficult and complex than, say, dealing with the doctrine of "faith only."

2. That their teachers and members are incompetent. If your concept of Mormon teachers is that they are just a bunch of nincompoops, your effectiveness in dealing with them will be severely compromised. It is true, of course, that they have their share of incompetents, as in any other religious group. However, in the presence of his brethren, a competent Mormon teacher often holds all the cards. Especially is this so in the face of an opposing teacher who approaches a study with an arrogant and condescending attitude toward Mormons. Mormons hasten to call to our attention the prominent political, educational and business figures who have embraced Mormonism. In Mormon strongholds in the West, one often finds that most of the educators, businessmen, and local politicians are Mormons. Of course, this proves nothing, except that Mormonism does not appeal just to the mentally deficient!

3. That they are "just another denomination." Mormons are among the very few religious peoples who consider themselves "the one true church," and all others in error. Unlike most denominationalists, they recognize absolutely no connection with either the Catholic or Protestant world. They are proud of their peculiar religious and historical heritage. This pride has almost a racial quality to it which is seen in their frequent references to non-Mormons as "gentiles." A failure to recognize this fierce attitude of exclusiveness among Mormons will handicap efforts to reach them.

4. That it is not a dangerous doctrine to church members. Some have learned by sad experience that members of the church can be caught up in all sorts of false doctrine, including Mormonism. On the other hand, the attitude is presented by some that Mormonism is such a bizarre and "obviously false" system that there is only minimal danger involved when Christians study with them. Our advice: *Don't you believe it!* We need to recall that early Mormon leaders, Sidney Rigdon and "apostle" Parley P. Pratt were formerly preachers of the gospel who defected from the "Restoration Movement." The extent of Rigdon's influence on Mormon doctrine is a subject of controversy, even among Mormons. That he influenced the doctrine can hardly be denied. But from whatever source, the fact remains that Mormon doctrine has in it enough sprinklings of Truth to make it palatable to some weak and unawares Christians. We need to be seriously concerned when a family tells us that they are studying with Mormon

teachers, and hasten to encourage a confrontation with them.

5. That all "Mormons" believe the same thing. It is important to be aware of the various divisions which have arisen among the Book of Mormon-believing people since 1830. Documentation is available to establish that since that time, at least 89 separate groups have arisen, each one teaching some doctrines which conflicted with the others. Many of these groups have ceased to exist. Others are so small as to be virtually unknown. But a general knowledge of the major differences between the largest groups will avoid some embarrassing moments and make our efforts more effective. For example: We ought to know that the members of the *Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints* usually object to being referred to as "Mormons." But the Salt Lake City group (*Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints*) have no objection to this name. The former group rejects the teachings of Brigham Young and even some of the works of Joseph Smith which are recognized as authoritative by the latter group. Neither group recognizes the other as their "brethren" and have no contact whatsoever. So, make sure you know which group of Book of Mormon-believing folks you are dealing with and prepare accordingly. (*To be continued*)

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PUBLISHER TO MINNESOTA FOR SIX MONTHS

I will be working with the Summit Avenue church in St. Paul, Minnesota until June. I appreciate the opportunity to work with this church and am humbled by the confidence the good brethren there have placed in me by inviting me to spend these few months with them.

I am also grateful to the Southwest church in Birmingham, where I regularly work, for allowing me to take this leave of absence. David O. Ogunsola has been invited to work with the church regularly in my absence.

My St. Paul address is:

2030 Wilson Avenue, Apt. 5
St. Paul, Minnesota 55119

PLEASE NOTE: This address is for personal correspondence only. All other mail should be sent to the Mt. Olive, Alabama address.

- Billy K. Farris

My Mother, Yes You Are!

Mother, God's gift to all our race;
Angels made the lines upon your face
And filled you with love so unique —
Beyond the tongue of man to speak.

Mother, who cared for me when I could not
And loved me more than I've forgot.
You kissed away my hurts and fears
And tenderly soothed my tingling tears.

Mother, who showed me right from wrong
And taught me to sing a happy song.
You stood by when temptations came
And helped me honor my father's name.

Mother, fondest companion of all my youth.
How I love thee in deed and truth.
You showed me how my pains to bear
And how with others my love to share.

Mother, how did I ever bring thee pain
When in my youth I acted vain?
You bore my follies without a scar,
For you are My Mother, Yes You Are!

James P. Needham
11/25/74

What a Blessing!

John Rhodes Trotter

I frequently stand amazed at the stupendous Biblical knowledge some brethren possess. These students of the Bible know their text from Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21. They recall the kings of Israel and Judah with astounding ease and rapidity. They recite the exact location wherein virtually every doctrinal point of Holy Writ is found. They give accurate and applicable exegeses from innumerable passages throughout God's inerrant book. Needless to say, these humble scholars possess the greatest knowledge the world has to offer — a knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures.

I ask myself, "How do these noble men and women know so much about God's revelation?" And, very quickly, I'm embarrassed by the obvious answer: They deny themselves. While others enjoy "sleepings often," these brethren study with fervent zeal. While others glue themselves to the boob tube, these students search for truth. While others play ball from dawn to dusk, these stewards examine difficult passages. While others idly gossip the hours away, these scholars exchange ideas and interpretations. Further yet, while others dream for invaluable Biblical knowledge, these brethren labor instead!

Those of us who stand amazed should note that these scholarly brethren did not buy their knowledge, nor did they steal it. They did not inherit this treasure, nor did they stumble upon it. They first desired this knowledge (I Pet. 2:2), and then gave diligence in acquiring it (II Tim. 2:15).

Whether or not we too ever reach this enviable height of knowledge depends wholly upon our own desire and diligence. Without these two qualities, we shall continue to be foolish, not understanding what the will of the Lord is (Eph. 5:17). Friends and brethren, wouldn't it be a blessing if we all had a more thorough knowledge of the Book of all books? Indeed it would. David was so very right when he declared that the blessed man's "delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night" (Psa. 1:2).

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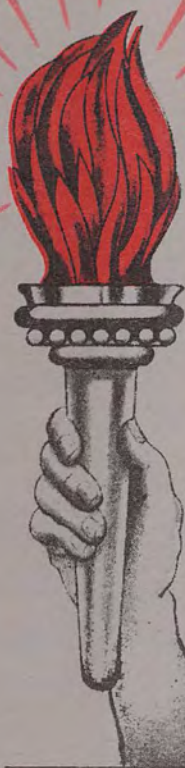
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February 1975



TORCH

*We do not write to be understood,
but so we cannot be misunderstood.*

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A Man and His Money

A brother was once heard to say
He'd save his money for a rainy day.
His giving to the Lord was meager;
It made a very small figure.
As a prophet of weather he blundered,
He and his money too early were sundered;
He died before it thundered!

James P. Needham
12-30-74

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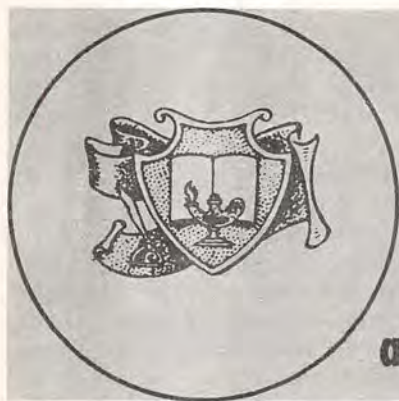
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Billy K. Farris, Publisher

Phone (205) 841-3792



Editorial

James P. Needham

Conservative Brethren, Unity and the College Issue

INTRODUCTION

Brethren informed in the field of church history know that "the college issue" is nothing new among Christians. The issue was raised early in the history of the church in America, brought on by the character and influence of Alexander Campbell's Bethany College, which still exists, and is operated by the liberal Christian Church. Daniel Sommer mounted a strong opposition to Bethany and its detrimental influence in his day. Because of this, all opposition to the scriptural right of a "Bible college" to exist has been unfairly labled "Sommerism."

Most major issue controversies in the church in America have been over the relationship of the church to human institutions. This seems to be a never-settled issue. Colleges owned and operated by brethren have played a major role in the controversies along this line.

In the 1940's. a major thrust was made to put such colleges in the budgets of the churches for regular contributions. N. B. Hardeman took the position that the orphan homes and the colleges "stand or fall together." (*Gospel Advocate*, Oct. 23, 1947, p. 844). Foy E. Wallace, Jr. mounted a very strong opposition to church grants to such human institutions. The controversy was carried in the *Bible Banner* and in the *Gospel Advocate*. While most thought the effort to obtain church money for human colleges was defeated, time has proven the contrary. Advocates of church grants to colleges pulled a strategy move and launched a strong campaign to get the orphan homes in the church budgets since the seed thought had been planted that "the orphan homes and the colleges stand or fall together." They thus reasoned that,

if this is true, if we get the orphan homes in the church budgets, we will have established a basis upon which to call upon the churches for grants to colleges, or else be inconsistent. I say this was a strategy move because promotion of church grants to orphan homes had a emotional appeal that was almost completely lacking in the college issue, so the promoters jumped on the orphan home issue as a convenient horse to ride on. It was a successful strategy. After 17 years of promoting the emotionally charged orphan homes into many church budgets, Batsell Baxter again boldly took the position that "*The orphan's homes and the Christian school must stand or fall together*" (Questions and Issues of the Day, p. 29). The result is that most of the churches who came to accept grants to orphan homes, either contribute to college, or think such would not be wrong.

CURRENT CONCERN OVER THE COLLEGE ISSUE

Those who read papers published by brethren know of the current concern among us over the college issue. Generally, brethren can be classified as follows on this question:

1. **Church and individual support:** Some liberal brethren advocate both church and individual contributions to secular colleges which teach the Bible. Batsell Baxter has verbalized the rationale for this position when he says the churches benefit from the colleges' works, so when churches support them, they are paying for services rendered.

2. **Individual support only:** A good many brethren in both the liberal and conservative camps believe colleges which teach the Bible have the right to exist, but should be supported only by individual contributions.

3. **Secular education, individual support only, no Bible teaching:** Some believe brethren have the scriptural right to operate a secular college, but deny them the scriptural right to teach the Bible under the oversight of a human board. They contend that such usurps the work of the church, and becomes a sort of a missionary society.

4. **Reject number 1, undecided between numbers 2, 3:** There is a large number of brethren who occupy this position. They know this position. They know position # 1 is wrong, but they are not sure if they should go as far as position # 3. They are deeply concerned about some practices of the colleges, and the strong attachment some brethren have to them.

Sometimes they say they think it would be better if we had no colleges but they would not contend such are unscriptural. They fear the influence of colleges over the thinking of brethren, and the political power they often wield. Their position might be best expressed as not denying the scripturalness (lawfulness) of position # 2, but questioning its expediency.

Position # 4 finds support in the blind partyistic loyalty to the colleges manifested by some brethren; the inability to make a clear distinction between the college and the church; the dependence of some churches and brethren upon the colleges; the unbrotherly attitudes manifested toward them, and the misrepresentations circulated by gossiping preachers in whispering campaigns.

Then, there is the hypocrisy of some who loudly proclaim that what one believes about the Bible department question should not be made a test of fellowship or a basis of questioning one's spirituality, but then never miss an opportunity to make negative comments about such when their names come up in conversation. While they profess fellowship, they tacitly practice disfellowship. They talk unity and practice division. They say what one believes about the colleges is a matter of personal opinion and choice, but to be in their good graces, one must accept *their settlement* of the issue.

The college issue is quite warm just now among conservative brethren. Several men of outstanding ability and wide-spread influence have taken position # 3. Knowledge of this fact led to a four-night debate on the subject in Pasadena, Texas the last week of September 1974, between Cecil Willis and Jesse Jenkins. (Brother Willis defended the Bible departments and brother Jenkins denied them). It is reported that "*several preachers changed to brother Jenkins' position as the result of the debate.*" I have a bulletin article of one able brother who says he was solidified in that position by the debate. I have personally talked to many who attended the debate, and several have written me, most of whom went with pro-Bible department leanings or convictions, and every single one of them has said that the right of the college Bible department to exist was not scripturally established in the debate. I have pointed out that this does not mean that it cannot be. The fact that a matter is not successfully defended in a single debate does not mean it is unscriptural. On the other hand, it can mean just that. Objectivity must characterize our observations. Debates, as such, cannot determine what is scriptural — the scriptural teaching done in them can help.

For several years I have detected a shying away from the colleges among conservative brethren. The disillusionment is more widespread than is generally known. In discussing the matter with brethren throughout the country I have come to realize that many take positions 3 and 4 who have never said anything about it. They have not preached or written it, but they will frankly state it when asked. Some who have been friendly toward the schools have done so with some deep-seated second thoughts about some features of them.

This turning away from the colleges has been characterized as "over-reaction to institutionalism." It may be on the part of some, but I do not believe this to be generally true. There is now a growing aversion to board arrangements for evangelism. I recently heard a brother promoting a new periodical he was about to begin. Someone asked him who would own the paper. He said, "*I will. It will be the sole property of _____.* All the brethren who will be writing for the paper objected to writing under a board arrangement." He went on to say that they objected on "scriptural grounds," then said he was not sure whether or not he should say that. He really didn't know whether their objections were scriptural or preferential. In either case, I think it is very significant and typical of present trends among us. Without too much trouble, I can foresee the time when, by far, the majority of conservative brethren will occupy this, or a similar, position. They may not occupy it as a scripturally demanded position, but one which they much prefer to the point that they will refuse to actively support any other. I have heard some pro-school men discussing how the Bible department might be re-arranged, and how they should try to get it done.

With this development will come some strong tensions. They can be felt already as stated earlier. It will take the wisdom of Solomon and the strongest brotherly love to avoid a division over this matter. Men are prone to have strong attachments to their

Men are prone to have strong attachments to their human institutions. As we have stated many times, some brethren panic at the thought of the existence of no college.

human institutions. As we have stated many times, some brethren panic at the thought of the existence of no college. They have trouble conceiving of how the church could survive in such an

atmosphere. A brother recently told me of a book he is writing which encourages churches to train their own personnel. He related how he made a statement in the book that he is "not anti-college, but pro-church." He submitted the manuscript to a well-known school man for evaluation. He told me how strongly the brother urged him to remove that statement from the book. He strongly contended that it has no place in the book. Over the past few years, a good many brethren have made this statement in my hearing. I believe it is the sign of the time. I do not hesitate to laud and applaud it. I believe it is a very healthy sign. I have studied the college issue for the past 25 years, and while my enthusiasm for such organizations has cooled off, I am not yet willing to take the anti-Bible department position. I have been restudying that position for the past 5 years. I have not completely settled it, and my mind remains open. Whether it can ever be definitely proven, the fact remains that it holds less danger for the cause of Christ than the pro-school position. I have to agree with the brother who said, "I am not anti-college, but pro-church."

TORCH AND THE COLLEGE ISSUE

Some party-minded brethren talk in terms of "the TORCH position on the colleges." In reality, such talk is nonsense. TORCH has no position on the college issue, or any other. TORCH is a few pieces of paper, a medium of expression, not only for my views, but for others. My personal convictions are not the screen through which TORCH articles are strained. Each person represents only himself. If I seriously disagree with him, I shall exercise the editorial prerogative to say so, as I sometimes do, but I will not refuse to print an article solely because I disagree with it.

It is true that I have voiced some warnings about church dependence upon colleges and other human institutions. These warnings are not new. They have been made over the past 25 years, as I can abundantly show. Some of the brethren who are so excited about my warnings have issued the same in the past. They now have unbrotherly attitudes toward those who sound these warnings, yet still claim they know full-well the difference between the church and the college. If so, why do they not only no longer sound the warnings, but resent those who do. That is a question which cries out for an answer. They remind me of others who occupy different positions from those once held, but all the while proclaiming "I haven't changed." Something has most definitely changed when one resents the very same warnings he once sounded. It doesn't take a Solomon to see that. They are like the story of two men fishing from a boat. One went to

sleep, and while asleep, the boat drifted. His companion caught a big fish, and the excitement woke him up. Noticing the surroundings were different from what they were when he went to sleep, he exclaimed, "We ain't here no more!" So it is. Something or somebody has changed while we slept: "We ain't here no more."

The fact that constructive criticism is resented within itself, is proof positive that something is wrong somewhere. I can understand resentment of destructive criticism, bitterness, and misrepresentation. Nothing is wrong with resenting that, but when good-natured brotherly criticism is misrepresented and used to try to destroy the influence of those offering it, we know something is out of joint. The most perceptive evaluation of this situation I ever read was made by Luther Blackmon. He said, ". . . you can't possibly say anything about one of 'our schools' without 'misrepresenting' and making 'false accusations'; that is, unless you are trying to boost it. If you are boosting it and trying to say that you think it is running the church a mighty close second, if not even better, then you can be pretty careless how you say it! otherwise take pictures and get affidavits" (Gospel Guardian, Vol. 11, p. 44).

FACING THE PRESENT TENSION

As we face the present tension, and try to deal with it objectively and scripturally, I believe the following statements need to be considered:

1. James W. Adams, *"Debates of the formal, oral variety tend to bring out the party spirit which seems to be latent in each one of us in one degree or another. In this fact, lies one of the dangers of such confrontations among brethren. Particularly is this true when the issue involved is not within itself of such character as to demand a severance of fellowship between those holding diverse views regarding it"* (Truth Magazine, Nov. 14, 1974).

2. Connie W. Adams, editor of *Searching the Scriptures*: *"There is absolutely no excuse for this issue ever dividing brethren unless some undertake to make laws which the Lord did not and make their consciences the guide for others. We have never thought less of a brother if he did not contribute to a school or send his children there. That is his own affair. If we contribute or send our children then that is our affair . . . Supporters of schools and papers should not leave the impression that they question the spirituality of those who do not see fit to use their services. We*

believe it is out of place to use church facilities or functions to advertise and promote schools or papers . . . This writer sincerely hopes that other oral debates on this question will not be forthcoming for awhile. We are not opposed to debates and have participated in several. Much good has come from them. But it appears to us now that further such discussion might generate considerable heat and pose the threat of fracturing peace and forming parties before enough time has elapsed for careful study to be given to the questions involved. Perhaps the papers would provide a better forum for discussion of questions which involve private enterprises since that is really what the papers are anyhow. Meanwhile, there is a need for careful thought, brotherly concern, long-suffering and patience. Objectivity should mark all such studies and detracting personal remarks should be left out entirely" (Searching the Scriptures, Nov. 1974, pp. 3, 4).

I believe these statements to be made wisely and sincerely. I also believe they should be heeded by all. They probably will be ignored by certain partyists and those bitten by the issue bug who feel that to *make a name* they must *make an issue*. We need more light and less heat; more lightning and less thunder; more prayer and less dare; more devotion and less commotion; more gospel preachers and fewer gossiping preachers. With other good brethren joining in the warnings as the brothers Adams have, who knows? we might just succeed!

Since it seemingly is agreed that the college issue is personal, and all are determined to keep it on that basis, let us all apply the principles of Romans 14 to the question. If support or non-support of colleges is a "personal matter," then it is in the realm of opinion, and all must believe God accepts those on both sides of the issue (provided they comport with the principles of Romans 14), and, thus, they should do the same. In Romans 14, both sides were at liberty to keep their convictions and live in accordance with them, but were forbidden to try to convert each other by "doubtful disputations" (v. 1). This is likely the most difficult part of Romans 14 to obey. A brother recently said to me, "*If you are not willing to deny the Bible departments the right to exist, how can you keep quiet when some are teaching they are sinful?*" My reply was and is that I can and must keep quiet the kind of contention Paul had in mind in Romans 14. But I do not think Paul forbid their continued study of the questions involved, but rather partyistic polemics with an either/or conclusion, namely, you either agree with me or I won't "receive" ("fellowship") you. I am not convinced that Paul would restrict objective study of any Biblical issue. What he forbids is partisan promotions

of "disfellowshipping" each other, hobby-riding preachers who seek personal aggrandizement by riding the crests of the waves they make, pontifical editors who sit on their paper thrones and crack the whip over the heads of all who refuse to line up *below* them, imperial elderships which make their convictions the law and bar from the pulpit all who do not kow tow to their legislation, and gossiping preachers who carry on whispering campaigns of calumny. Brother Connie Adams has expressed it well: "Objectivity should mark all such studies and detracting personal remarks should be left out entirely" (Emphasis mine, jpn).

While, as I stated earlier, my enthusiasm for board arrangements has subsided, I have not mounted a bitter campaign against such. At present I am convinced that they are inexpedient and dangerous. My past affiliation with and promotion of such is rather well known, and I can still say that some of my very best friends are connected with such. I have spoken my sincere convictions on these matters in the kindest way that I know how consistent with candor and clarity. Not once have I ever intentionally been offensive. I am neither a diplomat nor a politician. A loyal friend to all I try to be, which, in my view, does not include stifling honest constructive criticism. If brethren who disagree with me want to be friendly with me on that basis, fine — here's my hand. But, if in order to have their friendship I am expected to withhold my convictions and silence my constructive criticisms, I'll have to live without it though it will hurt me deeply. I shall not respond in kind and consider them my enemies. My conscience is not for sale, and if it were, *earthly* friendship would not buy it. My constructive criticisms have been uttered in the open, rather than in a dark corner. They have not been of a detracting personal nature, nor directed at any one organization. They have been based upon personal observations by me while affiliated with and working for such human arrangements, as well as solicited and unsolicited evaluations I have heard good brethren voice in private conversation. While it means little to me, I am surprised at the large number of good and influential brethren who have serious misgivings on the periodical and college issue, especially board arrangements. Some who are very friendly toward, and even promote them, have some serious second thoughts about them, and some facits of their operations. This will become more and more evident in the coming years. So let it be, I believe the majority of the brethren can handle it.

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Unity

Unity is a gaggle of geese in flight,
all together of the same speed and direction.
Each an individual, yet all as one,
o'er Land and Lake, until come the night
and the journey done.

Unity is a convoy of ships on the ocean,
with one Commander and point of compass.
As slow as the fast and as fast as the slow,
by day and night, 'til reaching the destination
and in harbor at last.

Unity is two brothers at work in the field,
no matter who plants or waters or reaps.
No matter who is praised, each does his best,
sweat all day with one concern, that final yield
until the night and rest.

Unity is the journey of me with my Lord,
walking in the light of His Word to guide.
In prayer always, 'Thy will be done,'
of one mind and one judgment, in one accord
until He come.

Larry L. Dickens
9-25-74

The Southwest Church — Birmingham, Alabama

Billy K. Farris

Birmingham, Alabama is one of the large industrial cities of the South. Its population is 58% white* and 42% black.* There are more than thirty churches of Christ in the metropolitan area, with more churches in the general West End area than any part of the city. Over the years the heavy industry of the western section has provided jobs which have produced a healthy economy.

When the new Civil Rights laws passed by congress and court rulings were enforced, blacks purchased houses in what had been "all-white" neighborhoods. At one point there was almost a panic situation; the whites put their houses up for sale as soon as the first black family moved into the neighborhood. As white brethren moved out of the area the numerical strength of the churches diminished considerably. Only in the areas where blacks did not buy houses were church memberships little affected. Today the membership in the churches located in racially mixed areas is down and some brethren drive great distances back to the church meeting place in these areas from their new homes in the suburbs.

I began work with the Southwest church, which is located in the western section of the city, in September of 1973. The few brethren who were left of the church recognized what changes were taking place and the new opportunities which these changes presented. They determined that they would do their best to preach the gospel to *all* residents in the neighborhood. Today the Southwest church's membership is about 50% black and the prospects for the future of the church is bright. In the eighteen months that I have been associated with the church there has been a genuine spirit of love and cooperation among the members.

The Southwest church, though small, is making a most significant contribution to the cause of Christ in Birmingham and should serve as an example to churches everywhere. At present I am temporarily working with the church in St. Paul, Minnesota, an arrangement by which I am to return to the Southwest church when my work in St. Paul is completed. David Ogunsola is now working with the Southwest church and is doing a splendid job.

* In this article I use the terms "white" and "black" with reference to the races as they are most acceptable to both.

Brother Ogunsola is black and is a native of Nigeria in West Africa. Although he is black and is preaching for a formerly "all-white" congregation, the brethren cooperate and work together very effectively. (At this point in 1975, it puzzles me that brethren would think that black and white brethren could not work together in the same congregation.) Allen Davis, a black, is a member of the congregation and a very able preacher also. He, brother Ogunsola and the rest of the Southwest church are doing the kind of work that most of the other churches have neglected.

It is a shame that other churches in Birmingham and other cities are virtually turning their backs on the black population. Little, if any, effort is being made by white brethren to convert blacks that live in the neighborhoods where the meeting places are located. The prospect of having blacks and whites in the same congregation is something that many brethren are not ready to accept, nor are many of them planning to accept. Obviously, black/white membership would not be limited to churches located in racially mixed areas of cities like Birmingham. Brethren know that the proximity of black and white neighborhoods to each other and the ease of transportation would mean that nearly all, if not all churches would have black members if an earnest effort were made to convert them.

I am made to wonder about why preaching brethren are neglecting the black population. Surely none will deny that we have been negligent. Oh, yes, we have seen to it that a few ill-prepared black preachers have been sent to "work among their own people." And most of us have preached sermons to black audiences and taught some black individuals and directed them to the "colored church." But few of us have really been actively working to convert blacks to the extent that we have whites. The black population of Birmingham is 42% and it seems that that would demand almost the same effort be given to converting blacks as whites. What I am saying is that we are failing to preach the gospel to a significant part of the population, and sometimes we are failing literally within the shadow of the meeting house.

The Southwest church is doing what has needed to be done for a long time. Brethren in Birmingham and elsewhere will do well to consider the responsibility they have to the black population in preaching the gospel. I am sure that brethren Ogunsola and Davis (as well as myself) would be happy to do whatever they can to help white brethren come to a better understanding of the present need.

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Part II

Dealing with Mormonism

Robert H. West

In our first article we made some suggestions regarding various ideas about Mormonism which one must eliminate from his thinking if he is to effectively deal with Mormons. Once that is accomplished, one should plan to spend some time preparing a line of evidence which will most likely reach the Mormon prospects. At the same time, he should prepare some material with which to answer and refute the Mormon lines of evidence which they will surely present. It will be the purpose of this article to suggest some general and specific areas of preparation along with some recommended source material.

SOME MATERIAL WHICH CAN BE AVOIDED

You will find available many volumes of "anti-Mormon" books and material. Some of these, which we will mention later, contain some interesting and profitable information. We have come to be convinced, however, that some such material, while interesting, is just a waste of time so far as using it to reach Mormons. In fact, some of it is so inflammatory and prejudicial that its use will serve to close most Mormon doors. Here are three areas which can be profitably avoided:

1. Evidence of the criminal and/or immoral character of Joseph Smith and others. There is an abundance of material available about Smith's character. Some of the older anti-Mormon books were wholly given to this approach against Mormonism. Some of this material is patently absurd and panders to those already convinced that it is a false system. There has been some recent well-documented evidence of Smith's criminal indictment for fraud, Brigham Young's complicity in a forgery scheme, etc. But however well-documented such evidence might be, most Mormons will not even look at such material, much less accept it. They have elevated Smith and other early leaders almost literally to a position of deity and are seldom impressed with assaults on their character. They well interpret the presentation of such material as an insulting exercise in dishonesty. We have found it best to avoid such matters.

2. The various theories of the true authorship of the Book of

Mormon. You will find entire volumes have been written trying to establish a connection between The Book of Mormon and a manuscript written by Solomon Spaulding; viz., Charles Shook's **The True Origin of the Book of Mormon.** This material is fascinating and perhaps even plausible. But the success of this origin theory depends entirely on the testimony of Mormon enemies. The Mormons have their witnesses on the other side of the question. Both sides of this particular controversy are presented in the **Braden-Kelley Debate.** Mormons are not going to accept the testimony of anti-Mormon witnesses. We may as well, therefore, not bother with it if our sole motive is trying to reach them with the truth. Brother James D. Bales of Searcy, Arkansas, has probably done more study on the Spaulding Manuscript theory than any living brother. He devoted an entire chapter on it in his excellent book, **The Book of Mormon?** (now out of print). He also presented this material in his debate with Thomas Stuart Ferguson in 1954. Brother Bales makes this significant comment in his book (p.146):

"However, in ordinary conversation, and in public debate, on the Book of Mormon, it is unnecessary to go into the question of who wrote the Book of Mormon. The really important issue is whether or not the Book of Mormon is of divine origin."

This statement represents our view of the matter. We may not be able to demonstrate the actual authorship of the Book of Mormon. But we can prove beyond any doubt that God did not write it!

3. Various "exposes" of anti-government plots, murders, and sanctioned immoralities among Mormons. There are also many sources regarding alleged disclosures of the secret Temple rites, murders allegedly practiced in connection with Brigham Young's "blood atonement" doctrine, and a host of similiar allegations. Only recently we heard the story that Mormons even now have acid vats in the Utah mountains for the disposal of their apostate brethren! Steer clear of such matters. It is true that there may be some available documentation regarding isolated atrocities in the past which are damaging to the Mormons (the Mountain Meadows Massacre of 1857; the Danites, etc.). But let us assure you that such matters, however well-documented, will accomplish little good with the average Mormon.

SOME SUGGESTED AREAS OF PREPARATION

1. Be familiar with the Mormon standards. While it is not abso-

lutely necessary, there is some advantage to having read The Book of Mormon in its entirety. This is not easy to do. Mark Twain is quoted as describing The Book of Mormon as "chloroform in print." After several chapters of the repeated phrase, "and it came to pass," you will know exactly what Mr. Twain meant! But it is sometimes impressive to Mormons to learn that we have taken the time to read their book. Also be familiar with the Doctrine and Covenants, which claims to be a collection of revelations received by Smith and a few others. Keep in mind that both the Salt Lake City group and the Independence group recognized only their own particular editions of both The Book of Mormon and the Doctrine and Covenants. In addition, the Salt Lake City Mormons have The Pearl of Great Price which they hold to be inspired of God. This book is not recognized by other Mormon factions. As we suggested in the first article, be sure you know with which group you are studying, so you can prepare intelligently.

2. Be able to show the finality of revelation in the 1st Century and the integrity of the present New Testament text. This is really the key issue which separates us from any people who believe in "latter-day revelation." Orson Pratt was one of the original apostles of Mormonism. He was the first one of them to undertake a logical defense of The Book of Mormon. Mr. Pratt stated the key issue as follows:

"If it could be proven from scripture that God had revealed all that He ever intended to reveal, then a professed revelation would not require investigation; for it would be known at once, that every thing of the kind was an imposition. It would be folly in the extreme to inquire whether a professed new revelation were true or false; for if God had declared in His word that no more was to be given, all writings or books purporting to be a new revelation could not be otherwise than false." — Orson Pratt's Works, 1899 Edition, p. 70.

Who among us could state it any better? Our job is clear: to get busy and establish from the Scriptures that revelation is, in fact, complete in the New Testament scriptures. Once we have accomplished this, there is no room for "a professed new revelation," The Book of Mormon included! In a future article, we shall present an outline of our approach on this point. You will find some very helpful material along this line in (of all places) the Stevens-Beevers Debate On The New Testament and Roman Catholicism. Also, some excellent material can be gleaned from

the book, **Infallibility of the Church** by George Salmon. Some are surprised to learn of the marked similarity between Catholicism and Mormonism. Both deny the sufficiency of the Bible. Both affirm continuous revelation. Both claim the necessity of an inspired head (Pope or President) to infallibly interpret Scripture and deliver revelation. Therefore, any material you have which attacks Catholicism on these points can be used with equal force against Mormonism. (Incidentally, did you know that the Mormons believe that Peter was the first "president" of the church?).

In connection with this area of preparation, one needs to be able to meet the Mormon charge that the Bible has been corrupted (see **The Book of Mormon**, I Nephi 13:26-28). Orson Pratt said: "Who knows that even one verse of the whole Bible has escaped pollution, so as to convey the same sense now that it did in the original?" (*Op. cit.*, p. 140). Mormon missionaries will often present a list of some twenty "lost books" which they claim are mentioned in the Bible. Unless you are considerably better at "tis" and "taint" shouting matches than is this writer, we suggest that you bone up on the "canon" of the scripture and the faithful transmission of the text. McGarvey's **Evidences of Christianity**, Everest's **The Divine Demonstration** and other more recent conservative works on evidences will prove helpful. We shall present some additional suggestions along this line in future articles.

3. Prepare especially to deal with the Mormon "testimony." This is nothing more than the old Holiness position of the miraculous convicting power of the Holy Spirit. The Mormons teach that if one really wants to know for sure whether The Book of Mormon is of God, just pray sincerely about it and the Holy Spirit will give a "testimony" which will settle the matter once and for all! (See the B of M, Moroni 10:4). From their very first contact with a prospect, Mormon missionaries push this "testimony" matter. Its importance cannot be over-emphasized. *This is the real "hook" which holds most Mormons to their church.* For once a person has become convinced that he has had a miraculous experience from the Holy Spirit, virtually nothing can ever change his mind. On numerous occasions this writer has presented irrefutable evidences against the divine origin of **The Book of Mormon**, only to be met with the reply, "Well, we can't answer your arguments, but we know we are right anyway, because we have the testimony of the Holy Spirit!" It is almost always expedient to deal with this "Testimony" at the outset of a study with Mormons. If you don't deal with it then, you'll surely have it to deal with later! Therefore, do some preparing in the area of *how* the Holy Spirit con-

victs. Gather material on how we may *know* the truth. More about this in a future article.

4. **Be familiar with their lines of "proof" for the Book of Mormon.** These are too numerous to cover within the scope of this article. You can learn these from Mormon tracts and publications readily available from their local representatives. The **Braden-Kelly Debate** and the **Gatewood-Farnsworth Debate** will be helpful in seeing their approach in a defense of **The Book of Mormon**. In a future article we shall deal with the Mormon "archaeological" proofs.

5. **Read well-documented books on Mormonism.** In addition to the ones already mentioned in this article, here are some others which may be helpful:

No Man Knows My History, by Fawn Brodie; **The Finality of the Faith**, by James D. Bales; **Notes On Mormonism**, by Homer Hailey; **Mormon Claims Examined**, by Larry Jonas.

The most current and best-documented material on Mormonism available may be purchased from Modern Microfilms, Inc., P. O. Box 1884, Salt Lake City, Utah 84110. Write for a book list. These books and pamphlets are published by Gerald and Barbara Tanner, who have been ex-communicated by the Mormon church. He is the nephew of one of the present "apostles." She is the great grand-daughter of Brigham Young. Much of their material contains photo-mechanical reproductions or original source materials which make them especially valuable.

In future articles, we shall make an effort to present some additional suggestions which may help you in dealing with Mormonism.

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Ray Hawk Vs Theophilus

Chapter Two: On the Firing Line

Bob West

Synopsis — A cartoon by Ray Hawk in response to one of my Theophilus illustrations initiated an exchange of correspondence between Ray and me on the subject of kitchens in the church building (see last month's issue of **TORCH**). The exchange was short-lived and abandoned by Ray to make a public attack on Theophilus and me in the August 25, 1974 issue of **Truth**, a paper published by the East Gadsden Church of Christ (Alabama).

Ray began his article by quoting one of his teachers, W. B. West, Jr., "If a man is on the firing line for Jesus Christ, he is going to be shot at." Then Ray refers to Paul's statement in 2 Cor. 11:26 concerning *false brethren* and makes the following application.

"Paul was in peril of false brethren. These are the kind of brethren that try to tear down every good thing you try to build up. We have such brethren today Recently, I saw a cartoon, drawn by Bob West called Theophilus. I often use many of Bob's cartoons to teach a lesson. However, Bob has a position which differs with mine and he thinks it is a sin to have a kitchen in the church building I sent a cartoon to brother Bob West and to the brother who placed it (Theophilus "restaurant" cartoon—BW) in his bulletin These brethren, though honest, feel we are sinning by having a kitchen in the church building. I believe these brethren are false brethren in that they are binding where God did not bind, Matt. 16:19; 18:18. They usurp the place of God and try to become gods themselves, binding their man-made doctrine upon their brethren. What makes this situation so sad is these brethren are so confused over this subject, that few of them agree with one another. We wonder, which of the following god is correct, and which god shall we follow as to his doctrine? 1. . . . Brother Needham states he will defend the right of brethren to use the building to eat in if it is for edification, evangelism, or benevolence. Yet, brother Needham is in fellowship with the following brethren! 2. Another brother states a kitchen may be used in the building for benevolence, but not for evangelism and edification. Brother Bob West made this statement in a letter, dated August 1, 1974. If you will go back to page 2, you

will see his admission is out of harmony with his cartoon which was drawn in 1967! Which time shall we follow him in his teaching? . . . Notice, these brethren fellowship one another, but they think I am in sin because we eat on occasions in our building. Brother Needham and West believe it is alright to eat a sack lunch in the church building. But, for some reason it is wrong when someone other than the preacher does it! When West does it, it is incidental, but when several Christians do it, it is *sinful!* . . . I believe we can see how much disagreement there is among these *false brethren*. If the subject is so clear, why are these men so confused? Which one of the human gods shall we follow? . . . When you are on the firing line, you're going to be shot at. I expect to be shot at some more. However, I refuse to allow *false brethren* to keep me from practicing what I know to be right. . . . One of these brethren I have already discussed this matter with in a written discussion. Another brother wants to debate me on this matter. However, may I suggest that he set his own brethren right in this matter first. —Ray Hawk”

I wrote to Ray and asked him either to run the full text of our correspondence or give me equal space to correct his mishandling of my name and distorting my position. Here is his reply, dated September 3, 1974:

“It seems that when the light of truth is turned on your brethren, that you don't like it. You have been giving us down the road for several years on your anti positions, so now the shoe is on the other foot . . . Now, where have I misrepresented you? If I am going to have to give you room in our bulletin so you can squirm out of your own difficulty, you must give me room in every bulletin where your 1967 cartoon has appeared to show up your fallacy. If not, then print a retraction of your 1967 cartoon and make it say that a kitchen will appear in the plans of ‘Theophilus’ building.’ If no retraction is forthcoming, don't bother me about ‘equal space.’ —Ray Hawk”

September 7, 1974:

“Dear Ray:

It appears that you are more interested in ‘telling me off’ than in showing me the scripturalness of your position. Contrary to what you may think, I'm not interested in squirming out of anything. Show me where I'm out of harmony with the Scriptures and I will make correction to the fullest extent within my power. You still haven't answered the arguments in my last letter

(August 10, 1974). In fact, you haven't even responded to them.

It is true that I should have made allowance for the preparation of the Lord's supper in my statement of July 16: '... a kitchen is *not* incidental to any work or act of worship ...' What I had in mind was the kitchen as commonly used for recreation. However, when you called it to my attention, I agreed. I will do this on any point you bring up which you can support with scripture.

Where (in your August 25 bulletin) did you misrepresent me? Here's where!

1. *'However, Bob has a position which differs with mine and he thinks it is a sin to have a kitchen in the church building.'* Ray, you know that's not so. In fact, you made a big point in your letter (Sept. 3, 1974) to tell me that I agreed that a kitchen is incidental to preparing the Lord's supper.

2. *'Another brother states a kitchen may be used in the building for benevolence ... Brother Bob West made this statement in a letter dated August 1, 1974,'* Ray, that's not what I said. Read it again. I was talking about your *logic*, I told you that in my letter of August 1, 1974, then again in my letter of August 10, 1974. I know you saw it for you quote me in your letter of September 3, and even underlined the word. We never got to what my position is on the subject. You're too quick to make a public attack and too slow to notice what I said. I granted that your logic was valid based on your premise. Your premise is that the work of the church in benevolence is to feed the poor. If this is the work of the church, it logically follows that whatever will expedite this work is authorized. Feeding the poor is a full time job. This would most likely necessitate a full time cafeteria or restaurant (without charge, of course) which would most likely require a kitchen — perhaps even a large one. But Ray, I believe your premise to be false. New Testament churches relieved needy saints. God wants *individual* Christians to *relieve the poor*. So my position is that benevolence with the Lord's money is restricted to saints in need.

3. *'Brother Needham and West believe it is alright to eat a sack lunch in the church building. But, for some reason it is wrong when someone other than the preacher does it! When West does it, it is incidental, but when several Christians do it, it is sinful!'* Read my letter of August 10, 1974 again: 'Notice that this is not a matter of what is done incidentally, such as a preacher, or any other member, who is working on church property eating a sack

lunch there.' I never limited it to a preacher.

4. You have twisted the meaning of my 1967 cartoon. The subject is neither the Lord's supper nor benevolence. Theophilus was making *one* point in 1967, and it is just as valid today. My 1967 cartoon still stands in condemnation of your church *restaurant* — the fellowship hall and the kitchen that feeds it — whether you charge for the meals or not. Now, do you know of a church somewhere that has built a kitchen for the express work of the church and not for recreation and socializing and limits its use to such? I don't.

5. The underlying theme of your article is the supposed differences among 'false brethren.' To prove your point *you misrepresent me again*. You also take James Needham's statement out of context. I have read the Hawk-Needham Discussion from beginning to end. I fully agree with brother Needham on this. I have said nothing that implies that I disagree and which would justify your conclusion.

But even if we did disagree, what has that to do with a study of truth with anyone on any subject? You suggested in your conclusion that we come to agreement before you discuss the matter with one of us. Do you refuse to talk to Baptists until they all agree? Must all Methodists agree before you study with them? Do I correctly assume that you agree on all things with all churches of Christ that you don't call 'Anti'? (How about the subject we're on? Kitchens. Is there any disagreement on this with those you fellowship?)

You make me responsible for providing you space over which I have *no authority* in order for you to provide me space over which you *do have authority*. This is illogical and unfair.

Your martyr spirit about being attacked for truth is rather doubtful. *You* have done the attacking, and have protected yourself from public reply where the attack was made.

Thank you for your quote of W. B. West, Jr. It gives me consolation and comfort knowing why you 'shot' at me.

Sincerely,
s/Bob"

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- James P. Needham

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but so we cannot be misunderstood.*

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Evil
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BUT TO THE
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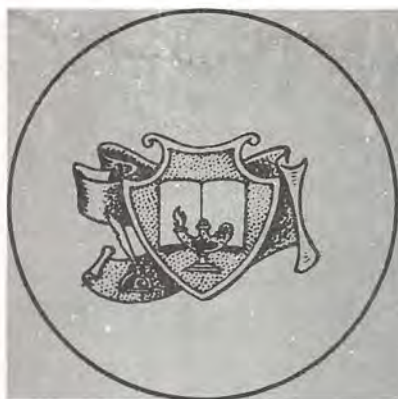
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Editorial

James P. Needham

Attitudes

INTRODUCTION

Webster says an attitude is "A persistent disposition to act either positively or negatively toward a person, group, object, situation or value." It is difficult to overestimate the importance of our attitudes. Our acceptance or rejection of any truth is determined by our attitude toward it. Wrong attitudes are often the very foundation of problems among brethren, and they can never be settled until wrong attitudes are corrected.

ATTITUDES WE SHOULD AVOID

1. Self-righteous: God has made us our brother's keeper (Gen. 4:9), and we are stewards of our own souls as well as others'. It is frequently our duty to correct our brethren in the Lord as well as those in Adam (Gal. 6:1; Mt. 18:15-17). Our efforts often end in failure because of a self-righteous attitude. Jesus condemned the self-righteous Pharisees because they "trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others" (Lk. 18:9). I once knew of a man who heard two preachers preach the same sermon. He loved one and despised the other. When asked why, he said, both of them told him he was going to hell, but the one he loved acted like it was breaking his heart, and the other acted like he was glad of it! A self-righteous attitude has closed many a door, and will cause the damnation of multitudes.

In seeking to correct a brother, we are told to do two things:

(1) have "the spirit of meekness," and (2) consider self lest we also be tempted (Gal. 6:11). These requirements demand that we approach the erring brother with an *open hand* and an *open mind*, and that we demonstrate the same *attitude* we would want him to have toward us if the tables were reversed, because sometime, they may be. It's really the golden rule, a foundation stone in the life of the Christian (Mt. 7:12).

A self-righteous attitude frequently is manifested by our condemning in others what we ourselves practice; if not in *actuality*, in *principle*. The Bible is very explicit in its condemnation of such (Rom. 2:1-3; 17-24). To the self-righteous snobs who brought to Jesus the woman found in adultery, He said, "Let him that is without sin cast the first stone" (Jn. 8:7). Jesus was not saying that he who corrects another must be sinlessly perfect. These self-righteous Jews were seeking to entrap Him, had no love or compassion for the woman, and had no more respect for the law they challenged Him to enforce than a pig does for pearls (Mt. 7:6). He was repulsed by their self-righteous attitude, so he rebuked them and forgave the woman.

2. **Partyistic:** Partyism is a work of the flesh which will damn the soul (Gal. 5:19-21). Paul said the party promoters at Corinth were carnal babies who walked as men (1 Cor. 3:1-3), and that they needed to learn "Not to think of man above that which is written" (1 Cor. 4:6). The church is a body with inner-dependent members who "should have the same care one for another" (1 Cor. 12:25), not divided against one another, or be "puffed up FOR one AGAINST another" (1 Cor. 4:6). These divine principles are ingored when we handle issues by drawing lines and pasting labels before we have had time to coolly and calmly study the problems in the light of the scriptures rather than in the heat of partyistic combat. When we are more influenced by editors and papers, and presidents and schools, than by holy writ, we are plagued by partyism and more than likely will do more harm than good to the cause of Christ. When brethren can condone or overlook in those who agree with them the *same things* they condemn in those who disagree with them, brethren of good will and judgment will take note of it.

3. **Know-it-all:** We should never manifest a "know-it-all" attitude. Neither our knowledge or application of truth is infallible. We have all, at one time or another, been cock-sure we were absolutely right on a given point, only to have some humble brother point out something on the subject that we had never thought of. Someone has well said that the more one knows, the

more he knows he doesn't know! It is not likely that we can teach a person anything who thinks he already has learned it all. A brother once accused this writer of teaching false doctrine. The elders asked him to meet with me and them. We all talked for about three hours. We studied the subject from several view points. The brother acknowledged several times that things were presented that he had not known, and could not refute. We thought we were making some progress with him. At the conclusion of our meeting, he said, "*Before we go I just want to tell you one thing, you ain't learned me nothing!*" I have a sermon I sometimes preach entitled, "Theunteachables." The know-it-all is one of them.

4. **Dogmatism in opinions:** This attitude is characteristic of the know-it-all. He is always "right" on everything, and will cause trouble if all don't agree with him. He cannot tolerate a differing view, or admit for one moment that he might be wrong. To admit such a possibility would be tantamount to saying he doesn't know it all. This attitude settles every issue by forming a strong unbending opinion on the subject. This person wants his conscience to be everybody's guide. He has settled every issue, regardless of its complexity, that has divided brethren over the years. Such a dogmatic attitude often finds its foundation in a *personal pride* that cannot admit *weakness* or *fault*. Such a person's opinions are like the laws of the Medes and Persians, they alter not. To alter an opinion would insult the false pride that is too arrogant to admit error. I once knew of a man who said he had a mule that was 18 feet tall. Someone said, "you mean 18 hands, don't you." He replied, "What did I say?" Someone replied, "well, you said 18 feet." He replied, "I will stick with what I said!" I once heard of an elder who said he had not changed his mind on any Bible subject in 20 years! I would say he still must be in error on many subjects.

5. **Argumentive:** Some brethren are lovers of controversy. Peace and tranquility are their enemies. They don't know how to exist in such an atmosphere. They are ready to debate every subject that arises, even before they have had the necessary time to really study the problem. These persons sometimes raise issues where there are none, for the sake of a fight. I once heard a preacher say, "Things are just too peaceful over where I preach; I wish someone would start something." Can you imagine that? This person seeks to make a major issue of every problem that arises; he draws lines, starts partying and pasting labels. He doesn't know the difference between a minor scrimmage and a major battle. He thinks the only way to settle every issue is to

have a public debate on it. In such a confrontation he finds his glory. Any who disagree with him are soft and don't believe in "contending earnestly for the faith." He refuses to admit that debates are sometimes the worst way to try to settle a controversy because of the tendency toward partyistic attitudes and an emotionally charged atmosphere that is detrimental to objective study. Certainly, debating has its place as a method of teaching when it is properly used under the right circumstances. But there are some subjects that should not be argued, muchless debated.

Paul said, "*But foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender strifes. But the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will*" (2 Tim. 2:23-26). Again, "*But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness*" (2 Tim. 2:16). And further, Paul said some are "*proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth . . .*" (1 Tim. 6:4,5). Who said everything is debatable, and all controversy is good?

ATTITUDES WE SHOULD HAVE

1. **Love:** We must first have an all-consuming love for God (Mk. 12:28-30). Second, we must have undying love for all men (Lk. 12:31). Jesus said, "On these . . . hang all the law and the prophets" (Mt. 22:40). The New Testament explains the working of love. Paul said it fulfills the law (Rom. 13:8,10). Peter said it "Covers a multitude of sins" (1 Pet. 4:8). The most complete explanation of love is found in the famous thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians, and in Romans 13:10, Paul declares that "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor." In a word, love is fair, kind, considerate, sympathetic, and good-willed. Paul said, "Let all that ye do be done in love" (1 Cor. 16:14). Do we fulfill this when we engage in character assassination? gossip? backbiting? destructive criticism? etc.

Some of our brethren are so allergic to love that they cringe when they hear someone say that it should motivate our actions. They have been hard nosed, and caustic so long that their concept of love is warped. When they are rebuked for not showing love, they define love in terms of caustic action in the interest of souls.

This is certainly a legitimate manifestation of love in given circumstances, but he who thinks this is the totality of love's action, and that it excludes tenderness, compassion, good will, empathy, humility, meekness, yea, and a willingness to sacrifice self for the good of others, has a sick sense of what love is all about. Of course, the same can be said of the person who swings to the other extreme and defines love as some sort of a sick sentimentalism that is as fragile as fern and as weak as water.

2. **Truth first:** Regardless of the importance of all other considerations, we must always have a truth-first attitude. It should be pointed out that as important as love is (shown in the previous paragraph), true love never overshadows or conflicts with truth. The Bible says a great deal about unity, and how we should "endeavor to keep it" (Eph. 4:3), but unity that is bought at the price of sacrifice truth is not worth having. Each of us is called upon from time to time to sacrifice our own interests, opinions, preferences, etc. in the interest of unity, and we should gladly make such sacrifices; but never should we give one ounce of truth for any amount of unity. Such is always a bad bargain! It is like blackmail: the bargainers never get through, and the price constantly increases. There are repeated demands for more and more compromise of more and more truth until finally our unity structure rests upon a foundation of error which is a thousand times worse than division. Truth is the only scriptural foundation for unity (Jn. 17:20,21).

3. **Openmindedness:** All of us must fight prejudice. It is hard to be completely objective; to study a matter with no personal preference as to what the outcome should be. We need to realize that the person with a closed mind is wrong even when the things he believes are right because he has no assurance of infallibility and if he were wrong on just one thing, a closed mind would prevent his learning it. It is sad, but many brethren settle many issues by personal loyalties and without ever really studying what the Bible teaches, and certainly without ever discussing the matters with the persons involved. An openminded person is also open "eared," open handed, and open hearted. He is never satisfied until he has all the facts, and his decision is made on the basis of those facts. The Bible severely condemns closedmindedness (Mt. 13:15; 2 Thess. 2:9,10). Let us never be like the man who prayed, "*Lord, start me right; because Thou knowest that if I get started wrongly, Thou thyself cannot change me.*"

4. **Forgiving:** The Bible says, "*Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any:*

even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye" (Col. 3:13). Someone said, "It is human to err but divine to forgive." Forgiveness comes very difficult for many of us. Once a brother has sinned, we just cannot accept his repentance with the openheartedness that should characterize us. So often we want to *make it hard* on him in some way. I once heard of two brethren who had a quarrel. One became deathly ill. A third brother insisted that they settle their complaint before he died. The well brother was brought to the bedside of the dying brother. After a long discussion of the quarrel, the well brother said, "*Well, I will tell you what I will do: if he dies, I will forgive him; If he gets well I won't.*" For shame! He who refuses forgiveness to his fellowmen, receives none from God (Mk. 11:25).

Aside from the fact that failure to forgive is sinful, it is very detrimental to our earthly happiness. A grudge is very hard on the person who bears it. It will eat his heart out. It will destroy his peace of mind, and rob him of needed sleep. It will haunt him day and night, and be a thorn in his side and a stench in his nostrils, and eat him as doeth a cancer.

5. **A sense of balance:** Nothing is quite as attractive as a well-balanced person; a brother who takes a broad overview of life and its issues, rather than being fixated on a few. This is indeed a great need on the part of all of us, but most especially *editors*. We have a tendency to get "hung up" on one or two problems. In turn, we get a lot of other brethren excited about these particular problems, and they begin to write about them. The hysteria spreads like wild fire until brethren generally begin to define soundness in terms of a very limited number of issues. This is never good. A brother is not sound just because he agrees with, or is excited about, the same issues as I am. Spiritual myopia is a very common disease among us. We all need to cure it with a more balanced view of all matters.

But what are the marks of a well-balanced person? Perhaps some are unbalanced because they don't know how to be otherwise. Let me make a few suggestions:

a. *Distinguishes major from minor issues:* A well-balanced person knows the difference between a minor scrimmage and a major battle. He never allows a minor issue, or a side issue, to overshadow a major one. He never allows a mere expediency to become a point of major controversy. Many brethren sit in all-night business meetings wrangling over technicalities while their neighbors die in sin.

b. *Expects the same of self as he does others:* He does not speak of spiritual matters in terms of "they," but "we." He doesn't say, "Somebody ought to do this or that," but rather he realizes that his responsibility is equal to everyone else's. He does not assume a "straw-boss" stance to tell everyone else how to do what he refuses to do him self.

c. *He shows to others the tolerance he wants them to show him:* He is not a super-critic of others' faults, but expects them in turn to be super-tolerant of his.

d. *Practices what he preaches:* He does not say, "Do as I say, but not as I do." He realizes that hypocrisy is repulsive to all right-thinking people, and he constantly strives to lead by example.

e. *He doesn't think he can settle issues that have divided brethren for centuries:* A well-balanced person realizes that there are certain issues over which brethren were divided long before he was born. He knows that they will not be settled in his life time, so he seeks to be tolerant and understanding in these areas, while never compromising his own conscience. Forming parties over such matters is repulsive to a well-balanced brother.

f. *Doesn't think of congregational unity in terms of one issue:* A well-balanced person does not think the settlement of one issue will completely unify a church. To do so is to be both unbalanced and naive. For instance, some brethren determine to cast a congregation into an artificial-head-covering mold, or some other such view. Once they have done this, they vainly think they have unified the church; all the while forgetting that there are dozens of brethren within that church who differ widely on many other issues.

g. *Doesn't push the panic button:* A well-balanced brother is not a panic button pusher. Every little tempest does not put him on the ropes. He "keeps his cool," and is patient (2 Pet. 1:5-11), and longsuffering (Gal. 5:22; Eph. 4:2). He looks at matters over the long run, rather than in terms of the here and now. He does not pull up the wheat with the tares, so to speak.

h. *He does at least as much listening as talking:* Some brethren never learn much because they never listen. One is not learning when he is talking. It is also important to be careful about to whom we listen. I get in more trouble accepting what somebody tells me than from just about any other source. Persons don't

usually misrepresent matters intentionally, but what they hear is subject to misunderstanding and misinterpretation. It is always best to get one's information "from the horse's mouth." That is, rely on original sources, rather than secondary ones. We Americans pride ourselves in our "freedom of speech," and most of us exercise (abuse) that freedom! One has no freedom of speech until he has something worthwhile to say. It is much better to be silent and be thought a fool, than to open one's mouth and remove all doubt! In the first century the Holy Spirit gave some brethren the gift of tongues. The "spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2) gives some brethren the "gift of tongues!" James admonishes us to be "*Swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath*" (Jas. 1:19).

CONCLUSION

An attribute of our attitudes that is both good and bad, is that they are capable of being changed. That is good, if they are changed from bad to good, but not if the change is from good to bad. Our attitudes are usually determined by several factors, such as: Knowledge or ignorance of God's word, good or bad experiences with fellowmen, our sense of values, upbringing, social status, education, and general philosophy of life. It is sometimes difficult to change a bad attitude, but with the help of God, it can be done. We must always view everything in terms of truth, love and a dogged sense of justice. Micah's message to Israel fits well just here as a motto of life: "Do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God" (Mic. 6:8).

Our attitudes really program our response to all stimuli. A bad attitude programs us to respond in the wrong way. If we have a closedminded or a know-it-all attitude, we are predisposed to refuse to consider any new material that does not harmonize with what we already believe. If we are openminded, we are predisposed to consider fairly all material that comes to our attention. The fact that it disagrees with what we already think is right, only makes it more challenging and necessary that we take a close look at it.

These considerations should cause all of us to strice diligently to cultivate the right attitude at all times and in all things. It is a very profitable study to go through the New Testament and study all the passages that show the kind of mind (attitude) God requires of His children. Once we do this, we should realize that the maintaining of that attitude is necessary to our pleasing the God we serve.

The Puzzled Preacher



I can't imagine what's wrong with Sherman;
Prays for the preacher, sleeps through the sermon,
Tells him firmly as he goes out the door:
"Good preaching, brother, just give us more."

But I'm just as confused about Jake
When he arises, announcements to make:
"Come back tonight," he strongly implores,
Yet he may not, and if he does he snores!

But I'm no less puzzled about folks
Who brand such religion a hoax,
Seeing it, they do a slow burn
As they through the song book turn!

Yet some to our glorious delight
Listening, do it just right;
Ears atuned to all that is heard
Plucking sweet morsels from God's own word.

James P. Needham
2/4/75

A Tribute to



Franklin T. Puckett at His Death

January 1975

A man who grew from simple stock
From a place they call Calico Rock.
Possessed of qualities that make men great;
He fostered no malace, harbored no hate.

A stock of hair as white as snow;
A distinguishing trade mark, we all know.
A stocky build, a strong physique;
A commanding appearance and quite unique.

A prince, a student, a gentle man;
A wonderful Christian with a helping hand;
A winsome smile and a pleasant look;
A brilliant knowledge of the grand ol' book.

Meek and humble, he was indeed!
With never a trace of selfish greed.
His work he did without a flare,
And studied the Bible with meticulous care.

He preached the gospel and taught some school.
And tried to live by the golden rule.
Friends and brethren he knew many
Had he enemies? I knew not any.

A scholar was he, second to none;
Sharing great knowledge with everyone.
Never too busy to lend a hand;
Always a gentleman's gentleman.

The gospel he preached for many years
And dealt with problems that brought him tears.
He stood for truth without disguise
And knew not how to compromise.

At wisdom's height his summons came
And took his armor and left us lame.
His sword is quiet; our ranks are broken;
The loss we've suffered cannot be spoken.

He now is gone and won't be back.
Those remaining must take up slack.
He's finished the course, and run the race,
And nobody, really, can take his place.

James P. Needham
2-19-75

Ray Hawk Vs Theophilus

Chapter Three:

**"What! Have ye not
churches to eat and to drink in?"**

Bob West

After Ray Hawk initiated an exchange of correspondence on the subject of kitchens in the church building, he abandoned it for a public attack. Ironically, in his paper called "TRUTH" Ray wrote a "Not so TRUE" representation of my position and labeled me a false brother who is trying to become a god. Instead of honoring my request for a correction and an apology, he has prolonged the discussion, clouded the issue, created side issues, and raised new questions. But the facts haven't changed.

On October 13, 1974, in a second article Ray enlarged upon his previous misrepresentations. The first article may have been the result of irresponsible journalism with Ray writing what I believe before he had investigated sufficiently to know. But now Ray knows better. And it is difficult for me to believe that the last attack and the outright lie it contained was not a result of maliciousness.

While I no longer had reason to expect that Ray will have the moral integrity to treat me fairly, I did make one more plea, and urged him to repent in view of Revelation 21:8. I also appealed to the elders at East Gadsden (where Ray preaches). I enclosed a brief article which correctly stated my position and requested that it be printed in *Truth*. That was 3 months ago (as I write this in January). Still no reply.

Theophilus first stirred Ray to action when he told a friend that there wouldn't be a kitchen — that they were building a church building, not a *restaurant*. So Ray rallied to the defense of that church out there somewhere that might have a kitchen exclusively for preparing the Lord's supper, and who might think that Theophilus was consigning them to hell. Now, Ray won't admit it, but he's really trying to defend those churches who have

kitchens for recreation and socializing. And that's what Theophilus was talking about.

In an effort to draw attention away from the real issue, Ray made a play on the word kitchen and placed a construction on my use of the word that was neither implied nor reasonable.

This illustration should show what I mean. A glass factory can manufacture communion cups. But can the church run a glass manufacturing operation? In making the observation that it is not the work of the church to manufacture communion cups, one could reply, "What if the local church only manufactured glass containers for her own use in preparing the Lord's supper?" That, of course, would be an unnatural, abnormal, and non-characteristic use of the glass factory. If that become the issue, it would be a change of issues.

That's *exactly* what Ray had done with the kitchen.

If the use of the church glass factory were confined to communion cups to facilitate the Lord's supper, wouldn't it be scriptural? Yes. But would it be good judgment? No. And isn't it possible to use such bad judgment in spending the Lord's money so as to become sin? I believe it is. And when I see figurines looking like cats and dogs coming off the communion cup assembly line, I get suspicious. I believe Ray's kitchen with its stove and refrigerator is about as incidental to preparing the Lord's supper as an olympic size church swimming pool is to baptism.

Ray objected when Theophilus told a friend that there wouldn't be a kitchen — that they were building a church building, not a *restaurant*. He said he didn't know of a single church that makes a restaurant out of the church building. Then he gave Webster's definition of restaurant as "an eating house." In spite of this, he told me in a letter that they use their kitchen to cool and heat their covered dishes which they bring with them to eat after worship. Now, if that doesn't make it "an eating house," what would it take? While I am on the subject, how is this for starters taken from brother Hawks bulletin Jan. 6, 1974?

"Tickets may now be purchased for the Alabama Christian College appreciation dinner! This dinner will be on February 23rd at 7:00 P.M. It will take place in the fellowship hall at the building. The tickets are \$10.00 each. If you cannot come yourself, why not purchase a ticket for one of our teenagers? The tickets

are tax deductible and it is a good way to help Christian education. Please help by buying a ticket or two! See the preacher."

Ray thinks his kitchen is parallel to his commodes and his drinking fountain. But, do you suppose he has ever announced that there would be a public gathering to drink at the water fountain? Or to use the restrooms? Yet these are used *incidentally* to the public assemblies. But the meals are not incidental to a gathering to worship. Meals constitute a separate purpose for gathering. And the kitchen is incidental to *that*, not to the work of the church. But, what about preparing the Lord's supper? Well, the truth is that you can prepare the Lord's supper without a kitchen. The kitchen is *not necessary* to preparing the Lord's supper. But a place (with toilet) *is necessary* to a public assembly.

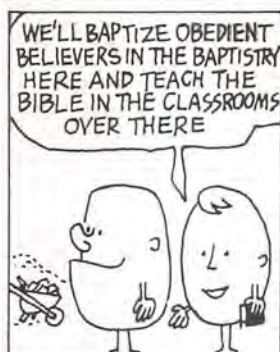
There is a big difference between *eating* a sack lunch incidental to working on church property and *coming for the purpose* of eating a "sack" lunch (and then spending the Lord's money for facilities to cool and heat it).

According to Ray, we have an approved apostolic example of Paul eating in a church building in Acts 20:11. I suppose he thinks if you meet for the Lord's supper in someone's home, the home becomes henceforth a church building. Such logic would also give one authority to move into and live in the meeting house owned by the Lord, and call it home.

Churches to eat in? Was that what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 11:22? No, Paul asked, "Have ye not *houses* to eat and to drink in?" I know the immediate concern was abuses of the Lord's supper, but the principle he states is broader in application. Paul's immediate concern was the time (when you come together for the Lord's supper is not the time to eat your own supper), but he also specified the *place* to eat your own supper ("have ye not *houses* . . ."). Where shall we eat, brethren? Shall we eat with Ray (churches), or shall we eat with Paul (houses)? Where do you think God would have it?

While Ray uses his time, the Lord's money, and the church bulletin to attack and misrepresent those who disagree with him in an effort to defend his social gospel, Theophilus will continue to share with others the Bread of Life. I pray that Ray will see his error and repent and that his hunger and thirst will be after righteousness — to the saving of his soul and those over which he has influence.

THEOPHILUS *by Bob West*



Part III

Dealing with Mormonism

Robert H. West

In our previous articles we have made some suggestions regarding things to avoid and things which might be profitably studied in preparing to deal with Mormonism. In this article we shall present a few specific matters which we have found helpful.

ESTABLISHING THE FINALITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

As we pointed out in the last article, the key issue with Mormonism centers around whether the Bible contains the *final*, and *complete* revelation of God to man. We quoted "apostle" Orson Pratt who correctly observed that if the finality and completeness of the Bible could be established, then the Book of Mormon would be forever exposed as a deception.

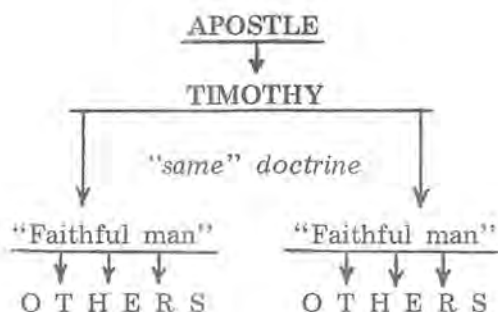
Before presenting an outline of our approach to this matter, let us caution against begging the question by the premature citation of 2 Timothy 3:16-17. Sometimes brethren throw out this passage in a discussion with Mormons and exultantly exclaim, "*That proves we have all we need in the Scriptures!*" A sharp Mormon teacher will invariably respond, "*Were there no other scriptures written after the book of 2 Timothy?*" When we agree that, yes, there were other books written after 2 Timothy, they move in for the *coup de grâce*: "*Then you admit that this passage does not establish the completeness of the Bible?*" In our judgement, the Mormons are right in this observation. This passage, taken alone, in no way defines what books are to be included in the "scripture." The Mormons reason that if we can fit in some extra New Testament books after 2 Timothy, then they can fit in the Book of Mormon without violating anything stated in the passage! The problem here is resolved when we *first* establish that the 27 New Testament books comprise the completion of revelation. Having done that, *then* 2 Timothy 3:16-17 can be cited to prove that God intended that "scripture" (the written word), as opposed to continuous revelation, be our standard of authority and bring us to perfection.

Likewise, the premature use of Revelation 22:18-19 can result in an uncomfortable situation. When we cite this passage with a view to proving the completeness of revelation, the Mormons call

our attention to the similar language of Deuteronomy 4:2 which forbade Israel from “adding to” or “taking away from” the Law of Moses. They then observe that there were many other Old Testament books written after that time; therefore, such language in no way forbids the inclusion of additional revelation! Again, we emphasize, *first* establish the completeness of revelation in the New Testament books. *Then* such passages as Revelation 22:18-19 can be profitably cited to show the exclusiveness of such completed revelation. Don’t “jump the gun”! Build your premises carefully. Draw accurate conclusions. Then, and only then, corroborate the conclusions with the passages above.

The following is an outline of the step-by-step approach which we use in establishing that the New Testament is the final and complete revelation of God to man.

1. Jesus **PROMISED ALL TRUTH** to the apostles through the **Holy Spirit**: John 14:26; John 16:12-13. It is good to consider the inclusiveness of the word “all.”
2. Apostolic men **RECEIVED ALL TRUTH**: 2 Peter 1:3; Ephesians 3:5; 1 Corinthians 2:9-13. The apostles received **ALL** truth through the Holy Spirit; but they did not receive the peculiar “revelations” of Mormonism. Either the Bible is wrong and they did not receive **ALL** truth, or, Mormonism is not part of the truth!
3. They **DELIVERED ALL TRUTH**: Acts 20:26; Romans 6:17. Observe in the passage in Romans that a “form” of doctrine is under consideration. At that date, there was already a “form” or “pattern” being laid down by these apostolic men. Read 2 Timothy 1:13 and 2:2 and notice the chart below:



Here is an apostle who had received ALL truth, who delivers it in a "form" or a "pattern" to another man, Timothy, who in turn is instructed to commit it to still other faithful men — who in turn were to teach others. This establishes that what the apostles were promised and received, they delivered to others who passed it on to still others. What the apostles received (ALL truth) was never intended, as some Mormons claim, for them only. Rather, this "form" of doctrine was to be handed down — showing it was a permanent standard of authority.

4. They delivered it "ONCE": Jude 3. The original word here is HAPAX, which means: *"used of what is so done as to be of perpetual validity and never need repetition, once for all"* — Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, page 54. What they were promised and received was delivered "one time for all time," thus precluding any latter-day restoration of the gospel. *If we do not have today this original "faith" delivered in the First Century, then we can never have it, according to this plain passage.* We might point out here that Mormons are seldom impressed with an appeal to the original language. The useage of "once" in Hebrews 9:27-28 and 10:10 can be cited as clarification of the meaning of the term.

5. They WROTE what they received with a view to general use: 1 John 1:1-4; John 20:30-31; 2 Peter 3:15-16. NOW is the time to cite 2 Timothy 3:16-17 to demonstrate God's intention that it was the *written word* which was to be used to instruct and perfect His people. Do we have a body of writings today which are the product of the apostles and prophets of the First Century? Indeed we do, in that book which we call the New Testament. Such passages as Galatians 1:6-9 and 1 John 4:1-6 can also be presented to show that the apostles wrote with a consciousness that what they were saying was to be the standard by which all other doctrines were to be tested. The New Testament, therefore, constitutes the complete and final revelation of God to man.

This conclusion might be placed in the following logical form:

A. The revelation received by the apostles and prophets in the First Century contained ALL truth.

B. But the present New Testament is the revelation received by the apostles and prophets in the 1st Century;

C. Therefore, the New Testament contains ALL truth.

If the Mormons continue to challenge this conclusion (which they are sure to do), then the burden of proof is upon them to demonstrate the insufficiency of the New Testament to "furnish us unto every good work" and to perfect us.

DO WE HAVE ALL OF THE ORIGINAL APOSTOLIC WRITINGS

Sometimes Mormons will agree that the apostles were *promised* all truth; that they *received* all truth; and even that they *delivered* all truth in the 1st Century. But they will then contend that much of the scripture was lost and corrupted over the centuries, thus making it necessary for a "restoration of the everlasting gospel" (*Volià*: the **Book of Mormon**). The **Book of Mormon** itself insists that ". . . many parts which are plain and most precious; and also many covenants of the Lord . . ." have been taken away from the Bible (See 1 Nephi 13:26-28 and 2 Nephi 29:3,6,10 — Salt Lake City edition). "Apostle" Orson Pratt inquired, "*Who knows that even one verse of the whole Bible has escaped pollution, so as to convey the same sense now that it did in the original?*" — Orson Pratt's Works, 1899 Edition, page 140.

In connection with Pratt's affirmation, we might make the following observation: If Mormons do not *know* that even *one verse* of the Bible has escaped corruption, then they just do not believe the Bible, in spite of all their affirmations to the contrary. One cannot believe that which *may* be false and corrupted!

We might also observe that in spite of all the Mormon claims about the Bible's unreliability, the **Book of Mormon** contains numerous Bible quotations, including 26 complete chapters copied verbatim from the King James Version! This constitutes approximately 11% of the **Book of Mormon**. Will the Mormons admit that 11% of their book is subject to doubt? Such inconsistencies abound in Mormonism.

But how do we know that the New Testament has come down to us without corruption? Let us read from one part of it which has, somehow, managed to survive through the centuries: "*Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever.*" — 1 Peter 1:23. God's word is INCORRUPTIBLE, in spite of what all the Mormons and infidels who have ever lived might have to say about it! The word LIVES and ABIDES forever! Now just what word is it that Peter is talking about? See verse 25: "*And this is the word WHICH BY THE GOSPEL IS PREACHED UNTO YOU*"! The same word

preached in the 1st Century is that which is incorruptible, which lives and abides FOREVER!

Corroborative testimony can be produced from textual scholars who attest to the integrity of the New Testament text. They unanimously conclude that we can say with confidence that we have what the New Testament writers wrote! Of course, Mormons are not likely to be impressed with what a non-Mormon scholar says. Therefore, let us quote from a Mormon scholar, *Dr. Richard Lloyd Anderson, Professor of History and Scripture at Brigham Young University*:

"In tracing the history of manuscript investigation, the student finds that two great facts emerge. First, no new manuscript discovery has produced serious differences in the essential story. This survey has disclosed the leading textual controversies, and together they would be well within one percent of the text. Stated differently, all manuscripts agree on the essential correctness of 99% of the verses in the New Testament. The events and the great truths contained there are agreed upon by all major manuscripts of the New Testament.

"The second great fact that such a survey demonstrates is the progress that has placed the world in possession of manuscripts very near the time of their writing . . ."

[At this point, Dr. Anderson quoted from Sir Fredreic Kenyon, a firm believer in the accuracy of the present New Testament text. — RHW]

"We are now much closer to the time of the writing of some New Testament book than when Kenyon made the foregoing confident appraisal, and we possess other confirming manuscripts. There is more reason today, then, to agree with him that we possess the New Testament 'in substantial integrity' and to underline that 'the variations of text are so entirely questions of detail, not of essential substance.'" — From Papers of the Forteenth Annual Symposium on the Archaeology of the Scriptures, Presented April 13, 1963, pages 57 and 58.

Let us summarize the argument:

The apostles were promised, received, and delivered once for all, in writing, ALL truth. We have those writings today in the New Testament which has been transmitted to us accurately since it is "incorruptible," such accurate transmission being confirmed by even Mormon scholars.

There may be other more fruitful ways to approach this subject. But we have found this one works well for us. Use whatever you can. If you see some way to improve the argument, please let us know.

In following articles we shall present some answers to some of the Mormon defenses of their system.

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TORCH Editorial on

"The Fellowship Issue"

Ron Halbrook

(EDITOR'S NOTE: We are stretching our policy a bit to print an eleven-page article, but because it is a response to our January editorial, we have decided to give space to it without asking brother Halbrook to try to condense it. We are anxious for him to have his say in his own way! However, to conserve space, I shall intersperse my comments upon its various parts in brackets using a different type style. I apologize for this format, but limited space necessitates it. It may become a little boring, but I shall initial all my comments to assure identity.

I might add just here that the January editorial has elicited the greatest response of any TORCH editorial I have written to date. The response has been preponderantly positive. In fact, to this date, brother Halbrook's is the first response that can be considered somewhat negative. jpn)

These lines are penned on the assumption that brother James P. Needham is "calling the shots" as he sees them in his January, 1975, editorial on "The Fellowship Issue." And, on the assumption, that he is open to reactions from others, positive, negative, or both. So in a good-natured way, we want to make a few observations for the furtherance of brotherly study on the vital theme of fellowship. *[This is indeed a noble undertaking, and one can only hope and pray that our brother lived up to his resolve in the total course of his reply. Whether he did or not might well depend upon his definition of "good-natured."* Not wanting to unfairly judge him or prejudice the reader, I shall leave it for you to judge. jpn] We will not pretend to have all the answers any more than brother Needham will. *[In my estimation, this is a key sentence in our brother's reply, and I shall constantly remind him of it. Upon this point we are thoroughly agreed; I am sure I don't*

have all the answers to the fellowship question, and I am no less convinced that brother Halbrook doesn't! This was the main point of my January editorial. In view of this admission from brother Halbrook, one must question the need for his eleven-page demonstration of the fact! There always have been problems in the area of fellowship, and there always will be, but some brethren act like they have all the answers when I know they don't. Traditionally, brethren have either not practiced what they preached, or they have not preached what they practiced. Let it be clearly understood, however, that to recognize these facts is not a leaning toward Carl Ketcherside's position, or a defense of any brother who may try to solve fellowship problems in ways that clearly violate scriptural principles. Some brethren had rather make accusations and insinuations than deal with the hard questions of fellowship. jpn] Like him, we believe the Bible answers the questions that MUST be answered for our salvation — so we are willing to learn all anyone can teach us from the Grand Revelation (2 Tim. 3:16,17; Deut. 20:20). [This is an easy statement to make, but I'm sure our brother realizes that various brethren have their own peculiar lists of questions whose answers they feel are "for our salvation." For instance, some brethren think the woman's covering question, the war question, the communion cup question, the women teacher question, and eldership questions, etc. must be answered their way in order to be saved. Generally, we are quite adept at making broad, sweeping statements that we have heard all our lives, but which are not quite as pat as we think they are when real-life situations are faced. I do not deny this good statement — I think it is sound and relevant — but it is not a cure-all. It is like the statement: "In faith unity, in opinion liberty, in all things charity." It sounds good until we discover that what is FAITH and what is OPINION can be a knotty problem. Sometimes what is FAITH and what is OPINION is itself a matter of OPINION! What do we do when one brother says the war question is a matter of opinion, and another says it is a matter of faith? Obviously, each brother will have to satisfy his own conscience, but then, how does his settlement of such questions effect his fellowship with brethren who settle this matter differently? That is the question, and brother Halbrook never addressed himself to it. Anybody can repeat cliches (we can teach a parrot to do that!), practical application is where the rub comes. Questioning some of our pat answers, or pointing out the difficulties they involve is like killing a sacred cow. It is one of the surest ways to have one's "soundness" questioned. One young preacher wrote to commend the editorial, and said the reason he had not written the same sentiments to other editors is that he didn't want to get on a black list! Another spoke of those who see the

problems, but are too fearful of "brotherhood consequences" to write about them. When young preachers (and older ones too) are afraid to ask their honest questions out loud, that they might receive attention and help, there is room for honest doubt that "we are willing to learn all anyone can teach us from the Grand Revelation." Brethren are good at reading between the lines, and while they deny the doctrine of imputed righteousness, they practice the doctrine of imputed bad motives and unsoundness where neither exists. I wonder if this might not accurately be called "warmed-over Calvinism." jpn]

We shall note an important area of agreement, answer a question, and ask brother Needham some questions.

1. Brother James Adams performed an admirable service when he did extended writing on fellowship, grace, Ketchersidism, and Calvinism. He awakened many brethren to the fact that the ancient landmarks laid down in God's Word and reasserted in the restoration plea were being subtly removed. Though most of Adams' writing was done in Truth Magazine (a weekly), he has also done some valuable writing along the same line in the Preceptor (a monthly). Others were involved in sounding this general alarm, and still others have spoken out for truth in their own way more recently.

The point here is not to laud any man or regard any above what is written (1 Cor. 4:6). But in my opinion, Adams did a pioneering work in his extensive writings. Surely all have learned by their experiences as this controversy has continued (or else, all will be doomed to repeat any mistakes made!). The point here is to ask — laying aside the facts (1) that hindsight is better than foresight, (2) a pioneering work in an area of controversy is never easy and gives rise to different reactions, (3) each of us has his own way of expressing things and naturally thinks it is the "best" way — to ask, "What positive good has come out of many months of painful controversy, which has involved more and more brethren as time has gone on?"

THE ANSWER IS SIGNIFICANT. Brother Needham has expressed the answer quite well. We agree here. And, that answer needs to be underscored. It has been conclusively shown that "the grace/fellowship theory" of Leroy Garret, Carl Ketcherside, Edward Fudge, and others is based upon a whole series of "arbitrary human distinction(s)." "Brethren Ketcherside, Fudge, et al" have promoted "erroneous Calvinian concepts of grace" in their effort to promote "a very easy, but false, solution to the

fellowship question." This solution "is very attractive from a human point of view." Since we must "walk by faith, not by feeling," those who walk by faith must reject this false teaching as "unscriptural" and "unacceptable." Men cannot be faithful to God while accepting, teaching, and defending such dangerous error.

In short, "we have successfully opposed and defeated a false remedy" (quotes from brother Needham's editorial). Some brethren are still confused, but a number have been rescued from the throes of warmed-over, Protestant denominational doctrine. Much study and teaching has been done, and much more should be done. The good work of upholding divine truth has always included, by the very nature of that truth, the imperative "to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down." At the same time, brother Needham wants to encourage brethren "to build, and to plant," to which we agree heartily. The two go hand-in-hand (Jer. 1:10).

Brother Needham seems to say the building and planting is presently lagging, but he expresses the desire to get on with that work and to encourage others to do likewise. All the help he can give or raise from others in evincing scriptural teaching will bring just that much more progress in fortifying the walls of Zion. Each man must speak of himself, and we must dissent from his gloomy feeling expressed this way at one point, "The discussions of the past year have added almost nothing to our scriptural knowledge on the subjects of unity and fellowship." *[If I were the only one with this feeling, brother Halbrook's disagreement might cause me to doubt my own judgment, but I have a stack of letters from brethren over a wide area who wholeheartedly agree with my evaluation, and many others have verbally expressed the same sentiment. I certainly did not mean that the controversy has not added to our Bible knowledge, or that a battle should not have been waged. I am saying that, while we have successfully refuted an unscriptural settlement of the fellowship problem, no scriptural and workable solution to the hard questions have been forthcoming. I know that PERSONS are frequently identified with false doctrines, but when a controversy is more concerned with the teacher than the teaching, brethren have the right to object, and they have done so. For instance, one brother told of researching the controversy of the past year in preparation for a series of sermons on fellowship. His evaluation is: "They . . . failed to get down to the 'nitty-gritty' of the ISSUES." Brother Halbrook is quite sensitive about any criticism of the fellowship controversy of the past year. He spent a great deal of space in its defense. He*

obviously thinks it needs a little scotching. jpn] But we wholly concur in his positive evaluation at another point when he says, "The prominence given to this issue" in journals "is justified," and we most certainly will rejoice in any contribution he makes through his journal. (For a specimen of the good he can do, see his editorial on 2 John 9.) All the progress that can be had is just what is needed!

2. Brother Needham raises an important question, "Is there some subtle difference between these issues (the issue of whether individual saints can have a Bible department in a college; the grace/fellowship issue; RH)?" There is a difference. Whether it is "subtle" or not may depend on the individual; the Baptist idea that baptism is necessary to obedience but not to remission of sins may seem to some like a subtle difference from baptism being necessary for remission of sins, but the difference is far-reaching nonetheless!

Even so, the difference in the two issues at hand is that the no-Bible-department position may contain inconsistencies as it has been stated by some, while the **new-unity-movement position cuts the very heart and soul out of the plea for a return to New Testament Christianity**. As brother Needham's quotations from brethren opposed to the Bible department show, these brethren are in the same boat as some of the brethren who teach wives/women to wear hats/artificial coverings in some/all religious activities in public/private. A recent tract urges it strongly, urges it as the safest course. But the author does not declare that the gospel teaches those who do not will be lost, so he says he does not make his convictions on this a matter of salvation and fellowship. [*Here brother Halbrook endeavors to explain the "subtle difference" I asked about. When it comes to this sort of thing, some brethren always have their explanations! They may be devious and obscure, but they can always find an explanation that satisfies THEM. But let us remember this: Brother Jenkins affirmed in the Pasadena debate that "It is UNSCRIPTURAL for brethren to" operate a school like Florida College. In the course of the debate he used the word "sinful" to describe such projects. Yet fellowship can exist in spite of this wide disparity on the college issue. Brother Halbrook affirms (and I agree) that the "grace/fellowship" position is "UNSCRIPTURAL," and "SINFUL." He would call its proponents false teachers. He would also say that the consequences of the "grace/fellowship" theory are more far-reaching than the school issue, but don't forget, this is his judgment, and some of those who oppose the Bible department's right to exist might disagree with him. On the other hand, how far-reaching*

must the consequences of a theory or teaching be before we are to break fellowship with its proponents? These are the kinds of problems I sought to bring to the fore in the January editorial, and which brother Halbrook failed to address. Truly, brother Halbrook doesn't "have all the answers"! But, remember, I don't either! At the same time, don't make the mistake of thinking I am saying there are no guidelines, or that I would fellowship all of those who propagate the "grace/fellowship" theory. Please don't read between the lines, or practice the doctrine of imputation! jpn]

Almost without exception, even those who say they believe it a sin for a wife/woman not to wear this symbol DO NOT IN ACTUALITY PRESS IT TO THE POINT OF SALVATION AND FELLOWSHIP; it has been my experience that such brethren will state their strong convictions, allow a dissenting brother to state his position, and then ask him to lead in closing prayer. [Evidently, brother Halbrook's experience with the covering question is very limited. He failed to deal with the situation I described on this issue in my editorial where brethren claim they don't make this matter a test of fellowship, but refuse to announce or attend meetings of those who disagree with them. Nor does he deal with the situations in which the covering question has been involved in division, and preacher firings, even though brethren usually try to keep this fact suppressed. I might also add that the Bible department issue has been involved in division among brethren for a good many years. All of this makes one wonder if it is proper to characterize such issues as personal opinion and private privilege. Let us remember that the covering question involves PUBLIC WORSHIP. Not many contend that a woman must wear the artificial covering in private worship. What about those who have said seeing a woman uncovered in public worship bothers their conscience and makes it difficult for them to worship. Also, what about serious differences on the qualifications of elders; is that too, a private matter? What can be more public than congregational organization? I am not saying there is no difference between private and public issues; I am questioning whether or not our classification is always accurate. I am suspicious that sometimes we classify the difficult issues over which we are NOT YET WILLING to draw lines of fellowship as PERSONAL OPINIONS and divide over others which are exactly parallel to them. This sometimes may be the easy way out; a way to stick our heads in the sand. This clever little catch-all used to satisfy me, but I am afraid it doesn't any more. I fully realize the distinction, but when such is used as a convenient dodge mechanism for issues we don't want to face, honesty demands a closer look.

jpn] THE PRACTICE OF SUCH BRETHREN CERTAINLY FITS THE CONTEXT OF ROMANS 14. It may be objected that some are adamant in labelling sisters without the symbols as sinners. We repeat, almost without exception such brethren show they have overstated the case because they do not IN ACTUALITY make the issue a matter of salvation and fellowship. [*What brother Halbrook needs to tell us is what to do about those who are less tolerant than those of his experience. (He admits there are exceptions). While he is at it, he might also answer the question as to whether those who make the covering a matter of salvation and those who don't, have unity and fellowship between themselves? And if he can have unity and fellowship with both groups? And if so, does he believe either group teaches error? If his answer is affirmative, then he should explain how he can have fellowship with those who teach error. It seems obvious who has "overstated the case."* *jpn]* In short, their practice is better than their theory — in which case, Romans 14 is most certainly applicable. If these brethren were to go beyond the limits of Romans 14, they would be met by a host — including James P. Needham — with the drawn sword of the Spirit in hand. There would be no timidity or partiality in facing the transgressors just because they opposed Calvinism.

The brethren at the Houston debate (to which brother Needham referred) PRACTICED the principles of Romans 14, and rightly so. Had brethren become over-zealous in opposing Bible departments to the point that they made such A MATTER OF SALVATION AND FELLOWSHIP, they would have been met with drawn swords. As it was, a forthright discussion was held, strong convictions were stated, a profitable study of Bible principles was conducted, AND WE WENT HOME BRETHREN AS WE CAME BRETHREN. The brethren who spoke could exchange pulpits before and after the discussion — and doubtless brother Needham would agree this was a healthy sign. [*Yes, and that in spite of the fact that both sides had taught for four nights that the other was teaching false doctrine. Remember, brother Jenkins affirmed, "It is UNSCRIPTURAL . . ." This is the whole point I made in the January editorial. These good brethren have fellowship in spite of their differences, but they won't do the same on certain other issues. The question is, Why? But we must keep in mind that brother Halbrook, like the rest of us, doesn't have all the answers! I am certain these brethren have explanations of these ambiguities, as does brother Halbrook, but the question is, must everyone accept their explanations in order to have their fellowship?* *jpn]*

But what of the Garrett-Ketcherside-Fudge, *et al*, position on

grace, unity, and fellowship? These men have taught error, put it into practice as they have had opportunity, and have been responsible for others doing likewise. They have promoted denominationalism and latitudinarianism so successfully as to render a number of young preachers wholly useless to the cause of truth. These brethren cut the heart and soul out of a return to New Testament Christianity when they teach that a baptized believer can worship with instrumental music, participate in social gospel practices, centralize and institutionalize churches, AND STILL BE COVERED BY GOD'S GRACE! In their zeal to defend their "erroneous Calvinian concepts of grace" and "easy, but false, solution to the fellowship question," they revised, redacted, restructured, and renounced the truth on 1 Cor. 1:10, Gal. 1:8-9, 2 Jn. 9, Jude 3, not to mention Jn. 17, Eph. 4, Lev. 10. In cases known to me personally, these false teachers have (whether intentionally or unintentionally) turned fine, militant, zealous, faithful young Christians over to institutionalism, denominationalism, pentecostalism, and occultism. How? By cutting the anchors that have held us true to God, His Son, and His Word.

We are not afraid to ask brother Needham if he could recommend that faithful brethren invite a man to hold a meeting — if that man had written for about 10 years in *Gospel Guardian* (a paper opposing institutionalism, social gospelism, centralization, and instrumental music in worship), *Firm Foundation* (a paper favoring all these innovations except instrumental music), and *Christian Standard* (a paper promoting all such innovations)? Could brother Needham say the use of such a man among sound brethren was a healthy sign — if that man's journalistic compromise was so unabashed that he could chameleon-like suit his articles to blend in with three such divergent journals? I know brother Needham's answer! It would be an unequivocal, "NO!" (or else I have not understood a thing he has said in *TORCH* for five years)

The so-called subtle difference here is the same as the difference between (1) the strong convictions of some reflected in Romans 14, which did not violate the terms of Christ's covenant; and (2) the false doctrine of others reflected in 1, 2, 3, John, which said that certain ones who continue without repentance to violate the terms of Christ's covenant "know God" and are safe in His grace! Was brother Needham prodding brethren to recognize this crucial difference, or was he implying the issues do not significantly differ?

We thought we knew the answer to this until we read, "All these good brethren agree that the grace/fellowship positions of Edward

Fudge *et al* are in error, and must not be fellowshiped, but all of them strongly pled during the discussion for brethren to continue to fellowship each other in spite of positions on the Bible department issue that are no less diverse than their's and Edward Fudge's on the grace/fellowship issue." The distance (and significance of the distance in terms of the binding nature of Bible authority) between Adams, Willis, Craig, Jenkins, (and Needham) on the one hand AND Fudge, *et al* on the other, regarding grace/fellowship, IS JUST AS GREAT AS THE DISTANCE BETWEEN Needham and Ray Hawk on social gospel practices in the church . . . IF NOT GREATER. *[Brother Halbrook read something into this statement that is just not there. He makes me say the college issue and the grace/fellowship issue are synonymous. I said no such thing! I said the positions occupied by Jenkins and Willis on the college issue "are no less diverse" (differing from one another, Webster) than theirs and brother Ed Fudge's on the fellowship issue. I did not say the issues themselves are equal, synonymous, or should be treated the same way. Brother Halbrook is still practicing the doctrine of imputation! jpn]*

3. A few statements of brother Needham call forth this question, "Do brethren's inconsistent application of truth lessen the validity of truth?" Here, again, I feel sure brother Needham will say, "No." It is one thing to discuss inconsistencies in application of Biblical principles and another to imply the principles themselves may be unsound. Perhaps brother Needham's statements imply more as written than he intended (or, perhaps, I inferred more than he actually implied — the reader can judge), *[Here brother Halbrook recognizes that he is on shaky ground, but he is willing to proceed bravely nevertheless. His article moves toward a predetermined goal of questioning my soundness, so every possible supporting scaffold must be built as it progresses jpn]* but the following statements do more than discuss brethren's inconsistencies: (1) ". . . what most brethren preach about unity among brethren, we do not have. If what is usually preached about unity is what the Bible requires, than we don't have what the Bible requires!" (This not only questions inconsistent application of "what most brethren preach about unity," but throws serious doubt on the basic premises and principles themselves — "what most brethren preach about unity." *[Brother Halbrook, what do "most brethren preach about unity"? To what did I have reference? Honestly, you don't know, do you? Yet in spite of this ignorance, and rather than take the time to find out, you were willing to accuse me of throwing "serious doubt on the basic premises and principles themselves."* What brother Halbrook needs to realize is that "what most brethren preach about unity," is *not necessarily* what the scriptures teach, and throwing "serious doubt

on the basic premises and principles" of what brethren preach is not tantamount to doing the same where scriptural "premises and principles" are concerned. I admit that the statement "what most brethren preach about unity among brethren" is an imprecise statement, and I wish I had been more specific, but using such a statement to accuse a brother of throwing "serious doubt" on scriptural "premises and principles" is a very unbrotherly thing to do. "... what most brethren preach about unity among brethren" is seen in their cry to the denominations to leave divisive human creeds and come into the church of Christ where we have unity based upon the word of God. Brethren constantly condemn division among brethren, and talk about "brotherhood unity." (a denominational concept). Often persons out of the church will say, "You preach that we should leave our church and 'join' the church of Christ, which one?" Or, "you condemn religious division, but you are divided too," or, "You preach unity and practice division." Then, for the first time, many brethren have to face the "music." They come up with the explanation that "we take the Bible to be our all-sufficient guide, but all members of the church don't see it just alike, but our differences are over personal opinions, or non-essentials," etc. It is a fact that when brethren preach the Bible truth about unity in Christ, they keep suppressed the fact that there is a great deal of disagreement and out-right division in the church. Thus, the implication of what "most brethren preach about unity" is that people should leave religious division and come into the church of Christ where we have 100% agreement on everything. This is what I question. It is this that I had in mind in the editorial, and I deny responsibility for the implications brother Halbrook thought he saw. jpn] This is the kind of come-on used by Garrett, Ketcherside, Fudge, et al when they prepare to dislodge "what most brethren preach about unity" from brethren's minds; what possible use can James P. Needham have for such a come-on?) [Webster says a "come-on" is, "An allurement or bait: as something designed to induce a person to become a victim of trickery." Since my integrity is not a debatable proposition, and since I don't need such impugment of motive to prop up my position, I am not disposed to make any further reply to such when it is used against me. "It is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment . . . but he that judgeth me is the Lord" (1 Cor. 4:3-4). To further compound his questionable behaviour, our brother says I sound like "Garrett, Ketcherside, Fudge, et al." But, again, I know that with reasonable persons, such tactics will "cut no ice." I couldn't care less whether I sound like Ketcherside, Garrett, or Ed Fudge. That is the least of my concern as long as I am convinced that I also sound like the Lord. Guilt by association is an old, old tactic that

has been discredited so often that another exposure of it seems unnecessary. Does brother Halbrook even say anything that sounds like these brethren? What does it prove? Well, a brother recently called me from a distant city. The church where he worships is having trouble with a preacher who says it is a sin to have the Lord's supper Sunday night, and that women sin who don't wear an artificial covering. He says those who don't agree with him, including brother Halbrook, "are like the liberals." Now, brother Halbrook is charged with "being like the liberals." What does it prove? NOTHING! jpn] (2) "It is both easy and correct to say that unity must be based upon the word of God. Just about everybody agrees with this, but upon whose understanding of it? Mine or yours?" (This sounds like Ketcherside's plaintive cry as he prepares to blur the line between matters where God has required or prohibited AND matters where He has not; of course, Needham does not accept Ketcherside's solution of blurring the line and hoping for grace to take care of it all. In the matters brother Needham mentions here — Bible department, covering, etc. — brethren have practiced the directives of Romans 14 while also uniting in practicing those things that God unquestionably binds upon us all. [Here, brother Halbrook is not "out in left field," he isn't even in the "ball park." To say "brethren have practiced the directives of Romans 14 while also uniting in practicing those things God unquestionably binds upon us all" where Bible departments, covering, etc, are concerned is either exaggeration or niavity. Talk about "overstating the case"! Some brethren have done so, to be sure, but the statement as it stands is too broad because there are too many exceptions. On the other hand, since brother Halbrook affirms that brethren have differed on these matters, but united "in practicing those things that God unquestionably binds upon us all," isn't he advocating "unity in diversity"? jpn] Where is the need to underscore divergent "understanding," "mine or yours," unless the point is that our basic premises and principles are unsound?) [I am certain brother Halbrook did not intend to be so accomodative here, but I must point out the accuracy of his expression "our basic principles." These may not be the same as the Lord's, and often are not. I am thoroughly convinced that the Bible reveals infallible "basic principles" on every issue, but I am just as thoroughly convinced that the brethren's understanding of these is not always infallible, and the fact that our forefathers taught us given principles, and we have always believed them, doesn't change one iota of Divine Revelation. No amount of ballyhoo, or threat of "brotherhood consequences," or fear of getting on someone's "black list," should stampeed anyone into blind loyalty to traditional concepts that may be unsound. I don't have any one thing in mind here, but am

trying to emphasize that we should not "think of men above that which is written" (1 Cor. 4:6). jpn] (3) "I am certainly not contending that unity is impossible to attain. I am saying something is wrong with our understanding of it." (NOTICE: This does not simply question the possible inconsistencies of brethren in applying "our understanding" of fundamental principle, it questions the very premise itself. In short, this says "our understanding of it (UNITY) is wrong.") Knowing what brother Needham's answer surely will be, we cannot but ask again, "Do brethren's inconsistencies in applying a fundamental principle mean the principle ITSELF is 'wrong'?" Garrett, Ketcherside, Fudge, *et al* tell us our fundamental premises are "wrong" on grace, unity, and fellowship. Does brother Needham mean to say he agrees that THIS IS THE REAL PROBLEM but that he disagrees with their particular solution? We would dissent, if so. [It seems that brother Halbrook cringes at the thought that "something is wrong with our understanding of" unity. I unequivocally admit that I think "something is wrong with our understanding" of unity when we affirm, as some do, that unity in diversity is impossible, and in preaching on unity give the impression that in the church of Christ, we have 100% agreement upon what the Bible teaches. Whether brother Halbrook has heard any such preaching, is beside the point. I have, and others have. I say such an implication indicates that "something is wrong with our understanding" of the Bible's teaching on unity. If that be heresy, make the most of it! More than once now, brother Halbrook has admitted that brethren are inconsistent in applying divine principles. He wants to know if such inconsistencies . . . mean the principle ITSELF is 'wrong'?" Certainly not, but basic to his argumentation is an assumption that on unity we have properly understood all the principles. I deny this when brethren leave the impression that in the church of Christ we have 100% agreement on everything. Let brother Halbrook not deny that a good many brethren have left this impression on ME! Maybe they haven't on him, but he can't testify for me. This is what I question. On the other hand, a question in order for brother Halbrook is whether he is advocating that since brethren have the "basic principles" right on unity and fellowship (his assumption), should we just ignore their inconsistencies rather than constructively calling them to our attention for consideration and improvement, which is what I tried to do in the January editorial. Let me also ask him if he thinks the questioning of the soundness of those who do so, creates an atmosphere of brotherly love, understanding, and objective study? jpn] The truth has been taught. [On what? The grace/fellowship doctrines of Carl Ketcherside? I doubt it not. But if brother Halbrook means that a workable and scriptural solution to all unity and fellowship

problems has come forth, I, along with a HOST of other brethren, unequivocally deny it. I think just about all brethren try to proceed in these matters by certain scriptural guidelines and basic principles, but honest brethren must admit that there are many unsolved problems. jpn] But our purpose is not to attack brother Needham; it is our deepest yearning to simply understand a brother we have appreciated and admired. [I am sure brother Halbrook honestly believes his statements here, but his article fails to convince me of its truthfulness. He has questioned my scriptural soundness, and sought to associate me with Carl Ketcherside, Leroy Garrett, et al. Those who know me realize that I was opposing some of the views of these brethren when Ron Halbrook was in knee pants! I take his references along this line as partyistic at best, and unbrotherly at worst, or vice versa, whichever is the most accurate! To say that his "deepest yearning" is "to simply understand a brother we have appreciated and admired," may express a sincere feeling of his heart, and yet, the simple fact remains, he could have called or written me on the points he didn't understand rather than placing his own interpretation on them and drawing conclusions that question my scriptural soundness, and trying to associate me with some party. jpn] Brother Needham may feel his article speaks for itself and that further comment is superfluous; so be it. We can only plead that we are speaking in good faith. If there is no alternative or explanation, then at least our questions can stand as a monument to our own inability to understand clear speech! We are not "shooting" at something "moving in the bushes." We are simply asking, "Who is there?" For this we make no apology and do not believe brother Needham expects it. [Here brother Halbrook proves himself to be as inept at judging his own efforts as he is at judging the efforts of others. He denies that he is "shooting at something moving in the bushes," but rather "simply asking, 'Who is there?'" No, brother Halbrook has already decided "Who is there"! It is someone who "sounds like Ketcherside, Garrett, et al. I think his effort is less noble than he depicts it. One certainly could find no fault with his asking, "Who is there?" but it is quite another matter for him to decide on insufficient evidence "Who is there," then start shooting at it, but all the while denying that he is so doing. It is possible that brother Halbrook doesn't know that he has done this? If so, I hope he never asks me to go deer hunting with him! He denies shooting at something moving in the bushes, when that is exactly what he is doing! (Implying I am unsound, and that I use "come-ons," and sound like Ketcherside, etc. are pot shots in anybody's book! jpn]

4. Brother Needham says he only wishes to point out that in

correcting our understanding of unity, we must come to realize that unity "does not consist of 100% agreement on everything . . ." Furthermore, those who cry that "unity in diversity" are "contradictory terms" must realize that " 'unity in diversity' is exactly what Paul" commanded in Romans 14 on the questions of meats and days ("matters of indifference to God"). "If we have unity today it is in diversity because I know of no two brethren who agree on everything." The point of all this is that "we need more enlightenment . . ."

None has taught 100% agreement nor denied unity-in-diversity "on matters of indifference to God" (at least, to my knowledge). *[The reader should pay close attention to the parenthetical statement. Each person writes from his own experience, and should not deny what another affirms along this line. I think, however, that brother Halbrook may not realize what he is saying. Does he mean he never heard of any brother's advocating division over matters of indifference to God, such as: the number of vessels on the Lord's table, Bible classes, women teachers, the right to have colleges, Sunday night communion, artificial coverings for women, etc.? Are you serious, brother Halbrook? You either never heard of division over these matters, or else you think these matters are not indifferent to God, so which is it? Truly, you don't have all the answers! jpn]* Again, I can't find the handle to all this. Brethren have questioned extending Romans 14 to matters where God has clearly bound one way or the other, or attempting to effect an invisible unity where there is visible disunity of faith and practice in matters where God has bound. What is brother Needham saying in view of his earlier assertion that the present differences over the Bible department "are no less diverse" than those over Fudge, *et al* "on the grace/fellowship issue"? Is he saying: (1) He doesn't know where to place the position opposing Bible departments and the one advocating all manner of Calvinism and denominationalism on unity — that both of these fit under "matters of indifference to God" OR ELSE under matters where God has bound, but he isn't sure which? (2) Or, that BOTH positions can exist without violating the terms of Christ's covenant, since, after all, "no two brethren . . . agree on everything"? *[There is a pretty good reason why brother Halbrook "Can't find the handle to all this." There isn't one! This I showed in an earlier comment. He seems eager to put me in the position of saying that the college issue and Calvinian concepts of grace are SYNONYMOUS. I said the positions of Willis and Jenkins on the Bible department question are "no less diverse" (different from each other) than their position and Fudge's on grace/fellowship. That is what I said, and that is what I meant, and I see no reason*

reason to take it back! Jenkins and Willis say Fudge's position of grace/fellowship is unscriptural, and that is *exactly what Jenkins affirmed concerning Willis' position on Bible departments*. Anyone who thinks that is saying I affirm that the Bible department and grace/fellowship issues are synonymous or equal in extent or consequences, needs a course in elemental logic. If brother Halbrook hadn't written his article with a preconceived idea and a pre-determined goal in mind, he wouldn't have had this trouble. And while he is looking for handles, let him see if he can find one for this: He attended the Pasadena debate and agrees that brother Jenkin's position is unscriptural, but he thinks it is wonderful that brethren can still have fellowship and unity even though they hold what each the other brands as unscriptural positions; so unscriptural that they had a nationally advertised debate on it that is to be published, and perhaps, repeated! Brother Halbrook, just how unscriptural does a brother's position have to be before you will declare division and disfellowship? "Need more enlightenment?" We surely do! Can you "find the handle to all this?" Oh, I know, he will say the school question is indifferent to God, so it is a matter of private opinion (A nationally advertised debate on a private opinion?). But, remember, he has said brethren have opposed "extending Romans 14," so, let's not let him do that because if the school question falls under Romans 14, then Paul said there should be no "doubtful disputations" about it, and there have been all kinds of brethren who have characterized the Pasadena debate as a doubtful disputation. I think brother Halbrook will be "extending Romans 14," if he tries to put the Pasadena debate under it. Yes, handles are sometimes hard to find, especially when they don't exist! jpn]

(3) Is he saying there needs to be a new fundamental premise from which to view such positions so that we can make "a scriptural list"? He says elsewhere, "If all differences are not matters of fellowship, then someone needs to publish a scriptural list that distinguishes those which are and those which are not." No doubt brother Needham has answered this latter point himself in gospel preaching through the years. Matters which do not pertain to the covenant of grace do not pertain to unity and fellowship with God — we may have "dis-unity" and "un-fellowship" in such matters of indifference (Romans 14). It is required that we unite (have fellowship) in practicing what God has bound in His eternal word, the gospel. All differences are NOT matters of primary fellowship with God. A difference over matters of indifference should not be made a stumbling block — do not force one to have fellowship with you in an action not required for fellowship with God, do not force him to violate his conscience (Romans 14). To speak of

publishing a scriptural list is unnecessary; God's all-sufficient Word lays down those premises and principles needed to judge each issue on its own as it arises (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:3). Obviously, a man-made list would amount to a creed which would need revision from age to age. *[I am not saying we need "a new fundamental premise," but rather that we may need a better understanding of those we already have, or else, a more consistent application of them. Brother Halbrook says "publishing a scriptural list" of those things which are private and those that are otherwise, and those over which we should divide and in which we should have no fellowship is "unnecessary," and "would amount to a creed." But, brother Halbrook has already published a partial list. He says the Bible department is a private opinion over which there should be no division or disfellowship, even though brethren have nationally advertised debates on it in which they charge each other with holding "unscriptural" positions. And, he classifies the grace/fellowship theory as a matter of public faith over which we should have division and disfellowship. If we could get Ron to complete his list, we could have 100% agreement on everything, provided we could all agree on his list. jpn]*

Again, what is brother Needham's point? If we don't know whether a specific thing is right, we can simply leave it off until we find out. *[But brother Halbrook failed to tell us what we do when one brother thinks he knows that a thing is right (woman's artificial covering), and another brother just as sincere doesn't know whether it is right, and decides to "simply leave it off." But the brother who "knows" he is right won't allow that, so he calls him a sinner, and says he is "like the liberals." But since brother Halbrook doesn't "have all the answers," maybe this is one he doesn't have. jpn]* The necessary principles and premises are there in God's Word: brethren determined to abide by that word have maintained unity of practice in what God has bound; other strong convictions have been subjected to the principles of Romans 14. Brethren have had problems being consistent with every principle of divine truth at one time or another, BUT THAT HAS NOT CHANGED DIVINE TRUTH. Brother Needham says, "We have rejected a solution proposed by Ketcherside, Fudge, *et al*, but what alternate solution has been proposed that is scriptural, workable and practical? . . . It has not yet appeared . . ." Where has a problem or issue arisen where brother Needham could not find a safe course laid out in God's Word? *[I don't have a lot of trouble finding "a safe course" for me, Ron, but I have had a bit of trouble convincing others that my course was safe for them. This "safe course" bit is another clever little cliché that has been oversimplified. It is easy to say, "Just follow the safe course,"*

but whose course is safe? I think mine is safe on the covering question, but some brethren contend that the only safe course is to have the women wear them. In fact, some think my course on this is so unsafe that they think it is unsafe to announce my meetings or come hear me preach! The same could be said on a dozen other issues among brethren. Some brethren think they have settled all issues when they repeat all the pet cliches they have heard all their lives. These cliches may have an element of truth in them, but they are not panaceas, as any experienced brother will readily testify. jpn] If brother Needham is not saying (1) our understanding of unity and fellowship is wrong, and (2) we have not found the Bible answer, THEN WHAT IN ALL THE WORLD IS HE SAYING? [Brother Halbrook is trying to make me look bad by emphasizing that he thinks I am saying "we have not found the Bible answer." But, if that is really what I am saying, I would be in real good company, because Ron says he doesn't have all the answers! Remember, the context of his statement is unity and fellowship; so, he admits he doesn't have all the answers on these subjects either, Ron, which answers do you not have, Biblical or un-Biblical? Surely, you didn't mean to say there are some un-Biblical answers on unity and fellowship you don't have!!! Obviously, you are saying you don't have all the Bible answers on unity and fellowship. Now, I will be as good to you as you were to me and give your statement back to you: "If brother Halbrook is not saying (1) his understanding of unity and fellowship is wrong, and (2) he has not found all the Bible answers, THEN WHAT IN ALL THE WORLD IS HE SAYING?" This is either true, or brother Halbrook is guilty of doing that of which he accused the artificial covering brethren of doing, he has overstated his case. jpn]

If brother Needham seeks a solution that can give rise to no questions, no inconsistencies, no problems, then surely he knows before he begins the search is futile. [So, again, brother Halbrook admits that everyone's solution (including his) is fraught with "questions," "inconsistencies," and "problems." Everyone take note of this. My editorial called attention to some of these, and called upon brethren to study them and write about them. This called forth an eleven-page article from brother Halbrook implying that I am unsound, and charging that I "sound like" Ketcherside, Garret, et al. Truly, the legs of the lame are not equal! jpn]

If such a course were necessary, we would have to give up all faith in God, for the unbeliever can raise questions, perplexities, and problems which we may be unable to resolve to our full satisfaction. [Seemingly, it was bad for me to "raise questions,

perplexities, and problems which we may be unable to resolve to our full satisfaction" in matters of unity and fellowship, but here brother Halbrook admits that such exists where "the unbeliever" is concerned, thus in the area of the fundamentals of the faith. Now, should brother Halbrook be thought of as unsound, or accused of sounding like a skeptic because he admits this? Shouldn't someone go after him with hammer and tongs because he admits he "may be unable" to answer all the unbelievers questions to his satisfaction? *jpn*] The difference in his case and ours is that the knots he cannot untie are much bigger and tighter than the ones we face. So it is in the subject of unity and fellowship. Just as on any Bible subject, human inconsistencies and problems may arise: BUT, THE ALTERNATIVE ROADS ARE INCOMPARABLY FAR WORSE, BOTH TEMPORARILY AND ETERNALLY. I believe the truth of God's word has been set forth (though I will remain open to further study on this as on all subjects); as to any "alternate solution," "it has not yet appeared"! *[I can agree that the truth on grace/fellowship has been taught, but, as I said in the editorial, to refute a false solution to division is insufficient. The problems of division still remain, and the "alternate solution has not appeared."* Brother Halbrook is trying to argue the grace/fellowship issue with me. That was not my point in the editorial. I have made myself clear on that issue. *jpn*]

As to the eight questions proposed, brother Needham can state the principles which answer them on a post card with room to spare, as his excellent question-and-answer columns have shown through the years. This is not to say one could not elaborate and write a whole article on each question separately. What brother Needham has taught countless times, we can only reiterate: Our unity and fellowship with God depend on faithful obedience to His Word (Jn. 17; 2 Jn. 9). Those in fellowship with God are in fellowship with one another (1 Jn. 1). The divine blueprint should be taught everywhere in every church (1 Tim. 3:14-15; 1 Cor. 4:17); and, both individual saints and separate churches may differ in matters indifferent to God, matters where He has not required or prohibited (Romans 14). Man's conduct or good intentions will not change divine principles of truth (Gal. 1).

Brother Needham opines that there has been too much negativism in this discussion and so wants to encourage brethren toward "THE PROPER DIRECTION FOR THIS CONTROVERSY." Now it is one thing to point out areas which need further study and to suggest Biblical principles which may aid in such study. But it is hard to read the above quotations without feeling we

have been served a dish of destructive negativism IN THE ABSENCE OF POSITIVE AFFIRMATION OF BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES. *[There is nothing wrong with "destructive negativism," if it refutes false doctrine and destroys overly simplified solutions to complex problems, while failing to make positive contributions. I deny that my article was wholly negative. The eight questions were an effort to give the discussion new direction. It is quite interesting that brother Halbrook dismissed these with a wave of the hand and then stated a few well known Bible principles, while admitting that one could "elaborate and write a whole article on each question separately." Thus, he ignored the heart of my editorial, while spending eleven pages in a vain effort to question my soundness and identify me with Ketcherside, Garret, et al. jpn]* Perhaps brother Needham plans to supply those Biblical principles in a follow-up article, in which case we shall be glad for the progress that can thereby be made in teaching divine truth. But without such principles coming forth, it appears brother Needham has sown seeds of doubt as though he wishes "either to tell or to hear SOME NEW THING." We anxiously await brother Needham's contribution in "the proper direction for this controversy." *[Brother Halbrook is stuck with the possibility that I might be planning to do some writing on the problems of unity and fellowship, but he couldn't wait to find out. He had to rush into print with his evil surmisings and accusations of unsoundness, sowing seeds of doubt, trickery, and wishing "either to tell or to hear SOME NEW THING." (There seems to be some judgment of my motives in this statement also). While our brother "anxiously awaits" my "contribution in 'the proper direction of this controversy,' let us devoutly hope that he will prepare his heart to give a more brotherly response to it than he has accorded my sincere effort to contribute something worthwhile to a discussion of vital subjects which, according to MANY brethren, has been sometimes confusing and often so tainted with personalities as to obscure the positive good it could have done. jpn]*

(EDITOR'S CONCLUSION: Nothing I have said in this reply is intended to be offensive. I have known brother Halbrook for a long time, and have admired his zeal and courage in teaching the truth and opposing error. I have made my points as directly and clearly as I know how. The January editorial was not designed to raise a controversy over its content, but to provoke thought and to use the controversies of the past year as a springboard to further clarify the principles and applications in the field of unity and fellowship. As I said before, "I am not interested in a gut fight with anyone on anything." My interest is in preaching, teaching and living the gospel in such a way as to save souls, including my own. I frankly and firmly deny the implications and conclusions brother Halbrook thought he could draw from the editorial he reviewed. I have reason to believe that even he might have some second thoughts about them. I hope so. I pray God's blessings upon us all as we continue to seriously study God's word. jpn)

Our Saviour's Marching Through the Land

Our Saviour's marching through the land
In mighty thoughts and deeds;
His army moves in close array
And on his manna feeds.

Our Saviour's marching through the land
His word is like a fire;
It melts away the dross of sin
And threatens every liar.

Our Saviour's marching through the land
His love is like a star;
No matter where you chance to wander,
It's always where you are.

Our Saviour's marching through the land
Our every act is seen;
He purges every mountain top,
And sweeps the valleys clean,

Our Saviour's marching through the land
Through His gospel that we preach;
There is no place upon this earth,
Where his saving power can't reach,

O, tell the story while you can;
Herald it to the passing crowd;
Our Saviour's marching through the land
O, let us sing the message loud!

James P. Needham
4/7/75

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In the Bible his name is God.

I talk with him when the light is dim.
To others it may seem odd;
Unburden my soul of misery untold
For he is indeed MY GOD.

When my heart is broken by grief unspoken.
When life is a burden to bear,
I return again to my faithful friend
For he is always there.

When I go wrong in the maddening throng
Of men who my friend ignore;
He my folly forgives for in heaven he lives,
How could I ask for more?

- James P. Needham, 4/7/75

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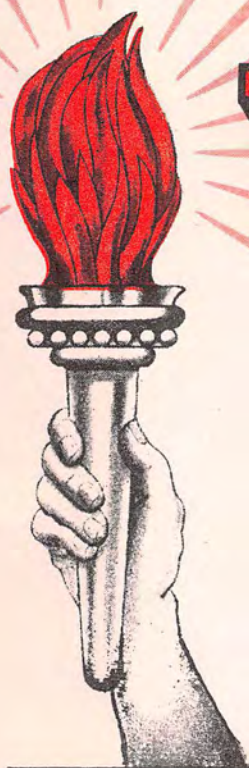
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May 1975



TORCH

*We do not write to be understood,
but so we cannot be misunderstood.*

LOOK INSIDE FOR THESE THOUGHT PROVOKING ARTICLES

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LATE AGAIN!

I am painfully aware that TORCH is late in the mails again, but I expect to have things back on schedule in a few weeks. This means that you will receive the issues that are in arrears close together.

I have been away from Birmingham since December working with the Summit Avenue church in St. Paul, Minnesota and will be there several more months. However, I have made arrangements to get TORCH on schedule and hopefully keep on schedule while I am away.

Jim Needham has had to take the brunt of complaints about TORCH being late. I apologize to him and to our subscribers, because Farris not Needham is responsible for the issues that are behind.

- Billy K. Farris

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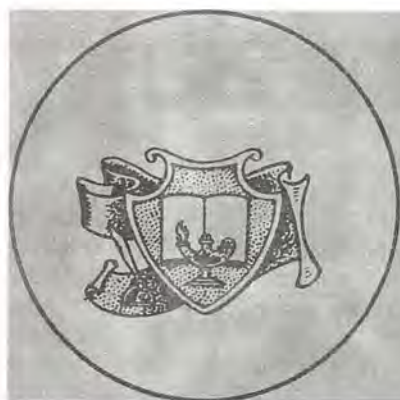
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Editorial

James P. Needham

Sidelights of Mike Willis' Reply to Leo Rogol

Elsewhere in this issue will be found an exchange between two good brethren, and personal friends of mine, on the college issue. The purpose of this editorial is not to participate in that exchange as such, but to comment upon some sidelights of brother Willis' article which casts aspersions upon **TORCH** and misrepresent it. In fact, it is my considered judgment that Mike's article is as much concerned with left-handed slaps at **TORCH** as with replying to brother Rogol. While I am not interested in a "gut fight" with Mike, or anyone else on anything, I cannot conscientiously see such obvious misconceptions and misrepresentations go unnoticed. Some imprecise articles have appeared which made the same points as does brother Willis which were thought to be aimed at such efforts as **TORCH**, but it is dangerous to make specific applications of imprecise articles, and especially bad to print reactions based upon assumptions. However, brother Mike leaves no doubt that the object of his comments is **TORCH**. I shall reply to his charges in as candid a manner as I can.

CHARGE NUMBER ONE — That brethren are pooling their resources to preach the gospel in **TORCH**:

If brethren can individually pool their resources to discharge one individual responsibility (eg. helping orphans, the aged, etc.), why can't they pool their resources to discharge any other individual responsibility (eg. preach the gospel as done through **TORCH**)? There is no difference in principle in what is being done in the publication of **TORCH** than in the training of preachers at Florida College. If there is a difference which makes the one scriptural and the other unscriptural, I have not heard it. What is it? If one attacks the allsufficiency of the church, so does the other!"

It has never been my conviction that what is being done at F. C. is wrong in principle, and I have never written a syllable that can be so construed, but to say that **TORCH** is a pooling of resources

to preach the gospel, is inaccurate. If F. C. can be scripturally defended, let it be done without misrepresenting something else. If one dime ever has been pooled to preach the gospel in **TORCH** like it is at F. C. since I have been its editor, I am wholly unaware of it. No person, to my knowledge, has ever donated a dime to **TORCH**. Some have bought subscriptions for others, but such is a donation to the recipient, not to **TORCH**. On the other hand, hundreds of thousands of dollars (perhaps even millions) have been pooled (donated) to F. C. by individuals. Professional fund raisers have been employed to scour the nation in search of these funds from both Christians and non-Christians. (I ought to know because I lodged them at my home). Whether this is right or wrong is not the issue here; the issue is that brother Willis' charges that there is a parallel pooling of resources in **TORCH** and F. C. is inaccurate, having no basis in fact. If such pooling of funds is scriptural, let it be defended by the scriptures, not by misrepresenting **TORCH**.

Brother Willis avers that "*Money is not the only resource which can be pooled.*" I think this is an effort to validate his charge of pooled resources in **TORCH** because he suspicions (or maybe knows) that **TORCH** receives no donations of money from any source. But again, his effort fails. There is no pooling of any kind of resources in **TORCH**, because there is no common oversight. Nobody oversees anyone in the production of **TORCH**. Each individual is responsible for his own articles and actions. I coordinate the articles and brother Farris prints them on HIS printing equipment, and neither of us exercises any oversight of the other. In fact, we almost never confer. There is no pooling of any resources, either of talent or funds, under any kind of common oversight. Subscribers pay just about enough for **TORCH** to defray the expense of its production. Does anyone think for a minute that this is parallel to the operation at F. C.?

There is verbal agreement to cooperate in the production of a periodical called **TORCH**, but there is no formal organization of graduated authority of any kind; no donation of funds from any source to a treasury under a common oversight. Now, can this be said of F. C.? If not, then it is inaccurate to say they are parallel. Again, I emphasize that whether one is right and the other wrong is not under consideration here, but whether brother Willis has spoken accurately.

If a verbal agreement to cooperate in a given work is a pooling of resources, then our arguments with the liberals on congregational cooperation have been in error. According to this, when more than one congregation verbally agree to support the same

preacher (2 Cor. 11:8), they are pooling resources, and therefore, there is no difference between this and centralized control and oversight as practiced in the **Herald of Truth**. If coordination of individual talents is pooling of resources then Paul and Barnabas formed an evangelistic organization when they agreed between them to visit the churches they had started (Acts 15:36). According to brother Willis, they had an organization paralleling Florida College even though they received no donations, had no common treasury, had no assets and no overseeing human board.

CHARGE NUMBER TWO — That TORCH is an organization paralleling Florida College:

He (Leo Rogol, jpn), brother Needham and brother Farris are participating in an organization, even though not legally and formally constituted an organization (technically and legally called a "quasi corporation").

Some brethren seem so bent on making **TORCH** parallel to F. C. that they will grab at almost any straw in such an effort. Brother Willis evidently has been reading some legal dictionary, like some others. This reminds me of a very memorable event in my life. There was a division in a church over institutionalism and unscriptural cooperation. The conservative brethren went to the bank which held the treasury and instructed them not to pay any more drafts on it until the issue was settled. The liberals called this a "quasi-legal action" and used it as a pretense to file a legal suit against the conservatives for exclusive use of the church property. So I am not totally ignorant of this "quasi" business and the vagaries brethren try to shield with it. **TORCH** "has no legal or formal organization" as brother Willis admits, but he is so determined to make it parallel to F. C. that he tries his hand at this "quasi" bit! The dictionary says, "*In legal phraseology, quasi is employed to point out that one subject resembles another with which it is compared to a certain extent, but that the two VARY INTRINSICALLY*" (Emphasis mine, jpn) (Practical Standard Dictionary, Funk and Wagnals). Enough said! Evolutionists say that man is a "quasi-ape," so he is a naked ape, but we don't buy that. I couldn't care less what some law dictionary says about spiritual and religious matters, and brother Willis will have some basis for argument when he is willing to say he will accept the law dictionary as authority on all religious matters. This is like saying brother Willis is a "pastor" or "reverend" because this is what the rules of good journalism say he should be called.

Again, I say without getting into the matter of the rightness or wrongness of F. C. and similar organizations, that there is no parallel between such and **TORCH**. He who thinks there is a parallel between an organization that is incorporated under the

laws of the civil states, has a board of directors, president, vice president, etc., assets of several million dollars, a budget of a hundred thousand or so, and sends public relations groups all over the country whose performances are publicized in church bulletins at church expense, and relies upon church members to feed and lodge them, and a little 24-page monthly publication which has none of these; absolutely no assets except a few bound volumes on which no profit is realized, and which could be abolished by one telephone call, is either not a very discerning individual, or is pretty hard pressed for something out of which to make a point. Study the following chart.

ARE TORCH AND FLORIDA COLLEGE PARALLEL?	
TORCH	FLORIDA COLLEGE
1. Has no legal entity as a corporation — is not incorporated.	1. Has legal entity as a corporation under state law.
2. Has no charter or by-laws.	2. Has a charter and by-laws.
3. Has no board of directors or administrative staff.	3. Has a board of directors and an administrative staff of graduated authority.
4. Has no assets except a few bound volumes which yield no profit.	4. Has assets of over a million dollars.
5. Neither solicits nor accepts donations from anyone.	5. Seeks donations from both Christians and non-Christians.
6. Can be terminated by one person.	6. Cannot be terminated by any one person.
7. Engages in no commercial enterprises for any purpose.	7. Engages in commercial enterprises for profit.
8. Has a treasury of funds received from those who pay for their copies of TORCH and receives no donations.	8. Has a treasury of pooled resources under common oversight which, in part, is donated by others; much by non-Christians.
9. Has no paid staff.	9. Has a paid staff.
10. Teaches the Bible with the purpose of preparing persons for eternal salvation.	10. Teaches Bible courses for which it gives credit toward academic degrees.
11. Discharges individual responsibility, which is spiritual.	11. Discharges corporate responsibility, which is secular.
12. Teaches only the Bible.	12. Teaches secular subjects such as arts, sciences and patriotism.

If TORCH is a "quasi corporation," so were the efforts of Aquilla and Priscilla and Paul and Barnabas when they agreed to cooperate in a preaching effort. Did they form a human institution parallel to F. C., and the Cogdill Foundation? That is about as reasonable as the liberals' argument that the seven men of Acts six formed a human board for church benevolence.

CHARGE NUMBER THREE — That TORCH has charged without proof that brethren are depending too heavily upon Florida College:

If brethren are depending too heavily on Florida College, as has been charged but the proof of which has not been forthcoming . . ."

First, if the church is depending to any degree upon any human institution, it is too "heavy." On the other hand, in the interest of accuracy, brother Willis' charge that "the proof . . . has not been forthcoming" that brethren are depending on the college is "palpably weak." Brother Willis may not accept the evidence, but for him to charge that none has been offered is just not accurate. The reader can read the following issues of TORCH and decide for himself whether we have offered any evidence of church dependence on schools: September 1971, June 1972, January 1973, October 1973, July 1974, January 1975, and February 1975. Surely brother Willis knows that abuses are difficult to argue. They are usually based upon subjective judgment of trends and attitudes and these will be viewed differently by different persons. If brother Willis expects us to produce affidavits from churches or individuals specifically stating that they are dependent upon some human organization to do church work, he will wait in vain. I don't have any such, and never expect to obtain any. But, if we wait around for brethren to admit such a thing before we warn of it, we will wait too long for our warnings to be of any help. Will brother Willis tell us that he never depends upon his subjective judgment of trends and attitudes to issue warnings of dangers?

I think it is just about always true that such warnings are either minimized or disregarded by those who need them the most. Those who issue them are usually accused of ulterior motives and become the objects of whispering campaigns and consigned to the realm of trouble makers. Many of us endured this in the institutional and cooperation fight, and brethren endured it in the pre-millennial struggle, and I suppose it will continue to be a phenomenon in religious controversy as long as the world shall

stand.

Now, I have not the slightest doubt as to the accuracy of my evaluation that some brethren and churches are dependent upon the school. Such a charge has not been made without serious fore thought and earnest prayer. What should one do when he thinks he sees such a danger, keep quiet in the interest of peace? Is this what brother Willis does? Is this what other brethren have done in the grace/fellowship controversy? Do they claim rights for themselves which they deny to others?

It is my firm conviction that I see some dangerous attitudes toward Florida College. Church dependence on the college is dangerous and an unscriptural thing, but another equally dangerous phenomenon is the college's dependence upon the church. There is no essential difference between the two ideas. It is quite irrational to deny either, in view of the evidence. I have not charged and do not believe that it is a deliberate thing, nor have I knowingly impugned anyone's motives. But, just for the sake of consideration let us look at . . .

SOME ADDITIONAL EVIDENCE

1. More and more college publicity is appearing in church bulletins: The college sends out entertainment groups for public relations work. These put on performances similar to what one can see in a local theater. There is popular music, comics, etc. Such performances are advertised in church bulletins at church expense, and the members are urged to attend. These editors would not allow said performances to take place in the church building, but they think it is alright to use a church publication to promote them! What is the difference? *If such can be promoted in the church bulletin why can't such be performed in the church building?* Accompanying most such church bulletin announcements is a long-drawn-out defense of the right to so use the church bulletin. These same arguments would justify having the performance in the church building. If not, why not? By what logic can church funds be expended to publicize such events, but not for their performance?

These same editors and elders would not tolerate the church bulletin's being used to advertise the same performance featuring the same personel *if it were not connected to Florida College*, and all of us know it. But since these groups are connected with F. C., and are designed to promote it, they become "scriptural" copy for the church bulletin! Association with F. C. evidently sanctifies

these secular matters and makes them scriptural objects of church funds. Thus, Florida College has a sanctifying influence upon otherwise purely secular events.

Understand that I am not charging that brother Willis, or the college approves this practice. I am citing evidence of some attitudes toward Florida College. I think it is quite strange however, that nothing has been said by brother Willis or the college in disavowal of such practice. Brother Willis is too busy opposing those who warn of college dangers to either see them, or warn against them.

It is constantly claimed that Florida College is not connected with the church of Christ; that it is not a church school; that it is purely a secular educational institution; that it is an expedient to the home and not to the church. If these claims are really believed, then why do editors and elders advertise only one such expedient secular matter in the church bulletin? Other brethren are in other businesses that are vital to the community, so why don't church bulletin editors also afford them equal promotional space? If such is scriptural, then other brethren should invoke the "fairness doctrine."

It is customary for school apologists to arge that the school is a private enterprise, and has no connection with the church, but how many of them would tolerate any other private enterprise so using the church to acquire customers? I know a brother who operates a chain of business schools. Would it be alright to announce in the church bulletin that Business Schools, Inc. is putting on a performance at a certain building on a given night so brother "X" can try to persuade the members to send their children to his business school? Brethren are in all kinds of business, and if one can exploit the church to promote any of them, so can all of them. Is it that brethren are unjust and unfair, or is it that down deep in their hearts, they really don't believe their claim that there is no connection between Florida College and the church? I think it is the latter. There is a psychological dependence upon the school which manifests itself in proffering the school prefered treatment. Such treatment would never enter the minds of brethren for other private enterprises.

Then there are some churches which pay their preacher's way to attend the Florida College lectures. These same churches would not think of paying his expenses to attend the college as a student, but they think it is alright to pay his way to attend the lectures, because he will be listening to Bible lessons. Maybe they don't

know it, but he will also be listening to a great deal of school publicity and promotion. All kinds of college and alumni business projects will be promoted. For instance, while they are praying, singing and preaching inside the auditorium, you can buy citrus fruit, books, and coffee and donuts just outside the door. Also, the college will put on an entertainment program, which will include the public relations group which you will be able to see in your local community when they make their tour. And we sometimes see preachers who return home and report to the local church on the Florida College lectures in the church bulletin. But then, it is argued that Florida College is purely a secular organization with absolutely no connection with the church of Christ. Who can believe it?

2. **School personnel and the church:** Not only is there overt and "hard core" church-supported publicity for the college, there are other forms of it that are much more subtil. For instance, some school official(s) travel with the public relations entertainment groups. They contact the local preacher and other school loyalists who whip up enthusiasm in the church for attendance at the performance, and secure for the school official an invitation to preach at a local church service. It can be argued that the local church has the right to invite such a brother to preach, and that the brother has the right to accept. This is certainly true, IF the basis of such is that he is a faithful brother, but IF on the other hand, it is motivated by the fact that he is a school official, and there is ANY THOUGHT in the hearts and minds of the brethren that this has significance as to school publicity, then there is subtil school publicity in the whole affair. Does anyone really believe that a school official's preaching at a church service in a community where many of the same persons have seen or will see him preside at the entertainment event, and hear his promotional speech for the college, has no school promotion value.

A good many school personnel are used by the churches for week-end meetings upon special subjects. Certainly this is fine, IF they are used because of some special ability they have without any consideration of what their appearance will do for the college. But if the use of such persons is a subtil way to advertise the school, then there has to be involved some psychological church dependence upon the school. It should be reported here that several brethren have specifically charged that week-end meetings are just subtil ways to promote the school at church expense. I have not made that charge since I have no first hand knowledge of it, but I hear it just about everywhere I go, and it is made by brethren whose names are household words across the nation.

3. Furthermore, if evidence for brethren's dependence upon the college has "not been forthcoming" heretofore, Mike's article would certainly bring it forth! He says,

Most preachers NEED to know a little about Greek and Hebrew to do word studies, but how many congregations are teaching these two languages? Criticizing the college for providing these courses will not solve the problem. (Emphasis mine, jpn).

Let us look at what brother Willis has said: (1) Preachers NEED to know Greek and Hebrew. (2) But CONGREGATIONS ARE NOT supplying this NEED. (3) But Florida College is supplying this NEED, (4) Therefore, a NEED for preachers in CHURCH work is being supplied by Florida College. If this is not dependence upon the college for supplying a church NEED, how could such be stated? Brother Willis claims that this deduction is a misrepresentation of him, and that he has not admitted church dependence upon the college. In fact he wrote and wanted brother Rogol to correct this "misrepresentation" before the exchange was printed. Whether he is misrepresented or not, I am willing to let the reader decide. I do not charge specifically, that Mike feels that the church is dependent upon the college, but that this is the logical conclusion of his argument, cannot be denied.

4. School loyalists' reaction to constructive criticism: I have spoken before of the almost complete absence of negative reaction to the constructive criticisms I and others have offered in reference to human institutions and the church. I have heard some rumors and gossip, but have received almost no negative reaction. I have heard reports of snide remarks and personal reflections and misrepresentations some perpetuate in an effort to damage my influence and impugn my motives for making such criticisms. I have tried to confirm some reports of such with persons who supposedly have made them, but I either get out-right denials, sophisticated double talk, or deafening silence! Almost without exception, the few reports of negative reaction can be traced back to some school official or participant in some "quasi" church-related human institution. Is this not highly significant?

Ninety-nine and forty-four one hundreths percent of the negative reaction that has dealt with the issue of dependence upon the college, has been denial that such dependence exists. I have not heard or seen any reacting brother's saying, *"If such exists, it is wrong, but it does not exist."* Brother Mike Willis never got around to saying this either. In fact, he affirms that preachers "NEED" the college. As I said once before, it is very possible that

I have overstated our exaggerated (unintentionally) such dependence, but one would think brethren would do more than deny the charge. They could at least oppose such, IF it exists. They could certainly acknowledge the value of the warnings. I fully

acknowledge that I could be wrong in charging it, but they need to accept the possibility that they could be wrong in denying it. That has "not been forthcoming."

As I have said before,
so say I again, that
those brethren who
warn of church
dependence upon
human institutions
should be considered
friends of such,
not enemies.

Some brethren are as silent as the tomb on this. Are they waiting for those who are dependent upon the school to admit it before they speak out against it? The great danger in this is that brethren may be depending upon human institutions without being conscious of it.

As I have said before, so say I now again, that those brethren who warn of church dependence upon human institutions should be considered friends of such, not enemies. I would go a step

further and say that they will be considered friends by all who have a clear concept of the church and its relationship to human inventions. That some brethren don't have this clear concept is evidenced by the fact that the very ones who now resent constructive criticism have, in the past, publicly disavowed any connection, real or subtil, between the church and the college.

CHARGE NUMBER FOUR — That TORCH has criticized the college for church failures:

If brethren are depending too heavily upon the college, as has been charged but the proof has not been forthcoming, then they should criticize what needs correcting — the guilty congregations and not the college.

Brother Willis has either not read **TORCH** very closely, or he has made a wild and reckless charge. A reading of the **TORCH** articles critical of this dependence exposes this as just another inaccurate

charge. Aside from the inaccuracy of brother Willis' charge, perhaps it would be well to examine his thesis, namely, that we should not criticize the college for providing what he says preachers "NEED" for CHURCH work. Will he stay with his proposition? Let us see: One of the rationales for starting the Missionary Society was that the churches were not doing their jobs. (An argument similar to Mike's on what preachers "NEED.") A good many brethren like David Lipscomb and W. W. Otey spent a good deal of time criticizing the Missionary Society. Mike would say this is like "getting mad at the cat and kicking the dog"! According to him, these brethren should have criticized the churches, not the Missionary Society.

A similar argument was made for the introduction of instrumental music. Brethren said the singing was poor, so they needed some help. So they brought in "help" in the form of a human invention, a mechanical instrument. According to Mike, brethren should not have criticized the human invention, but rather the failure of the churches to improve their singing. To criticize instrumental music is like "getting mad at the cat and kicking the dog."

Today the **Herald of Truth**, the orphan homes, and some of the colleges have gotten into church budgets on the argument that churches were not fulfilling the great commission, caring for poor helpless orphans, edifying the members, training preachers, elders, teachers, preachers' wives, etc. Mike would say we should not criticize these human inventions designed to fill the needs the church should fill, but we should criticize the churches for their short comings. To criticize the human inventions is like "getting mad at the cat and kicking the dog."

According to this thesis, God should not have criticized Nadab's and Abihu's strange fire, or David's new cart. He should have criticized Nadab's and Abihu's failure to use scriptural fire, and David's failure to transport the ark as God designed, and said nothing about a new cart and strange fire. In reality, there is no difference. When one criticizes human inventions, he is criticizing the failure to carry out God's law. One cannot criticize an unscriptural act without at the same time criticizing the failure to fulfil God's law. One wonders if God was "getting mad at the cat and kicking the dog."

CONCLUSION

I want to emphasize, as I have done frequently, that I am not

an enemy of Florida College, or anyone connected with it. I can, without reluctance, admit the good it has done, and is doing. I have been a close friend of the school, and many school personnel in the past. Some of the best friends I ever had are on the faculty, and I still feel warmly toward them. Whether they reciprocate this feeling, is beside the point with me — I shall not alter my feeling for them as brethren in Christ. The faculty contains some of the most able Bible teachers of our time, and I appreciate their ability and dedication as well as the good they have done and are doing in teaching the word of God, but none of this makes them or the college immune to my constructive criticism when I honestly think they deserve it. Any other course would be abandonment of my own responsibility as well as my feeling of friendship for them.

I believe the brethren have the right to expect better things from the college than they have received in response to the things which have been said in **TORCH**. The only thing I have heard is some reports that one of them said, "*The college is receiving a lot of criticism,*" and when one official was asked what the college was going to do about it, replied, "*Ignore it.*" Whether these events happened or not, I don't know — they are rumors and reports by way of the grapevine. I do KNOW however, that nobody connected with the college has written anything in direct response to the criticisms disavowing church dependence on the college, or college dependence on the church, promotion of its public relations activities in church bulletins, nor have they encouraged those of us who have thought we could detect some unhealthy trends. At the same time, I personally know that a school official has been urged to write something that would make it clear that the school disavows church dependence. They used to issue such quite frequently on a voluntary basis, but now they evidently won't do it even though they are urged to. Is there some significance in this? I recently commented to a rather influential brother that the college has said nothing to discourage dependence upon the college. His reply was, "No, they are trying to encourage it." I hope and pray to God that he is mistaken.

There is wide-spread dissatisfaction with the attitude and some practices of the college. A very widely respected brother recently predicted that "things are going to blow wide open one of these days." I hope not. Such can be avoided, if brethren will re-evaluate this whole question and seek a solution. It would greatly help, if the college administration and/or board would make a clear declaration of clear distinction between the church and the college, and change some of the close proximity between school activities and church function. I hope they will not "bow their

necks" and take the position that some little old paper like **TORCH**, or some brother like James P. Needham, is not going to badger us into doing anything. Before God, there is absolutely no thought of such a thing in my mind. I think I love the church that cost the life of God's Son more than anything on earth, and it is my only interest. I have no desire to badger anyone into doing anything, and certainly would feel no personal pride or sense of victory, if the good brother connected with the college should make such a statement. I would greatly rejoice in a triumph of truth, and would commend and congratulate these brethren, but would not so much as think of taking any personal pride in such.

I previously offered the college personnel space in **TORCH** to make such a statement, but received no response. A brother told me that "*Brother Cope is not going to make any such statement through **TORCH**, because he does not consider you a friend of the school.*" I don't know upon what such a statement is based, whether subjective evaluation, or something that was said. In either case, I hope it is not true, and if it is, I am sorry and am not aware of anything I have done to cause such a feeling and would repent of it if convinced that such an attitude toward me is justified. Perhaps I have failed to communicate my true feelings toward these brethren, or maybe they have misunderstood what I have said, or attributed to me bad motives. In either case, I have here made another honest and specific effort to clarify the matter. Do I have the right to expect the same from them?

Finally, I would like to commend brother Cope's attitude expressed many years ago. If he is the good brother I have always thought him to be, he still feels the same way:

In these days when objections are raised to churches supporting schools from their treasuries, some who are ruled more by sentiment than reason, cry out, "oh, all these folks think about is how they can hurt the schools. They are against Christian education and the colleges!" We have known where these or similar statements have been made about men who have contributed liberally of their time and money to Christian colleges. It seems never to occur to some people that a sincere criticism can be offered without the one offering it attempting to kill the thing itself or the influence of the person criticized. (Preceptor, Sept. 1953, p. 9).

We propose to profit by the constructive criticism of loyal brethren without counting them our enemies when they disagree with us in matters of judgment. (Gospel Guardian, Vol. I, No. 4, May 26, 1949, p. 2).

The College Issue — A Reply

Mike Willis

In the November, 1974 issue of *TORCH*, Leo Rogol wrote an article entitled "The College Issue" in which he asserted that it is sinful for a college to have as one of its aims the training of preachers. I believe that he was wrong in what he said and immediately wrote to him asking him to correct the error. Since he does not believe he has erred, I shall reply publicly to what he asserted. Here is what he affirmed to be wrong with colleges training preachers:

"When a college has as one of its functions the training of preachers, it invades the work belonging solely to the church . . . In our controversies over institutionalism, we have always talked about the 'all-sufficiency of the church,' that is, that the church needs no outside organization, no other institution, to aid it in its work. Well, is not preaching one function of the church? Then where is the all-sufficiency of the church when we expect a college — not the church — to train preachers? . . . We need to understand that the colleges do not train preachers for colleges, but for the churches. Since they are doing this as a 'service' to the church, it is unscriptural because it involves a human organization in the work of the church" (*TORCH*, November, 1974, pp. 19, 23).

Having quoted brother Rogol's remarks, let me pinpoint the issue. Brother Rogol believes for a college to have a course of training preachers in its curriculum is wrong because the work of training preachers belongs exclusively to the congregation. Our brother affirmed that the work of training preachers belongs exclusively to the congregation but he did not prove it. The statement is not axiomatic; it needs proof.

I do not believe that the work of training preachers belongs exclusively to the congregation. The record in Acts of Paul training Timothy to preach is proof positive that the work belongs to individuals as well as to congregations (*cf.* Acts 16f). Brother Rogol must either take the position that what the individual does the congregation is doing or admit that the work of training preachers does not belong exclusively to the church. If he takes the former position, he is in trouble on the benevolent institution issue; if he takes the latter position, he has given up his charge against the college. Actually, the latter course is the only one open to him. Brother Rogol does not believe that what the individual does the congregation is doing. Therefore, he must admit that the work of training preachers is also an individual responsibility.

However, to admit that individuals have a responsibility to train preachers constitutes a giving up of the position that the work of training preachers belongs exclusively to the church, which position is the foundation upon which his charge that Florida College is invading the sphere of work belonging exclusively to the church rests.

Through the years of the institutionalism controversy, brethren have admitted, and I think correctly, that Christians could individually pool their time, resources, and talents to form a benevolent institution, provided that it did not take donations from congregations. The thing that made benevolent institutions wrong was that they took donations from congregations. If brethren can individually pool their resources to discharge one individual responsibility (e.g. helping orphans, the aged, etc.), why can't they pool their resources to discharge any other individual responsibility (e.g. preach the gospel as done through TORCH)? There is no difference in principle in what is being done in the publication of TORCH than in the training of preachers at Florida College. If there is a difference which makes the one scriptural and the other unscriptural, I have not heard it. What is it? If one attacks the all-sufficiency of the church, so does the other!

Brother Rogol is in a strange position to be writing an article criticizing Florida College for having a preacher training program. He, brother Needham, and brother Farris are participants in an organization, even though not legally and formally constituted an organization (technically and legally called a "quasi-corporation"), which has an influence over preachers and, therefore, could be called a "preacher training" paper in the same sense as the teaching of the Bible at Florida College can be called "preacher training." They have pooled their resources (*money is not the only resource which can be pooled*) to form an organization *which trains preachers to believe that organizations which train preachers are sinful!* Brother Rogol, why is it right to train preachers through TORCH but wrong to train them through Florida College? Surely, you will recognize that your article sought to train preachers to believe that it is wrong for colleges to have "preacher training" programs. If your position is correct, you are most inconsistent. You have taken the position that a preacher can buy written Bible instruction which trains him (e.g. TORCH) but cannot buy oral Bible instruction which trains him. (This is the opposite end of the same position taken by the anti-literature brethren. They say a person can use oral teaching but not written teaching; Rogol said a person can buy written preacher training material but not oral preacher training material.) Though brother Rogol would deny taking this position, it is logically inherent in his position.

Brother Rogol said that he did not oppose the college teaching the Bible to *general* audiences but did oppose the college making one of its aims the training of preachers. This implies that the Bible must be taught one way in teaching the "clergy" and another way in teaching the "laity." Brother Rogol, would you give me an example of how you would teach on baptism if it was for "preaching training," and an example of how you would teach on baptism if it was for the congregation, so that I can see the difference? I deny that there is any difference. (This reminds me of the letter of Wm. Coffey, then an elder of the Red Bluff Road church in Pasadena, Texas, in the January, 1974 issue of **TORCH** which said colleges have a right to a Bible department "*if their charter states that all subjects are taught as secular subjects and never a matter of faith.*" Would someone please explain to me how I can teach what the Bible says about "faith" as a "secular subject," and not as a "matter of faith"? This is impossible to do!) Brother Rogol needs to specify which parts of the Bible one can teach without becoming involved in "preacher training." Is there *any* part of the Bible that a preacher needs to know but which the average person does not need to know? Actually, the whole argument against a preacher training school implies that Brother Rogol believes in a clergy-laity distinction. Florida College does not recognize such a distinction. Every class is open to girls as well as to boys, so far as I know. (Are you ready to charge that Florida College is training women preachers? Or, is it "preacher training" if a boy goes through the program but something else if a girl goes through the program? If I sent my daughter to Florida College and she took some Bible courses, would she be training to preach?) The argument about the aim of the instruction is palpably weak.

The only criticism which I have read about Florida College is that the congregations are depending too heavily on the college. *Brethren, this is a criticism of the congregations, not of the college.* Those who are crying about leaning too heavily on the college should do more to prevent it. How many congregations are providing classes taught by competent men in the fields of church history, Old Testament and New Testament studies, archaeology, etc.? Most preachers need to know a little about Greek and Hebrew to do word studies, but how many congregations are teaching classes in which a person can get an adequate knowledge of these two languages? *Criticizing the college for providing those courses will not solve the problem.* If brethren are depending too heavily on Florida College, as has been charged but the proof of which has not been forthcoming, then they should criticize

(continued on page 24)

My Answer to Mike Willis

Leo Rogol

Elsewhere in this issue of **TORCH** is a reply by brother Mike Willis to my article dealing with the question of colleges training preachers, which appeared in the November, 1974 issue. I am now writing in reply to his reply.

Before I deal with the beginning of his reply, I would like to make some observations on a statement he made near the end of his article. He wrote: "Brother Rogol's position of criticizing the college because the congregations are depending too heavily on it is as nonsensical as getting mad at the cat and kicking the dog."

This appears to be prejudicial because it gives the impression that I am against the college without any due regard for any fault of the church. Remember, at the close of my article (Nov. 1974) I said: "... that the real indictment is upon *brethren* and *churches* ..." (pg. 23). I clearly pointed out that both, the dog AND the cat need some "kicking."

But right here brother Willis made the argument for me, and yet he opposed it himself all along. I wouldn't have to proceed any further, for this one statement destroys entirely what he's been trying to defend all the time. He has conceded his argument. He did not say "INDIVIDUALS" depend on the college. He said that a CHURCH depends on a HUMAN INSTITUTION for help in its work. He is saying exactly what Baxter said that, actually, churches have been depending upon the colleges to train their elders, preachers and teachers. Yes, brother Willis recognized the issue at hand, that churches depend too heavily upon the college. The church depends upon the college to help it in its spiritual functions. Again I repeat: *brother Willis made the admission that churches do depend upon the colleges*. What is so "nonsensical" in criticizing the college for *yielding* to the churches that depend on the college? Is the college right in yielding but the church wrong for depending? It is this kind of situation that causes so many brethren to consider the colleges as "church-related." Now I will go back to the beginning of Mike's article. But all the way through, keep in mind what was said about churches depending on colleges. I will deal with his reply paragraph by paragraph. I have numbered them as they appear in his reply.

Brother Willis began: "Our brother affirmed that the work of

training preachers belongs exclusively to the congregation but did not prove it."

I do not have to prove there was no secular institution in the days of Paul to train preachers. He has to prove that such is justified by scriptural authority. We do not have to prove that missionary societies, *Herald of Truth*, are unscriptural; the burden of proof is upon their defenders.

Paragraph 2: "I do not believe the work of training preachers belongs exclusively to the congregation. The record in Acts of Paul training Timothy to preach is proof positive that the work belongs to individuals as well as congregations." By this brother Willis comes to the conclusion that I have to "give up (my) charge against the college."

By this conclusion, then, Paul was an institution, a college!!! Notice how he jumps from "congregation" and "individual" to A COLLEGE. I did not argue that an *individual* (Paul) could not train preachers. But I will not admit that a *college* is in the same category as Paul, an *individual*. Brother Willis seems to have difficulty in distinguishing between an individual and an institution or organization. Liberal brethren have this same difficulty when they promote their institutional projects.

Paragraph 3: "... Christians could individually pool their time, resources, and talents to form a benevolent institution provided that it did not take donations from congregations." He also said individuals could "pool their resources to discharge their personal responsibility (e.g. *helping the orphans*)." But do you know, individual Christians *already* have an organization in which they can "pool their resources" for the work of training preachers — the church. Now, if they find it necessary to build another organization and there pool their resources, this means the former method is unworkable! God gave the organization WHAT it needs FOR the work it should do (Eph. 4:11).

How can brother Willis defend what a college — an institution — does in training preachers upon the basis that Paul — an individual — could teach Timothy? I ask, through WHAT ORGANIZATION did Paul — an individual — train Timothy? Was he a teacher in the Bible Department of "Jerusalem College" or was he working as a gospel minister in the Lord's church? Paul told Timothy: "And the things that thou hast heard of me . . . the same commit thou to faithful men . . ." (2 Tim. 2:2). WHERE did Paul teach "the things?" What college did Timothy attend to "hear" these

things? Since Paul was a "minister" (Col. 1:23), and since God "gave" the church "evangelists" (Eph. 4:11), then Paul did his work only through the church and not through a secular institution. Yes, Paul "personally trained Timothy," but this does not make Paul *another organization* such as a college.

But what about brethren pooling their resources to build a benevolent organization? This is not a valid argument. A man goes to a college so he can prepare to preach in a *local church*. Hence, the college is training him for a function in an office in the organization of the church.

But who is to argue that brethren can form a benevolent organization for anything connected with any church function? We know that there is benevolence that the church can do and there is benevolence that the church *cannot* do. Galatians 6:10 points this out. *Individuals* have a duty to "ALL MEN" *as well as to* "the household of faith." Individuals can help unbelievers — even atheists! Can the church???

In Acts 6 we have record of men selected to care for the needy widows. The "daily ministration" was the "business" of *the church*. And it was men of *the church* who attended to this "business." Had some individuals pooled their resources and formed a benevolent organization to care for widows, this "administration" would no longer be the "business" of the church. We see, therefore, that this argument about individuals pooling their resources to form a benevolent organization has no bearing on this issue of colleges training preachers because THIS has to do with AN OFFICE AND FUNCTION OR WORK WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE LOCAL CHURCH. Brother Willis tried to make a parallel between two things that are completely unrelated and unlike!

Remember that brother Willis said brethren could pool their resources, *etc.* to form a benevolent organization to discharge their responsibility, *e.g.* HELPING THE ORPHANS. *Now this must be kept within the context of this issue of colleges training preachers for the church.* Doesn't brother Willis realize that the pattern for benevolence is not the pattern for evangelism? Brother Willis said that the work of training preachers "belongs to the individuals AS WELL AS TO THE CONGREGATION." Then he said individuals could pool their resources and organize a college to train preachers. But brother Willis ought to realize there is a difference between individuals and organizations.

Since brother Willis injected the orphans' home into this issue of training preachers, he's going to have to accept the consequences. Brother Willis said that the work of training preachers "belongs to the individuals AS WELL AS TO THE CONGREGATION." Then he said individuals could "pool their resources and build a college to train preachers. So the parallel in this argument seems to be that the work of "HELPING THE ORPHANS" belongs "to the individual AS WELL AS TO THE CONGREGATIONS." Since he applied the "individual" and "congregation" to preacher-training, by which he justifies the college's participation in this, then the parallel is "individual" and "CONGREGATION" in caring for orphans, by which liberals justify orphans' homes in connection with "individuals" and congregations." Now don't accuse me of mis-representation, brother Willis. Read your article again and see how you used this care for orphans in direct relation to your argument about congregations, individuals, and colleges in this issue of preacher-training. I don't believe that even you will buy your own "logic" here. But I am sure the liberal brethren are going to simply love you for what you just said!

Paragraph 4: Brother Willis said that **TORCH** "therefore could be called a 'preacher training' paper in the same sense as teaching of the Bible at Florida College can be called 'preacher training.'" Right, brother — IF it is "in the same sense!"

But I pointed out in my article that there is a difference when it comes to the SPECIFIC AIM to train preachers and when it is simply a matter of teaching the Bible. When I conduct a home Bible study I'm not training a preacher! When we have men's training class in the church we are training preachers.

Brother Needham, do you have **WOMEN** on your mailing list (**TORCH**)? **SCRATCH THEM OFF YOUR LIST!** Brother Willis thinks you're training women preachers. Brother Willis, do you have women on your bulletin mailing list? Don't you know you're training women preachers? Take all the girls out of the Bible Department of the College because, according to brother Willis, this is training women preachers since there is no difference between teaching the Bible and training preachers. All because **TORCH**, or whatever you have or read, is "in the same sense" as "teaching Bible at Florida College (and) can be called preacher training." After all, brother Willis asked, "Why is it right to train preachers through **TORCH**, but wrong to train them through Florida College?" Read my article again. I believe I made it very clear that Bible teaching and preacher training are not "in the same sense." If they are, then ladies, don't go to church services because

The College Issue — A Reply (continued from page 18)

what needs correcting — the guilty congregations and not the college! When the college engages in practices which are wrong, criticize it; when the congregations engage in practices which are wrong, criticize them. However, do not criticize the congregations for the mistakes of the college nor the college for the mistakes of the congregations. Brother Rogol's position of criticizing the college because the congregations are depending too heavily on it is as nonsensical as getting mad at the cat and kicking the dog!

I do not believe that the church needs the college in order to survive. The college is not an essential or an expedient to the church; it is an expedient to individuals. However, I am not persuaded that congregations are depending upon the college to do their duties any more than I believe that they are depending upon the periodicals, such as **TORCH**, to do their duties. The college *and the periodicals* are only extensions of the work of individuals, not of the church. Brother Rogol has failed to make this distinction and consequently, was mistaken in his article. However inadequately I have done this, to expose that mistake has been my purpose in this article.

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but so we cannot be misunderstood.*

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WEDDED LOVE

When time has turned your hair to silver
And your fram is frail and thin;
I'll think every line and wrinkle
Was engraved by an angel's pin.

When your sight is dim and faded
And the strength of youth has failed;
You still will be as much my darling
As you were the night we wed.

Though the burdens of life be heavy
And its trials be hard to bear;
We'll come through with flying colors,
For we'll have our love to share.

When your hand's no longer steady
And your limbs are weak and sore;
My love for you will be stronger then,
Than ever it was before.

James P. Needham

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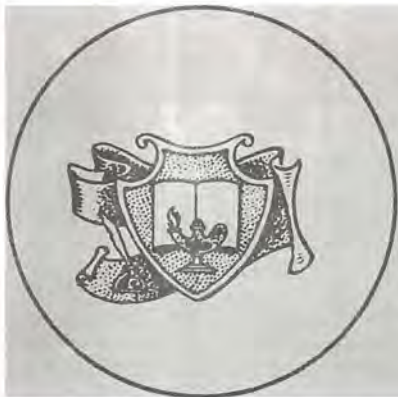
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Editorial

James P. Needham

Today's Radical Is Tomorrow's Liberal

*Radicals swing like a pendulum do;
They decide what to believe for you.
They teach doctrines, not just a few,
What's taught today is tomorrow taboo!*

(By jpn, with apologies to Rodger Miller)

There has always been a radical element in the church. There were such in New Testament days. They were the Judaizers and the party makers of whom Paul said, "*As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised: only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh*" (Gal. 6:12,13). Some of these men seem to have followed Paul desiring to tear down his work and proselyte his converts. They were party builders, and trouble makers.

Every generation produces a crop of these. They are so straight that they lean over backwards. In their efforts to "go back to Jerusalem" they run past it and bump their heads on the walls of Jericho, or is it Babylon? Their most prevalent characteristic is their vacillation. Today they consign to torment all those who disagree with them, and refuse to join their party. Tomorrow they swing to the opposite side and consign to hell all who believe what they taught yesterday! Like Paul's enemies, they follow the trail of good men who preach the pure gospel and save souls, trying to unsettle their converts and proselyte them to their party. They

These radical party leaders have martyr complexes. They have been terribly mistreated by the brethren who wouldn't furnish them an audience. Their young satellites sing the blues for them.

beguile unstable souls.

Such men are usually "great debaters." They want to debate everyone on everything. This usually means they want others to furnish them an audience to which they can preach their propaganda. You see, they don't have many (if any) churches, because they have never built any. That's not their "bag." Their trade is seeking to take over those that others build. In many cases, if they could get all their followers all over the world in one place, they would half fill an average auditorium. So debating is to their advantage because it gives them publicity and an audience. Their followers are usually benighted young hero worshippers who think these "great scholars" have solved all the problems, and found all the answers.

These radical party leaders have martyr complexes. They have been terribly mistreated by the brethren who wouldn't furnish them an audience. Their young satellites sing the blues for them. They know the song well, and they sing it in concert!

There are many examples of this today. When I was a young preacher, Carl Ketcherside badgered N. B. Hardeman into having a debate with G. C. Brewer on the campus of Freed-Hardeman College. He tried the same tactic 6 or 8 years ago with Florida College. It didn't work that time, only the thing he wanted to debate this time was directly opposite to what he debated at Freed-Hardeman. Then it was the right of a college to exist. He disfellowshipped those who believed in it. He wanted to debate the unity/fellowship idea at Florida College. He used to fellowship almost nobody, now he will fellowship almost anybody! The pendulum swings!

This same pattern has been followed by such men as Leroy Garrett, Charles Holt and others. The great defenders of the faith who wanted to debate anybody and everybody, now can fellowship almost anybody. One brother who took a leading part in a nationally advertised liquor fight, now is part and parcel of the crowd he once so valiantly opposed.

. . . we need to maintain proper balance in our teaching. We need to be satisfied to be just humble gospel preachers rather than ambitiously campaigning for "brotherhood" prominence.

Many of Ketcherside's erstwhile followers have long since become disenchanted with him. Some became bitterly disillusioned. Some were destroyed spiritually. Will it be any different in the future? Not likely. Some of the young brethren who have been drawn aside (maybe sucked in would be a better discription) by the latest fancy of brother Ketcherside have already abandoned him. They realized that this time brother Ketcherside has opened a "Pandora's box." When they opened it, they found many ills they had not imagined. The present Ketcherside position is a sheet "knit at the four corners . . . wherein are all manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air." It is like buying a pig in a poke. It really cuts the foundation from under simple New Testament Christianity. It does away with everything distinctive except faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and, just maybe, baptism — but hardly, since he is willing to fellowship the pious unimmersed.

When the pendulum swings again for brother Ketcherside, there is no telling where it will go. But swing it will. He has gone too far to turn back now. Once the excitement wears off his latest fancy, he'll have to find some other place to whip up a little more excitement. Unless, of course, he is going to retire. Let's hope he does. He has announced plans to retire his official organ, the *Mission Messenger*. Just maybe he will just lay aside his radicalism and repent of all the trouble he has caused among God's people and be content to be just a humble Christian. Let us hope and pray to that end.

I have said all of that to say this: we need to maintain proper balance in our teaching. We need to be satisfied to be just humble gospel preachers rather than ambitiously campaigning for "brotherhood" prominence. We need to remember that God's only working unit on earth is the local church and stop trying to be somewhat in the church universal. Certainly any gospel preacher will take advantage of every opportunity to do good, but there are some who just can't be satisfied to do local work. They have to be household words in the "church universal." They have to be champions of some cause, or the generals in some "brotherhood

I know a good many of these solid citizens who convert more people in a month than the specialists do in a year. They don't champion anybody's cause but the Lord's.

fight." Without this, they are nothing! They glory in some great warrior of the past and aspire to be his counterpart in their generation. Much evil has been gendered by such childish ambitions. I sometimes pray, "Lord, save us from the saviour's of the church." We don't need specialists — we need good, all-around, well-informed, gospel-preaching men of God. We need men, like our Lord, who could sit down in some unknown place and teach one person. Or like Paul, who could teach a king on the throne or from house to house" (Acts 20:20).

I assure you there are many of these around, though their names are not headlined in the "brotherhood" journals. Some have never written an article for a paper, or appeared on anybody's lecture-ship, or been known as a specialist, or preached for big churches, but they are getting the job done. They may live in some small church in an out-of-the way place that many don't know exists, but they are shooting the gospel gun, and the enemy is falling on the field of battle. I know a good many of these solid citizens who convert more people in a month than the specialists do in a year. They don't champion anybody's cause but the Lord's. They are not interested in anybody's acclaim, but God's. They are just earnest, honest and humble Christians who want to go to heaven, and take others with them. Their names are not found in the "bluebooks" of brotherhood prestige, but their names are enrolled in the book of life. That is what really counts.

Nothing I have said in this article is designed to cast any reflection upon good men who have arisen to the challenge of false doctrine and carried the banner for truth. Nor is there any intention to reflect unfavorably upon one changing when he finds himself to be in error. I have discussed radicals and extremists who swing from one extreme position to another. Certainly we must be openminded and willing to listen to ideas that differ from our own, but we must not be like a willow in a wind storm, "carried about by every wind of doctrine." We must not jump on every bandwagon that comes along. We must not "swing like a pendulum do."

Part IV

Dealing with Mormonism

Robert H. West

Mormon teachers have many different approaches in defending the **Book of Mormon**. It is not within the scope of this series to consider each line of "evidence" which they present. Effective answers to the LDS defences are furnished in some of the works cited in previous articles. There is one line of LDS evidence, however, upon which comparatively little has been written. We refer to:

THE MORMON ARCHAEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

The argument, briefly put, is that the science of archaeology has "proven" the accuracy of the **Book of Mormon**. A more extended form of the argument would be that (1) the **Book of Mormon** claims to be a history of ancient peoples inhabiting Central America until 421 A. D.; (2) No one in 1830 (when the **Book of Mormon** was published) had any idea of the existence of the great cities and ancient civilizations which once inhabited Central America; (3) Archaeologists and other researchers after 1830 confirmed that such ancient civilizations and cities, similar to those described in the **Book of Mormon**, did exist; (4) Therefore, this shows that the **Book of Mormon** is accurate and must have been translated by the power of God as Joseph Smith claimed.

In our judgement, this is one of the most formidable arguments which LDS teachers present. Formidable, we say, not because it is unanswerable, but because of the lack of information available to the average person on Central American archaeology. The claims of Mormon teachers are enforced by their books of colored photographs of magnificent ruins which evidence the existence of an intelligent and industrious people who occupied Mesoamerican centuries ago. With these volumes in hand, Mormon teachers triumphantly insist that "the **Book of Mormon** has been proven"!

We shall try to furnish you with some material which is sure to deflate this Mormon balloon.

AVAILABILITY OF INFORMATION AND THEORIES CONCERNING ANCIENT AMERICA BEFORE 1830

Is it true that no one had any information about the magnificent ruins in Central America before 1830, as the Mormons claim? The answer is emphatically NO! From brother James D. Bales and other sources, we have learned of at least the following works containing this information which were in print before 1830: **History of Mexico** by Clavigero (2 Vols.), 1st English edition in 1787, 2nd in 1807, translated by Charles Cullen; **A Star in the West**, by E. Boudinot, 1816; **Spanish Colonies**, by Walton, 1810; **Researches in Mexico**, by A. De Humboldt, translated into English by H. M. Williams, 1814; **History of America**, by Herrera, 1725; **A View of S. America and Mexico**, by Niles, 1826; **Spanish America**, by R. H. Bonnycastle, 1818; **European Settlements in America**, by Burks, 1808; **Bullock's Mexico**, 1824; **Researches on America**, by James H. McCullah, 1817; **Archaeologia Americana**, 1820; **Notes on Mexico**, by Poinsett, 1825; **The American Geography**, by Jedidiah Morse, 1789; **History of the American Indians**, by James Adair, 1775; **The Hope of Israel**, by Manasseh ben Israel, 1649-1656; **View of the Hebrews**, by Ethan Smith, 2nd Ed., 1825; **The Wonders of Nature and Providence**, by Josiah Priest, 1824. Regarding this book by Priest: it was copyrighted June, 1824 in the office of R. R. Lansing — the same office in which the **Book of Mormon** was copyrighted!

Another matter of interest is that of the above listed seventeen books, the ones by *Priest*, *Smith*, *Manasseh ben Israel* and *Adair* presented the then popular theory that the American Indians were in reality descendants of the Israelites!

But does the proof that these books existed compel us to conclude that Joseph Smith ever read any of them or had any knowledge of their contents? The answer to this question is no, not necessarily. But it does put the lie to the Mormon claim that no such information was available to Smith! However, there does exist some evidence that Smith did have information similar to that contained in these books and the **Book of Mormon** prior to the time he allegedly received the "plates of Nephi" from which the book was supposed to have been translated. *Lucy Mack Smith*, Smith's mother, wrote:

"During our evening conversations, Joseph would occasionally give us some of the most amusing recitals that could be imagined. He would describe the ancient inhabitants of this continent, their dress, mode of traveling, and the animals upon which they rode; their cities, their buildings with every particular; their mode of warfare; and also their religious worship. [emphasis mine,

RHW] *This he would do with as much ease, seemingly, as if he had spent his whole life with them.*" — **Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith The Prophet and His Progenitors For Many Generations**, p. 85 of the original 1853 Edition. (This section is deleted in current editions.)

Having refuted the preliminary claims of the Mormons on this subject, let us turn our attention to the primary issue:

DOES ARCHAEOLOGY SUSTAIN BOOK OF MORMON?

We have heard young Mormon missionaries make the claim that non-Mormon archaeologists have used the **Book of Mormon** as something of a guide to assist them in locating important sites in Central America. This writer is not competent to assess such claims, having no formal training in archaeology and related subjects. Therefore, we must depend on the testimony of the archaeological authorities who do have such competence.

The Bureau of American Ethnology at the *Smithsonian Institution* is recognized internationally as a leader in the compilation of knowledge regarding Central American antiquities. Apparently this Bureau has been deluged with inquiries regarding the **Book of Mormon** and its archaeological accuracy. They have found it necessary to print a form-letter which is sent to all making such inquiries. Here is one statement from this letter:

"The Smithsonian Institution has never used the Book of Mormon in any way as a scientific guide. Smithsonian archaeologists see no connection between the archaeology of the New World and the subject matter of the Book."

Our Mormon friends tell us that that is the kind of reaction we should expect from non-Mormon archaeologists. But, they claim their own archaeologists at Brigham Young University have found such proof for the **Book of Mormon**.

Before examining some of the published statements of B.Y.U. and other LDS archaeologists, let us acknowledge that all of these men are faithful members of the LDS Church and devout believers in the **Book of Mormon**. With this in mind, let us hear what they have to say about the archaeological "proof" of the **Book of Mormon**.

Statement of Dr. Ross T. Christensen, archaeologist and professor at B.Y.U.:

"In the first place, the statement that the Book of Mormon has already been proven by archaeology is misleading. The truth of the matter is that we are only now beginning to see even the outlines of the archaeological time-periods which could compare with those of the Book of Mormon. How, then, can the matter have been settled once and for all? That such an idea could exist indicates the ignorance of many of our people with regard to what is going on in the historical and anthropological sciences . . . Latter-day Saints who have had any formal training in archaeology are exceeding few. In other words, the interest which they have had in this field has been up to the present largely on an amateur rather than professional level . . . As for the notion that the Book of Mormon has already been proved by archaeology, I must say with Shakespeare, 'Lay not that flattering unction to your soul.'" — The University Archaeological Society Miscellaneous Papers, No. 19: Some Views On Archaeology And Its Role At Brigham Young University, Dec., 1960, pp. 8 and 9. (This pamphlet is still available from B.Y.U.).

But if Dr. Christensen's statement is true, what are we to say about the popular picture books on "archaeology" carried about by Mormon missionaries? These books are written, for the most part, by amateurs — not professional archaeologists. Let us hear what other Mormon archaeologists have to say about this:

Statement by Dr. Dee F. Green, LDS Archaeologist and then editor of the University Archaeological Society Newsletter at B.Y.U.:

" . . . For example, some popular 'Mormon' books show pictures of classic Maya, Inca, and Aztec ruins and attribute them to the Nephites. Scholars are aware that these civilizations postdate Book of Mormon times. Other gross errors include the use of out-dated or otherwise unreliable source materials and the tendency to make every peice of evidence fit neatly into the Book of Mormon picture, whether it belongs there or not." — U.A.S. Newsletter, No. 54, Nov. 19, 1958, p. 2.

Statement of Dr. M. Wells Jakeman, Archaeologist and Professor at B.Y.U., from his book, *Discovering The Past*:

"The archaeologists have not yet found any evidence of metal-working, writing, or architecture in this early period, such as required by the Book of Mormon." (p. 133)

"There are, moreover, a number of points where correspondence should have been found in American archaeology, but to this date has not been; for example, no authenticated Near Eastern or Book of Mormon writing (i.e. Hebrew or Egyptian) has been found in America, nor any trace of the Near Eastern plants (wheat, barley, etc.) which the Book of Mormon people brought with them in the New World." (p. 338)

"Although the area of the Book of Mormon civilizations is quite clearly Mesoamerica . . . the exact — or even approximate — location in this area of the various cities of the Book of Mormon is still unsolved. Even the principal cities or main centers of the Book of Mormon civilizations . . . have not yet been placed. It is obvious that before the final archaeological test of excavation can be applied to the Book of Mormon record, at least the approximate location of its main settlements must be determined." (p. 339)

Space will not permit the inclusion of many other such quotations from LDS scholars. But none of them are willing to make the extravagant claims so frequently heard from the missionaries.

THE SUM OF IT ALL

We have endeavored to present a small portion of the available evidence to show that —

(1) Materials were available to Joseph Smith before 1830 telling of the ancient cities of Mesoamerica. These books also set forth the theory of Jewish origin of the ancient inhabitants along with other **Book of Mormon** themes.

(2) Joseph Smith told stories about ancient inhabitants before 1830, thus proving that he had knowledge of such things as mentioned in the **Book of Mormon**.

(3) Non-Mormon archaeologists deny the archaeological accuracy of the **Book of Mormon**.

(4) Mormon archaeologists, while affirming their faith in the **Book of Mormon**, nevertheless admit that the Book is certainly not "proved" by their findings.

The Mormon "Archaeological Argument," therefore, cannot be successfully sustained by current evidence.

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Second Reply

Mike Willis

Brother Rogol first charged that I admitted the point that he was trying to make, namely that the churches were depending upon the college. Re-read my article and notice these quotations to see if I conceded the point:

"If brethren are depending too heavily on Florida College, as has been charged but the proof of which has not been forthcoming, then they should criticize what needs correcting — the guilty congregations and not the college! . . . However, I am not persuaded that congregations are depending upon the college to do their duties any more than I believe that they are depending upon the periodicals, such as TORCH, to do their duties."

I have not been able to understand, in light to these clear statements, how brother Rogol has concluded that I believe otherwise. You will have to decide whether or not I conceded the point. (I must, however, concede that brother Rogol did criticize *both* the churches and the college. I did not intend to misrepresent my brother.)

Part of brother Rogol's response misses the point in my reply. For example, he said,

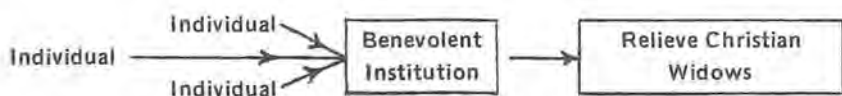
"I do not have to prove there was no secular institution in the days of Paul to train preachers. He has to prove that such is justified by scriptural authority. We do not have to prove that missionary societies, Herald of Truth, are unscriptural; the burden of proof is upon their defenders."

Granted that this is true but, brother Rogol, we are not discussing whether or not colleges have a right to exist and to train preachers as such I am writing in the *negative* to your *affirmative* statement which said that the work of training preachers belonged *solely* or *exclusively* to the church. You have not proved that as the example of Paul training gospel preachers visibly demonstrates. I realize that Paul was not a college; *I also realize that he was not a church!* The fact that he trained preachers makes your affirmative statement false, regardless of whether or not I can prove that Florida College has a right to exist!

Brother Rogol, you cannot admit that individuals can scripturally engage in training preachers and also say that the work belongs *exclusively* to the church! That is like saying that a man is saved by faith *only* but also by grace. Paul did not train

Timothy through any organization; he trained him as an individual. He did not train him "through the church" anymore than Lydia exercised hospitality "through the church" (Acts 16:15). When my brother says, "Paul did his work (of training preachers — mw) through the church," *he is in essence saying that what Paul did as an individual the church was doing.* Realizing this dilemma with reference to the benevolent issue, Rogol said, "Had some individuals pooled their resources and formed a benevolent society to care for widows (the ones in Acts 6 — mw), the 'administrations' would no longer be the 'business of the church.'" Brother Rogol, that is exactly what I am saying in regard to the training of preachers. Why can individuals do the one and not the other?

IF THIS,



WHY NOT THIS?

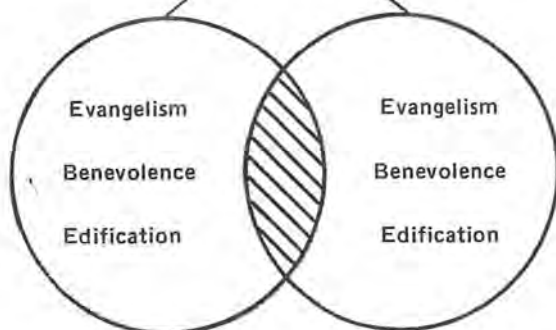


We both admit that neither work belongs exclusively to the congregation (Rogol admitted that Paul trained preachers). Rogol admits that one of these is right; I admit that both are right. (Rogol tried to wrap the church-support-of-orphans-homes issue around my neck. I do not believe congregations have responsibility toward caring for unbelievers, so rather than quibble, I have used his illustration, relieving needy widows, in my chart. The point is still the same.) If brethren can individually pool their resources to discharge one individual responsibility (*e.g.* relieving the needs of Christian widows), why can't they pool their resources individually to discharge any other individual responsibility (*e.g.* preaching the gospel, as done through TORCH; train preachers as done through both TORCH and Florida College)?

Here is brother Rogol's problem: he believes that training preachers belongs *exclusively* to the congregations. It cannot belong *exclusively* to the congregations. It cannot belong exclusively to congregations and to individuals as well. Yet, he grants that it belongs to individuals. Why he will not just admit that he erred in the former statement, I do not know. Instead, he persists in charging that Florida College is doing the work of the church. Please notice the following chart:

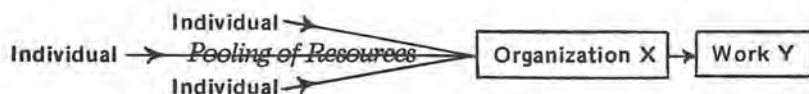
WORK OF INDIVIDUAL

WORK OF CHURCH



The works of individuals (the chart does not present every work which the individual can be engaged in) and congregations overlap in some areas. Although the congregations have responsibilities in evangelization, edification, and benevolence, so does the individual have responsibilities in the same areas. That brethren individually can organize to work in evangelism, edification, and benevolence is generally admitted to be right. This is seen in the fact that they individually pool their resources to publish periodicals for evangelism and edification and pool their resources to relieve benevolent needs (*e.g.* a non-Christian who needs assistance). Let them call edification "preacher training" and suddenly the work becomes that of the congregation. What makes it the work of the congregation? The congregations do not have exclusive responsibilities in those areas. They did not start the work. They do not oversee it; they do not pay for it. Exactly what makes what Florida College is doing an invasion of the work of the church? If Florida College is not doing the work of the church, Rogol's objection falls. Therefore, I am asking what makes training preachers at Florida College the work of the church?

Brother Rogol was alarmed by my "jumping" from individuals to colleges. I jumped because I thought that he would admit that individuals could work together collectively to discharge their individual responsibilities. Brother Rogol, do you admit the following is scriptural?



If he says that the above is wrong, I will fill in the blank "Organization X" with **TORCH** magazine and "Work Y" with "evangelism and edification." If he believes that it is right, I will fill in "Organization X" with Florida College and "Work Y" with "Edification." Which do you believe, brother Rogol? Forgive me for making the jump; maybe our differences are greater than I thought. I thought that you would concede this point and, therefore, did not labor to prove it.

Leo criticized as follows: "Individual Christians *already* have an organization in which they can 'pool their resources' for the work of training preachers — the church. Now, if they find it necessary to build another organization and there pool their resources, this means the former method is unworkable!" I deny this. One might as easily say that individuals already have an organization (the church) in which they can pool their resources to relieve indigent Christian widows; therefore, to organize another institution to care for them (a benevolent home) manifests dissatisfaction with the church. Or again, individuals already have an institution (the church) through which to pool their resources to preach the gospel; therefore, to organize another organization (e.g. **TORCH**) to preach the gospel manifests dissatisfaction with the church. I do not believe that. By the way, brother Rogol, is the reason that you use **TORCH** as an organization through which you do part of your teaching (even though an organization already exists through which Christians are to pool their resources to preach the gospel) because you are dissatisfied with the God-ordained church?

Another problem which is going to be ultimately discussed in the issue before us is to define what is an "organization." Brother Rogol does not believe that **TORCH** is an organization because "**TORCH** only has a few bound volumes" in assets. (Notice that he did not say Needham or Farris has a few bound volumes, but **TORCH**!) I did not know that one determined whether something was not an organization by its assets. By looking at one's sheet of assets, a person can tell whether the organization is large or small, financially sound or financially unsound, but not whether or not it is an organization. The fact that it has a list of assets separate and apart from the assets of Needham or Farris does say something about whether or not it is an organization, however! (Brother Needham, if I paid you what those bound volumes were worth, would I own **TORCH**?) (No, you would own Billy K. Farris, jpn) **TORCH** is an organization. Notice the following chart comparing Florida College and **TORCH**:

FLORIDA COLLEGE	TORCH
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. President — head 2. President regulates teaching 3. President selects faculty 4. Teaches the Bible 5. Trains young preachers 6. Depends on individuals for support (not all contributions are monetary) 7. Does not take church donations 8. Is not an individual 9. Is not a church 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Editor — head 2. Editor regulates teaching 3. Editor selects writers 4. Teaches the Bible 5. Trains young preachers 6. Depends on individuals for support (accepts non-monetary contributions) 7. Does not take church donations 8. Is not an individual 9. Is not a church

I may be naive, brother Rogol, but not so naive as to believe that **TORCH** is not an organization!

I hope that you noticed that brother Rogol did not answer my argument regarding training preachers but rather belittled it. Brother Rogol, when does Bible teaching become exclusively preacher training? What is the difference between regular preaching and preacher training? In your distinction about the "aim," is it the aim of the teacher or the student? (In other words, if a teacher is presenting his material to a mixed class of boys and girls at Florida College, is it preacher training for the boys but something else for the girls?) Brother Rogol, you made it clear that *you* do not believe that teaching the Bible and training preachers are the same *but you have not told us wherein they differ!* Frankly, I will withhold my conclusion until I see your evidence.

Rogol's comments about me not believing the church to be as capable to train preachers as Florida College is ludicrous. Brother Rogol, do you print articles in **TORCH** because you believe the church is insufficient in evangelism and edification? Since evangelism is a work of the church, is **TORCH** doing the work of the church? You answer these questions about **TORCH** and you will have my answer (unless you and I radically differ on this issue as well) to your questions about the colleges training preachers.

I hope that these comments shed light and not heat. Brethren, when all is said and done, the best that can be said for this issue is that it is like the war question, covering issue, smoking, etc. Let us treat this subject just as we have treated other subjects of individual nature. Let each man have his own conscience in respect to each other and to God. We must not press our conclusions to the point of division!

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Correction???

Leo Rogol

In my reply to Mike Willis (May, 1975), I made the statement that "Brother Willis made the admission that churches do depend upon the colleges . . ." (paragraph 4). Brother Willis wrote to me and said I misrepresented him regarding this matter. I do not wish to misrepresent anyone. But I believe Mike has misrepresented himself. I will point out that at one time he did say churches depend on colleges and at another time he said they do not. No matter which statement I refer to, then naturally, the other will "misrepresent" the other. But of course, this only means that Mike misrepresented himself in either statement. Here are the statements which confused me. They are found in paragraph 6 in his reply to my article of November, 1974.

"Now many congregations are providing classes taught by competent men in the fields of church history, Old Testament and New Testament studies, archaeology, etc.? Most (why not all? — LR) preachers need to know a little about Greek and Hebrew to do word studies, but not many congregations are teaching classes in which a person can get an adequate knowledge of these languages? *Criticizing the college for providing those courses will not solve the problem.*"

Here are some points which confused me and led me to the conclusion that Mike does believe churches depend on colleges to train preachers.

1. Very few churches **provide these** courses.

2. Preachers **NEED these studies**.

3. Colleges provide **for** preachers what the churches do not, or cannot, and since preachers **need** these courses, then my conclusion was that Mike gave **the impression** that preachers have to turn to colleges for **something** they need because churches are not able to provide them.

Incidentally, Alexander Campbell started and justified the Missionary Society upon the same rationale, Mike, that another organization was needed because churches could not, or would not, do their work in evangelism. He sought to justify a human institution doing a work for the church by exploiting the weaknesses among churches. This is the same argument brethren use to justify Herald of Truth, *etc.*

Did the failure of churches in the work of evangelism justify

the establishment of the Missionary Society or the Herald of Truth? Campbell could have reasoned as you did, Mike, "Criticizing the Missionary Society for providing its services will not solve the problem." Two wrongs do not make one right!

Then Mike turned right around and completely over-threw what he just stated. He said; concerning churches depending upon the colleges: "... as has been charged *but the proof of which has not been forthcoming*, then they should criticize what needs correcting — the guilty congregations and not the colleges!"

For the life of me, I can't see the "logic" in his statement. If churches DID depend on colleges, then why criticize the churches — ONLY? In other words, if this situation actually existed, criticize the churches but leave the colleges alone!

Just how will you reconcile your previous statement which is *your own admission* that churches *are not providing* certain courses which preachers NEED, but which the colleges do provide? If preachers NEED these courses, and only the colleges provide them, then this is PROOF from yourself in what you said which has not been forthcoming." It "came forth" from you, Mike.

Again, Mike said: "... criticizing the college because the congregations are depending too heavily on it is as nonsensical as getting mad at the cat and kicking the dog!"

As has been pointed out (and which Mike admitted) this is a misrepresentation of my statement. I specifically stated that the real indictment is upon brethren and churches. But again Mike is saying, don't criticize the college. If a college ANSWERS to a demand of the churches, it is innocent but the church is guilty. Is any college above criticism?

In conclusion let me summarize what Mike impressed me with in his reply.

1. Churches are not providing certain courses.
2. Preachers need these courses.
3. Colleges are providing these courses which preachers need but which churches are not providing. (What else could I think but that churches depend on colleges to train preachers in studies they (churches) are not offering?).
4. There is no proof that churches are depending on colleges.
5. If churches are depending on colleges, then criticize the churches but not the colleges.

Mike, if this is not what you meant, then say what you mean, and mean what you say!

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Abraham and Baptism

David Smitherman

There is an "argument" currently making the rounds regarding baptism which, due to its popularity and subtle nature gives it some "plausibility," needs to be dealt with. The position has to do with what God may or may not do with those who have not been baptized and is based upon a supposed analogy between Abraham's justification and the justification of those today who are not baptized. The "argument" goes something like this:

In James 2:21, the writer asks, "Was not Abraham our father justified by works in that he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar?" The Old Testament event to which this is a reference is found in Genesis 22, where Abraham is told to offer his only son Isaac as a sacrifice. Abraham set out to do this very thing. His intention was to obey God: "Abraham stretched out his hand, and took the knife to slay his son" (22:10). However, he was stopped from carrying through with his intention: "But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven, and said, 'Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' And he said, 'Do not stretch out your hand against the lad, and do nothing to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me'" (vss. 11-12).

Now the "point" made in reference to baptism in this "analogy" is that although Abraham did not *actually* offer up his son, his *intention* was to do so and he *would have* done it had he not been stopped. And yet, James says, "he offered up Isaac" even though the deed was not done and he was still reckoned as righteous. The same is true today, some brethren confidently affirm, in regard to those who have not been baptized. Take for example, they say, the man who realizes that baptism is for the remission of sins. He is intent upon doing it and sets out to be baptized but on the way he is killed. We are told that, as in the case of Abraham, the intentions of the individual were such that God will reckon him as righteous. There are at least two alarming things about this "reasoning" that we wish to consider.

(1) The position places one in the role of playing God and sitting in judgement on the eternal destiny of the souls of men. One of the frequent criticisms levied against "conservatives" by those who are "liberal" is that they (the "conservatives") are guilty of "playing God" by affirming that when men "miss the mark" in reference to the work and worship of the church and engage in unauthorized activities they will be lost. But look who is playing God now! If men are guilty of playing God by affirming

that certain ones *will* be lost, then others are guilty of the same thing when they affirm that some *will not* be lost!

When brethren confidently proclaim that God *will not* punish certain individuals who were not baptized, it just so happens that they are talking about something they know nothing about. I *know* what God *has* said about baptism: "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned" (Mark 16:16). Now the *only* thing that I as a mere man have any right to tell anyone is just exactly what God has revealed. And since our teaching is to come from Divine revelation (1 Peter 4:11) and Divine revelation contains no statements as to what God may or may not do with those intent upon being baptized, it would do us well to remain silent about the matter. I just do not have the right to play God and pass judgement by telling men what I *think* God *might* do on the day of judgement. If God in His mercy decides to justify some who were not baptized, but were intent upon doing so when they first realized that this is what God desires, this will be up to Him. And, it is *none of my business* to try to figure it all out beforehand and leave the impression with people that I *know* what He will do. A very fundamental principle is stated in Deuteronomy 29:29 that it would do us all well to keep in mind: "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our sons forever, that we may observe all the words of this law." When it comes to preaching on "things revealed" and "secret things" it would do us good to speak with all boldness concerning the former and remain silent about the latter.

(2) In the second place, those who draw this "analogy" would do well to take a second look for there is no analogy or parallel between what occurred in Abraham's case and what happens today. The "analogy" breaks down at a very significant point. Notice what it was that kept Abraham from his intention of actually offering Isaac as a sacrifice: *Divine intervention!* Now, when you find a man today who was on the way to be baptized and a voice from heaven tells him to stop and not be baptized, then you will have a parallel and I will concede that an analogy exists. But until that happens, I simply fail to see the parallel.

Brethren, let us exercise great caution as teachers of God's word, "knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgement" (James 3:1). Let us stay with what God has *said*, not with what we *think* He might do; with what is clearly revealed and not with the interpretations of "analogies." "Whoever speaks, let him speak, as it were, the utterances of God . . ." (1 Peter 4:11).

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The Restoration Myth

Bruce Edwards, Jr.

A group of religious people are going about the day-to-day service for their God and, in the process, one of them stumbles upon an old scroll. In examining it he discovers that it is a revelation from the very God they had been seeking to serve. Further study of the scroll indicates that their worship has been misdirected in various ways, incomplete in some and downright presumptuous in others. Convinced of their error, they correct their lawless practices and initiate well-pleasing service unto their God. This is the story of Judah during the reign of King Josiah. For several reasons this is a remarkable narrative, but it is remarkable most of all for the way in which Josiah *did not* conduct this reformation of the house of God.

Notice that Josiah *did not* rally the people together under some contrived *banner* or *slogan*. His appeal was to the authority of God's written word (2 Kings 23:1-3). Notice that Josiah *did not* compel the citizens to "*restore the Old Testament congregation*." His petition was directed to the *personal dedication of each individual citizen* unto Jehovah (2 Kings 23:3). Notice that Josiah *did not* concern himself with whether he had "*splintered the restoration movement*" by his dogmatic call to obedience (2 Kings 23:4-25). Clearly, the reformation which Josiah effected was one lacking extra-Biblical appeals to "pleas," "movements" or "heritages."

We often hear of "the restoration principle" or a "restoration plea is relevant in the 20th century." I must irreverently inquire. "What of it?" These are not Scriptural terms and for that matter neither are they Scriptural topics. I cannot read a jot or a tittle concerning these things in God's revelation. But I do recognize this: mankind enjoys inventing unto itself slogans, titles and movements that circumvent God's own terminology and mission. The only "restoration" that God's book talks about is the one which occurs between sinful men and their God. When each one humbles himself and surrenders his will to his Creator — THEN we have a "restoration." And if there is to be any "restoration" that is exactly how God will accomplish it — one-by-one — as He calls them through His written word.

Whenever a group of these restored souls get together and begin functioning as a local society of believers according to the *pattern*

found in *God's revelation*, THEN we have a "New Testament" church. I fear that we have for so long championed the "restoration of the primitive church" that we have utterly dispensed with the true meaning of discipleship. We have tied our fortunes to the work of some fallible men of the 19th century, most of whom we could not ourselves welcome as "faithful" brethren were they to walk into our assemblies. Wherein their teaching coincides with that of the Scriptures, by all means, let us vigorously promote it; but let us never hold the "pioneers" up as some unofficial denominational standard.

Scripturally speaking, the "restoration plea" is a myth. In truth there is nothing to "restore"—only to establish. One preaches the gospel and a faithful group of believers exists in that place or it does not. We caution the reader to understand us here: it is not that there is no infallible pattern which we must follow, for there is. The point is that we obfuscate the Lord's work when we insert our own peculiar 20th century nomenclature in the place of His inspired system of thought. The Lord's church is not some institutional, ecclesiastical structure that can be "restored" like a "faded photograph"—after all brethren, we do have the *original negative!* The only "plea" that we have a right to make is the one to which Josiah committed himself and his people, each one pledging "to walk after Jehovah, and to keep His commandments, and His testimonies, and His statutes, with all his heart, and all his soul, to perform the words of this covenant . . ." (2 Kings 23:3).

The fruit of such an emphasis upon an abstract, extra-Biblical "restoration principle" has been a growing denominationalism among those who have ironically promoted the cause of "undenominational Christianity." There is a definite "clerical" air about some preachers who enjoy the "title" of "Minister of the church of Christ." "Our Christian colleges" are increasingly reminiscent of denominational theological seminaries. Local churches are becoming recreational centers or erstwhile chapters of the Red Cross. And we observe the "language of Ashdod" among many "members": "The church of Christ teaches . . ." "The church of Christ is the right church because . . ." "He is a church of Christ preacher . . ." I have become weary of so-called "accommodating language." Let us have the intestinal fortitude and devotion to the Lord to break out of our denominational molds and speak boldly in *Scriptural* terms, no matter who is the audience is "uninitiated."

When one gets a group dedicated "to the restoration movement" he ends up with the Christian Church. When one gets a group

(continued on page 24)

Agreement

Keith Sharp

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Following is a joint statement from brethren Keith Sharp and David Smitherman concerning matters which appeared in TORCH. This statement was written last October and I fully intended to print it in TORCH before now, but other pressing matters kept pushing it aside. I trust these brethren will forgive this, and continue their great work for God. jpn)

During the week of the recent debate in Pasadena, Texas between brethren Cecil Willis and Jesse Jenkins, I had the pleasure of meeting brother David Smitherman. I found him to be most congenial. We discussed our recent exchange in TORCH over the matter of consistency. Since we seemed to find ourselves pretty much in agreement, brother Smitherman agreed to write a letter to me expressing briefly his thoughts on the subject, on the stipulation that I add whatever thoughts of my own I thought were necessary and send it in. Here are brother Smitherman's thoughts and my reaction.

"1. As I indicated in my response to your article I stand corrected on the use of inconsistencies in discussing our differences. They certainly do have a legitimate use and should be used. Those who are in obvious conflict between what they profess and what they practice certainly have an obligation to deal with such inconsistencies. Kent Ellis had some good thoughts along this line in a recent edition of Bible Standard.

"2. It is also true that if an inconsistency is persisted in it certainly can lead one into hypocrisy.

"3. I stress again what I sought to say in the initial article: I hate to see inconsistencies stressed to the point that we make a man look dishonest when he may not be. And, if we find a man to be inconsistent with what he says and what he does we still need to find a scripture that either what he says or what he does violates."

I believe brother Smitherman and I pretty well see "eye-to-eye" (mentally, but not physically, for he must be six inches taller than I am). There are only three methods of agreementation from the New Testament whereby one can establish the scripturalness of his teaching or practice: precept, apostolic approved example and necessary implication. But, if I can demonstrate a person to be inconsistent in his teaching or practice, then he must either reassess his position or he will show himself to be an hypocrite. I do appreciate the honest and forthright manner in which brother Smitherman has dealt with these matters.

THE RESTORATION MYTH

(continued from page 22)

dedicated to the Lord, he gets a faithful community of disciples, Christians who are truly called out of the world. We find ourselves in the same situation in which Timothy and Titus found themselves: the apostles were completing their written ministry and these evangelists were dependent upon *their letters*. Thus Paul's inspired counsel to them is eminently applicable to us: "Guard that which is committed unto thee" (1 Tim. 6:20); "Hold the pattern of sound words which thou heard from me" (2 Tim. 1:13); "The same which thou heard from me commit thou to faithful men" (2 Tim. 2:2); "Speak thou the things which befit sound doctrine" (Tit. 2:1). All knowledge that we need to serve God acceptably and go to heaven when we die is in His book; it is enough to instruct us in accomplishing His mission here below. We can dispense with all our human schemes, slogans, pleas, principles, movements, heritages, *et al.*; all else is superfluous. When we have God and His word we do not need anything else.

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*We do not write to be understood,
but so we cannot be misunderstood.*

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"Sing and be Happy Today!"

John Rhodes Trotter

If any people on God's green earth should be inflated with joy, optimism, contentment, and peace, surely it is the sons of God. Sadness, pessimism, anxiety, and strife should in no wise fill our souls. We have been bought with a price: therefore we should illuminate a sin-darkened world! However, odd it may seem, such is not always the case.

If any group of men and women have the *right* to be bubbling over with joy, indeed it is God's people. Paul said, "Rejoice always" (1 Thess. 5:16), and why shouldn't we? Haven't we, through obedience to God's power (Rom. 1:16), accepted "the free gift of God" which "is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord"

(continued on page 21)

Volume X

July 1975

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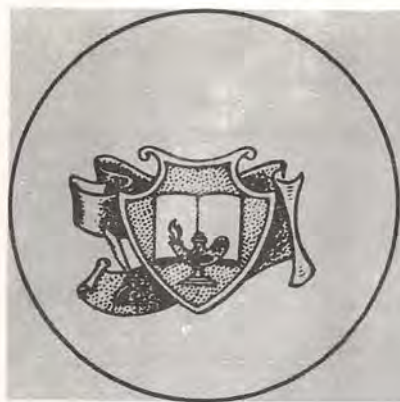
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Editorial

James P. Needham

Of this and that

WE ARE BEHIND AGAIN — Yes, **TORCH** is behind in publication again. I am sure the reader is no more frustrated than I am! I am also sure that you are not interested in a long list of excuses, though we could make some pretty good ones. All you want, according to mail and phone calls, is your **TORCH** on time. We are flattered by your attention, and interest. We are trying to get it back on schedule just as soon as possible. While this gives us no consolation, we notice that we are not alone in this. We see other publications are having the same problem.

WE ARE NOT A ONE-ISSUE PAPER — I know some may be beginning to doubt this, but I assure you that we will not become such. The school issue has dominated several issues now, along with the grace/fellowship controversy and related matters. We think these matters need to be aired, and when we express ourselves and others respond, we think they have the right to be heard, within reason, of course. We are not in the business of telling our readers what to believe, but to present both sides of given issues so you can have the "stuff" out of which to make a decision as to where the truth lies.

I assure you that I have no desire or inclination to be a controversialist, or a crusader. My only desire is to teach and practice the truth. I want to be as free to express my point of view as are others. If brethren have the right to promote their private enterprises among the brethren, then certainly, the brethren must have the right to sound warnings where they sincerely feel dangers lurk in the shadows. Questioning a highly favored institution's practices is certainly not a pleasant activity, and the unreasonable reactions of some are somewhat upsetting, but I must maintain my right and exercise my liberty to speak my mind. It is my earnest prayer that I shall always do so in a brotherly fashion and in good taste, and should I fail, surely my good brethren will call my hand and I will

be man enough to make whatever corrections are necessary. You may not believe what I say, but I do!

FUTURE ISSUES — We have a great deal of excellent material planned for the months ahead. We believe **TORCH** is filling a need, and we are determined to fill it well. We hope you will continue to renew your subscription and tell others about the paper as you have done so long and so faithfully. We sometimes run into publication problems, but over the long haul, we are determined that you shall get more than your money's worth in **TORCH**. We believe you have done so in the past, and we want it to be even more so in the future. Thanks for your patience in the past, and we beg for the same in the months to come. We appreciate the many, many letters, phone calls, and personal expressions of confidence from so many quarters. These keep us encouraged to persevere. Were it not for these, an editor would get pretty low at times. Thanks, readers, and again, I say, **THANKS!**

THE BOB WEST MATERIAL ON MORMONISM — I think some of the most practical material we have published is Bob West's on Mormonism. Both **TORCH** and the readers owe him a debt of gratitude for producing this most excellent material on one of the most militant cults in our society. I asked him to write a series of articles that would be useful in the hands of brethren who must meet the door to door salesmen of Mormonism. He has done that and done it well. Our sincere thanks.

BOOKS BY THE EDITOR — From time to time several books and booklets by this editor are advertized in **TORCH**. These continue to be in good demand, especially *Preachers and Preaching*, *The Woman's Covering*, *The Hawk — Needham Debate*, and *Why Christians Cannot Support United Appeal*. We now add another one to the list entitled: *The Home as God Would Have It*. This is a series of sermons I have preached many times, and is suitable for class study, and has been so used upon many occasions. They are \$.50 each in any quantity. Order them from the editor.

MISSION MAGAZINE'S STRANGE CRITERION FOR SCHOLARSHIP — *Mission Magazine* is a "left field" (or should it be out-of-the-ball-park) publication which finds wrong with the church just about everything I think is right with it. Recently it carried an article which essentially said that nobody is a scholar who thinks the four gospels can be harmonized!! The writer poked fun at Professor McCarvey's *Fourfold Gospel*. These brethren have swallowed classical liberalism, humanism and rationalism "hook, line and sinker."

Part V

Dealing with Mormonism

Robert H. West

THE MORMONISM TESTIMONY

In the previous articles we have presented some suggestions which we feel will be helpful to the reader as he prepares to meet the doctrines of Mormonism. We have directed you to some lines of evidence and material which logically and powerfully refutes the basic tenets of this false system. Yet, those of us who have had many opportunities to deal with Mormonism can cite only minimal results in reaching Mormons. Why is this so?

We do not believe the answer lies in a deficiency in the lines of evidence. Rather, it lies in the fact that the faith of most Mormons does not depend upon an objective consideration of evidence. Their faith is largely subjective, arising from what they call their "testimony." This "testimony" is really nothing more than the usually denominational "better-felt-than-told" experience. But with the Mormons it is not something which "just happens." Quite to the contrary: from the beginning of their studies with their prospects they urge that they work for this "testimony." The following passage in the Book of Mormon is cited as authoritative:

"And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost. And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things." — Moroni 10:4

This writer has had many occasions to present well-documented refutation of Mormon claims in the presence of LDS teachers, only to be met with this rejoinder: "We can't answer the arguments, but we know we're right anyway because we have a testimony from the Holy Spirit." This has led us to believe that this testimony business is the single most important matter which must be met if we are to win souls from this false system. Believe us when we say that once a person has become convinced that he

has "got the testimony," the chances of reclaiming him are almost non-existent!

It is interesting to observe that Mormon teachers are often divided concerning this testimony. Some claim anyone can have proof for the **Book of Mormon** by this test — just read it once and through prayer an answer will immediately be given (if you are honest and sincere). Others, however, claim that the testimony is something that can be received only by those who already are believers in the **Book of Mormon**. This latter view was held by the late Mormon scholar, Dr. John D. Widtsoe. In his book, *Evidences and Reconciliations* (1943), pp. 9-10, he wrote:

"A testimony of the truth of the gospel comes, then, from: (1) Desire, (2) Prayer, (3) Study, and (4) Practice. This is really the formula given in Moroni . . . So far, no one who, with flaming desire, sincere prayer, earnest study, and fearless practice, has sought the truth of 'Mormonism' has failed to find it."

Even many experienced Mormons freely admit that, even though they were raised in the LDS church, they received their "testimony" only after years of great effort on their part! This writer has had several young missionaries tell him that they received their "testimony" only after many hard months on their "mission." This being the case, how is it that most of these missionaries call upon inexperienced non-Mormons to apply this test after their initial reading of the **Book of Mormon**? But such are the inconsistencies of false doctrine.

THE CLAIM IS NOT UNIQUE

As we have already mentioned, this "testimony" is not unique. Catholics, Adventists, most of the Holiness groups, along with many others, make this same claim. In our first article we pointed out that since 1830 there have been at least 89 different **Book of Mormon** groups come into existence. Of this number, 45 claimed to be right on the basis of "testimony" from God. The point of this is that even our Mormon friends will admit that all these other groups are wrong; therefore, something is amiss with the "testimony" claimed by these other groups. This demonstrates that, to say the very least, the "testimony" is not an infallible standard of determining truth!

THE BIBLE ON HOW REAL CONVICTION IS OBTAINED

In the First Century there was certainly a need for Christians to have some way by which they could be sure that a given doctrine was true. It follows that if we can learn how early Christians obtained real conviction, then we shall know how the same might be obtained today. Here is an abbreviated procedure which we have found effective:

A. *How Faith in Jesus Was Established*

1. Prayer not mentioned — John 5:32-39, 45-47
2. Requires exercise of the senses — Matthew 13:13-17
3. Conviction comes through the written word — John 20:30-31; Romans 10:17; Luke 1:3-4

B. *How Faith in The Gospel Was Induced By The Early Preachers*

— Acts 8:12; 18:4,8; 26:27-29; 17:11

From the above and other considerations, it is evident that nowhere did Jesus or any inspired man affirm that faith came by some subjective religious experience or “testimony.” There were controversies and issues in the times of the apostles by which people could become confused. But these were not to be resolved by asking God for a “testimony”; rather, the divine test was a comparison of the various doctrines with what these inspired men had taught. (See Gal. 1:6-9; 1 Jno. 4:6; 1 Jno. 2:3.) The same test can successfully be applied today.

A LOOK AT JAMES 1:5

Our Mormon friends insist that it is entirely proper that we should ask God to give us the knowledge of what is right or wrong. They cite James 1:5 as their authority. In *The Pearl of Great Price*, pp. 47-48, Joseph Smith writes of the time when he was a sinful young lad, confused by the conflicting religious sects of his day; that he read James 1:5, retired to some woods to pray and God then revealed Himself to Smith. The passage reads, “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally . . . and it shall be given him.” The first problem here is that this passage is addressed to “brethren” (v. 2), and was never intended to be instruction for alien sinners such as young Joseph Smith. The second problem is that Smith went to the woods to pray for *knowledge* and this passage authorizes Christians to pray for *wisdom*. That there is a distinct difference between wisdom and knowledge is seen throughout the Bible (See Rom. 11:33; Col. 2:3; James 3:13,17). A careful study of the passages and contexts in which “wisdom” is used shows that it refers to that mental

maturity or excellence which enables us to cope successfully with every situation; that faculty of mind which permits us to understand the ultimate purpose behind God's decrees. But this is not what Smith prayed for! He prayed for miraculous *knowledge*. *The very first passage in the Bible that Joseph Smith tried to apply, he misapplied!* Thus, if he really had any kind of religious experience in response to his prayer in the woods, it was not from God!

WHAT IS THE TRUE SOURCE OF THE "TESTIMONY"?

We do not believe that the many Mormon groups and other "testifying" religionists are lying to us when they affirm that they have had some kind of "experience." What we must try to get these folks to see, however, is that they have had to objectively analyze that "experience" and make a decision as to its source. They cannot escape the fact that somewhere along the line they have had to exercise their reasoning powers. If they have been praying for a "testimony" and, Lo, they suddenly have this strange feeling in the pit of their stomach, they must then *think* and *reason* as to the cause of that feeling. Could it be the Holy Spirit? Or, rather, might it not be that pepperoni pizza they consumed earlier? You see, they are forced to *objectively* identify their "experience." We have learned earlier that conviction does not come through "experiences"; rather, from a consideration of the word of God. It is upon the word of the Lord which man must exercise his mind; *not* upon some questionable feeling! This is the point which we must hammer home to our Mormon friends.

The Bible warns us of the severe consequences of following the dictates of the heart. See Jeremiah 3:17; 7:24; 9:13-14; 10:23; 17:9, and Proverbs 14:12, *etc.* The child of God is bound to put his trust in God and His word, not the variable feelings proceeding from the heart! All among us have been deceived by our "feelings." Remember that noisy window shade which you just "knew in your heart" was a burglar? We dare not trust in the feelings arising from our hearts.

But what of those who ignore these warnings, turn their back on the revealed word of God, and depend upon what their "heart" tells them? The Bible has somewhat to say about these. In *Ezekiel 14:2-5* God warned the Israelites that if they approached Him with "idols in their heart," that "I the Lord will answer him according to the multitude of his idols; that I may take the house of Israel in *their own heart*, because they are all estranged from me

through their idols.” We believe this warning is pertinent to our study in that it shows that God has, in the past, allowed those who turned their back on His word in favor of error to be confirmed in that error! Such has always been the case as seen also in Romans 1:26,28. In 2 *Thessalonians* 2:11-12 the same point is made. Observe that the person who will not receive the love of the truth will invariably wind up believing a lie! “Strong delusions” await those who foolishly turn away from God’s appointed means of gaining conviction, and turn to “feelings,” “testimony” or other schemes of men.

The mind of man, by its very constitution, will seek to provide what man desires. Dr. Maxwell Maltz, in his book *Psycho-Cybernetics*, sets forth this well-known principle. If a person wants to change something about his life, he must center his mind upon it, work toward that goal, and the mind will supply the rest! The formula would be: *Desire + Effort = Result*. This, in our opinion, is just what has happened to our Mormon and other denominational friends who have their “experience.” They have been taught that they need this “experience.” So, they *desire* it with all their heart. They *work* and *pray* to obtain it. Sure enough, they get it! The Catholic gets his desired “vision” of Mary. The Holiness gets his “feeling.” And the various brands of Mormons get their “testimony.” Once they “get it,” they are usually hooked for life! Such is the source and the consequences of this “testimony.”

It is our sincere hope that the foregoing material will prove helpful to you as you are called upon to deal with the various facets of the Mormon doctrine.

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(END OF SERIES)

BACK ISSUE REQUESTS

There have been a number of requests for additional copies of the March and April issues of TORCH. We are sorry that we cannot fill these requests as our over-print supply is exhausted.

An Expedition into Theology

Jeffery Kingry

While I was still in college a brother humbly informed me that in his experience, "A preacher can never really be effective without a good foundation in theology." He was obviously very much taken by his own advice for he informed me that he was at that moment "working on my Master's Thesis." It has been several years now, and unfortunately I never took a single course in theology. I felt sadly "ineffective" as I had merely pointed people towards God and immersed sinners into Christ to make them new creatures. He, on the other hand, had gone on to add several initials after his name, including a PhD. So I decided to sit down and plumb the depths of Blake, Hegel, Nietzsche, Altizer, Kierkegaard, *ad infinitum et al* the rest of "them guys!"

Immediately, though possessing a normal intellect and vocabulary, I found myself turning more pages in the dictionary than I was in the textbooks I was attempting to peruse. For an example, consider a statement by a "conservative" theologian concerning J. J. Altizer, a "liberal" theologian:

"Kaufmann perceptively notes that Hegel thereby (Because Hegel forced the historic Christian method into the procrustean bed of philosophical Immanentism) because a precedent for theologians like Tillich and Bultmann. And the same applies to Altizer."

"Right!" I said to myself, "the same to you too." It took me a few hours to learn that he was calling Altizer an atheist. I could have told him that. I quit reading Altizer and picked up Montgomery after the "God is Dead" Doctor made the following quotation,

"From my point of view . . . can the word of God, as it is present in the Bible . . . be spoken in our time? . . . It is my persuasion that . . . the word of God as therein contained can no longer be spoken as a source of life and joy and that to speak the word of God . . . is to bind oneself to death." My Altizer not only believes that the Bible is not relevant (to put it mildly), but actually harmful! *"Ours indeed is a world bathed in darkness. And Christians, too, live in darkness insofar as they remain bound to past forms of the word of God."* What really made my mouth fuzzy though was, *"I've long since lost any hope that the spokes-*

man of the traditional word of God can be anything in our day but an enemy of man." By the way, this fella is Associate Professor of Bible and Religion at Emory College in Atlanta, Georgia. I'd advise my preaching brethren not to walk that campus at night if they value their neck!

But, then, the paradoxes of man's philosophy were just beginning to reveal themselves. Hegel it seems, did not believe there was anything that was knowable. Truth was not a word in his vocabulary, for truth must be absolute, and his philosophy was one of "dialectic process." It was humorous actually to read Hegel, for his own philosophy destroyed itself. Much like the *Two Cats of Kilkenney*, his thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, "*Fought and they fit, Scratched and they bit, Till ceptin' their nails, And the tips of their tails, Instead of two cats, there weren't any!*"

Neitzsche, I found, went insane. Blake, who spoke of Jesus as a personification of art, conversed with his dead brother and claimed that spirits dictated poems to him.

In all of my reading of man's philosophies I found only one comment that seemed to fit it all: H. L. Mecnken's description of the work of Warren Gamaliel Harding.

"It reminds me of a string of wet sponges; it reminds me of tattered washing on the line; it reminds me of stale bean soup, of college yells, of dogs barking idiotically through endless nights. It is all so bad that a sort of grandeur creeps into it. It drags itself out of the dark abysm(abcess?) of pish, and crawls insanely up to the topmost pinnacle of posh. It is rumble and bumble. It is flap and doodle. It is balder and dash."

So wearily I lay aside my philosophy books and my visions of a ThD, and turned to the refreshing pages of the New Testament and began reading.

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ . . . But thou O man of God . . . keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called" (Col. 2:8; 1 Tim. 6:11).

Now that makes sense.

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This Question of Evolution

Howard Stoner

(INTRODUCTORY NOTE: The author offers this as a brief of the excellent book, A Critical Look At Evolution edited by Robert Camp and published by the Religion, Science and Communication Research and Developement Corporation of Atlanta, Georgia. Some observations are the author's own, but the bulk can be attributed to Mr. Camp and his contributing authors with appreciation.)

HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Evolution is a brief system which states that organisms, including man have developed from lower organisms over many millions of years, these lowest of organisms having come up from non-living materials; the non-living material having existed in some form or another eternally.

Evolution was first written of by the early Greeks who believed that life sprang from moist decadent soil. They observed the interdependence of life forms on the earth, and carried these concepts of origins and interdependence into their social dissertations and essays. Most notably in the writings of Aristotle and Plato. The early fathers of the Catholic church, most notably Augustine and Aquinas, tended to be more interested in rationalism and writings of the ancients than the study of scripture in an objective way, and Biblical truth teachings gave way to humanism by the middle 1700's. Man was becoming his own God in European academic circles. The emergence of humanism and its preconditions, aposticism and agnosticism flourished. Later on we will deal in detail with the psychological reasons for this series of occurrences.

Men like James Hutton, in 1750, and Charles Lyell, in the early 1800's, in conjunction with the erroneous geneticist Lamarck, wrote on their conceptions of developemental Earth history. Their writings, though laughably lacking in truth were well received by the agnostics and cynics of the day. Charles Darwin, whose father Erasmus had been a fierce hater of religion, was an understudy of Charles Lyell, expedited into print his book, **Origin of the Species by the Process of Natural Selection**, in 1859. The writing was first to spell out in a definitive fashion the theory that higher life originated from lower. It lays the format into which new discoveries or sub-theories are plugged to form a continuing teleology devoid of the possibility of supernatural intervention.

GENERAL ACCEPTANCE

On May 2, 1966, 177 biologists at a symposium in this country signed a statement of consensus that read, in part, "It has been for many years well established that all forms of life, including man have come into being by a lengthy process of evolution. There is no alternative hypothesis that any competent biologist of today takes seriously. Moreover, the principle is so important for an understanding of the world we live in and of ourselves that the public in general, including highschool biology students should be made aware of it, and the fact that it is as well established scientifically as is the rotundity of the Earth."

George Wald, professor of biology, Harvard University, department head, and Nobel Prize laureate says, "I think a scientist has no choice but to approach the origin of life thru a hypothesis of spontaneous generation." He goes on to say, "One has only to contemplate the magnitude of this task of evolution of primeval life from inorganics to concede that the spontaneous generation of a living organism is impossible. Yet here we are — as a result, I believe, of spontaneous generation." It is altogether proper here to note that Dr. Wald has not stated that spontaneous generation, a necessary condition of the evolutionary hypothesis unlikely. He has said it is IMPOSSIBLE! Yet he says in the next breath that it happened and we are a partial product. Does this sound at all like the religious dogma that scientists accuse creationists guilty of?

OBJECTIVE FAILINGS

If evolution is such a tight, irrefutable fact of life, why and how can we possibly oppose it. As Christians and creationists, we oppose it because of its intrinsic denial of the Bible and necessarily God. As normally endowed thinking creatures we can note the following items which evolutionists fail to come to grips with:

1. Evolutionist scientists working in the same field present conflicting arguments and interpretation of evidence. Read a few writers on a subject of significance to the general hypothesis (of evolution). They are frequently in opposition on significant points.

2. Evolutionary theory cannot answer the question of origins as it purports to. Where did matter come from?

3. There is no proof as to how life originated. Dr. William Beck, noted evolutionist agrees that there is no way to prove it. Remember also Dr. Wald's statement.

4. The fossil record contains enormous gaps which shouldn't be there if evolution were true.
5. There is no evidence as to the origin of bacteria.
6. No proof for the origin of plant life.
7. No proof of emergency of vertebrates from invertebrates.
8. No proof that fish gave birth to quadrupeds or that a fish changed into a quadruped.
9. No proof that mammals came from earlier quadrupeds.
10. No proof of birds coming from reptiles.
11. No proof to fill in the blanks of man's supposed evolutionary ancestry.
12. No adequate occurrences going on today to explain divergence into so many diverse forms of life.
13. Failure to deal with the natural tendency of biological systems to degrade from the complex to simple rather than vice-versa.
14. Failure to answer the question of when man could first say or conceptualize "I AM."

OF SACRED COWS AND SERPENTS

We have seen briefly the tenants and failures of evolution as a theory. Now let us turn to the psychological considerations which allow it to prosper and thrive despite its dismal failings.

"Not in innocence and not in Asia was man born. We came about slowly, ever so slowly, on a sky-swept savannah glowing with menace. In neither bankruptcy nor bastardy did we face our long beginnings. Our ancestry is firmly rooted in the animal world . . . and to its ways our hearts are yet pledged . . . most significant of all our ways . . . is the legacy bequeathed us by killer apes . . . our immediate forbearers . . . the legacy of territoriality and weapons."

The above is an introductory statement to a book written as a synthesis of the findings, theories and beliefs of modern day

paleoanthropologists, zoologists, and other scientists currently searching for proof of man's beginnings, particularly in the Olduvai Gorge area, near Lake Victoria in Kenya, Africa. The book is called *African Genesis* and is written by Robert Ardrey. It is a very good work in terms of getting the evolutionists story across to the layman. Having read this statement we might well ask what it is that drives brilliant men to pursue answers to questions that are already resolved? Also, why do the mass of people accept incomplete answers as true without substantially questioning them. Drawing from the writings of Dr. James Bales of Harding College, we will deal with this matter.

Dr. Bales suggests three basic illusions and desires of men that are demonstrated in the Genesis fall:

1. In Genesis 2:16-17, the serpent tempted man to be a law unto himself, independent of God. Genesis 3:4-5, man is tempted with the promise of being equal to God. God is false, his laws and penalties are not for real.

2. Genesis 1:27 tells us that man was made in God's image, but this wasn't sufficient to appease the pride of man. He sought to be greater by seeking the good on his own rather than submitting to the will of God.

3. Genesis 3:8-14 tells that when God called man to account for his disobedience, man tried to hide from God, and when found, tried to escape responsibility by blaming God and the woman who in turn blamed the serpent. Man rationalized the situation and in a sense declared: "I am not responsible."

To summarize, man is burdened with the spirit of lawlessness. The law of nature mentioned by Ardrey has been softened by humanism for social stability. But morality is flexible as to social or governmental needs. In the final analysis, might is right. Man wants to be his own God. Man can make himself better. He can fashion his own destiny by controlling via surgery or conditioning his problematic tendencies. Man wants to escape responsibility. All man's faults can be laid at his ancestors graves. The apes made me do it! The flight from responsibility is predicated on lack of supernatural destiny and his animal nature.

SCRIPTURAL CONSIDERATIONS

What does the Bible tell us concerning these topics? Is it proper for us to use our facilities to evaluate and rationalize some problems regarding our faith and the events of the world? In 1 Thessalonians 5:21 we are advised to "examine everything carefully, holding fast to that which is true." 1 Peter 3:15, "being always ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you."

Colossians 4:5-6 tells to "conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders . . . knowing how to respond." 2 Timothy 2:25-26 instructs us to "teach with gentleness, correcting those in opposition, tending to truth." Of great significance to me is Acts 17:23, wherein Paul tells the Greeks that on his way into their town he saw an altar dedicated "TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. What you worship in ignorance this I proclaim to you."

Even working under a well directed teleology, can man answer all the great mysteries? Is man's emperical ability limited? Ecclesiastes 3:11 "man will not find out the work of God from beginning to end." 1 Samuel 16:7 "God doesn't see as we see, but looks at the heart." Job 38 is a chapter of the Bible to be read in its entirety noting particularly the opening sentence of each verse, as it relates to this question of mysteries.

Are current paleontological dating methods reliable? Read 2 Peter 3:8 and see that "with the Lord, one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as a day."

What is the fundamental thesis for an all powerful God? Matthew 19:26 "With God, all things are possible."

What is the truth for man's society? Read Acts 17:26 and see that "he made from one every nation of mankind to live on the face of the earth having determined their appointed times and boundaries of habitation."

Science is in continual flux, but "Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today and yea, forever" Hebrews 13:8.

God created not only the forms of things, but also the matter of them as read in Hebrews 11:3 "what is seen was not made out of things visible . . . but by the word of God." We cannot understand this ability, as seen in Isaiah 55:9 that Gods ways are higher than ours." But the order of the universe argues for a creator, as in Psalms 19:1, "creation tells the story of God." The world hasn't been undisturbed from without since it took shape. Read 2 Peter 3 for an account of earth history and the future as it relates to the massive interference of God.

Theistic evolution is untenable. Read Isaiah 29:16 in its entirety. The Bible is the complete answer as seen in Romans 1:18-27 and Hebrews 1:1-2, 2:3-4. Although scripture is not as appealing, ascetically, as current evolutionary teaching in the various media, we hold that in an objective comparison study, the weight of reasonability falls preponderantly upon the Bible.

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The Power of God's Word

William J. Imrisek

Many expressions are used in the scriptures to describe the dynamic force that the word of God can have on the heart of an individual. It is, in a simple but potent expression, the "*power of God unto salvation*" (Rom. 1:16; 1 Cor. 1:18). It is also compared to a "*two-edged sword*, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). And the prophet Jeremiah describes God's word as an all-consuming *fire* and as forceful as a *hammer* which can shatter a rock (Jer. 23:29). It definitely is a powerful instrument.

Power is a force which can be used to secure both good and evil results. The mighty atom, for example, can be harnessed so as to provide the much needed energy required for the continuous function of our modern mechanical society. And yet, that same atom, when placed in the hands of a political despot, can be employed in a ruthless manner to terminate the lives of thousands, yea even millions, of fellow human beings.

In like manner, the potential power available in the modern miracle drugs of today is evident to all of us as we witness the advancement of medical science and medical care. Nevertheless, allowing that same drug to fall into the hands of the unskilled can result in the distortion of a good brain, chromosome damage, and in many cases, death. Power can be rightly used, but is all too often miserably abused.

Mightier than any atom and with more potential for good than any modern miracle drug is the powerful work of God. In the hands of a Christian it is to be wielded as a sword for combating the schemes of the devil (Eph. 6:11,17). It is able to produce faith in the heart of the honest hearer (Rom. 10:17). It has the ability of convicting the sinner of the error of his ways and bringing about true repentance (2 Kings 22:9-13; Acts 2:14-42). (It was able to change the Thessalonians from servants of idols to servants of the living and true God [1 Thess. 1:9; 2:13]. It transformed many of the residents of the city of Corinth from the most corrupt of human beings [1 Cor. 6:9-11] to saints of God [1 Cor. 1:2]). And in addition it can save the soul (Acts 11:14) from the eternal destruction for which it is otherwise destined (2 Thess. 1:8).

However, this same powerful force, in the hands of the unskilled and unstable, can produce ominous results. The apostle Peter, familiar with such men, warned, "Regard the patience of our Lord to be salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to

the wisdom given him, wrote to you, as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the scriptures, to their own destruction. You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard lest, being carried away by the error of unprincipled men, you fall from your own steadfastness" (2 Pet. 3:15-17). As is the case all too often, the unstable distort the scriptures not only to their own destruction but also to the destruction of their hearers. "If a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit" (Matt. 15:14).

Having such a powerful instrument for good available with the potential of being destructive if placed in the wrong hands, it is no wonder that the writers of the New Testament repeatedly warn us of the responsibility placed on us when we attempt to expound the scriptures. Consider the following. "Be diligent to present yourselves approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). "Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment" (James 3:1). "For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it" (Heb. 2:1). With such warnings before us, we dare not wrest the scriptures but rather examine ourselves and our teachings carefully (1 Thess. 5:21) in the light of that all perfect and complete guide, the Holy Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:15-17).

Realizing the power present, both for good and evil, when God's word is proclaimed, we all need to consider what is said, "receive the word with great eagerness, examining the scriptures daily, to see whether these things were so" (Acts 17:11), planting into our hearts that which we find to be true (James 1:21) and rejecting that which is found to be false (1 John 4:1). In addition we need to examine our beliefs and practices in the light of God's word, for the scriptures tell us, "There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death" (Prov. 14:12). It is a humble man who will acknowledge his error and say, "I have sinned against the Lord" (2 Sam. 12:13), and allow the Lord to direct his steps (Jer. 11:23). He is also a wise man who will do so, realizing the power to destroy which resides in believing that which is false and the power to save which resides in the unadulterated word of God. "See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less shall we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven" (Heb. 12:25).

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Are You Satisfied?

Ralph R. Givens

"Be ye free from the love of money; content with such things as ye have: for himself hath said, I will in no wise fail thee, neither will I in any wise forsake thee" (Heb. 13:5). Satisfaction in some things is commanded. But a mistake many people make is to be satisfied with themselves while God is not satisfied with them. When one is wrong and yet satisfied with himself and content with his manner of life it is very hard to change him, or to get him to see his need. Many people mistake their feelings of self-satisfaction as evidence that God is pleased with them. This is a fatal mistake because it keeps one in bondage to sin (Jn. 8:31-44).

The self-righteous Pharisee was exceedingly well pleased with himself and his deeds (Lk. 18:9-14). He considered himself much better than the publican, yet it was the publican who was justified. The publican was "poor in spirit," (Matt. 5:3). *"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones"* (Isa. 57:15). The complacent person thinks more highly of himself than he ought to think (Rom. 12:3). *"Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips"* (Prov. 27:2).

The Jews were satisfied to be children of Abraham (Matt. 3:9). They considered themselves righteous because of this relationship, hence they felt no need of repentance. But John called them a "generation of vipers." Something about them reminded John of snakes. No wonder that Jesus said our righteousness must "exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees or we could not enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:20).

It seems that the righteousness of some church members does not exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees. They are satisfied that they are "Church of Christ people," they have been baptized, they take the Lord's Supper, and some can even say that their parents were of this faith. It seems easy for them to ignore the words of Paul to ". . . be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58).

The rich man (Lk. 12:16-21) was satisfied with himself and his decision. God's will did not bother him. God called him a fool and said he would die that night. He did. And when he died he had nothing to go to that would bring him satisfaction. He had made no deposits in the bank of heaven. He had made plans but they were not God's plans.

Through Isaiah God said, *"Woe to the rebellious children," says the Lord, "who carry out a plan, but not mine; and who make a league, but not of my spirit, that they may add sin to sin; who set out to go down to Egypt, without asking my counsel, to take refuge in the protection of Pharaoh, and to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt"* (Isa. 30:1,2 - RSV).

We have church members today like those in Laodicea (Rev. 3:14-22). They were well pleased with themselves, but they made God sick. They didn't even know that they were naked. The Lord said they were "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Let us examine ourselves, we may be in the same pitiful condition.

Are you satisfied with yourself and the life you are living? Have you looked in the mirror recently? (James 1:23-25). What of your faith, humility and obedience? Have you been added to the church for which Jesus died? Do you wear the only name in which there is salvation? (Acts 4:12) A man once came to me after services and gave me a tract to read. He informed me that he was a "Baptist," but the name of the tract was — "Ten Reasons For Being a Christian," I wondered why he was a Baptist.

His attitude and actions showed that he was satisfied, but blind to the error of his way. He belonged to a church we cannot read about in the Bible.

Jesus said, *"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my father which is in heaven"* (Matt. 7:21).

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(Rom. 6:23)? Thus, should not God's people be a joyous people? Absolutely! Paul was an ill-tried prisoner, yet he evermore rejoiced — not in his imprisonment — but in the Lord! He wrote of some who sought to cause him distress in his bonds by preaching Christ out of selfish ambition, but because Christ was preached, Paul shouted, "I rejoice, yes, and I will rejoice" (Phil. 1:18). He further declared that even if he was to be martyred, "I rejoice and share my joy with you. And you too, I urge you, rejoice in the same way . . ." (Phil. 2:17,18). Brethren, a man of the world would think Paul to be crazy! Yet, the Lord's apostle continued to sing, "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say rejoice!" (Phil. 4:4). Fellow saints, may we ever strive for such a joyous disposition.

Closely akin to joy, God's children should likewise be optimistic. Christ has promised us victory (Rev. 2:10), and we know that His promise is true. "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God" (Rom. 8:28). Besides, "If God is for us, who is against us?" (Rom. 8:31). Indeed, "in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us" (Rom. 8:37). Imagine brethren: no man, thing, nor circumstance "shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:39). Hence, fellow disciples, we should be subjects of optimism plus! Who besides a Christian could utter the following words: "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:54-57)? Moreover, who besides a Christian could honestly state, "For to me, to live is Christ, but *to die is gain* . . . But I am hard-pressed from both directions, *having a desire to depart* and be with Christ" (Phil. 1:21,23)? Good reader, was Paul a pessimist? Nay! He, like we should be, was optimism personified!

If Christians should not be under the domain of contentment, pray tell who should? We have the assurance of things both material (Matt. 6:33) and spiritual (Rev. 2:10). Wherefore, we should never be "anxious for tomorrow" realizing that "tomorrow will care for itself" (Matt. 6:34). Again, Peter beseeches us to cast all our "anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you" (1 Pet. 5:7). Paul was one who exemplified true contentment. While still a prisoner in the Imperial City, he wrote, "I have learned to be content in whatever circumstance I am" (Phil. 4:11). And, to the Thessalonians, the Lord's ambassador instructed, ". . . make it

your ambition to lead a quiet life and attend to your own business . . .” (1 Thess. 4:11). Yes, brethren, the saints of God should be characterized by contentment. We should heed these sober words: “Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:6,7).

Lastly, the people of God should be saturated with peace. Strife must never cause spot nor blemish! Paul admonished young Timothy to “pursue righteousness, faith, love and PEACE, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart” (2 Tim. 2:22). David of old declared, “Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace and pursue it” (Psa. 34:14). Yes, if we desire peace, we must SEEK and PURSUE it! Peace cannot be obtained by any mystical means; it is SOUGHT and PURSUED! Paul commands, “let us pursue the things which make for peace” (Rom. 12:14). Again, if we desire peace, we must MAKE it! Nonetheless, some “saints” seem to thrive on generating strife. They follow the Rotten Rule: do unto others as they do unto you! Howbeit, the Bible instructs us to “never pay back evil to anyone . . . Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good” (Rom. 12:17,21). Peter declared that Christ is our example “to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; and while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously” (1 Pet. 2:21-23). He goes on to write, “To sum up, let all be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; not returning evil for evil, or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing” (3:8,9). Brethren, surely we must forever “be diligent to be found by Him in peace” (2 Pet. 3:14).

As initially stated, God’s people should be a people engulfed by joy, optimism, contentment, and peace. But not always is this true. Some Christians, yea maybe even many, are sad, pessimistic, anxious, and full of strife. Their disposition causes one to wonder if they were baptized in lemon juice! They are miserable and succeed in making others likewise. Brethren, this does not have to be so! We should recognize that happiness is trusting and obeying the Lord. And oh, if we would only practice what that lovely song teaches: “Sing and be happy today!”

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Philippians 1:27

Dennis Abernathy

"Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ; . . ." Here the apostle Paul is speaking of our conduct, or the way that we live. It is to be in a "manner worthy of the gospel of Christ." What are some things that are involved in this conduct?

(1) *"STANDING FIRM"* — If our conduct is what it should be it will involve standing for something. "Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong" (1 Cor. 16:13). Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, so stand firm in the Lord my beloved" (Phil. 4:1). "So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us" (2 Thess. 2:15). "Now I make known to you brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand" (1 Cor. 15:1). We must stand firm — (1) in the faith, (2) in the Lord, (3) in the teaching of the apostles, (4) in the gospel — if our conduct is to be what it should be.

Sad to say, that today many will stand for hardly anything. They believe everything and stand for nothing. Oh yes, they give lip service to the truth, but when it comes time to stand they become "O ye of little faith." But just remember, if a thing is worth having it is worth standing firm for.

(2) *"STRIVING TOGETHER"* — "And the congregation of those, who believed were of one heart and soul; . . ." (Acts 4:32). "Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree, and there be no divisions among you, but you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Cor. 1:10). Brethren, we must be of one mind and strive together. This involves having the right feelings or attitude toward ourself and toward our brethren. "Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation" (Rom. 12:16). "Make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose" (Phil. 2:2). "To sum up, let all be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kind-hearted, and humble in spirit" (1 Pet. 3:8).

(3) *"FOR THE FAITH OF THE GOSPEL"* — We must stand
(continued on back)

firm and strive together for the faith of the gospel (Jude 3). The gospel is God's power to save (Rom. 1:16). If we would conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel, we will stand firm, be of one mind, strive together for the faith, preach it (Gal. 1:23), and people will become obedient to it (Acts 6:7).

(4) *WHY THERE ARE PROBLEMS* — Far too many Christians do not stand firm. They want the easy way out, the middle of the road. When the faith of the gospel is under fire they cannot be counted on to be at their station on the firing line.

Far too many Christians are not striving together, but pulling apart. Too many criticize, bite and devour, complain and murmur, instead of taking the yoke and pulling their load. Striving together involves faithfulness. Faithfulness in attendance, in study, in giving, in trying to teach others. It involves love and respect for our brethren. Praying and doing for one another. Being concerned for one another. Are you simply striving, or, are you striving together.

Many are striving, but not for the gospel. Many strive over schools, papers, their favorite institution, program, etc. The blessed gospel must be constantly before us. We must *REALLY* believe it. We must *REALLY* stand for it. It must be the standard or map for our journey to heaven. Do we have problems? What of our conduct?

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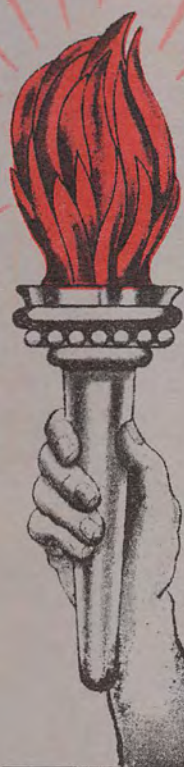
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*We do not write to be understood,
but so we cannot be misunderstood.*

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Parable of the Tares

Terry L. Sumerlin

Please read Matthew 14:24-30, 36-43 carefully.

The "Parable of the Sower," which preceeds the parable of our text, usually causes one to ask, "What kind of soil am I?" Our present parable adds the questions, "Am I a child of the kingdom?" and "How will I fare at harvest time?" Such questions, and acceptable answers to them, cannot be overemphasized. On the other hand, any emphasis of the (mis)application *some* brethren have made of the parable is *overemphasis*, and needs close atten-

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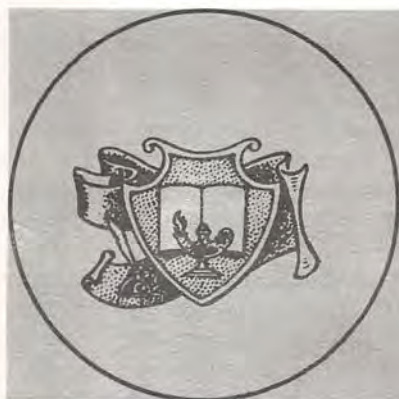
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Editorial

James P. Needham

The Grace/Fellowship and Playing God Controversy,

INTRODUCTION

A great deal has been said in the last couple of years about the grace/fellowship question. It is called grace/fellowship because those promoting this idea contend that God's grace covers sins of ignorance and human weakness in his children *without repentance*, thus such sins should pose no barrier to fellowship among us. The fellowship aspect of the question ranges all the way from the *sublime* to the *ridiculous*. Some say they can fellowship anyone who has been immersed, which would include Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, some Methodists, and who knows whom else? Carl Ketcherside says he can even fellowship the pious unimmersed as "brothers in prospect"! Others contend that such issues as congregational cooperation, premillennialism, the charismatic movement, instrumental music, *etc.*, should pose no barrier to fellowship among churches of Christ.

HISTORICAL INEVITABILITY OF THIS MOVEMENT

The student of church history finds the current unity movement no surprise. In fact, he would have been surprised had it not developed. Such movements inevitably follow just about all major divisions in the church. There were such efforts following the divisions over the missionary society, instrumental music, premillennialism, and now, the division over institutionalism, and congregational cooperation.

THE SOURCE OF SUCH MOVEMENTS

The promoters of these unity movements can be classified as follows:

1. Those who are identified with the apostasy, but who never fathom the depths of the issues. There are always some of these around. They know very little about the issues and a lot less about the Bible. They always are trying to work out some "deal," or minimize the gravity of the situation. They sometimes explain all issues in terms of personality conflicts, and power struggles. There is no doubt that personalities have sometimes been more prominent in religious controversies than they should have been, and power struggles are certainly to be reckoned with, but to say that these are the only issues is too simplistic. This is the easy way out. Such movements would unite the various segments without ever discussing the basic Bible principles being violated. This would suit these brethren just fine, because the biblical principles mean almost nothing to them anyway.

2. "Second generation brethren who fail to appreciate the struggles and sacrifices of those who contended earnestly for the faith once delivered. These younger men are usually well-educated, sincere, and claim to believe the truth on the issues at stake. They sometimes entertain a scornful attitude toward the "old warriors," and magnify and seek to capitalize upon their mistakes and shortcomings, while ignoring or minimizing those of the promoters of error. Because we refuse to compromise the principles involved in the controversies and "fellowship" the innovators, our attitude is wrong. These younger men leave the impression that they think they could have done a much better job had they lived 30 years earlier. The truth is, their convictions are so weak that they likely would not have raised their little finger in opposition to these errors. It is *very doubtful* that those who now want to cover the sins of the past 30 years with a blanket of divine grace would have stood in the way of the false teachers when the controversies were first raised. If this is not true, then why do they want to have unity and fellowship with them now in spite of the persisting differences? If they don't think the principles involved are sufficiently serious to pose a barrier to fellowship now, why would they have been considered a basis of controversy 30 years ago?

I am certain that mistakes were made in the battle. This is inevitably true, but such do not nullify the biblical principles upon which we stand. It is one thing to *regret* and even *repent* of the mistakes made, but quite something else to surrender the principles. This we must never do.

Some of these younger brethren have tried to explain their compromising attitudes on the basis of "battle fatigue." Whatever

The idea that God's grace will overlook sins of human weakness and ignorance *does not encourage righteous living regardless of the protestations of its advocates. Such a position resembles a license to sin.*

explanation might be given, this is definitely not it! How can one get "battle fatigue" who has never fired a gun, or smelled the smoke of battle? The second generation brethren were in knee pants when the battle raged over the institutional issues. They are not battle weary. They may be *gun shy*, but they are definitely not *shell-shocked*!

THE ERRORS OF THE MOVEMENT

1. **Perversion of scripture:** Several attempts have been made to scripturally support the idea that sins of ignorance and human weakness will not be charged against the child of God. Such efforts always wind up in scriptural perversions. These brethren do no better job sustaining this position than their Calvinist teachers from whom they learned their "exegetical skills." Their position is just a mild form of the old doctrine of the impossibility of apostasy to which they will inevitably go.

We read a good deal about "standing in grace," "being constantly in and out of grace," *etc.* as efforts to support the theory, but all such efforts fall far short of their goal. Certainly the child of God is in the grace of God, but God's grace is dispensed through his law (see TORCH editorial, March 1974), not in disobedience to it. The idea that God's grace will overlook sins of human weakness and ignorance *does not encourage righteous living regardless of the protestations of its advocates. Such a position resembles a license to sin.* Neither does it square with such passages as 1 Corinthians 5 and Galatians 5:19-21, and a host of others. Paul commanded the Corinthians to deliver a fornicator unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh. Why did Paul even bother to mention it, if God's grace would cover a sin of human weakness, which fornication certainly is?

All we need now is for the advocates of this doctrine to publish a catalog of the sins God's grace will cause Him to overlook and which ones it won't. Surely, if the position is true, this is not an

unreasonable request. Since these brethren seem to know so much about what is in the mind of God, they should oblige us with such a list. I have been studying the Bible for at least 40 years, and I have not discovered such a list upon its pages.

These brethren say that the alternative to this position is *sinless perfection*. They have charged that those who deny their doctrine advocate sinless perfection, but this is not true. (I think some who oppose them get rather close, but I know I don't believe in sinless perfection). John says those who advocate such are liars and the truth is not in them (1 Jn. 1:8).

Without a doubt, God will have to overlook imperfections in his children if any of them are saved. Sinless perfection is just not within the possibility of finite humans. Jesus said when we have done all we are commanded to do, we are still unprofitable servants. (Lk. 17:10). But we are *playing God* when we start specifying which sins He will overlook. This is such a complex question that humans had better let it alone — it's God's business. We had better spend our time pleading the law, and let the judge meet out clemency as He sees fit, and to whom ever He will. On the other hand, those who are so sure that God *won't* overlook certain imperfections in His children also border on playing God. Whenever we admit, as we must, that sinless perfection is outside the ability of humans, and then admit that some humans will be saved, we have formed the premises from which an inevitable conclusion must be drawn, namely, that imperfect persons will be saved. Just as surely as that is the case, God will overlook some imperfections in us. But we must strictly avoid saying *which imperfections* God will overlook, because then we begin to nullify, or at least minimize, the necessity of obedience to certain parts of the law which equals a *license to sin*. On the other hand, we must not get into the area of saying which imperfections God *won't* overlook. We know that He will have to overlook some, but who knows which ones?

The Christian occupies a position similar to an attorney. He must plead the law. He can have ideas about *judicial clemency*, but he has no right to *promise* it to his client. He does not know what is in the mind of the judge. If the judge exercises clemency, certainly he will rejoice, but he has no right to build up any hopes for such in the mind of his client.

It is our duty to plead for strict obedience to the law of God. We have no authority to promote clemency or to deny it. That's not our business. We must urge persons to live by the law to the

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fullest extent of their ability, and perpare to face a *just judge* in the end. If God chooses to save some persons in spite of their ignorance and human weaknesses, that will suit me just fine — I don't plan to protest. But I have no authority to make any promises, or build up any hopes. To do so is to *play God*, to pretend to know what is in the mind of God, which is impossible where He has not told us. I can know what is in God's mind only as His Spirit reveals it (1 Cor. 2:13), and His Spirit has not told us that God is going to overlook sins of ingorance and human weakness. If He has, let those advocating such a doctrine produce the spiritual proof, and I will preach it too.

MOTIVATIONS OF THE MOVEMENT

What could possibly motivate the movement propagating the doctrine of grace/fellowship? God's people have been known as sticklers for His law. We have preached, "*Where the Bible speaks, we speak, where the Bible is silent, we are silent.*" We have preached from the housetops, "*If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.*" (1 Pet. 4:11). We have contended for *strict obedience* to the precepts of God's word. But now, some are backing off of that scriptural plea. They want to give people hope of salvation short of complete obedience. What motivates such an idea. There are some possibilities:

1. **Some have weak convictions:** Some have the compromising philosophy of "*live and let live.*" They want to cover disobedience with such alibis as ignorance and human weakness. They don't want to ever tell any brother that he will be lost for using instrumental music in worship, believing premillennialism, or claiming miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit. These brethren are not sure of their ground, their convictions are weak. One brother told me he would never tell a brother who uses instrumental music in worship that he will be lost because of it. The next logical question is, "*Would he tell one who refuses to be baptized that he will be lost for it?*" If not, then, one part of God's word seems to be more important, and binding, than another, and these brethren have become, not doers of the law, but judges (Jas. 4:11). What these brethren need is a little starch for their backbones! They

need to learn that God says what He means, and means what He says.

2. **Aversion to controversy:** Nearly all the brethren advocating these ideas shy away from controversy. They *avoid* their opposition. They play the game of shut-mouth when they are challenged. They say, "read my tract, book, or articles." They refuse to get involved in a meaningful exchange of ideas. Are they afraid of their position? Do they fear face to face confrontation? They freely attend denominational conventions sponsored by the "evangelicals," but refuse meaningful and useful dialogue with those they claim are their own brethren! Someone figure that one out! Is it possible that these brethren have an idol in their hearts? Have they decided what they are going to believe, regardless of what the truth is? If so, then there is no hope for them, and rank denominationalism is their soon destiny.

3. **Acedemic pride:** As stated earlier, most of the young men advocating these ideas are well-educated. There is a visable effort to flaunt their scholarship. There is a certain highmindedness about them (Rom. 11:20), a definite lack of the meekness and humility that ought to characterize the children of God. I was told of one of these young scholars who was confronted by some brethren about some of the things he was saying about fellowship. His reply, reportedly, was, "*When you have studied Greek as much as I have, you will agree with me.*" Think of that! One cannot learn the truth on the fellowship question from the English translation; he must study Greek. Does this mean, then, that one must become a Greek scholar to know the truth? I believe it was brother H. Leo Boles who coined the expression, "*If you cannot prove a thing from the English, you cannot prove it from the Greek.*" He obviously knew as much about the Greek as any of our current budding young scholars, but he obviously didn't buy their philosophy. What makes this position even more absurd, is that there are brethren that know as much or more about the Greek as does this young brother, and they disagree with him! He either thinks he knows more about the Greek than those who disagree with him, or else he conceives of himself as more honest than they. In either case, he would be quite *egotistical*.

CONCLUSION

The grace/fellowship movement must be opposed by the plain teaching of God's word. To fail to do so will forfeit pure New Testament Christianity and make the church just another denomination. Such a movement will soon develop the old philosophy

that everyone has a right to his own belief as long as he is honest; God will overlook his sins of ignorance and human weakness. To-day, we stand at a disadvantage in our opposition to these ideas. Certain strategic blunders have been made in the battle against this movement in the recent past. Good, sound brethren have been turned off all across this nation. Many, many have ceased to read the periodicals in which the battle has been mainly waged. They are sick at heart, and discouraged with the tactics of some. To them, the controversy is a stand off. They don't buy the grace/fellowship doctrine, but neither do they buy the tactics of many who have opposed it. A serious question that troubles me is, what of the future? Shall we cease the battle for truth because some have used the wrong tactics? or, shall we map a new strategy and press the fight? Shall we surrender the principles of divine truth because some have used wrong methods of warfare, or shall we correct the strategy and mount a counter attack?

Let it not be said that those good brethren who have opposed the methods of the recent past are "soft on the issues." This would do them a grave injustice. It is a false charge. It scandalizes good brethren. Some may tend to identify all future opposition to the grace/fellowship issues with the poor tactics of the past, but that will be a sad mistake, and time will prove it. The doctrines of the grace/fellowship movement are wrong. Some of the tactics in opposing it may have been just as wrong, but two wrongs don't make one right! This must not be forgotten. The brethren who are opposed to the grace/fellowship doctrines must not now lose the battle by default; that is, simply retreat and allow this new movement to infiltrate our ranks and occupy the field. There is great danger that this will occur, unless we mount a new offensive.

Let us not conclude that the issues and principles involved in the grace/fellowship movement are not important since wrong strategy has been used to combat it, which resulted in a stand-off situation. The grace/fellowship doctrine will make a denomination of the so-called "restoration movement." Its main thrust is the unifying of those who "*share the restoration heritage.*" That includes: churches which use *instrumental music*, believe in *premillennialism*, practice *institutionalism*, have *church-furnished recreation*, *support schools and hospitals*, and are part of *charismatic movement*. It is a counterpart of the ecumenical movement in the denominational world. If allowed to have its way among us, we can forget about the church as the Bible reveals it and we have known it in the past, throw our Bibles on the junk heap, and rent hell out for a "horse lot" because the logical consequences of such doctrines is universal salvation.

tion in light of the context and other Biblical principles.

Some hold (for whatever reason) the belief that Jesus is here making the point that once one enters into fellowship with God and His people, he is there to stay until the end, regardless. Thus, the concept of expelling one from the local fellowship is out, regardless of ungodliness of which he will not repent. Such a view cannot be correct, if for no other reason than the fact that it would have Jesus contradicting both Himself and Paul (Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Cor. 5:1-5; 2 Thess. 3:6). Furthermore, it represents the church as a receptacle for those who are righteous as well as those who *were once righteous* and have become children of the devil. There are two things wrong with such an idea: (1) The universal church is a *relationship*, not a receptacle; (2) and when the righteous life which put one in a relationship with God ceases, so does the relationship he enjoyed.

Much of the confusion over the passage, though, results from the application of the above misconceptions, to a misreading of the text itself. If folks would read carefully Jesus' explanation of the parable, and accept what He said, "The field *is the world*" (all emphasis mine, TLS), *not the church*, the proper meaning of the parable would become apparent. Our Lord's point has to do with the coexistence of the righteous *in the world*.

If one is inclined to say that "the world" is symbolic for the "church," we reply that such would be contrary to the concept of the church we just discussed. Also, in His attempt to explain the symbolic language of the parable, why would Jesus, in effect, say, "The field is the world, which is the church"? If He meant "church," why didn't He say it?

Concerning the expressions "children of the kingdom" and "his kingdom," notice Christ's words, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). Since Christ is over *all* kingdoms, all men, being in an earthly kingdom of some sort, and His subjects. But, those in whose hearts He rules are "*children of the kingdom*." They are made "kings and priests" (Rev. 1:6).

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The Use of the New Testament Word "Doctrine"

Warren E. Berkley

Whatever we can know and share with others is largely limited by the words we can use. This is especially true in Christian life and experience. Without the proper words we cannot convey or exchange ideas; this is serious for us because of our responsibility of sharing the gospel message. Certainly Christians could greatly increase their effectiveness in daily living by becoming skilled communicators.

There is a real simple and workable solution to any problems we might encounter relative to communication. We are commanded to "retain the standard of sound words," (2 Tim. 1:13). Bible terms and phrases should be used in religious discourse, but only *in their biblically intended sense!* It is right, for instance, to use the word "baptism" only if we employ it in its scriptural sense. Before we can communicate properly and effectively, we must resolutely convert ourselves to "the standard of sound words."

With this principle in view, let's focus our attention on one New Testament word that arises in our discourse often: DOCTRINE.

WORD EVOLUTION

Dorthy Mulgrave (1903-1960); Professor of Education of New York University, has made this observation which bears on our topic: "Two common processes involved in semantic change are *generalization* and *specialization*, or *semantic widening* and *narrowing*. As these terms imply, some words come into the language with a rather restricted meaning, but eventually embrace much more than their origins would imply. Others are adopted into the language with a fairly broad interpretation and in time narrow their meanings." (SPEECH: A Handbook of Voice Training Diction and Public Speaking, page 11).

To clarify this observation, consider two examples of what is called "semantic narrowing." There is the word "Bible" from the Greek *biblia*, meaning "book, or papyrus." This term had now been *narrowed* to refer to the revealed word of God, Old

and New Testaments. "Conversation" in the King James Bible refers to "one's whole behavior or conduct." That term had narrowed to mean "vocal communication, or exchange of ideas." Through a process which might be properly called "word evolution," these two words have narrowed in meaning.

This is exactly what has happened to the word "doctrine!" Its original meaning was, and is, simply "teaching," limited only by its contextual setting in the Bible. But the word has narrowed to mean "religious teaching of a controversial nature; dogma."

NEW TESTAMENT USAGE

Two Greek words are translated into our English word "doctrine." They are *Didaskalia* and *Didache*. Though some commentators and lexicographers suggest the possibility of *Didaskalia* meaning the "substance of what is taught," and *Didache* as the "act of teaching," all agree that "doctrine" (whether from *Didaskalia* or *Didache*) refers simply to teaching (see Young's *Analytical Concordance*, p. 267).

Reference to a few examples would be helpful at this point. In Matthew 16:12, "doctrine" refers to the *teachings* of the Pharisees and Sadducees. In Matthew 7:28, "doctrine" simply designates that which Jesus *taught* on the mountain. The word is found in Acts 2:42 where it identifies that which was *taught* by the apostles. Again, in Ephesians 4:14, "doctrine" simply means that which is *taught* by men that upsets the stability of Christians.

From these examples, the basic meaning of the word, and numerous other examples in the New Testament which could be taken up, it is very clear that the word "doctrine" as used in the New Testament refers to "teaching." Of course, as with many New Testament words, it is often limited by its contextual setting (e.g., "doctrine of devils," in 1 Timothy 4:1 does not include baptism for the remission of sins). Yet, the fundamental idea the word conveys is TEACHING.

ARTIFICIAL DISTINCTION

Unfortunately, this simple truth is overlooked in the popular usage of the term. The word "doctrine" has, through the years of religious controversy, *narrowed* to refer only to the "controversial, dogma" kind of teaching.

Somewhere along the line (historical perspective is not the purpose of this writing), we have adopted an artificial distinction that is simply not warrented by the Bible. We have assumed a distinction between so-called "doctrinal matters," as opposed to "ethical or moral matters." Not one shred of scriptural evidence supports such a distinction! The chart on this page illustrates the point.

"Doctrinal Matters"	"Ethical, Moral Matters"
Virgin Birth	Brotherly Love
Death of Christ	Humility
Resurrection of Christ	Kindness
Diety of Christ	Purity of Life
Humanity of Christ	Peace
Baptism	Chasity
"First Principles"	—etc.
The One Church	
Person & Work of Holy Spirit	
Work of Church	
—etc.	

We need to recognize that the word "doctrine" simply means teaching — whether it be of a controversial nature or not! We need to convert ourselves to the truth that **ANYTHING THE BIBLE TEACHES IS DOCTRINE**. Cecil Willis comments on 2 Timothy 3:16,17 with these words: "The scripture is not the source from which we get our doctrines; the scripture *is* our doctrine. Did you ever hear anyone say, 'Our preacher preaches too many doctrinal sermons'? What other kind of sermon is there? If *every* scripture is profitable for doctrine, the only kind of non-doctrinal sermon one could preach would be an *unscriptural* one." (How to Study the Bible: Truth in Life Series, page 13).

In the generation and religious climate in which we now live, perhaps we will begin to recongize the invalidity of this artificial distinction. Many of the "ethical or moral matters" are becoming just as controversial as the "doctrinal matters." Joseph Fletcher and his disciples are impressing us with the fact that these "ethical or moral matters" are not as generally accepted as we once thought! These modernists and new moralists are not too interested in an argument about the virgin birth, or the resurrection — they can dismiss that with a flippant wave. But they

will argue loud and long about chastity, "love" and other related matters. These things are becoming quite controversial.

As to the origin of this distinction, permit me to speculate a bit. Could it be that our failure to reduce principles to practice has contributed to this distinction? Among professing Christians it is not at all unusual to find those who "have the faith," but do not "live it!" Could it be that our language reflects our secret desire to believe principles ("doctrinal matters"), but not practice real faith ("ethical matters")? Think about it, and read James 1:21-27; 2:14-26 which was written to Christians, not a Baptist church!

Whatever the cause might be, it is clear that everything the New Testament *teaches* for man today is *doctrine*. And doctrine not just in belief, but in practice (see Titus 2 — sound doctrine reaches every aspect of one's life)!

SOME DANGEROUS RAMIFICATIONS

"So what?" some will reply. "What difference does it really make?" In the words of the wise man of the Old Testament, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so he is!" Perhaps it is more than just a communication problem, or perhaps it could *become* more than just a communication problem! Ponder a couple of possibilities:

1. WITH REGARD TO UNITY the term "doctrinal matters" comes up frequently. Often, when speaking of division in a local church, some will observe: "The issue was not doctrinal," or "they did not divide over anything doctrinal." But, what else is there that will divide the body other than failure to abide by some aspect of New Testament doctrine?

If all the members of a given local church are abiding by the doctrine of Christ in *every area of life*, unity will prevail! Someone will quickly respond: "But what about 'personality differences, immaturity and other personal problems having to do with one's attitude'?" Have we studied the Bible so long and yet do not realize that the Bible deals with these matters too? There is an abundance of *teaching* — doctrine, if you will, governing the attitude of Christians (see Eph. 4:1,2 and Phil. 2:1-11 for good examples).

If we are going to "speak where the Bible speaks," we had better call every division like it is — A DOCTRINAL MATTER!

It may not involve the "fundamental tenets of our faith, first principles, the work of the church, or the Holy Spirit," but every division is caused by a departure from God's way, that is, a departure from SOUND DOCTRINE.

2. WITH REGARD TO MILITANCY, there seems to be two dangerous extremes. One would lead us to believe that we should boldly renounce any departure from the list of "doctrinal matters," while "going easy" on the list of "moral matters," (let the individual take care of his own "moral or ethical life," but be sure to school him in "sound doctrine"). Another extreme has it just reversed: militantly deal with the truth as regards "ethical and moral concerns," but leave a man to his own opinion concerning "doctrinal matters." BOTH EXTREMES ARE WRONG!

Who says that "doctrinal matters" deserve more attention than "moral matters?" And, in turn, who says that "moral matters" are more vital than "doctrinal matters?" *Who will assume the prerogative of deciding where the emphasis ought to be?*

Why not just preach and practice to the best of our ability "the whole counsel of God?" Why not strive to present every man "perfect in Christ," and do all we can to grow up into Christ "in all respects?" Wouldn't that be a SOUND course to follow? (See Acts 20:20,27; Col. 1:28; Eph. 4:15). Remember, lopsided teaching and preaching usually results in lopsided growth!

CONCLUSION

I am not so naive as to think that I am announcing a new discovery! The proper use of the term "doctrine" has not gone unnoticed by preachers, many who lived and worked before my time. But it appears to me that we have been reluctant to alter our practice. For this reason, I do not think I have frittered away time and energy elaborately proving the obvious; the point we have tried to establish may have been obvious in theory, but not in practice. Let us keep 1 Timothy 1:13 steadily in view: "retain the standard of sound words!"

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Please Include Your Old And New Zip Code With Address Changes

The Commuting Preacher

Larry L. Dickens

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Here is an in-depth study of a very relevant subject by a commuting preacher who has done much good for the cause of Christ. This is the kind of article that TORCH delights in publishing. It is practical, relevant and objective. Let each read it with great care. jpn)

In recent times there have been several edifying articles on the problems of preachers (H. E. Phillips, *Preachers and Problems*, *Searching the Scriptures*, Dec. 1974; J. P. Needham, *Frustrated Preachers*, TORCH, Nov., 1974; Jack Gray, *Why Preachers Quit*, *Gospel Guardian*, Jan. 1, 1975.) Rightfully, the significance of import of these articles was on behalf of and in the interest of the fully paid, or so-called "full-time," evangelist. Very little attention has been given to the unique situation of the commuting, or so-called "part-time," preacher. Yet at this time, there are many new congregations, small (up to 100) congregations, and rural churches which have commuting preachers because of the shortage of fully paid preachers and/or a shortage of funds. With this situation existing, as it does, there are several aspects of the congregation-commuting preacher relationship which need to be discussed. Attitudes toward the preacher, problems unique to commuting, excuses made by some men, and other considerations should be worthy of discussion.

ATTITUDES TOWARD COMMUTING PREACHERS

If some travel on Sunday and fill the pulpit in order to receive the praise of men, and they receive such praise, "yea, verily, they have their reward." However, generally one should not be concerned about this, since usually the sincere appreciation of the extra effort is limited only to those men who would have had to "make a talk" if you were not there. This is generally a result of an attitude of mind toward the commuting preacher. The term applied is "part-time," the implication being that part-time preachers could never do the job in the pulpit of the "full-time" preacher. This attitude stems from several sources. Firstly, there are many excellent full-time evangelists, (especially, those whom the members have heard in meetings) who, in fact, because of their study and experience, *are better speakers* than most other preachers ("part-time" or "full-time"). Secondly, this attitude of inferiority of the commuting preacher results from congregational inferiority complexes

(either real or imagined inferiority). Members of smaller congregations are often badgered over the issues or discouraged after many trials and do not think highly enough of themselves. Such is their attitude of their own inferiority; it only follows in their thinking that one willing to preach for them must of necessity be inferior. Thirdly, some who do preach "part-time" think themselves to be inferior and possibly in some cases, they are not as good as pulpiteers as they could be. In many cases the term "part-time" is a correct one; however, often the part-time preacher is teaching two classes and preaching twice a week, doing a radio program, putting out a bulletin, and doing personal work at night. Surely being partly paid does not qualify him as "part-time." The basis of the problem is of *identity*; i.e. the commuting preacher is really "neither fish nor fowl." Those who do not understand the work of the evangelist, who tend to make a "clergyman" out of their preacher, do not know how to react to the commuting preacher. Yet, because he does fill the pulpit, they never react to him as they do to the other brethren. The commuting preacher then may have a problem of identity. He is a preacher but he isn't . . . and the brethren are unsure of their relationship to him.

This basic problem is amplified by the attitudes of a few full-paid evangelists toward the commuting preachers. Certainly, most evangelists do understand and are sympathetic with the commuting preacher. Truly, most fully-paid preachers are brothers and comrades to those who do secular work during the week and fill pulpits on Sunday. However, there is a small percentage of evangelists who look upon the commuting preacher with disdain and disgust. Some seem to be jealous or envious of their secular incomes. It seems at times that some evangelists, who have to suffer from a lack of adequate income or from the insecurity of depending upon the whims of their brethren, cannot stand to see anyone in any pulpit who is financially secure. Such brethren would have treated the apostle Paul as a second class citizen of the kingdom for making tents. Those few who have such attitudes (and thankfully only a few do) should examine their hearts as to whether they are pleasing to God.

PROBLEMS UNIQUE TO COMMUTING

Several problems, while not necessarily unique to commuting preachers, usually present themselves to the commuting preacher. Firstly, most small congregations *lack* elders and many *lack* any kind of spiritual *leadership*. This thrusts upon the preacher often-times some problems of *leadership* as well as preaching; and yet great care must be taken that the commuting preacher not over

step his bounds either scriptually or as a matter of practicality.

Secondly, there is the unique situation of Sunday afternoon. Unlike the evangelist who is at home then, the commuting preacher is often fed too well every Sunday. This is not necessarily good for one who is already overweight. Many members would do well to read about how to treat the preacher (**Preachers and Preaching**). If the commuting preacher also has small children, he is often confronted with their care (especially a convenient place to nap) on Sunday afternoon. If the comforts of home away from home are unavailable, he must often go without his family. This is neither good for his family nor for the preacher.

Thirdly, there are the problems involving money. Yes, commuting preachers also have money problems! Some take no expense money from the church; but rather pay their expenses out of their own pocket. While this is exceedingly generous, it does not allow the congregation to have fellowship in the preaching of the gospel nor does it teach the local church its financial responsibilities to the gospel. Also, while one man may have no need for expense money, the man who follows him may; and if the church has not been taught, he suffers.

To take expense money or not is certainly a matter between the preacher and congregation. If the commuting preacher is doing so *just* to supplement his income, he should reexamine his attitude toward filthy lucre. If the congregation has a "part-time" preacher simply because he is less expensive than a fully supported one, they should restudy their attitudes toward money and toward the gospel. Thinking brethren would be wise, if they intend to pay the expenses of travel, to consider the ever increasing costs of operating an automobile. In short, if "X" dollars was adequate expense money in 1969, it is totally inadequate today.

THE QUESTION OF SERVICE OR DISSERVICE

If anyone who works at secular work all week and fills the pulpit on Sunday thinks that his preaching is superior to the preaching of most fully supported evangelists, surely, his ego exceeds his wisdom! Surely one who works at secular work forty or more hours a week does not have as much time as the regular evangelist for study, for visiting, for personal work, and etc.

However, in many new congregations, in smaller congregations, or rural congregations, those who fill the pulpit because there are not enough full effort evangelists (or not enough money) do a

service for the cause of Christ which is very needed. All over this country there are small groups and *larger* churches looking for full-time preachers who need somebody in the pulpit . . . and they need him now! If a brother can help in such cases, surely this must be a service.

On the other hand, intermediate sized congregations, that could afford (or nearly afford) to pay a "full-time" evangelist but who don't because "part-time" preachers are cheaper, should reexamine their priorities. There are some congregations that do have a country club attitude (see W. R. Jones, *Isolationism, Searching the Scriptures*, Jan. 1975.) They want no elders or regular preachers; because, then their contentment with themselves might be spoiled. There also may be some *larger*, college-town, churches that depend on well-intentioned teachers or preachers to the point that their progress is stymied. Surely to contribute to stagnation, mediocrity, and *lukewarmness* is a DISSERVICE to the cause of Christ.

EXCUSES, EXCUSES, EXCUSES

In many congregations, *large* and small, there are many men sitting in the pews week after week who have both the knowledge and the speaking ability to help, and if they were willing to commute and do a *little* work, they could be of great benefit to the small or struggling congregation. The numbers and kinds of excuses are proportional only to their imaginations and *laziness*.

Some say they have "to work hard all week" or "have no time for study." If this is explicitly accurate, one may wonder if he has time for his hobbies, has recreation or anything else. If truly he does not have time, he simply is *too* busy. Some say they cannot "afford it" or it is "too far." These often are the same ones who can ride three hours on Saturday to go hunting or fishing or attend a ball game. Others hide behind the skirt tails of their wives and the innocence of their children. They say "it's too hard on the wife and kids" or their "children need to be in classes in *larger* churches." Such is an excuse which implies that one *learns* more from class books than from parental example. I doubt it. (See the next section).

WHY DO IT?

Why then should these who have some ability and knowledge *leave* the security of the big city church and wear out their bodies and automobiles in service to God? Firstly, it is good for personal

spirituality. A man can never develop spiritual maturity without the sacrifice of going the second mile. Secondly, it is especially useful for the spiritual development of the children. Long after the places Paul went on his missionary journeys are forgotten the children will remember the places their daddy went on Sunday; and *that example* will inspire a dedication in them. Also, if as children they met in old buildings, old houses, old store buildings, or rented meeting halls; when they grow up and move away, they will not be ashamed to go across the tracks to meet in a rented building because of the truth of God's word.

THE ULTIMATE QUESTION

If one commutes to preach on Sunday and he does his best, sooner or later some good brother will ask "Why don't you preach full-time?" If you cannot answer the question to yourself honestly, then it is a soul searching question. But to answer the question for the brother, it is most difficult to tell that brother that it may have been the unbrotherly conduct of his brethren which caused the *last* fully paid evangelist to move on . . . or more simply, you are accustomed to the financial security of secular work. Or it may be possible that you know of qualifications (God's) of the evangelist which he has not considered . . . and you do not qualify at this time. Or maybe one does not go into "full-time" preaching, because if he should *later* have to quit (for whatever reasons), he often becomes the object of scorn and criticism for quitting . . . so he never tries.

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Coming in the October and November Issues of TORCH

THE MELEAR — WILLIAMS DEBATE

on

"The Marriage Question"

"Ought"

Bruce Edwards, Jr.

Have you ever said to yourself, "Why don't things ever act the way that they *ought to*?" The toaster won't work, the television won't work, the lawn-mower won't work — and our natural reaction is: "Why don't they work like they *ought!*" Then, on another level, we see immature or hypocritical behaviour on the part of *persons* — even *devilish behaviour* — and react, "They're not acting like they *ought to!*" This is America, we plead. This is civilization, we counter. "People *should not* and *ought not* act in certain ways."

But did you ever stop and wonder exactly *why* someone *ought* to act in a certain manner? "Ought" is a curious word that has found its way into our vocabularies. Webster says that it means, "Moral obligation, advisability, or logical consequence." But what *individual or group of individuals* has the right to determine what "ought" to be done? All of us have a certain standard of conduct, a moral propriety by which we measure the behaviour of ourselves and others; but do we even stop to consider just *where* we have derived such a standard?

Men and women constantly choose up "sides" proclaiming the "gospels" of their respective movements. For and against war; pro and con on abortion; yes and "no" on impeachment. But what standard or right or precept allows them to announce the *oughtness* of their cause? Where did anyone ever get the idea that someone *ought* to behave in a certain way? When we begin to examine this concept we will derive an insight into *nature of authority*. Mankind derives its sense of "oughtness" from one source only: the Creator. Apart from God there is no such thing as a "standard." Non-believers deceive themselves when they suppose there is a basis for an orderly society without room for God. An appeal to "human dignity," "common decency," or "natural propriety" is nonsense without the word of a sovereign and living God who stands behind the morality of the world. In a society based wholly on an evolutionary or existential view of life, the word "ought" is meaningless. In such a situation, the only "right" is "might."

This is where the Christian needs desperately to step to the forefront and *with all boldness* declare, "Only in the knowledge of a living and true God is there hope for order and peace!" We need to shake an unwary society from their slumber — we need

to make them see that apart from God there is no basis whatsoever upon which to build an ethical existence. The atheistic propaganda which is fed to young people in public schools and across the airwaves to unsuspecting families is appalling! Millions are being taught that there are no absolutes and that man is merely a smart animal. It is somewhat ridiculous to appeal to "human dignity" as a basis for morality when that "human" is merely an educated baboon! But let those who disseminate such nonsense face up to the facts! *Leave God out* and it's every man for himself. *Leave God out* and the poor, the downtrodden, and the weak of society are but "things" to be made merchandise of by those with the power and the might.

The only foundation for a "humanitarian" approach to life is a humble belief in and submission to the true and living God! Those who seek *true freedom* must be introduced to Jesus (Jn. 8:31,32). The same word that created the world and destroyed it by flood (2 Pet. 3:5), that reserves the earth unto judgment again (2 Pet. 3:6), also brings *life* (Jn. 6:63). May we be strong in the fight against the standardless immorality which exploits the less fortunate among us. Let us show truth-seekers what they truly *ought* to do.

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CATCHING UP

For several months TORCH has been behind schedule. When you receive this issue we will be well on our way to being back on schedule. Within the next few days you should receive the remaining back issues and we will be caught up. We appreciate your patience so very much.

We note that other journals are having difficulties with their schedules also. We are sure that they will appreciate the same patience that you have extended to us.

- Billy K. Farris

"Hair as the Hair of Women"

Peter McPherson

Whatever other lessons can be learned from the "locusts" of Revelation chapter 9 (and there are lessons to be learned in all the imagery of the book of Revelation), an incidental lesson we can learn is that besides their faces being "as the faces of men" and "their teeth . . . as the teeth of lions," they also "HAD HAIR AS THE HAIR OF WOMEN" (Rev. 9:7-8).

Question: What thought impartation is supposed to spring into our minds at the expression "hair as the hair of women"? The color, the quality or is it the length? Why of course naturally and Biblically it is THE LENGTH. Whatever else 1 Corinthians 11:1-16 teaches (and the main lesson is headship and respect for the same), an incidental lesson clearly taught is that "if any *women* have LONG HAIR, it is a glory to her" (Vs. 15). In the same context we learn that "if a *man* have long hair, it is a SHAME unto him" (Vs. 14). The expressly stated truth and the necessary conclusion is: (1) Women are to have LONG hair and, (2) Men are to have SHORT hair.

In the past number of decades this sex separating feature has been blatantly disregarded. (At first, again, "Adam (man) was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." 1 Tim. 2:14). She had her hair "bobbed" off short like the men. And then he started to let his hair grow "long" like the women. And now, you cannot tell by looking at a back profile of two sexes whether it is the boy or the girl that has the "hair as the hair of women"! And like those of old "*that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put sweet for bitter, and bitter for sweet*" (Isa. 5:20), there are those today that call long short, and short long. The proper hair length for men is worn by women and the proper hair length for women is sported by men! Surely God is not well pleased, to say the least about such practices, and certainly what He is seeing is an abomination unto Him, to tell the truth.

Truth, friends, the exact hair length has not been spelled out in the word of God and so then hair lengths are to be relatively long or short. BUT, long on the women and short on the men! A woman does not have to have un-cut hair to have long hair but when she shows all of her ears from whatever angle you look at

(continued on back)

her and the neck and back of the head hair is sticking out like a burr, then she does NOT have "hair as the hair of women" . . . she does NOT have "long" hair! A man must not have a crew cut to have short hair but when his ears cannot be seen from whatever angle you look at him and his hair is all over his collar, shoulders and face, then he does NOT have short hair, but it is he, heaven forbid, that has the "hair as the hair of women."

The effeminate hair styles on the men and the masculine hair styles on the women will not likely be stopped by an appeal to the Bible nor propriety. Many have no sense of decency and honor and as for Christ and His teaching, they know what He/it says and they have chosen not to have Him or His word "reign over them" (Lk. 19:27). But we are told, "Short hair is making a strong comeback. That's the latest word from BBAIA, which in this age of unisex hair parlors stands for Barbers, Beauticians, and Allied Industries Association. The straggly hair look is gone, and the Nation's athletes seem to be right out front in the new tidiness trend. "Have you seen Dandy Don Meredith on the tube?" said R. A. Plumb, the general president of the BBAIA. "That's the latest look — full over the ear, full in back, short on top — the kind of haircut you can get at a barbershop." Gone, apparently, are the days of long hair as a symbol of defiance, of schoolmasters battling students over the length of their locks, of a judge making headlines by sentencing a long-haired miscreant to a shearing." (Encounter — published by the National Research Bureau, Inc., 424 North Third St., Burlington, Iowa).

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TORCH

*We do not write to be understood,
but so we cannot be misunderstood.*

LOOK INSIDE FOR THESE THOUGHT PROVOKING ARTICLES

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"By Their Collar You Shall Know Them"

Don Alexander

An article appearing in *The Press* newspaper of Portland, Oregon, November 19, 1969, "Whence, Whither of Clerical Collar" by Lester Kinsolving presents several points worthy of comment. Mr. Kinsolving observed that the widespread popularity of the round collar in most major denominations is based on several advantages. This writer does not intend to discredit the integrity of religious teachers who wear the clerical collar because they dress differently than he, but purposes to allow the Kinsolving article to manifest the error involved in the wearing of the "backward" or "clerical collar."

(continued on page 8)

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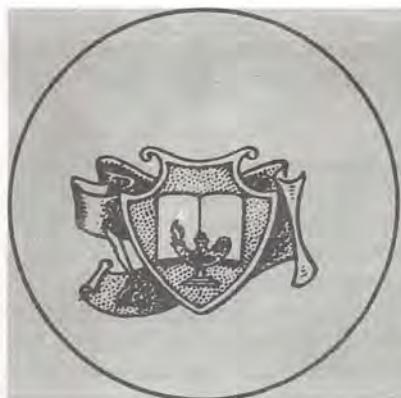
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Editorial

James P. Needham

To Name or Not to Name, That Is the Question

Ever since I started trying to preach the gospel, this has been a debated question. As usual, there are extreme positions taken by some who feel that one who does not call the name of the advocates of the error he opposes with an appropriate air of sarcasm and self-righteousness, is a soft-soaper and a pussy-footer! There are others who are so "meek" and "mild" that they think it is harsh and unloving ever to name the advocates of error. A study of the scriptures will show that both positions are wrong. The truth is somewhere in between.

It is true that spirit-guided men sometimes named the advocates of error. Hymaneus and Alexander (1 Tim. 1:20), Hymaneus and Philetus (2 Tim. 2:17), Diotrophes (3 Jn. 9,10). But it is also true that many errorists were not named. Paul had been told of some factionists at Corinth by "them which are of the house of Chloe" (1 Cor. 1:11,12), but he never one time named the leaders of these contentions, preferring to cast himself, Cephas, and Apollos in these roles (1 Cor. 1:12), but explaining in 4:6, that *"these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written."* (Do you suppose "them which are of the house of Chloe" didn't tell Paul their names?) Paul wrote a great deal in opposition to Judaizers in the early church (Galatians), and yet we don't know the *name* of even ONE Judaizer! When the letter was sent out from Jerusalem concerning those false teachers who claimed the Jerusalem elders had commissioned them to bind circumcision on Gentile converts, they said, *"Forasmuch as we have heard, that CERTAIN (COWARD!!!!) which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment"* (Acts 15:24). Does anyone suppose they didn't know the names of these brethren? Paul and Barnabas had

been in strong contention with them at Antioch (Acts 15:1,2). Brethren who complain about certain "imprecise articles" should take note of this.

It seems obvious then, that whether the one in error is named is a matter of judgment. It cannot rightly be contended that they should always be named. To say this would be to *indict* Paul and John, and others. This is just as wrong as saying, as some brethren do, that calling the name of the errorist manifests a *lack of love*. (It may, or it may not.) This would accuse John and Paul of not manifesting love when they called the names of certain false teachers. As stated earlier, the truth must be somewhere in between these two positions.

In matters of judgment we are all likely to err from time to time. I am sure I have called names when I shouldn't have, and have sometimes failed to do so when it would have been better to have done so. Who is willing to say his judgment is *infallible* along this line, or any other?

Whether it is good judgment or bad to call names in any given case may well be determined by the *motive* of the person doing it. If it is done out of a smartalec attitude, or is done to hold up some PERSON to ridicule rather than to defeat his error, then it is always wrong. I have seen name calling practiced by those who obviously conceive of themselves as *champions* of the Cause, and *saviours* of the church; men who thought they had enough influence that for them to call a brother's name and call him a false teacher would automatically destroy him in the "brotherhood." This psychology is usually practiced by brethren identified with some political power structure — some human organization — designed to control "brotherhood" thinking and define soundness for everyone in terms of power-structure policy. Sometimes the first approach to a brother in error is an abusive name-plastering article in some "brotherhood" periodical. Such cannot be scripturally defended.

CALLING NAMES — PRO AND CON

I can think of only one reason to call the name of a promoter of error; *to identify the source of error so it can be marked and avoided* (Rom. 16:17). Yet, this would apply only when the person involved seems determined to pursue an erroneous course and persists in his promotion of false doctrine. One who exalts himself against the truth in a defiant manner. It seems more appropriate for the unteachable — the person who thinks he has

learned it all, and will not listen to correction. This seems to have been the case with Diotrophes.

But then, I can think of several good reasons why names should not be called in some cases. I bid you consider them.

1. It may give some lime-light seeker the very thing he is looking for, thus play right into his hands. It is sad, but true, that brethren sometimes promote erroneous positions because of *personality problems*; they want to be known as *original thinkers*; as the *champions of a cause*. They like the lime-light, and like a spoiled child, will do almost anything to get it. When everyone jumps on them in the periodicals and pulpits of the land, they gloat over it because then everybody is "dancing to their music." They are getting what they want. I will not knowingly accomodate such a person.

2. It may result in the promotion of error by eliciting public sympathy for the person publicly attacked. Who has not seen this happen? Sometimes some person is written up in the periodicals as an advocate of an erroneous position. (Unfortunately, some brethren seem to sit around and look for someone they can write up.) This is the signal for every "writin' brother" in the church to sharpen up his pencil and get busy. It reminds me of a fight on a school campus. Everyone gathers around and yells for his favorite combatant. The same thing is said over and over. The editors are deluged with "me too" articles from those who want to court the favor of the editor and the power structure he symbolizes or try to make a name for themselves as writers, preachers and debators. Soon the public begins to sympathize with the person attacked. They feel he is being *unfairly treated*, and *abused*. They begin to say, "*I don't agree with his error, but is he any worse off than his attackers?*"

3. It may push one deeper into error by wounding his pride: It is injurious to one's personal pride to have his name *needlessly* publicized and his person held up to *public scorn*. The natural response in such a case is to dig in and fight back. When this happens, such a person gets further and further from the truth, or, at least, becomes more and more entrenched in his error. He feels that to capitulate would be to lick the boots of his attackers, and that he will never do! I think I have known of brethren who fit into this class. With a little patience and fair play, they could have been saved from pernicious error. We need to "*Reprove, rebuke and exhort WITH ALL LONGSUFFERING AND TEACHING*" (2 Tim. 4:2), rather than with *rancor*, *abuse* and a yen for *personal*

victory.

4. It may bring more personality than principle into the discussion, and thus turn on more heat than light. When *some person's name* is the most prominent word in article after article, we should suspect that personality is more important than it should be. When we can read article after article and all we learn is *who said* and *did what* and *when* and *where*, and *almost nothing* about the teaching of the scripture, we need to evaluate the objectivity of the study and question its motivation and purpose.

5. It tends to cut off lines of communication by making the ~~one~~ attacked feel that his attackers are his enemies: How often is this the case? The sweetest word to any person in any language is *his name*, and he doesn't like to have it besmirched or held up to ridicule. Those who treat it with contempt are very likely to be thought of as enemies, and one is not likely to continue meaningful dialogue with those he considers to be his personal adversaries. There is no hope for correcting error when the lines of communication are down. We often slam doors before we get inside, then blame others for the situation.

6. It may be superfluous: Recently a friend was reprimanding me because I had not called the name of something I had constructively criticized. He said, "Everybody knows whom you were talking about." My first thought was, well then, if everybody knows what I was talking about, why do I need to tell them what they already know. Some brethren seem to have a "thing" about name calling! It seems to be a badge of distinction if one "has the courage to name what or whom he is talking about." As I see it, courage has nothing to do with it. Good judgment, good taste, and diplomacy are involved, and a desire to discuss *principles* rather than *personalities*. And I certainly would not say it is always good judgment *not* to call names, and I have probably erred on both sides of the ledger from time to time, but not intentionally. Some brethren seem to like a "gut fight" on everything. Such is foreign to my nature, and I would go out of my way to avoid such. Life has enough unpleasanties without unnecessarily creating them. It is my desire to maintain good relationships with those it becomes painfully necessary for me to oppose. I know the possibility of this is lessened by poor tactics and outright blunders in judgment on my part.

CONCLUSION

We need to keep our long-term goals clearly defined. We need to

convince ourselves that it is possible to *win a fight*, but *lose the war*. We sometimes pull up the wheat when we *snatch* out the tares. If our hearts are right, our goal is to do the most good possible. This requires a great deal of planning and forethought as to which will be the *best tactic*. Impulsive actions and "gut reactions" usually result in more harm than good. Jesus said to be as "*wise as serpents and as harmless as doves*" (Mt. 10:16). I have no interest in a *shouting contest*. Such has about as much merit as a hog-calling contest! If error is present, let the error be exposed, and exposed well. Let the truth violated be made abundantly clear. If the advocate of the error be a man of great influence and he poses a danger to the cause of truth, let him be identified by name that the source of danger may be known to and isolated by all, but let it stop at that. Keep the *issues* before us and make the *truth* plain. Don't *abuse* the *teacher*, *devastate* his *teaching*. Keep the discussion on a high plane. Appeal to the better virtues of men: love for truth, reason, good judgment and fairness — not to such base passions as partyism, emotionalism, strife and sadism.

Let us make sure that our controversies are always motivated by love for the souls of men, and especially brethren. A brother may be ever so wrong, and he may need public exposure, but he is still a brother and I must not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother (2 Thess. 3:15). Regardless of how far from the truth he may be, I can never scripturally justify abusing him or treating him unfairly. If my attitude and tactics become as dangerous as his doctrinal error, victory for truth will be impossible for brethren will conclude that the "cure" for the trouble is as bad or worse than the trouble itself. In such a case, great harm is done to the cause of truth, and I must bear much of the responsibility for it.

We should always labor to maintain the respect of our opponents. If our tactics and attitudes destroy his respect for us as persons, we should abandon the fight at once. From that point onward the struggle will help nobody, and certainly not the cause of truth. The longer it continues the worse it will get, and the more harm will be done. If we cannot disagree and continue to respect each other's persons, we have no business getting involved in controversy. We should leave such to those of more mature minds and better manners. One of the greatest fears I have ever known is that the cause of truth may suffer in my hands! Such a fear will sober one's mind and control his actions. It will keep one from "going off half cocked," or foolishly rushing in where angles fear to tread.

ORIGIN OF THE CLERICAL COLLAR!

According to Kinsolving, the clerical collar for ministers originated around 1890 in Troy, New York. The shirt manufacturing firm of Cluett and Peabody (makers of "Arrow" shirts) began manufacturing. Peabody was a church board member of St. Paul's Episcopal Church and was approached by his minister, Philip Mosher, and urged to create a collar that would not fray on the edges and chafe the neck during constant use by the minister. There is nothing more unsightly than a frayed collar and nothing more uncomfortable to a preacher than a chafed neck! If this were the ONLY reason for wearing the clerical collar, every preacher — every male member — should wear one! But based on statements of ministers in Kinsolving's article certain other "advantages" exist which make the wearing of the clerical collar appealing.

ADVANTAGES OF THE CLERICAL COLLAR

"A clergyman wearing such a collar on house visits to newcomers is rarely mistaken for a door-to-door salesman." This idea implies a built-in vice in every door-to-door salesman and inherent virtue in all "men of the collar." Neither idea is true. Criminals, it is true, have dressed in business suits and duped the unsuspecting consumer door-to-door. However, occasionally one reads of the housewife who opens a friendly door to a strange "man of the collar" and found him to be a "wolf in sheep's clothing." Any uncertainty about the identity of a stranger is easily overcome by a simple question as to identity and purpose of the visit before the door is opened!

Clyde McKim, a board member of San Francisco's Calvary Temple (Assembly of God) reportedly stated that the use of a clerical collar is good for "it identifies him as a minister." This so-called advantage removes the smoke-screen and illuminates the REAL issue involved. The term "minister" in the New Testament church meant simply, "One who executes the commands of another" (Thayer — "a servant"). Every child of God is a minister" whether they publicly proclaim the Gospel or not. But the term "minister" as it is used today often carries an air of sophistication as if it applied only to the "clergy," and as if it signified a high-ranking officer in the church of the Lord for which only PREACHERS are qualified. Jesus taught that "he that is the greatest among you" should be "a servant" (Matt 18:1-4;

Mk. 10:35-45).

The distinction between what are called "clergy" (Preacher) and "laity" (Members) was unknown in the New Testament church. God made no distinction, and if it did exist among some in the church, it existed in violation of Jesus' own teaching in Matthew 23:5-13! Historians also tell us that such a distinction did not originate until many years after the establishment and growth of the church. "In the apostolic church no abstract distinction of clergy and laity, as to privilege or sanctity, was known; all believers were called to the prophetic, priestly, and kingly officers in Christ (1 Pet. 5:3)" (McClintock and Strong). "Ignatius (110 A.D.) was the first to consider the clergy the necessary medium of access for the people to God" (Schaff, Phillip, *History of the Christian Church*, II: 125). "The first appearance of a distinction between priestly and secular dress is in a mosaic in the Church of St. Vitalis at Ravenna, belonging to the sixth century, and another mosaic of the same period in the Church of St. Sophia at Constantinople" (Fisher, George P., *History of the Christian Church*, p. 121). Jesus Christ is the "one mediator between God and man" (1 Tim. 2:5), thus the Christian needs no "clergy" with a special styled shirt to mediate for him before God. How different from the modern "clergy" was the attitude of Jesus, "Wherefore, in all things it behoved him to be made LIKE UNTO HIS BRETHREN (emphasis mine, DMA), that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted" (Heb. 2:17-18).

The outward appearance of the preacher of the Gospel does not characterize him as a "minister" of CHRIST. The work he does and the message he preaches show him to be a minister of Christ. Jesus said, "beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. By their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:15). The identifying marks of a Gospel minister were stated by the apostle Paul, in writing to Timothy the preacher, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:2). There is no mention of a special garb Timothy wore to distinguish him as a preacher. When those in clerical collar fail to preach the Gospel and instead use their manner of dress to glorify the flesh, it is obvious they have never "adorned the doctrine of God" (Tit. 2:10). Their message betrays them as Satan's ministers who have fashioned themselves as "ministers of righteousness" (2 Cor. 11:13-15). Under the mark of the clerical

collar Satan's ministers proclaim human politics, violence and lawlessness as a means of social reform, acceptance of homosexuality as a "righteous" means of sexual "expression," "wife swapping" as a tool of "cementing" a marriage bond, and everything else EXCEPT the Gospel of Christ! "Let them be accursed" (Gal. 1:6-8)!

The real love of the clerical collar is best expressed by Kinsolving's summary:

"For the first three of four weeks after ordination, the new minister or priest who wears a collar feels a slight sensation of strangulation. But this is more than compensated for in the sudden awe in which the young man finds himself held by many people. Dear old ladies old enough to be his grandmother, address him as 'Father,' an experience which in its initial impact can be as exhilarating as finding men tipping their hats to him."

When we compare this statement with that of Jesus in Matthew 23:5-12, we are stunned with the fact that the ATTITUDE of those who love the wearing of the clerical collar as a mark of distinction belonging exclusively to the "clergy" is older than the collar style of 1890 designed by Peabody. The "clergy garb" is different, but the attitude is the same as that manifested by the scribes and Pharisees!

"But they do all their deeds to be noticed by men; for they broaden their phylacteries, and lengthen the tassels of their garments. And they love the place of honor at banquets, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and respectful greetings in the market places, and being called by men, Rabbi. But be not called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brethers. And do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. And do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, that is, Christ. But the greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted" (New Amer. Stand. Version).

Since the Gospel preacher is a MESSENGER, God blessed his FEET — not his brain — and indeed, not his COLLAR!

"How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things"
(Romans 10:15).

what's your question

Bible Answers to Bible Questions

Send to:

James P. Needham
1600 Oneco Avenue
Winter Park, Florida 32789

QUESTION: Sunday Evening Communion

Dear brother Needham;

We have received **TORCH** for quite some time since you began as editor. This teaching medium has been well prepared and is thought provoking. The format is the most readable of any magazine we receive. Enough of the bouquets and back slapping!

The *What's Your Question* section of **TORCH** is one which we greatly enjoy. However, in the August 1974 issue of this section you have given an answer which is inconsistent with the scriptures and even contains inconsistency within the article itself.

You state two reasons for believing the Lord's supper may be served twice on a Lord's day. Your first point includes, "Thus those who commune on Sunday evening are fulfilling the *demands* of the scriptures." (emphasis mine, AR) Later (in answering an objection) you state, "How does some man discover that one is not *obligated* to do what the Lord authorized?" (emphasis mine, AR)

These two statements make it clear that you believe one *must* partake of the Lord's supper in the evening if he "could not attend" the morning service. Yet (in your last paragraph) you say, "If one has to miss the Sunday morning assembly, and does not feel that he should take the supper at the evening service, *let him not* do so." (emphasis mine, AR) Now, *must* one partake in the evening if he "could not attend" the morning service? You answer, Yes and No! Inconsistency! Which do you believe, brother Needham?

Your second point of defense says, "Observance of the supper is an individual matter: . . ." Does this deal with the issue? In 1

Corinthians Paul writes, "when ye come together in the church" (11:18); "we *all* partake of the one bread" (10:17); "when ye come together *to eat*" (11:33); and in Matthew 26:27, "Drink ye *all* of it."

These scriptures teach that we *must* come together for the purpose of eating the supper, and *all* must partake of it? On Sunday evening we do not come together *for the purpose* of eating the supper! OR DO WE??? Is the eating the supper our reason for having the evening assembly? Do we *all* drink of it (the cup) on Sunday evening?

James D. Bales expresses an important point in his book *Pat Boone and the Gift of Tongues*, page 196. He writes, "Congregational participation is very active in singing, and in *each* of us when partaking of the Lord's Supper. (emphasis mine, AR) We also participate, but with less physical expression, when we follow the prayers, and when we listen to the teaching. We further participate in contributing of our means. *In fact, we participate in one way or another in every act of public worship.*" (emphasis mine, AR)

My conviction is that brother Bales is correct and scriptural in his statement here. If he is accurate please let me know in what way the "others" (majority) are to *participate* during the evening supper!

With all due respect:

Brotherly love,

Allen Roth
R.R. 3, Box 5
Streator, Illinois 61364

REPLY TO BROTHER ROTH

James P. Needham

The matter of Sunday evening communion is more and more becoming an issue with some brethren at some places. It is a matter that needs careful study. I appreciate brother Roth's reply.

1. **Am I inconsistent?** Brother Roth thinks I am inconsistent to say that Sunday evening is still the Lord's day and brethren are "obligated" to take the supper on that day, but then to say, "If one has to miss the Sunday morning assembly, and does not feel that he should take the supper at the evening service, LET HIM NOT DO SO." I deny that I am inconsistent here. By "let him

not do so," I simply meant to let this person satisfy his own conscience. I, nor anyone else, have any power to force him to commune on Sunday night. It is my conviction that he who is hindered by life's circumstances from communing on Sunday morning, is "obligated" to commune when he can, but I am not a police officer, and he is not responsible to me, but rather, to God. It is a matter between him and God, so I am willing to leave it there. Where brother Roth worships there are some members he thinks are "obligated" to commune on Sunday morning, but, through indifference, they don't. He doesn't approve of what they do, but what can he do about it but say he thinks they are obligated to commune on Sunday morning? It is a matter between them and God. I certainly was not giving my approval to anyone's failing to commune on the Lord's day just like the Bible teaches in Acts 20:7; and 1 Corinthians 11.

2. **Communion an individual matter:** I still maintain on the basis of 1 Corinthians 11:28,29, that communion is an individual matter. Paul says, "*But let a MAN examine HIMSELF, and so let HIM eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For HE that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to HIMSELF, not discerning the Lord's body.*" I agree with his quotation from James Bales; I realize that eating the supper is done in concert with others, like singing, giving, *etc.*, but the fact still remains that communion is between me and the Lord, (Matt. 26:29) and there is no way that one person can "drink damnation" to another. It is strictly between the individual and God. That is where I am willing to leave it.

3. **The "all" passages:** Brother Roth feels he finds support for no Sunday night communion in the passages that speak of "all" partaking of it. But the "all" is made up of the individuals who should participate. I maintain that the "all" passages can be fulfilled both on Sunday morning, and Sunday evening; that is, all can partake who are supposed to. All saints are obligated to partake of the supper on the Lord's day. Brother Roth will not deny this. All who are obligated to partake of the supper who are present on Sunday morning can partake of it at that time. All who are obligated to partake of the supper who are present on Sunday evening can partake of it then. The sum total is that when this is done, all who are obligated to partake of the supper on the Lord's day, will have done so. Can brother Roth say this about his plan?

4. **Purpose of Sunday evening service:** Brother Roth wants to know if the Lord's supper is the purpose for having the Sunday evening service? Obviously, it is one of the purposes. Will he say that the Lord's supper is the **SOLE** purpose of having the Sunday morning service? Paul preached to the Troas assembly (Acts 20:7),

was that part of the purpose of that assembly? He wants to know how the non-partakers participate on Sunday night. I can't speak for others, but I participate in the prayers, and think of the significance of the event. The only thing I don't do is break the bread and drink the cup. Since we are at this point in our study, I would like to ask brother Roth if he would approve of Sunday evening communion if all present partook? Would this solve the problem? Would it be wrong? Would it be first-day-of-the-week communion?

5. **What about giving?** Since giving is also limited to the first day of the week, and Paul says, "*let every one of you lay by him in store*" (1 Cor. 16:2), does brother Roth's plan also disallow Sunday night giving? He charges me with inconsistency, but he would do well to take a good look at this aspect of his own position. There is no way he can be consistent while disallowing Sunday evening communion, but allowing Sunday evening contribution. If all who are going to commune on the Lord's day must do so at the Sunday morning assembly, the same can be said for giving. If not, then, why not.

6. **Lord's day, or Lord's hour?** That's the question? Brother Roth's position makes no provision for the Lord's DAY, but arbitrarily picks out a specified time on that day which amounts to the Lord's hour, or better yet, the Lord's fifteen minutes (the time in the service necessary to pass the communion trays). This position says you either be present in the assembly during that fifteen minutes, or you have failed to obey Acts 20:7.

CONCLUSION

I would that the reader clearly understand that I am not defending the lazy, indifferent church member who goes golfing, fishing, or sleeps on Sunday morning with the absurd notion that "I can get the Lord's supper at the evening service." I can find no defence for such lukewarmness. Sunday evening communion by such a person is a farse and a sham, and of no benefit whatsoever. But this person's problem is not Sunday evening communion, but a much deeper spiritual sickness that will endanger his soul. I have in mind the individual who is hindered by life's circumstances from being present on Sunday morning, but who can be present on Sunday evening. I maintain that it is still the Lord's day, the time when the Lord commanded that the supper be observed. I cannot find it in my heart to say, "You may have been ill this morning, but, too bad, we will not serve you the Lord's supper this evening, even though it is still the Lord's day." I find such an attitude arbitrary, contrary to the individual nature of communion, and out of harmony with the scriptures.

Christian Evidence

Roy Kingsmill

The following impressions and conclusions have been arrived at as a result of exposure to the appended bibliography. It is my personal reaction and therefore follows no critique pattern.

Whether the word "if" or the word "god" was first to be incorporated into our vocabulary is of little consequence except to note that theologically they are inseparable. Man is theistic by nature, design and necessity. He needs a Supreme Being, and if he has none he will invent one. I repeat, *he will invent one*. It may be a tree or the sun or one based on miracles or history, or miracles and history.

The principle of a deity is acceptable and essential to the hominid, the reasoning animal. The first truth he learns is the depths of his incompetency. This knowledge may be of conscious or unconscious nature, but it becomes a part of his pursuit. The second truth now follows: Because he can perform many tasks which place him on a plane unattainable by his physically superior animal counterparts, he knows he has been chosen above them, for better things.

Unable to grasp these better things, (pleasures of life in full measure, elimination of pain, and greatest of all — eternal life) by his own limited abilities, he reasons that some unseen force is greater than he.

He is quite sure that animals are not aware of this "greater force," "good force," or "God": therefore Greater Force or whatever it is called will add his power to man but not to animal. This may sound like stoneage logic but this poor reasoning is alive and well and living in your community today. Many people who "accept" Christ, deny Him to any not of their particular spiritual persuasion. Even one deeply immersed in literary bankruptcy could pen volumes on our presumption to "accept" a gift paid for by the supreme sacrifice, dictated by God's love. As realization of the necessity of God or a god becomes more dominant in man, he begins to examine his environment for evidence of a supreme force. *If there is a Divinity that can be entreated to aid man*, there must be a way to recognize Him and approach Him. If sufficient evidence is not to be found in the active, he must look to the passive. He leaves today and searches into yesterday. The record

of previous days are written in books. In these books lies the truth of existing Divinity, *if* one exists. Unfortunately, all that is written in books is not true. Man now finds that he must make a selection of the books that contain the truth.

From billions of folders containing printed matter, how can he be certain of the ones that will give him an avenue to truth. In his search for "Greater Force" he knows inherently that the elimination of doubt can only be accomplished by insertion of truth. Truth *will* make him free.

The books tell so many things, most of which his contemporaries accept in principle but not in fact. As George and Ira Gershwin wrote for the biblical musical farce, *Porgy and Bess*, "... the things that you're liable to read in the Bible . . . It Ain't Necessarily So." For man in his search for spiritual truth, however, it must be "Necessarily So."

History inadvertently substantiates many facts on which legends and fables are based. Reproduction often begets elaboration, and the truth gets harder to uncover. If man could see Moses, David, Paul or Peter writing, he could immediately read their words and know the truth.

Alas, Moses, David, Paul and Peter are physically unable to comply. Or are they?

Archaeology is man's telescope to the past. Homer's Troy has been identified under millennial strata thus archaeology. Ancient history has been verified. Now man has a reliable agent of verification that may be used to identify "greater Force" and possibly disclose what must be done to gain his favor. In attempting to substantiate the Old Testament as true and inspired, man learns the following:

1. Archaeology has uncovered evidence of the flood as recently as 1929 (Leonard Woolley).

2. That King Sargon reigned nearly 6,000 years ago, is documented and removed from the category of legend.

3. The great works of the Summerians can be read, including their reckoning of time.

4. The Hummarabi code of legal procedure has been rescued from the ravages of time.

How frustrating that none can say, "Here, read this, it was written by Isaiah." "See, here is his signature." "Lift this tablet, it contains the law of Moses." "This piece of the Ark of the Covenant, see how it measures exactly as the Lord commanded Moses to build it. It is made of acacia wood." If God or "Greater Force" really wanted us to follow Him, why does he make finding him so difficult? Why is no single word left for us to point to and say, "Christ, the Son of God wrote that"?

Man's need for God is so acute that if a piece of parchment with His written word on it were extant, man would undoubtedly build a shrine to hold it and become idolatrous in his worship of a physical symbol of divinity.

It is difficult to give evidence that will conclusively prove God to be God, and the Bible to be his inspired word. Difficult, but not impossible.

Accepting the ancient origin of the Old Testament, man now attempts to authenticate its inspirational claims. It is necessarily so? True, maybe the number forty so often used in both the Old and the New Testaments does not specifically mean four times ten, but rather a colloquialism meaning a considerable number. What of our writers today who use "several," or apply the common exaggerations, "boatload, millions, lots, *etc.*" Should all their books be considered facetious or untrue, because the amount referred to is general rather than specific? No one knows how many celestial bodies there are, but that fact does not deter navigators from plotting a course by the stars. We don't know the number of fishes it took to break Peter's net, but we accept the fact that the boats were filled to a capacity that threatened to sink them. What really concerns man in his spiritual search is truth as it affects his salvation.

Are the books of the Bible, the Word of God given to man by inspiration through the Holy Spirit? Let's see what we have now. In Exodus 17, Moses is told to write a "book." That book, and others like it, were prophetic. Proof of prophecy is in detailed fulfillment. The New Testament records the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy.

The personality of the prophets differs only slightly although they were from all walks of life from kings to shepherds. They did exist. That David lived is documented history. So is the life of Isaiah.

Among the things man has found in the lens of his telescope to the past is that the Sadducees were liberal, the Pharisees were narrow minded and biased. It remained for the Essenes to be sincere. All this is confirmed for the practical searcher of truth through the efforts of archaeologists. Archaeologists were not and are not inspired men. Some ply their trade strictly for profit. So no one can say that they dig up and disclose only that which is favorable to the doctrine of inspired scripture.

The Bible today, assembled from the most ancient writings available, specifically states that Christ quoted from the Old Testament many, many times. With this to go on the Old Testament can be authenticated without a single written word left by Christ. He can be proven to be the Son of God.

The Son of God would not find it necessary to quote from uninspired works of man. Dignifying the Old Testament by His many references, Christ gives witness that the law and the prophets were divinely inspired.

At this point the searcher learns that New Testament believers have received unexpected confirmation of the Old Testament and justification for the New Testament in the discovery of the "Dead Sea Scrolls." Found by a shepherd in 1947, and sold for profit, these manuscripts, predating the Christian era, contain at least part of all the books of the Old Testament except Esther. The monastery where the scrolls were prepared covered two centuries and encompassed the time of the life of Christ.

Now we have documentation to substantiate the references to the Old Testament as quoted by Christ. The apocraphal gap between the Old and the New Testament is at least partially bridged. The Old Testament prophets, who can now be believed, (by documented fulfillment) in turn make the New Testament believable through this same verification.

The historic accuracy of the New Testament information has been verified through archaeological achievement making the inspirational claim for these books convincing. The central figure of the New Testament, and the fulfillment of the Old Testament is the same, Christ. Man has found his God.

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"Except Some Man Should Guide Me"

Larry Dickens

When the evangelist, Philip, asked the Ethiopian if he understood what he was reading, he answered, "How can I, except some man should guide me?" (see Acts 8:30-31).

There are very few of us who have both the intelligence and the spiritual wisdom to be able to fully understand all that we find in the scriptures without the help of some man. Most of us depend quite heavily upon our preachers, elders, Bible class teachers, *etc.*, to guide us in our Bible study. And, in turn, often times the Bible teachers and preachers depend upon other teachers, preachers, commentators, and other scholars of the Word of God. While it is good for us to admit that we can use the guidance of other men, we must be careful of the men whose guidance we use. The advice, guidance, and direction of others is good only if that advice is true.

Since there are many warnings in the Scriptures about false teachers in and out of the Church (Acts 20:29-30; 2 Pet. 2:1-3; 1 Tim. 4:13), we must be very careful not to be guided in the wrong way. We certainly would not want to be led by a blind guide (see Matt. 15:14). These warnings should make us want to study what kind of men we should choose to guide us. So the question is: What should I look for in another man that indicates that he would be a safe guide as I study my Bible?

1. HE IS CONVINCED IT MATTERS: Since it obviously DOES matter to God what I believe, and what I do, and what I am; any man who says it does not matter is NOT a safe guide. Statements like: "It does not matter what you believe as long as you are honest and sincere" or "One faith is as good as another" or "One church is as good as another" are a dead-give-away that, as far as that person is concerned, it just does not matter *anyway*. This person is not a suitable guide because to him it is all *laissez faire* anyway.

2. THE STUDY IS NOT ACADEMIC: While it is good to refrain from overemotionalism in Bible study, the man who has an absolutely academic attitude toward the study should be wared. Since what I believe, and what I am, has an effect upon the salvation of my soul, the man who guides my study must not only be interested in the study, but also in ME and my eternal welfare. Any guide who is not concerned about you as a precious soul in

the sight of God will not be a suitable guide.

3. HE IS CONCERNED WITH WHAT IS RIGHT: The man who answers the question with "I don't see anything wrong with it" has not answered the question. He has simply told you how he feels. If he is going to be a guide, let him answer with: "It is right because . . ." Beware of the man who defends what he is practicing by asking you to defend what you both are doing. If you have to show HIM what IS right about what you both are already agreed upon in order to discuss a point of disagreement, then you are talking to a student, not a teacher.

4. HE KNOWS WHAT HE BELIEVES: If my problem is indecision, the last thing on earth I need is the guidance of another undecided person. In other words, a good guide will always be sure of his position. He will know what he believes and WHY he believes and practices what he does. In short, he will believe that HE is right. Whenever a man says to me, "I don't know whether I am right on this or not," at that point, I quit listening to his advice on that subject.

5. HE RECOGNIZES HIS FALLIBILITY: At the same time he must be sure of his position, would he be willing to admit error and change his position, if it proved to be wrong? Any man who suffers from such delusions of grandeur as to think that he is incapable of fallacious reasoning would be dangerous to follow as a religious guide.

6. HE CARES ABOUT MY ERROR: How the man who guides me reacts to me when I am wrong is most important. First, he must not be afraid to tell me that I am wrong. Or how else will I be able to get right again? If he tolerates my error or sins, he might misguide me into thinking that God does also. Secondly, does he tell me that I am wrong with love for my soul in his heart. In other words, does he patiently tell me to help me or simply to inflate his own ego.

7. HE IS WILLING TO SPEND TIME WITH ME: What good is all his knowledge and all his truth to me if he will not share it with me? If all he will do is tell others behind my back that I am wrong, he is, in fact, not a guide but a gossip. If I am in error and he knows it, he must make the effort to take the time necessary to help me out of my error or he is not a suitable guide to any man.

8. HE KNOWS WHAT HE IS TALKING ABOUT: The free

advice of the ignorant is worth just what you pay for it . . . NOTHING! It seems that today in sports, politics, and religion, there is an over-abundance of drug store cowboys. This last requirement is most important in matters of religion. For instance, the man who thinks that the word "*baptize*" means to *dip* and to *sprinkle* and to *pour* knows nothing about the subject; or the man who teaches that *singing* in worship to God means *singing and* playing does not know enough to be a suitable guide; or the man who believes that *fellowship* involves *food, fun and frolic* is not capable of guiding anyone in religious matters. In short, if he is going to teach you what the Scriptures say, does he know himself what they say and what they mean. The word "guide" itself implies an intimate knowledge of the course or way, and if he does not KNOW, he is not a guide.

In conclusion, to study the scriptures is most admirable (and necessary, if you want to go to heaven), and to use the guidance of men is almost unavoidable; but choose your guides with care. Your soul depends on it. If a man is lost in the woods with a guide who also is lost or who does not care, that guide is a liability, not an asset.

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Excelling for the Lord

Jeffery Kingry

There is an attitude often expressed among brethren that demonstrates contempt for "Big-Name-Preachers." The expression is almost a universal byword of derision among saints. The most damning accusation that could conceivably be brought against any man's motives is "He is trying to be a Big-Name-Preacher." Now, it is obvious that there are such men — preachers out to peddle themselves rather than giving away the Gospel. These men desire the acclaim of men and the prominence it brings. They are those who look upon the brethren as a source of livelihood and other preachers as competitors or allies. These caricatures are pitiful creatures, more to be pitied than hated — but certainly to be avoided (2 Tim. 3).

But this crushing accusation often keeps men of high ability from striving for goals of higher service and excellence for the Lord. There seems to be a great deal of what this writer calls "inverse snobbery" in the church today. Many who have obeyed the Gospel are simple and modest personalities. But, this modesty should not extend to smother any ability or zeal that is greater or stronger than our own. Rather we should rejoice that every part of the body has differing abilities — the total effect being a body which is strong and effective over all (1 Cor. 12).

"Seek that ye might excel to the edifying of the body of the Lord" (1 Cor. 14:12). We can be justifiably proud of any effort we put forth to excel for the Lord by serving the church. Whether it be intellectually, spiritually or in good works, our service for God is not in vain, and it should give us as much pleasure to serve the Lord as it does for Him to receive it (Ecc. 2:26; Matt. 25:21; Luke 6:22,23). Our rejoicing in service to God is not for the "name" we may garner among men, but for the joy we have in that our names are written in heaven (Luke 10:20). The brother who puts out the least amount of work he can get by with is cheating himself and the Lord who gave him the talents to produce more. The brother who "cuts back" because of "Big Preacher" criticism or because the grade inclines upward will never reach the top of anything.

This is not an idle admonition. Many are content to remain in stasis, making no effort to climb. There appears to be no sense of urgency or zeal that would prod the "soldier of Christ" to arise

and go out to join forces with God's warriors in defeating the Army of Satan. Preachers who give two lessons a week, study infrequently, write little or not at all, and for all intents ignore the plight of the lost are misusing their support and prostituting their function. Many preachers think the church exists to provide them a living, and if there is no fruit in converted souls it is because "the church didn't provide me with any contacts." The work of evangelism can be done, and often is done independently of the local church. The Bible evangelist does not depend on the church to provide him with work to do. Any student of the life of Paul will testify to this. Our work is as a "servant of Christ" to make "all men complete in Christ Jesus."

SOUR GRAPES

Did you ever wonder where the expression "Sour Grapes" comes from? It is derived from the fable of the hungry fox by Aesop, an ancient Greek philosopher. The tale is related that there was a hungry fox who happened to pass through a grape vineyard. He saw a particularly succulent cluster of dew-washed grapes, and the saliva began to run. He stretched and strained to reach the grapes, but they remained just out of his reach tantalizing him with the promise of their sweetness. Finally, setting back in frustration and hunger, the fox declared heatedly, "Well, the grapes are probably sour anyway — who wants sour grapes?" Feeling somewhat less frustrated, though hardly less hungry, the fox stalks off without testing the grapes. Aesop's moral was *"There is always some comfort in pretending we do not want the things we cannot get."*

This moral strikes close at the motivation of most criticism of those men who "excel to the edifying of the body of the Lord" (1 Cor. 14:12). It is much easier to live with our own lackadaisical character if we can write off those who work harder than we do as "gloryhounds." Any man who has ever worked on an assembly line or with a group in a common job knows of the stigma the slow moving and lazy try to put on the efforts of the diligent. *"In all labor there is profit, but the talk of the lips leads only to poverty"* (Prov. 14:23). These critics seldom produce anything but criticism. They are always going to do something, at least they talk about it alot, but when it comes to any worthwhile work, they are obvious frauds. The slothful desire the respect and honor given to those who labor hard and well, *"but his hands refuse to labor. He covets greedily all day long"* (Prov. 21:25). Solomon said that he could always tell the farm of the sluggard *"lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down."* The King of Israel learned

something from this scene. The result of "a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep" in the end brought only disorder, chaos, and final destruction (Prov. 24:30-34).

Look to the critic who is always down upon men of ability — see his life and his fruits. Test his knowledge of the Word, and the effect it has in his life, and then weigh his words against the labor of the one of whom he is so contemptuous.

It is the height of hypocrisy to claim to have a knowledge of God and not be diligent in our service to him (Heb. 11:6; Phil. 3:13,14; 1 Tim. 3:10; Gal. 6:9). God tells us that a man is a liar if he claims a right relationship with God and yet is slothful in his service, and is contemptuous of his brother (1 Jno. 2:4,9). But the man who excels for the Lord will be known and honored by those who appreciate service to our King. "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before the King; but he shall not stand before mean and obscure men" (Prov. 22:29).

*You want to gain heaven's best
And yet you lay you down to rest.
You say your share you'll never shirk,
And yet you hate to have to work.*

*How odd, your works your words deny,
Your life and toil and Word belie.
I'm sorry sir, in spite of frowns
You just can't make it sitting down.*

Jeffery Kingry 6/11/72

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