

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

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PUBLISHER MOVES

This past September I began work with the Southwest church in Birmingham, Alabama. This involved a move to another residence for my family. In December we moved to Fultondale. Readers need to be aware that there has been no change in the **TORCH** mailing address. Mt. Olive and Fultondale are in metropolitan Birmingham and my present residence is only a short distance from Mt. Olive. We will continue to mail **TORCH** from the Mt. Olive Post Office.

My new work and residence change have been largely responsible for the delay in the mailing of TORCH. You have been patient. We thank you.

- Billy K. Farris

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Editorial

James P. Needham

A New Era, A New Volume

As difficult as it is to believe, with this issue I begin my fourth year as editor of TORCH. The years have slipped away almost unnoticed. These have been pleasant years in many ways. I have enjoyed putting together 37 issues of this little paper. It hasn't always been easy, but it has been "fun." It is often done in snatches here and there: late at night, at odd moments during the day, or sitting in a cramped-up seat screaming across the airways at 30,000 feet. Seldom is there enough time to give the effort all that we feel it deserves.

One of the most pleasant features of the work has been a very pleasant association with the Farris family. Our relationship deepens with time and circumstance. While I feel cramped for time to give to TORCH, I am sure I feel only a fraction of what they experience. All I do is edit the paper. They do all the rest: Sister Farris sets the type, Billy K. does the make up, shoots the negatives, makes the plates, does the printing, and then the whole family cooperates in folding, assembling, addressing and mailing. It is a momentious task, and one constantly wonders how they get it all done with all the other things they are involved in. Brother Farris is now preaching for the Southwest church in Birmingham, Alabama.

But there are many rewards for our labor; a feeling of accomplishment in our individual duties to use every teaching opportunity, the heavy volume of mail we receive expressing appreciation for our efforts, and encouraging us to perservere.

As we enter a new volume of TORCH, we have entered a new era in time. Things are changing all around us, physically and spiritually. Spiritually, we see all kinds of turmoil. Our liberal brethren continue to struggle with ultra-liberalism which is outright modernism in its approach to the authority of the scriptures. The liberals seem to be unaware that their "no pattern" idea which they have used to "justify" their unscriptural promotions over the past 25 years is really modernism in a milder form.

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Second generation liberal preachers with their denominational seminary educations have simply taken the premises to their logical conclusions. First generation liberals refuse to admit this abvious truth, so they march forth in a life and death struggle with the ultra-liberal elements among them in a hopeless effort to isolate the dissidents. This is a battle they cannot win permanently because there will be third generation preachers who will arise to take again the unsurrendered false premises to their logical conclusion. One cannot come back to the truth by clinging to basic errors.

The degree of success attained by the ultra-liberals is vividly seen in their infiltration of the Highland church in Abilene, Texas, one of the most respected churches among the liberals, and sponsor of the Herald of Truth, the most grandiose scheme to come along in this modern apostasy. Second generation liberals have moved in under first-generation patriarchs and unceremoniously unseated them and introduced their modernism, neo-pentecostalism, etc. E.R. Harper who has served the Highland church for 28 years in various capacities was fired by the Herald of Truth committee, not by the elders. W.F. Cawyer, one of the elders who has worked much in the interest of the Herald of Truth resigned. Then the elders began a frantic effort to discredit the expose of Harper and Cawyer, but were unable to prop up the crumbling structure, thus there has been a rash of elder resignations since, and wholesale abandonment of the Herald of Truth on the part of churches and leading preachers.

But while it is likely that Herald of Truth will die, such is no evidence that a victory for truth has been won for those who have abandoned it have not done so because they believe the organizational principles upon which it has existed are wrong. Many of those who have abandoned it of late have stated that they would yet defend the principles of cooperation by which it has operated. They do not yet see, or else pride will not let them acknowledge. that the pooling of the resources of many churches under the oversight of one church puts more power and money in the hands of a single eldership than God ever intended they should have. Until this is recognized, there is no way they can protect the Herald of Truth from future corruptions. There is some talk now of getting it under the oversight of another eldership, but this would have only cosmetic value. The present situation developed under the oversight of one of the most respectable chruches among the liberals. What is to keep it from recurring? They need to abandon its unscriptural organizational principles, not change it's address.

But there is also turmoil among the conservatives. Some second generation preachers don't see the controversies over the past 25 years in the same light as do those who bear the scars of the battle. They have set themselves up as judges of the means and methods used, and have generalized upon certain specific radical and extreme measures sometimes employed. They have attributed bad motives and accused some older brethren of not being concerned about division.

These younger brethren have found some affinity with Carl Ketcherside who is now riding his latest hobby which covers nearly all division with an all-encompassing blanket of "love," and tramples under foot divine principles of truth. We can best view the present situation by taking a look at the past. We can best see where the present Ketcherside movement is going by seeing where it has been. Brother Ketcherside is a very impressive man. Ever since I have known of him, he has impressed certain young preachers with whom he has come in contact. He and his fellow-travellers have always hovered around the college campuses where they could pick up an occasional young preacher who was looking for a hero to worship, and a cause to promote. He has always been a rebel, and will probably die one. He and his fellows were making their appearances on the campus where I went to school 25 years ago and defying the administration and challenging for debates on the right of colleges to exist, located preachers, etc. In those days brother Ketcherside was on the opposite side of the fence from where he is today: he was so straight-laced that he fellowshipped almost nobody, but today he is so broad and "loving" that he fellowships almost everybody. And for the information of those who might not know, those from my peer group who jumped on his bandwagon 25 years ago have been almost unheard of since. The results of Ketcherside's influence upon young preachers is as contradictory as he is: at first, extreme attachment, but later, bitter disillusionment.

But we have also entered a new era so far as our physical surroundings are concerned. A nation whose standard of living has been and continues to be the envy of the world now faces shortages. It is a new experience for people who have been at liberty to fare sumptiously every day and to waste more food and energy than some nations have.

God gave to ancient Israel "a land flowing with milk and honey" (Exo. 3:8), but warned them not to be piggish and exploit it. He gave them strict laws of conservation with heavy penalties for disobedience; the Israelites were exiled in a strange land until

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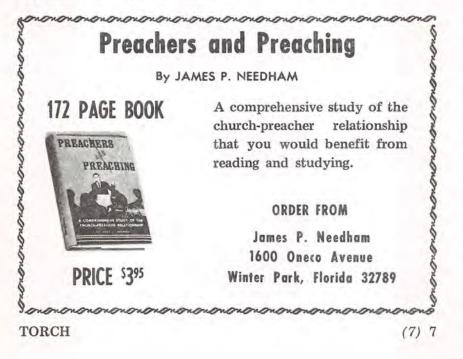
the land received the rest of which they had deprived it (Exo. 23:11; Lev. 26:34,35; 2 Chron. 36:21). Waste and selfish exploitation are contrary to the word of God from beginning to end. Jesus exemplified conservation of food when He miraculously fed about five thousand persons, and commanded the disciples to "Gather up the fragments that remain, THAT NOTHING BE LOST" (Jn. 6:12).

America has not practiced these principles. We have wasted our natural resources on pleasure, selfishness and wars with never a thought that their supply is exhaustable. Our land has flowed with milk and honey, but we have wasted it in riotous living. Our garbage cans are better fed than many nations of the world. Many nations could live on what we throw away.

We have now lived up an era. The land of plenty is now a land of shortages. Shortages of energy, food, paper, etc. Never again will we be free to abuse our abundance. This is good! As bad as some think these times are going to be, there is more good than bad in what is taking place. Once the prodical son had "wasted his substance on riotous living" (Lk. 15:13), he finally "came to himself" and said, "I will arise and go to my Father . . ." (vv. 17, 18). Perhaps we piggish Americans who have gorged ourselves on the succulent acorns of plenty will finally look up to see where they have come from. Maybe, just maybe, we will finally come to ourselves. We are about to learn the truthfulness of the old proverb that "Wilful waste makes woeful want." No doubt, our notorious resourcefulness will avoid the tragedy of real suffering, but what a shame it would be should we fail to learn a great lesson.

Affluence has never drawn people closer to God. Of ancient Israel God said, "They were filled, and their heart was exalted; therefore have they forgotten me" (Hosea 13:6). The dwendling spiritual interest in America has been in proportion to our growing affluence. For several years spiritual obstinance in our nation has been a frequent topic of conversation among brethren. Many wonder why it is no longer possible to baptize 25 or 30 in gospel meetings. God said, "As they were increased, so they sinned against me: therefore will I change their glory into shame" (Hosea 4:7). It is hard for people who live in fine homes with 3 cars in the front yard, a travel trailer and boat in the back yard, money in the bank and a great deal of free time to think they are in need of God. They tend to "trust in uncertain riches" rather than "in the living God who giveth us richly all things to enjoy" (1 Tim. 6:17). This new era can be a glorious one, if we learn the lesson of the prodical son. Hopefully, aliens and brethren will come to themselves and return to God. Perhaps when people are no longer at liberty to take week-end trips, they will think more about the Lord's day and worship. Perhaps church members will get more involved in the local church program and really learn what it means to be a member of the Lord's church. Perhaps the time will come when people will hunger and thirst for righteousness rather than for more and more of this world's goods. Maybe the time will again come when we will see people anxious to study and obey the word of God. If such be the result of the "energy crisis," it could well be one of the brightest and most thrilling chapters in world history. Have you thought that God just might be trying to tell us something?

The Lord willing, we shall continue to come your way via this medium. Shortages may cramp our style just a bit, but we are determined to continue to improve the paper both in quality of material and physical makeup. Brother Farris recently wrote in a letter, "Things look GREAT for TORCH." For this we are thankful to God and every subscriber and our appreciation shall be manifested in my constant efforts to produce edifying and instructive material in the most palatable manner of which we are capable. We have great things planned for the future in the way of articles, so, "stay tuned"!



Christianity in Black and White

Billy K. Farris

Over the past few years membership in churches located in racially mixed communities has decreased sharply. In some places a crisis situation has developed. For the most part, the existence of churches presently located in racially mixed areas is maintained by members who drive considerable distances to the meeting place. The floundering growth of these churches is due to the fact that members are moving away and little or no effort is being made to convert those who are moving into the community. The reason being that those moving out are white and those moving in are black.

The traditional separation of the races in this country, especially in the South, has become a tacit law for the church. This has caused a feeling of ambivalence among whites toward blacks. A few white churches will accept, with a degree of tolerance, a black family, but the prospect of making a true effort to convert blacks and have them as a part of their membership is terrifying to them.

Rapid social change has taken place in this country over the past decade. Schools, places of entertainment, restaurants, housing, etc. are becoming more and more racially mixed. The conditions of the seventies are far different than the sixties. Whites, especially in the South, have been very reluctant to accept the change. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the church. It is difficult to predict what changes will take place during the next ten years, but it is reasonable to expect that integration will become an accepted way of life.

In the past, efforts to preach the gospel to blacks has been motivated by a sense of responsibility (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15), but has been hindered by a desire to maintain a separation of the races. I realize that a few would challenge the latter, but the fact that there is racial segregation at the present is evidence that it is true. White brethren generally, have been satisfied to support a black preacher "to work among the colored," or to give some of their time to preach or teach classes for them. At the same time whites have (perhaps unconsciously) built a frame of reference which has made blacks appear as inferior members of the human race. This frame of reference runs something like, "the Negros should stay in their place;" "God made them black to be

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separate from whites;" "a Negro is alright as long as he knows his place;" "Negros had rather be with their own kind." Again, there are a few who would challenge this and accuse me of trying to arouse black prejudice. I deny that I have any desire to arouse prejudice in either blacks or whites. However, I believe that I could present a strong case against a few whites who have sought to arouse white prejudice. Efforts to convert blacks have been overshadowed by this frame of reference and black churches that have been established are characterized by a system of spiritual and financial paternalism of white churches.

Also, past efforts have left the races ignorant of each other. This ignorance has been a major factor in preventing true communication between them. The time has come for whites and blacks to lay aside their traditional past and come to know and understand each other. The time has come for Christians to adjust to social change and accept the fact that the only way that a church can exist in a racially mixed community is with a racially mixed membership. How can we actually expect to influence those of racially mixed communities to hear the gospel if we have "respect of persons." It is not uncommon for Christians who are black to have to drive past a church meeting place in order to attend a church "where they can be with their own kind." The names of black contacts and prospects are turned over to the "colored" preacher when the prospect is nearer the white preacher and meeting place. It does not make much sense (especially to a black) to hear a preacher talk of God with whom there is no respect of persons (Acts 10:34.35), of Christians who are one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:26-28) and how there is to be no respect of persons with them (James 2:1-12), and then in addition be told that one should "stay in his place."

White brethren must come to realize that integration in "their communities" is basically the result of better economic circumstances for blacks. Communities today are white, black or mixed, (Irealize that there are areas where other races would be included). In white communities there will be white churches, in black communities there will be black churches and in racially mixed communities there should be racially mixed churches. In every community there must be acceptance on the basis of brethren rather than race. It is foolish to think that any community can remain securely white. In this country the law states that there can be no racial discrimination in housing. Christians will do well to remember that civil government is ordained of God (Romans 13:1-7; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13). Also, we would do well to examine ourselves to see if we have made our traditions into laws.

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It is argued that racially mixed churches will encourage racially mixed communities. What of it? Racially mixed schools, military service, jobs, entertainment places, restaurants, etc. encourage racially mixed communities. Economic advancement encourages racially mixed communities.

At this point it will be well to meet the argument that racially mixed churches will encourage racially mixed marriages. The objective person will recognize that the social changes taking place may encourage some racially mixed marriages. To what degree I do not know. I think very little. Marriages between Caucasian and Orientals are not too uncommon. There have been some Caucasian - Negro marriages. At present I can see a number of reasons why interracial marriage is not advisable. Blacks that I am acquainted with share this view. The possibility of racially mixed marriages is sometimes used as a scare tactic to arouse white prejudice and justify racial segregation.

The Christian who is black seeks acceptance as "one" in Christ. It is difficult for him to seek acceptance and it is difficult for the Christian who is white to accept him. Whites see blacks as inferior men who pose a threat to their traditions. It is easy for them to accept the suggestion that "the blacks want to take over" or that racial mixing will not work. Blacks see whites as oppressors and/or exploiters for their own economic gain. It is easy for them to accept the suggestion that whites cannot be trusted. Recently, blacks have visited the services of white churches, but it appears that this has been more on a black and white basis rather than as brothers in Christ. There have been a few cases of open division in white churches over racial mixing.

What I have said here is not to promote integration for the sake of integration nor to encourage racially mixed marriages. Social change has presented its problems, but it has also presented its opportunities. It is now possible for white preachers to reach blacks and for black preachers to reach whites. The system of white paternalism over black churches, which should have never existed, can be abolished. Christians, black and white can worship together and work together to save souls. Why not welcome all from the community where the meeting place is located and reach out to the community to teach and preach the gospel of Christ? Adjustments will be difficult, perhaps painful, but ultimately will bear fruit to the glory of God.

> 1800 Maplecrest Lane Fultondale, Alabama 35068

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What's Your Question?

BIBLE ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS. Send to: James P. Needham, 1600 Oneco Avenue, Winter Park, Florida 32789.

QUESTION: Schools of Preaching

"What is a 'school of preaching,' and what is their relationship to the congregation and the customary Bible classes?" - Georgia

REPLY:

The answer to these questions would depend upon how the "school of preaching" is organized. I shall try to discuss this recent development in a general way, and perhaps the questions will be answered sufficiently.

1. What is a school of preaching? A school of preaching is a program usually set up by a local church and under its oversight designed to train men to be preachers of the gospel. The curriculem usually includes mostly Bible and Bible-related subjects. However, some offer courses in public speaking, etc., which aid in being a more effective preacher. Schools of preaching have been organized in several sections of the country by those on both sides of the issues that have divided us for the past 25 years. Their organization and practice usually involves the principles which form the basis of that division; that is, the "liberals" usually organize their's on a sponsoring church basis where the sponsoring church operates and oversees the school of preaching, while other congregations contribute to it for defrayment of expenses, such as: facilities, faculty, books, and in some cases, support for students while they attend the school.

Among the conservatives organization is simpler. The church which operates the school of preaching receives no monies from other churches, but preachers from other churches may contribute their time to teach courses in the school, or they may be paid for their services by the inviting church. In some cases, the "school of preaching" is no more than a special Bible class wholly operated by a local church, but attended by all who desire its benefits. This writer once operated such a class for two years at

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Expressway church in Louisville, Kentucky, and for three months this past summer (1973) where I am now working.

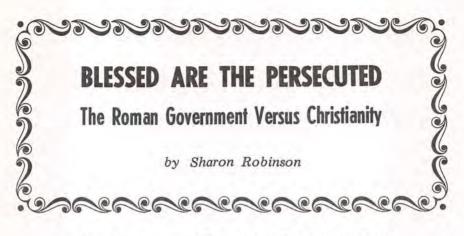
2. What is their relationship to the congregation and the regular Bible classes? As seen in the comments of the previous paragraph, a "school of preaching" (which may not be so identified) can be, and often is, just a special class arrangement where we study a bit more intently than in the average Bible class, but it exists on the same principles and by the same arrangement as do the regular Bible classes. Such special classes usually meet more frequently and for longer class periods than the regular Bible classes, and are sometimes attended by brethren from other churches in the area.

Such special training classes are, relatively, a recent development. Among the liberals, I believe them to be a means of avoiding the rank modernism which has infested most of their colleges which previously trained most of their preachers. There is among the liberals a rather large segment of brethren who are fighting said modernism through the printed page and in their schools of preaching. Among the conservatives, the development of congregational preacher training courses is to some degree a rejection of the idea that the church is dependent upon human institutions to train its personnel. This realization is becoming rather wide-spread and more and more brethren are awakening to the fact that the church has always been created in the image of the school or schools that trained its preachers, and are revolting. More and more brethren are saving that the congregation is God's training school, and it has shifted this responsibility to human institutions too long. There are some good reasons to believe that this is an "idea" whose time has come, and we can expect more and more special preacher training schools in more and more congregations in the next few years. In addition to this, many churches which will not have an organized class will employ a young preacher to work with and be trained by a more experienced one. Experience has proven this to be a very effective program. It gives the young preacher "on the job training," under the supervision of elders at best, but always under the guidance and advice of an older, more experienced preacher.

Special training classes or "schools of preaching," whatever they are called, should be encouraged, but we must avoid the pitfalls of making them independent of the local church, and turning them into "liberal arts" institutes, after a fashion. That is, we must emphasize Bible and Bible-related subjects and avoid the secular. It would be quite absurd to oppose church contributions to secular colleges, then turn the local church into one!

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PART I - ROMAN RELIGION

(Editor's Note: The following excellent article which will be continued in two or three issues is a paper which Sherry Robinson prepared in a college history course. It contains so much valuable information that the average person does not have about early Christians and is so well written that I obtained Sherry's permission to print it in TORCH. Sherry and her family are faithful members where the editor preaches. I believe you will be profited greatly, as I was, by reading this well researched material. Our appreciation to Sherry for permission to print it. jpn)

At the beginning of the first century A. D., the Roman Empire stretched from the Iberian Peninsula to the Black Sea, from the Rhine River through the northern part of Africa. Alexander's empire had been replaced by one that was centered around and ruled from the city on the Tiber River in Italy - Rome. The very name had frightened people in the previous centuries as waves of legions swept the land and engulfed their existence. But shortly after the reign of its first emperor, Augustus, an element from within began to spread and attempt to take over the empire. Rome fought with all of its mighty strength against this different and frightening force called Christianity. Yet, for all its vast resources, military power, and imperial deity, it was ultimately defeated. The question that has echoed through the ages since that time is, why was Christianity fought as it was? A brief look at the circumstances may lead to some understanding to this puzzling query.

Rome actually had no specific religion of its own. The gods

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the Romans served were in part old Etruscan gods taken over by the Romans, in part abstractions developed by the Romans out of earlier, more specific, worships, and in part Greek gods gradually introduced into Roman circles. The official religion offered a strange combination of hostility toward foreign cults with sporadic acceptance of them, usually for political motives. Romans held that the power of Rome could be attributed to the gods of Rome. The gods of other nations had demonstrated their inferiority to the Roman gods by failing to protect these nations against the power of Rome's legions. Therefore, other peoples living in Italy now owed allegiance to the Roman gods, not the gods of Greece or the Orient, and those that introduced the worship of foreign deities were inevitably suspected of subversive activity. At times of crisis the Senate might vote to introduce the worship of some foreign deity of Rome, but these gods became Roman gods.²

Throughout the centuries Roman religion, whatever its appearance, had certain unchanging qualities. To begin with, it was a religion of form, of ritual, with little emphasis on spiritual things or feelings. It was as if the Romans had made a compact with their gods - you do something for me and I'll do something for you. Thus, their religion was largely a meticulous observance of that agreement. It was also an external, communal affair, rather than an internal experience. In the beginning the religious community had been the family; then as Rome grew, it became the village, the city, the state, and finally, the empire. Only when these public formal observances became mechanical and meaningless did Rome turn to other kinds of religions whose appeal was intimate and emotional.³ The lower classes began to strive after the Greek and Oriental religions in which it was obvious that the gods took a personal interest in the believers. Only the power of the state commended the official Roman religion to the people. But they incessantly brought pressure to bear on the aristocracy to accept new gods and new religions, and often with success." Another reason Rome frowned on foreign cults was because these foreign religions found favor, not among the aristocracy who were extremely conservative and sought to control all religion, but among the masses and the slaves. Foreign religions were often considered then as threats to the morality and very existence of the state and its own official religion.

One author says, however:

On the whole, Roman policy was remarkably tolerant in dealing with the religions encountered as the

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legions overran that world around the Mediterranean. If the national religions of the conquered countries would add homage to the emperor to their other rites, Rome almost never interfered. On the contrary, it was more likely to find a place for the foreign religion in the swarm of new deities whose cults were brought to Rome \dots 5

The emperor Augustus was brought up very strictly in the old religion. He and his advisors were strictly opposed to foreign religions, regarding them as dangerous to the state. Augustus devotedly supported ancient and traditional worships such as the Eleusinian mysteries, but despised the religion of the Egyptians and the Jews. Political considerations compelled him to confirm Caesar's decrees of friendship toward the Jews, but he forbade Roman citizens to participate in the inhuman religion of the Druids, well known for the practice of human sacrifice.⁶ During the reign of Tiberius there was a special edict issued against the Jews in which they were forbidden to practice their religious customs. Four thousand ex-slaves who refused to abandon their religion were deported to Sardinia for police duty. Other Jews were ordered to leave Italy unless before a certain day they had abandoned their "profane rites." This decree applied not only to Jews but also to proselvtes.7

What was later to become known as Christianity was first brought to the attention of the Roman government in 30 A. D. Pontius Pilatus, procurator of the province of Judea, sent to Rome a report concerning a man named Jesus of Nazareth who claimed to be the King of the Jews. Pilate had been doubtful of his guilt but under the insistence of the local high priest he had agreed to crucify him.⁸ The Roman historian Flavius Josephus wrote about 90 A. D. concerning the event:

Now there was about this time, Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works, — a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. He was the Christ; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day.⁹

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Pilate's report to the emperor was filled in the government archives without comment probably because at that time the Roman administration was in the hands of Sejanus, a militant anti-Semite, who undoubtedly favored the use of strong measures in rebellious Palestine. Therefore, in the Roman archives the man called Jesus was referred to only as a rebel.¹⁰

Things remained fairly quiet for almost twenty years, but in 48 and 49 constant rioting among the Jewish populace at Rome resulted in an edict by the emperor Claudius forbidding Jewish religious meetings. Another historian, Suetonius, explains the riots as instigated by "Chrestus." Since "Chrestus" was the usual Greek pronunciation of the name "Christ," in all probability, the riots were concerned with the question of the Jewish Messiah, and that Christians were involved.¹¹ The Christian religion was often associated with revoluntionary movements in its native Palestine. In fact, it was several decades before the group was recognized as seperate and apart from the Jewish sects. As all the documents in the Roman archives dealing with Jewish prophets and their followers showed conclusively that they were opposed to Roman power, government officials thought they ought to be suppressed as enemies of the state.¹² As the government realized the distinct difference of the Christian beliefs from those of the Jews or any other religion, the Christians found themselves the subjects of bitter tyranny, horrible deaths, and far-reaching persecution.

Next Issue: Part II - CHRISTIAN PERSECUTIONS

FOOT NOTES

 Robert M. Grant, The Sword and the Cross. New York: McMillan Co., 1955, pp. 9, 16.

- Moses Hadas and editors of Time-Life Books. Imperial Rome, Great Ages of Man. New York: Time-Life Books, 1965, p. 121.
- 4. Grant, p. 11.
- Paul Hutchinson and Winfred Garrison. Twenty Centuries of Christianity. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1959, p. 30.
- 6. Grant, p. 36.
- 7. Ibid, p. 38.
- 8. Ibid. p. 44.
- 9. Flavius Josephus, Josephus: Complete Works. trans. by William Whitson. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publishers, 1970. Book XVIII, Ch. III, p. 3.
- 10. Grant, p. 44.
- 11. Ibid, p. 41.
- 12. Grant, pp. 44, 49.

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^{2.} Ibid, p. 12.

A Christian's Attitude Toward the Bible

Warren Needham

By faith the Christian accepts the Bible as his rule and guide in all matters pertaining to life and godliness (2 Pet. 1:3). That faith comes from hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17). It is based upon evidences both from within the writings of the Bible and historical facts which are known and are being confirmed daily by archaeological findings (Heb. 11:1). Numerous works have been written in defense of the Bible and have never been successfully denied. Conversly, when error is defended many are ready to refute it.

The Bible is God's mind made known to man. At the beginning the Word was with God but the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (Jn. 1:1,2,14). The word of God came by Jesus Christ and He taught it to men. The apostles were selected and personally taught by the Son of God. The Holy Spirit came and inspired them to remember the things which Jesus taught (Jn. 15:26; 16:13), thus guiding them in their word of preaching and writing. In the providence of God writing was developed to get the message out from the apostles to the world, thus, the apostles wrote the mysteries of God as they were revealed to them, Eph. 3:3,4, "Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ.

Christians accept the Bible as being divinely inspired and "profitable for doctrine for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16,17). This makes a Christian a peculiar being because this is different from the world. He accepts the Bible as the perfect guide and lives by it (Tit. 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:9). People who hold liberalistic, modernistic or atheistic views think the Bible and its believers are strange.

The Bible is the story of Jesus. The Old Testament reveals Him in prophecy: His virgin birth, life, teaching, death and resurrection. Without the Bible, little would be known about the Saviour of man, "the way, the truth and the life" (Jn. 14:6). Without the Bible men could not know the Saviour nor how to come to Him or to live acceptably in the sight of God. The New Testament is the Old fulfilled. Jesus came, lived, taught and give us the good news; a new covenant, sealed with His blood, which constitutes a form of doctrine which we are to obey (Rom. 6:17,18). It teaches us how to live; to "deny ungodliness and worldly lust, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world; looking

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for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ" (Tit. 2:11,12).

The Bible is the basis of faith (Rom. 10:17). Without it we would be totally ignorant of God's mind. Thus, it would be impossible for us to please God (Heb. 11:6).

The Bible is the one and only creed of the Christian. It is not of any private interpretation of men of old (1 Pet. 1:20,21). It is a complete guide, a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path (Psa. 119:105).

The Bible is a supernatural book because it is and always has been on the right side of every conflict. Thus, it is to Christians an all-sufficient guide in truth (Jn. 16:13) and his only authority in word or deed (Matt. 28:18; Col. 3:17; 1 Pet. 1:3), a sufficient written guide which man can accept and have life (Jn. 20:30,31). It is to be taught and its commands believed and obeyed that we may enjoy the presence and approval of God "even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:20).

The Bible is the basis of unity for all men (Jn. 17:17-23). All men who truly desire to have peace with God and man may confidently follow the Bible instructions and have unity in the one body, Spirit, hope of calling, Lord, faith and baptism, (Eph. 4:4,5), thus have peace which passeth understanding (Phil. 4:7).

The Bible is God's power to reveal the only plan for man's salvation (Rom. 1:16). It is so powerful that man cannot comprehend it. It is "sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing assunder of the soul and spirit, the joints and morrow, and is the discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12,13). It is the living word (Jn. 17:17; 1 Pet. 1:23).

The Bible is the word of truth, the foundation upon which all men must build (1 Cor. 3:9-11), and the foundation upon which the church of God is built "to make known the manifold wisdom of God" (Eph. 3:10).

The Bible is the only revelation to man which tells him of his origin, mission and dentiny. It is man's guide from earth to heaven.

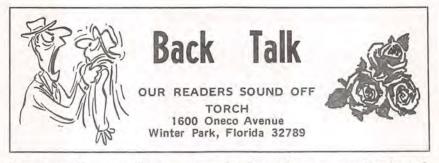
The Bible speaks of all man-kind: Christian and non-Christian (Eph. 3:2-4).

The Bible is the eternal standard of judgment (2 Tim. 4:1), for the living and dead. It will be opened as the standard at judgment day (Rev. 20:12-15).

1330 Overlook Terrace Titusville, Florida 32780

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Pasadena, Texas -- "I agree completely with your questioning of the preeminence placed in human organizations. I think that all colleges have a right to exist. I also think they 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. However, this is not the case with the charter of many Bible Department Colleges. In reference to the lectureships (I do not know the difference between this and a Gospel Meeting except the length of time.) I wonder if you know the official purpose of these at a college. I have been told by some preachers it is for edification. Question, since these are sponsored by a chartered, usually non-profit, corporation, where is the scripture that authorizes, by any stretch of the imagination, this arrangement? If the attitude of most pro-college brethren reaches the degree of the college orientation that exists at Abilene the job of restoration will indeed be a tough proposition." -- Wm. R. Coffey

(Editor's Note: Merely stating in the charter that the Bible is taught as a secular subject would make no difference, if it was then taught as a matter of faith, as it almost certainly is in almost all the colleges. A few years ago one of the colleges would not allow a young man to attend it and live in the home of a person who disagreed with official college dogma! I think I would not be far from right if I say that college lectureships have two official purposes, namely, (1) To teach the Bible. Much excellent Bible teaching has been characteristic of most lectureships I have attended. (2) To raise financial and moral support. Every lectureship has fund-raising as a part of its purpose. Several brethren resent this aspect of them, and I have known some to be deliberately absent from all fund-raising meetings during lectureships. Moral support is raised at lectureships by bringing together brethren from a wide area and trying to impress them with the activities of the school. This two-fold purpose is also served by handing out invitations to speak on the lectureship to ambitious preachers who think lectureship appearances mean that they have become somewhat in the "brotherhood" and will repay such

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supposed recognition by raising money and students for the college.

The scriptural authorization for a private corporation to make provisions for Bible teaching on its premises would be found in all scriptures that command the individual to teach the word at every opportunity (Heb. 5:12-14; Mt. 28:19,20, etc.). For instance, I knew of a brother who owned a manufacturing plant who had the local preacher to teach a daily Bible class on his employee's lunch hour. If brethren have the right to engage in the education business, and I know of nobody who denies this, they certainly have the same scriptural obligation to teach the Bible as do brethren in other businesses. I have preached the gospel at local public schools on many occasions at the invitation of the principal.

The real danger in colleges owned and operated by the brethren where there is an organized Bible department and an official preacher-training program is that they become too influential over the thinking of brethren. Both colleges and brethren must scrupulously avoid this, but, unfortunately, both sometimes encourage it. Colleges become centers of political influence in the "brotherhood," and identify with certain party interests and serve as creedmakers for certain segments of brethren and the backbreakers of all who don't support them in this role. This, in turn, developes a feeling of dependence upon the colleges on the part of brethren generally. After all (reason some brethren), the college has all these facilities and an educated facility and thus are better equipped to train preachers, elders, deacons and teachers than are the churches, so, the brethren become wedded to the colleges and are unable to see how the church could exist without them. It is a bad situation. As a matter of fact, not many churches are seeking to train workers, and, furthermore, most are poorly equipped to do so. But this may very well be due to the fact that they have turned this work over to human institutions so long that they have forgotten, or never knew, they have any abligation along this line. jpn)

Glen Burnie, Maryland -- "I am becoming more and more convinced that something is going to have to be done in a public way by those who are the college to combat this lean in their direction. Do you think a series of articles by someone like James Cope about the church's and the Christian's relationship to the college would do it?" -Jeffery Kingry

(Editor's Note: I think it would help greatly, and would gladly print some material along this line from brother Cope, if he would be disposed to write it. jpn)

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Alta Loma, Texas -- "I appreciate the efforts set forth in the October issue of TORCH concerning the College question. I did not expect to have my letter published, but was simply asking for reasons why some believe it wrong to teach the Bible in Colleges.

As to my assumption that some one in TORCH tried to teach others that teaching the Bible in College is error, may I refer to some statements in Chandler's article? And though he disavows teaching against teaching the Bible in Colleges or "Bible Departments" I could not but believe that was exactly what he was teaching when I first read the article in the May issue and again when I read it after reading the article in the October issue!

(TORCH, Vol. VIII, No. 5, May 1973)

"... no need to try to justify either the existence or the necessity of a Bible department in a school ..." (p. 6, 102), (emp. mine, L.B.).

"Since there is no legitimate need for them, why set them up" "... and just disband the organized Bible departments?" (p. 9, 105).

"... by disbanding the Bible department?" "... such things as Bible departments or any other questionable organization will have no need to exist." (p. 10, 106).

These statements, along with the title of the article, do not sound as though the writer was just voicing concern about perversions of such practice or what might happen in the future. It sounds as though he is against teaching the Bible in Colleges! (and perhaps any other place except the church and home, cf., "Nothing outside of the home or the local church was necessary to accomplish that" (p. 8, 104). However, he has stated that this is not his belief nor the intent of his article. This still leaves me with (a part of) my question unanawered — I would like to hear someone who does believe it wrong explain why he believes it wrong.

In the matter of Earnest Finley's article, I do believe he proved that teaching the Bible in College is scriptural — unless someone can show where the other things mentioned in the article (written comments on the scriptures; purchasing a commentary; etc.) are unscriptural! I was also under the impression that any inconsistencies in my teaching/practice would be unscrip-

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tural (wrong). If I teach/practice one thing one time and something inconsistent with that teaching/practice at another time, one (and perhaps both) of the teachings/practices would be wrong. (?)

I appreciate TORCH and the help your teaching and writings have been to me in preaching the gospel." -Larry A. Bunch

(Editor's Note: Since brother Chandler has dealt with this interpretation of his article, I shall make no further comments along that line. It is noteworthy, however, that brother Bunch is still mistaken about brother Finley's article. He says, "I do believe he proved that teaching the Bible in College is scriptural - unless someone can show where the other things mentioned in the article (written comments on the scriptures; purchasing a commentary; etc.) are unscriptural." I have been under the impression that there are three ways to prove a thing to be scriptural: (1) Direct command, (2) Approved apostolic example, and (3) Necessary inference, but brother Bunch has a fourth way, a thing is scriptural "unless someone can show where . . . other things . . . are unscriptural." From the viewpoint of logic and evidence, this falls far short. It goes like this: (1) Brother "X" believes it is unscriptural to teach the Bible in a college. (2) But brother "X" believes it is scriptural to buy written comments on the Bible. (3) But buying written comments on the Bible is parallel to paying for verbal comments on it in a college class room. (4) Therefore, teaching the Bible in a college is scriptural. No, the logical conclusion is: Therefore, brother "X" is inconsistent, if buying written comments on the Bible is parallel to paying for verbal comments upon it in a class room.

Would we buy this "logic" in other matters? Look: (1) Brother "X" believes it is wrong to drink alcohol. (2) But brother "X" believes it is right to drink caffeine. (3) But drinking caffeine is parallel to drinking alcohol. (4) Therefore, drinking alcohol is scriptural. Or, (1) Brother "X" believes it is wrong to smoke marijuana. (2) But brother "X" believes it is right to smoke nicotine. (3) But smoking nicotine is parallel to smoking marijuana. (4) Therefore, smoking marijuana is right.

Or, as we used to hear so frequently, (1) Brother "X" believes Bible colleges are scriptural, (2) But, brother "X" believes the missionary society is unscriptural, (3) But the college is parallel to the missionary society. (4) Therefore Bible colleges are unscriptural.

Maybe this will help us to see the point: (1) Brother "X" believes the Herald of Truth is unscriptural. (2) But brother "X"

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believes congregations can conduct a cooperative radio program. (3) Cooperative radio programs and Herald of Truth are parallel. (4) Therefore, Herald of Truth is scriptural.

We have sometimes made this argument: (1) Brother "X" believes Herald of Truth is scriptural. (2) But brother "X" believes the missionary society is unscriptural. (3) But Herald of Truth and the missionary society are parallel. (4) Therefore, Herald of Truth is unscriptural.

This is a type of argument that is legitimate, but it does not prove anything to be either scriptural or unscriptural. Using it to try to prove scripturalness or unscripturalness is a misuse of it. It proves inconsistency, if it proves anything at all, and that is contingent upon whether or not number three is true. If number three is false in all the above arguments, they don't even prove inconsistency, and brother Bunch recognizes this when he says, "If I teach/practice one thing one time and something inconsistent with that teaching/practice at another time, one (and perhaps both) of the teachings/practices would be wrong." We all realize the possibility of being consistently wrong. Realizing this why would anyone try to use consistency to prove right or wrong? jpn)

Columbus, Georgia -- "I really enjoyed the October TORCH. It was 'thought provoking.' Had a lot of 'meat' in it. It surely behooves us all to consider the dangers of college Bible departments, or colleges run by brethren. I also believe this holds true with certain 'brotherhood papers.' We often look to these papers as 'church of Christ creeds.' I know you put a lot of your own time and effort into TORCH, and I want you to know that as a reader, I am certainly appreciative." -John Trotter

(Editor's Note: This comment about "brotherhood papers" is well taken and right down my "alley"! I have warned of this danger about as frequently as I have warned of the dangers lurking in the colleges. One brother recently commented that I "left nothing for the critics." So be it! In a recent article a brother wrote that those who are "badmouthing" the college (to which charge I enter a plea of innocent) don't seem to be concerned about the churches' depending upon the publishing houses (human institutions) for their literature. I gather from this that he either has not been reading TORCH, his comprehension leaves something to be desired, or he deliberately ignores the many warnings we have uttered about tying the fortunes of God's church to publishing houses and periodicals. Those who are unaware of the dangers lurking in such unions are ignoring plain historical facts. This should demonstrate the degree to which some brethren are committed to human institutions. jpn)

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Schools and Papers

When brethren generally look to the schools to train preachers, elders, and deacons, and to the papers to settle their issues for them, we all need to stop and see if we have not sort of lost our New Testament bearings. We must not allow a human expedient to become a devilish innovation.

This is not to deny that papers and schools have a right to exist, we believe they do. But defending their right to exist is not a defense of the abuse of that right, nor does such a defense deprive one of the right to cease the support of them when he feels they have abdicated their rightful sphere. When one's soundness is called in question because he exercises that right, there is no better proof that these projects have more influence and power than they ought to have. When we hear brethren speak of papers as the "saviors of the church," and the college as "our only hope for future preachers," we have already entered the danger zone, and it is time for someone to arrest our attention and crank up our thinking machines.

> - James P. Needham (Excerpt from Editorial, January 1972)

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

LOOK INSIDE FOR THESE THOUGHT PROVOKING ARTICLES

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WANTED: READERS NOT LOYALISTS

TORCH enjoys a respectable circulation even though there is no regular advertising and promotional campaign. Even with the irregular appearance (which we are determined to improve) old readers continue to renew and new subscriptions continue to come in. Every subscription and renewal is appreciated because they keep us going. Advertising space is not sold and donations are not accepted. A journal is not a journal without *readers* and of course we want to keep the old readers and add new ones along. However, we are not interested in building a loyal following for these few pieces of paper, James P. Needham or Billy K. Farris. We endeavor to publish material that will be instructive and thought stimulating-material that will benefit you, not promote a party or seek a personal following. - Billy K. Farris

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Editorial-

James P. Needham

To what extent do personality clashes, personal vendettas, institutional rivalries, commercial interests, and behind-the-scenes political maneuvers influence the initiation, organization, manner and outcome of major-issue controversies among us?

Development of Major-Issue Controversies

Brethren generally need to do some serious thinking about how major-issue controversies are developed among us. There is no doubt that ALL error must be opposed. Remember, I said ALL error. There is always a tendancy for some brethren to pick out some favorite issue(s) and ride it to the neglecting of others of equal importance. They then measure the soundness of others by THEIR catalog of what are the major issues of a given time period. Other brethren then line up according to this catalog because they want to be considered sound by the self-appointed soundness committee (usually some human institution organized and staffed by brethren "who seem to be somewhat" Gal. 2:6). Without a doubt, there are times when some issues deserve more attention than others, but we all should realize that most any issue can become MAJOR at the insistence of a few "big" preachers.

Brethren need to ask themselves this question: To what extent do personality clashes, personal vendettas, institutional rivalries, commercial interests, and behind-the-scenes political maneuvers influence the initiation, organization, manner and outcome of major-issue controversies among us? Have brethren ever been divided over issues that were magnified out of proportion to others equally serious because they afforded feuding brethren an opportunity to vent personal feelings and become isolated from

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each other? (I know this often happens in local church divisions). Is there no possibility that brethren and churches sometimes unwittingly will take sides in a power struggle in the church universal, all the while thinking they are standing up for the truth? "Who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Mt. 18:1) was a major issue among the apostles. Isn't it possible that some brethren are still trying to settle this issue rather than accepting the Lord's settlement of it?

Have we ever allowed controversies and personal ambitions within human organizations and arrangements to disturb churches and brethren generally, such as: Who is going to edit which paper? Who is going to be the most influential editor? Which paper is going to have the largest circulation? Who is going to be president of some college? Who is going to sit on the board? Who is going to control the board? Which school is going to be the largest? richest? most influential? Which bookstore is going to have the largest volume of business? etc.

Is it possible that such influences cause some to carefully scrutinize each other's writings and preaching for something they can magnify into an open, public gut fight as a means of vengeance in a personal vendetta about which unsuspecting brethren know little or nothing, and couldn't care less? Do such unspoken and un-admitted motivations ever cause us to pick at unintentional ambiguities (which characterize us all), require that another's teaching always elaborate fully every point it MENTIONS or IMPLIES, or its author be charged with every position someone wants to read between the lines? Do such influences ever cause any of us to set up rules of conduct for others which we do not follow? Some say all brethren should speak out on all issues, but they don't do so. What they really mean is that all should speak out on all issues the rule makers and major-issue definers consider to be important. This results in a good many "me-too" brethren.

Do you suppose it is possible that none of us has ever allowed issues that were raised for political reasons to stampede us into being political demagogues who said and did what we knew would please the party bosses to enhance our personal standing with them and the machine they controlled? Do we ever become more interested in proving our "soundness" to editors, presidents and superintendents than in being sound according to the doctrine of Christ? Do we never equate approval of the group with approval with God? Do we ever feel that having our name written on the loyalty rolls of the party is equal to having it written "in the Lamb's book of life"? Have sinister motives never influenced any of us to use unkind and unfair tactics in an effort to raise heated controversies in an effort to sell subscriptions, gain publicity to bolster sagging income for our favorite human institution?

In commenting upon a young preacher's writing, a well-known preacher recently said, "I never read his articles because I have learned that everything he says has been said better by someone else." The brother did not imply that everything one writes has to be new and different. His point was that many brethren are too much influenced in their beliefs by a desire to stand with their hero preachers rather than with the Lord. If we all teach the truth we will all "speak the same thing" (1 Cor. 1:10), but when we "speak the same thing" it must be our conviction, not an echo of the thinking of brethren we would like to please. Let us give diligence to present ourselves approved unto God, not unto the powers that be (2 Tim. 2:15).

Have sinister motives never influenced any of us to use unkind and unfair tactics in an effort to raise heated controversies in an effort to sell subscriptions, gain publicity to bolster sagging income for our favorite human institution? Secular publishing houses are accused of "writing what will sell papers." Is it not at all possible that sometimes some of us have been tainted with this poison? Is it reasonable to say that brethren who have staffed and promoted human organizations which have depended upon brotherhood support have never over-reacted to the actions and statements of others because their position, promotion or popularity seemed threatened? Would it be absolutely objective to say that the commercial interests of these human organizations have never influenced brethren to take a given position or determined which issue would be raised and at what time? Have any of our brethren ever practiced "yellow journalism"?

All this raises the possibility that we might be better off if we had no human institutions, even though they might have a right to exist. Some things are *lawful*, but not expedient (1 Cor. 6:12). One is reminded of the situation described by Paul in Philippians one. He could appreciate the fact that the truth was preached, but not the motives of those who preached it. Many issues have been raised by human organizations over the years which have resulted in "making manifest those who are approved" (1 Cor. 11:19).

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The exalting of one issue above others of equal consequence often results in labels that lump persons together who share convictions on only one issue, which presents a pattern of humpty-dumpty patchwork of political partyism that is bewildering to the unwary.

One must rejoice in the end result, but not in any personal or political ambitions that might have motivated any brother or brethren which always produce unpleasant by-products like: misrepresentations, lies, bitterness and life-long hatreds which will surely jeapordize the souls of many.

The exalting of one issue above others of equal consequence often results in labels that lump persons together who share convictions on only one issue, which presents a pattern of humptydumpty patchwork of political partvism that is bewildering to the unwary. For instance, there are some who are staunch supporters of those who are militants against Carl Ketcherside's latest theories, (which would allow fellowship with all the immersed), but who, in giving this support, are fellowshipping brethren they believe hold soul-damning error on the woman's covering, posture in prayer, Sunday night communion, etc. It all boils down to the fact that some brethren want to define soundness in terms of the issues they consider to be important, and they will support almost any movement or institution that is militant against one of their pet issues, even though, in so doing, they tacitly fellowship those they believe to be in error! Somebody well said, "Politics and religion make strange bedfellows."

The upshot of all this is simple; brethren can very easily become pawns in the hands of certain promoters of human organizations which may have a scriptural right to exist, but which abuse that right by becoming brotherhood thermostats to control the temperature and atmosphere of the church universal, and, perhaps unwittingly, equate supporting *their cause* with defending the faith once for all delivered. When the majority of the preachers are trained by human organizations, and when what are the major issues is defined by human organizations, and when one's soundness is determined by whether he defends and supports human organizations, and when whether preachers are known or unknown, used or unused by the "brotherhood" is regulated by human organizations, and when brethren and churches look to

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human organizations for these "services," how can we say there is nothing to fear? And how can we, in the light of such dependence upon human organizations, claim, with a straight face, that we believe in the all-sufficiency of the local church? We need to realize that we can be "institutional" while denying the church the right to subsidize institutions. In fact, some who oppose church grants to human institutions out institutionalize the most rabid institionalists! ("go and learn what that meaneth").

CONCLUSION

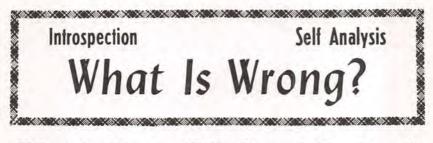
I am not charging that brethren, churches or ligitimate human organizations are aware of the conditions described herein. We are all rather adept at convincing ourselves that our actions are motivated by the highest ideals, and we can nearly always make short work of justifying, in our own minds, our personal promotions, perferences, and positions. Solomon well said, "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes" (Prov. 12:15).

The questions I have raised in this editorial give me a chill! They point up the danger that individually and collectively, we may become pawns in the hands of ambitious institutionalists. It is a sad commentary on us, but it is true, that far too many churches and brethren are created in the image of leading preachers, editors, presidents and superintendents. What many brethren believe is not determined by what they can prove by the word of God, but by what some editor, president superintendent or their favorite preacher believes. What is believed may be ever so right, but the reason for believing it ever so wrong! (Phil. 1:13-18).

I would not venture to say to what extent these conditions are true of us, but if they are true to any extent, we should all be alarmed. It re-emphasizes the necessity of "proving what is acceptable to God" (Eph. 5:10) rather than simply approving what is acceptable to some influential brother, or human institu-The basis of our faith must be the word of God (Rom. tion. 10:17), not the word of big preachers, brassy editors, brawny presidents, and bully superintendents. Our convictions must be dictated by our fear of God, rather than the fear of having the anathema of some human organization brought down upon our heads. Our beliefs and practices must be motivated by the word that is "forever settled in heaven" (Ps. 119:89), rather than by what was settled in the board meeting of some human institution. Our convictions must be hammered out by diligent study of God's word, not handed out by self-appointed lords of our faith (2 Cor. 1:24).

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What Is Wrong With Gospel Meetings?

Larry L. Dickens

(Editor's Note: Brother Dickens preaches for a new, small congregation at Sapphire, North Carolina while making his living as Professor of Biology at Clemson University at Greenville, South Carolina. I commend to you this timely article. jpn)

If the great commission of our Lord has any meaning to New Testament Christians today, it is that we are a taught, baptized, and a *teaching* people. If indeed the divine purpose of the church is to make known the manifold wisdom of God, then our primary concern must be the teaching program within the local church.

In most congregations, the total teaching program can be classified as the sum of three means: 1. pulpit preaching, 2. Bible class teaching and, 3. home Bible study. Each method has its place, its purpose, and its proper use. Unfortunately, to many people, pulpit preaching is $it \dots$ because that is all they get. They never attend on Wednesday night or Sunday Bible school, so the preaching is all of it for them. In far too many congregations, the emphasis (yes, even an overemphasis) is placed on the preaching and the preacher. In many places, everything which is accomplished, no matter how great or small, is centered around the preacher. They are either "getting one" or "getting rid of one" or "this or that happened to the preacher." All of which shows the great emphasis in the minds of many Christians is on the preaching.

Again, there is the Bible class program. (And if indeed it is a well-planned program; that is progress.) Certainly if you want to meet the spiritual strength within a congregation, meet those present during the Bible studies. It is in the Bible studies that much of the real teaching and learning takes place. The classes allow for comments, questions, and answers which may never be a part of sermons from the pulpit.

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Again, the third part of the teaching program is the home teaching. This includes the so-called family devotionals and the cottage meetings. It includes the time when Christians sit down in the privacy of their homes to study portions of God's word. Unfortunately again, for many who call themselves Christians, such opportunities are never used.

One of the special efforts made for years has been the use of the "Gospel Meeting." Certainly the term and the idea is scriptural. To meet together to learn of the gospel is really a most desirable means of "teaching, baptizing and teaching again." Can you recall the gospel meeting of twenty years ago (or more) in rural America? Do you remember the meeting when if at least 25 people were not baptized and another 25 restored, it was not considered a success? Do you remember when a gospel meeting lasted two weeks, or maybe a month, and when the preaching lasted at least an hour, but more likely two hours, each night?

Why, then, were the old time gospel meetings so successful? Is not the same truth being taught today? Why do we not see reports of 20 baptisms or 30 restorations in our meetings today? What factors contributed to the success of those efforts which are not present today? Why today, if only two per cent of those who say they are coming *do* come, that is better than average? Let's examine the differences.

1. First, there are the socio-economic changes. Twenty years ago, when men got off from work at sundown, they were through for the day. There was little T.V., ballgames, recreations, secondjobs, etc. to take their evening hours. They, both saints and sinners, were simply not "too busy." They were not too preoccupied with their vocations and avocations to be willing to spend several nights in a row listening to good Bible preaching. Nowadays, if you can get the members to come, that is progress.

2. Again, there is the spiritual change within the "typical American." In those days, the member of the denominational world already believed in God, he already believed that the Bible was God's inspired word, he had already been taught the all-sufficiency of the scriptures, and moreover, he knew what he believed. In other words, if he was a member of a popular denomination that believed in faith only, he knew he believed that. If he believed instrumental music in worship was right, he believed it must be in the Bible. This person was a good candidate to be converted. All it took was to show him the passages which taught him the error of what he believed. Oh yes, he might get angry, oppose it, delay, or ignore it, but if you taught enough

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people who already had that fundamental respect for God's word, in fact, many did obey that gospel.

So what has happened? Instead of 14 to 21 sermons of 1 to 2 hours of scripture being taught; the weariness of the brethren has reduced the meeting to 5 nights of 30 minutes each. Everybody is too tied or too busy for any more than that. Today, if in a meeting you get two good hours of real Bible preaching, you have done well. In those days, you might get that in one night.

But as important as this change is in the modern religious man, it is overshadowed by his clergyman. Today's denominational preacher, the product of the seminary, does not believe in the virgin birth, the resurrection, or in anything and everything in which he does not want to have faith. Moreover, they do not have, and they are not teaching, that fundamental respect for the Divine Word of God. Many not only do not know what the Bible says, they do not care. The roots of liberalism are so engrained in the religious world today that even our own brethren teach that the Bible does not mean what it says or say what it means. It is no wonder things have changed. So now, instead of beginning with the plan of salvation, we must begin with the all-sufficiency of God's Word. That is a long way back! In fact, in those years, a lot of our work had already been done for us. Moreover, most members of many denominations today do not know what they are supposed to believe. One has to tell them what they are supposed to believe as members of their denomination, before one can begin to show them the error of those false doctrines. All of this additional teaching load requires more time and effort. Yet, some of those who go about holding meetings act as if "meeting" is synonymous with "vacation."

3. Another change is seen in our attitudes toward our religious neighbors, and in turn, their attitude toward us. Years ago, the "revival" of the local denomination and the "gospel meeting" of the Lord's church were social events in the community. In brief, when the time came, everybody went. (And the faithful Christian used both events as an opportunity to teach the truth.) Then, possibly, because some unconverted, so-called Christian fell away to the denominational world, it became a "mortal" sin for a Christian to go to a "revival" because he would be "having fellowship with unbelievers." Whatever the reason or reasoning, the fact is: "we" quit attending "theirs" and so "they" quit attending "ours" and now both opportunities have been lost. The ultimate decline in attendance by outsiders has continued over the years from a "house half-full of sectarians" to one lone (and brave) visitor. And so what happens; the preacher preaches the same

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sermon on baptism to that one lone denominationalist. It takes very little intellect for him to tell who is being preached to . . . the same man who now does not believe God's word is all-sufficient, so he is turned off and rejects the sermon. So now we report, "no visible results."

4. Such problems in recent years have been further compounded, especially for the smaller and struggling congregations, by those carnally minded and near-sighted elders of bigger congregations who refuse to let a preacher preach because he is "their preacher" and they want him "at home on Sundays." So the evangelist is in "his place" on Sunday, being "our" preacher, while the sinners are dying and going to hell.

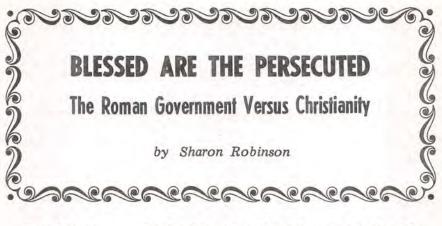
Certainly in recent years, several valiant efforts have been made to prop up the declining "Gospel Meeting." Some well-meaning Christians and preachers wear out themselves and their cars running to and fro to support the meeting, maybe even to the neglect of teaching God's word at home. Take any area where several congregations are within driving distance. Preachers and members can spend all spring, summer and fall running around to gospel meetings while the local work goes undone. "After all, if we don't support them, they won't come to our meeting." (Ain't that the truth!) So the visiting evangelist gets up and preaches on first principles (or the "issues") to an audience of 95% mature and faithful Christians.

Do not misunderstand, the "Gospel Meeting" can still be an effective and integral part of the total teaching program. Combined with an active personal work program within a congregation. the gospel meeting can be an excellent way to occasionally "shake a ripe tree." Without an effective personal work program. however, an evangelistic type meeting may be little less than totally frustrating. The gospel meeting can still be an effective means of providing spiritual meat for the majority of the audiences, those faithful Christians who are so good about attending. It maybe, when used effectively, an excellent method of awakening those who are asleep. Truly, teaching lessons for Christians may be most effective in the edification of the saints in the meetings of the future. I, for one, have witnessed what I believe to be the decline of the gospel meeting, but I do not wish to see its fall. Because I still am in favor of this means of teaching, I would welcome any and all scriptural suggestions for making them more effective.

> 10 Conley Street Greenville, South Carolina 29605

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PART II — CHRISTIAN PERSECUTIONS

Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.¹³

These words of Jesus must have held great comfort for his followers during those early centuries. As the Christians sought to obey their Lord in righteous living and to bring to others the peace and tranquility that Jesus offered through the gospel, they found they would have to suffer for their beliefs even unto death. They would be deprived of home, possessions, and livelihood. But still they clung stubbornly to their convictions and continued to convert others to Christ. One author says that the Gospel of Jesus could not have come at a better time to find men in a serious mood. The religious life of the Graeco-Roman period was destitute and there was an earnest striving after new and universal religion. Men were living in a transitional stage between collectivism and individualism, cramping polis and universal state, political and personal-ethnical religion, religion of nature and that of revelation. Men demanded more light than nature and reason could supply.¹⁴ Thus, Christianity succeeded at first because it offered these people the kind of comfort and inspiration which they were seeking.

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In a surprisingly short time, thanks to the zeal of Christians and the ease of travel throughout the Roman world, there were little Christian groups in every important center of the Empire. At first it was an urban movement. The poor masses made ready converts for they expected the second coming of Christ to rid them of their rich masters. The church took such a hold in urban centers that the Christians used the word "paganus" meaning "a rustic" to describe non-Christians; hence the word "pagan."¹⁵

Even though the populace found comfort in Christ, the authorities viewed it with suspicion. Erwin Goodenough gives some reasons for the governmental hostility:

For from the first Christianity was viewed with suspicion by the governmental officials. The chief reasons for this antipathy were, first, a fixed notion in all non-Christian circles that the Christians, while they pretended to peculiar virtue, were actually practicing in their secret meetings the most horrible acts of incest and murder, and even cannibalism; second, a suspicion of the Christians, from the very fact that they met in secret to celebrate the Eucharist, that, even worse than committing immoralities, they were plotting against the government. This suspicion was given poignancy by the fact that the Christians refused, in their zeal against idol worship, to observe the apparently very harmless custom of dropping a pinch of incense upon the incenseburner before the Emperor's statue. To the ordinary citizen this act meant no more than saluting the flag does today; it was merely a gesture by which one declared his patriotism. But the Roman Empire had deified its Caesars, and Christians felt that to burn incense to them was to denv their faith in the one Lord Jesus Christ. A sect which would refuse so simple a gesture of patriotism was given then as little patience as a modern crowd in war time would extend to a fanatic who in a patriotic mass meeting refused to salute the flag with the others.

Still more obvious an indication of the undesirability of Christianity in Roman eyes was the fact that its converts were drawn in an overwhelming majority from the lowest classes of society. Then as now the governing classes were apprehensive of a movement which brought into a closely knit and secret organization the servants and slaves of society...

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In an age when torture of unfortunate people was the great popular form of entertainment furnished by the government, it can hardly be a matter of surprise that the cry was frequently raised that such people be thrown to the lions. It was already by the end of the first century a capital crime to confess oneself a Christian, and as such it was regarded consistently by strict legalists until the Edict of Toleration in 313.¹⁶

Relations between the Christians and the government came to a head in July, 64, during the reign of Nero. On the 19th, fire broke out in Rome in the southeast corner of the Circus Maximus — an area filled with inflammable wooden shops. Accelerated by wind, the fire raged for six days and nights burning two-thirds of the city.¹⁷ Religious measures were taken to calm the excited populace: offerings were made to the gods; the Sibylline Books were consulted; prayers were offered to the underworld deities Valcan, Ceres, and Proserpine; sacrifices were offered to Juno, first on the Capitol and then at Ostia. Inspite of these ceremonies, there was a persistent rumor that the emperor Nero himself had been responsible for the fire, since he needed space for the construction of his new palace, the Golden House. In order to quell the rumor, Nero accused the Christians (now distinguished from Jews) of being incendiaries.¹⁸

The mob was enraged by the losses of homes, temples, statues, and treasure from Rome's past, so they readily accepted the Christians as Nero's scapegoats, even though the empress Poppaea Sabina, a convert to Judaism, pleaded for them. The Christians were particularly blamed and hated because of their prophesy of a final world conflagration on Christ's return. Tacitus, a Roman historian, says that vast numbers were convicted not so much on the count of arson as for their hatred of the human race since Jewish misanthropy was proverbial.¹⁹ So even though the Christians were recognized as apart from Judaism, in the Roman mind they still were connected because of Christianity's beginning.

Tacitus describes the executions of those Christians convicted by Nero:

... vast multitudes were convicted ... and in their deaths they were made the subjects of sport, for they were covered with hides of wild beasts, and worried to death by dogs, or nailed to crosses, or set fire to, and when day declined were burned to serve for nocturnal lights.²⁰

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Juvenal also alludes to the persecutions twice in his Satires. In Satire I he speaks of burning live bodies and dragging them across the arena, and in Satire VIII he mentions the "tunica molesta" (shirt of evil) which was lined with pitch and in which victims were burned alive — the ordinary punishment at Rome for incendiaries.²¹

Many of the Christians were crucified and burned in Nero's gardens while the emperor drove among the audience dressed as a charioteer. Even though Nero had opened his palace grounds to the refugees of the fire and had provided them with food and clothing, his strange behavior finally evoked some sympathy for the Christians, or at least some suspicion of his motives. Grant has these observatives about the persecutions:

There was nothing remarkable, except for its cruelty, about the burning of the Christians. An old law set forth in the Twelve Tables provided for the burning of incendiaries who set fire to a temple or to a field next to a house, and this law was evidently invoked. More remarkable was the use of wild animals, perhaps derived from Nero's enthusiasm for strange mythological games.

It is hard to tell whether any Christians had actually been incendiaries. It is easier to suggest that they may have seen in the fire a sign of divine judgment upon the city and that they were probably not eager to assist in putting it out. Their negative attitude could have been taken as a proof of their hatred of mankind, their inhumanity.

This is the first example of Roman persecution of Christians. It was persecution based primarily on the exploitation of popular prejudice. The Christians were scapegoats for Nero. The result was somewhat mixed. A precedent was set for later anti-Christian activities, and their name was darkened in official memory. On the other hand, Nero himself did not escape suspicion, and his cruelty seemed unnecessary at least to Romans who opposed tyranny.²²

Peter seemed to speak of the ordeal in his epistle:

Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

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If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a theif, or an evil-doer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.²³

After the burning of Rome, persecution spread throughout the provience. The Jews, who did not accept Jesus as their Christ, accused the Christians for their own oppression and sought them out to send to Rome for execution. It was probably at this time the apostles Peter and Paul were killed.²⁴

The next two emperors, Vespasian and Titus, did not overly persecute the Christians, but seemed to let things alone. Titus, however, was responsible for the destruction of Jerusalem, capital of the Jewish people, and birthplace of Christianity, in 70. But this was in response to a rebellion on the part of Judaean inhabitants. Domitian, on the other hand, championed the imperial cult to the exclusion of all others except that of Isis—Serapis, to whom he erected a temple. For a century men had voluntarily taken an oath by the "genius" of the emperor, but Domitian was the first to make it a real test of personal loyalty by forcing men to swear by it in all public documents.²⁵ An example of this oath (as used by Caligula) is:

We swear by Zeus the Savior and by the divine Caesar Augustus and by the native pure Virgin that we will be loyal to Gaius Caesar Augustus and to his whole family, and that we will consider friends those whom he chooses and enemies those whom he rejects. If we break it, the opposite.²⁶

This was totally unacceptable to the Christians and they refused to observe the ritual acts connected with the emperor, such as incense offered to his idol, on the grounds that such gestures were tantamount to worshipping the emperor as a god. There was only one God to them. Mommsen said, "The God of the Christians had no nation and did not suffer any other divinity at his side; the community of the Christians has never been a political community and the Christian was necessarily an apostate from polytheism."²⁷ Thus, more and more hatred and suspicion was built up by the Roman government against the Christians.

In 111 Pliny the Younger, of Bithynia, wrote in complaint to the emperor Trajan that the temples were almost abandoned and sellers of sacrifical animals were suffering great loss of business

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because of the Christians.²⁸ He wrote of the immorality inherent in Christianity, the inflexible, stubbornness of Christians, and their "vicious and harmful superstitions."²⁹ Trajan replied that they were to be left alone unless they were prosecuted by those who were willing to give their names. If a Christian was convicted, he would be allowed the opportunity to recant. If he did this and offered sacrifice to the gods, he was to be set free. If not, he was to be punished. While this appeared lenient in a way, at the same time it provided for wholesale persecutions by unscrupulous men who were willing to accuse and testify against Christians falsely.³⁰

Shortly afterwards, Trajan had Ignatius, the Bishop of Antioch, torn to pieces by lions in the Colosseum. This gave impulse, as Trajan probably intended, to the popular prejudice which was ready to visit every public calamity on those who refused alike to worship the national gods and to indulge in the national vices; and every plague, or famine, or earthquake, or defeat was a signal for the mob to assemble in the amphitheatre of every city to raise the cry "Christianos ad leones" — Christians to the lions!³¹

Marcus Aurelious was the next emperor to take definite steps against the Christians. He reintroduced the loyalty oath as a significant part in Christianity cases. Even though they were willing to pray for the emperor, the Christians still refused to take oaths or offer sacrifices. Hyde claims that the emperor's hostility was merely a logical result of training from boyhood. He had been taught to regard the imperial cult and imperial idea as identical and to feel that Christianity was opposed to them. He ordered the various governors to punish "sacrilege" which he regarded as the great crime of Christians. When the governor of Gaul wrote for advice on handling the Christians, the emperor replied that "they should be tortured to death, but that if any should recant they should be let go." Consequently, refractory citizens were to be beheaded and others sent to the beasts - the traditional method of punishing citizens and non-citizens respec-tively.³²

Commodus, the successor of Marcus Aurelious, continued the persecution of Christians but made the mistake of falling in love with one. Marcia used her position with the emperor to intervene on the behalf of the Christians. She finally went so far as to try to poison him, but this failed. She then persuaded an athlete friend of Commodus to strangle him in his bath.³³

There were some emperors, though, who were broadminded and tolerant of different religions, including Christianity. Septimus Severus and his nephew Alexander had a favorable attitude

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toward the Christians. Alexander even reversed the decree forbidding conversion to Judaism and Christianity and extended their privileges. These efforts were cut short by assassination;³⁴ however, in 212 the new emperor, Caracalla, extended Roman citizenship to all inhabitants of the empire, presumably in order to enlarge the base of taxation. Also, all the gods of the people of the empire were finally admitted within the pomerium of Rome.³⁵

These emperors provided the Christians with the longest period of peace since their beginning. There is even a Christian burial inscription dated 216. Previously they had been denied access to regular burial places and had been forced to bury their dead in crowded underground vaults used by the poor called the catacombs 36 But with the accession of Maximinus the Thracian in 235 the situation changed for the worse. Pagans had become alarmed at the progress of Christianity and revived the calumny of placing incidental misfortunes to the account of its professors. Fire, sword, wild beasts, and imprisonments were resorted to, and even the dead bodies of Christians were torn from their graves and submitted to every insult: yet the gospel withstood the attacks of the enemy. In fact, Tertullian, who lived in this age, informs us that if Christians had collectively withdrawn themselves from the Roman territories, the empire would have been greatly depopulated 37

Maximunus decided that in order to ensure the doubtful solidarity of the empire, especially against the Persians in the East, old regulations against Christians should be enforced. Form this point on the empire passed through one crisis after another.³⁸

Persecutions increased under Decius as he sought to restore the ancient institutions and religion of Rome which he felt was impossible if Christianity continued. By then the church contained nobles, the wealthy, and educated classes.³⁹ Goodenough also offers a description of this time:

... in the year 248 a mob outburst in Alexandris against the Christians was taken up systematically by the new Emperor Decius, and for two years the Christians throughout the Empire were subjected to an organized movement to force them to sacrifice to the gods. Both Gallus and Valerian in turn carried out the policy of Decius, so that from 249-259 Christians were harassed by a fearful persecution in which many of their number were killed or banished, and in which all church property was confiscated. Because of the stubborn resistance of the Christians against all efforts to make them give up their religion, only the strong emperors attempted to enforce the laws against them. Valerian's

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son Gallienus, a worthless weakling, gave up the struggle and restored their lands to the Christians. Practical toleration as this was, it was not an official toleration, for all the laws were allowed to stand against them, and it needed only a strong ruler for the trouble to break out afresh. But strong rulers were scarce in the decadent period of Rome, and it was not until the reign of Diocletion in 303 that the Christians were again molested on a larger scale.⁴⁰

The persecutions under Diocletion were the last, but they were the most formidable and systematic of them all. Diocletion was a brilliant statesman and a conservative Roman. He felt that Christianity was a menace and that the State must either destroy or yield to it - he was not about to yield to it. Orders went out for all copies of the Bible to be burned, all churches to be torn down;41 houses filled with Christians were set on fire, droves were tied together and thrown in the sea; 17,000 were slain in one month in Egypt alone, 144,000 died in violence while another 700.000 died of fatigues of banishment or from the public works they were condemned to.⁴² Three specific edicts were issued against the Christians. The first was issued on February 23, 303 and provided for all the measures afore mentioned. The second ordered that bishops, priests, and deacons be imprisoned; and the third ordered all Roman inhabitants to sacrifice on pain of death.⁴³

The persecution was carried through by Diocletion's successor, Galerius, but at the end of his life, for some reason, he changed his attitude. With his colleagues Licinius and Constantine, he issued the famous Edict of Toleration on April 30, 311. From that time forth, the edict stated, all Christians were to be free from persecution and allowed to establish places of worship and live as they please. The edict closed with this admonition to the Christians:

Wherefore it will be the duty of the Christians, in consequence of this our toleration, to pray to their God for our welfare and for that of the public, and for their own, that the commonwealth may continue safe in every quarter, and that they themselves may live securely in their habitations.⁴⁴

Seventy years later, in 381, Theodosius made Christianity the official faith of the state. The great Roman Empire had lost its fight against the one God and the ethics of Jesus. Emperor -worship and polytheism were now banned from the empire as had once been Christianity.⁴⁵

But still the question remains as to why the Roman Govern-

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ment reacted so violently to this new religion from Palestine that taught peace and love of man. Some theories can be offered, but the final conclusion must be left up to the individual.

Next Issue: Part III - REASONS FOR PERSECUTIONS

FOOT NOTES

- 13. Bible, King James Version, Matthew 5:10-12.
- S. Angus, The Environment of Early Christianity. London: Duckworth & Co., 1914, p. 68.
- 15. Hadas, p. 168.
- Erwin R. Goodenough, The Church in the Roman Empire. New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1931, pp. 36-38.
- 17. Walter W. Hyde, Paganism to Christianity in the Roman Empire, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1946, p. 168.
- 18. Grant, pp. 50,51.
- 19. Hyde, p. 168
- John D. Cox, A Concise Account of Church History. Murfreesboro, Tennessee: Dehoff Publications, 1958, pp. 18,19.
- 21. Hyde, p. 169.
- 22. Grant, pp. 51,52.
- 23. Bible, 1 Peter 4:10-16.
- 24. George A. Klingman, Church History for Busy People. Cincinnati: F.L. Rowe, Publishers, 1943, pp. 126,127.
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- Simeon L. Guterman, Religious Toleration and Persecution in Ancient Rome. London: Aiglon Press Ltd., 1957, p. 12.
- 28. Cox, p. 19.
- 29. Grant, p. 63.
- 30. Cox, p. 19.
- 31. Klingman, p. 128.
- 32. Hyde, p. 171.
- 33. Grant, p. 102.
- 34. Hyde, p. 174.
- 35. Grant, p. 108.
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- John Foxe, History of the Christian Martyrs. ed. Marie King. New York: Pyramid Books, 1968, p. 192.
- 38. Grant, p. 110.
- 39. Hyde, p. 177.
- 40. Goodenough, p. 38.
- 41. Cox, p. 21.
- 42. Klingman, p. 130.
- 43. Hyde, pp. 180,181.
- 44. Ibid, p. 182.
- 45. Ibid, p. 183.
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College Appreciation Dinner in Church Fellowship Hall

Following is an item noticed in Truth the weekly bulletin of the East Gadsden, Alabama church where Ray Hawk preaches:

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

Truth, Jan. 6, 1974

Brother Hawk and some others in the liberal camp are fighting what they call liberalism. They claim to be against church contributions to colleges, yet it is obvious that they don't know the difference between the church and the college. What is the difference between the church's contributing to the school, and using church facilities for a college dinner, and to cap the climax, charge the members \$10 a head to eat in their own building!

In our recent debate brother Hawk defended the right of elders to call the church together for a common meal for social and/or recreational purposes. He defined recreation as "food eaten for refreshment," but he said nothing about charging the members \$10 for such a meal in the interest of a secular educational institution. I wonder if that comes under the heading of "social and/or recreational" too. These brethren fight liberalism with one hand and sow it with the other!

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Harding College and the Church

I recently received from Harding College a brochure describing a new Harding program entitled, "A New Dimension In Preacher Training." The brochure says:

"A critical shortage of preachers exists in the brotherhood of the Church of Christ. To help alleviate this crisis, Harding College will inaugurate the Christian Communications Program during the fall of 1974. The new program will be an additional evangelistic thrust radiating from the Harding campus. This practical approach to preacher training has been designed to further utilize the experience of the faculty and the strong academic facilities of Harding's Bible department.

"Harding's commitment to evangelism has long been a dominant characteristic of the faculty and student body. The new thrust in preacher training is only one of many ways the college is preparing young men and women to meet the challenges of the coming decades ... Students will spend their weekends under the oversight of local elderships putting classroom techniques to use. Harding's Bible department will locate unevangelized areas within driving distance of Searcy and assign students to work in these areas during the weekends. A student's field work will be supervised by a Harding faculty member. Summer campaigns in the United States and foreign countries will provide a variety of mission experience ... specially adapted classrooms will be used to develop a student's evangelistic talents ... Special courses will be offered for the wives of students to aid them in adjusing to their role as minister's wives . . . With the support of 100 preachers from throughout the United States the Bible department will provide a placement bureau for graduates of the preacher training program."

"The brotherhood of the Church of Christ" (a denominational concept) is very fortunate that this human institution decided to "help alleviate this crisis" brought on by "A critical shortage of preachers." What a bleak existence the Lord's church would have were it not for the watch, care and protection of human institutions!

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But next we are told that this preacher training program "will be an additional evangelistic thrust radiating from the Harding campus," and that "Harding's commitment to evangelism has been a dominant characteristic of the faculty and student body." And then we are told that these "Students will spend their weekends under the oversight of local elderships," but of course, they will "be supervised by a Harding faculty member," and "Harding's Bible department will locate unevangelized areas within driving distance of Searcy and assign students to work in these areas during the weekends." (Emphasis mine, jpn).

Then they tell us that "Special courses will be offered for the wives of students to aid them in adjusting to their role as minister's wives," so that will take care of that!

And finally, "With the support of 100 preachers from throughout the United States the Bible department will provide a placement bureau for graduates of the preacher training program." And so, we have a neat little missionary society, denominational seminary, and brotherhood preacher "placement bureau" all wrapped up in a nice little package called "Harding College." And if they have left anything for the churches to do beside meet and worship and take up a collection for human institutions, I haven't found it. What a sorry job the Lord did in building the church! Why didn't he just build a college and be done with it? The arrogance and brazen usurpation of divine function manifested by just about all human institutions is getting to be blasphemous and downright disgusting!

Finally Got Their Man

I see where a church which a few years ago advertised for a preacher with the proviso that they wanted a man who had earned at least a Master's Degree, (but temporarily settled for less) finally has gotten their man. Their new preacher has "earned a bachelor's degree" and "since then he has taken graduate work to be better able to do the work of the Lord." I guess the Lord, James and John and the rest of us poor unprofessional peons will have to take what these professionals leave for us, and be content with doing the work of the Lord in our poor, inefficient and handicapped way! For shame! Some brethren have gone educational crazy! I have discovered that the only thing a degree tells about its holder is how much time he has spent in a class room.

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

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IMPROVEMENTS AND COSTS

While we have not mentioned it, I am sure you have noticed that we are using a heavier and better quality paper in this cost of material for producing a copy of TORCH is three times this year. There will probably be an increase in the subscription

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Editorial-

James P. Needham

Salvation By Grace

INTRODUCTION

One of the most thrilling and heartwarming doctrines of the Bible is salvation by God's grace, yet, it is grossly misunderstood by most religious people, including many brethren. All agree that salvation is by God's grace, but disagree on the manner and the results of such salvation. The teaching of John Calvin is responsible for many erroneous doctrines regarding the grace of God. Many brethren have studied at Calvinian seminaries and emerged with varying hues of Calvinian theology. There is some evidence that Calvinian theology is spreading among some of the younger brethren. Perhaps it is time to return to God's word and thoroughly explore the subject of the grace of God and how it saves.

I. GRACE DEFINED

Thayer's Greek Lexicon has the following to say about grace: "Good-will, loving-kindness, favor: CHARIS (grace), is used of the kindness of a master toward his inferior or servants, and so especially of God towards men . . . Moreover, the word CHARIS contains the idea of kindness which bestows upon one what he has not deserved. But the New Testament writers use CHARIS preeminently of that kindness by which God bestows favors even upon the ill-deserving, and grants to sinners the pardon of their offenses, and bids them accept of eternal salvation through Christ" (p. 666).

Thus, the grace of God is His favor or kindness which he bestows upon His creatures which they have not earned, merited or deserved. This means that whatever favor God may bestow upon man, it is not in payment for what he is or has done. No amount of works or goodness in man can ever earn the favor God shows him.

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II. GRACE DISPENSED THROUGH TWO DIVINE LAWS

(1) Natural Law: God's favor or kindness is dispensed daily to all mankind through His natural laws. In the sermon on the mount Jesus taught that we should show kindness toward our enemies. even though they don't deserve it, "That you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" (Mt. 5:45). Even though "God is angry with the wicked every day" (Psa. 7:11), and those who violate His moral law are "worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (Rom. 1:32), they continue to receive thousands of undeserved blessings of God's grace every day. Even though misguided persons often accuse God of taking physical vengeance upon them or others for their sins, the Bible denies that this is the case: "There were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them. Suppose ve that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise persih. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Lk. 13:1-4). All sinners will be punished, but God does not cut off his grace dispensed through His natural laws to those who refuse to serve Him in this life. They must repent or perish, but the perishing will take place after the judgment. Unrighteous persons often suffer misfortune in this life, but so do righteous persons (consider Job), but it is a mistake to think such is God's retribution for sins. This was the fallacy in the philosophy of Job's "friends."

One can deprive himself of God's natural grace by violating His natural laws. For instance, natural law dictates that God's grace will give a farmer an harvest of corn in the fall, if he plants it in the spring. The farmer will deprive himself of this grace, if he tries to reverse the process and plant in the fall, hoping for harvest in the spring. But God does not deny His natural grace to those who violate his spiritual laws. A saint and a sinner can plant corn in adjacent fields and enjoy equal harvest at the same time, all things being equal.

(2) Spiritual Law: God's spiritual grace is dispensed through His spiritual laws. Since God's favor is unmerited by its recipients, He has the right to dictate *when*, *where* and *how* it shall be dispensed. One can no more expect to receive God's spiritual grace in violation of His spiritual law than a farmer can expect to harvest

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corn planted in violation of God's natural law. Thus, receipt of God's grace, whether natural or spiritual, is conditioned upon obedience to His law. This being the case, God cannot consistently dispense His grace to the disobedient. He is "no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34, 35).

III. MISCONCEPTIONS OF GRACE

There are many misconceptions of grace in the religious world. Perhaps it will be helpful to examine these:

(1) That grace eliminates works: This grows out of a misunderstanding of the Bible doctrine of works. The Bible mentions four kinds of works: (a) The works of the law of Moses (Gal. 2:16). Grace definitely eliminates from salvation all works of the Law of Moses (Jn. 1:17; Gal. 2:16). We are not saved by the Law of Moses (Gal. 5:4). (b) The works of man. Isaiah says, "All of our righteousnesses are as filthy rags in the sight of God" (Isa. 64:6). "Our righteousnesses" are works of human righteousness; of human contrivance. Paul said salvation is "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us . . . " (Tit. 3:5). He further states that salvation is "Not of works lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:9). No amount of human works could ever earn salvation. Regardless of the amount of good works man may do, they can never earn salvation, or in any way obligate God to save him. (c) The works of the devil (1 Jn. 3:8). I trust we all agree that one is not saved by these. (d) The works of God. Some Jews came to Jesus and asked, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent" (Jn. 6:28, 29). It is obvious that grace eliminates all works except the works of God. But note that "the work of God" is something man does, "that ye believe." Paul said, "With the heart MAN believeth" (Rom. 10:10).

Thus, in spite of the decrees of sectarian creeds, or the current misunderstandings of some brethren, grace does not mitigate obedience to divine law, any divine law, whether the command be classified as "gospel" or "doctrine." "Sin is the transgression of law" (1 Jn. 3:4), and there is no way God can dispense His grace to the disobedient and at the same time maintain His justice and holiness.

"The works of God" include anything and everything He designs and commands man to do. The common Protestant doctrine that man is saved the moment he calls on the name of the Lord is flatly denied by Jesus when he says, "Not everyone that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of Heaven, but he that

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DOETH THE WILL OF MY FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN" (Mt. 7:21, 22).

To affirm that salvation by God's grace excludes all human activity is to affirm that one can be saved without faith since faith is said to be a work (Jn. 6:28, 29) which man must do (Rom. 10:10). Such teaching would necessitate the conclusion of universal salvation since Paul says, "The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to ALL MEN . . ." (Tit. 3:11, 12). Calvin's teaching on the grace of God has driven men to universalism, and it will continue to do so unless its fallacy is exposed in the light of God's word.

To demonstrate the necessity of human activity in salvation by God's grace, notice the following chart:

| - GRACE - | -MAN - |
|---|--|
| 1. Given of God (Jas. 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5). | 1. Has access to it by faith (Rom. 5:2; Cf. Jn. 6:28,29; Rom. 10:10). |
| 2. Provides the gospel (Acts 20:24). | Must receive the gospel (1 Cor. 15:1) the word of truth (Eph. 1:13). |
| 3. Provides the word (Acts 20:32; 14:3). | Must receive it with meekness (1 Thess. 1:6; Jas. 1:21). |
| 4. Elects man to salvation (Rom. 11:5). | 4. Unto obedience (1 Pet 1:2). |
| 5. Is in Christ (2 Tim. 2:1). | 5. Must enter Him by baptism (Gal. 3:27). |
| 6. Provided the death of Christ (Heb. 2:9). | 6. Must enter that death by baptism (Rom. 6:4). |
| 7. Brings salvation (Tit. 2:11). | Must work it out by obedience (Phil. 2:12). |
| 8. Teaches (Tit. 2:11). | Must practice the teaching (Tit. 2:11,12). |
| 9. Justifies (Rom. 3:24). | Must have faith (Rom. 5:1; Cf. Rom. 10:10). |

It is clear, then, that while God's grace excludes some works, it by no means or method excludes or eliminates the necessity of man's working "the works of God." He who says man can be saved by human works, or the works of the Law of Moses denies the Bible as does he who affirms that salvation is WHOLLY of God's grace without any human activity. When the Bible denies

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that salvation is by human works, it denies that salvation is by any scheme of human devising — if man is ever saved, it will be by the plan of God — man could never devise a system nor perfect a plan by which God would save him. "It is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps" (Jer. 10:23).

Today many are trying to be saved by human works, without the grace of God. They render slavish obedience to sectarian creeds which contain human doctrines unknown to the word of God. If they are saved eternally by such systems of human religion, they can truly boast of having merited salvation and can sing through the ceasless ages of eternity, "We are saved, but not by grace." And yet, it is these same persons who persistently accuse others of believing in salvation by human works apart from the grace of God! Truly, the drunkard always thinks the other fellow is intoxicated!

IV. THE RESULTS OF SALVATION BY GRACE

Those who teach error concerning how man is saved by the grace of God, also teach error as to the results of it. Let us notice some of these errors:

(1) Impossibility of apostasy: Some teach that if man is lost after being saved by God's grace, it will be the fault of God's grace. This error is based upon the erroneous idea that grace eliminates human responsibility, but let us note the fallacy of this. The New Testament teaches that man is saved by grace, but that man can:

- 1. Receive the grace of God in vain (2 Cor. 6:1).
- 2. Turn the grace of God into lasciviousness (Jude 4).
- 3. Frustrate the grace of God (Gal. 2:21).
- 4. Fail of the grace of God (Heb. 12:15).
- 5. Do despite to the Spirit of Grace (Heb. 10:29).
- 6. Fall from God's grace (Gal. 5:4).

Furthermore, the New Testament teaches that:

| MAN IS SAVED BY: | BUT MAN MUST NOT: |
|--|--|
| 1. The Spirit of grace (Heb. 10:29). | 1. Do despite to Him (Heb. 10:29). |
| 2. The gospel of grace (Acts 20:24). | 2. Fail to keep it in memory (1 Cor. 15:2). |
| 3. The word of grace (Acts 20:32; 14:3). | 3. Put it from him (Acts 13:46). |
| 4. Election of grace (Rom. 11:5). | 4. Fail to make it sure (2 Pet. 1:10). |

Again, the New Testament teaches that man is saved by grace, BUT HE MUST:

- 1. Receive it (2 Cor. 6:1).
- 2. Grow in it (2 Pet. 3:18, Cf. 1 Pet. 2:2).
- 3. Continue in it (Acts 13:43).
- 4. Be strong in it (2 Tim. 2:1).
- 5. Stand in it (1 Pet. 5:12).

Thus salvation by grace does not mitigate human activity and responsibility either before or after salvation from past sins is obtained. Grace saves one from past sins, and it keeps one saved, but on condition that one continue in it (Acts 13:43) by daily practicing its teachings (Tit. 2:11, 12).

Imputation of the righteousness of Christ: This idea is (2)closely related to the impossibility of apostasy. It says that once one is saved by grace, God will extend His grace to him in spite of his imperfect obedience, because He will impute to him the perfect obedience of Christ. Some brethren would say that such sins as adding instrumental music to the worship, human institutions to the work, and human doctrines (premillennialism) to the doctrine of Christ will not result in condemnation because God's grace imputes to his children the righteousness of Christ. The Calvinists go a little further and say that ". . . the way I live has nothing whatsoever to do with the salvation of my soul" (Sam Morris). Or, as a Baptist preacher in Louisville, Kentucky said, "A child of God can go from the arms of a harlot to the arms of Jesus." Or as a Baptist preacher said to me, "If I killed my wife and mother and debauched a thousand women, I couldn't go to hell - in fact, I couldn't go to hell, if I wanted to. If on the judgment day. I should find that my loved ones are lost, and should lose all desire to be saved and should beg God to send me to hell with them, he couldn't do it; and if he did, he would be a liar because he said, 'No man can pluck them out of my hand,' "

The only difference between these absurdities and those advocated by some brethren is degree, and an arbitrary distinction between gospel and doctrine. Brethren who draw the line of God's tolerance at gross immorality and say that God's grace does not cover such sins in the child of God, limit the grace of God, and make Him a respecter of persons. How can God be consistent and just when he would overlook violations of His divine law in the fields of church work, worship and doctrine, but not in the area of morality? They attribute instrumental music, premillennialism and church grants to human institutions as ignorance, weakness, or some other human frailty, and say that on this basis, God will overlook it because He will impute to these the perfect righteousness of Christ. But sin is sin, and they have not and cannot show where God makes such a vast difference between "doctrinal sins," and "moral sins." I am aware that the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin, but such is conditioned upon our walking in the light (1 Jn. 1:7), and no man walks in the light who persistently clings to darkness while his brethren try desperately to lead him to the light.

It is true that Paul speaks of "the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (Rom. 4:8), and the man "unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works" (Rom. 4:6). But what is Paul talking about? The context will show that the Jews were depending upon their Mosaic works to save them, circumcision, etc. (v. 9). Paul is showing that man is saved apart from the works of the Law of Moses. He who believes in Christ with an obedient faith (Rom. 1:5; 16:26), has the righteousness of Christ imputed unto him without works of the Mosaic law, but not without condition, for Paul says this individual must present his body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, and transform his whole life by the renewing of his mind (Rom, 12:1,2). He who thinks Paul is saying that primary obedience, which establishes covenant relationship with Christ, is all that is necessary, and everything beyond this will be overlooked by God, does not understand the Book of Romans, to say nothing of the scheme of redemption.

What I have said is not arguing that salvation is dependent upon perfect obedience. If this be required, none will be saved, for the child of God who says he has no sin is sinning when he says it, because he deceives himself and the truth is not in him (1 Jn. 1:8). The man to whom God will not impute sin is not the man who is perfectly obedient, but the man who has obeyed the gospel, and who "prays without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17) for more wisdom in the proper application of the knowledge he gains through diligent study (2 Tim. 2:15; Jas. 1:5). This very definitely does not describe those who have forced upon their brethren instrumental music, the missionary society, premillennialism, church grants to human institutions, unscriptural cooperative arrangements such as Herald of Truth, etc. to the division of the body of Christ, and who for many years have maligned, and misrepresented a large number of brethren who pleaded with them to cease and desist, and who firmly told us, "If you don't like it, get out!" In many cases where we did not see fit to get out and surrender to

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the forces of error hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of property which we struggled to help pay for, they have gone to court and sought to throw us out in violation of the plain word of God (1 Cor. 6:1).

Now, today, some brethren who were just youngsters when some of us were bearing the brunt of all this come along and say we should fellowship these brethren because God at the judgment will impute to them the perfect obedience of Christ because they are just "weak brethren" who stumble because of "imperfect knowledge." All I have to say is that these brethren certainly have imperfect knowledge, but it is not because they are weak, but because they are stubborn and rebellious, and like king Saul, will be rejected of God (1 Sam. 15:23). Brethren who are still in error after so many years of discussing all these issues are not going to get by the judgment as sweet-spirited, misguided brethren. When one has had so many opportunities to learn the truth, but still clings to error, has heart trouble that will prove fatal, if he doesn't change (1 Thess. 2:9,10). He will not be judged on the basis of what he knows, but on the basis of what he had opportunity to find out.

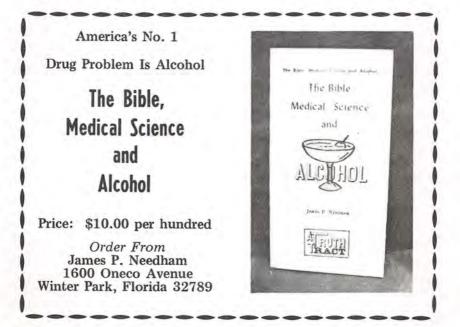
The real result of being saved by the grace of God is an opportunity to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling by daily striving to obey the dictates of God's divine law (Phil. 2:12). When the Jerusalem brethren heard that Antioch had received the word of God, they "sent forth Barnabas" that he should go as far as Antioch. Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they should cleave unto the Lord" (Acts 11:22, 23). Yes, one can see the grace of God. It is obvious from the obedient lives of those who have received it. Barnabas observed it in the lives of the brethren of Antioch, and rejoiced. But this was not enough; he thought it appropriate to "exhort them all, that with purpose of heart they should cleave unto the Lord." When all of the brethren at Antioch clung unto the Lord, they had unity and fellowship because of the grace of God they had received, and it would be completely incongruous and unthinkable that they could or would have fellowship with brethren who clung instead to human innovations and persistently resisted all efforts to lead them from darkness to light. Unity and fellowship is not based upon our community in the grace of God, but in our obedience to the divine law which that grace teaches (Tit. 2:11, 12; Jn. 17:20, 21).

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CONCLUSION

Certainly, I would not undertake to defend all the means and methods we have used over the past 25 years to combat the forces of error. When we are defending the most precious thing on earth, being human, we will likely get carried away and make some mistakes. At the same time, I shall not lend my influence or encouragement to those who would concoct erroneous theories about the grace of God in an effort to minimize the errors that made the fight necessary. There is a vast difference between saying that we may have sometimes erred in our battle strategy and saying there should not have been a battle. Those of us who have been active in the good fight of faith should carefully listen to those who criticize the way we held our weapons. It is not true that this is not important, as any soldier will verify. We should welcome those who criticize our battle strategy, but reject all efforts to dull the sword of the Spirit with the file of human wisdom. It is unwise for us to resent all criticisms of our methods, and illogical and erroneous to conclude that all who do so have gone over to the enemy. He who cannot take criticism, should not offer it. None of us is infallible in our judgments, and none of us should ever think we are. We should have the spirit of Abraham Lincoln when he said, "I am not bound to be right (in judgment jpn), but I am bound to be true . . ." So let it be!



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"Free" Churches

Billy K. Farris

We are hearing much these days about freedom and fellowship. One editor, whose writings I frequently read, often writes about "free" churches and his excursions among them. There is little doubt that his writings and addresses on freedom, unity and fellowship are quite appealing, especially to the young, who, according to his reports, get a "bang" out of what he says.

What Is a "Free" Church?

From their writings, I gather that a "free" church (the kind of church that the above mentioned editor and those like him promote) is a church that in faith, worship and work conforms to the following:

In faith — "Each must find his own way, seeking God's guidance." "They just take it easy and let Jesus put it all together." Unless I have missed their point (I do not believe I have), this means guidance separate and apart from what God has revealed in the scriptures.

In worship — Anything that pleases them. Their idea seems to be that to suggest that we must please God (John 4:23, 24) questions their freedom.

In work - Pliable, to serve their community.

Success of "Free" Church Promoters

Acting like mountebanks, the "free" church promoters project themselves as heros. They use fear to power their machine, and they attract the unstable and the unconverted to their ranks. In their own minds they are the oppressed, cheated of their freedom by those they call the "preservers of the *status quo*."

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Their formula is this: Cause one to feel that he is oppressed by tyranny, invite confrontation and reaction to their activities and then advertise their martyrdom. That this is their formula can be seen in just one article written recently by one of their leading editors.

To cause one to feel oppressed by tyranny he uses such expressions as, "elderships ... do some of the most immature and asinine things imaginable", "... they often resort to such political chicanery and highhandedness that they force people to leave ...", "... every weapon in the arsenal of ecclesiasticism is brought to bear ...", "... leaders ... actually become criminal in both their attitude and conduct ...", "... the professional leadership ...", "... said preacher had Napoleonic qualities ..."

He advertises their martyrdom with such expressions as, "... tantamount to being thrown out by bruising and battering", "... they will bring all the powers at their command upon you to destroy you", "... lovely people bruised and battered by ecclesiastical madness", "... Church of Christ innocents ...", "... they had to suffer abuse and innuendo for being different."

There is no doubt that there is some validity in their grievances against what brethren and churches have done. It is my feeling that the way brethren sometimes act does more to add to the ranks of the so-called "free" churches than the appeal of freedom and fellowship they are supposed to have. We cannot but abhor ungodly actions on the part of brethren and churches.

What Do the "Free" Churches Offer?

I have not read all the "theology" of the "free" churches, but when I do get a little, I am disgusted. What do they offer? Nothing! Nothing that encourages growth "in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). I am frank to admit that I know of no way to be free apart from what God has revealed in the scriptures. As a human being I cannot direct my own steps in that which pleases the Lord -Imust rely upon what He has revealed. By faith (Romans 10:17) I have been made free in obedience to that form of doctrine delivered (Romans 6:17, 18). Being made free I have become the servant of righteousness (Romans 6:22). Free people make up

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free churches — free to serve God according to His will not their own. The so-called "free" churches offer a philosophy of religious existentialism that rejects the authority of the scriptures. They make no secret of the fact that they want assemblies where people "are free to say what they will", where they can introduce into the worship whatever pleases them. They would have it appear that freedom to "say what they will" means study and discussion, when in reality it means having a church that looks like Pandora's box.

The "Free" Churches Are Revolutionary

They warn that what is happening among them is just a sample of that which is to come in the future. They are urging rebellion unless some changes are made (their demands are met). What all this revolution among them means is that they have determined to change the leadership of the *party* or they are going to form a new *party*. Well, there may be a *party* that they want to control, and although they will resent my referring to them as a *party* the resentment will not nullify the evidence.

Freedom and Unity Must Be Based on the Scriptures

It seems to have never occurred to the "free" churches that they can enjoy freedom on the Lord's terms - that they can be free in Christ and free to do His will. As free men in Christ we will be guided by the revelation of His will contained in the scriptures. The true free church is one that is made up of those who would be one "through their (i.e., the apostles) word" (John 17:20, 21). The unity and fellowship for which Jesus prayed is realized in the congregation when we seek to be guided by the scriptures - that which inspired men have written, not by what the leaders of the "Restoration Movement" wrote or thought. The unity for which Jesus praved is a seamless garment, not a Joseph's coat of many colors. It has the stability of revelation by inspiration, not selfmade heros who are tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine. When we speak of freedom we must begin with the scriptures, continue in the scriptures and end with the scriptures.

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Love and Fellowship

Floyd Chappelear

In the continuing struggle for unity (in diversity?) among God's people, increasingly we hear that we should be led by the "law of love" and that if we were so led we would be able to unite with others without respect to the position they occupy on a particular doctrine or practice. That love is given a lofty position by the Lord, none can deny; but to ascribe to love the characteristics of law, which governs our practices and determines our fellowship, is to do that which the Lord never did. Love is not law, no matter how many well meaning brethren may assert that it is.

Love properly governs our hearts only with respect to our reaction to law and to our fellow pilgrims who are likewise subject to the decrees of God. The Lord does not say that love *is* worship, but He does say that love should be the motivating force behind our worship. Likewise, He does not state that love *is* fellowship, but that it is the force that leads us into fellowship when we obey His laws.

The hymn writer Bonar says, "Will they tell us what is to regulate service, if not law? Love, they say. This is pure fallacy. Love is not a rule, but a motive. Love does not tell me what to do, it tells me how to do it . . . Love without law to guide its impluses would be the parent of will-worship and confusion, as surely as terror and self-righteousness, unless upon the supposition of an inward miraculous illumination, as an equivalent for law." Situation Ethics, a debate, p. 39, J. Fletcher and J. Montgomery.

To attempt to establish fellowship on the basis of love apart from obedience to God's law is tantamount to establishing a human law which is regarded as being equal to God's. It is for this reason that the "neo-fellowship" movement is regarded as being modernism gone to seed. The movement replaces the instruction of Deity with the moral preachments of one man who is so obviously fallible as to not need proving.

Fellowship cannot exist between two people, one of whom does not submit himself to the Law of Liberty. Should the one nevertheless love the other? Certainly. His attitude toward the other should remain the same regardless of what actions may grow out of the disposition of the other (*Cf.* Matt. 5:44). But, should (continued on page 20)

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Wedding in the Bank Building

Jeffery Kingry

(Editor's Note: We are printing the following satire as a means of provoking study of this very important theme. I am compelled to say that I do not agree with the thesis of this article, namely, that all weddings are foreign to the mission of the church. I shall not argue the point here, but insert it as a matter of interest. Whether or not we agree with a given article is not the criterion that determines whether I can conscientiously publish it. I believe this subject needs more and deeper study than it has received. jpn)

The Bank president was mildly surprised as he drove by the First National to see all the cars that were drawn up in the bank's parking lot.

"I wonder what's going on." he murmured, "The bank isn't open today!"

He pulled his car in and parked it in front of the entrance. People, well dressed, laughing and happy, were walking into the bank. Organ music filtered out to him as the doors opened to let people inside. "What in the world," he thought as he stepped inside?

Within the bank he saw that all the chairs had been taken from the offices and board room and had been set up in the lobby, much like a church or a funeral parlor. A white cloth had been stretched down the aisle, and it appeared that a wedding was just drawing to a close. He looked over towards his office and saw a portable organ, just beginning to warm up for the tunes of the recessional, sitting before his door. Flowers adorned each tellers cage, and the tables from the employees conference room had been brought up from the basement and were now laden with food waiting for the reception which should shortly follow.

Sputtering and confused he grabbed the arm of the usher, who stood beside him, "What . . . what is going on here?"

"Oh! Hi, J.B.! We are having a little wedding in the bank."

J. B. turned at the voice, recognizing it as one of the male drive-up tellers.

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"I can see that! But what is going on?"

"Why, you are upset, J. B.! Don't you think this makes a good setting for a wedding?"

Sputtering to himself, J. B. looked the teller in the eye and said, "Whose idea was this?"

"Well mine, actually," said the teller. "Mary Jo? You know, my cousin from out east? She needed a place to get married so I said, 'Why don't you use the Bank lobby on Saturday? I am sure no-one would mind.' You don't mind, do you J. B.?"

"Of course I mind! This is a *bank*, not a wedding parlor! This building was erected, paid for, and is maintained to carry on the *bank*'s business. It is not for your private use!"

"Well, if no weddings may be conducted in the bank just because they are not functions of the bank, then we are going to have to ask our customers and employees to quit socializing before and after transactions. Everything in the world is discussed by our customers in the lobby from Junior's cutting teeth, to the number of coons old Blue treed the night before. These things must come to a halt if you are to be consistent, J. B. There can be no socializing except about Bank business until you get off of the Bank's property. After all, the stockholders money was not spent to provide a place to discuss coon hunting..."

J. B. listened, his mouth open in disbelief as the teller went on and on.

"Yessir, J. B. There probably is a difference in a bank going into business and spending its money on weddings and social affairs, but a wedding in a bank is something else. Really, the bylaws of the bank never said we *couldn't* have a wedding in the bank lobby! The bank's charter informs us how the *bank* is to conduct itself, but it never said anything about the bank's facilities, now did it? The way I see it, this is just a matter of judgement and expediency. I mean, we are not doing something in poor taste, like having a basket ball game or a covered dish supper that might reflect on the bank. And the bank certainly isn't holy, is it J. B.?"

"ARE YOU CRAZY?! This isn't your bank, man! It belongs to the stock holders, under the oversight of the Board of Directors, to conduct business ... the bank's business!"

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"Well, I am a stockholder. I buy a share a year. I got two shares now."

"Huh?"

"You sure are going to make the bank look bad in the community, J. B. Why, I know some folks that started banking here when they got their first dollar on their paper route. Now these kids are going to be grown one of these days, and where are they going to get married? The Savings and Loan? Down the street at General Finance? I bet you wouldn't mind your daughter getting married at the Federal Reserve, but you wouldn't let her marry in your own First National."

J. B. took the teller by the arm and moved towards his office to call the police.

"I'll not have this unauthorized use in my bank."

As he pushed the organ out of the way and stepped into his office he saw a large portly woman, the mother of the bride, sitting in his chair, looking over his papers as she talked on the phone.

"Who are you?" he demanded.

The woman looked up in irritation, and put her hand over the receiver.

"Shhh," she said, "Can't you see I am on the phone?

"But, Madam. That is my phone, and this is my office, and you are in my chair!"

"Hush, This is Saturday. The bank is closed today, and you are not using it anyway."

"That phone, and these premises are to be used for Bank business only,madam, so will you kindly hang up and let me use my office?"

"You people spend thousands of dollars for these phones and this building, then you use it only 5 days a week. Don't try and tell me you have never called your wife on this phone. What do you care if I use your old phone for just a few minutes?"

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"Hello, Antonio?" she continued, "That's right, send over 25 more bottles, and we will need some more help for the reception. Yes, send it over to the First National Bank. Right. See you later, Hon." The matron hung up the phone and rose from the president's chair.

"There! Now you can use your silly old phone. Imagine, doesn't let anyone use his phone for anything but Bank business!" Both the matron and the teller laughed.

As J. B. approached his desk he heard the XEROX running in his secretary's office. Glancing at the other two in his office he opened his secretary's door and looked in. A stranger was running material on the XEROX.

"What are you doing?" J. B. asked.

"Oh, we're running off a batch of wedding invitations for Betty Lou's wedding next Saturday. This machine is really neat. We ran off *all* of Mary Jo's announcements here. This little machine really works fine."

"But . . . that isn't your machine!"

"What's the difference, old man? They let us use the building, the chairs, the lights, the heat, and the rest of the facilities, why not use the XEROX too?... Hey! That gives me an idea!"

"An idea," said J. B.?

"Yeah! If we can use *everything* in the bank, the stuff that the bank's money *buys*, why can't we just use the bank's money?!"

"Yeah," said the teller!

"Of course," cried the matron!

"No . . . no . . . no" said J. B.

It did not take long for the three to get down to the Bank vault, but by that time J. B. had called the police, and before the three and a few curious onlookers managed to blow the safe, the police had arrived and arrested them all.

"Nice wedding you got here," the police lieutenant said.

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"Uh, yes . . . one of my employees . . ." mumbled J.B., in somewhat of a daze.

"Yeah, nice wedding. Say. I got this sister what is getting married next month, see, and we don't bank here, but I was wondering if maybe . . ."

J. B.'s eyes were wide and frenzied as he ran away from the bank laughing in a funny sort of way.

"Odd guy, that prez. I don't know why he should mind though. After all, I did park my squad car in their lot, and there ain't no difference between a squad car and a wedding!"

> 5 Mohawk Ave. Glen Burnie, Maryland 21061

Love and Fellowship - continued from page 15

fellowship exist if both love equally but one does not submit due to ignorance? How can it? Can one plow with an ox and an ass together even though they have a mutual regard for the hay that may be placed before them for fodder? (See Deut. 22:10). The fact that each may have the same disposition as the other does not change the fact that one is an ox and the other an ass.

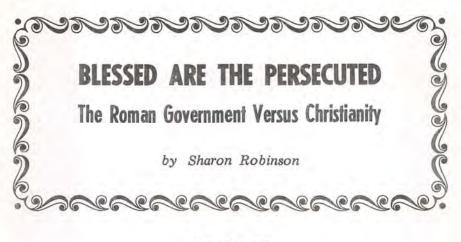
One is not a child of God merely because he loves the Lord in some sense, but because he has put on Christ in obedience to His plan (Gal. 3:27; Jno. 14:15). That relationship continues only because one walks in the light (1 Jno. 1:7), not because one loves the source of that light. To argue otherwise is to replace law with the ambiguous concept of the "law of love." Christians should not make that mistake. No matter how much love is needed, it does not supplant law in God's plan for man.

Brethren, let us have fellowship with as many as is humanly possible. Let us never exclude those who should not be excluded. At the same time let us not include the unworthy merely because they have expressed themselves as having a form of love for the same God that we hold dear. To adopt such a policy will result in chaos and lost souls that otherwise might have a chance to be saved. In the face of that, who can say that love *is* fellowship?

> 3910 Glenbrook Rd. Fairfax, Virginia 22030

> > March 1974

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PART III

REASONS FOR PERSECUTIONS

Most authors agree that the foremost reason for the persecutions of the Christians was that they were believed to offer a threat to the state because of their refusal to comply with state religion and custom. Emperor worship was required of all but Christians refused to bow down before the emperor's image. For this reason they failed to pass the chief test of loyalty to the state. Their secret meetings held forbodings of conspiracy against the government, especially since the Christians mainly drew their following from the masses, including slaves.

One author states that Rome banned Christianity not because they disliked their theology, but because of the political disobedience that resulted from their religious scruples. Christianity insisted that they alone possessed the truth, and that all other religions, including state ones, were false. They refused to observe ritual acts connected with the emperor on the grounds that this would be worship of a god. To them there was only one God to worship, Jehovah.⁴⁶

Because they refused to participate in idol worship they were branded as atheists and enemies of their fellow Romans. This caused them to be blamed for all the calamities that befell the

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Romans: famines, pestilences, plagues, earthquakes, and the like.

The business interests often caused the Christians to be persecuted. The zealous Christians were very successful in converting people to Christ. This brought about a desertion of the temples and left the sellers of sacrifices and images with out buyers.

The influence of pagan philosophies which were propagated by the Stoics and Epicureans caused many men to look down upon Christianity because it was accepted by the common and unlettered class, and because it preached a system of faith and did not prove anything on philosophical grounds.⁴⁷ Along with this, there was the fact that Christians looked upon all men as equals. It made no distinction between master and slave. This, of course, was contrary to the spirit of the Roman world. Glover gives these reasons for the appeal of Christianity to the masses:

... the change of character, the honesty, the purity, the courage, that marked whole classes of the community which the ancient world despised. Woman and slaves, clothed with a new power, rival Socrates himself in the gladness and courage with which they die for the new faith, and live in a new spirit ... there is no Greek word for "unselfishness." Quite apart from that and the negative words in which we too often expressed the virtues, Paul's epistle to the Galatians gives us a whole series of positive words representing positive virtues which the Stoics did not know - love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, faith. But, more than anything else, it was the death of the martyr in the arena which shook the candid spirit of the ancient world; and that in itself is evidence that we are dealing with a real race of men who are doing real things. 48

All this is not to say Christians were not exemplary subjects. They believed that the Roman government was in existence by the power and authority of God; therefore, they were peaceful and law-abiding, but they had made the choice repeatedly between the empire and their religion, and everyone understood that upon any occasion they would do so again. In all things, God's will came first.

In my opinion all the arguments can be boiled down into one word as to the reason Rome persecuted the Christians – fear.

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Fear is perhaps the greatest motivating emotion we possess. The Romans obviously were powerful, but even they had a fear of the unknown — and that was what the Christians represented to them, unknown elements. They could see no reason behind their actions, in the first place. But it was also a fear such as Herod experienced when he was told that the King of the Jews had been born. He had all the baby boys under two killed.⁴⁹ The Christians' prophesy of Jesus' return to set up the kingdom of heaven, misunderstood by the Romans as it was even by some of the Christians, caused great fear in the officials. Here was another power to contend with in the conquest of the world. Anything that is secret is suspicious and feared. Such were the meetings of the Christians to perform their acts of worship — things that were also misunderstood by the Romans. They tried to conquer this religion as they had conquered the countries of the Mediterranean and surrounding lands. This was the only way they knew how to fight. Fright could be the only result when, instead of suppressing it, it continued to grow at an ever accelerating speed. What could the future hold in store for them from these strange people? Again, there is fear of the unknown. Persecutions seemed to do no good at all. Bonds forged in the furnace of suffering are the strongest human nature knows, and all that the persecutions had succeeded in doing was to transform the iron links of church organization into the hardest steel.

Reasons of politics, economics, religion, social variances all can be given as solutions to the centuries-old questions of why the Romans persecuted the Christians. Since we were not there at the time and do not have a true feeling of the way things really were, we can only reply on what others have written, either contemporaries of the early church or learned authors, and our own feelings to come up with an answer of our own. Surely, all of these reasons play a part in the whole answer; there can be no question of that. But as all problems of history, further study gives more insight into the problem of then and aides in the understanding of today.

END

FOOT NOTES

- 46. Hadas, p. 128.
- 47. Cox, p. 23.
- T.R. Glover, The World of the New Testament. London: Cambridge University Press, 1937, pp. 188,189.
- 49. Bible, Matthew 2:16.

TORCH

The Stream of Life

Carried along by the stream of life, Disillusioned by the useless strife. Men who strive for selfish goals Wreck their ships on rocky shoals.

The steam of life is often swift Making it dangerous, merely to drift; So stear your ship where you want to go, Or be driven aimlessly to and fro.

The stream of life is wide and deep. Its banks are rugged and often steep. There are harbors of peace and ports of pain. There are bays of pleasure and earthly gain.

Each must sail his ship with care, Never venturing to take a dare; For the price of folly is far to great To hazard life to the irony of fate.

So sail your ship straight and steady With your compass handy and always ready To change your course from wrong to right In the clearest day, or the darkest night.

> James P. Needham 5-14-73

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

LOOK INSIDE FOR THESE THOUGHT PROVOKING ARTICLES

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TORCH – AN INDIVIDUAL EFFORT

It has been and will continue to be my policy to impress the readers of this journal with the fact that it is an individual effort. A few have kindly suggested that this point has been made clear enough and I would not deny that perhaps more emphasis has been given to this matter than is necessary. However, I make no secret of the fact that I feel very keenly about the identity of this effort.

TORCH is not a "church-hood" paper. This journal is not published under the auspices of a church or churches. The publisher does not accept donations from churches or individuals to produce this material. I will do anything that is right to avoid a situation where **TORCH** will be identified as anything other than an individual effort.

- Billy K. Farris

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| | Editor | | |
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Editorial-

James P. Needham

Use and Misuse of the Book of Revelation

INTRODUCTION

Bible students are convinced that the Book of Revelation is in our Bible for a purpose. Various purposes are assigned to it, but all are convinced that it is more than mere space filler. Because of the nature of its content it probably furnishes more fodder for the speculation mills than any other portion of Holy Writ. It shall be our purpose in this study to briefly refute some of the more radical interpretations of Revelation and set forth a meaningful hermeneutical philosophy. We are thoroughly convinced that it has a vital message which is often tragically lost beneath the avalanche of wild speculations, and fanciful interpretations.

The title of the book in the Greek Testament is APOKALUPSIS. This word is defined as "an uncovering, prop. a laying bare, making naked" (Thayer). It is from APOKALUPTO, "to uncover, unveil" (Vine). This indicates that God is seeking to uncover something for us in this book. That being true, it behooves us to work diligently to discover just what it is. Obviously, if we miss it, the book becomes worthless to us. One never profits from a misinterpretation of scripture. We are commanded to "speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11), and we are to "handle aright the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). Wrestling the scriptures brings only destruction (2 Pet. 3:16).

I. MISUSES OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

1. As an almanac: Many people, including some brethren, use the Book of Revelation as a sort of almanac to interpret the signs of the times. This has led to many absurdities. Practically every war in history has been the battle of Armageddon (16:16). It should be obvious to all that this cannot be true. This is the folly of the continuous historical interpretation of the book. A study of such interpretations presents an absurd abstract mosaic! A

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brother said to me several years ago that he believed the Book of Revelation covers the history of the world from the beginning to the end, and that the world will end when we get through the 22nd chapter, and he thought we were in chapter 21 at that time! There is not one benefit to be derived from such folly. Time is its best refutation. It is impossible for me to believe that God has placed within the Bible a book designed to tell us something angels and His own Son do not know (Mt. 24:36).

Garner Ted Armstrong claims to have prophesied on the basis of Revelation and other Bible teaching, the exact time and events of the 1967 Mid-East war. He claims that his prophesies are a matter of record, and this may be true, but I emphatically deny that such were accurately based upon anything the Bible says. A little research would reveal that others have claimed the same Biblical basis for predicting previous Mid-East events. Obviously, the same prophesies cannot have reference to all such events. That would be like saying that a person was born in New York, Los Angeles and Baghdad! The only connection between such prophesies and the Bible is that it says "false prophets shall arise" (Mt. 24:24).

2. As an eschatological road map: The Book of Revelation suffers its greatest abuse at the hands of the Premillennial speculators. To them its main purpose is to serve as a sort of road map in reference to the events surrounding the second coming of Christ, the end of the world, and the final judgment. Out of a tortured patchwork of distortions they build a fanciful theory of millennial maddness.

As an example, the premillennial theory says that the church will be caught up into heaven (1 Thess. 4:17), where it will stay, according to some of them, for seven years. This is called "the rapture period." They then conveniently run to Rev. 21:2, and find the "New Jerusalem" coming down out of heaven, so they say this is Christ coming with the saints to reign on earth for a thousand years (Rev. 20). But such a hodgepodge runs into many difficulties.

First, it is assumed that the thousand years reign of Revelation 20 will take place on earth. There is absolutely no Biblical evidence of this.

Second, it is assumed that the New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven is the church. There is no biblical basis for this assumption.

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There are also other difficulties too numerous to mention here. Suffice it to say, one without an over active "assumptive gland" is repulsed by such fanciful theorizing. Such turns the Bible into material out of which every person is to fashion his own theological jig-saw puzzle, each one more absurd than the other.

3. As a book of heavenly vital statistics: Our Jehovah's Witness friends use the Book of Revelation as a sort of a book of vital statistics on the population of heaven. They theorize from Revelation 7:4, that only 144,000 souls will go to heaven. The rest of the redeemed (the meek) shall inherit the earth (Mt. 5:5). Hence, this earth supposedly will stand forever, and will be the dwelling place of all the saved with the exception of the 144,000. But such speculation runs into many difficulties.

First, John saw a "great multitude" clothed in white robes before God's throne IN ADDITION to the 144,000.

Second, the 144,000 were virgin Jewish men (14:4), hence, this would mean that only 144,000 unmarried Jewish men will go to heaven (no women).

Third, the 144,000 were called "the firstfruits unto God" (14:4), indicating more would follow.

Fourth, such a speculation conflicts with the clear Bible teaching that God is no respector of persons, for there "is no difference between Jew and Greek: for the same Lord OVER ALL is rich unto ALL that call upon Him" (Rom. 10:12 Cf. Acts 10:35). Note also that Revelation 22:14 says, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Everything in the New Testament indicates that all the saved of all the nations (Jews and Gentiles) are all going to the same place (heaven) on the same terms (obedience to the gospel).

II. PROPER USES OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

In order to understand the proper use of the Book of Revelation, several facts need to be known:

1. Style of composition: Sign or code language: "He sent and signified (sign-i-fied) it by his angel unto his servant John" (1:1). "SEMAINO, to give a sign, indicate (sema, a sign . . .) to signify, is so translated in Revelation 1:1, where perhaps the suggestions is that of expressing by signs" (Vine, Vol. 4, p. 30). The visions John

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saw were *coded* messages sent to God's people telling them of future events and ultimate outcomes. These visions would mean much to Christians, but nothing to anyone else. In this way the heathens would be in the dark as to the significance of the historical events in which they took part, and thus would be prevented a pre-mature presecution. In such visions historical events were sort of played out by certain fictitious actors on a sort of a dramatic stage. Revelation reads like a dramatic play with each scene subject to interpretation in the light of the then current trends and events. Such is frequently true of present-day dramatic productions.

There is a great deal of this type of composition in the Old Testament in the writings of Ezekiel, Daniel, and Zechariah. When we consider the circumstances surrounding, not only these Old Testament books, but also Revelation, we are forced to the conclusion that God used this method of communicating His will to His people previous to and during periods of great difficulty.

2. Nature of material: Largely prophetic: "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass" (1:1,3; 22:19). While everything in the book is not prophetic, a great deal of it is. It set forth in prophetic fashion, the trials and triumphs of God's people in the first centuries, and typically, throughout all time.

3. Those addressed: God's people: "To show unto *His* servants . . ." (1:1). This plus the fact that 1:4 says, "John to the seven churches which are in Asia . . ." proves that the book is addressed to *God's people*. It was not intended for, nor would it have made any sense to, the unbelievers. Keeping this in mind will greatly assist in the understanding of the book's message.

Having these facts in mind, let us now look at the proper uses of the Book of Revelation:

1. To show fightings within the church: The problems within the seven churches of Asia are typically the problems of the churches of all time. These are: Materialism which leads to lukewarmness (Laodicea) "I am rich, and increased with goods and have need of nothing . . ." (3:17). Ritualism, cold formalism, doing right things without proper motivation (Ephesus) "Thou hast left thy first love" (2:4). Compromise, tolerating false doctrines (Pergamos, Thyatira, etc.) "Thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam . . . Nicolaitans . . ." (2:14, 15). Failure to watch (Sardis) "be watchful" (3:2). (This list is only

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suggestive, and is not intended to be exhaustive. The reader may want to persue this thought further). As long as the church is composed of humans, there will be problems. "For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you (1 Cor. 11:19).

2. To show that earthly conflicts often have a spiritual purpose and direction: In chapters 5-11, we see what seems to be an earthly conflict. The loosing of the seven seals (Chapter 8, 8:1.2), and the sounding of the seven trumpets (Chapters 8-11) reveal what seemingly is an earthly, physical struggle. But a close study of 12:1-19:10, shows that this conflict has a deeper significance than we first thought. The righteous are really instruments in God's hands, and the forces of evil are the cohorts of Satan. Thus, we learn the real significance of the earthly conflict; it is a fight to the finish, a struggle for the survival of the fittest in a war between the spiritual powers: good and evil, God and Satan. Hence, Revelation demonstrates the age-old truth that "The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will" (Dan. 4:25). Christ turns out to be not only "king of saints" (15:3), but also "Lord of lords and King of kings" (17:14; 19:16). As is stated in 17:17, "God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled."

From all this Christians should learn a valuable lesson, namely, that they must not get so involved and caught up in the "ins" and "outs" of worldly political struggles that they forget that such events are governed by Him who sits on the throne (Chapter 4) and executed by "the Lion of the tribe of Judah" (5:5) who, alone was found worthy to open the book (see chapter 6). Regardless of how ruthless the conflect, or bloody the battle field. God is on His throne and He "ruleth in the kingdom of men" and He will do as He pleases. We must remember that "our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:20), and that "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down of imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:4, 5). "for we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Eph. 6:12).

3. To show that regardless of when or where the conflict

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between truth and error rages, truth will triumph. In this apocalyptic drama, there are times when the cause of truth seemed lost, and there was no hope for victory. There were martyrs under the altar who cried out for vindication of God's Cause (6:9,10). The bodies of the martyred prophets lay in the streets for three and a half days, with nobody caring (11:7-9). The beast rising out of the sea received power from the dragon and made "war with the saints and OVERCAME them" (13:1-7). When the angel poured the third vial and said, "Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of SAINTS and PROPHETS, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy" (16:5,6). "The mother of harlots" was "drunken with the blood of saints, and with the blood of PROPHETS and SAINTS, and of all that were slain upon the earth" (18:24).

Thus is presented a very discouraging picture, but look at the other side. Truth ultimately triumphs, for the martyred saints and prophets are reigning on thrones in one of the closing scenes of the great drama (20:4). There is a war scene in chapter 12. between the dragon (satan) and Michael and his angels, and behold. the dragon was defeated and cast down and a "loud voice" said, "Now is come SALVATION, and STRENGTH, and THE KING-DOM OF OUR GOD, and THE POWER OF HIS CHRIST: for the accuser of OUR BRETHREN is CAST DOWN, which accused them before our God day and night. And they OVERCAME him by the BLOOD OF THE LAMB, and by THE WORD OF THEIR TESTIMONY; and they loved not their lives unto the death" (12:1-11). In 14:13, John hears a voice from heaven saying, "Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours: and their works do follow them." In 18:1,2, John hears an angel cry, "Babylon the great is FALLEN, is FALLEN, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean bird . . ." In 19:20, the beast and false prophet are "cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone." In 20:10, it is said, "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

Thus we see the contrast. Babylon (worldliness) wallowed in luxury, and trafficked in the blood of saints and prophets, but she ultimately falls. The false prophet (human religion) seems to gain the upper hand in conflict with the true, but "truth crushed

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to earth shall rise again, the eternal years of God are hers. But error wounded, writhes in pain, and dies among her worshippers." The mighty hand of political oppression laid heavily upon the heads of God's people, but it could not prevail. The dragon, (satan) the proprieter of all opposition to truth by whatever means, seems to have everything under control, but alas, he is bound, cast into the bottomless pit, and the saints and prophets he has persecuted and killed are "reigning with Christ a thousand years" (20:1-4), and everything seems secure for the cause of truth and right, but beware of complacency! the thousand years is ended and "satan shall be loosed out of his prison" "a little season (20:3), but be not dismayed, ultimately he is cast into the lake of fire (20:10) and destroyed forever. Truth and right have triumphed at last! All foes are conquered, and the saints are at rest in God's peaceful paradise (19:10-22).

CONCLUSION

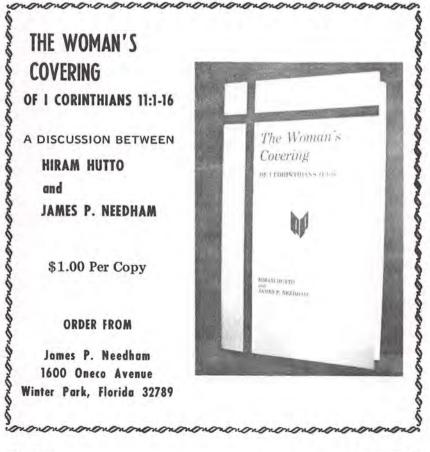
There is no more beautiful or meaningful book in the Bible than Revelation. It is unfortunate that men have so abused it that many either are afraid to read it, and others spend all their time trying to give meaning to the countless pieces of poetic drapery that form the back-drop on the action stage upon which it is played out. It is just such nonsense that deprives many of the great lessons God put in the book for us. We must not gaze at the beautiful and/or unusual drapery on the stage to the point that we do not see the act, muchless interpret it significance. One must strive for a comprehensive over-view of each act and scene, rather than exhausting all his interpretive energy on the many incidentals.

We must constantly ask ourselves, "What did this mean to the people to whom it was originally written?" It was a coded message to them, but what was the message? not, what is the significance of all the details of the code? It is certain that Revelation meant a great deal more to those who originally received it, but let us remember that in the first chapter we are told, "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein" (1:3), and also in the very last chapter, "Blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book" (22:7). We must not conclude that the Book of Revelation has no message for us.

And now that all acts have been played, and all scenes are finished, and the final curtain is pulled, the Son of God comes, as it were, to the center of the stage and says, "I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the

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root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come, and let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" (22:17). Then in one final warning he says, "He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen." (22:20). Then, John having viewed the entire drama, yea, having been often in the midst of the fastmoving action, and having fathomed the deep significance of the over-all play, exclaims with great emotion, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus"! (22:20). This is truly the reaction of every person who understands this great book. It does not excite fear, but cool confidence; confidence because we are assured that God is on His throne, Christ is executing his divine plan, and regardless of what happens, truth will triumph "because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 Jn. 4:4).



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KOSMIOS AIDOS SOPHROSUNE Three Words in I Timothy 2:9

(A Defense of the "Traditional" Use of the Passage)

Ron Halbrook

A number of thoughts are offered from time to time on the subject of woman's modesty. No bitterness or unbrotherly strife need be shown in such published remarks, as none is offered here. A spirit of inquiry and attempts at *open study* should be manifest. Whenever earnest study occurs, good is done.

Most all who speak out seem to agree that the principle of modesty ought to be taught. All should be commended who are *willing to speak out* on this important subject, rather than being intimidated by the terrific pressures brought to bear by the god of this world.

But, there seems to be occasional disagreement on what word, words, verse, and/or verses properly bear on this subject. Much has been said at times to exclude the applicability of the word *modest*, as it appears in KJV expression "*modest apparel*," from the subject at hand. The word in question is KOSMIOS. Emphasis has been given to other words and/or verses, and some very good information has been brought forth on how other words and verses serve to teach what we always thought KOSMIOS helped to teach.

Let us use all that is rightly taught on modesty from other words than KOSMIOS and from other verses than 1 Tim. 2:9. These few lines are offered for the sake of those who might be scared or confused into leaving KOSMIOS out of the arsenal on modesty, after exposure to various doubts, confusions, and reservations expressed by some.

It is by no means established that KOSMIOS has nothing to offer in this fight against the immodesty of scantiness! There is no need or justification for a wholesale abandonment of the practice

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of quoting "that women adorn themselves in modest apparel" when teaching on modesty (as we commonly use the word)!

Actually, three words in 1 Tim. 2:9 have a bearing on the problem of scanty dress. (1) KOSMIOS emphasizes order and a sense of propriety within, which is reflected without (as in one's apparel). KOSMIO (dative, singular, feminine of KOSMIOS) is the adjective translated "modest" in the expression "modest apparel." (2) AIDOS emphasizes a steadfast, immovable sense of shame within the heart. It is translated "shamefacedness" in the KJV. (3) SOPHROSUNE emphasizes inward self-discipline, the habit of governing and holding in reign one's desires. It is translated "sobriety." Scanty dress is the outward proof that one has inwardly weakened or broken the bounds of all that KOSMIOS, AIDOS, and SOPHROSUNE suggest!

We hear from some that AIDOS may be fairly used in teaching on modern dress problems, but KOSMIOS has nothing to do with such matters. We're told that the "order" in KOSMIOS is only a "neatness" — a sort of artistic arrangment, cleanliness, etc. The truth is that KOSMIO extends beyond that limit to the whole concept of that order which the Lord brings into our lives — a fitness and propriety which includes *all that is right, holy, and uplifting.* This order includes modesty, just as a proper sense of shame includes modesty; just as inward self-discipline includes modesty.

That is why the sources given below include modesty in their definitions and discussions of KOSMIOS, AIDOS, and/or SOPHROSUNE. Nearly all these sources, taken separately, use modest or modesty as involved in the meanings of at least two out of our three words. Modesty, without any notation or explanation of its use under one listing being any different from its use under another listing, comes under the purview of all three words, as these sources taken together show. There is no authority for excluding modesty from any of these three words. These sources show that limiting "modesty" to any one or two of the three words is without proper substantiation: Greek-English Lexicons by (1) Arndt & Gringrich, (2) W. J. Hickie, (3) Thomas Sheldon Green, (4) Thayer, (5) Harper; then (6) Vine's Dictionary of N.T. Words and (7) Commentary on Timothy and Titus; (8) Word Studies in the N. T. by Vincent and (9) Synonyms of the N. T. by Trench: and a number of commentaries, as on Timothy and Titus by William Hendriksen.

Objections to "modesty" in KOSMIOS have been based on

quotations from commentaries which emphasize the costly array and other incidentals mentioned in verse 9. The implication is that scanty clothing can't fit in this context; both should be discussed and applied as needed today. The period when the N.T. was written was troubled by immodesty caused by (1) costly, form fitting and see-through silk — this was the rage, the newest thing, the in-thing for society, the most costly array around! (2) This costly, "scanty" clothing was specifically accompanied by extravagant hair-do's, including (3) gold dust sprinkled in the hair and (4) other costly ornaments. An interesting description of this trend may be found in East To Cathay; The Silk Road, by Robert Collins, page 44f. Those who displayed their worldly attitude in the first century by either over-dressing or under-dressing violated the inward sense of proper order (KOSMIOS), inward sense of (AIDOS), and inward sense of self-denial proper shame (SOPHROSUNE), which the Lord commanded.

We are sometimes cautioned that the newer translations render KOSMIOS "seemly" and "proper"; thus modesty is not included. Fine; let us refer to these translations. Such translations include the idea of modesty, as a little perusal of a few English dictionaries will show. For instance, "proper,": "conforming to a standard; becoming; seemly; correct" or "see synonyms . . . modest." Or, try "modest," — "observing the proprieties of dress and behavior," *i.e.* proper clothing! Scanty clothing violates *every definition* in this paragraph (and many more could have been added).

Was Paul redundant if he used three words that have a bearing on the modern question of modesty? No more than he was in verses 1-2 of the same chapter. "Supplications," "prayers," "intercessions," and "giving of thanks" have some overlapping meanings, yet each can be distinguished. So with "all men." "kings," and "all that are in authority." Words can have some overlapping in meaning without being identical — and without being redundant.

Let vigorous discussion and open study continue. This article isn't "the last word" in this debate. It is healthy for us to learn from each other. Let us continue to teach on modesty, from whatever text we feel is proper. But, as all the evidence continues to come forth in discussions from time to time on both sides of the question, this writer is compelled to urge brethren to continue using 1 Tim. 2:9 and KOSMIOS in the "traditional" way.

> 3536 Dickerson Rd. Nashville, Tennessee 37207

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What's Your Question?

BIBLE ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS. Send to: James P. Needham, 1600 Oneco Avenue, Winter Park, Florida 32789.

QUESTION: Offending a Brother

"What does 1 Corinthians 8:13 and Romans 14:21 mean when they say one should not offend his brother?" - Nebraska

REPLY:

First, let us read the passages under consideration:

"Wherefore, if meat causeth my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore, that I cause not my brother to stumble" (1 Cor. 8:13).

"It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth (ASV) (or is offended, or is made weak KJV)" (Rom. 14:21). The clause in brackets () found in the KJV is lacking in support from the best manuscripts, thus is omitted in the ASV, and most post KJ translations.

The reply to this question will be largely a word study since the understanding of these verses hinges upon the meaning of "offend" or "stumble." Though I know that most of our readers are not Greek scholars, the reason for telling you what is the Greek word for "stumble" or "offend" will become apparent in the course of this reply. The word is "SKANDALIZO." Concerning this word and its relatives, we have the following:

"Signifies to put a snarl or stumbling block in the way, always metaphorically in the NT., . . . it is absent in the most authentic MSS. in Rom. 14:21. The RV renders it by the verb to stumble, or cause to stumble, in every place save the following, where it uses the verb to offend, Mt. 13:57; 15:12; 26:31,33; Mk. 6:3; 14:17,29" (Vine).

Originally meant "to set traps." In Classical literature it is

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translated: "He sets traps with his questions."

In OT Hebrew it means, "To strike (slam) . . . to catch in a snare . . . to slip . . . to stumble . . . an obstacle on the path over which one falls (Lev. 19:14; Isa. 57:14) . . . causes of disaster (Psa. 119:165) . . . Occasion of sin and hence leading to punishment, which is again disaster."

"In the NT as in the old what is at issue in SCANDALON is the relation to God... the SKANDALON is an obstacle in coming to faith and a cause of going astray in it. As in the OT it is the cause of both transgression and destruction... for a fall in faith is a fall in the absolute sense. The force of the verb SKANDALIZO is even stronger than that of the noun SKANDALON in the NT whereas SKANDALON is only an 'occasion of falling' which might lead to a fall or not, SKANDALIZO is the causing of a fall and SCANDALIZOMAI the actual taking place of the fall."

"In 1 Cor. 8ff. and Rom. 14f one may see most vividly what is included in the multiplicity of SCANDALIZESTHAI. The strong with his freedom destroys the brother whom Christ has saved (Rom. 14:15); he thus overturns the work of God (Rom. 14:20), i.e. the saving work of Jesus, which includes the OIKODOME (edification jpn) of the community as well as the individual. The weak, by acting against his conscience and faith and thus falling victim to SCANDALON, KATAKEKRITAI, 'has (already) fallen under the condemnation of the judge,' (Rom. 14:23). Paul shares the faith of the strong (Rom. 15:1) but ... takes the side of the weak" (Kittel and Friedrich Theological Dictionary Of The New Testament).

SOME OBSERVATIONS: On the basis of the data given concerning the words involved, we can make the following observations:

1. The things under consideration in Rom. 14 and 1 Cor. 8, are in the realm of *personal freedom*, namely, (a) eating meats sacrificed to idols, and (b) observing special days (Rom. 14:1-6).

2. One's relationship to God would not be affected regardless of which side of the issue he occupies (1 Cor. 8:8), but each should forgo his freedom when exercising it would: (a) "grieve" — injure or damage (Arndt & Gingrich) another's faith (Rom. 14:15), (b) cause a brother to stumble or engage in something he thinks is wrong and thus sin against his weak conscience, and thus God (Rom. 14:13,23). (c) "Destroy" a brother, that is,

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overthrow his faith (Rom. 14:15,21).

3. Nothing in these passages or any others obligates us to forgo any freedom because someone (a) mistakes our action as an affront to them because it violates his/her personal opinion, (b) gets his/her feelings hurt and threatens to identify with another congregation if he/she doesn't get his/her way. (c) gets his/her sensitive feelings hurt and pouts because everyone doesn't kowtow to his/her petty whims.

If I am wrong in this, we would all be miserable because someone objects to just about everything we do. If our actions are to be governed by the petty whims of others, (that is, if they simply object to what I do and it doesn't cause them to sin) we would look about like this: All women would wear hats to worship, and black dresses down to their ankles. We would all drink from the same communion cup, and all break our bread from one peace. We wouldn't have a regular preacher, Communion on Sunday night for those who couldn't take it on Sunday morning, or Bible classes at our assemblies. We would never meet in a building we owned, could not have a preacher's study in the building, a telephone, or a public address system. We would not have carpet on the floor, paint on the walls, or upholstered pews. We would never have elders, deacons, Bible class teachers, or a church secretary. We would not have a church treasury, a typewriter, a tape recorder or a business meeting. We could not have a baptistry in the building, or a wedding, or a water fountain, or a rest room, etc.

There would be no end to the list because individually and collectively, we would be obligated to stop doing anything and everything to which anyone objected. Everyone would be obligated to let another's conscience be his/her guide in everything. If his/her conscience changed, which all consciences inevitably do, we would be obligated to go where it goes.

We must always be ready to give in and give up where and when our actions injure the faith of others, or tend to lead them away from the truth, but I know of no passage that obligates us to govern our lives by the super-sensitive or hyper-critical immaturities of those who make a career of self-righteously seeking to force their opinions on others.

Paul says, "Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification" (Rom. 15:1). It is not good to pamper petty whims.

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When Human Life Is Cheap

James P. Needham

Human life is sacred. The taking of it has always been a sin before God. The first recorded case of murder is Cain's slaying of his brother, Abel (Gen. 4). Cain was cursed for this sin, and in Gen. 9:6, God said, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man."

Dr. Albert Einstein coined the famous phrase, "reverence for life." He also practiced it.

The Christian must reverence human life, for it is sacred. No amount of human reason, or philosophy can justify violating God's prohibition of taking human life, except as He directs.

We have lived to see the price of human life drastically decline in our own beloved country. To be sure, life has never been very precious in the minds of politicians who, often under false pretenses, have gotten us involved in wars designed to protect the commercial interests of the multi-millionaires who have foreign investments. But today, the value of human life has declined in the minds of the general American public. I have reference to the wide-spread approval and practice of abortion in our country. Over the past four or five years hundreds of thousands of legal abortions have been performed, and that without shame! The Supreme Court has now ruled in favor of it.

General Giap, the master mind of the North Vietnamese military machine has been quoted as saying, "The life and death of human beings means nothing. Every minute thousands of people die all over the world." (Orlando Evening Star, Dec. 23, 1972). The price of human life has always been cheaper in the Oriental mind, than in the West. Are we being influenced by their philosophy?

Life has drastically declined in value in this country when the Supreme Court rules in such a way as to protect the murderer (no capital punishment) and yet allows the wanton slaying of helpless unborn infants (abortion). This will have to go down as the absurdity of the century. Revelation 21:8 says "Murderers ... shall have their part in the lake of fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

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Akron, Ohio -- "You are editing a great little paper ... I have felt the same as you expressed it on the instrumental music accompanying religious songs at weddings and funerals ... I am looking forward to the discussion upcoming in TORCH ... " --Peter McPherson

(Editor's Note: The discussion on instrumental music, and social meals in the church building have aroused a great deal of interest and comment. I am now in the process of publishing the debate, and would like to receive as many prepublication orders as possible. Price is not yet known, so send no money. Several orders already received. We will mail the finished product as soon as possible. It will be paper back, and as cheap as possible. We hope for wide distribution. jpn)

Titusville, Florida -- "Thank you and your family for the diligent work you are doing in printing this fine paper" -- Thomas R. Lester

(Editor's Note: Many have expressed the same appreciation to the Farris family, and they are very deserving of it. They spend many hours preparing this publication. Contrary to what many might think, such a venture is not one of windfall profits. Brother Farris has thousands of dollars of his own money tied up in printing equipment, and there is serious doubt that he has broken even over the years he has published TORCH. It is a work of faith and a labor of love. I appreciate the fact that many readers recognize that we publish TORCH for whatever good we can do with it. jpn)

Atoka, Oklahoma -- "I am edified with the work of the good brethren who stand for the truth. The articles "Reflections of a Young Preacher's Wife," and "Why Ephesus Had No Missionary Society," that appeared in TORCH, March '73, are truly good. More of this type writing is needed and faithful members of the

18 (90)

body of Christ need to appreciate it more." -W.B.J.

(Editor's Note: The most frequent comment we receive concerning TORCH is the uniqueness of it's style and material. This seems to be very appealing to our readers. We are not trying to be different; we are trying to be true. A great deal of thought goes into each issue, and from the large file of articles contributed, I try to select articles that are the most relevant and best written. I am naturally attracted to any article that shows original thought, and approaches a subject from a different angle from the ordinary. It is not always necessary that it be completely in harmony with my views. TORCH, as you know, has an open-door policy. Neither the editor nor the readers is infallible. We should all be open-minded. jpn)

Gonzales, Louisiana -- "I just read one of your issues of TORCH and must say that I enjoyed it very much. This was the issue containing "The Hobbs Street Bathing Suit Affair." I'm sure that you have received your share of brickbats, but my contribution is a bouquet. I can certainly appreciate your sense of fairplay. As you stated, and as I also realize, what took place there in Athens certainly left a scar on the body of our Lord. However, I can appreciate the way you used wisdom in not making rash judgments before all the facts were in. Let all of us who are God's people and who love truth hope and pray that the wrongs on both sides may be corrected and this horrible wound healed." --James H. Gunts

(Editor's Note: Our readers also frequently comment upon our efforts to be fair and reasonable. I discovered a long time ago that reactionary writing: going off "half cocked" and persuing a gut fight between and among those uying for more influence than they ought to have, seldom is objective, often loses sight of the point of error, and appeals to radical, partyistic and unreasonable persons who feel insecure in any other atmosphere. O yes, I get a few brickbats! The tough-minded, thick-skinned and hard-nosed thing to say is that these don't bother me -I just ignore them, but that would be false. They do bother me! I don't always agree with others' evaluations of me, or their interpretations of my writings and actions, and I do sometimes feel the need to reply, but ignore them, I don't. Brickbats can be great teachers! Those who ignore them are poor students, and are likely to wind up with a "hickey" on their heads! I do very much like to have all the facts before I comment. I have no ambition to be the first to burst into print with a story (like the secular press), or to write sensationally. Those who are so motivated should keep their

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words nice and sweet; for they never know from day to day, which ones they'll have to eat! jpn)

Doniphan, Missouri -- "I am so glad you sent this copy of TORCH, as I have received every copy that has been printed since the beginning by Foy Wallace in 1950, and I do not want to miss a copy. I was 92 years old February 22, 1973, so I want to take TORCH as long as we both live. I wish every member of the church took TORCH. I feel it is needed ... God bless you and the work you are doing." -E. F. O'Neal

(Editor's Note: What a joy to receive a letter from such a brother. What a privilege to have such a distinguished reader. I wonder how many other readers can match this brother's subscription record for TORCH. I wonder if we have any other reader who can match or surpass this brother's age. Please let us hear from you. I would like to determine if this brother is the oldest and the longest reader of TORCH. jpn)

Augusta, Kansas -- "I enjoy TORCH very much. More down-toearth teaching than in any other paper." -- Leroy Shuman

(Editor's Note: Of course, I think this is a very discriminating reader! All jokes aside, I said earlier that I don't always accept others' evaluations of me. While I appreciate this letter, and many others like it, I cannot afford to agree with it. We shall continue to try to make this paper a simple extension of our individual efforts to preach the gospel without trying to be the biggest and the best of such publications. A spirit of competition among members of the body is not healthy. jpn)

Roseburg, Oregon -- "I thoroughly enjoy each issue and the variety of subjects covered . . . Good luck in the future and may God bless you for your efforts." --Milton L. Anderson

(Editor's Note: This reader mentions another feature of TORCH that is mentioned frequently in our mail, "the variety of subjects." I took this editor's chair with a firm resolve to make TORCH a well balanced publication; one that is not centered around and ONE issue, and one that deals with a variety of relevant subject matter. All indications that such objectives are being realized are encouraging. jpn)

Brooksville, Florida -- "I appreciate . . . the debate on the use of the meeting house in regard in social and recreational activities. I think you have cleared the air once for all for any who thought

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that the 'antis' were against eating in the building owned or rented by the church *per se*. I have long defended the all-day meetings with dinner on the grounds, since the eating was an incidental, and not the purpose for the gathering. Also the individuals provided their own food, etc. This seems to me to be the same as the preacher's eating a sandwich in the study while preparing a sermon or other work related to his responsibilities." --Kenneth Thomas

(Editor's Note: All of which proves that error cannot stand in the light of truth, and open discussion between brethren of good will never hurts, but helps the truth. Proponents of error, if not honest, like darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil, thus they shy away from head-on confrontations with the opposition in open discussion. Such serves the cause of error, but never the cause of truth. We continue to see evidence of good done by this discussion. Our liberal brethren have relied upon misrepresentation ("they think the building is holy," etc.) which arouses prejudice in "brain washing" brethren and promoting churchsponsored recreation. The Hawk—Needham debate is the only printed debate on this subject, and I know of only one other being held among us on this issue. jpn)

Glen Burnie, Maryland -- "Had to say 'amen' to brother Chandler's article on schools. I believe the answer to the problem is not the closing of the schools, but an opening of the churches. Close the schools and what do you get? You have eliminated the source of abuse, but you have killed the good with the bad as well, and we are still saddled with indifferent, do-nothing churches. I have said it before, the problem is not necessarily the school. It is some in the administration, and the attitude of some brethren. There is the fight. If every church would do what Palm Springs Drive and James P. Needham are doing, the college Bible department would be out of business." -Jeffery Kingry

Danville, Kentucky -- "I respect you ever so much for your fearless stance as editor. Undoubtedly, with the appearance of Royce Chandler's article, brother Kingry's in the last issue, and your own expressed opinions, TORCH will be 'branded' as being 'anticollege.' Such cries will no doubt come, but I adjure you not to buckle to the demands of those who love their 'pet' more than the Lord's blood-bought body, His church. I have confidence that you will not and for this I am grateful. TORCH continues to be a welcome arrival for me and I was pleasantly surprised when two arrived this week. I share brother Kingry's (futile) wish that TORCH were a weekly. Continue to keep TORCH an indepen-

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dently produced publication without any allegiances or alliances. I am aware that several 'conservative' editors might not have published Royce Chandler's article." -Bruce Edwards

(Editor's Note: The above letters are typical of many we have received on the college issue. It is obvious that many are beginning to realize that what some of us have been saying about the college's relationship to the church is exactly what sound brethren have been saying all along, but that many brethren have not always practiced what they claimed to believe. Thus, they have, perhaps inadvertently, tied the fortunes of the Lord's church to the college, even though they have opposed this in the liberals. We repeat that church dependence upon a college is only one step away from church contributions to one. It is pretty obvious that this is a bitter pill for some of the brethren to swallow who found themselves guilty, but this doesn't change the facts, and all the over-reacting, recriminations, misrepresentations, and false labeling won't help the cause of the college, or hinder the march of truth on this matter. It's similar to something a brother said to me in a recent letter as he described his encounter with a brother, "To make a long story short. I hurt his feelings. I mean, he is supposed to be a 'big-name-preacher' and some upstart kid called his card and caught him cheating I found him to be a quite pompous man ... anything that will take the air out of him will do him good." Whether brethren "who seem to be somewhat" like it or not. there is too much truth in what this brother says. When we get so pompous that we can't hear anyone's voice but our own, and when we get so big and powerful that we think we can't be wrong about anything, or even warned of dangers, we assumed the same attitude we have been opposing for the past 25 years in the liberals. As I said before, we unintentionally may have over-estimated the degree to which brethren depend upon the college, but any degree of dependence calls for a warning. Now, I ask, is there any brother in all the world who will deny that? jpn)

PLANNING TO MOVE?

PLEASE NOTIFY US OF ADDRESS

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COME WITH US TO THE BIBLE LANDS AND EUROPE

We are very anxious to have you, your family and your friends along with us on this historic tour of the Bible Lands and Europe. This will be my second tour. I spent several days in the Bible Lands and Europe on an around-the-world trip in April and May of 1972. We urge you to make your reservations with us at once.

PLACES WE SHALL VISIT: Rome, Athens, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem (a number of towns and villages in Israel), Tiberas, Frankfurt, London.

QUALIFICATIONS: I believe I am in a position to make this trip an unforgetable experience for you. I studied Bible geography under a recognized expert in the field: The late N.B. Hardeman. I have also conducted numerous classes on the subject and have kept abrest of the field of Bible archaeology. My previous tour of the Bible Lands will be of great assistance in making your tour more meaningful, enjoyable, and profitable. I plan to supply each traveler with a booklet containing extensive notes on the places we shall visit, and conduct several teaching sessions along the way. This should make the trip spiritually edifying.

BONUS: As you can see, we have included a bonus on our trip; we will also see parts of Germany. It would be a shame to visit that part of the world and not see this historic country. Our visit to Frankfurt includes a cruse up the beautiful Rhine river, lined on either side with cliffs, vineyards, and ancient castles.

WHO SHOULD GO? We would like to invite anyone to come with us who is physically able to make the trip. Already we have older and younger persons signed up to go. My wife and teen-age daughter will be going, and will help with chaperoning the young folks, and rendering other assistence to all travelers as needed.

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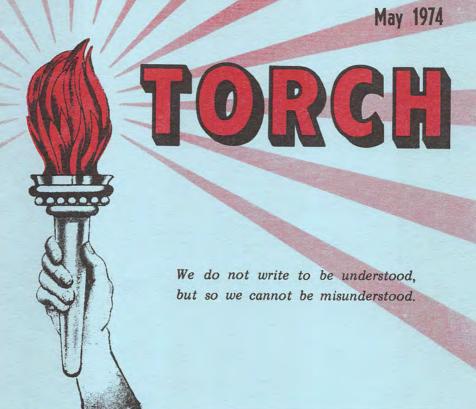
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CHECK YOUR ADDRESS

Several copies of this journal have not been delivered to subscribers because of incorrect addresses. It is important that we have your correct address in every detail: name, number, street, route, box, apartment, etc. must be exact. Zip Code Numbers must be correct. Check your address on this issue and if corrections need to be made please let us know.

Also, please inform us of address changes in advance and do not forget to include your old address. In the past we have tried to send issues that subscribers missed due to address changes, but time and expense have forced us to cease the practice.

Send address changes/corrections to: P.O. Box 254, Mt. Olive, Alabama 35117.

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| | Editor | |
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Editorial-

James P. Needham

Shabby Treatment

I guess there always have been incidents of shabby treatment between and among brethren, but that doesn't make it right or acceptable. Paul said, "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words" (2 Tim. 4:14,15). And he spoke of those who "preach Christ of envy and strife; . . . of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds" (Phil. 1:15,16). He also spoke of being "in perils among false brethren" (2 Cor. 11:26). John said that Diotrephes had been "prating ("to raise false accusations" Vine) against us with malicious words" (3 Jn. 10).

When we are at the receiving end of shabby treatment from brethren, such statements help us to realize that we are not the first to receive such, and probably will not be the last, but this serves as *poor balm* for a *broken heart*. Nothing hurts quite as badly as wounds inflicted by those we love and who are supposed to love us. Our Saviour knew well the feeling when he found Judas in the ranks of His enemies, and Peter denying that he even knew Him.

Those who have not witnessed instances of shabby treatment among brethren are either poor observers, or isolated. Several cases of such come to my attention every month, and it seems almost criminal to remain silent about them. Surely, it is not too much to expect better of those who claim to have surrendered their lives to Him who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth, and whose example we claim to follow. It might be well to say at this point, that in discussing these matters, I have no specific case in mind, mainly because these actions have become so common that I don't need to be specific.

1. BREAKING CONFIDENCE: The time has arrived when many brethren are afraid to write private letters to other brethren for fear that they will appear in print and used in some unholy way. Any more it is very dangerous to speak to brethren on anything in confidence. Even one's best friend may turn against him

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and expose confidential matters never intended for the public ear. Many are the instances where private discussions pertaining to the business of a local church have become public knowledge through persons who could not keep confidence, or who thought they could aggrandize themselves by exposing it.

A brother who would knowingly break a confidence, when divine duty does not compel it, exposes a character flaw that can reasonably be expected to permeate his whole being and manifest itself in other ways and in other matters. The breaking of a confidence is a form of dishonesty, and a first cousin to stealing. We may have come to a time similar to that described by the prophet Jeremiah, "Take heed every one of his neighbor, and TRUST YE NOT IN ANY BROTHER: for every brother will supplant, and every neighbor will walk with slanders" (Jer. 9:4).

2. PREACHER — CHURCH RELATIONS: I am constantly disappointed in some shabby behavior involved in preacher — church relationships. Certainly, it is not a one-sided affair. Some actions on the part of both are quite shabby indeed.

(a) Pay the preacher not to preach: Preachers are notorious for their lack of financial security. They have no salary insurance, and are unable to save for that "rainy day." A few weeks without salary would put most of them in very dire circumstances. Because of this, they have tried to work out a reasonable severance plan with churches. A common agreement is that the church or the preacher will give a 30, 60 or 90 days notice when either party decides to make a change. This seems to be reasonable and practical. It gives the preacher a chance to relocate without disruption of his financial security, and the church a chance to look for a new preacher without disrupting its work. But, many times it doesn't work out that way.

There are several cases where the church gets ready to change preachers, so they give the preacher three months (or whatever is the agreement) wages and tell him to vacate the premises. They bar him from the pulpit, and frown on his or his family's attending worship there any more. When he tries to find the reason for such drastic action, they refuse to give any. They may even write up a nice recommendation for him to help him get relocated. They have been known to tell him that they have nothing against him personally, and he has never preached anything that is not so, and that his life is beyond reproach, but they just want to change preachers and they prefer that he not occupy the pulpit any more, so they are paying him the remainder of his salary and want him to vacate the premises as soon as possible.

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In some cases where elders are involved, the church may seek in vain to find out why the preacher has been terminated. The elders have reasons, but they refuse to give them to the church. They feel no obligation to divulge them, and the church is supposed to respect their high-handed action and meekly submit. This is supposed to be what the Lord had in mind when He says elders rule and members are to submit. They interpret this to mean that the elders are free to do as they please, even though they would be unable to scripturally authorize their conduct.

It seems almost impossible to impress some churches and brethren with the fact that the money in the church treasury is not theirs to do with as they please. By what authority can it be used to pay a brother not to preach? They refuse to allow him to earn the wages they pay him, but refuse to make any scriptural charge against him. I can find authority for a church to pay a preacher to preach, but none for paying a preacher NOT to preach. Brethren will give an account for such conduct.

In about 99% of such cases, the preacher has violated some human custom developed in a given church, or they have discovered that he refuses to preach what they want to hear, or ride some hobby they have. They know this, the preacher knows it, and the church knows it, but those "in authority" refuse to state it or put it in writing because they know it is unscriptural and they don't want to defend their action, or suffer its consequences. Thus, they play a little game of "shut mouth," hoping it will blow over and they can keep everything under control. He who thinks this is not shabby treatment is warped in his thinking.

(b) "FLY-BY-NIGHT" PREACHERS: Some preachers are as unstable as water. Every time one sees them, they are looking for some place to move. I hate to say it, but it is true. When I receive letters from some preachers I know before I open them that they want me to help them find a new location! They have moved around so much that they have worn out their furniture and families! One brother who had been preaching 16 years said he had 2 years experience 8 times!!!! It is too true to be funny!

These preachers sometimes move half (or all) the way across the continent at great expense to the local church, only to stay for a few months, or a year or two at most. The churches are always mistreating them. They are like the fellow who has had bad neighbors everywhere he has ever lived!!!! It is obvious who is the problem. It is not the church, but the preacher. He is cantankerous, immature, or lazy. He doesn't do his job. The brethren don't (and shouldn't like it. He always has "an ace" up

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his sleeve; if they don't like it, he can always move. Never mind that they have spent from 1 to 3 thousand dollars of the Lord's money to pay his moving bill, and will have to spend that much more to replace him and some other church that much more to move him in long enough to get to know him and that much more to replace him etc., etc. He is indeed a privileged character! The purse strings of the Lord's treasury are in his hands to finance his childish escapades. Never mind the fact that these thousands of dollars could be used to take the gospel to those who never heard it.

Such preachers ought to do the Lord and the brethren a favor and sell insurance, teach school or drive a taxi cab. They show a lack of dedication to the cause they profess to serve, and should find something to do that is less expensive to the cause of Christ and the salvation of souls.

The basis of this shabby treatment between churches and preachers is selfishness. Brethren are using the church and the Lord's money to further their own selfish whims and desires. They are not serving the Lord, but their own bellies (Phil. 3:19). There is often no sincere effort made on the part of the church or the preacher to get along and build an enduring relationship. Each picks at and emphasizes the other's bad points. Harmonious relationships are never built in any institution on the bad qualities of those involved. No church has ever found a perfect preacher, and no preacher has ever found a perfect church. He or they who searches for such is like the fellow who spends his life looking for the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. All concerned need to grow up, and become more interested in what is good for the Cause of the Lord, and less interested in what will protect their pride, promote their party, and cement their control over the congregation.

In conclusion, we would do well to learn what the scriptures require of us in our relationship as brethren in the Lord. "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malace; and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:31,32). "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing" (1 Pet. 3:8,9). If anyone is in doubt about what it means to LOVE the brethren, read 1 Cor. 13.

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Mountain People

Bruce Edwards, Jr.

As we parted ways, a dear friend and brother in Christ scribbled these words of encouragement in my college yearbook, "Just don't slip into the valley and let the world get you down, WE ARE MOUNTAIN PEOPLE . . ." Our brother's beautiful phrasiology captures the essence of one's life in Christ; as Christians we are not to be constantly inhabiting the valleys of despair and depression to which the world will drive us WE ARE MOUNTAIN PEOPLE! We must span the glorious heights of God's wondrous love and care, remaining firmly encamped in the mountains of His righteousness.

For centuries, the enemies of God's people looked upon Jehovah as a "mountain God" because of the many mighty works He had performed in the mountains of Palestine. So many wonderful and magnificent events transpired *in the mountains* of God's creation. When God gave His glorious law to Israel, He didn't beckon Moses to the lowest depths of the physical world, not into some *valley* of the earth — He called him into the majestic heights of Mount Sinai!

Throughout the Scriptures, mountain imagery is employed to symbolize the glorious nature of God's people in their fellowship with Him. Particularly, the prophets saw the mountain as a figure for His greatest work, His new creation, the church. In Isaiah 2, the prophet proclaims, "And it shall come to pass in the latter days, that the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow into it." Again, in Daniel 2, we find the church pictured as a stone which smote the image and "became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." Indeed, a beautiful portrait!

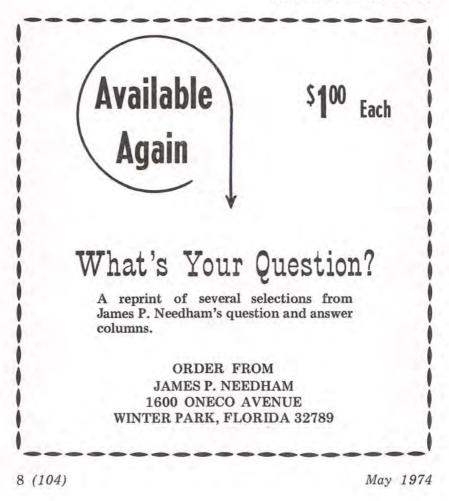
Thus, God's people have a heritage of "mountain dwelling," both literally and figuratively. We too, must be MOUNTAIN PEOPLE, casting aside a nominal existence in the dark vales of the earth; did not even David in the 23rd psalm paint a picture of bleak despair as "the valley of the shadow of death?"

Come out of the *valley* and climb up into the summit where the air is fresh and clear and where the mountain springs flow with the

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healing waters of salvation; God is here and beckons us to His side: "For ye are not come unto a mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, and unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words... we are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable hosts of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven ... wherefore receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service wellpleasing to God with reverence and awe: for our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:18, 19, 22, 23, 28, 29).

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"Slow Me Down — Help Me, Lord"

Don Alexander

Time in rhythms beating Marks our days as fleeting; While the beats we're hearing Eternity is nearing. As Satan is alluring Is my Saviour still assuring Heaven is prepared for me When Time becomes Eternity?

The pace of life is madd'ning, The strain of life is sadd'ning. With Satan I'm competing, And often he's defeating. He blinds me to sin's sorrow And says, "There's no tomorrow." Joys of Earth cannot compare With Heaven's riches I shall share! Slow me down, Help me, Lord. With Heaven's riches I shall share!

Slow me down, Help me, Lord. Set my hope upon the crown Thou hast reserved for me When hope becomes reality. And Earth and all its toys Rob me of salvation's joys Slow me down — Help me, Lord, to think of Thee.

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There is only one source of light in this dark world, "Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: For he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may be children of light" (John 12:35).

"The Light Still Shines in Darkness"

Jeffery Kingry

Philosophies of men are always taking a created entity, like the mind, or the body, or economics, or the individual conscience, and elevating it to the rank of God.

The inevitable result of reversing the creator and the creature is always profound disorder, even a breakdown, of the world. The reason for this is that the created is never equal to the task of being God, and simply fails because it is incapable of dealing with the totality of life.

Suppose, for example, we make an absolute of that which God has created which we call the "mind," "spirit," or "intellect," and elevate it to the place of God. We determine that the mind of man is *the* principle which shall govern man and his affairs: reason shall have all dominion. This is exactly what men devised in philosophy when they began to follow gnosticism, from the Greek GNOSTOS: To know. This view of life which placed right and wrong on a purely intellectual level produced a system of thought which was incapable of dealing with the emotions, needs, and irrational forces in human life. How does intellect and reason deal with the sacrifice of Jesus, God's Son, on the cross, a most unreasonable act? Reason does not touch sacrifice, unrequited love, boundless mercy, or unreasoning hatred of sin.

But, suppose, in response to the intellectual "god" we turn to

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the "life" god? A purely biological view of the world leans over in the other direction and leaves the mind and the spirit unsatisfied. The intellect *is* more, and demands more than being a mere "effect" of the flesh. Man's evolution ignores that man is more than a "Human Ape," that he is an ethical creature created in the image of God, and that he is of infinite worth even when he is called old, sick, infirm, or a "non-person" unfit to live. The "life-god" puts a premium on "living," "experiencing" with little or no thought as to how those in less than perfect health can pursue its man-made goals.

Similar conflicts can be shown in *all* attempts to base a view of the world on a created thing. For example, when the *individual* is deified and the philosophy declares that nothing but the so-called "right of personality" is to develop within its own nature, we have what is commonly called subjectivism. This attitude of "do-your-own-thing" ultimately leaves man as a community out in the cold, and the community always revolts quite violently against this "individualism." Individualism, being basically selfish, also carries its own seeds of destruction, for man is first a community being, and will not survive without community. The recluse, the exile, the hermit are all tragic and particularly impotent creatures.

On the other hand, when the community is elevated to the place of God, and "what is good for the group is good for me" is the rule, then a collectivism develops which ultimately will suffocate the individual personality. Social order is not always good, as witnessed by the regimented order, lack of crime, and the lack of personal moral evil, in such countries as Red China and Nazi Germany. Many in the church would that government in some way legislate morality: Set the standard for decent dress, what is or is not "fit" reading material, establish "prayer" and "religion" in school and other public institutions. But brethren need to be made aware that by binding socially and legislatively what we believe moral, only leaves us with no recourse when the next generation decides we are not moral. Man controlled morality is not moral, it can even be immoral, as witnessed by the community destruction of innocent human life in Red China and in Nazi Germany. Whenever the individual is tyrannized by the community, he will rebel in favor of a new individualism, and the cycle will begin anew.

If we trace the history of our nation, even the world, in the last several centuries, we are apt to lose track of the catch words, battle cries, and slogans, so rapid has the succession of philosophies

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been. It has been a veritable parade of man-made idols, and as they pass by, how comical and ineffectual they appear in hindsight. We can recognize them by their effect on time, and by their suffixes: They always end in "ism."

Herein is the lesson for the Christian. Whenever God the Creator is deposed as the *absolute* and *sovereign* Lord of the world and our life, *the gods take over*. We can look through history and see how Catholicism took over when God as authority was taken down. We can see how the gods of "my liberty in Christ" destroyed the unity of the restoration movement, and the gods of "Let's do it in a big, brotherhood way" destroyed the unity of his people in this century.

Whenever God's authority is neglected to follow the gods of man's making, there will be an inevitable battle among the philosophies of men, and with any war a mutual disregard for the design of God. And therefore mutual understanding also disappears from the heart of God's people, because the binding force which is God's will is gone, and each sect with its own gods, that is with their absolutized minds, fight with one another. There is no human arm that can call a halt to this conflict of gods.

It would seem, therefore, to me which a sense of the Deity and the power of God, and with a recognition of history's lessons, that they would turn from the gods of this world to follow the only guide out of this dark maze called living. There *is* a creator who is the Lord of heaven and earth and that Jesus Christ stands at the beginning and end of history. This means that we are not wandering about in a hopeless maze at the mercy of the powers of fate, but with faith in Him and His way we can accomplish everything he has created us to do.

The gospel tells us of the KAIROS, the "acceptable time," the "today" in which we may hearken to his voice. The *real* history of man is not based upon human gods and philosophies, but a working trust in God and his way of doing things. Only when men, as men, turn back to the Original Plan can we be assured of a new beginning and a new future. There is only one source of light in this dark world, "Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: For he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may be children of light" (John. 12:35).

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How to React to Controversy

Larry L. Dickens

It seems impossible these days to make any significant statement in matters of religion without someone disagreeing. Even the fundamental statement of Christianity, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God, is controversial, for many in this world do not believe it. This being the case, it seems appropriate to discuss the proper reaction to controversy.

One wise professor once said that most people shun controversies, preferring to be with their own group where they can "grin and talk to themselves." Whenever a controversy arises, silence is one of the worst things that one might practice. When there are differences, especially among brethren or friends, there ought not to be just silence and the going of separate ways. It is good to talk with those who do not agree with us, who take different positions, that we might come to an understanding of the truth; that if we are in error we might be taught; that if we hold the truth we might be able to teach others.

Do you remember this statement? "We must realize, just as Mr. Khruschev, that a great battle of ideas is going on in the world today. When we fail to answer, only one side of the case is presented to the world today. We in the free world must learn that we cannot stand silently by while the disciples of Communism beat their drums in the world forum." (U. S. News & World Report, Sept. 28, 1959, p. 60). This statement was made by Mr. Richard Nixon, then the Vice-President, about political ideologies.

In the scriptures, we find, "Beloved, while I was giving all diligence to write unto you of our common salvation, I was constrained to write unto you exhorting you to contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints. For there are certain men crept in privily . . . , ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ" (Jude 3,4). Therefore, each person MUST contend for the faith. We need to study, recognizing that WE can err; that the other man may err, BUT we can too. When there is controversy, one may be in error, or the other, or both.

All controversy, therefore, should be treated seriously. If a subject is worth discussing; it is worth SERIOUS discussion. The question then comes: how can we discuss seriously controversial subjects? In Fred Wilhelms, "Letter to a Teacher," Social Foundations of Education, Dryden Press, pp. 557-560, we find this advice to a young teacher on discussing controversial subjects.

1. Seek to focus on the problem, on the REAL ISSUES.

None of us should wish to state the position of another man in a way that misrepresents HIS position. We should, by proper dialogue, seek to find out what the exact position of the man is; what the issue is; and then deal with it exactly where he stands, not trying to push him off into a position that is not his real position.

2. In doing this, we should not forget the COMMON GROUND that we hold. Let us not, as we look at the controversy, forget the common ground; let us not forget that we ARE friends or brethren. Then, neither let us just look at the common ground and forget the controversy, forget the things that DO need to be discussed.

3. Next, one should define clearly and honestly all issues and all the TERMONOLOGY used. Too often in religious discussions, the terms are not scriptural terms, or they are scriptural terms but are being used in ways not found in the scriptures. This is confusing. Therefore, definitions are important.

4. In the beginning, we should determine the standard of reference. In a religious discussion, we do not have to FORM some criteria by which to measure, because there is only one standard of reference to the Christian, God's Word. However, meaningful discussion is often ended before it begins because one of the parties does NOT want to use THE standard, the Bible.

5. We should seek in the discussion only one goal: the PROPER solution to the controversy; not a solution that suits my fancy or the other man's; or is to my advantage or somebody else's; but the solution that is right and proper. In religious controversy, remember that any solution we might work out, or any arrangement that might come, if it compromises the Word of God, is not THE solution, for it will fall in judgment. It cannot stand if it is not based on a "thus saith the Lord."

6. Finally, he advises the young teacher to "Keep his weight off the problem." In other words, WHO believes it will not decide what is right or wrong in the matter. Often, in religious matters, the truth is lost because someone of great influence believes error and forces HIS position upon the less influential and the easily impressionable.

When there is a controversy in religion, I believe, if all who disagree will turn to the standard of reference, the Word of God, agreeing to seek the TRUTH *together* in the spirit of love, disregarding outside pressures and influences, and accepting the word as the source of all good things; the controversy will be ended. "Behold, how good it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

(adapted from a sermon by E.L. Flannery)

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James P. Needham

Hell does not fit into modern theology, so it is looked upon as a joke, a myth, or fairy tale. There are some denominations which will not say hell is a joke, but they advocate a no hell doctrine. They claim it is either the grave, or anihilation, or some other theory that would deceive people into believing it is not as bad as the Bible pictures it as being. In either case, those who accept these deceptions are in for a rude awakening! They won't be in hell 10 seconds before they change their minds!

People want to take from the Bible what they like and reject everything else. One theologian said we must "demythologize" the Bible. The way to do this is to call everything you don't like a myth! Hell is unpleasant, so it is a myth! Heaven and love are pleasant, so they are true. That is a handy little system, but it is a colossal deception.

The same Bible that talks about heaven and love, talks about hell. It is nonsense for one to say, "I will accept one, but not the other." If we cannot believe some of the Bible, there is no good reason to believe any of it. It is either all true, or there is no way to determine if any of it is true. We must believe it all or not at all. There is no middle ground that is sensible or scriptural.

Jesus said, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Mt. 25:46). This statement was made by Christ. Those who would believe in heaven and not in hell, must accept half of His statement and reject the other half! That hardly comports with the demands of reason!

"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works... And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:12, 15).

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What's Your Question?

BIBLE ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS. Send to: James P. Needham, 1600 Oneco Avenue, Winter Park, Florida 32789.

QUESTION: Euthanasia

"I agree that no one should have the right to decide when a life should be terminated . . . I have heard recently of persons who have made out a written statement with the help of their attorney stating that while in sound mind and body they are voluntarily stating that they have no desire to be an emotional burden to their family and that, should they ever contract a condition for which competent medical authorities stated there is no hope of recovery, they desire to be allowed to die without efforts to artificially prolong their lives. Do you feel that such a legal document made in advance of a terminal illness would be wrong?"

- Kentucky

REPLY:

The real weakness of the legal document described is found in the phrase: "Competent medical authorities." Who are they, and where are their credentials? I have been associated with doctors, hospitals and sorrowing families as a preacher of the gospel for 26 years now, and I have never met a "medical authority" that is sufficiently "competent" to infallibly diagnose all terminal illnesses. To be sure, they are right more times than wrong, but this is insufficient credentials to place the decision of life or death in their hands. There are too many cases where they have been dead wrong. Without any desire to cast any unkind reflection upon the medical profession, I have witnessed too much medical advice from "competent medical authorities" that would have been disasterous had the family followed it. Let's look at a case or two:

(1) A very dear young Christian recently called to tell me that she and her husband were expecting their first child. You see

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"Competent medical authorities" had told her that she need never worry about pregnancy since she has a missing chromosome. All the while these authorities knew that if she ever conceived she would have a terrible time giving birth, and the baby would very likely be deformed. Well, now that she had conceived, her "competent medical authorities" were strongly advising her to let them abort the child. Others were urging her to follow the doctor's advice.

In her moment of desperation she called me all the way across the continent to seek my advice. I urged her not to follow the doctor's advice; not to terminate the baby's life. I asked her, "If the doctors were wrong when they said you would not conceive, how do you know they are right in their prophecy that the baby will be deformed?" Of course, there was no answer to that nagging question.

Well, the baby was taken by caesarean section at almost full term. To be sure with great difficulty, but the baby is not visably deformed. It has some problems, but they appear to be controlable. She is a little darling, and will go down in the medical history books. A young Christian is experiencing the joys of motherhood rather than the guilt feelings that she would have experienced had she followed the advice of her "competent medical authorities."

(2) A young man had a motorcycle accident. He sustained brain injury, as well as a broken leg and internal injuries. He was attended by the best neurosurgeon in the area. He gave the family no hope for the survival of their son. He had a tracheotomy, a calapsed lung, struggled for breath, was unconscious for many days and his right side was paralyzed while brethren and friends watched, waited and prayed in faith and hope.

Since "competent medical authorities" gave no hope, and since intensive care units can be very costly, and since the immediate "emotional burden" is considerable, and since the "competent medical authorities" prognosis is that, should he survive, he will likely be "a mere vegetable," why doesn't his father order the doctor to go in and mercifully pull all the plugs and end all the misery? This case has in it all the elements of the querest's question, so what is wrong with pulling the plugs and ending this "artificially prolonged" life?

Well, we are all glad nobody did this! Today the young man is home. His tracheotomy is closed, his lung is well, his leg is healing,

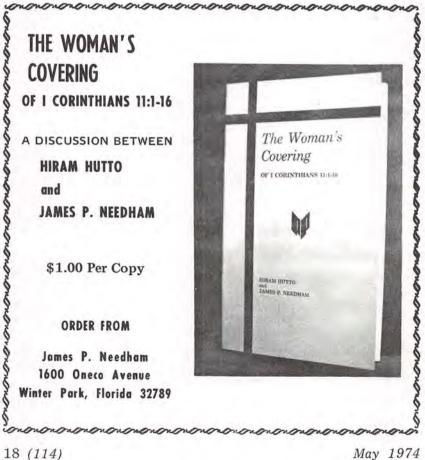
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he is conscious, he is speaking almost normally, he is regaining the use of his right side, and making good progress in therapy. The neurosurgeons give him great hope of complete recovery. What if some "good Samaritan" had pulled the plugs?

(4) A news story recently told of a young person seriously injured in an accident. The "competent medical authorities" gave no hope, and persuaded the parents to donate the heart for transplant, which they did. The courts have now ruled that the youth was not dead at the time of the removal of the heart. What now?

CONCLUSION: There is no way that any person can give a definitive answer to this question. I shall not make a legal document like the one described, or give my encouragement to anyone else to make one. There are to many variables involved and beside, I don't want any fallible human judgment deciding when my time has come. I shall not meddle in God's affairs or consent for others to do so.



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"Behold the Man"

Franklin Burns

The above words fell from the lips of Pilate as he stood face to face with a mob of Jews. The man he was speaking of was Christ, who was standing by his side (Jn. 19:5).

The Governor had made four attempts to release the prisoner: (1) by urging the Jews to try Him by their law (Jn. 18:31); (2) by sending Him to Herod (Lk. 23:7); (3) by giving the Jews the choice between Him and Barabbas (Mt. 27:15); (4) by scourging Him (Lk. 23:16). Having failed in every attempt, Pilate led Him to the people saying, "Behold the man!"

We shall become spectators and gaze upon the man — the harassed, the tormented, the persecuted man. We may see the man from seven angles or views, as follows:

1. Behold the Man! This man was born, just as we are. He grew up, was tempted, felt pain and joy, and experienced every human emotion, just as other men.

2. Behold the Forsaken Man! Judas had betrayed Him; Peter had denied Him; and, the other disciples had fled from Him. He was altogether in the hands of His foes.

3. Behold the Innocent Man! The judge declared Him faultless (Jn. 19:4). Pilate's wife called Him "that just man" (Mt. 27:19). Judas said that he had betrayed innocent blood (Mt. 27:3-4).

4. Behold the Ridiculed Man! His crown was a crown of thorns (Jn. 19:2). His robe was a robe of derision (Mt. 27:28; Jn. 19:2).

5. Behold the Silent Man! He made no defense (Mt. 27:12-14; Lk. 23:8-9). He had lived a flawless life and preached a pure doctrine.

6. Behold the Self-sacrificing Man! He gave his live a ransom for all (Mk. 10:45). The faithful shepherd will die for his sheep, and this Jesus Christ did (Jn. 10:11,17,18). The suffering servant of Jehovah is pictured in Isa. 53:4-7; Christ is that servant.

7. Behold the Victorious Man! Viewing Him three days later, we acknowledge Him as all victorious (Jn. 16:33; Mt. 28:18; Rev. 1:17-18).

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We have beheld the man. Now let us accept His challange. "Follow me!" he says. In order to follow our Master, there are some instructions to which we direct our attention.

I. Stand Not in Idleness. In order to follow Christ, steps must be taken. These must be forward steps, taken in the direction of the Master.

II. Turn Not Aside into Worldliness. Be not hindered by great possessions (Mk. 10:17-22). Do not hold back on account of domestic duties (Lk. 9:59-60). Divided affections will stop your forward progress; avoid them (Lk. 9:61-62). We cannot follow two masters (Mt. 6:24).

III. There is Danger in Lukewarmness. Peter followed from afar and was severely tempted (Lk. 22:54). There is safety in nearness. John followed in nearness and was secure (Jn. 10:27-28).

IV. A Follower Never Precedes the Leader. We should do nothing as worship or service without the Master's example and instruction. The apostles' doctrine will guide us; we must turn aside from our own opinions, doctrines, and best guesses (Acts 2:42).

V. Depart Not from Him in Unbelief. In John 6:66, some of His followers quit following. Remembering how Abram was told to offer his only son, we must not let lack of understanding hinder us from following Christ all the way He leads. In order to follow, we need not understand why the Master leads as He does in every case. Walk by faith and not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7).

Let each of us hear the words, "Follow thou me." Our primary concern should be in ourselves, not in another (Jn. 21:22). Let us be less curious about our fellow disciples and more concerned about our own duty. We cannot fix our attention on what others are doing or not doing when Christ says, "Follow thou me to the cross" (Gal. 2:20). He requires each one of us to follow Him through the grave — even the grave of water in baptism (Rom. 6:4). This is not a mere form, for He leads and we must follow, after baptism, "in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4). Finally, He is leading us and we are following Him to the regions of eternal glory (Cor. 3:3-4). Thus, we dare not take our gaze off of Him for a moment! Every day, every hour, we must "behold the man."

> Route 2 Toney, Alabama 35773

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May 1974

I Am Tired — But Not Too Tired Tired!!!

Curtis Torno, M. D.

God has been good to my generation, for He has provided us with the means that have made America the most affluent country on earth. We have made many, many mistakes, but in the light of all the news that we see unfolding before us, I guess our biggest mistake is our cowardly capitulation to the nation's youth.

We have been the victims of the "no-discipline-lest-you-inhibitthem" school of child rearing and now even the advocates of this discarded theory are admitting their error.

Speaking out for parents who are now faced with the Leftists' Decree to our youth - "Kill your parents" - I want to say with K. Ross Toole, professor of history, University of Montana,

"I am tired of being blamed, maimed and contrite; I am tired of tolerance and the reaching out . . . for understanding. I am sick of the total irrationality of the campus 'rebel,' whose bearded visage, dirty hair, body odor and 'tactics' are childish but brutal, naive but dangerous and the essence of arrogant tyranny — the tryanny of spoiled brats . . ."

"It is time to call a halt; time to live in an adult world where we belong and time to put these people in their places. We owe the 'younger generations' what all 'older generations' have owed younger generations love, protection to a point and respect when they deserve it. We do not owe them our souls, our privacy, our whole lives, and above all, we do not owe them immunity from our mistakes, or their own."

Since when have young children ruled this country? By virtue of what right, by what accomplishment should thousands of teenagers, wet behind the ears and utterly without the benefit of having lived long enough to have either judgment or wisdom, become the sages of our time?

I have watched this new generation and have concluded most of them are fine. A minority is not — and the trouble is that the minority threatens to tyrannize the majority and take over.

I have been on college campuses and around young people; I genuinely like the majority, but I make no bones about it; I dislike the minority; I am aghast that the majority "takes" it and

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allows itself to be used.

The minority does not know what the meaning of common courtesy is, for they have no regard for the opinions of others. They will not listen for their forte is to shout down. They will not discuss but, like four-year-olds, they throw rocks and shout. They are, the minority, arrogant and obnoxious.

We parents have talked a lot about what is going on, but let's face it — why has this present generation been allowed to occupy our homes, our administration buildings, our streets and our parks, trampling on our beliefs and defiling our premises?

We are deeply concerned about our failures; we have not solved the racial problem, but we have faced it; we are terribly worried about the degradation of our environment, about injustices and inequities, but we have attacked these things. We have, all our lives, taken arms against our sea of troubles.

Youth has always been characterized by *impatient idealism*. If it were not, there would be no change. *Impatient idealism does* not extend to guns, fire bombs, riots, vicious arrogance, and instant gratification. That is not idealism; it is childishness.

I'm tired . . . and, bless your hearts, with all the thanksgiving in my heart for the two children that God gave me that have already taken their places in making America a good country, I pledge to the three still in my home that I shall not grow too tired to apply a principle that is God-given to assure them that they will grow up to be good citizens also. Hear it: "Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell" (Prov. 23:13-14). "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:1-4).

Let us parents resolve that we will not become so tired as to forget that God's plan for raising a child cannot be improved upon and the end result will be not *rioting*, *burning* and *destruction*, but all *working together* to build a nation that will exalt the Creator who made it.

> 1029 E. Thomas St. Pasadena, Texas 77502

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May 1974

COME WITH US TO THE BIBLE LANDS AND EUROPE

We are very anxious to have you, your family and your friends along with us on this historic tour of the Bible Lands and Europe. This will be my second tour. I spent several days in the Bible Lands and Europe on an around-the-world trip in April and May of 1972. We urge you to make your reservations with us at once.

PLACES WE SHALL VISIT: Rome, Athens, Tel Aviv, Jerusalem (a number of towns and villages in Israel), Tiberas, Frankfurt, London.

QUALIFICATIONS: I believe I am in a position to make this trip an unforgetable experience for you. I studied Bible geography under a recognized expert in the field: The late N.B. Hardeman. I have also conducted numerous classes on the subject and have kept abrest of the field of Bible archaeology. My previous tour of the Bible Lands will be of great assistance in making your tour more meaningful, enjoyable, and profitable. I plan to supply each traveler with a booklet containing extensive notes on the places we shall visit, and conduct several teaching sessions along the way. This should make the trip spiritually edifying.

BONUS: As you can see, we have included a bonus on our trip; we will also see parts of Germany. It would be a shame to visit that part of the world and not see this historic country. Our visit to Frankfurt includes a cruse up the beautiful Rhine river, lined on either side with cliffs, vineyards, and ancient castles.

WHO SHOULD GO? We would like to invite anyone to come with us who is physically able to make the trip. Already we have older and younger persons signed up to go. My wife and teen-age daughter will be going, and will help with chaperoning the young folks, and rendering other assistence to all travelers as needed.

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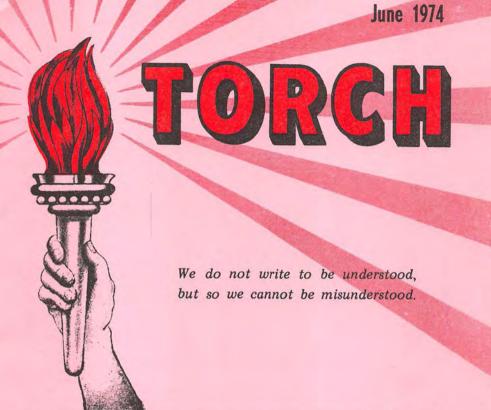
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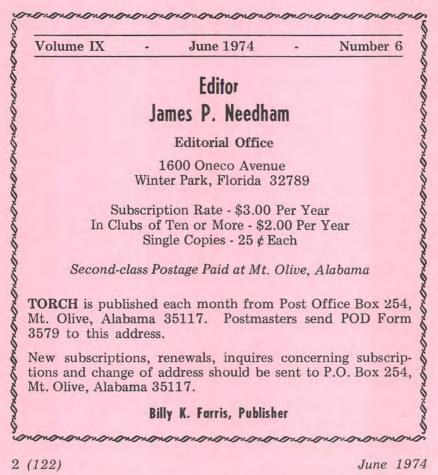


FINALLY MADE IT !

From its beginning with Foy E. Wallace, Jr., TORCH has had a history of being late getting in the mail. With this issue we have finally gotten on schedule and we plan to stay on or ahead of schedule.

I have been pleasantly surprized at how new subscriptions and renewals have continued to come in daily in spite of my tardiness. (This is not to say that there have not been complaints; there have and I am determined to profit from them). I am taking this opportunity to say thanks for your patience and to say a special thanks to Jim Needham, whose patience I have tried and whose friendship I treasure.

Billy K. Farris





Editorial

James P. Needham

Self-Promoting Preachers

I guess I have earned a reputation as a preacher's critic. (I have a lot of experience with a preacher who needs one, myself). A few years ago I wrote a lengthy series of articles for **Truth Magazine** (at the insistence of the editor, Cecil Willis) under the heading *Preachers and Preaching*. Brethren generally responded to that series by insisting that it be put in book form, which it was. (The book **Preachers and Preaching** can be ordered from this editor at \$3.95 per copy). In that series of articles, I "came down hard" on the practices of some preachers. (One friend calls the book "the green-back preacher's manual!) There is constant evidence of good done by the articles and the book, which proves that we preachers not only need critics, but we desire such for our own self-improvement.

Preachers are some of the most (probably the most) influential persons in the church in every age. Paul recognized this when he admonished Timothy to "be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim. 4:12). Such a position puts preachers under heavy obligation always to act in a becoming manner. James admonishes, "My brethren, be not many of you teachers, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation" (Jas. 3:1). By reading this passage in context, it almost forces one to conclude that James means that men expect more from a public teacher than from those who are not such. I do not mean to rule out the possibility that the passage also teaches that God will do the same.

The longer I live and preach the gospel, and the more I learn about people of all types, including preachers, the more I am disappointed in what I see. It would be easy to become cynical, (as some have done), but this would not be right because reasonable persons know the folly of generalizing upon specifics. It is never fair to identify all persons of a given class or group with a "few bad eggs." The equitable thing to do is to reject and condemn the bad and accept the good without regard to the group or class.

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Generally speaking, preachers evaluate other preachers by the number of meetings held, debates, articles written, editorship or associate editorship of some paper, or position with some school. They tend to evaluate themselves and other preachers as "nobodys" who do not have an impressive "track record" in these activities. They envy (maybe not always in a bad sense) those who occupy these positions and engage in these activities. Younger preachers often make prominence along these lines their goals in life, and become very aggressive in their efforts to attain them, even to politicking, pushing and shoving their fellowpreachers, and would, seemingly, hire a publicity agent, if they thought they could get by with it. It is the age-old argument of who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven (Mk. 9:33-37). Many still have not learned the answer to that question. Some have never realized that there are many great and good men in the church who hold very few meetings, don't write for the papers. and have not and would not engage in a public debate. They have never broken into the brotherhood publicity circuit, and are not known as one of the great preachers or scholars of our time, but they do a much greater work for God and man than some who constantly stay in the limelight.

In preacher gatherings, popular or big-name preachers frequently come up for discussion. It is not unusual to hear someone say, "I don't know what the brethren see in him; his preaching is as shallow as branch water, or he is a poor speaker, and yet, he holds "X" number of meetings per year, has so many debates, and is associate editor of _____", etc.

There are various reactions to this type of dialogue. Some write off such talk as being motivated by "preacher jealousy." Others take it to mean that brethren are just generally shallow, so they like shallow preaching. Others say it is because he preaches about 25 minutes, and this makes him popular with brethren in our times who endure rather than enjoy preaching. The "explanations" range all the way from the subline to the ridiculous! But there is one explanation of why some preachers "hold so many meetings," etc., that is almost never discussed because it is almost unknown. Preachers manage to keep it concealed because they know it would tarnish their image as "one of the most popular preachers in the church today," (simply because they hold a lot of meetings) and would give a hollow ring to their glowing reports that "I held meetings last year."

What is that explanation? It is the practice of PROMOTING SELF. Disappointingly, I have come to realize that SOME

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preachers who hold a lot of meetings are not that popular, they are just that brassy! During meetings they politick with the right people in the church to get invited back. They issue strong hints, or just come right out and ask for a return invitation. They make acquaintances and cultivate and/or exploit friendships in churches where they have not been and influence these persons to promote them a meeting. They keep themselves well advertised in the papers, and notify the brethren that "I have time for _____ more meetings in 19____." They politic with other preachers who hold several meetings, and ask them to help them get more, or some-



times preachers "scratch each other's back"; they promote each other. I have learned of preachers who developed a certain series of lessons they think is real special and good (and such preachers are certainly not conceited, they are convinced!). so they write and ask churches to invite them to deliver them. brother told me about a preacher's stopping by to see him one day, and in the course of their conversation, he happened to mention that they had a certain guestion to come up in a Bible class the week before. Right away, the preacher said, "Let me come over and preach a few nights on that subject, I really have some good material on it." Well, the brother was taken aback by his persistence, but the preacher wouldn't give up until the brother agreed to approach the brethren about it. That preacher told me in

a boasting way that "The brethren over at _____ wanted me to come over and preach a few nights on _____." The brethren did no such thing, they ALLOWED him to come!

At a preacher's luncheon I heard a young preacher ask one a little older if he had any material on a given subject. The preacher said, "Oh, yes, I have some real fine material on it, why do you ask?" The younger preacher said, "I have been discussing this subject with some folks in a home study, and could use a little help on it." The preacher didn't offer to furnish him the help, but responded by saying, "Could you get me a debate with their preacher?" The disgusting thing about this incident is the fact

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that I had been talking to that preacher about this very thing that very day (since I knew he was a self-promoter), and was trying, in a diplomatic way, to show him that such self promotion is in very poor taste, and does not become a gospel preacher. He assured me that such a practice was disgusting to him, and that he never engaged in it. It is bad enough to engage in the practice, but much worse to do it and then deny it!

I am certainly no model as a preacher, and I have made my share of mistakes, but in 26 years of preaching the gospel I have never asked any church to invite me for a meeting, or invite me to return for one. I have held a few debates, but in 95 percent of the cases, churches have arranged them and asked me to represent them. In the others, they have come up in the course of local work. I have turned down a few, and suggested that brethren get someone else because I felt they could do a better job. In a few cases I have volunteered my services for gospel meetings for churches that were young and small and needed a meeting, but couldn't afford to pay for one. Never, have I volunteered or even suggested that I hold a church a meeting for which I expected to be paid.

In the 26 years that I have preached the gospel I have held approximately 200 gospel meetings in many parts of the world. This has put me in touch with many thousands of brethren and churches. The study of people is one of my favorite hobbies, and I like to think that I am rather observant. (And that doesn't mean that I am nosy!). One can learn quite a bit about people by just looking and listening. What I have learned about preachers would make a rather large book, in fact it has already done so in **Preachers and Preaching**. I have learned a good many things about a good many persons.

I have found that preachers are rather adept at making rules for others which they don't keep! For instance, I held a meeting at a place where a rather well known preacher was preaching at the time. He is widely known as a "meeting preacher." That is, he holds several meetings each year. He was telling me about a preacher who held a meeting for the church where he was working, and how he politicked to get invited back. He called him a politician, and scored him rather deeply for such action. But as time went on I chanced to discover that this very popular preacher wrote a letter to a church and asked them for a return invitation for a meeting. Blessed is the man that condemneth not himself!

Almost all preachers known to me look with disfavor upon self

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promoting preachers. It is the object of some rather harsh criticism among preachers, and those who are known to engage in it are sort of a joke. But what about those who frown upon it, then practice it? What are they doing, trying to cover up their own practice? or are they deceived into believing that they don't do it? Or, is it just wrong when someone else does it? or do they frown on it because they fear that others are infringing upon their territory?

Some sage said, "If you can write a better book, or build a better mouse trap, the world will beat a path to your door." Which being interpreted means, if you can cut the mustard, do it, and your services will be in demand. If the brethren want you, they will call you. If they don't call take it that they don't want your services, so diligently serve God where you are. I heard a professor in a course on free enterprise say that proverb is "a bunch of bunk." His point was that the free enterprise system is based upon the axium that "it pays to advertise." and if one is going to make it in such a system, he must employ Madison Avenue tactics, and put the name of his product on the hearts and tongues of the populas. Obviously, some preachers agree with this, but is it becoming to a gospel preacher to use such tactics? A good deal of the Madison Avenue advertising of our time is an insult to one's intelligence. The same can be said of the cheap advertising some preachers do. Their action insults the intelligence of the brethren because it says they would never recognize his great ability, if he don't tell them about it.

On the other hand, it is amazing how brethren and churches accomodatively respond to the self-promoters. They often receive them with open arms, and throw the pulpit wide open to them. There has to be a better reason for having a given preacher hold a meeting for a given church than the fact that he asked to do so. If there are any churches waiting for me to ask them to invite me for a meeting, they had better give up now and ask me on their own for they are going to be waiting a long, long time. I don't think enough of my talents to ask them to invite me, and I don't really think they are so desperate that they will suffer irretrievable loss if they don't invite me. If I can arrange to do so, and think I can do good, I will try to respond when I am called, but there is no church on earth to which I am trying to promote an invitation. When I go to hold a meeting for a congregation, I want to feel like I am there because they wanted me to come, not because they were too timid to repulse my brass! If this is not as it should be, I have failed to understand the spirit and tenor of the New Testament, the attitude that ought to characterize a servant of the Lord, and plain ordinary etiquette in this world.

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The Big Preacher Syndrome

There was a preacher of some note Who thought he'd missed the boat: He never got greetings

Or held big meetings For churches near and remote!

But once he was told By a preacher quite bold: You must promote yourself,

Or be left on the shelf Until you are wrinkled and old!

So, loosed from his fetters He began to write letters To men of position Like a real politician, Now he's one of the go-getters!

He stands up big and straight and tall; He's a man of monumental gall!

He writes for the papers And pulls other capers And preaches for churches not small.

Once his name was known as Amos, But now its known as big and famous: He's a very big man,

He thinks he's just grand, On this his decision's unanimous!

> - James P. Needham 3-29-74

Editor and Publisher to Make Philippine Trip

James P. Needham

At the invitation of leading brethren in the Philippine Islands, the editor and publisher of TORCH plan to make a six-week's trip to the Philippine Islands in the spring of 1976. The editor made a similar trip in 1072 with brother

similar trip in 1972 with brother Dudley Ross Spears. We published our material in a book which has been used extensively in the Filipino churches since having been translated into at least one native tongue. Also, for over two years we have sent TORCH to every Filipino preachers whose name and address we have. The church where I preach fully supports one native preacher, and sends our weekly church bulletin to over 100 native preachers. Also, since I was in the Philippines in 1972, I have spoken to over 50 churches in the interest of the Filipino work, and raised several thousand dollars which have been used for teaching aids and benevolence. All this has kept us in rather close contact with the work there, and has led to their urging me to return. They asked that I choose a compatable companion to come with me, and since they have come to know brother Billy K.



Philippine Islands.

Farris through TORCH, I suggested him, and they have responded to this enthusiastically.

Australian brethren have urged me to visit them while in that part of the world, and perhaps this will be worked into the trip also, though it is not yet certain.

The churches where we work regularly have already made plans

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for us to make this trip, and will continue their support to us while we are gone. It will be necessary for us to raise travel and other expenses necessary to the trip. Amounts are yet to be determined, and further announcements will be made as time goes on. We would appreciate anyone or any church's pledging any amount toward this effort.

These may appear to be LONG-RANGE PLANS, but anyone who has made a trip to the Philippines, knows that it is not too long-range. We plan to print a book of the material we will use and ship it before we leave. We hope to have it in the Philippines before we leave the States. This will require a great deal of preparation and work. Too, making our plans this far in advance should simplify the raising of the travel fund since it gives churches, especially, time to consider the matter in their budgets. We hope this will be done, and our travel funds can be raised without too much trouble and expense.

I, and others, have questioned the necessity of continued annual trips to the Philippines. This has been discussed among those who have already gone, and with leading Filipino brethren. It is their judgment and the judgment of many American brethren that these trips remain necessary as long as American brethren and churches continue to put large amounts of money into the Filipino work. Also, these trips continue to bear a great deal of fruit in terms of conversions, edification of the brethren, and training of preachers. Some of the Filipino brethren have asked me to move to the Philippine Islands for a much longer period of time for the purpose of training preachers. I have considered this, but do not believe it is the wise thing for me to do at this time in view of several important considerations. They have asked me to try to find someone to move there, if I decide not to do so.

Brethren Connie Adams and Cecil Willis have announced their plans to go next spring (1975). Details of their plans are not known at this time, but we will publish them as we receive them.

We ask brethren every where to remember this trip when you pray, and make your plans to contribute, financially and otherwise, to its success.

PLEASE NOTIFY US OF ADDRESS CHANGES IN ADVANCE

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Billy K. Farris

God wants his people to be one. Unity is taught throughout the scriptures. "Neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on me through their word; that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us: that the world may believe that thou didst send me." (John 17:20, 21). "Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment." (1 Corinthians 1:10). These two passages should convince us that Christ and his apostles intended that believers be one. It will be my purpose here to discuss where and how unity is realized among God's people.

An understanding of the organizational structure of the church is essential to an understanding of God's plan for unity. The universal body of Christ is a brotherhood (Matthew 23:8; 1 Peter 2:17). The church, in this sense, is not a functional unit. The New Testament provides no external organization for the universal church. The organizational structure of the church is limited to that which pertains to a single congregation. The New Testament knows no organization larger than a single church where there are functions of the church that require collective action (1 Corinthians 1:2; Philippians 1:1).

Unfortunately unity is generally thought of on a "churchhood" basis. Some journals refer to themselves as "publications for the

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churches of Christ." One editor makes much of the fact that he writes about the "Church of Christ" with a capital "C" in church. He envisions unity in diversity on a "churchhood" basis. We often mistakenly apply John 17:20, 21 and 1 Corinthians 1:10 in such a way as to imply "churchhood" unity. The "churches of Christ," Romans 16:16, does not refer to "congregations of the church of Christ" or to a "churchhood," but to churches in different locations. Each church is the church of Christ.

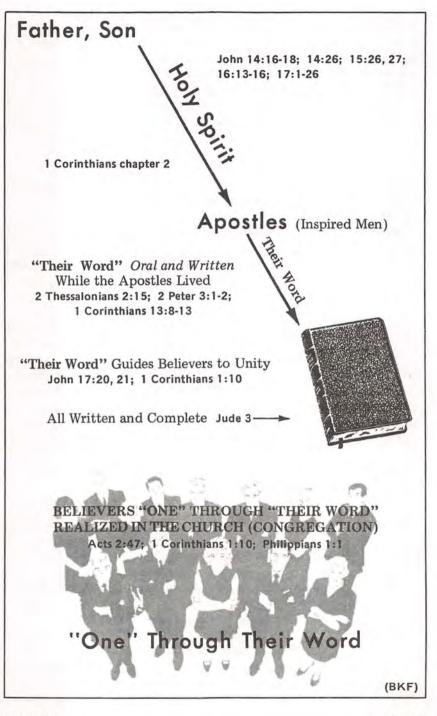
The unity for which Christ prayed is realized where we find Christians working together in units which we may call local churches or congregations. Each collective unit of believers is the church of Christ. (Cf. Philippians 1:1). The prayer of Jesus asks that "they may all be one" "that believe on me through their word." The letters of the apostles show us that unity is to be realized in the collective working unit (congregation). (Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 1:10; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Philippians 1:1; 2:1-4; Colossians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1). These epistles deal largely with congregational affairs — an inspired writer bringing the believers to unity through his word.

When a church is directed by the scriptures, and works to have unity (and has unity), then they are practicing that for which Christ prayed.

The church (working unit) will have problems from time to time that will threaten its unity, but these problems are LOCAL. Most problems can be overcome through instruction (2 Timothy 3:16, 17). We learn wherein we are wrong and we change to that which is right. Sometimes it becomes necessary to deal with those in the congregation who engage in sin, teach error and cause division, but this action is a LOCAL matter. The congregation will have to oppose the error taught by those who are not Christians. It will also have to oppose the error taught by brethren, but again, the battle is a LOCAL action. No church has the right to make any decision for another church.

Sometimes the church at one place will "withdraw fellowship" from another and expect every "faithful" church to comply with its action. In the first place, the idea supposes some kind of ecclesiastical tie-up of churches. Every church is a separate and complete unit. There are no instructions in the New Testament

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as to how one church should "withdraw fellowship" from another. In the second place, the idea makes sects of the churches. For example, I know a city where there are a number of churches who practice this secterian foolishness. Church "A" has no "fellowship" with church "B" and church "C." But church "C" has "fellowship" with church "A" and church "D," but not with church "B." (And on and on it goes). The reasons include everything from petty differences between brethren to who is preaching in the meeting for one of the churches.

Matters of judgment and expediency should never cause division. There may be disagreements over many things which do not warrant drawing lines or division. This is evident from Romans chapter 14. There are many personal things we may hold which do not affect or alter the worship, organization, work or identity of the church. So long as we do not make our feelings a matter of law and try to force the whole church to accept them, we can have unity.

The early church of Christ exhibited a profound simplicity in organization. This organization, the congregation, provided the relationship among believers wherein unity could be realized. Christ's church in this generation can enjoy (if it does not already) the unity for which Jesus prayed. But unity does not just happen, nor does it continue without interest and effort. God's plan for unity does not depend on what the religious world does, and it does not depend on what churches of Christ collectively do. The answer to Christ's prayer for unity (John 17:20, 21) and the plea of the apostles (1 Corinthians 1:10) is realized in the church LOCALLY.

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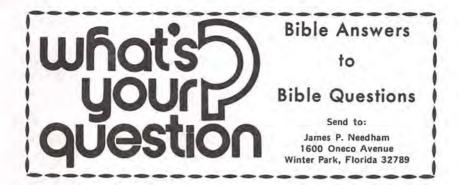
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QUESTION: Isaiah 35:8

"Please explain Isaiah 35:8. What is the meaning of 'the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err' in the way?" ---Florida

REPLY:

It would be well first to read the passage in its entirety.

"And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein."

Isaiah is called the Messianic prophet because he prophesied so much of the Messiah and His kingdom. But it is always well to look first for an immediate fulfillment of a prophecy. Some of them have both an immediate and a N. T. fulfillment. I think this is one such. Isaiah lived previous to the Babylonian captivity, and the immediate fulfillment of this passage is *the way* God prepared for the faithful remnant (Isa. 1:9) to return from Babylon in 536 B. C., and thereafter. The Bible student will remember that God put it in the heart of Cyrus, king of Persia, (the Persians conquered Babylon) to assist in this return (See Isa. 44:28; 45:1-14; Ez. 1:1-11; 5:13, 14; 6:3; Book of Ezra). God promised to be the leader of this way (Isa. 35:4), thus in their return He would protect them from harm and danger (v. 9), thus the simplest of

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those traveling this way could not go astray because God was the leader and protector.

The secondary (N. T.) fulfillment of the prophecy is the church. That it is Messianic admits of little doubt in view of the context. The church was frequently referred to as "the way." This way is for the redeemed (v. 9), and not for "the unclean." The "wayfarer" (the redeemed who travel this way), regardless of how simple (foolish, or unreasoning) he might be would have no excuse for erring (going astray) from this way.

The reason for this is very simple: No person can enter the church who is too simple to understand the requirements of membership; to "live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world (Tit. 2:12). In prophesying of this WAY, Jeremiah said, "For they shall know me (God) from the *least* to the *greatest*..." (Jer. 31:34). Under the O. T. system one had covenant relationship with God by virtue of physical birth. It was a national religion. Thus there were many who were in that way who were incapable of understanding its terms and requirements (Infants and imbeciles). This cannot be true in the N. T. way, for "they shall ALL be *taught* of God" and "EVERY MAN" must *hear* and *learn* BEFORE he can *come* to Christ (Jn. 6:44, 45).

The logical conclusion, then, is that the person who is capable of understanding the *terms of entrance* into the Messiah's kingdom, is also capable of understanding the *requirements of citizenship* in it, and, regardless of how simple or foolish he may be, there is no excuse for erring therein, and one cannot do so with *impunity*.

This does not mean that citizenship in the kingdom requires sinless perfection for we know this is impossible for humans. There are terms of forgiveness which the child of God must meet. The point is, one cannot live a life of sin in the King's highway. and expect His approval.

WHAT IT TAKES TO WRITE COPY

"It takes a heart more than a brain. If you can't feel, you can't write no matter how many A's you got in English."

> - Lenord V. Loveridge in Printers' Ink

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Brotherly Consideration

John Rhodes Trotter

Our beloved brother Paul urges Christians saying, "Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give perference to one another in honor" (Rom. 12:10). Today, practically all who profess to be diligent disciples of Jesus could no doubt show the alien sinner God's scheme for man's redemption by citing several passages from the Scriptures. But, although such may be the case, I believe that many of us have completely neglected two of the many essentialities which constitute pure New Testament Christianity -(1) Brotherly love and (2) Brotherly preference.

As members of God's holy family, we must never have contempt toward anyone, especially toward our own brethren. Rather. "let all be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kind-hearted, and humble in spirit; not returning evil for evil, or insult with insult, but giving a blessing instead" (1 Pet. 3:8,9). When our brethren wrong us in any way, we must "never pay back evil for evil . . . but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:17-18,21), and if at all possible, "be at peace with all men" (Rom. 12:18). Howbeit, today's New Testament church is characterized by bitterness and abrasiveness. And, contrary to the disposition of Christ, we often pounce and claw at one another like wild mountain cats. Moreover, attacks are frequently ignited by malice and engineered with delight. Furthermore, we launch such attacks as if we have never heard Paul say, "Love is patient" (1 Cor. 13:4). Such, we must never overlook or fellowship our brethren's "unfruiftul deeds of darkness" (Eph. 5:11); but also, we must never joyfully crucify our erring (whether doctrinally or morally) brethren and thus ignore James' sober exhortation to reconvert them: "My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth, and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his ways will save his soul from death, and will cover a multitude of sins" (Jas. 5:19,20). Paul says that we must not regard our erring brethren as enemies, but admonish them as brethren (2 Thess. 3:15). In short, instead of happily feeding our erring brethren to the hungry lions, we must save their souls from death!

Another essentiality of pure New Testament Christianity is the practice of giving "preference to one another in honor." Sometimes we are guilty of overemphasizing I, me, and mine. We esteem "good ole number one." Even in worship services, many of us continually desire the leading role. We want to lead the

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singing, make the announcements, serve on the Lord's table, preach the sermon, lead the prayer, teach the Bible class, etc., and thus receive special recognition. (Sometimes it is necessary that only one or a few of the men perform most or all of these services. However, most of the time, we simply crave the limelight!) You might say that we have the attitude of Diotrephes; we love the preeminence among men (3 Jn. 9). Yet, such an attitude is totally foreign to the attitude of our Lord. "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus . . ." (Phil. 2:3-5). We who perpetually seek leadership and never submit to followership are Christians who fail to examine ourselves in the light of brotherly preference; Paul says that love "does not seek its own" (1 Cor. 13:5). Brethren, let us heed these words of instruction: "Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly" (Rom. 12:16).

Obedience to "the elementary principles of the oracles of God" is only the beginning of our service to the Great Redeemer. We need deep devotion "to one another in brotherly love" and also "preference to one another in honor." Therefore, may we "press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus . . . who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory . . . " (Phil. 3:14,21).

> 3808 - 17th Ave. Columbus, Georgia 31904

In the next issue . . . "CHRISTIANS, CRITICS AND CRITICISM" AND OTHER THOUGHT PROVOKING ARTICLES

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Greenville, South Carolina - "I have just finished reading with the highest interest your editorial entitled 'Being a Little Sentimental, Or . . . Sounds I Would Like to Hear Again.' Without agreeing with all your conclusions, I enjoyed the article beyond measure, and it is probably the most forceful (to the average reader) you have ever written on the 'issues.' I have said for a long time that most of 'our' papers are written by preachers for preachers with only preachers reading them. This article proves that an item can be forceful and appealing to a wide reading audience while still teaching what one wishes to teach. It takes a little more thought and effort to do it than to warm over an old sermon, but it will reach more people.

And another thing: I think we would all like to return to the good old days when things were far less complex. But we can't go back — that is in the sense of turning our backs on the problems we face today. Each generation must carve out its on little place in history. I want to so live and so preach the word of God that my own sons (hopefully preachers of the future) would like to return and hear me.

Although I did not write for this purpose, I will say a word about our exchange on the music question. I am unable to follow your reasoning (I can clearly understand what you are saying but I cannot understand your reason back of it). You state your conclusions but do not reason to your conclusions. For example, you say that to use a thing designed for worship for any other purpose would be to profane the holy. Yet in your beautiful article referred to above (p. 5) that 'I would like again to eat the left-over bread from the Lord's table which sister Midgett always made.' How could you eat bread designed for worship (and which minutes before was used in worship) for food without profaning the holy? Another thought, if an act of worship cannot be used (I mean something designed for worship) for anything but worship, how could you give to a secular organization or make a gift of money

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to anything other than the Lord? I hold that giving is an act of worship (when it is so purposed), but I can give (to the Red Cross — not necessarily approved, but it is the thing that came to mind) — the same act, mind you — and it not be worship. I think if you will use the same reasoning on hymns as entertainment as you do on these two points, you will reach the same conclusion I have." -Howard Winters

(Editor's Note: The editorial "Being A Little Sentimental," Dec. 1973, has received an enthusiastic response. We appreciate brother Winters' remarks in reference to it, even though, as he says, he does not subscribe to all the conclusions drawn. Being a fellow-editor, he is quite well acquainted with the problems involved in keeping a periodical fresh and interesting.

I can understand and, to a degree, appreciate his statement that "... we can't go back — that is in the sense of turning our backs on the problems we face today," but what many fail to realize is that sometimes we have to go backward to make progress!!! When the Campbells, Stones, etc. set about to return to "the ancient order of things," they were making progress while going backwards. ("Back to the Bible" was their "watchword.") The same situation obtains with the promoters of today's innovations in the field of church grants to human institutions. If they ever make any progress, they will have to shift to reverse. As long as they stay in a forward gear, they will go further and further from the truth, and the current controversy among them over what they call "liberalism," is solid evidence of the truthfulness of this. Brother Winters is in the forefront of the opposition to the ultra liberals (those who are going into classical liberalism), but he is like a person he once described in a letter to me, "... he fights liberalism with one hand, and sows it with the other." He says he wants "to so live and so preach the word of God that my sons would like to return and hear me." But there is a very strong likelyhood that his sons will view his preaching in about the same light as brother Winter's now views the preaching of those I quoted in the editorial he complimented. His sons likely will take this generation's principles to their logical conclusions, and thus wind up further from the truth than their father is willing to go. This is sad, but it is true. Disrespect for scriptural authority, even in a so-called "small degree," has a way of growing with time.

Next, brother Winters gets back on the singing with instrumental accompaniment exchange. He thinks he has found an inconsistency with my position in the editorial.

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1. He picks up my statement that "I would like again to eat the left-over bread from the Lord's table which sister Midgett always made." He then asks, "How could you eat bread designed for worship (and which minutes before was used in worship) for food without profaning the holy?" I find no inconsistency here whatsoever. First. unleavened bread as such is not the Lord's supper. It is a part of the Lord's supper when it is used in the assembly accompanied by thanks and discernment of the Lord's body (1 Cor. 11). Brother Winters' point would be like saying one can never eat unleavened bread, or drink grape juice outside the assembly because these elements are exclusively designed for worship. We all know this is not the case. Brother Winters will have a point when he proves by the scriptures that the singing of "psalms, hymns and spiritual songs" is not designed exclusively for worship. The only proof he has is his opinion. He has produced no scripture, and will not because he cannot. Now, another point that is worthy of note is that when I ate the left-over bread, or when one drinks grape juice outside the assembly, he does not take the Lord's name in vain as in the case of singing songs containing God's name, but which are not worship, according to brother Winters' position. There would be a semblance of a parallel also, if I were advocating doing the exact same thing out of the assembly in regard to the Lord's supper (saying the prayers, reading the scriptural referring to the Lord's supper) as is done in the assembly, but doing it for my own entertainment, denying that it is worship. I would be just as opposed to this as I am to brother Winters' contention about singing spiritual songs for entertainment.

Furthermore, I think brother Winters must have a rather weak cause when he tries to prove it by the childish actions of a 6 or 8 year old country boy! They say that a drowning man will grap at a straw to try to save his life.

2. The same situation obtains in what brother Winters says about giving. Notice: "Another thought, if an act of worship cannot be used (I mean something designed for worship) for anything but worship, how could you give to a secular organization or make a gift of money to anything other than the Lord? I hold that giving is an act of worship (when it is so purposed), but I can give (to the Red Cross — not necessarily approved, but it is the thing that came to mind) — the same act, mind you — and it not be worship."

Again, it does not follow that because giving is an act of worship, everytime one gives he must be worshipping any more

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than to say that since grape juice and unleavened bread are used in worship, everytime one drinks grape juice and eats unleavened bread it must be worship. It does not follow that since singing is an act of worship, one must worship everytime he sings. There are eating, giving and singing that are not acts of worship in the sense of (1 Cor. 11; 16:1,2; Eph. 5:19, etc). My contention is. however, that scripturally, we cannot take the giving the Lord's supper, or the singing that God designed for His worship ("Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs") and use them for our own entertainment. I firmly maintain that one cannot scripturally do the giving commanded in 1 Cor. 16:1,2; 2 Cor. 9:7, etc., to the Red Cross any more than one can do the grape juice drinking and unleavened bread eating commanded in 1 Cor. 11; Mt. 26, etc. in the context of recreation (the very act for which Paul condemned the Corinthians in 1 Cor. 11), or the singing commanded in Eph. 5:19: Col. 3:16, etc., as entertainment, to say nothing of adding mechanical music to it!

In this exchange brother Winters constantly has sat in judgment upon my logic and reasoning power. In his latest effort he says, "I think if you will use the same reasoning on hymns as entertainment as you do on these two points, you will reach the same conclusion I have." "You... do not reason to your conclusions." It is very obvious to me, and no doubt to many readers, whose logic needs repairing. As a matter of fact, I do use "the same reasoning on hymns as entertainment" as I did on "these two points," but contrary to brother Winters' prophecy, I did not and cannot "reach the same conclusion" he has. I am perfectly content for the reader to decide why this is the case. jpn.)

Marshall, Texas -- "As I said before, while we may not agree on everything you write I surely enjoy the lively way you say it, with the 'bark off' so to speak. I doubt any have ever had to scratch their heads to determine what your position is on anything you write. Wish I could commend all other writers on their clarity. Your annual indexing is by subject matter, offering a system of retrieval, something very few others provide. I have written a short article on this, and someday may publish it, suggesting to all editors they do this. Brotherhood publications in circulation today have some very fine writing, particularly on subjects currently of interest among God's people. They offer what seems to me to be far and away the best commentaries on these. Yet, almost to a one, they have no reasonable method of retrieval information for later reference, thus destroying much of the poential good they could do."

--Wallace H. Little

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"For Lack of Knowledge"

Don Alexander

For lack of knowledge:

Faith is forgotten, Hope is hindered, Desire is destroyed, Responsibility is resisted, Workers are weakened, Laborers are lessened, Holiness is halted, Immorality is enthroned.

Self is sanctified, Error is honored, Pride is praised, Doctrine is despised, Truth is taunted, Lasciviousness is loved, Salvation is spurned, Saints are splintered.

Souls are neglected, The Lord is rejected, His grace is detracted, His cause is destroyed.

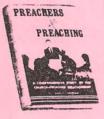
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We do not write to be understood, but so we cannot be misunderstood.

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THE SPIRIT OF TORCH

"It is not an organization; it is not a business; and not being in business, it is not competitive with anything anybody else is doing. It is rather a medium — the personal medium of its editor, who publishes it from month to month in the same spirit and on the same principle that he preaches from place to place."

> - Foy E. Wallace, Jr. TORCH, Volume 1, Number 1 July, 1950

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Editorial

James P. Needham

Christians, Critics and Criticism

Criticism is an integral part of life. All of us give it as well as take it from time to time. We were all introduced to it quite early in our earthly existence. We would all agree that it is much easier to give than to take. Criticism can be a good thing, or it can be very bad. This depends upon its nature, motivation, and our response to it. The world is a better place because of criticism, and it would be a very dangerous place to live without it. Nothing would be safe if nobody ever criticized. What if everyone agreed never to criticize, but to accept everything everybody does and says; never point out the flaws even though they are detected?

The world owes a lot to the critics. Much of the progress in all phases of society comes about as the result of criticism. Science, art, literature, education, and politics all thrive on criticism. Because of it improvement is constantly in progress. Without it society would stagnate and die for lack of challenge. A recent development in our country called "consumer advocacy" demonstrates beautifully the value of criticism. It protects the consuming public from the unscrupulous fabricators by criticizing faulty and dangerous products promoted in the free enterprise system. Consumer advocacy is really organized criticism. Before its development the same criticisms were being hurled at the fabricators' products, but being disorganized, they were practically powerless as a force for good. The powerful corporations often felt obliged to simply ignore them.

CRITICISM IS OF TWO KINDS

(1) DESTRUCTIVE: Destructive criticism is often motivated by bitterness, persistent negativism, retaliation, or jealousy. It is never motivated by a desire to help its object, though this motivation may be claimed by the destructive critic. That is to say, the destructive critic is sometimes intellectually dishonest. It is usually accompanied by arrogance and self-righteousness, and it is often (but not always) a sure sign of the quality or effectiveness of its object. Destructive criticism often (but not always) misrepresents its object because its objective is frequently to damage or destroy

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the effectiveness of something it recognizes to be worthwhile, but which it sees as some kind of a threat.

But it is dangerous to conclude that destructive criticism is always inaccurate, and therefore should be ignored. It is never safe to disregard any criticism. It never hurts anyone to evaluate destructive criticism, but it often helps. To disregard criticism because it is destructive is like burning down the barn to get rid of the rats. To listen to criticism only when we think it is constructive will rob us of many opportunities to improve our efforts. The destructive critic is often our best friend, though he doesn't intend to be.

(2) CONSTRUCTIVE: Constructive criticism is always motivated by good will and desire to help its object. It calls attention to the good and beautiful, while pointing out how it might be improved. It is characterized by kindness and humility and never is uttered self-righteously. It considers itself lest it also be tempted (Gal. 6:1), and "reproves, rebukes and exhorts with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:2).

CRITICISM AMONG CHRISTIANS

We see both kinds of criticism among Christians. A great deal of the criticism we witness among us is of the destructive variety, though this is not readily admitted. Most critics are quick to affirm that they are motivated by the wholesome desire to help, but this is belied by their bitterness, strife, self-righteousness and arrogance. While such criticism may have a constructive effect, this was not really the intent of the critic. Not many of us would ever admit to being destructive critics. On the other hand, criticism is not necessarily destructive because it results in division and bitter strife. Because of pride, some are offended by criticism when the critic was motivated by the purest desire to help and offered his criticism in the best of spirits.

The most frequent media of criticism among Christians are the periodicals. Because of the heated issues they have discussed over the past 30 years, they have earned a reputation of being only negative and critical of the thoughts and actions of others. This criticism of them certainly has some merit, and it is obvious that some writers never produce unless they are making or answering some criticism. Their words leap upon the pages when they are criticizing someone, but their articles become very mediocre (dry and boring) when they try to write something positive. Many seem to be either incapable of producing articles of positive Bible teaching, or else they are just not motivated to write unless they feel threatened or antagonized. It is true that a challenge, a threat, or an antagonist often brings out our best efforts, but is it a

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healthy situation for us to be incapable of producing in the absence of such? I think not because we are likely to become arrogant mote hunters and issue grabbers; shooting at anything that moves. This can cause us to make mountains out of mole hills, and open up to public censure matters that could have been handled privately with more brotherliness and healthier results.

One of the great dangers of criticism among Christians is that we often judge the motives of those who utter it. It is one thing to *suspect* that the critic is motivated by political or commercial desires, but quite another matter to charge this in print and prove it. We should also realize the possibility that the criticized may unwittingly judge the motives of the critic as a means of deverting attention from the merit of the criticism. Certainly all Christians would admit that this is dishonest, but let us recognize that those who do it may be seeking to save face or to salvage personal pride and be unaware of what they are doing. We often deceive ourselves. It is easy to say that one should not do this, but we must deal with situations as they are, rather than as we think they ought to be. I do not intend to defend such action, but to recognize facts; to be objective.

There is a temptation for the critic to become so intoxicated with his position as a critic, that he dehumanizes his object forgets that he is a brother in Christ - and then gloats in his opportunity to "nail his hide to the wall." The critic may have done a great job of criticizing and bringing to light a lurking danger, but his efforts may be characterized by so much overkill, that he turns off a good many brethren who, deep down, are in sympathy with his original aim, but who shy away from identification with him because they find his tactics and attitude to be as dangerous, or more so, than what he criticizes. He seems to delight in making it hard on the objects of his criticism. He says so much that personal pride is wounded, and the brethren criticized can see no way out of the situation that will leave them any personal dignity. Any effort they make will seem to be crawling to the critic on their knees. (Certainly, repentance necessitates humility and a denial of personal pride. But while this is good and necessary in coming to the Lord, it is out of place and damaging in human relationships, especially among brethren).

THE EITHER/OR FALLACY

One of the great fallacies among brethren is an arrogant either/or proposition; namely, "You either agree with WHAT I say and the WAY I say it, or you stand with that which I oppose." Any disagreement with tactics is interpreted as a defense and endorse-

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ment of what is criticized. I am aware that this may sometimes be the case, but it is a gross error to conclude that it is always the case. When good and sound brethren of known integrity and impedable reputations question the way I make a criticism or preach the truth, I need to take a little inventory of my manners. The truth is infallible, but I am a feeble and fallible earthan vessel. I can, and often have, erred in the way I have presented the truth. Self-righteous pride will drive one to defend his actions at all costs. It will often cause one to cover one mistake with another.

Paul criticized the motives of some brethren, but rejoiced in the truth they preached (Phil. 1:16-18). It is not possible to do the same thing today? I agree that we cannot always know the *motives* of brethren, but we can certainly sit in judgment on their *manners*. If we don't agree with them, then certainly we should be free to criticize without being falsely accused of endorsing error.

"SHOW US A BETTER WAY"

We sometimes here the critics say, "If you don't like the way we do it, show us how it ought to be done." There is the ugly implication in this (and it is sometimes actually stated) that those who criticize the methods of others never oppose error, but only criticize the methods of those who do. Such a conclusion may sometimes be justified, but it certainly is not infallible. The methods of the critics sometimes make it difficult for good brethren to stand with them in their opposition to error because they are placed in a dilemma: they are as opposed to the ungodly attitudes of the critics, as they are to the errors they criticize. When the attitudes and methods of the critics are as dangerous as the errors they oppose, conscientious brethren find it hard to know just what is the proper course of action. Obviously we should oppose all errors involved regardless of who is guilty, even though this creates a third front. The third front is never popular, and is sometimes mislabeled "the middle of the road" in an effort to offset its effectiveness. But there is nothing wrong with the middle of the road, in fact it is the only safe place, when it is bordered on both sides with damnable error. When one is put in the position of having to endorse one error in order to oppose another, the middle of the road looks rather attractive. No circumstance can ever arise that will justify a Christian's fellowshipping one error in order to fight another one. We are commanded to "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11). This obligates one to oppose all error, not just doctrinal error, but attitudinal as well.

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RULES FOR THE CRITIC

1. Criticize others like you would want to be criticized.

2. Don't be a nit picker, or a mote hunter (Mt. 7:1). Be sure the errors you criticize are more serious than the common faults of humanity. Remember, you are not perfect.

3. Make your love for those you criticize so obvious to everyone, including the object of your criticism, that you won't have to tell them that you have it.

4. Be concerned about how you come across; avoid bitterness, self-righteousness and arrogance. Be humble, kind and loving in your criticisms.

5. Find and always mention some good qualities in the person you criticize. He may not be as perfect as you are, but nobody is totally bad. Don't be all negative.

6. Always try to criticize in such a way that your motives will not be suspect.

7. Avoid impugning the motives of others. "What man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man which is in him?" (1 Cor. 2:11), and Paul said, "Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God" (1 Cor. 4:5).

8. Never try to fortify your criticism by exaggerating the number of people who agree with it. If your criticism is unjust, the fact or fiction that the greatest numbers and the most glamorous names agree with it, won't change it.

RULES FOR THE CRITICIZED

1. Never ignore any criticism regardless of its nature. There is probably some truth in the most destructive criticism — profit from it even though you don't respect the critic.

2. If the criticism is destructive, never answer in kind. "Recompense to no man evil for evil . . . be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:17, 21).

3. Never try to blunt valid criticism by reflecting upon the motives of the critic. Bad motives in the critic, even if you could

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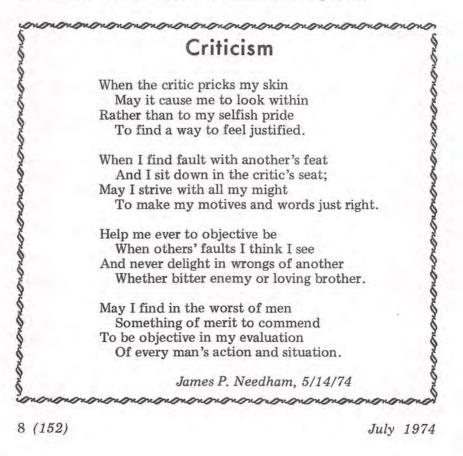
prove them, won't change the truthfulness of his criticism, if it is just.

4. If you feel you must defend yourself against unfair criticism, be as fair with the critic as you wish he had been with you.

5. THINK before replying to unjust criticism. Perhaps your friends don't believe the criticism, and likely your reply will not convince your enemies. If this is true, won't your reply be a waste of time?

6. Never take a criticism of your actions personally: it will only make you angry, and prejudice you against the critic and the criticism, thus robbing you of the profit you could derive from the criticism.

7. If you cannot profit from valid criticism, then don't expect others to do so. You have no right to expect more of others than of yourself. If you cannot take criticism, don't give it.



All Hail Christ: Raised and Reigning!

Ron Halbrook

The very God of heaven and earth "spake of the resurrection of Christ" centuries before He appeared. God's startling announcement was that when the Messiah appeared, coming out of the family of David, God "would raise up Christ to sit on his throne." The apostles proclaimed, speaking as first-hand witnesses, "This Jesus hath God raised up."

But the grand news was not exhausted in the declaration of the resurrection. Closely tied to the resurrection was the exaltation of Jesus Christ "to sit on his (David's) throne" at the favored right hand of God Himself! And so it was that the apostles told a stunned audience of Jews that the things "which ye now see and hear" were direct proof that Jesus was already exalted by the right hand of God! You can read the thrilling account of these events and the heavenly sermon of the apostles in Acts, chapter 2.

Those ears were startled to hear that Christ was both raised and reigning, "both Lord and Christ." Likewise, our minds are staggered, our hearts are amazed, our consciences stricken, our love awakened, our wills are moved by the old, old story of Jesus and his love. Let the Good News be published again and again, how that God's Son lived in perfection, died in love, arose in power, and now reigns with all authority.

Sad to say, some tried to weaken the idea of our promised resurrection, thinking they could still believe Christ was raised. In reading the first half of 1 Corinthians 15, you will see that Paul showed the close connection between our promised resurrection and Christ's past resurrection. They are connected as one and cannot be separated. To deny one is to weaken the other.

Sad to say, some have tried to weaken the idea of Christ's reigning now at God's right hand; yet, they admit he was raised. In reading Acts 2, you will see the close connection between the resurrection of Christ and the reign of Christ. If he is raised, then he is reigning. To deny one is to weaken the other. Let us apply Paul's line of argument from 1 Corinthians 15 to this present-day problem.

Ron Halbrook preaches for the Broadmoor church in Nashville, Tennessee and is a doctoral candidate at Vanderbilt University.

Christ was raised to sit on his (David's) throne (Acts 2:30). "Now if Christ be preached that he arose from the dead, how say some of you that" he does not sit on the throne?

But if he does not sit on the throne, "Then is Christ not risen, And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ ("to sit on the throne"): Whom he raised not up, if so be that" Christ does not sit on the throne.

For if Christ does not sit on the throne, "then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins." (Vs. 18) "But now is Christ risen from the dead, "to sit on the throne."

God's expressed purpose of the ages was (1) to "raise up Christ" (2) "to sit on his (David's) throne." If the best efforts of ungodly men could not defeat God's purpose (1) to "raise up Christ," then the best efforts of men could not thrawt God's purpose to have Christ (2) "sit on his throne."

Therefore let all the house of the premillenialists know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom you acknowledge to have been raised up, both Lord and Christ! The raised-up Christ even now continues to sit on the throne of David, glorified in regal splendor, spreading abroad the sure mercies of David and the love of God in our hearts! "All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name!"

> 3536 Dickerson Rd. Nashville, Tennessee 37207

CONCERNING BACK ISSUES

We have a number of requests to begin a subscription with a certain issue and whenever possible we do this. However, back issues are now in short supply and some issues are not available. Do not let your subscription expire — do not miss an issue.

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James P. Needham

The religious world has gone version crazy! Two ulterior motives seem to prompt the proliferation of new versions of the scriptures: (1) Dissatisfaction with what the Bible says: Many versions have been produced because some sectarian group wanted to alter what the Bible says, so they translate (?) it to accomodate their dogmas. These are not versions but perversions! (2) Money: The publishers are conscious of the constant desire for new versions, so they produce them at a tremendous profit. In fact new versions have been produced like popcorn the last few years, and some of them are about as worthless!

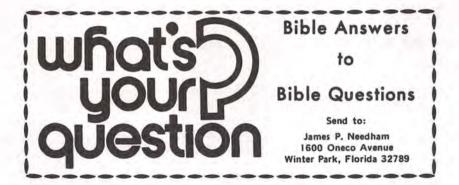
I read a statement a while back that I consider to be a slander against the beloved King James Version of the Bible. Notice it, "Our modern generation finds the English of the King James Version almost unintelligible." I must kindly, but firmly deny this. I have been studying the Bible most of my life. On my shelves are to be found many versions of the scriptures. I have studied them all, but I still prefer the KJV. I know it has some weak translations, but let one of its critics produce a version that does not. I do not overlook the fact that there may be versions which are as good as, or perhaps even superior to, the KJV, but this statement is very obviously prejudicial and slanderous. When the battle of the versions is over, the KJV will still have a prominent place in the minds and use of Bible-loving people. For reverence, beauty and literary value, it has no equal, and its accuracy is not significantly surpassed.

The thing that surprises me is how much like the KJV many of the new versions are in so many places. Many times the only change is the removal of certain archaic words, and the switch

(continued on page 14)

TORCH

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QUESTION: Women Singing Groups

"Is it scripturally correct for a group of women singers (no men in the group) to sing religious songs and prayers at weddings and funerals? If it is not right for the women to sing religious songs and prayers, can they sing secular songs at weddings in the church building? Please give scriptures for your answers." ---Arkansas

REPLY:

As one can see, there are two questions involved. Both questions are quite controversial in nature. They concern some practices in which we engage out of tradition and which probably come to us from the denominational world. I have some very serious doubts about the practices under question.

1. I find no scriptural authority for special group singing at any public service of the church. Singing in the New Testament is fellowship; joint participation of all worshipers in praise, admonition and teaching (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). I know of nothing that indicates that some are to sing while others listen. If this be correct, then this answers the first question for if there is no authority for group singing, then whether there are men in the group is beside the point.

2. The answer to the first question answers the first part of

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the second. The last part of the second question concerns the singing of secular songs at weddings in the church building. There is no authority for using the church building for any SECULAR activity. The church building is bought with the Lord's money. The divine pattern (Heb. 8:5) shows that there is one way to collect this money (1 Cor. 16:1,2) and three ways to spend it: Evangelism (2 Cor. 11:8; Phil. 4:15), Edification (Acts 11:22), and Benevolence (Acts 6:1-4). Since the building is purchased with the Lord's money it can only be used for the purposes for which the money can be used. There is no difference in principle between misappropraiting the money and misappropriating that which the money buys. It is absurd to contend that it is unscriptural to use the Lord's money to throw a party, but scriptural to use the church building for one. The Lord's money is being expended in both cases, only in a slightly different way.

Thus it is not scriptural to use the church building for any SECULAR activity, singing or whatever! This naturally raises the question of what constitutes a secular song? Are the songs traditionally sung at weddings secular songs? Such as: "I Love You Truly," "O Promise Me," *etc.* Does a song have to be in our hymn book to be a spiritual song? (Some songs in our hymn books are not very spiritual!) Does a song have to mention the name of God to be a spiritual song? Does the expression of a scriptural idea make a song a spiritual song? Do the intention of the singers and the occasion have anything to do with the nature of a song? These are all questions that must be answered in the consideration of the matters under discussion.

Weddings and funerals in church buildings are scripturally justifiable only if they are spiritual, or teaching services. If they are spiritual teaching services, then everything inconsistent with this purpose should be eliminated from them. If it would be unscriptural to have special group singing at a Lord's day service, how can it be scriptural to have it at another service? What is the difference? For a long time I have questioned special group singing at any type of church service. I believe others have done and are doing the same thing. I note that more and more funerals are having congregational singing. I sometimes wonder why we have any kind of singing at funerals. Much of it is in poor taste, some of it does what we would condemn the preacher for doing; it preaches the deceased right into heaven! Why not eliminate singing from weddings, or else have congregational singing of some appropriate songs?

These questions are admittedly difficult as well as controversial.

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I am glad to express what I think the Bible teaches on them, but realize that I don't have all the answers, and that many may sincerely disagree with what I have said. In such cases, we welcome articles in response provided they are comparable in length and spirit.

Questions like these should be calmly studied. They should not be occasions for devisive strife within churches, and we shall not knowingly be a party to making them such. Those who are conscientiously opposed to the practices under question should refrain from participating, but should not seek to force their convictions on others until all have had the opportunity to thoroughly explore the matters from all angles. This attitude will lead us to a scriptural solution to almost any problem. It is when some want to make their consciencies everybody else's guide before all have studied the question that we have division and strife. Trouble comes when one or more wants to set the pace for all. Unless everybody thinks like they think, when they think it, they write them off as insincere and unworthy of their fellowship. Let this not happen to any of us on any question that may arise for discussion.

In Defense of the King James Version - continued from page 11

from the solemn English to the contemporary. If in doing this, the meaning of the original is retained, I have no objection. But let it be remembered that one is not greatly hindered in the KJV by the archaic words and the solemn style, if he is a diligent student. A good English dictionary will define any archaic words. If someone wants to say, "Well, why not use a version that renders this unnecessary?" I say, "fine," but let us not go off the deep end and exaggerate the weakness of the KJV.

My advice has always been to own and compare several good versions of the scriptures. There is no finer commentary! One should never get "hung up" or fixated on any one version, but neither should he render himself absurd by castigating a version that has been the English-speaking world's Bible since 1611.

Has Your Subscription Expired?? Renew Promptly!!

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Ask An Expert

Dennis Shaver

People refer to the time in which we live as "the age of specialization." Everyone strives to learn a given job better than anyone else. With this knowledge they can get the better jobs, and have the better rewards. For instance, if one's car is having mechanical problems, he goes to the best mechanic in town. If one needs dental treatment, he goes to the most skilled dentist. If one has a heart problem, he goes to the best specialist he knows for treatment. Whatever the problem, we try to find the man best qualified to handle it. We look for an expert for the particular problem we are having.

The sad thing about this "age of specialization" is that many people who are spiritually ill are not as selective in regard to their spiritual needs. Whenever they have physical problems, they look for an expert. When it comes to their eternal destiny, they will take anybody's word for it. These are those who join denominations, read and heed human creeds, and listen to the false doctrines of denominational pastors. They are ignorant of the falsehoods they hear, and in many instances, they couldn't care less. But, for those who are sincere in their desire to please God, they simply fail to understand and heed the warning in Matt. 15:9, 13, 14, "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men . . . Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind, and if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." If one is really desirous of having heaven as his home, he will ask an expert. Joining a denomination, and heeding their doctrines, and listening to their preachers will not lead to heaven. That is like asking a car mechanic to perform open heart surgery. He cannot do it.

Ask an expert. Christ is the expert when it comes to your spiritual diseases. He states in Jn. 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life, no man cometh to the Father, except by me." Jesus is the only way to receive salvation from all our sins against God. In Heb. 5:8, 9, we find that He is the author of eternal salvation to all them that OBEY Him. Jesus shows us the way. All we have (continued on page 17)

Dennis Shaver preaches for the new church in Inverness, Florida, and is the son of Glenn Shaver, a well known and faithful preacher of the gospel.

Do You Wear the Latest Styles?

Don R. Taaffe

Today we hear much talk about styles that perhaps we need to look at some styles God would have us to wear. There are some garments that never go out of style. In Isa. 52:1, the call of the Lord comes to Zion to awake and put on her strength and to Jerusalem to put on her beautiful garments. This call is the result of what precedes. She has been in a state of utter prostration and covered with dust; powerless under the fury of her enemies and robbed of her royal and priestly robes; wearing instead the chains of captivity around her neck. From all those who had defiled and degraded her, she would be delivered.

The preacher, the son of David, king in Jerusalem once said: "Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment" (Eccl. 9:8). And the Lord once said to the church at Sardis: "Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment" (Rev. 3:4, 5). Have you been "washed white in the blood of the lamb"? (Rev. 7:14). Are you the kind of character which God recognizes as worthy of salvation?

Do you wear the garment of praise, or do you let the Lord wear it? In Isa. 61:3, this prophetic reference to Christ reveals that our saviour is the one to wear the garment of praise, not we.

Let us notice some styles the Lord has designed for us:

1. The garment of humility: "Likewise, ye younger, be subject unto the elder. Yea, all of you gird yourselves with humility, to serve one another: for God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble" (1 Pet. 5:5). According to Thayer's Greek — English Lexicon, the words "gird yourself" are translated from the Greek verb egkomboomai," a term of exceeding interest and significance. The noun from which it is derived (kombos) signifies a knot; and the verb of our text denoting the garment thus tied on with a knot. Thus we are to "tie on humility."

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Don R. Taaffe preaches for the church of Christ in Dundee, Florida, which is in the Winter Haven area. During his almost five years of work there, the church has grown from 6 to approximately 40. Brother Taaffe is of Jewish extraction, and learned the truth through his wife. This article represents his first venture upon the tempestuous sea of religious journalism.

2. The garment of love: The apostle Paul said, "Put on love" (Col. 3:14). Thus we are to wear the garment of love. But most of us have indefinite and incorrect conceptions of what love is. It is not an emotion, or fleshly feeling or a magnetic attraction, or a mere sentiment. The apostle John defines it thusly: "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments" (1 Jn. 5:3).

3. The garments of salvation: Isaiah rejoiced in the Lord because God clothed him with the garments of salvation and covered him with the robes of righteousness (Isa. 61:10). Have you worn the latest styles of righteousness? That garment that has never gone out of style, the "garment of salvation"? Or will he say to you, "Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment"? (Matt. 22:12). Have you put on the garment of preparation? Perhaps you need to get in style!

P.O. Box 338 Dundee, Florida 33838

Ask An Expert - continued from page 15

to do is ask, WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED? Jesus replies, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mk. 16:16). Ask an expert, Jesus Christ.

P.O. Box 714 Inverness, Florida 32650

In the August Issue . . .

Black America: A Neglected Field

AND OTHER THOUGHT PROVOKING ARTICLES

TORCH

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- Parallels -

Larry A. Bunch

In the January issue of TORCH, I believe brother Needham "missed" the point of argument in brother Finley's article (Oct., 1973). Brother Needham came closest to the point of argument with the "Herald of Truth – Missionary Society" illustration. He completely missed it with the "alcohol – caffeine" and "marijuana – nicotine" argument.

One could not "prove" the Herald of Truth to be unscriptural by comparison to the Missionary Society unless all brethren involved believe the Missionary Society to be unscriptural and parallel to the Herald of Truth. Consequently, as brother Needham pointed out, point # 3 in the argument would have to be proven correct. Point # 2 is assumed correct by all involved.

But let's notice the two "missed" illustrations given by brother Needham, with an extra point added by me:

- (1) Brother "X" believes it is wrong to drink alcohol.
- (2) But brother "X" believes it is right to drink caffeine.
- (3) But drinking caffeine is parallel to drinking alcohol.
- (4) Therefore, drinking alcohol is scriptural.
- (5) OR, drinking caffeine is unscriptural! (LB)

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Larry Bunch preaches for the church in Alta Loma, Texas.

(1) Brother "X" believes it is wrong to smoke marijuana.

(2) But brother "X" believes it is right to smoke nicotine.

(3) But smoking nicotine is parallel to smoking marijuana.

(4) Therefore, smoking marijuana is right.

(5) OR, smoking nicotine is wrong! (LB)

In these two examples, either point # 4 or point # 5 depends upon the validity of point # 3. To "prove" point # 4, point # 2would have to be proven; to "prove" point # 5, point # 1 would have to be proven.

Now note this example:

(1) Brother "Y" believes it is wrong to teach the Bible in colleges.

(2) But brother "Y" believes it is right to teach the Bible through publishing houses.

(3) But publishing houses and colleges are parallel.

(4) Therefore, teaching the Bible in colleges is scriptural.

(5) OR, teaching the Bible through publishing houses is unscriptural.

In this argument, the validity of points #4 or 5 depend upon the validity of point #3 ONLY (quite unlike the other two examples) — IF brethren accept point #2! If #3 is correct, then brethren must either accept #4 or #5 — it cannot be both ways! No one has attempted to invalidate point #3 in reply to brother Finley's article or my letters. Instead of charging brother Bunch with finding another way to determine Bible authority, why not deal with the argument?

"We do not write to be understood, but so we cannot be misunderstood." Does it not seem strange, in view of this statement, that readers misunderstood brother Chandler's article (May, 1973)?

> P.O. Box 311 Alta Loma, Texas 77510

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Replying to Brother Bunch's Parallels

James P. Needham

Elsewhere in this issue, brother Larry Bunch seeks to nullify my efforts to show the weakness of trying to prove something to be unscriptural by paralleling it with something else. First, let it be understood that I have not said and do not say that inconsistency is of no value in polemics. We all use it, but it is abused when we try to use it to show something scriptural. This is what brother Bunch did in his letter printed in TORCH. January, 1974. In referring to brother Finley's article on Fuzzy Thinking, he said: "I do believe he proved that teaching the Bible in College is SCRIPTURAL unless someone can show where the other things mentioned in the article are UNSCRIPTURAL." Brother Bunch is saying that brother Finley has proven Bible colleges to be scriptural because those who are opposed to them believe it is scriptural to buy written comments on the scriptures from human organizations. As I have said before, so say I now again: I am not convinced that either is wrong, but proving two things to be parallel does not prove either to be right. That is the only point I have made in this connection. I say that if the Bible colleges are scriptural, somebody must find a better argument for them than the fact that they are parallel to publishing houses. Since this seems to be the most popular argument in their behalf, are we to conclude that it is the strongest one? I am not interested in defending the right of any human organization to exist, but if I were so inclined, I can assure you that I could find a better defence than parallels and inconsistencies. These can certainly be used to focus attention on a given issue, but ultimately, the only way to prove a thing to be scriptural is to produce the command, inference or example that establishes it as an authorized practice.

Brother Bunch is still hobbling around on this lame logic in his latest effort. Notice what he says, "One could not prove" the Herald of Truth to be unscriptural by comparison to the Missionary Society unless all brethren involved believed the Missionary Society to be unscriptural and parallel to the Herald of Truth."

Reader, please look at this logic: Brother Bunch is saying: (1) We believe the Missionary society is unscriptural. (2) We believe the Herald of Truth is parallel to the Missionary Society. (3) Therefore, the Herald of Truth is unscriptural. The conclusion does not follow regardless of what anybody says. The syllogism

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does not concern what is scriptural, but what we believe is scriptural. These are horses of two different colors! What we or anyone else believes is scriptural or unscriptural has absolutely no bearing upon what is scriptural. We cannot prove anything to be scriptural or unscriptural by what we or anyone else believes. Pointing out parallels between Herald of Truth and the Missionary Society may well focus attention on the issue, or force someone to take a closer look at it, but it will never prove anything to be unscriptural.

Brother Bunch says, "No one has attempted to invalidate point #3 ("publishing houses and colleges are parallel" jpn), in reply to brother Finley's article or my letters. Instead of charging brother Bunch with finding another way to determine Bible authority, why not deal with the argument?" What argument? That schools are authorized because they parallel publishing houses? I think I have dealt with that argument rather adequately. For brother Bunch's information I think I agree with "point #3," so I have no need to try to refute it. I have dealt with it's weakness as an argument to prove something to be scriptural. That is the whole thrust of what I have said, and sincere and honest readers will not read anything else between the lines. Brother Bunch is the one who needs to start arguing. Since he is obviously interested in defending the right of brethren to form a human corporation for the purpose of preaching the gospel, let him write an article for TORCH setting forth the scriptural authority (command, example or inference) for such. I have not said, and am not saying, that such is unscriptural, but if it is scriptural, brethren who want to defend it must find a better defence for it than parallels and inconsistencies. If this is the strongest argument in its favor, then it is a lame cause indeed. To be sure, such parallels and inconsistencies should be dealt with by those who deny brethren the right to form such corporations, but parallels and inconsistencies don't prove scripturalness.

In his final paragraph, brother Bunch says, "'We do not write to be understood, but so we cannot be misunderstood,' Does it not seem strange, in view of this statement, that readers misunderstood brother Chandler's article (May 1973)?" Here brother Bunch takes an unkind jab at the little motto which appears on the front of TORCH. This statement is taken from my first editorial for TORCH (Jan. 1971, p. 5).

The fact that my motto is to write so I can't be misunderstood does not mean that my efforts along that line are infallible, but would brother Bunch have me to abandon this ideal because I

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may sometimes fail to reach it? Does brother Bunch try to preach so as not to be misunderstood? Does he ever fail? Does he abandon such an ideal because he sometimes fails? Is it always brother Bunch's fault when people misunderstand what he preaches? I am sure some persons have understood him to preach "water salvation," but is that his fault? I am certain some have understood him to preach Campbellism, but is that his fault?

When I wrote that motto in 1971, I don't think I had ever met Royce Chandler. I never had any idea that I was speaking or vouching for all writers of all times who would contribute articles for publication in TORCH. I believe brother Bunch has been unkind and unfair, perhaps without meaning to be.

Brother Bunch says that "... READERS misunderstood brother Chandler's article." (emphesis mine, jpn). How many, brother Bunch? Tell us. We don't know. All we know is that some few misunderstood it, but we know many more who understood it. We received several favorable letters concerning the article, and we saw it quoted and endorsed in some church bulletins across the country. I admit, and told brother Chandler, that it would take a little extra effort to understand what is his point in the article. In fact, I told him that he almost took the Summer position, but I could not see where he really took it. I saw his article as a defense of the sufficiency of the local church, not a condemnation of the school. He issued the same warnings that others have voiced. namely, church dependence on a human organization is a danger. He apologized in TORCH (Oct., 1973) for any ambiguities of his article and clarified his position in no uncertain terms. If brother Bunch derives any pleasure from kicking a dead dog, let him have it. As for me and my house, we shall try to be more charitable and fair in dealing with our brethren and friends. All this proves that reactionary writing frequently misses the point, and often brings out the worst in us.

ADDRESS CORRECTIONS PLEASE

Again, we ask that you check your address on this issue. It is important that we have your name, street, route, box number, apartment number, city, state and zip code correct in every detail! The Post Office will will not deliver copies of TORCH with any errors in the name or address.

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It's Hard to Preach With a Broken Heart

It's hard to preach with a broken heart, Or even try to make a start; To make it appear that all is fine When crushed by troubles: others' and mine.

It's hard to preach with a broken heart; To stand up tall and play the part Of one whose life is calm and serene When pain is present, real and keen.

It's hard to preach with a broken heart, When I'm pricked by satan's dart; Hurled by those I try to teach, And whose lives I cannot reach.

It's hard to preach with a broken heart; To be cheerful like a meadow lark When troubles come like a sweeping storm And religion appears as an empty form.

It's hard to preach with a broken heart, To be a tried and true bulwark When I know that I'm as weak As those to whom I've come to speak.

It's hard to preach with a broken heart; To point my finger; to yell and bark At those who see my vigor and vim But who could help me more than I can them.

It's hard to preach with a broken heart When the realization is fresh and stark That I cannot make, I cannot mold, But only declare what God has told.

James P. Needham, 4/20/74

TORCH



Proposition: The scriptures teach that the elders may call the church together to eat a common meal on church property, namely, in the church building or on church grounds when said meal is designed for social and/or recreational purposes.

Ray Hawk, Affirmative James P. Needham, Negative

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August 1974

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LOOK INSIDE FOR THESE THOUGHT PROVOKING ARTICLES

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MAILING SCHEDULE

For quite sometime TORCH has reached your mail box late. We hope that you have noticed that we are now "on schedule." In fact some readers will receive their copies in the month before the date of issue. Our schedule is to mail each issue on the 10th of the month prior to issue date. This issue (*August*) was mailed on July 10th. This means some readers will receive it in July, but most will receive it in August. We have found that the Postal Service requires from 1 to 6 weeks to deliver TORCH in all parts of the country. Our mailing schedule will now have TORCH in your mail box with a current date on it.

- Billy K. Farris

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Editorial

James P. Needham

Gospel Preachers, Scholars and Scholarship

I have about decided that a "scholar" is someone who can footnote everything he says! Or, to put it another way, someone who knows who said what, when and where! There has developed among us a penchant for scholars and scholarship. Many gospel preachers are seeking more and more higher education. Some want to be known as "scholars." Their ambition is not to give their lives to the humble work of preaching the gospel, but to qualify themselves for professorship in some human institution, and be known as a "scholar." They develop an intellectual snobbery and an academic pride that are completely out of harmony with the spirit of Christ, and their sermons and articles abound with quotations from denominational scholars which often are unintelligible to the hearers, if not to those who quote them.

This penchant for scholars and scholarship often springs from a feeling of inferiority in the minds of certain preaching brethren. They are embarrassed that 99 per cent of all the "scholarly" works are authored by those who are not members of the church of Christ. In 26 years of preaching the gospel, I have heard this complaint from several preachers who determined to correct the situation by becoming "scholars" and producing works that would be accepted throughout the religious world as "scholarly." Off hand, I cannot think of a single one of those who made this complaint and expressed this ambition who still stands for the truth! They are either atheists, liberals, or denominationalists.

In order to become such a "recognized scholar," one must earn a recognized degree from some renouned denominational seminary. (They have buried the faith of so many preachers that cemetery would be more descriptive). In order to earn such a degree, it is necessary to learn so many things that are not so that it is hard for many brethren to continue to see the clear line between truth and error. Most denominational seminaries are so saturated with

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Calvinian theology that its principles and doctrines begin to appear in the preaching of some of the brethren who attend them, perhaps with a new twist, but sufficiently Calvinistic that their origin is unmistakable. The old country proverbs seem to fit quite well just here: "He who lies down with dogs, will get up with fleas," or "He who sleeps with the hogs will smell like swine."

A goodly number of brilliant young preachers have been lost to the Cause of Christ through the luring trap of higher education. Over the years I have heard brethren who were closely associated with these young preachers say that their change was noticed after they started attending some denominational seminary. One such brilliant young preacher was going to become a "gang buster" to modernism. He made it his ambition to prepare himself educationally to authoritatively refute the modernists. This was about the time that a distinct wave of modernism began sweeping over some of the first preachers I ever knew to attend denominational seminaries. This brilliant young man went into a well known university in search for his doctorate in philosophy, and challenged his atheistic professors for public debates. He had several, and he scored brilliantly at first, but as time went on, some commented that his defence got weaker, and it became difficult to tell whether he really disagreed with his opponent. One well known older gospel preacher wondered if this "brilliant young man" was not using the polemic platform in an effort to convince himself that the Bible is true. If so, it didn't work, for he left the church completely.

Upon two different occasions I have heard brilliant young men of higher education lecture at colleges on modernism and atheism, and it was hard to tell whether they were for it or against it. They went to great lengths to "fairly state the position of the opposition," which, as it turned out, made atheism and modernism look as strong, if not stronger, than their opposition to it. I might be prone to doubt this evaluation of their efforts were it not for the fact that more able men than I made the same judgment.

Since its beginning, this penchant for scholars and scholarship has consistently increased. Young intellectuals seeing the high esteem accorded some of those who have their doctorates from leading seminaries and universities, have made it their ambition to follow in their footsteps. Recently a brother said of a promising young man who is seeking a doctorate, "Brother ______ is his idol."

It is becoming more and more stylish to fill sermons and articles

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with quotations from "the scholars." Footnotes abound from the "doctors of the law." If these serve a useful purpose for the rank and file of the readers, fine, but if they are an effort to demonstrate "scholarship," then they are repulsive. Documentation is essential to good writing and preaching. Nobody with good sense could find fault with it. But documentation for the sake of showing how many books one has read, is pure show and means nothing to the average reader, and is disgusting to all who recognize it for what it is. We need to quote the scriptures, not what some sectarian "scholar" says about them. Are the scriptures so ambiguous that we must have some intellectual who doesn't even know what a sinner must do to be saved tell us what they mean? I do not mean to disparage obtaining HELP in Bible study from any source, but rather the idea that we can't study a Bible passage or subject without having to quote some "scholar" on it.

More and more we are seeing gospel preachers who think of themselves as scholars and intellectuals attending and speaking at sectarian seminars and publishing interviews they had with some denominational scholar. They also publish pictures of themselves with the scholars, and publicize the occasion as something historical and significant. It is obvious that they stand in awe of these men who are responsible for a large percent of the false doctrines that stand in opposition to the church for which our Savior died. Had our forefathers had the same attitude toward these men that some of these young brethren manifest, these young men would not be members of the Lord's church today for the older brethren would long since have joined the denominations like many of the young intellectuals have done through the years, and like some others are going to do in the not-too-distant future, if they don't change their courses.

Paul once stood before the most brilliant scholars of his time. He stood where they were wont to meet to tell or hear some new thing (Acts 17:21). They looked upon Paul in derision, as a babbler (v. 18), one who is uneducated except as he has plagiarized information from those who are educated. (Does that sound familiar?). When this humble gospel preacher stood before them, he made himself perfectly clear, he said, "God does not dwell in your churches (temples)." (How many of our present-day preachers ever said that at one of their unity forums, or seminars?) When Paul stood before Felix, he "Reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come" (Acts 24:25). It seems that Paul's message got through, not as an effort to communicate with others "who are in the mainstream of the Restoration tradition," but as an effort to correct his errors, for he "trembled." Jesus so

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crossed the grain of the leading "scholars" of His time that they nailed Him to a cross. Wherever the apostles went they caused a revival or a riot! What a contrast to the activities we witness today! The difference is that Jesus and early Christians had a message that was antagonistic to the traditions of men and they were not ashamed of it (Rom. 1:16). Today his people have that same message, but they are seeking to accomodate it to the religious whims of the 20th century. The difference is between seeking *conversion* and *accomodation*! Conversion is changing the world, accomodation is being changed by the world. One is conviction, the other is compromise.

The simple truth of the gospel is being obscured today by many forces. The "popcorn" so-called versions (perversions) of the scriptures are removing the fundamentals from that which people call their Bibles. Spineless, time-serving, self-promoting professional preachers are more concerned with personal popularity and position than with making a fearless stand for the truth of the gospel. Many of the young intellectuals are seeking an accomodative nomenclature that will water down the acidity of the gospel and make it blend with the bland "mainstream of Restoration tradition," and cover with a broad umbrella of grace, all the perversive promotions and false doctrines that have been propagated for the past 150 years.

What have the "scholars" given us? They have given us modernism, liberalism, modern versions (perversions) of the scriptures that eliminate the distinctive fundamentals, situation ethics, and the "God-is-dead" nonsense. In the church the "scholars" have given us no-patternism, human institutions to take over the work of the church, instrumental music in the worship, the modern charismatic movement, neo-Calvinism, etc., etc. The pure word of God and the church of Jesus Christ have suffered more at the hands of "scholars" than from any other source. "Scholars" get so "smart" that they stumble at the simplicity of the gospel and feel embarrassed to use its simple terminology. They write and talk in the "sophisticated" gibberish of modern "scholars" which makes them sound educated but leaves Bible lovers cold and the average hearer untaught and bewildered except for some few whose egoes get a boost from making others think they understand it.

Am I against scholarship? Am I putting a premium on ignorance? Certainly not. A true scholar is "one who by long systematic study has gained a high degree of mastery in one or more of the academic disciplines especially one who has engaged

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in advanced study and acquired the minutiae of knowledge in some special field along with accuracy and skill in investigation and powers of critical analysis in interpertation of such knowledge. A learned person; specially one who has the attitudes (as curiosity, perserverance, initiative, originality, integrity) considered essential for learning" (Webster's Third New International Dictionary). True scholarship is the aquirement of accurate knowledge. Much that is foisted off as true scholarship is pseudo-scholarship because the knowledge it has is not accurate. One can be a scholar of Calvinian theology, and his knowledge of it may be accurate so far as Calvinism is concerned, but his knowledge does not square with the truth. Can Christians consider him a true scholar? These persons are "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Tim. 3:7). If a sinner asked them what to do to be saved, they either couldn't or wouldn't give him the Bible answer to this question. In either case, they forfeit their fight to be known as true scholars. What business do gospel preachers or other Christians have bowing and scraping to such persons as great religious leaders and Bible scholars of our time? I beg to be excused!

Brethren, we don't need "scholars," we need good old downto-earth, humble, dedicated gospel preachers who know the book, not the books. We need brethren who can quote Paul, not Brunner, Barth and Bultmann. We need brethren who will expose false doctrine (Eph. 5:11), not seek accomodation with it. We need brethren who will oppose innovation and innovators, not seek unity with them on the basis that we are all "in the mainstream of The Restoration Movement." We need brethren who know the difference between the Lord's church and The Restoration Movement. We need brethren who can prove what is acceptable to the Lord, not what Campbell or Stone said about it. We need men who can preach and write so the rank and file in the pew can understand, not palaver around with perversive platitudes plagiarized from the publications of Protestant professors. We need men who will give their lives to preaching the gospel in the hedges and highways of the world, not cloister themselves in the ivy halls of human institutions in search of "scholarship." We need men who are interested in glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ, not building up a reputation for themselves as one of the great "scholars" of our time. We need men who will work with churches for the good they can do the cause of Christ, not use the churches as a means of income while they attend the sectarian colleges and universities that will likely destroy their usefulness or make them a detriment to the Cause of Christ. In short, we need gospel preachers, not "scholars,"

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Sectarian Tendencies: Who Is Guilty?

John Rhodes Trotter

Brethren who refuse to pledge their allegience to ingrained brotherhood traditions are frequently tagged as "brethren with sectarian tendencies." These brethren openly thwart that which we've always received as good, sound "Church of Christ Doctrine," and consequently, a brotherhood APB is immediately alarmed and said brethren are spiritually ostracized. After all, who can doubt that such overt unorthodoxy is indicative of "sectarian tendencies"?

Many of us who claim to be "heirs of the Restoration" are sometimes guilty of seeking not to "speak as the oracles of God," but as tradition dictates. Instead of proving our religion by God's adequate and inerrant word, we tirelessly search our old bound volumes of *Brotherhood Voice* to see what "bulwarks" like I. B. Dick Tater and J. Facto Head said on certain issues. Besides, isn't the authority of these "faithful guardians" tantamount to that of Holy Writ?

It is a fact that men often determine the validity of something wholly on the grounds of tradition. Moreover, sad as it may sound, this definitely holds true among brethren today. Yet, our Savior Himself lucidly condemned such shallow thinking by tersely stating, "And thus you invalidate the word of God for the sake of your tradition" (Mt. 15:6).

As may well be expected, there is a number of unwritten laws within the Lord's body today. And, although these laws have come to us via tradition alone, they receive broad *de facto* recognition. Among these are: Women must never attend congregational business meetings; collection plates must always be passed immediately before or immediately after observance of the Lord's supper; preachers must be the only members of the Lord's church who can receive wages for labor rendered; white brethren must never lower their dignity by bellowing "amen" during a sermon, prayer, etc.; all preachers must be graduates of "Brotherhood Colleges"; order of worship must always follow the line of two

JOHN RHODES TROTTER preaches for the church in Cuthbert, Georgia (near Columbus) while attending a local college. (He is in his Junior year now). He is a son of brother and sister Daniel Trotter. His father is one of the elders at Rosehill in Columbus. During the summer of 1973, John worked with the Palm Springs Drive church and studied with this editor. He is a very promising young preacher.

songs, prayer, sermon, etc.; Bible classes must never supplant pulpit preaching on Sunday evening; all baptizing must be done by preachers; women must never wear any type of pants; zealous Christians must never sport a beard or mustache; and the King James Bible must always be used in formal teaching. I surely realize that many of the above traditional practices are matters of expediency. Nevertheless, if anyone dares to violate many of these traditional views, he or she is quite apt to be labeled "a Christian with sectarian tendencies."

Some brethren have long since denounced all unwritten creeds, and have sounded their desire to conform to the Book and it alone. And, in doing so, they have been looked down upon by the "high and mighty" among us. Howbeit, they continue to eschew the favorite pet whims of opinionated brethren, and thus enjoy true liberty in Christ Jesus.

Those of us who accuse our unorthodox brethren of "leaning toward sectarianism" should first examine our own condition. The Greek equivalent of "sect" is *heresies* which "denotes . . . that which is chosen, and hence, an opinion, especially a self-willed opinion, which is substituted for submission to the power of truth . . ." (Vine). Thus, in the light of this definition, who is guilty of "sectarian tendencies": the brother who conforms to God's word alone, or the brother who not only obeys God's word, but also seeks to bind his traditional opinions upon others? Surely, guilt falls upon the latter. The brother who breaks "brotherhood traditions" *per se* is not guilty of "sectarian tendencies." Rather, the guilty brother is he who seeks to bind his traditional preferences on those who do not share them.

> 3808 - 17th Ave. Columbus, Georgia 31904



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Black America: A Neglected Field

Billy K. Farris

Efforts in this country by white brethren to reach the black race with the gospel has been characterized by indifference, insensibility and ambivalence. There are many large "white" churches in the cities, but few or no "colored" churches. The few black churches that exist in the cities are usually small and spiritually weak. Very few black preachers have been trained to work effectively.

REASONS FOR NEGLECT

1. Whites insensible toward blacks. This is probably because the whites control the wealth of the country and tend to look upon blacks as being inferior. The frame of reference in which blacks are usually found is prejudicial. Whites tend to accept the generalizations in this frame of reference as being characteristic of all blacks. References such as, "black men are thieves," "black women have illegitimate children just to increase their welfare payments," "the 'niggers' just want to take over," "the blacks cannot be taught the gospel," *etc.*, *etc.* cause whites to be indifferent toward blacks.

2. Black preachers untrained. Well known black preachers, who otherwise would have been repudiated because of their unscriptural methods and antics have been tolerated because they were working among "their own people." There are a few black preachers today that are very effective in their work, but for the most part the others do not have the ability and/or training. Many black preachers practice what amounts to "evangelistic oversight" and a few assume a dictatorial position over a congregation. White brethren must share the blame for fostering these conditions because they are satisfied to overlook the lack of qualification and practices of the black preachers they support.

3. White paternalism. Some brethren do not like the suggestion that white churches exercise paternalistic control of black churches. I have seen too much evidence of it even among "conservative" brethren. Paternalism is *defacto* oversight and is not any different from what churches are doing when they openly claim the oversight of another church or churches. White paternalism's objective seems to be to preserve segregation of the races.

4. What will people think? Black America is being neglected because white brethren are too concerned with what people will think of their efforts to reach members of the black race. White

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brethren do not invite their black neighbors to the services of the church, and they do not invite their black co-workers to the services of a gospel meeting. The fact that a man's soul may be lost does not mean as much as being accepted by one's peers. The ambivalent attitude of white brethren will occasionally cause them to refer a black "prospect" to the "colored" church or the "colored" preacher. They are satisfied to teach a black person as long as they do not have to become personally involved. White churches will support preachers in Africa (which they should) and a preacher to work among the blacks in their own city (which they should), but neglect teaching thousands because some of them might attend the "white" church, and what would people think if that happened!

NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Social and racial conditions have changed considerably over the past twenty years. I was a high school student when the Supreme Court ruled in 1954 that segregation in public schools was unconstitutional. During the early sixties I preached in a Northern city where a black family visited our services, but I was warned by one of the elders "not to encourage those Negros to come." Most of the race riots and racial tensions took place in the sixties. In the seventies the races are generally at peace; there are racially mixed schools and racially mixed neighborhoods. We now have an unprecedented opportunity to turn from the neglect of the past and carry the gospel to "all men" in this country.

Social and racial changes have almost wiped out the membership of white churches located in areas that have become racially mixed. Instead of giving up these meeting places, why not put forth an effort to reach those in the area whether black or white? Has it never occurred to white brethren that just as many souls still live in the neighborhood where the building is located and that these souls need the gospel of Christ to be saved? Why are white brethren so opposed to the possibility of having a racially mixed church? Why are white brethren not encouraging black brethren to improve their understanding and abilities by attending their gospel meetings?

Now, I do not believe that a church has to be racially mixed to be scriptural. A few white brethren and a black brother who should know better and for reasons best known to them have charged me with seeking to integrate all the churches in the Birmingham area. I have no sympathy with the idea that blacks should place membership in white churches to promote integration. However, I am convinced that a faithful black Christian cannot be denied the right to enter (place membership or visit) into a congregation and participate in worship of God simply

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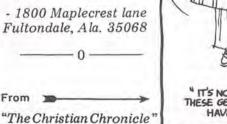
because he is black. I do not believe that a black person who seeks to know the truth should be turned away or sent to be with "his own kind" just because he is black. I do not believe that white churches and brethren should neglect preaching the gospel to "all men" because the present social order very likely will lead to racial mixing of churches.

I work with a racially mixed church in Birmingham, Ala. (Lest someone accuse me of not understanding the racial situation in the South or being an outsider, let it be understood that I grew up in Birmingham and have lived most of my life here). The meeting place of the Southwest church is located in a racially mixed area. The church lost more than 75% of its membership when white families moved out of the area because blacks began moving in. The decision to stay in the area and turn what seemed to be a disaster into an opportunity for the cause of Christ was led principally by four white Southwest brethren. The few saints that remained of the church accepted a challenge that other churches have avoided or neglected. There are several black members in the church now and we are working together to reach "all men" in the area. The future looks bright for the Southwest church and a good attitude prevails among the members for "we be brethren."

Too often we have neglected opportunities to carry the gospel to all men. Surely we should be concerned with preaching the

gospel in foreign lands, but many churches that spend thousands of dollars sending the gospel to distant places neglect those who live "in the shadow of the meeting house." Brethren we will give an account for this neglect. Will some soul say in judgment "vou never mentioned Him to me?"

- 1800 Maplecrest lane Fultondale, Ala. 35068





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HERALD OF TRUTH'S LATEST THRUST

Under the date of May 13, 1974, I received a letter over the signature of Batsell Barrett Baxter soliciting contributions to Herald of Truth. There was no mention of the recent controversies within the program and the Highland church which sponsors it. Just the same type of propaganda they have been circulating over the years. Notice:

"From January through March, 32,201 people responded to Herald of Truth programs. In one town in Mexico, 514 people (radio contacts) are studying the Bible. Seventeen of these were baptized in March alone! Across the Atlantic, people are being converted all over Spain and Portugal. In the U. S., results are pouring in every day, just as impressively."

This is what might be called, "Acentuating the positive, eliminating the negative." They obviously think they can cover up the recent scandals by claiming great success in "winning souls." Seems like I have heard of these tactics somewhere else!

In the midst of all the controversy, brother Baxter stood solidly with the Highland elders who went along with the firing of E.R. Harper, and defended their own lack of control of matters in the Highland church and the Herald of Truth. Obviously they are planning to continue as in the past.

Also in the letter we are given this bit of information:

"As you read this, I will be filming the pilot film of a new television series based upon 1 Corinthians, entitled "No Other Foundation." The first film is being made on credit. Each film will cost almost \$20,000. We cannot continue beyond the pilot film without your help and the help of others."

Highland elders, (or is it "The Herald of Truth committee"?) (continued at the bottom of next page)

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SEND ALL BOOKS FOR REVIEW TO THE EDITOR 1600 ONECO AVENUE, WINTER PARK, FLORIDA 32789

Evolution Vs. Science and the Bible

Bob West Publications, 6121 Hudson St. Orlando, Florida 32808, has just published an excellent 13-weeks course on the above subject. It consists of 13 lesson sheets for the students, 13 work sheets and a very thorough teacher's manual. Each lesson is introduced by one of his famous THEOPHILUS cartoons, which gives the course an unusual flavor. Also included is a 4-page final test to evaluate the student's comprehension of the material.

The lessons are all well done, and illustrated by a great deal of good art. (Brother West is a professional artist). The subject material is ably treated in a very simple style and is designed to be taught to students from 5th grade through adults, with some adaptation of course. In my estimation, this material presents a very interesting challenge to both teacher and student. Brethren everywhere will do well to take a good look at it. I am sure brother West would be glad to send you a returnable sample packet for inspection. The material is moderately priced as follows: student material, 75¢ per set, and teacher's guide, \$1.25. Order from Bob West Publications at the aforementioned address.

Needham's Notes - continued from preceeding page

still feel they have the right to plan work for the brotherhood. They continue to make contracts and create obligations for the brotherhood. Thus, they continue to operate as brotherhood elders. I predicted once that the scandals would spell the end of Herald of Truth, but I am not so sure now. I guess I underestimated the gullibility of brethren who are addicted to bigness and to the idea of doing "the work of the Lord" by simply making a contribution and letting someone else decide how to spend it.

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Franklin - Woods Debate

Ray Hawk

(Editor's Note: I print the following report of a recent debate as a news item of some historical interest. It proves the extent of neo-Pentecostalism inflitration and that our liberal brethren are still able to manifest brazen inconsistency. They fight the fruits of their errors with one hand, and continue to sow the seeds that produce it with the other. The neo-Pentecostal movement is a natural result of the no patternism which brother Woods and others have defended for the past 25 years. One wonders why it is so important to follow the pattern where spiritual gifts are concerned, but alright to ignore it where church benevolence, cooperation, etc. are concerned. I used to hear brother Woods condemn those who "believe the Bible in spots." jpn)

On May 20-23, 1974, brother Guy N. Woods met Ben Franklin in a public debate on the subject of Holy Ghost baptism, miracles, signs and wonders. Brother Franklin affirmed these things are found in the church today, whereas brother Woods affirmed they have ceased. The debate was held in Gadsden, Alabama.

Brother Woods did a masterful work in defending the faith. He conducted himself as a gentleman throughout the discussion. Brother Franklin allowed his composure to slip one time and referred to us as "Campbellites." He later apologized.

Brother Henry McCaghren, evangelist with the Sansom Avenue church of Christ moderated for brother Woods and a brother Hill moderated for brother Franklin. Both Franklin and Hill were gospel preachers but now espouse Neo-Pentecostal doctrine.

During the discussion brother Franklin involved himself in a number of contradictions. On one or more of his charts he denied that the tongues in the New Testament were ecstatic. However, brother Woods produced proof from Franklin's book that he did believe they were ecstatic. Franklin at first denied that that was what he meant, but later said it didn't make any difference.

RAY HAWK preaches for the East Gadsden church of Christ in East Gadsden, Alabama. He and the editor of TORCH had a written debate published in TORCH and Bible Beacon which he edits. The subject was the scriptural use of meeting houses. This debate is now available in book form and sells for \$1.00. It can be ordered from this editor, or brother Hawk.

Franklin was pressed to reveal what he thought 1 Corinthians 12:13 was saying. He had to be forced by brother Woods to admit what kind of baptism was under consideration. Finally, he admitted it was Holy Ghost baptism. Franklin had written in his book that he had been baptized in water for the remission of his sins and twenty-five years later baptized into the Holy Ghost. Woods asked him if he had the remission of sins for 25 years before he was baptized into Christ by the Spirit. He refused to reply.

When Franklin was pressed on 1 Corinthians 13:8-10 and Ephesians 4:11-13, he stated these offices and gifts would cease in the Perfect Age. Brother Woods produced a chart which would not allow brother Franklin to say the Perfect Age was in heaven, for it would have involved him in saying error and immaturity would be found in heaven. Therefore, he said the Perfect Age would be here on earth. This is premillennialism! This left Franklin in a dilemma from which he was not able to extricate himself.

During the debate the audience could clearly comprehend that brother Franklin was confused. He gave the book of Ephesians some nineteen chapters. He had Paul writing 2 Peter 3:16,17. He often apologized for his mistakes and complained that he was not a debater and did not like debates. Woods pointed out that Franklin had said the Holy Spirit led him into the debate and asked him if he disliked what the Holy Spirit led him into doing! Franklin refused to reply.

Franklin complained about Woods' charts and said he could not answer them on the same night he saw them for the first time because he wasn't capable of doing so. Yet, on his charts he showed where one with Holy Ghost baptism would have the Spirit guiding him into ALL truth. What Franklin lacked, the Holy Spirit could make up. One Holy Spirit would have defeated a million Guy N. Woodses! But, it was evident that brother Franklin did not have what he argued for.

Franklin was often guilty of misquoting and misreading scripture. He referred to Mark 6:5 three or four times during the debate to show why he wasn't going to perform any miracles. He wasn't because Jesus "could there do no mighty works" because of their unbelief. Yet, although he did say something about Jesus doing some healing "on the side," the passage clearly says he healed a few sick folk. Franklin could heal no one. In fact, he argued that our unbelief negated his belief and kept him from

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healing anyone. Yet, 1 Corinthians 14:22 says tongues are for those who do not believe!

Franklin used Philippians 4:9 and said we ought to be like Paul, even in believing in and performing miracles. When brother Woods pointed out 2 Corinthians 12:12 and asked brother Franklin if he did what Paul did, he never brought up the argument again. Brother Hill, Franklin's moderator told some preachers that if he were debating, he would confirm his word with miracles. However, the only miracles that were performed, were those which Franklin told about happening in California and other places. Not one miracle, sign or wonder was performed in Gadsden, Alabama!

During the last night of the debate, Franklin had not yet discussed most of brother Woods' charts. When pressed on this, he asked brother Fred House, who was operating the overhead projector, to put up all of brother Woods' charts. Brother House began putting them up from number one to number fourteen. Just before he arrived at the most damaging charts, Franklin told House to stop the machine. House responded by saying there were three more charts. Brother Franklin told him that was enough. Woods spoke up from his seat and said, "I thought you wanted to see all of them." Brother Franklin's reply was, "I've changed my mind."

This debate will go down in history as the turning point of Pentecostalism in the churches of Christ. Anyone who truly wants the truth will be able to see the fallacy of Franklin's position. We owe a deep sense of gratitude to brother Guy N. Woods for his defense of the truth.

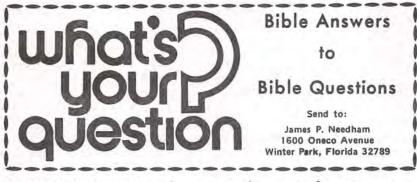
Tapes of the debate may be ordered from Ray Hawk; 801 Litchfield Avenue; Gadsden, Alabama 35903. These are reel to tapes. A single tape for 4 track machines is \$4.40. Two tapes for 2 track recorders are \$6.40. Charts used by brother Woods may be ordered from Henry McCaghren; 100 Carlton Place; Gadsden, Alabama 35901. These are \$1.25 per set. The book on the debate shall be out within 90 - 120 days. The cost is not yet known.

> P.O. Box 2005 East Gadsden, Alabama 35903

HAS YOUR SUBSCRIPTION EXPIRED? RENEW PROMPTLY!

TORCH

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QUESTION: Sunday Night Lord's Supper

"Is it scriptural, (Is there Bible authority) to serve the Lord's supper at the P.M. assembly, after it has already been served at the A.M. assembly, for the benefit of those providentially hindered from being present at the A.M. assembly"? --Georgia

REPLY:

The querest means is it scriptural for the Lord's supper to be served twice on a Lord's day: once on Sunday morning for the worshippers, and again on Sunday evening for those who *could not attend* the morning service.

I definitely believe it to be scriptural thus to do, and for the following reasons:

1. Sunday evening is still the first day of the week: The scriptures teach by example and necessary inference that the first day of the week is when the Lord intends for us to observe the supper. As we count time, the first day of the week begins at midnight Saturday night, and ends at midnight Sunday night. Any time between those two points is a scriptural time to partake of the Lord's supper. That includes the Sunday evening service. Thus those who commune on Sunday evening are fulfilling the demands of the scriptures.

2. Observance of the supper is an individual matter: Paul said, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup" (1 Cor. 11:28). Since it is an individual matter, no church or members thereof have the right to bar others from the table at the time the Lord authorized the supper to be observed. To do so would be to violate the demand of self-examination, and to bind where God has loosed.

OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED

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1. "If one cannot attend the morning service, he is not obligated to take the supper." It would be interesting to discover how this was determined, since Sunday evening is still the first day of the week, the very day upon which the Lord authorized the supper to be observed. How does some man discover that one is not obligated to do what the Lord authorized?

2. "But in 1 Corinthians 11, they were to tarry one for another, and all were to partake of it at the same time." The Greek word for "tarry" here is ekdechomai, and means "to expect, await" (Vine); "Cordially receive" (McKnight). Many leading scholars translate it "receive one another" (Meyer, et al). Paul is correcting the party spirit at Corinth, the practice of parties which excluded those not members of it. He is saying," Do not exclude one another, but receive each and all cordially." Everyone may have partaken of the supper at the same time, but that is not Paul's point in this context, and there is nothing in the scriptures to indicate that it is obligatory. Furthermore, everyone partakes of the supper in our services today, that is, everyone who is supposed to partake of it does so at both the morning and evening services.

The idea that all saints in a given assembly must partake of the supper, not just a few of them, as is the case in the Sunday evening communion, runs one into some difficulties. For instance, I have frequently preached at two Sunday morning services at two different churches and the Lord's supper was observed in both assemblies. In such a case, what should I do? partake of the supper twice? If not, I violate the rule that all saints in a given assembly must partake of the supper.

3. "Sunday evening communion encourages people to neglect the morning communion." The same objection could be raised to the Sunday evening preaching; we could with as much logic argue that we should not have preaching on Sunday evening because it just encourages people to sleep, or go golfing on Sunday morning, and say, "Oh, well, I will hear the sermon tonight." There is no defence for the person who through negligence and indifference misses the Sunday morning sermon, or supper on the basis that he can substitute for it the Sunday evening service. Such a person's problem is not Sunday evening communion, but his ungodly lukewarm attitude. But in reality, such a person is in the same boat with the one who indifferently fails to attend the Sunday evening service because he says, "I had the supper at the morning service."

This is a question which has disturbed some churches. There is no reason why it should do so. 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. But let him not seek to force his opinion on other brethren, or the church. When we begin to make laws of our opinions, we begin to bind where God loosed.

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(Editor's Note: It never occurred to me that anyone would think it unethical to print excerpts from mail written to either me or brother Farris in which readers comment upon TORCH subject matter, but one reader has intimated that I have acted contrary to my editorial in which I criticized brethren for publishing private mail. I can understand how one might think that editorial is inconsistent with Back Talk, but it is not really. The excerpts printed in Back Talk are comments from readers on material that has appeared in TORCH, not "private mail." At no time have I knowingly printed any confidential statement from anyone. Neither have I ever printed any excerpt that I remotely thought would be embarrassing to anyone. In fact, I have deliberately withheld some very pertinent statements simply because I felt they were meant to be confidential, and might be embarrassing. I have received some letters which have been labeled "NOT FOR PUBLICATION." He who thinks I would break a confidence, or seek to embarrass someone, doesn't know me very well.

One editor criticized such columns as Back Talk as being clever ways for periodicals to brag on themselves, even though that editor has printed several letters from readers commending his efforts!!! Which is alright with me. I have printed a good many such letters, but not because they commended TORCH efforts, but because I think it is good for the reading public to know what others are thinking. If anyone disagrees with this judgment, have at it! I shall continue to do as I think best for this little effort, and allow other editor's the same privilege. The careful reader must have noticed that I have printed a good many letters which were critical of my editorials. If printed comments favorable to my efforts is a clever way to brag on myself, I wonder what printing criticisms is a clever effort to do.

Almost every magazine, and newspaper has a "Letter to the Editor" page. Some letters on this page are critical, some are favorable. To me such is a vital part of open-handed journalism.

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When I reach the point that I can't hear anyone's voice but my own, I hope I will have enough presence of mind to vacate this editor's chair because I won't deserve to occupy it any longer. jpn)

St. Paul, Minnesota -- ". . . I wish to comment briefly on the article by the wife of a preacher. I surely hope some other preacher's wife responds to it. It paints a pessimistic picture that has not at all characterized our lives in this family. I believe many, many wives can see another side that is quite optomistic. Because of my wife's critical condition right now, I do not have the disposition to do so, but if some woman does not do it, I hope to be able to respond later, even if it would be written by a man. I dislike pessimism, especially among preachers and their wives. We have the greatest privilege in this world, why should we count it such a burden? And the brethren with whom I have lived and worked have not been at all like the ones she described, even though we had five children - which children were neither idolized nor abhorred by the brethren, but everywhere respected and treated well. You have much good material in your little paper." --- Leslie Diestelkamp

(Editor's Note: Though this letter is quite old now (June 6, 1973) and comments upon an article that appeared in even further back than that (March, 1973) we believe that it deserves to be read. I delayed printing it because I was in hopes that brother Diestelkamp would get around to fulfilling his intention to write a direct reply. But his dear wife has gone to her reward, and he has taken on a new field of labor in Australia. Thus, I am printing his reply that the other side of the matter might receive some airing. I believe it is fair to point out that both points of view in this matter are based upon personal experiences which are quite different. One is older, the other younger. From their particular vantage points, I am sure both are correct, and the fact that they are contradictory does not prove that either is false. Personal experiences sometimes run parallel, but then, sometimes they run in opposite directions. jpn).

Mt. Pleasant, S.C. -- "We appreciate TORCH very much. Brother Needham has a way of saying what needs to be said in a way that it should be said. We believe that TORCH is one of the hopes of the truth, or I should say, the people, Christians, who are responsible for it." --Horace and Beverly Neely

(Editor's Note: Billy K. Farris and I are wholly responsible for the production and distribution of TORCH. While we appreciate the many expressions of confidence in our efforts, we do not feel that we are the champions of some cause and that we are

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knights in shining armor riding forth on firey steeds as saviours of the cause of truth. We produce and distribute this paper in the discharge of our individual responsibilities to preach the gospel. Other Christians use other methods; we happen to use this one. If our efforts edify and instruct others in the ways of the Lord, we give God the glory, and thank Him heartily for supplying us with this opportunity to serve Him. Beyond this, we have absolutely no ambition. jpn)

Walkerton, Indiana -- "I am persuaded that very few of us as readers can comprehend the time and labor involved in editing a good periodical such as TORCH. I receive, with thanksgiving, each issue of TORCH. The un-biased way in which you deal with each subject is very gratifying. May you continue in the path of truth, honesty, and sincerity that all may be edified and strengthened, and God glorified." ---H. L. Rumley

(Editor's Note: Brother Rumley is just right; the average reader has no idea what all is involved in making this paper available. Many thoughtful and laborous hours go into each issue. (This is being written while many of you sleep). Many persons think that anyone who does any kind of publishing work is rolling in dough! (How mistaken can one be?) Nothing could be further from the truth. I have been associated with religious periodicals most of my preaching life, and personally know that many brethren have sacrificed much of their own funds to keep them in print. In the final analysis, the subscription price, in most cases, will hardly pay the printing bill, muchless the many other expenses connected with such an effort. So, why do we do it? Because we feel it is needed, and that it accomplishes good. On no other grounds is the labor and sacrifice justified. jpn)

Little Rock, Arkansas -- "Still appreciate TORCH. The articles have been fine. I was especially touched by brother Needham's article in December, 1973, Being a Little Sentimental, or Sounds I Would Like to Hear Again." -- Louis Sharp

(Editor's Note: It seems that particular editorial touched a good many heart strings! At the same time, I am sure some of the things I mentioned meant nothing to those who are not old enough to remember those simpler times and circumstances. jpn)

Frostproof, Florida -- "I appreciate your work in the TORCH You are a real encouragement to me."

(Editor's Note: Many letters similar to this one from young preachers all over the country will help explain why we are so willing to persevere in this work, even though it often taxes our time and strength. From what other work on earth could one realize such fruit, or derive such satisfaction? jpn)

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Help Me

Help me to feel a throbbing pain

When others' rights go down the drain; To shed a tear when others weep And of them think while others sleep.

Help me to see my blundering faultWhen I fail to act as I know I ought;To see in me what others seeWhen I'm not as loving as I ought to be.

Help me to forgive when I am wronged When others take what to me belonged;To be concerned in such a case, Not just for me, but the human race.

Help me to see that life goes onWhen hate arises where love is gone;To love when hate would be expected;To accept others when I'm rejected.

Help me know my limitations; To refrain from frivilous explanations, Or making anemic alibis Which others know are embellished lies.

Help me to see my enemies' best Though I deplore all the rest And in my friends some faults observe; To give to all what they deserve.

Help me to be a friend indeed; To extend my hand to those in need With never a thought of sowing seed To later redound to my selfish greed.

> James P. Needham 4-20-74

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

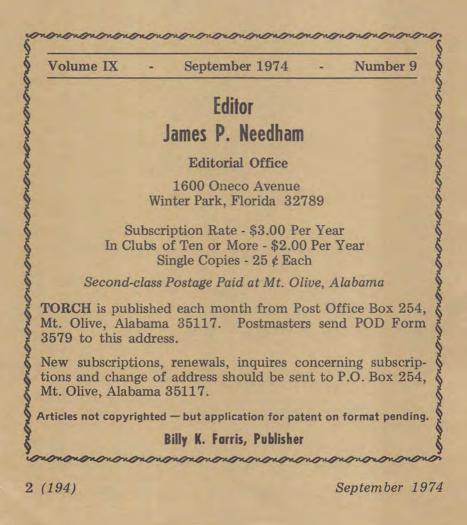
LOOK INSIDE FOR THESE THOUGHT PROVOKING ARTICLES

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SELF MEASUREMENT

Self measurement is a false standard because it is a human standard. It is beneficial to hear and to read what men say and have said, whether they are alive or dead, for counsel and consideration, for interest and information, but never for standards of measurement. What is needed is a plain passage of scripture for what we practice, and if what we do is right we can find the scripture.

> - Foy E. Wallace, Jr. TORCH, Volume I, Number 4 October, 1950





Editorial-

James P. Needham

2 John 9 - 11, and the Doctrine of Christ

It is too often the case that men go to the Bible to prove what they already believe, rather than going to the Bible to find out what to believe. When the Bible is approached in an effort to substantiate preconceived ideas, dogmas and doctrines, every verse seems to teach them! I used to plough an old mule on the farm which learned that the sound of a dinner bell meant it was time to go to the barn. She wanted to hear the dinner bell so strongly, that I could tap on the plough handle at ten o'clock in the morning, or three o'clock in the afternoon, and she would try to take out for the barn from the middle of the field! So, when we decide what we are going to believe and then go to the Bible to prove it, our strong predisposition and desire to defend a pet theory will make almost every passage of scripture *seem* to prove our preconceived notion.

Today there is a group of younger brethren, some of whom have a considerable amount of higher education "under their belts," and who aspire to be *recognized scholars*, who tells us that the expression "the doctrine of Christ" in 2 John 9-11, has reference, not to the doctrine which Christ taught, but to the doctrine about Him, namely, that He has come in the flesh. Consequently, all of us who have used this passage to justify refusing to have fellowship with those who teach and practice things contrary to the New Testament teaching, are *misusing* it. It only teaches that we should refuse fellowship to those who deny that Jesus Christ came in the flesh. It does not justify withholding our fellowship from the liberials and digressives with all their unscriptural doctrines and innovations, they say.

I get the distinct impression that these young "scholars" think they have discovered something new, and that they have really come up with an historical discovery that will revolutionize the attitudes and actions of the brethren. I don't claim to be a scholar, and I don't have a lot of higher education, but I would like to notify these brethren that this argument on 2 John 911 is older than most of them! Theard it from the digressives and modernists when I first started preaching about 26 years ago. To prove this beyond the shadow of reasonable doubt, I insert here a short

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article from The Gospel Advocate, December 4, 1941, p. 1159. It was written by a very able teacher at whose feet I had the privilege to sit, brother Frank Van Dyke. He not only proves the age of the argument, but he absolutely wipes it out for all who are not irrevocably committed to Calvinism. Read it with care.

THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST

Frank Van Dyke

"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." (2 John 9-11.)

This passage shows the sin of doing in religion those things which God has not commanded us to do. The doctrine of Christ is that which Christ taught — that which he taught personally or through those whom he inspired to write the New Testament. New Testament teaching is the doctrine of Christ. Whoever goes onward, teaching and practicing something in religion for which there is no New Testament authority, is not abiding in the doctrine of Christ. He hath not God.

We are not to receive those who bring not this doctrine. This means that we cannot fellowship the Christian Church as long as it has musical instruments, societies, and kindred innovations. The silence of the Scripture must be respected. To fellowship the Christian Church in these matters is to become a partaker of its error.

Of course our digressive brethren have labored hard to escape the force of this teaching. The following incident is typical of the way they go about it. It has been reported that one of our brethren quoted 2 John 9-11 in one of the national unity meetings, and went on to give the usual argument as outlined above. A Christian Church man replied, contending fervently that this is not the meaning of the passage. He argued that "the doctrine of Christ," as John used it here, refers to his being the Son of God. This must have been based on verse 7, where John says: "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh." John was merely warning the brethren against those who denied Christ as the Son of God. If any of this kind should come unto them, they were not to receive them. To "bring not this doctrine" means to reject Christ as God's Son, while to abide "in the doctrine" is to acknowledge that he is the Son. Such was the man's rebuttal, and it is said that he offset the force of our brother's argument.

Let us see the implications of this argument. "He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son." If to abide "in the doctrine of Christ" simply means to accept him as God's Son — to believe this truth and nothing more — then whoever believes this has both the Father and the Son. If he has the Son, he has life. "He that hath the Son hath life." (1 John 5:12.) To have life spiritually is to be saved. Now see the conclusion: Whoever abides in the doctrine of Christ — just believes that he is God's Son — has the Son, has life, or is

saved; therefore, the argument proves salvation by faith only!

How much better it is to forstall such quibbles by first showing what a passage does not mean! It is necessary to know the arguments on both sides of a question, because people are not always convinced when we merely set forth the truth without exposing the error. Both positive and negative preaching are needed to do justice to the cause of truth.

While I am unwilling to do.so, I could admit this false contention on 2 John 9-11, and still not surrender the grounds for refusing to fellowship digressive brethren. This is not the only passage in the New Testament that forbids our fellowshipping those in error. What about the following?

Romans 16:17,18 -"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." We are told by these brethren that we must keep all passages in context, which rule I whole-heartedly accept. So, what "doctrine" had the Roman's learned? The only way to answer that is to read the Book of Romans. Whatever Paul taught them in the Book of Romans is the doctrine they had learned. Any student of the Book knows that more is involved than the Deity of Christ, or primary obedience to the gospel.

Galatians 1:8.9 - "But though we, or an angel from heaven,preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again. If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." Paul is commanding the Galatians to mark and avoid those Judaizing false teachers in the Galatian churches who were not denying the Sonship of Christ, but were simply trying to add something to it. They were not preaching "another" gospel (that is a completely different one). but they "would pervert the gospel of Christ" (v. 6). All this is said to those who were "removing from him that called you into the grace of Christ . . ." (v. 6), so it was not a perversion of the essentials of sonship, but perversion of that which was beyond the point of sonship; beyond the point at which they were "called ... into the grace of Christ." Thus there is no indication that the Galatians were altering the fundamentals of the gospel, or denying the divine Sonship of Christ. Thus, they were to "let him be accursed" who perverted that which was beyond the point of being "called . . . into the grace of Christ . . . " (v. 6). To deny this is to deny the obvious.

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Ephesians 5:11 - "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." This passage is in the context of "Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord" (v. 10) and "ALL THINGS that are reproved or made manifest by the light" (v. 12). The question arises, then, what are the "unfruitful works of darkness?" According to the context, there are "those things (all things v. 13) which are done in secret" (v. 12), thus, all things which are contrary to light. This is explained beautifully by 1 John 1:7-10, "If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another (that is, man with God), and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (v. 7). What it means to walk in the light is explained in verses 8-10, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." The blood of Christ is God's provision for removal, or forgiveness, of sin. To walk in the light is to live in fellowship with the Father and the Son. Sin interrupts this fellowship but confession of our sins restores it. Continuous confession (which involves repentance and petition) keeps this fellowship unbroken. Thus, Ephesians 5:11 enjoins refusal to have fellowship with anything that is contrary to all things which cannot be proven to be acceptable to God, the works of darkness; and beyond that, we are commanded to reprove them. It is not enough to refuse to fellowship error (all error), we must aggressively reprove it.

1 Thessalonians 3:6 - "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us." The quibble is sometimes made that this is in the context of one who will not work, but notice that in verse 7, Paul says, "For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you," but now notice a transition, in verse 8, "NEITHER did we (an introduction of a thought in addition to what he was already discussing) eat any man's bread for nought . . ." Refusing to work is only one way that one can walk disorderly (contrary to order), and Paul proves this conclusively when he says in verses 13,14,15, "But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing. And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." Hence, this passage (chapter) commands us to withdraw ourselves from any brother who walks contrary to the order set forth in divine revelation, not just those who tamper with the fundamentals, or deny that Jesus

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has come in the flesh.

Titus 3:10 - "A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself." An heretic is a party maker, not one who denies the Sonship of Christ, or tampers with the conditions of our sonship. Parties are usually formed by brethren who tamper with things other than the fundamentals.

Hebrews 8:5 - "Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shown to thee in the mount." Any student of Hebrews knows that the writer is contrasting the Old Testament tabernacle with the New Testament church, and showing that Moses was bound by God to make every phase and facit of the tabernacle according to the pattern he had been shown in the mount. Would it have been acceptable had Moses done otherwise? Who will answer in the affirmative? Now, look at verse 6, "But now hath he (Christ) obtained A MORE EX-CELLENT ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a BETTER COVENANT, which was established upon BETTER PROMISES." If Moses could not have pleased God by departing from the pattern in an inferior tabernacle, how can we please Him by departing from it in the church, which is better? But following the pattern in the church has to do with more than obeying the fundamentals of sonship, and confessing the deity of Christ. If perverting the pattern of the church is not sufficient grounds for breaking fellowship, could we say the same concerning Moses had he broken the pattern of the tabernacle?

1 Peter 4:11 — "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." Concerning the word "oracle" Vine says, "A diminutive of logos, a word, narrative, statement, denotes a Divine response or utterance, an oracle; it is used of (a) the contents of the Mosaic Law, Acts 7:38; (b) all the written utterances of God through O.T. writers, Romans 3:2; (c) the substance of Christian doctrine, Hebrews 5:12; (d) utterances of God through Christian teachers, 1 Peter 4:11." Our duty to speak as God speaks in everything is quite clear, not just in the area of the fundamentals of sonship, and the Deity of Christ. If this is not true, then God's word can be made to mean almost anything.

This controversy is similar to that we have had over the years on Revelation 22:18,19, which forbids adding to or taking from "this book." Some have argued that this has reference only to the Book

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of Revelation; others argue that it has reference to all of Divine revelation. The argument is useless since the same idea is taught in other New Testament passages, and was very much a part of Old Testament revelation. Why hinge an entire controversy on one passage when the same thing is taught throughout Divine revelation?

But, really, brother Van Dyke has clearly shown the fallacy of the idea that 2 John 9-11 has reference to the Deity of Christ ONLY. Logically, the matter looks like this:

- 1. He that abides in the doctrine of Christ (believes in his Deity), hath both the Father and the Son (2 John 9).
- 2. But to have the Son is to have life (1 Jn. 5:12).
- 3. But to have life is to be saved.
- 4. Therefore, he who believes in the deity of Christ has life and is saved.

That is Calvinism gone to seed, and those who hold that "the doctrine of Christ" in 2 John 9 has reference only to the Deity of Christ have four alternatives: (1) They can accept the consequences of their position: salvation by faith only which is Calvinistic and unscriptural (Jas. 2:24), or (2) They can admit that they are wrong on the passage and recognize that it has reference to the *whole doctrinal system* taught by Christ and His apostles and start practicing it and stop trying to find some rationale for fellowshiping false teachers, or (3) They can put up their theology books and get out their Bibles and prove a fallacy in this argument, or (4) They can ignore the argument and thus surrender their claim to scholarship.

I am honest when I say that it doesn't matter to me what is the truth about 2 John 9, or any other Bible subject. If the Deity of Christ is the only thing under consideration there, so let it be. But this is not the case just because some young "scholars" want it to be. It is true if they are able to prove it beyond the shadow of a doubt, which they have not done, and, I am convinced, cannot do. Brother Van Dyke's argument DEMANDS their very careful attention. If they are not willing to accept its conclusion, they must give up their argument on 2 John 9. If they are willing to accept his conclusion, then the Calvinistic label fits them to a "T," and they, like all Calvinists, find themselves in direct conflict with James 2:24. Which will it be?

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"O, Consistency, Thou Art a Jewel!"

Keith Sharp

(Editor's Note: We here publish Keith Sharp's reply to an article on consistency by David Smitherman. Since TORCH is a monthly, we like to try to give the person reveiwed a chance to reply in the same issue; otherwise, his reply might not be published for 2 or 3 months, thus losing the readers – especially those who don't keep back issues. Obviously, brother Sharp has reference to my review of brother Finley's article on Fuzzy Thinking, and in the discussion that has followed. I feel there has been a deviation from the only point I made, namely, that convicting the anti-Bible department brethren of inconsistency because they buy written comments on the Bible from human organizations does not prove Bible departments to be scriptural. I have not denied the utility of proving inconsistency in polemics, and I have used, and shall continue to use it, but I know that it proves nothing scriptural. It helps to focus attention on the issue, and proves that something is out of joint in the opponent's position, but I repeat, it proves nothing to A thing is proven to be scriptural either by be scriptural. command, approved apostolic example, or necessary inference. If inconsistence is a fourth way to prove something to be scriptural, I have yet to be convinced of it. These brethren can discuss consistency all they want to, but I shall not allow anyone to attribute a position to me which I do not endorse. I am not saying this has been done, but when the discussion strays from the original point, there is a danger that someone will be falsely labeled in the process. jpn)

Much has been penned in TORCH recently about consistency. I suppose it all began with the publication of brother Ernest Finley's article, "Fuzzy Thinking," which was written for the purpose of demonstrating the inconsistency of brethren who oppose Bible departments in colleges yet patronize and support religious publishing houses.

In a December, 1973 article in TORCH, entitled "On Being Consistent," brother David Smitherman contended:

"Why is such a big point made out of inconsistency? The

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KEITH SHARP preaches for the Pruitt and Lobit church in Baytown, Texas. He is a son of H. F. Sharp, a well known and very able preacher of the gospel for many years.

only kind of inconsistency that I can think of that is wrong is that which manifests itself in hypocrisy (Gal. 2:11-14).... Do you know what you have proven when you prove a man to be inconsistent? You have proven him to be inconsistent, and that is all that you have proven! ...

"Truth and error are not to be discovered in consistencies and inconsistencies . . . Consistency is not necessarily a virtue and inconsistency a vice."

It is truly a shame the Lord did not realize how insignificant consistency is. Had He so realized, He doubtless would not have used invalid and pointless arguments on His adversaries. For example, in Luke 13:11-13 we read of Jesus healing a woman "which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years." The ruler of the synagogue rebuked Jesus before the people for healing on the sabbath (v. 14). Jesus replied scathingly:

"Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?

"And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?" (vs. 15,16).

As the result of the Lord's argument, "all his adversaries were ashamed" (v. 17).

The Lord's sole argument in defense of His practice of healing on the sabbath was the inconsistency of His opponents in their objections. This establishes some vital truths about the matter of consistency.

- 1. When one is obviously inconsistent and knows it, he is a hypocrite (Lk. 13:15; Gal. 2:11-14). Rather than hypocrisy being that which makes inconsistency wrong, inconsistency adhered to proves one to be a hypocrite.
- 2. Inconsistency is a valid argument to use against an opponent. It is a "big point."
- When a man is proven to be inconsistent, he is proven to be wrong in at least one of his positions.
- 4. Truth and error can be discovered in consistencies and

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inconsistencies.

5. Inconsistency IS necessarily a vice.

The logical reason behind these observations should be obvious and can be stated in a simple syllogism.

Major Premise: Truth is consistent (Axiomatic).

Minor Premise: The Bible, God's Word, is Truth (John 17:17).

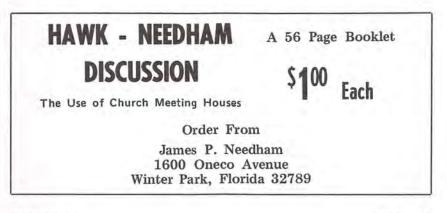
Conclusion: Therefore, the Bible, God's Word, is consistent.

If a man has the truth of the Bible, he will be consistent.

The application of this principle should also be obvious. Those who level an argument against another man's position, which argument they will not level against their own position, are guilty of the logical fallacy of "special pleading." They are, in short, inconsistent. If their inconsistency is pointed out, and they adhere to their position regardless, they demonstrate hypocrisy.

Those brethren who argue that the Bible cannot be taught as a separate course in the college on the basis that the college is a collectivity other than the church must forthrightly deal with the matter of religious publishing houses and magazines. As brother Needham well said, "Contradictory statements can't both be right." (TORCH, December, 1973, p. 10). Neither can contradictory positions nor practices. "O, Consistency, thou art a jewel!"

> 600 W. Lobit St. Baytown, Texas 77520



TORCH

(203) 11

Reply to Brother Sharp

David Smitherman

Elsewhere in this issue of TORCH brother Needham has printed a reply to my December, 1973, article concerning "consistency." I appreciate the attitude of brother Keith Sharp in his response to this article which gives me occasion to re-think my position and examine again my thinking.

It was certainly not our purpose in the original article to encourage inconsistencies or to discourage a harmonizing of what we practice with what we profess. The thrust of that article (although I may have failed to "make myself perfectly clear") was against the practice of using a man's inconsistencies to (a) make him appear to be a dishonest hypocrite and/or (b) to prove his position to be erroneous just on the basis of an inconsistency. Before considering brother Sharp's article we will elaborate further on these two matters. With reference to point "a," we say that this is not always the case. We agree with brother Sharp that if an inconsistency is persisted in, it certainly can make a man a hypocrite. We question the position that it always does. As for point "b," we maintain that a man's practice or belief must be put to the ultimate test of Divine Truth in order to determine whether or not it is wrong. This, not a lack of harmony in a man's profession and practice, is our standard of right and wrong. Now to brother Sharp's article.

I agree with what he says about the event of Luke 13:11-13. It harmonizes with what I said concerning inconsistency being wrong when it manifests itself in hypocrisy. The difference between us seems to be over whether or not *all* inconsistency is hypocrisy. Is hypocrisy an integral part of inconsistency? Does all inconsistency, if persisted in, result in hypocrisy? Cannot a man be inconsistent without being a hypocrite?

Please read brother Sharp's statements concerning the vital truths to be gleaned from the above incident. Our response will be numbered in accord with them.

1. Is this always the case? Some brethren, because of conscience, will not observe Christmas by exchanging gifts because they feel this has religious significance. Yet they will dye Easter eggs and throw rice at weddings, both of

DAVID SMITHERMAN preaches for the church in Bryon, Texas. He is a son of brother and sister Thomas Smitherman of Port Arthur, Texas. Brother Thomas Smitherman is an able elder of the Imhoff Blvd. church in Port Arthur.

which acts at one time carried with them religious overtones of a pagan nature. Now, are they consistent? I think not. However, I do not believe that such are hypocrites.

- 2. I agree with this statement here as it relates to the statement in his paragraph 6. I realize that I left the impression in my article that inconsistencies could not and should not be used in discussing differences. I stand corrected on this and express appreciation to brother Sharp for pointing this out. I say again, to stress my original point, that when too big a point is made of a man's inconsistencies, we run the risk of making him appear to be something that he may not be: a dishonest hypocrite.
- 3. Again, we say that it is *Truth* that must be used to prove a man to be in error on a position.
- 4. Once more, truth and error are to be found by an appeal to scripture.
- 5. I could agree with this *if* it could be proven that *all* inconsistency necessarily involves hypocrisy.

I certainly have nothing to disagree with in the syllogism. I would point out that if it is Truth as a standard that we speak of, then certainly we must strive for consistency in profession and practice. However, if it is in areas of opinion and matters of indifference, then inconsistency would not necessarily be a vice.

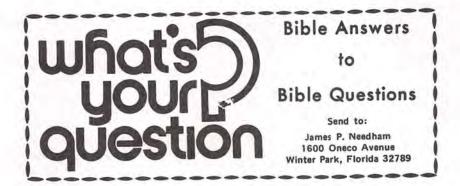
I agree that brethren who object to the Bible college arrangement must forthrightly deal with matters of a similar nature. However, I think that wisdom dictates that we be slow in inferring about them or charging them with (and I am not saying brother Sharp has done this) hypocrisy, if their practice does not "jive" in all respects with their beliefs. It is a serious thing to accuse a man of being a hypocrite. Peter lists this evil among other sins in 1 Peter 2:1. Among these sins is "wickedness" which, according to Thayer, means "malignity, malice, ill-will, desire to injure." If we are going to flatly state or infer that a brother is a hypocrite because of his inconsistencies, then he is deserving of the same treatment that is to be accorded the wicked and all others committing the sins mentioned by Peter. If all inconsistencies are indications of hypocrisy, and if hypocrites are to be treated as all other sinners, then brethren let's be consistent and start exercising discipline in the case of all inconsistent brethren!

Again, my thanks to brother Sharp for his article and his corrections and the opportunity that his response has afforded me to (hopefully) clarify the original article.

> 3610 Plainsman La. Bryan, Texas 77801

TORCH

(205) 13



QUESTION: Soul Sleep

What does Solomon mean when he says there is no knowledge in the grave? Does it mean "soul sleep," or that the dead are unconscious? Florida

REPLY:

Reference is made to Eccl. 9:10 which says: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might; for there is no work, nor device NOR KNOWLEDGE, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest."

We constantly emphasize the necessity of studying the context of a passage to find its proper meaning. It will help the reader to read the entire ninth chapter of Ecclesiastes. Notice the following points discussed:

1. Death comes to all men alike: "there is one event to the righteous, and to the wicked \ldots " (v. 2), "There is one event to all \ldots " (v. 3).

2. Contrast between the dead and the living: (a) A contrast in *hope*: For to him that is joined to all the *living* there is hope: for a *living dog* is better than a dead lion" (v. 4). (b) A contrast in *their involvement in earthly activities*: The living know, love, hate, envy, etc. but the dead have no more "a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun" (that is, in the land of the living). It says the dead do not know what is going on in the land of the

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living (what is done under the sun), not that they are unconscious and know nothing at all. That this is true is proven by the rich man in Lk. 16. He knew what he had done during his life time, and presumed that his brothers were following his example. Thus he was not unconscious.

3. Man should live a full life while he can: He should enjoy his food and drink (v. 7), wear clean clothes and sweet-smelling ointments (v. 8), and live joyfully with his wife (v. 9). Why? "For that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun" (v. 9). Then follows a summary of all he has said, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest" (v. 10).

The doctrine of "soul sleep" (or that man is unconscious between death and the resurrection) is taught by the Jehovah's Witness sect, but it has no support in the word of God. There are several passages in Ecclesiastes which they pervert in an effort to support their theory, but the context will always refute their abuses.

The spirit or soul of man is that part of him which is in the image of God (Gen. 1:27). God formed this spirit in man (Zech. 12:1). God is the Father of Spirits (Heb. 12:9). Spirits never die, nor lose consciousness. It is just as sensible to talk about God losing consciousness as to talk about man's doing so. The part of man that knows, loves, hates, envies, etc., or that with which he participates in the affairs of this life, ceases at death. He is no longer aware of on-going earthly affairs, but to make the expression "the dead know not anything" apply to what he has done on earth, or to awareness of his state after death, is to pervert the word of God because it contradicts Luke 16. The rich man, Abraham, and Lazarus were all conscious after death.

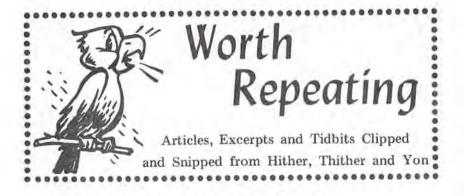
The usual dodge of the Jehovah's Witness is that Luke 16 is a parable. Of this they have absolutely no proof. There is nothing in this story to indicate that it is a parable. Let us note the following:

1. No Contrast: The word parable means to throw along side, that is to compare one thing with another. This element is completely absent from the story of the rich man and Lazarus.

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"For twenty-five years 'conservative' brethren have moved away from church supported institutions and sponsoring church power centers, only to be manipulated and molded by a complex of foundation, publishing, and college interests. There is an interlocking of these various institutional interests through personnel who have official, semi-official, or merely 'special' interests in the enterprises involved. There are some who have achieved prominence through their activities and connections with these institutions and interests. They serve as an informal guardian and directing aristocracy among conservative brethren. They have the power to create a consensus, arouse it, and direct it against whomsoever they will. They can shape public opinion, create hysteria, mark brethren and destroy reputation. They serve as a moulding party-type influence over preachers, elders, and congregations.

"This is not to suggest that prominent brethren involved in various institutional and publishing ventures are depraved. It is to suggest that the pressures and responsibilities of their influential positions, the dedication to cause, and the reaction to opposition often move them into unauthorized and unscriptural policies and procedures as brotherhood regulators and overseers.

"Brethren can, of course, function in their various institutional interests without abuse and encroachment. But when they use their positions as power-bases in the fashion of a curia, no matter how well-intentioned they may be, the centralization of authority we have long opposed has come upon us. While we fight to keep it from breaking through the front door, it enters the back door. The household has been infiltrated with various poisons that accompany power politics and party tactics in religious ranks. These poisons, namely, those that make brethren do what Paul said they ought not to do in Galatians 5:15, are just as destructive

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of individual and church standing before God as heresy or false teaching. Those who are obsessed with the danger of apostasy would do well to consider also the effects of the works of the flesh in controversy, and of centralization of authority in an aristocracy."

> William E. Wallace Gospel Guardian June 13, 1974

(Editor's Note: Few men in the church today have the ability to analyze and state a thing clearer than Bill Wallace. I believe the above is the clearest statement of the dangers we have sought to warn against that I have seen, and I reprint it here for the good it will surely do. Like brother Wallace, I believe "that brethren can . . . function in their various institutional interests without abuse and encroachment," but, while they have the right to do so, we must also exercise our right to criticize where we feel it is necessary. We must keep our criticism responsible and brotherly, but, criticize them, we must. When brotherly and responsible criticism is resented and the response to it is irresponsible and unbrotherly, we know that somebody is arrogating to themselves authority which God never intended, and wants to exercise it highhandedly and without interference. This is tyranny. jpn)

What's Your Question? - continued from page 15

2. Personalities: This story carries the actual names of persons involved in it: Abraham, Lazarus, and Jewish tradition assigns the name NIMEUSIS to the rich man. Meyer's commentary says, "Tradition calls the rich man ------, which, according to a scholiast, appeared also in certain MSS.; as, moreover, the Sahidic version has the addition: CUJUS ERAT MOMEN NINEUS." Parables of Jesus did not carry personal names of individuals. Since this story carries the names of two known historical characters, and possibly of three, we conclude that it is a record of an historical event.

But, on the other hand, if we admit it to be a parable, which I am not willing to do, it still teaches the truth. Jesus often spoke in parables, can we deny what they teach because they are parables? Certainly not! A parable is a method of teaching the truth. The Bible does not teach the materialistic doctrine of "soul sleep."

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The Language of Ashdod

From the June 23, 1974 bulletin of the Southern Avenue church in Shreveport, Louisiana, I take the following:

The elders confirmed Monday night that Mack Dillingham has agreed to WORK UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE SOUTHERN AVENUE ELDERS as a MISSIONARY to Truman Street. Area congregations are helping in the support of brother Dillingham. We welcome him to Shreveport and to our program of work here at Southern Avenue. (Larry James, Ray Hooper) (Emphasis mine, jpn)

Yet, in spite of such sectarian gibberish, our liberal brethren still claim to "speak as the oracles of God." In so doing they are mouthing a traditional slogan, not stating a fact. They cannot, and I predict will not attempt to, find anything in the Bible that is a forty-second cousin to the idea that a preacher can work for one church while "under the direction" of another. Neither will they find anything akin to a distinction between a *preacher* and a *missionary*, or between a *church* and a *mission*. Like the Jews at the time of the restoration who had intermarried with the people of Ashdod and whose children "spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language" (Neb. 9:24), so our liberal brethren have adopted the language of denominationalism whose ways they follow.

Editor Still Being "Hawked"

Ray Hawk, with whom I recently had a written debate on the proper use of the church building, continues to be bumfuzzled by the fact that I don't believe it is wrong to eat in the church building *per se*. In his bulletin dated June 16, 1974, he says:

Brother Needham says he will affirm that brethren may eat on the church grounds or in the building when such eating expedites evangelism, benevolence, or edification. *I did not really think he so believed*... (Emphasis mine, jpn)

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This demonstrates the tremendous good that can come from open discussion of religious differences. It clarifies the issues, and eliminates straw men and misrepresentations. Brother Hawk and his brethren have made a lot of hay with the false charge that "the *antis believe the building is holy*...." Now that brother Hawk knows this is not true, he can't quite figure out just what to do where the "antis" are concerned.

He goes on to quote a lengthy article from Dan Shipley in the May 1974, *Plain Talk*, distinguishing between *purposely* using the church property for a given action, like discussing a golf game, and *incidentally* doing so. All of this was discussed in the Hawk — Needham debate, but brother Hawk is still a bit befuddled from having one of his sugar sticks taken away from him, and as he concludes his article he repeats several of his quibbles and misrepresentations of the "antis," all of which have been as clearly refuted in the written debate as was his pipe dream that "*the antis believe the building is holy*." All of which, disappointingly, proves that brother Hawk is determined to continue in his unbrotherly and unkind ways in an effort to prejudice his readers and hearers against "the antis."

Meanwhile, order the Hawk — Needham Debate from this editor at \$1 per copy. Get the full story. Error can't stand in the searchlight of truth.

New Periodicals

Several new periodicals have come upon the scene, or are about to do so in the near future. This is a very healthy sign, and I rejoice to see it. The more periodicals we have the less will be the likely-hood that one will gain too much power and be looked upon as the voice of the church. Also, it will give the brethren a choice. If they don't like the policy, style, or thrust of one paper, they can always subscribe for another. If there is one thing the Lord's church doesn't need it is a human organization that claims to have no official connection with the church, but having the power to shape opinion, call the shots, and control the direction of the church universal. If there is anything more dangerous — more conductive to apostasy — I haven't discovered it.

GOSPEL ANCHOR: One such periodical to be announced recently, is Gospel Anchor. Actually, this is not a new publication, but the bringing of an old one out of "moth balls." It was published for about one year as a quarterly in 1958. It had a special thrust of in-depth articles on some rather deep subjects.

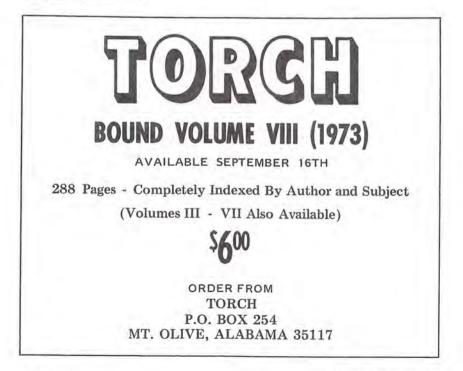
TORCH

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(This editor wrote a rather lengthy article for Gospel Anchor on *Dispensationalism* which is still referred to by many). The new Gospel Anchor will be a monthly with Gene Frost again in the editor's chair. He has gathered about him a rather large and able staff of regional editors who can give the paper quality and efficiency seldom attained in such efforts, provided they do more than have their names printed as "regional editors" on the masthead, which is too frequently the case. Some of our most able men seldom, if ever, write.

In his prospectus, Gene Frost, the editor, states: "We hope to maintain the QUALITY that characterized the Quarterly, while adopting a monthly schedule. Our proposal is to publish a journal that deals with current problems of interest to the church of our Lord, devotional material, in-depth studies of texts and subjects ... in essence the entire range of interest to the sincere, concerned child of God. Our purpose is to focus upon Bible teaching as free of personalities as possible."

The editor and publisher of TORCH wish these brethren well in this endeavor, and welcome them to the often tempestuous sea of religious journalism.



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Envy

Billy K. Farris

Envy is defined as ". . . the feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing or hearing of the prosperity of others . . ." It is distinguished from jealousy in ". . . that envy desires to deprive another of what he has, jealousy desires to have the same or the same sort of thing for itself." (See Vine, Vol. II, page 37).

One is moved to envy when he fails to respond in kind to the success or prosperity of others. Envy is the pain felt and malignity conceived that causes one to harbor ill will with the view to finding an opportunity to malign, disparage and harm. Peter says we are to lay "... aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and *envies*, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." (1 Peter 2:1, 2).

It is a pity that envy is found even among Christians. Much of the malice and strife among brethren today is traceable to envy. It has estranged brethren and destroyed churches. I think I have seen envy do more harm to brethren and churches than false doctrine. False doctrine invades the wounds envy has inflicted.

Christians who are materialistic are also envious. While they seek after the things of this world, they would harm others who are equally or more successful; who seem as happy or happier than themselves. It is envy that causes a brother to slander and discredit the success of another as an elder, deacon, Bible class teacher, song leader, *etc*.

The motives of preachers are not always pure. Paul wrote of those who "preach Christ even of *envy* and strife." (Philippians 1:15). Preachers are probably the most influential persons in the church, therefore highly susceptible to envy. Their abilities vary: some are excellent writers, dynamic speakers, debaters or possess vast knowledge of certain subjects; others preach in a number of meetings each year, work with large well known churches, publish or edit periodicals. These varied abilities make preachers totally effective in their work when devoid of envy. Yet, I have seen the influence of good brethren damaged by some who are just plain envious of their ability and success. When one cannot clearly state his grievance against a brother, when he misrepresents him and attributes to him positions he disclaims,

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chances are good that he is acting out of envy. Malicious remarks calculated to discredit and belittle another are motivated by envy.

How unfortunate that many religious disputes are inspired by envy. Controversialists are often motivated by envy, who succeed only in corrupting and corroding their own character and assassinating the character of their opponents. Brethren will often have little, if anything, to do with each other, not because of doctrinal differences, but because one (or both) is "full of envy."

Envy creates parties and causes party feuds. When defense of truth escalates to a party feud and personality battle envy produces malice, and when a person reaches that stage there is little, if any, good left in him. Envy is listed as one of the works of the flesh in Galatians 5:21 and is the most base and least curable. Since envy cannot bear to see the success and prosperity of others it will enslave one to live in it. (Titus 3:3).

"Let us not be desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another." (Galatians 5:26).

> 1800 Maplecrest Lane Fultondale, Alabama 35068

Jenkins — Willis Debate

Arrangements have been completed for a discussion between Jesse G. Jenkins and Cecil Willis concerning collective actions of Christians in teaching the Bible in college Bible departments and publishing companies. The debate will be conducted in the Pasadena High School auditorium in Pasadena, Texas (Houston area), September 23, 24, 26 and 27. There is every reason to believe that this will be a *fair*, *interesting* and *profitable* discussion.

- Billy K. Farris

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Broken Hearts

Hearts are broken by selfish deeds That grow and flourish like noxious weeds: That take roots as deep as a well And draw their poison from a vinomous hell. Hearts are broken by those who measure Happiness in terms of sadistic pleasure Gained by hurting those who care With no regard for what is fair. Hearts are broken by unkind acts; By selfish persons ignoring facts. Whether a child or a supposed friend Matters little in the bitter end. Hearts are broken by sowing seeds Of unkind words and thoughtless deeds Which lodge in the soil of another's life And bring forth fruit to hate and strife. A broken heart has pain untold That bruises lives and troubles souls: Assuaged perhaps by repentance true But leaving scars the whole life through. A broken heart is hard to heal Torn assunder by pain that's real; Caused by one we've loved and lost Who cares not for our terrible cost. A broken heart is like a broken vase That holds no flowers to bless and grace The lives of others who friendlessly cry For love and help as we pass by. If your heart is broken by a deed unkind Try to remember to keep in mind That you can break the heart of another; A trusting friend, father or mother. So always act in a way that's true,

As you think others should always do. Never follow the advice of a fool, But order your life by the golden rule.

- James P. Needham, 4-20-74

TORCH

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October 1974

LOOK INSIDE FOR THESE THOUGHT PROVOKING ARTICLES

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Florida Writers

The reader will notice that most articles in this issue are authored by Central Florida brethren. These are not, by any means, all the preachers in Central Florida. I invited others to write for this issue, but they did not respond. There are many able and dedicated preachers in this area — in fact throughout the state. Most of them have been known to me for a long time, and are considered as dear friends. It is a pleasure to present them to our readers through this issue.

- James P. Needham

monononononononononononon Number 10 Volume IX October 1974 Editor James P. Needham **Editorial Office** 1600 Oneco Avenue Winter Park, Florida 32789 Subscription Rate - \$3.00 Per Year In Clubs of Ten or More - \$2.00 Per Year Single Copies - 25 ¢ Each Second-class Postage Paid at Mt. Olive, Alabama **TORCH** is published each month from Post Office Box 254. Mt. Olive, Alabama 35117. Postmasters send POD Form 3579 to this address. New subscriptions, renewals, inquires concerning subscriptions and change of address should be sent to P.O. Box 254, Mt. Olive, Alabama 35117. Articles not copyrighted - but application for patent on format pending. Billy K. Farris, Publisher 2(218)October 1974



Editorial-

James P. Needham

"The Mainstream of Restoration Tradition"

With increasing frequency we are reading this and similiar statements in the periodicals of certain brethren. It is notoriously present in the writings of the brethren throught of as "liberal," and almost completely absent from those labeled "conservatives." This is very significant because it is symptomatic of polarized points of view. The restorationist brethren seem to connote a certain denominational identity in the concept, rather than the undenominational philosophy that gave rise to the expression "restoration" with the Campbells, Stones, et al. Those making such frequent use of this terminology today have turned it into an inverted pyramid, the original concept being broader at its top than it was at its base. They have expanded (perverted) it to include a rather large group of diverse religious groups (philosophies) which have evolved from the original body due to a misunderstanding of, or a lack of desire to practice, what the originators of the expression had in mind.

With the early brethren who coined the idea of "restorationism," it meant the exclusion of all humanisms and bringing all religious people together by accepting everything Divine. Unity in diversity certainly was not in the minds of those who first coined this phrase. They were asking persons caught up in denominational division to leave these human bodies and be added to the Lord's church. They were endeavoring to "restore the ancient order of things," not solidify the present order of things.

Present-day restoration loyalists want to use the terminology as a rallying point for all who mouth the catch phrases, but reject the concept — they are not interested in practicing what the terminology originally meant. To them "restorationism" is not *a catch phrase* but *a catch-all!* It is a vessel knit at the four corners, wherein are all manner of "fourfooted beasts, wild beasts, creeping things and fowls of the air": Those who believe in Premillennialism, mechanical music in worship, missionary societies, brotherhood elders, church grants to diverse kinds of human institutions, the social gospel, neo-Pentecostalism and the time would fail me

TORCH

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to tell what else. No fair-minded student of early American church history could think for a moment that this is what these early brethren had in mind when they talked about "restoring the ancient order." While these brethren seem to be searching for a point of origin for their denomination, they have *appropriated*, (perverted) by means of a transmutation of thought, philosophy which was originally very foreign to their own.

One can contract a bad case of misunderstanding by trying to determine what the early brethren meant by the concept of restorationism by their practice in later years because many of them abandoned the original concept in their own life time. This misunderstanding is aided by most historians of "the restoration movement" when they make no destinction between those who held to the original concept while others abandoned it. They are usually treated as one group. For instance, Alexander Campbell, one of the giants of the early "movement," scathingly denounced all human societies in church work, then allowed himself to be appointed the first president of the first human society among the brethren! If one ignores the fact that Campbell changed (even though, like some brethren today, he denied it), a case for unityin diversity connotation for "restorationism" can be fabricated, but upon a flimsy foundation. While it was not recognized for some time, division of thought and practice existed in the group, The dichotomy was really no more pronounced after the overt division than before.

When I began preaching 26 years ago, sermons were constantly filled with the expression "the restoration movement." In my memory, N. B. Hardeman was one of the most prolific proclaimers of "the restoration principles." He frequently would preach a whole sermon on the concept. I sat at his feet in the class room, and I am well acquainted with his understanding of its substance. No man ever denounced humanisms (both in and out of the church) more scathingly than did N. B. Hardeman. His opposition was so strong and so pointed, that he often offended some of his own soft brethren. Like many brethren today, he abandoned the concept in practice before he died, but nobody could have told him in his heyday that "restorationism" as advocated by the Campbells, *et al*, was the concept of unity-in-diversity among those who are "in the mainstream of the restoration tradition."

Can these brethren seriously believe they are in "the restoration tradition" when they advocate fellowship among all the various factions and philosophies who claim to be churches of Christ, just as long as they believe in baptism for remission of sins? He who

thinks this is what the Campbells, Stone, *et al*, believed and practiced is either a very poor student of "the restoration movement," or else he is guilty of the grossest perversion. How could this have been their philosophy when there were no factions at the time they began preaching "restorationism"? Such factionalism was a later development due to misunderstanding of the philosophy or disinchantment with it.

Purely from the standpoint of current usage, "restorationism" connotes a denominational identity, rather than an actual fact. Webster says "restoration" means "a bringing back to or putting back into a former position or condition." Putting back into a former position is the only sense in which we can scripturally think of restoring the New Testament church; its condition has never changed because the seed has never changed (Lk. 8:11). The church (from the divine point of view) has never changed, and never will. All change comes from the human side. Humans change their concepts of the church, turn away from it, etc., but they never change the church of God.

But the "restorationers" of today are not putting the church "back into a former position," if they mean they are putting the church of Christ back in the position it had in the first century. This is what the Campbells et al had in mind. I don't contend that they fully succeeded, but in their early days they came a lot nearer to doing so than so those who now use their terminology but deny its implications. For these brethren to claim identity with Campbell's view of restorationism, obligates them to affirm that the New Testament church supported human organizations, operated secular schools, had brotherhood elders, etc. etc. Such is too absurd for words. These brethren's brand of "restoration" is not identical with the Campbells, et al, or the New Testament church. It is an hybrid concept bred and born in the minds of those who are looking for denominational identity while claiming kinship with those who were, loosely speaking, their spiritual ancestors, Campbell, et al.

The term "restoration" among the early brethren came into use because they finally decided that "reformation" did not describe what they were doing. Those determined to follow the New Testament were falling into ill repute in the prominent churches in early America, the Presbyterians, Baptists, Methodists, etc. It soon became obvious that they were not reforming these bodies, so they began to say they were not interested in "reformation," but "restoration." I don't agree that it was a good choice. In some ways it has a bad connotation, and I think they would have been much better off had they said they were going to preach the gospel as it is revealed in the New Testament. Why coin a

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human label for their efforts that tends to give them denominational status? History proves it to have been a bad choice when so many brethren are seeking to identify with it rather than being satisfied to say we are preaching the gospel to save souls and organize churches after the New Testament pattern. It also proves to be a bad choice when brethren begin to talk about "the restoration heritage," "the restoration tradition," "restoration theology," etc. etc. All of these expressions connote denominational identity. It parallels such expressions as "Luther's theology," or "in the Calvinian tradition," etc. Such terminology focuses attention on *a man*, or a group of men, rather than on the infallible word. "Campbellites" is a fairly accurate label for such persons.

Am I "an heir of the restoration movement"? Well, I guess so. I am fighting against many of the human innovations that came out of it, such as: church supported secular schools, missionary and benevolent societies, instrumental music, etc., and I am opposed to brethren's making "the restoration movement" a point of identity. So, from that point of view, I am "an heir of the restoration movement."

I do not preach about the "restoration movement," and never did. I am not interested in some human label for my efforts because to the extent that I need such a human label to describe my religious efforts, to that extent my efforts are not divinely motivated or sanctioned. I am not interested in "restoration theology." In the first place, I don't know what that is, and couldn't care less about finding out. I know about as little about "the restoration tradition," and "the mainstream of restoration thought." All such terminology sounds theologically sophisticated. but it is not "speaking as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11). Such human terminology is not found in God's word, nor does it connote a scriptural concept. It is not used by brethren who believe in "holding fast the form of sound words" (1 Tim. 1:13), for they deny that the Bible is a pattern for twentieth-century life. That is, they do not believe the Bible is an absolute authoritive religious guide. Such language makes them more acceptable to the modern theologians whom they glorify and with whom they associate because it avoids affirming any essential historical difference with them. These brethren walked with these theologians so long that they got closer to the theologians houses than to their own, so they just went on home with them! Now the common denominator between them and the theologians with whom they abide is "evangelical Christianity," another of their pet phrases which is meaningless to the average reader because it

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The Righteous Judgment

Wayne Sullivan

The Bible clearly teaches that there will be a judgment. When Paul was speaking unto the Athenians he said that God ". . . hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31). Just as sure as Christ was raised from the dead there will be a judgment. We might add that just as sure as men die there will be a judgment (Heb. 9:27). I want to emphasize that it will be a righteous judgment (Rom. 2:5).

It will be a righteous judgment because the one who will do the judging is righteous. Jesus said: "For neither doth the Father judge any man, but he hath given all judgment unto the Son" (Jno. 5:22). While Peter was speaking unto some of the Jews concerning Jesus he said: "But ye denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted unto you, and killed the Prince of life; whom God raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses" (Acts 3:14-15). Christ is the Holy and Righteous One who will serve as the judge which means that we will have a righteous judge. He will be fair and impartial and cannot be bribed to render a verdict that is not right.

This will be a righteous judgment because of the standard by which we will be judged. All who have lived this side of the cross will be judged by the New Covenant or Testament. Paul speaks of "... the day when God shall judge the secrets of men, according to my gospel, by Jesus Christ" (Rom. 2:16). Jesus said: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day" (Jno. 12:48).

There are times when I find myself unable to keep an appointment that I have made. However there is one appointment that I will keep along with everyone else, for we shall all appear in the judgment. The Lord has made this appointment and all of us will be present. "For we must all be made manifest before the judgement seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10). Regardless of how much one may be worth in a material sense or what position he may hold, he will still appear with everyone else in the judgment. We shall be judged individually and "... each one of us shall give account of himself

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to God" (Rom. 14:12). This should cause each one of us to search our heart and see if we are making proper preparation for that day. In that day some will hear the Lord say, "... Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matt. 25:34). The rest will hear the words, "... Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41). There are only two groups and we will be in one or the other.

I get the distinct impression that many who profess to be Christians have failed to grasp the finality of the judgment. Every Christian should recognize the need for obedience to the gospel in this life. Everyone who fails to obey the gospel will be eternally separated from God (2 Thess. 1:7-10). Only those who are in Christ and obedient unto death will receive eternal life (2 Tim. 2:10: Rev. 2:10). Now let us ponder this question. How much time and effort do we use in trying to convert the lost? If we really believe those outside of Christ are lost, then we should put forth every possible effort to reach them with the gospel. If you feel that you are not capable of teaching, then arrange a study with your friends or relatives and ask someone else to do the teaching. Our friends and relatives will not live in this life forever and neither will we. James said: ". . . ve are a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away (Jas. 4:14). Keep in mind that children of God will appear in the judgment right along with the most wicked person you can think of and will be called upon to give an account unto God. Let us remember that this will be a righteous judgment. The Lord has revealed what we must do to have the forgiveness of past sins and the hope of eternal salvation. Man is a free moral agent and can either accept or reject what God offers him. If he rejects God's plan for salvation and is lost eternally it will not be because of some fault with the judgment or with the judge. God does not force us to accept what He offers unto us. However, we cannot expect to have eternal salvation without meeting His requirements. The child of God cannot expect to receive eternal life without being faithful unto death. The writer of the Hebrew letter said: "For ye have need of patience, that, having done the will of God, ye may receive the promise" (Heb. 10:36). All who will do this will be able to look forward to the righteous judgment and say along with the Apostle Paul, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course. I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing" (2 Tim. 4:7-8).

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Christianity: An Individual Religion

Roger M. Hendricks

In Matthew 3:10 when John the Baptist said, "... every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire," and in John 15:6 and when Jesus declared, "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned," both were suggesting that the religion of Jesus Christ would be pre-eminently a religion addressed to and designed for the individual. While the gospel is certainly universal in scope (Mt. 28:19), the Lord's appeal is not so much to groups, societies, and nations as it is to the individual. (cf. Mt. 11:28; Rev. 22:17). Even while addressing the multitudes, the Master's language was really directed to the individual (cf. Mt. 7:24, "whosoever heareth").

The gospel of Jesus Christ is, therefore, *personal* as well as *penetrating*. This may very well be why many reject it. We do not like to have others (even God) involved in our personal affairs. And, in an effort to embrace the gospel, yet escape its personal and pentrative dealing in our affairs, many have centered their attention on a social application of its truths. "Social" has reference to a group (which would include the local church). In any social application of the gospel, emphasis is given to group fulfilment of duties and responsibilities. Accepted in the extreme, this means that individual responsibility and personal religion are dismissed from one's mind and, consequently, from one's life. In contrast with this, the Bible emphasizes the fact of

Man's Personal, Individual Responsibility.

The responsibility of BECOMING a Christian rests upon the individual. There is no way that one can become a Christian simply by being a part of a group.

Furthermore, the responsibility of BEING a Christian is individual in its nature. Being a member of a society or group (a local church) does not, within itself, mean that one is a child of God. To be a Christian one must accept his responsibilities.

There are two extreme fallacies which must be avoided in any consideration of responsibility in religion.

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First, that responsibility is always independent. Lest I be misunderstood, I'll explain that by this I refer to the idea that fellowship with other Christians is unnecessary, local churches are unnecessary, and collective (congregational) action is unnecessary. Such a view does violence to the Scriptures. The New Testament teaches that, when such is possible: (a) Fellowship with other Christians is demanded. Fellowship has reference to mutual participation in a common interest. The common interest under consideration here is, obviously, that of serving the Lord according to His will. Passages setting forth our responsibility of fellowship are numerous. (cf. Acts 2:42ff; Heb. 13:16 "communicate" = fellowship; 2 Cor. 6:14 - a sort of "left-handed" argument that, while we are not to have fellowship with evil, we are to fellowship good.) Fellowship with other Christians in WORSHIP (Acts 20:7; Eph. 5:19), in EDIFICATION (1 Cor. 14:3,12,26), and in WORK (Phil. 4:15) is enjoined. (b) Membership in a local church OF CHRIST is essential. The responsibility of fellowship demands it. The elder's responsibility to oversee demands it. The responsibility of local church discipline demands it. And the examples of Christians in apostolic days demand it. (c) Congregational functioning is authorized and expected. This fact necessarily follows the other two.

The second fallacy to be avoided is that of assuming that all responsibility is social. Besides virtually eliminating the fact of personal, individual responsibility, this notion leads to the foolish conclusion of being innocent by association. Whereas the Pharisees and Sadducees might argue, "We have Abraham to our father," today's cry would most likely be, "But I'm a member of the church." (Using the term church in a very denominational sense.) None of us is innocent due to his association with another — except that other be, of course, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The truth is that ALL RELIGIOUS DUTIES ARE ASSIGNED TO THE INDIVIDUAL. Some are to be fulfilled independently. But, when such is possible, some are to be fulfilled in fellowship with others, as we have already seen. Yes, responsibility is personal.

Man's Personal, Individual Sins

According to the Word of God, not only are responsibilities personal, so are sins. No one else gives account for my sins. Each of us gives account for himself.

We hear talk about moral and immoral societies. Frankly, no society is either moral or immoral apart from those who compose it. Whatever is good or bad within a society must first be characteristic of the individuals who compose that society. To have an

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angry mob, an atheistic nation, an immoral society, an intelligent class or a pure church, there must be people composing these groups who possess these particular characteristics. The fact must characterize the people individually before it can ever be true of any society. Societies are not sinners, men are! Furthermore, it is not society that creates immoral men, rather, immoral men create immoral societies. To be sure, society (immoral men as a group) may influence the individual for evil, but the individual may rise above such influence.

Man is responsible for his own sins (Ezek. 18:1ff; Rom. 14:12). Man is responsible for his own obedience (Acts 2:38). Man is responsible for his own destiny (Rev. 22:12). (No doubt a note of explanation should be added here. If man reaches heaven it must be as a result of obtaining the salvation made possible through Christ. But Christ died for all. If any are lost, it must be their own fault. They failed to avail themselves of the forgiveness of sins provided by the Son of God. In this sense man is responsible for his own destiny.) Yes, sin is personal.

Man's Personal, Individual Salvation And Reformation

Our great need is not for social reform but for individual reform. If this occurs, social reform will be a logical consequence. A reversal of this proceedure (at least an attempt at it) has resulted in a social gospel concept among religious people. Religious leaders have drifted away from the gospel and its basic appeal to the individual in their efforts to seek out man's SOCIAL GOOD.

James 4:8 clearly expresses our need: "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded." Judgement will reveal what our needs in this life were — forgiveness of sins and reformation of life — ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS. There will be a judgment of all society alright (Mt. 25), but note the basis of that judgment: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10).

Each man must repent (resulting in a reformation of life) and obey God (resulting in the forgiveness of sins). Yes, reformation and salvation are personal.

So, I reaffirm, the religion of Jesus Christ is pre-eminently a religion addressed to and designed for the individual. It is an individual religion!

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TORCH "Shop Talk"

Billy K. Farris

About this time last year the decision was made to print TORCH on a better grade of paper in 1974 without any increase in the subscription rates. By the early part of this year inflation had increased our printing costs considerably, but we announced that there would be no increase in the subscription rates for 1974,



but that they would likely increase in 1975. Well, there will definately be a subscription rate increase. Beginning with the January 1975 issue the single subscription rate will be \$4.00 per year and clubs of ten or more \$3.00 per year.

In the August 22nd issue of Truth Magazine, brother Cecil Willis discusses some of the financial problems that journal faces because of inflation. Having some knowledge of the printing business, I can vouch for what he says and predict with him that subscription rates are likely to continue to increase. In fact,

some journals will likely be forced out of business. Especially those that depend upon subscriptions to pay production costs. They have no recourse except to increase subscription rates or go out of business. And increasing subscription rates may put them out of business! With brother Willis I agree that we need to let subscribers know what we are up against so that they can understand why price increases must be made from time to time. I am taking this space to engage in a little "shop talk" about **TORCH**.

The publishing of TORCH is somewhat different from most other periodicals published by brethren. First, TORCH is a personal endeavor. I own it, am responsible for its debts and receive any profits from it. (In the nearly nine years that I have published TORCH I have yet to benefit financially from it). Second, TORCH depends entirely upon subscriptions to pay production costs. No advertising space is sold to individuals or churches and there is no bookstore business to subsidize the

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production costs. Let me say here that the way TORCH is produced is a matter of personal preference. I do not believe that it is wrong for several brethren to own and publish a journal. Neither do I believe that it is wrong to sell advertising space and operate a bookstore to subsidize printing costs. As for advertising, most periodicals do not have a large enough circulation to attract advertising that would bring in enough revenue to significantly help pay production costs. The advertising that appears in TORCH is that of books and other materials published by the editor or myself, and is used primarily as "filler" in the layout. I have no quarrel with church ads *that churches buy as a service*. As for a bookstore, there are enough operated already to provide the services brethren need and want.

When compared with other periodicals, TORCH has as much or more reading material per subscription dollar. We are able to produce TORCH at a reasonable subscription rate because it is printed on my personal equipment. In other words, we furnish the labor. Jim Needham takes care of the editorial work, which I assure you is no small task. Unless a journal has an able editor it may as well fold up. The editor keeps the journal "alive." My wife, Pat takes care of the bookkeeping, typesetting and subscription list. I do the printing and the whole family (we have two teen-age children) takes care of the folding, assembling and addressing.

Inflation hits us hardest when we buy paper and supplies. There has been about a 200% increase in the price of paper since 1971. Hopefully, prices will level off soon and we can maintain the new subscription rate for some time. About the only thing we have on our side now is that we do not expect our labor costs to increase. We hope you can fit TORCH into your budget if you think it is worth the subscription price.

A Special Thanks to the Editor

James P. Needham has done much for TORCH, in fact he kept it from folding in 1971. His role with TORCH is everything that the term editor implies. He will continue to edit TORCH as he has in the past - no strings attached. TORCH is in that sense his personal endeavor also. The first volume of TORCH was the personal medium of Foy E. Wallace, Jr. and perhaps it should not have been revived. Journals have a tendency to aspire for greatness and become the voice of the church when they live too long. Neither I nor the editor want that to happen to TORCH. Therefore, as far as I am concerned TORCH shall not live longer than its present publisher and/or editor. We hope that future generations will not base their journalistic efforts on what we have done with a few pieces of paper called TORCH.

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The Names of God

R. J. Evans

When we observe and consider the names by which God has disclosed Himself to us, we are overwhelmed by His greatness and glory. In the Bible, names are significant. Abram's name was changed to Abraham because he was to be the father of a great nation (Gen. 17:5). The name Edom (red) was applied to Esau because he sold his birthright for some red pottage (Gen. 25:30). Thus, when we take account of the names of God in the Scriptures, we discover that they are suggestive and meaningful.

1. GOD, "El" or "Elohim." "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1). This name carries with it the idea of one who is exalted and of one who has force, power and might. It is impossible for our finite minds to comprehend all that is about us (universe, etc.), and yet, God had the ability to speak it all into existence. God said, "Let there be light, and there was light" (Gen. 1:3).

When man conceives of God as the one who, by His nature and His works created all, his fear and reverence are aroused. However, there are those who ignore the fact that God is a God of force, power and might. As a result, they do not fear God. The Hebrew writer tells us that "our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29). Paul, in the Roman letter, spoke of some who had "no fear of God before their eyes" (Rom. 3:18). As the wise man Solomon stated: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Eccl. 12:13).

2. LORD, "Adhon." "For the Lord your God is God of gods. and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward" (Deut. 10:17). "Lord of lords," — God is the ruler over all other rulers. This name signifies a God who has authority, who rules, who has the right to command. Not a single ruler in the universe is over God. All authority exercised by parents, rulers, and masters has been delegated to them by God. And anytime we are commanded by our government, parents or masters to do that which is contrary to God's will, we must "obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

In speaking of Christ, the Scripture says, "he is Lord of lords, King of kings" (Rev. 17:14). Jesus has all authority, for he said of

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himself, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). In reference to Christ, the inspired apostle Peter wrote, "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him" (1 Pet. 3:22).

3. JEHOVAH, "Yahweh." "And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known to them ... Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments" (Ex. 6:3,6). The name "Jehovah" carries with it the idea of one who is; one who is unchangeable. In Exodus 3:13-15, Moses asked God how he could answer the Israelites when they asked, "What is his name?" God said unto Moses, "I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." Here the enduring existence of God was revealed unto Moses, the same God who had spoken unto his fathers was now speaking to him. Men change (they grow older, lose some of their capabilities and functions, etc.), but God never changes. God had promised the Jews that after they had gone into Egypt as a family, they would come out as a nation. In this context, they are assured by God (the one who is unchangeable) that the promises that were made unto them would be carried out.

The same description is given of Christ, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever" (Heb. 13:8). "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am" (Jno. 8:58).

4. ROCK, "Cur." "Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee . . . How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the Lord had shut them up? For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges" (Deut. 32:18, 30-31). This name indicates stability and dependability. We may lose all our earthly possessions and our friends may forsake us because we are Christians, but we will never be deserted by the Lord. "For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me" (Heb. 13:5,6). The members of my family can't say that to me nor I to them. I can tell them that it is not my desire to leave them, but tomorrow I may die of a heart attack or by some unforeseen accident.

5. ALMIGHTY, "El Shadday." "And when Abram was ninety

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years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect" (Gen. 17:1). This name conveys the idea of one who is able to carry out his plans, even when it looks as though it is impossible to do so. This name is used throughout the book of Exodus. In the New Testament, it is used repeatedly in Revelation (Rev. 1:8; 2:10; 11:17,18). In this name there is hope and trust for the final triumph of the church and the reward in heaven for all those who are faithful children of God.

Throughout history, individuals have been given descriptive names, often referring to physical or character traits. Even today, the name is an integral part of the total identity. We are awed when we observe the names by which God has chosen to reveal Himself to us. "Let all the earth fear the Lord: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him" (Psa. 33:8).

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"The Mainstream of Restoration Tradition" CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

is more of that "sophisticated" theological jargon they learned from the denominational seminaries.

These brethren no longer believe in the concept of the one true church. They accept the denominational concept that no particular church is the right church, but the church is made up of "the evangelicals" (those who believe in personal conversion and forgiveness through faith in Christ and emphasize preaching rather than ritual) in all denominations. The origin, organization, doctrine, name and practice of the church are insignificant. He who thinks such a concept "is in the restoration tradition" (that is, identical with those who said "where the scriptures speak, we speak, where the scriptures are silent, we are silent) would have no trouble believing the moon is made of green cheese!

I am not interested in "the restoration movement, tradition, theology," "evangelical Christianity," or any other such terminology. My work is preaching the gospel, saving souls and "contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3). This won't make me popular with theologians or with denominational loyalists, but Christ never promised it would. The Christian's mission is to try to change the world, not be changed by the world. The latter has happened to a rather large group of our brethren who mistakenly thought they could be educated by denominational theologians and come out loving the pure and simple truth of God's word. He who lies down with dogs, shall get up with fleas!

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Do You Live in a Haunted House?

Don R. Taaffe

In Matthew 12:43-45, Jesus used a parable to teach a lesson. The parable is cast in the thought-pattern of the day in which Jesus lived. A time when demons literally had their abode in some human beings. The parable tells of a man from whom a demon had been evicted. Thus Jesus says the demon sought another home. But unable to find one he decided to return to his former place of abode. When he arrived there he found it to be empty, swept, and put in order, a most desirable place to live. He then sought the company of seven other spirits because of the desirability of this house to be "haunted." They were more evil than himself. Thus making the last state of the man worse than the first.

Today this parable is true in the physical world. Life then and now abhors a vacuum. Our universe replaces itself when it finds a vacuum. This is also true of a social vacuum. Have you ever seen children who are strangers? They always start playing together moments after they meet. Life has little patience with a spiritual vacuum as well. Some parents have created a spiritual vacuum in their children. They let them decide for themselves what they will believe in religion. This vacuum in their children will be filled from some source, whether from the right source or not. Jesus warns the Jews that the evil spirits which he had cast out would return to fill the vacuum. When these spirits could find a house to "haunt" they would fill it up. The Jews, Arabs, Egyptians and others believed this principle. They believed the desert or "waterless places" to be haunted by evil spirits. Thus a vacuum filled with evil, just as life abhors a vacuum and sets at once to fill it, using the material at hand.

For us to get rid of evil in our thoughts, habits and our way of life is not enough. It needs to be replaced immediately. Titus recorded this thought: "we should live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world" (Tit. 2:11-12). The "demon" (evil) driven from his house will search for a way of return. The process of baptism (Acts 2:38) uproots sin. But we must grow at once in virtues. If we get involved in doing the will and commandments of God, we have started to fill the vacuum. A farmer that

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cleans a field of weeds and prepares the ground without planting the seed only invites a new crop of weeds and briars. Our lives are to be a power for good. We must have a belief so strong that it will fill our vacuum. "But without faith it is impossible to please him" (Heb. 11:6). This must be a working faith (Jas. 2:22-24). Judas is an individual who illustrates the truth of this parable. We can also see it in the Jewish nation, after the crucifixion of Jesus.

The evicted demon moved back into the unoccupied house. Moved in to "haunt" the very house he had left. But the second time is more terrifying than the first. For now he has the support of seven other demons, worse than himself (if you can picture one demon being worse than others). Evil always replaces itself with more evil. Fear never replaces itself with trust or hatred is never replaced with love on its own. If left to themselves they will be replaced with their own kind, only worse (2 Pet. 2:20-22).

Jesus said, "the last state of that man is worse than the first" (Matt. 12:45); all because they did not fill their hearts with good when evil was cast out. Since they failed to take him as their guiding spirit, it would end in evil. They would be worse for having known and rejected the Christ. How about you? Do you live in a "haunted" house?

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Another New Periodical

I recently mentioned that several new periodicals have recently appeared, or are about to appear. Sentry Magazine was one I had heard about, and had been discussed. Its editor, Floyd Chappelear, has now announced his entry date: January 1975. Subscription price is \$2.00 per year (12 issues), and its address is 3910 Glenbrook, Fairfax, Virginia 22030.

This paper shows great promise. It will feature articles on "Living as Christians" written by able brethren. Its editor is an able thinker with a unique style and a pungent pen. I admire his independence (in a good sense), and his dedication. I believe his policy will be fair and open, and his material edifying. I recommend that you subscribe for this periodical.

- James P. Needham

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A Mind and a Field

Dennis Shaver

A man's mind and a field have much in common. If one takes the time to cultivate and work on a field he can grow something worthwhile. However, if he takes no time to cultivate the field it will eventually grow up in weeds. A man's mind is much the same. When he takes the time to cultivate it, it will grow and prosper. If, on the other hand he fails to work his mind, it grows up in improper thoughts which are manifest by improper actions. A failure to cultivate the mind often results in negative thoughts and actions. While the cultivated mind has positive thoughts and actions.

Christ taught this fundamental truth in the parable of the sower. Some hear the word of truth, and their reaction is negative. Their life is spent in trying to defeat God's will. They will not allow themselves to think positively concerning God's will, and therefore their thoughts are negative. The positive thinker hears the word of God and reacts positively, thus doing God's will. The positive thinker says, "I can," "I will," and "I shall." The negative thinker says, "I can't," "I won't," and "I shall not."

Positive and negative thinking are taught in all areas of salesmanship. A man who aspires to be a salesman is taught to think positively about himself and about his product. When he accomplishes this, he becomes a good salesman. Christians should cultivate their minds to be positive in their approach to the word of God, and in their activities relative to it. A man can live as God instructs — IF HE WANTS TO. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (1 Jno. 5:3). A Christian must be sold on this life, and the gospel which will produce such a life. When he spends his life on "I can not," he misses the "I cans." The life of a Christian is not negative, but POSITIVE.

The apostle Paul stated: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live? yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. 2:20). Further, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). The culmination of such thought is expressed in Philippians 4:13; "I can do all things thru Christ, which strentheneth me." Let us be POSITIVE about being a Christian, and cultivate our minds to think upon "things above, not on things on the earth."

> P.O. Box 714 Inverness, Florida 32650

DENNIS SHAVER preaches for the church in Inverness, Florida.

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Returning to Rhodesia



Jim Short

My father, Foy Short, is planning to return to the U. S. from Rhodesia next March for a period of 15 to 18 months, having been preaching there since 1947. I plan, the Lord willing, to try to go to Rhodesia the first of next year, taking his place in the work in the city of Gwelo for the period he is in the States and then going wherever needed for a further 3 to 4 years, at least.

There is a great need for men to go to Rhodesia and preach the gospel. There are over 1/4 million white people, 5 million blacks, but only two full-time preachers of a conservative persuasion (apart from my father). The liberal brethren have a number of men there now and, while as yet there has been no complete breach (the churches not yet being self-supporting, much less supporting institutions), there is a need for those to go who are willing to teach the whole counsel of God.

There is a need then for one to go - both from the viewpoint of many who have never even heard the gospel preached, yet are eager to hear, and from the viewpoint of trying to keep those already converted in the ways of truth.

I was born in Rhodesia and grew up there, and have now spent the last three and a half years in the U. S. During this time I have acquired a college degree, a wife (formerly Becky Bingham) and experience preaching. For the last 20 months, my wife and I have lived in Southern Illinois where I have attended Southern Illinois University at Carbondale while preaching regularly for the Crawford church in Buckner, Illinois. I believe that, by virtue of my background and experience, I am qualified to undertake this work. I know the work I plan to go into, the problems, the people, the country, and am already known by the brethren there. My wife is very enthusiastic about going and will, I am confident, be a great help to me.

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I would like to ask brethren to have a part with me in this work. The work needs to be done, someone needs to go, and I am willing to go. I would like churches and individuals to consider helping in my support and/or travel fund and thus have a part in the Rhodesian work.

I have discussed with my parents what our needs will be in the way of support. In the light of recent 20-30% devaluations of the U. S. dollar against the Rhodesian dollar (it now takes about \$1.80 U. S. dollars to equal R1.00), the current price of gasoline being R1.35 (1.35 Rhodesian dollars) per gallon, and the much travelling that needs to be done to the rural areas where the blacks live, my parents have suggested the following in the way of needs:

| Personal Support | \$750/mo |
|---|----------|
| House & Utilities | \$225/mo |
| Work Fund (to be used to pay car and gasoline expenses involved in | |
| the work, etc.) | \$225/mo |

As of now, we estimate \$5,000 as the amount of travel fund needed. This is to pay for travel expenses for my wife and me as well as the cost of shipping a car and our household goods. The above figure is subject to change either up or down depending on the actual number and size of crates required to ship our household goods and rates for freight and travel which may change. Any money in excess of our needs will of course be returned.

I would appreciate very much knowing as soon as possible whether or not there are those in a position to help, and to what extent, as time is getting rather short. If anyone needs to contact me regarding any questions about the work, write me at the address below, or call me at 618-724-4992. If there are any other questions regarding either me or the Rhodesian work, contact any of the following brethren, all of whom know me personally and are acquainted with the work in Rhodesia:

| W. E. Bingham |
|-------------------------------|
| Box 167 |
| Buckner, Illinois 62819 |
| Sewell Hall |
| 3250 Chamblee-Tucker Rd, N.E. |
| Atlanta, Georgia 30341 |
| |

Rt. 2 Mulkeytown, Illinois 62865

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Public Discussion with Moslem in Birmingham

Billy K. Farris

Arrangements have been completed for a discussion between Dr. Salah El Dareer and Hiram Hutto concerning Jesus and Muhammad, and the Bible and the Koran.

Dr. El Dareer moved to the United States from Egypt about twenty-five years ago and is now an American citizen. He is doing cancer research at one of the Birmingham research institutes and formerly taught Genetics and related subjects in Michigan. He holds several high academic degrees. He is also the President of the Southern Islamic Center, as well as contributing editor for the Syrian-Lebanese Journal.

Hiram Hutto works with the Midfield church of Christ and is a panelist on a local question-answer radio program. The discussion grew out of a recent exchange with Dr. El Dareer on that program. Brother Hutto is an able gospel preacher and is capable of handling his part of the discussion on behalf of the truth.

The propositions for discussion are:

Jesus, the Messiah is the only begotten son of God, was crucified for the sins of the world, and the New Testament is God's final revelation.

The advent of the prophet Muhammad is clearly foretold in both Old and New Testaments and the Koran is God's final revelation.

The dates for the discussion have been set for October 21, 22, 24, 25. It is hoped that an auditorium on the campus of the University of Alabama in Birmingham can be used for the discussion. In the event that this does not work out the discussion will be conducted in the Midfield church building. Those planning to attend should contact brother Hutto (telephone 787-5855) about final location arrangements.

The fact that many people are interested in Islam and that it has attracted many college students points up the need for this discussion. It should be very interesting both from the standpoint of the subject matter and that the participants are representative.

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Ten Commandments of the Song Book

Tom Butler

- I. Do not tie knots in my marker.
- II. Do not break my back by bending my covers backward too far.
- III. Do not scar my face with pencil marks.
- IV. Do not add to what I have to say by writing.
 - V. Do not take away from what I have to say by tearing my pages.
- VI. Do not put trash in my bed for it is not a garbage can.
- VII. Do not carelessly shove me into my bed for it is too narrow.
- VIII. Do not play with me for I am not a toy.
 - IX. Do not take me home with you for I belong to the church. You can buy my brother for a nominal amount.
 - X. Do not keep me closed while Christians are singing, but use me to sing joyfully unto the Lord.

Box 1713 Lakeland, Florida 38802

TOM BUTLER has preached for the Lake Wire church in Lakeland, Florida for almost 40 years. He is an able preacher of the word, and has a wide influence for good in Central Florida. This article is typical of him. One will never see a neater or cleaner church property than the one at Lake Wire. It is one of Tom Butler's trademarks!

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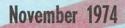
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Editorial

James P. Needham

Frustrated Preachers

When persons fail for any reason to fulfill an ambition, some of them become frustrated. This frustration is manifested in various ways. They may be irritable, bitter, and unstable. They are miserable in almost everything they do, and often make their associates miserable. Their frustrations often are taken out on those around them, making it almost impossible for them to get along with others, including their own families. They feel that life has cheated them, and just about everything they do is never "the real thing," so they consider it second best, thus it does not receive their enthusiastic best effort. Those persons who have attained that unto which they aspire, are resented either openly or secretly. Frustrated persons have a tendency to wallow in self pity, and spend much of their time and energy destructively criticizing those they think "have made it." They usually can find some covert reason why "they made it"; they knew the boss, or they played politics, or they "made it" by climbing over the dead bodies of others, etc. (Certainly, some persons "make it" in these ways, but not all).

SYMPTOMS OF PREACHER FRUSTRATION

Over the years I have known a good many frustrated preachers. They are not doing what they really want to do, or, as preachers, they have failed to reach the goal they hope to attain. Certainly, nobody should condemn or seek to frustrate healthy and worthy ambition, but it is hard to encourage and help one whose ambition is obviously otherwise. Let us look at some symptoms of frustrated preachers.

1. Frequent moves: This may be due to many causes. (a) Cantankerousness. The preacher does not really want to preach, but has to make a living some way, so preaching is as good or better than something else since he can't do what he really wants to do. In this state of mind he finds it hard to work with the brethren. He feels better working against them, because they are "the enemy," perhaps unconsciously, and he must not cooperate with the enemy. (b) Better opportunities. Some preachers are

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frustrated because they are not as big in the "brotherhood" as they would like to be, and a "better opportunity" often means a bigger, or more influential church that will make them look bigger to the "brotherhood," or will put them closer to a "big preacher" whose influence they can use. So, the brethren who have such a preacher are constantly in danger of losing him. He is often disinterested in the work where he is, and doesn't really give himself to it because it is only an insignificant rung on the ladder, just a place to camp until something "better" (bigger) comes along.

On the other hand, some preachers who are amazingly successful in their local work are frequent movers. The work may be growing, and they may be working themselves half to death, and yet, pick up and move right in the middle of it. Again, this is a manifestation of frustration. They may be successful in their present work, but it does not give them the "brotherhood" recognition they desire, so the success of the work is not their interest, it is success of SELF they are looking for. They can't be concerned about the result of their frequent moves to the local church, thus they are selfish.

2. Hitchhikers, hobos and coat-tail jockies: In their upward climb, some preachers will grab on to the coat-tails of anybody they consider to be further up the ladder of "success" than themselves. That is, they will "hitch a ride" on anybody's influence that will accomodate them. They are very appreciative of the ride as long as it lasts, but once they get off, they think just as much of their benefactor as a hobo thinks of a railroad company! He is only somebody who can be used to their banefit, then discarded. He not only will not be appreciated, but in many cases despised because he couldn't (or wised up and wouldn't) give more.

3. Joiners: Some frustrated preachers become joiners. They will join almost any party, cause or promotion that comes along, if they think it will help them climb the ladder of what they consider to be success; make them seem to be somewhat in the eyes of themselves and others.

4. Divided loyalty: Some preachers are ambitious to make a lot of money. They like the "prestige" of preaching, but not the pay. They can never really be wholly dedicated to the work of preaching, because that is not where the money is. Thus, they become half preachers, and half something else. They are frequently in and out of preaching; they preach for a while, and do something else for a while, or they spend just enough time to get by as a preacher, and use the rest of their time and talent in some money-making scheme, or business endeavor.

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I do not mean this as a blanket criticism of part-time preachers. Circumstances alter cases. I know there is a great need for parttime preachers, and there are often good and sound reasons why there should be such. I know that some such preachers do a great deal of good. What I am really talking about is a brother who wants to draw full-time support for part time preaching. He wants to be known as a full-time preacher, but he wants the salary of a salesman or a businessman.

These brethren remind me of a bumper sticker I frequently see that says "I'D RATHER BE FLYING." This sticker tells me that here is a fellow who is doing something he had rather not be doing. He had rather be doing something else. This describes some frustrated preachers. It is obvious that such brethren will not give themselves wholly to the work of preaching (1 Tim. 4:15), and certainly will not "make full proof" of their ministry (2 Tim. 4:5). Success as a preacher, like most everything else, is a matter of concentration and most of us do not have the capacity to concentrate well on two things at the same time. We usually sacrifice one for the other and do poorly at both. When I write down the names of the most successful and unfluential preachers I know, they all have one thing in common; they have never mixed preaching with some business endeavor - they have never entangled themselves in the affairs of this life (2 Tim. 2:4). They decided a long time ago that they were going to preach the gospel, and that activity has completely and absolutely consumed their lives. The longer I live the more wisdom I see in brother David Lipscomb's reported advice to preachers: "Don't preach, if you can help it." That is, if you could be happy doing something else, then don't preach because you won't be the kind of preacher you ought to be. This has to do with concentration; with divided loyalty.

5. Flirting with sin: There is a manifest lack of real dedication to righteousness in the thoughts and lives of some preachers. They have not really decided that they want to be Christians, and yet they are preachers! Down deep in their hearts they had much rather be playboys, or swingers. They do not know "how to possess their vessel in sanctification and honor; not in the lust of concupiscense . . ." (1 Thess. 4:4,5). To be around these preachers and their families is to be aware that something is wrong. It is obvious that they are not bound together with the cords of love and devotion to one another. The preacher runs rough-shod over the rights and feelings of his wife, ignores his children, yet becomes a ladies' man in the presence of other women. In his own mind, his wife compares unfavorably with others.

Sooner or later his frustration leads him into an immoral

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escapade that ruins him as a preacher and does untold harm to the cause of Christ. No amount of persuasion will help him because the real self has finally emerged. This is what he was at heart all the time, and he now confesses it. Nothing else seems to matter now. He is fulfilling his ambition, and getting rid of his long-lived frustration. Once he gets it over with, he may become bitter because he cannot take up where he left off. He is sour because the brethren he doubled-crossed and humiliated don't immediately put him on a pedistal, and accept him like they once did.

6. Displaying and dismaying: A preacher's frustrations can usually be detected in his work. If he is a frustrated artist, his bulletin looks like a funny paper. His sermons are preached from charts that display his artistic ability, which may or may not be good, depending upon how it is used. If he is a frustrated philosopher, he uses the pulpit or the Bible class as an opportunity to teach philosophy. If he is a frustrated scientist, he may do a lot of teaching on evolution that is more related to science than to the If he is a frustrated psychologist, his sermons will look Bible. more like a lesson in psychology than a proclamation of the good news of Christ. If he is a frustrated scholar, he will spend much of his time learning what the theologians have said about this or that, and will never miss a chance to quote what they have said. If he is a frustrated playbody, his sermons may sound like lectures on sexology, and may contain language more fitted to a bar room than to the pulpit. Much of his preaching will be sex oriented, and he will have much to say about pornography, sex offenses, and related subjects because this is where his mind dwells. If he is a frustrated orator, his sermons and writings will be filled with beautiful words grouped together in such a way that they sound good, but say little if anything to the hearer or reader. If he is a frustrated writer, he will bury the thoughts of his articles in an avalanche of words and complex sentences that a "Philidelphia lawyer" could not decipher.

There may be some place for some of all of these, but they all are frequently over done, and are always out of place when the preacher is seeking to vent his frustrations or display his ability. There is every indication that Paul was a highly educated man, but he said, "My speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (1 Cor. 2:4,5). He told Timothy to "Preach the word; be instant in season out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:2). To the Corinthians he said, "For we preach not ourselves, but

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Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Cor. 4:5). What the world and the church need is the gospel, not how much the preacher knows about some secular subject; the gospel, not himself. When the preacher uses the pulpit to display his knowledge and ability in an effort to relieve his frustrations, he dismays his hearers and robs them of the only thing that can build them up and give them an inheritance among them which are sanctified (Acts 20:32).

7. Desire to dominate: Some preaching brethren are frustrated executives or bosses. They always wanted to be the head of something; to be the boss, to tell others what to do, to control others. They never realized this ambition in the world, so they think being a preacher is their chance. Thus they think of themselves as "the pastor," the man in charge. They get a real satisfaction from being in charge of just about everything in the local church. They hinder others from participating in and feeling themselves to be a part of the local church. If the brethren do not allow such a brother to have his way, he soon becomes discouraged and moves on, or quits preaching. His real problems is frustration of an unscriptural desire.

8. Hobby Riding: Related to the above symptom, is hobby riding. Some preaching brethren want to be known as "original thinkers." They are constantly taking some novel view of scripture, or they are always looking for something about which to be contentious. If their views are not accepted, they get frustrated. They are hard to get along with. They become soured at the world. They feel mistreated, go into secular work and claim the brethren never accepted them as preachers, or that they got a bad deal.

CONCLUSION

Brethren, we need more humble, down-to-earth, dedicated preachers. Men whose love and life is the preaching of the gospel. We need men of wisdom and stability; not frivilous fly-by-nights who are constantly jockeying for a better position, more personal power, and greater recognition in the "brotherhood." We need godly men with devoted families who can settle down for extended work in one locality, and be content to really do local work, rather than using the local church as a rung in a brotherhood prestige ladder. We need preachers who are just preachers, not those who are constantly looking for an opportunity to use their position as preachers to launch into some business venture. In short, we don't need frustrated preachers.

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Clothing and Hair Styles

Billy K. Farris

American life has undergone a dramatic change in the past twenty-five years. The change from an agrarian society to an essentially urban one has brought with it count-



less tensions and problems to plague us. Not the least of these problems is the matter of clothing and hair styles for Christians.

For centuries man was influenced by "one-community," but during the past quarter century man has lived in and been influenced by several communities. When man was largely confined to a single community his clothing

styles changed very slowly and very seldom did one from another community come into his midst. Being under the constant scrutiny of all others in the community he did not adopt clothing styles he observed from other communities very readily.

The Christian today functions in a shifting society. Clothing styles sometimes come and go fast, others remain for a long period of time. We cannot and will not go back to the small-town living

of a few decades ago, where the scrutiny of the community served as a discipline for us. Thus, we face problems today which are complex and difficult to solve. The New Testament nowhere attempts to make a list of every conceivable wrong clothing and hair style or of every conceivable right clothing and hair Christians must live style. with the fact that life is sometimes very difficult. I believe



the answer to our problem here lies in the development of self-discipline — training the conscience.

It is perhaps well that we mention some areas in which we have failed to answer questions and solve problems concerning clothing and hair styles.

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Customs

Because of highly developed communications and fast modes of transportation our world is not as "large" as it was a century ago.

Today we are brought in much closer contact with people from every part of the world. This contact has greatly influenced our clothing styles. Sometimes it is difficult for us to accept some of the changes that take place. We often tend to regard clothing which is identified with the customs of others as "flashy" and unacceptable. Some clothing today reflects the nostalgia for the past when things were less complex and tense. The hair styles, mustaches and beards which were worn by men (including the pioneer preachers) then are much in vogue today. The long dresses worn by the women then are quite popular with women today. May Christians today



wear clothing identified with the customs of others and with our heritage in this country (providing custom does not go beyond the principles of godliness)?

Because clothing styles (at least certain parts, *i.e.*, belts, shirts, shoes, *etc.*) which are identified with the customs of others and our heritage are often rejected by brethren, especially those older who see the younger generation as "going to the dogs," new and often unnecessary difficulties are created. We tend to want to impose a rigid list of do's and don't's for clothing and hair styles which do not go beyond the principles of sex identity and godliness

Modern Styles

Perhaps the most difficult problem area is modern styles. Colors which were once impossible to have are to be found in almost every article of clothing. New styles for men and women appear almost every time the season changes. Flared and cuffed trousers for men and pant suits for women are examples of more recent clothing styles. Men are wearing somewhat longer hair styles than the crew cuts of the 1950's and women are wearing their hair very long. Here again we are confronted with the question: May Christians wear modern clothing and hair styles which do not go beyond the principles of sex identity and godliness.

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The Bible has not provided specific commands reguarding clothing styles (cut, fabric, color, etc.), or hair styles (in terms



of inches, the way combed, etc.). As in the case of custom we tend to mingle our own "creeds" and dogmatic "opinions" with what the Bible teaches concerning clothing and hair styles and impose our "infallible" interpretations upon our querists.

Prejudice

We all have our likes and dislikes. We sometimes hold a thing to be right or wrong only on the basis of I like it or I don't like it. I never wore a crew cut although I was in high school during the "happy

days" because I decided that mostly smart alecks wore that hair style. I simply had prejudice against crew cuts. Today a fellow looks rather odd who wears a crew cut, but is it wrong for him to do so? Much of the criticism today of longer hair styles worn by men is based on prejudice.

Answering the Questions and Solving the Problems

The New Testament teaching concerning clothing and hair styles is concisely stated in two passages. 1 Corinthians 11:14-15:

"Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a dishonor to him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering." 1 Timothy 2:9-10: "in like manner, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefastness and sobriety; not with braided hair. and gold or perals or costly raiment; but (which becometh women professing godliness) through good works." Other passages such as Romans 13:14; 1 Corinthians 6:9; Galatians 5:19-21; 1 Peter 2:11-12; 1 Peter 3:3-4, etc. should also be considered.

The primary thrust of 1 Corinthians 11:14-15 is sex identity. God intends



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that there be a distinction between the man and the woman. This passage teaches that a woman is to have a hair style longer than a man's identifying her as a woman, and a man is to have a hair

style shorter than a woman's identifying him as a man. In the context of 1 Corinthians 11 the custom of the woman's headdress is a matter of sex identity also. The Corinthian women covered their heads, the men did not. In some parts of the world the woman's headdress is still regarded as a matter of sex identity. Hair styles for men and women must conform primarily with sex identity. We may not particularly like some of the styles and we may become somewhat frustrated because some styles change quickly. but the principle regulating them is sex identity. Whenever a hair style blurs that identity it is wrong, and needless to say there are hair styles worn by many men today which do blur sex identity. But not all styles longer than $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches on the top and $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ an inch on the sides blur sex identity. These



styles may go against our preferences and prejudices, but when they do not blur sex identity they are not wrong. In the same way there are women who wear styles that blur sex identity, but not all styles shorter than natural hair growth on women are wrong.

In 1 Timothy 2:9-10 the Bible regulates the clothing a Christian is to wear. While Paul addresses himself to the woman in these passages it should be obvious that the principles apply to the man as well. We have already observed that the Bible has not provided specific commands regarding clothing styles, *i.e.*, cut, fabric, color, *etc.* I read an article recently concerning pant suits for women in which the author said, "Both Testaments *seem* to teach that men and women should be distinctive in appearance, even beyond obvious natural distinctions." (Emphasis mine, bkf). While he was advising women against pant suits the statement only comes close to what both Testaments teach. I believe it can be shown quite successfully that both Testaments definately *teach that men and women should be distinctive in appearance, even beyond obvious natural distinction.* The Bible then regulates clothing from the standpoint of sex identity and godliness.

One of the difficulties involved in clothing styles is the tendency to identify many styles with the evils of the world. Much of this is an unnecessary difficulty. Observe how the hippie movement

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has influenced our styles even to the most conservative dresser. Just because we can trace a clothing style to an ungodly source does not necessarily make it wrong. If this is the criterion hardly any clothing style will be acceptable.

There is also the tendency to associate similarities in clothing styles of men and women with effeminacy and mannishness. Much of this is another unnecessary difficulty. There have always been similarities in clothing styles for men and women. When these similarities blur sex identity they are wrong, but when they are minimized by clothing which emphasizes the gender of the wearer they are not necessarily wrong. Clothing styles for men and women are regulated by sex identity and godliness.

Self-Discipline - Training the Conscience

We must realize that we live in a world that changes very rapidly. We are not allowed the gradual changes of the past that permitted easy adjustment and adaptation. Clothing and hair styles which the most conservative persons accept today would be largely rejected by those who lived a century ago. Christians wear

We educate our consciences by diligent study, not by bombastic blasts from the pulpit and journalistic pornography describing in lewd detail what Christians should avoid. clothing styles today which are accepted by all others that those who lived even less than a century ago would not have worn. We must learn to accept and adjust to frequent style Christians should not rush changes. to take up every new style that comes along without thought of sex identity and godliness. We must be guided by the scriptures, not by prejudice and dogmatic opinions which create unnecessary problems and frustrations. We educate our consciences by diligent study, not by bombastic blasts from the pulpit and journalistic pornography describing in lewd detail what Christians should avoid. The one who allows the Lord to properly educate

his conscience will be able to discipline himself concerning sex identity and godliness in the same way he can discipline himself with a properly educated conscience concerning adultry. (Cf. Matthew 5:28).

- 1800 Maplecrest Lane Fultondale, Alabama 35068

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Televison or Hellevision?

James P. Needham

Have you ever wanted to cram a television down someone's throat? Well, so have I! Particularly when I pay someone a



social visit, or call on someone who needs spiritual help, only to have the whole thing spoiled by a blasting nonsensical television program. Many people, including church members, don't care enough about one's visit, to say nothing of common courtesy, to turn the T.V. off long enough to carry on a conversation.

Oh, that one-eyed monster has robbed us of so much! It robs us of the beauties of God's outdoors: the

flowers, the fruits, and the fresh air. It robs us of the association with neighbors and friends. It robs us of valuable time that could be better used for something much more worthy. It robs periods of worship of the presence of people who need to be there so badly. It robs our children of precious time they need and deserve with their parents. It robs us of the knowledge of God's word. It robs us of valuable exercise, so badly needed to keep the Spirit's temple in proper condition. In such cases it is indeed Hellevision!

Television has many worthwhile qualities. It has brought many worthwhile educational events to the living rooms of many who would not otherwise have seen them. But let us not forget. God commands us to redeem our time (Eph. 5:16). Don't make your television an hellevision!

TORCH



An Ode to Autumn

When spring was young and the wind was cold We fondly dreamed of harvest gold. In hope we ploughed and planted fields And eagerly prayed for abundant yields.

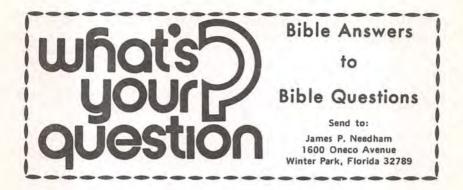
In summer's sun we toiled and labored. With God's rich blessings abundantly favored. Warm nights and rain to sprout our seed; God's preparing His children to feed.

Autumn came at summer's end; There's now a touch of frost in the wind. Our barns are full, our crops are done; We've battled the elements, and again we've won.

The fields are bare, the leaves are brown; The flowers bow their heads to the ground. Waterfoul on the wing in migrant flights, And we are safe from the winter's nights.

> - James P. Needham 8-26-74

November 1974



QUESTION: Alcoholism

"How can I stop my husband from drinking?" - Tennessee

REPLY:

I suppose the use of alcohol has broken up more homes, and caused more unhappiness than just about any other one thing in history. It causes wives and children to be abused and deprived of those things God intended they should have. It becomes the master of those who persistently use it. It distorts the mind, and numbs the user's sensitivity to the suffering and misery he causes others. It often transforms otherwise good people into demons, and insufferable bores.

The inquirer wants to know how *she* can stop her husband from drinking? I am sorry to say, I do not know of any way. Drinking is a sin (Gal. 5:19-21). Sin is a wilful act involving the exercise of the participant's power of choice. If one chooses to sin nobody can stop him, not even his own wife.

We hear a great deal about alcoholism being a disease. In some kind of way, it may be, but it is a self-inflicted one for which one will be accountable to God. The Bible calls it a sin, not a disease.

The only way I know to approach anyone who drinks is from the standpoint of what it will do to one's eternal destiny. There is no hope for that individual who refuses to be concerned about such. I am sure the lady has used this approach, and from the fact that she is still concerned about the problem, I gather that it has been unsuccessful.

There is one other alternative. She can try to get her husband to

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contact alcoholics anonymous. This organization has succeeded in helping thousands to stop drinking through the counsel and help of others who have done so. There is at least one prerequisite, however: the subject must admit that he is an alcoholic. I have found this a big step. The person who is not ready to stop drinking will adamantly deny that he is an alcoholic. He will confidently boast that he is master of himself, and he can stop drinking any time he gets ready. Such a claim is pretty devious since it requires a demonstration from the claimant to prove it — which demonstration he refuses to give! It is sort of like the fellow who said to stop smoking is easy, he had done it a thousand times!!!

Some alcoholics use as proof of their claim that they can stop when they get ready, the fact that they have stopped in the past. They conclude that since they have stopped in the past, they can do so now. Such is flimsy proof! One never knows himself. The fact that we have accomplished some fete in the past is no proof that we can repeat it at will now, or in the future. Paul said, "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. 10:12). He also describes the carnal man who is "sold under sin" in these words: "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do, I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh), dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would, I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind. and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin" (Rom. 7:14-25).

These verses describe the overpowering nature of sin, including the use of alcohol. The Hebrew writer warns lest any "be hardened through the decitfulness of sin" (Heb. 3:13).

The person who boasts that he can quit sinning any time he gets ready is engaging in the worst form of decepting: self-deception.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23

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The College Issue

Leo Rogol

For many years concerned brethren have opposed the schemes of some bold men to get the college into the church budgets. One argument made by Batsell B. Baxter in his appeal for church support of colleges is that the Church has Depended Upon the Colleges to Train Their Preachers, Elders and Teachers. Since then various colleges have had "elders/preachers workshops," and seminars on mission work or evangelism. Hence, colleges have gradually assumed the role of supervisors in practically every area of church work. Churches are being more and more dominated by the colleges.

It certainly is evident that the colleges exert a powerful influence over churches. This undeniable fact proves that these colleges are *church-related*. In fact, a former college president once said to me that the church is the strongest where there is a school and boldly affirmed that the churches prospered because of the schools. This kind of thinking prevails in the minds of too many brethren. It seems like the Lord made a bad mistake when He said, "I will build my CHURCH . . ." (Mt. 16:18). He should have been more concerned about building a *college*; then let the college take care of building the church.

Yet, sadly, the history of colleges shows they often have been the cause of the downfall of churches. Even many denominationational theological seminaries have become hotbeds of infidelity and atheism. Look where Bethany College is now. Consider the turmoil and division caused by Lipscomb and Abilene colleges.

Yet we must exercise caution in using this as an argument against the right of a college operated by brethren to exist. It should only make us cautious and more alert to signs that indicate history is repeating itself. I have seen churches with morally corrupt elders. Are we to do away with elders? There are preachers who have no business preaching. Are we to do away with preachers because some are unqualified?

Who would have thought fifty years ago that such schools as

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LEO ROGOL preaches for the church in Shippensburg, Pennsylvania. He was reared in Adventism, but is now an able writer, preacher and worker in the Lord's church.

Lipscomb, Pepperdine, Abilene, etc. would be the source of so much trouble today? We dare not say, "Oh, that will never happen to us." This probably was said by digressive brethren many years ago. Hence, I am saying that we must be on guard constantly. Yet some are highly indignant when sincere brethren voice concern over this issue.

A LOOK AT THE REAL ISSUE

Actually, then, the only issue to some brethren is money. In other words, if no money is involved in the college issue, there is no issue. But we must ask, "Is it right for a college to train preachers?" If so, what is wrong with 'elders workshops' (colleges training elders), as long as churches don't contribute to these colleges? What is the difference between a college's training preachers and its training elders?

We must approach the college question from two viewpoints. First, do colleges have the right to have Bible departments to teach the Bible? Second, do colleges have the right to train preachers? I want to keep these two questions separated in dealing with the college question.

It is my opinion that the colleges training preachers, or that we must depend on colleges to train preachers for the church, is one of the main reasons that Bible departments are questioned among many brethren. The ATTITUDE that we need a college to train preachers, and the feeling that preachers are more qualified to preach because they went to a "church-related" college, have brought Bible departments under scrutiny.

Hence, it is my purpose in this article to deal with the issue of colleges training preachers and not with the Bible department as such. I am not saying that the Bible department question should be ignored. I am simply saying that I want to deal with the college question from the standpoint of training preachers. That is my concern in this article.

Some may ask, "Is not the means of the one the process of attaining the other?" That is, is not teaching the Bible in Bible departments the means of training preachers? But here we must realize that the AIM of teaching the Bible is different from the specific aim of training preachers.

For example, where I preach we conduct home Bible studies. The aim, or objective, is not to train a preacher but to convert a

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soul. We also have Bible classes and preaching. Our aim is to teach and build up the church. In these it is not our SPECIFIC aim to train preachers.

We also have a training class for men aimed SPECIFICALLY to train and develop brethren in preaching. In preaching and Bible classes it is not our aim to make preachers of everyone who participates. In our training class it IS our specific purpose to develop the volunteers into preachers. We believe this is consistent with what Paul wrote: "And the things which thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2). Hence, we realize the difference between teaching the Bible for the purpose of instructing the audience and for the purpose of training preachers.

In a school this becomes a specialty, just like departments to train scientists, business men, etc. When a college has as one of its functions the training of preachers, it invades the work belonging soley to the church. This is the danger facing us today. For a college to have a specific program for training preachers stands on the same premise as when Baxter says the churches *depend* upon the colleges to train its preachers. The only difference is, Baxter asks churches to "pay for services rendered" and our brethren want the service rendered free!

The idea of having a school upon which churches depend to train their preachers is symptomatic of a spiritual laziness or indifference which has plagued the church since the beginning of the "Restoration Movement." This is the same problem that caused major digressions in past generations.

There are far too many churches, and brethren, who are totally unconcerned about training and developing preachers in the church. There are far too few churches today that are aware of the responsibility of the church to fulfil its duty in every area of work — including the work of training preachers. 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 allsufficiency of the church when we expect a college — not the church—to train preachers? There is too much talk about "so-andso going to school to become a preacher." And there are far too many preachers who feel they are qualified to preach because they went to a college to be trained to preach. And so, our argument

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for the "all-sufficiency of the church" is slapping right back in our faces because church dependence upon the college involves the very same principle of institutionalism — another institution to do the work of the church: train preachers.

A COMMON CHARACTERISTIC PRINCIPLE

I wish to quote some passages from various sources to demonstrate the common characteristic principle that was involved in every digression, past and present.

Following is an excellent observation about the spiritual quality involved in this and every issue: ". . . something is seriously wrong with modern Christianity . . . History indicates that all movements TEND TO BECOME INSTITUTIONALIZED. This is what happened to the religious movements of the past, and modern religious movements will be no exception" (A Quest for Vitality in Religion, Edge, F. E., Pref. pp. 9, 10).

Although this author is a denominationalist, he hit the nail on the head in his observation. He realized something is wrong with "modern Christianity" and connected it with "institutionalized" religion. Now I am not against organization, I believe in the "organization of the church." However, the cause of this institutional problem among churches is that too many churches are so poorly organized that they hardly function at all!

Religion, to many, has become a superficial form, more or less an out-growth of a childish habit of "play-acting." A cold indifference has smothered the zeal and conviction of brethren professing religion, and personal commitment and dedication necessary to practicing a vital religion is rarely seen. With such a spiritual atmosphere, it is but little wonder that churches allow another institution to train their preachers because that means this is a responsibility they don't have to bother with. Some brethren seem to think the less they do, the more efficient they are.

This same author pointed out that people have become more stirred up in social, business or political matters than in the spiritual. Too many of our brethren become more dedicated to a political system, to a community project, to their jobs than to Christ and spiritual obligations.

ALEXANDER CAMPBELL AND MISSIONARY SOCIETIES

The idea that another organization is necessary because the church

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is not doing enough in evangelism began with Alexander Campbell. He said, "A church can do what an individual cannot, and so a district of churches can do what a single congregation cannot" (Search for the Ancient Order, West. E. Vol. 1, p. 156). It was this very principle, or attitude, that led to the establishment of the missionary society. The contention that the local church was not doing enough was the rationale used to justify the establishment of the society. And so the seed of thought was planted: when the church fails to fully carry out its work, create another organization to take over its work.

Brother West has very well pointed out: "... the history of the church has well shown that THE LESS ZEAL AND DEVOTION THERE IS IN THE CHURCH, THE MORE INSTITUTION-ALISM AND HUMAN ORGANIZATIONS ARE NEEDED" (Ibid. pp. 169,170, emph. mine, LR). Why did it not occur to those who organized institutions, that rather than creating human organizations to carry on where the churches failed, to teach and exhort the churches to greater zeal and effort?

Further, in quoting David Lipscomb, brother West recorded, "When the society prospers, THE CONGREGATIONS BECOME INACTIVE, ALLOWING THE WORK TO BE OVERTAKEN BY THESE HUMAN ORGANIZATIONS" (Vol. 2, p. 59, emph. mine LR).

We know well the heartache of division that arose over the missionary societies. And all because churches failed in evangelism, causing some to feel it necessary to form human organizations to take over part of the work of the church.

THE HERALD OF TRUTH

Another from of missionary society was created a hundred years later on the same rationale, the Herald of Truth. Notice that the missionary society was established upon the basis of *cooperation* of churches in evangelism. It was exactly upon this idea, cooperation of churches, that the Herald of Truth was created.

In The Mirror of a Movement, Wm. Banowsky wrote: "As a result of the Abilene articulation of defense of the COOPERA-TION PRINCIPLE, it soon became widely applied in churches... Within a few years the Highland Church added to its outreach a nationwide television broadcast" (p. 322).

Notice several things in common between the missionary

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societies and the Herald of Truth:

- 1. Individual churches were not doing enough work.
- 2. "Cooperative" efforts could carry on the work on a much larger scale.
- 3. Thus came into existence ANOTHER organization to do the work the local churches were not doing.

In either case (missionary societies or H.O.T.) I challenge these brethren to show how such organizations can accomplish more than the sum total of all the work of all churches everywhere. Remember, then, "When the society prospers, the congergations become inactive, allowing the work to be overtaken by these human organizations" (David Lipscomb).

Can we not see the same characteristic pattern of danger in this issue of colleges training preachers? While "cooperative" efforts of churches is not involved, yet the same rationale is, namely, that because churches are failing to do their work, a human arrangement to overtake it is justified.

Any time the church depends upon a college to train preachers, Lipscomb's principle applies: "When another organization (or society) prospers, congregations become inactive, allowing the work to be overtaken by these human organizations." Or, in other words, the less churches are concerned about training preachers, the more willing they are to turn this job over to colleges; the more they "depend" upon the colleges to train preachers (as Baxter said).

Did brethren need another organization in evangelism, the missionary society, to carry on the work of the church?

Did brethren need another organization, the Herald of Truth, to carry on radio and television evangelism for churches?

Do brethren need another organization, a college, to carry on the work of training preachers for churches?

If brethren feel that the need justifies a "yes" answer to the last question, then this same argument justifies a "yes" answer to the first and second questions.

If, however, the answer to the first and second questions is NO,

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then the same answer must apply to the last.

We need to understand that 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.

In closing, let me point out that the real indictment is upon brethren and churches; their lack of zeal or concern to do what they should be doing. Let's not attack the college for training preachers, feel self-righteous that we have successfully pointed the finger of guilt in the right direction, while at the same time be unconcerned and uninvolved in doing the Lord's work as we say it should be done. While we may write and talk all we want to about Bible departments and college-trained preachers, we have not solved the problem until the churches get down to the business of doing what God assigned to them.

> 418 E. King St. Shippensburg, Pennsylvania 17257

What's Your Question - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

I refuse to believe his claim until he proves it with a demonstration.

Why a person thinks it is some kind of virtue to be able to quit sinning when he gets ready, is beyond me. People actually think such a boast makes them look better. This is part of the self-deception. Such an idle boast really rips off the mask, and reveals such a person's true colors. What it really says is this: "Even though I can stop sinning any time I get ready; I am not ready yet, so I think more of sin than I do of Christ and my soul."

In conclusion, I would say to the lady that her best chance of getting her husband to stop drinking is to convert him to Christ. Experts in the field of alcoholism say this is the best way to control this problem, and alcoholics anonymous requires all participants to have a strong faith in a Supreme Being. I pray for her success as well as for the success of all others who must live with and witness a loved one destroy his physical and spiritual health with alcohol.

Moving? Please Notify Us Of Address Changes In Advance

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Special Series Beginning in January

Beginning in the January issue, we will feature a series of three or four articles on Dealing with Mormons, This series will be written by Bob West who preaches for the Fourteenth Avenue church in St. Petersburg, Florida. He is a foremost authority on this subject. For three years he edited The LDS Discerner, a monthly publication devoted to an examination of Mormonism. He is the author of two tracts on Mormonism, and has held a number of lecture series on Mormonism and engaged in one public debate with a Mormon representative. He has worked in areas where Mormons are strong, and understands how to deal with them. A practical guide on how to deal with these people when you are confronted by them. An outsranding series. Do not miss it!

- James P. Needham

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

LOOK INSIDE FOR THESE THOUGHT PROVOKING ARTICLES

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THE COMPLETION OF VOLUME IX

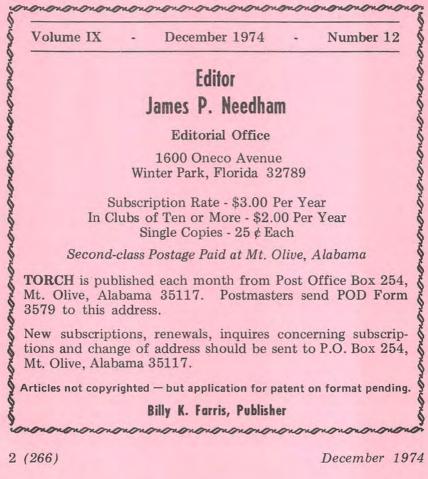
With this issue we close Volume IX of TORCH. This completes four volumes (years) with the present editor. TORCH has grown from an almost defunct publication at the beginning of Volume VI, to a circulation that compares favorably with most papers published by conservative brethren, and it continues a steady upward climb.

The editor and publisher want to take this opportunity to thank our readers for your warm acceptance of our efforts, and the many expressions of encouragement given us in a large volume of mail. TORCH represents a good deal of hard work without any monetary remuneration. The knowledge of good done is our only reward. We thank you for keeping our batteries charged!

We are constantly seeking ways to up-grade TORCH. We try to improve both the material and the mecanical make-up as we have ability and opportunity. Inflation has hit us hard during the past year, and it is necessary to raise our subscription price to \$4 per year beginning with the January 1975 issue. The increase is minimal, but necessary, if we are to continue this work. We are certain you understand and will cooperate. We say THANKS for your confidence and continued support.

James P. Needham, Editor

Billy K. Farris, Publisher





Editorial-

James P. Needham

Openness

The Spiritual Sword, Mission,

TORCH, Nichols,

Needham and Halbrook

In this issue we carry an article by Ron Halbrook concerning a previous article published in the May 1971 TORCH, and related matters which have developed since. The article is pretty well self-explanitory, but I want to make a few comments in reference to it.

THE SPIRITUAL SWORD: I am a regular reader of this publication, and concur with Halbrook's evaluation of its contents. It is unique as to format and method of production. It is published and sold by the Getwell and Dunn church in Memphis, Tennessee, which puts that church in the publishing business. It is sent free to "foreign missionaries," preachers (I didn't know there is a difference between a missionary and a preacher), and elders.

In all the years I have read this publication, I cannot remember ever reading a single article that disagreed with the editor's point of view. It has attacked the "antis" repeatedly, misrepresented them, and refused to print or even acknowledge receipt of articles written in reply (*cf.* Halbrook's article). How such a paper can muster the monumental gall to claim "openness" is beyond the comprehension of honest people.

But knowing doctor Thomas B. Warren, the editor, as I do, helps me to understand such tactics. I have been acquainted with him and his tactics for a long time. He once stood firmly for the truth on institutionalism (See Gospel Guardian, Vol. 4,5), but he and Roy Deaver got together and concocted the now (in) famous "total-situation-constituent-elements" debacle which they claimed converted them to institutionalism and was to be the argument to end all arguments on this question. (His demise was about as rapid as its appearence.) Brother Cecil Douthitt finally got Thomas Warren to put this argument to the test at South Houston in 1956,

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with a previous agreement to jointly publish the debate in book form. Well it never was published because brother Douthitt would not agree to allow brother Warren to add 38 pages of new material to his manuscript. The complete story of this can be found in **The Gospel Guardian**, Vol. 8, pp. 637,771. If brother Halbrook has not read these articles, I suggest he do so. They will help him to understand the peculiar brand of "openness" practiced by the **Spiritual Sword** editor. (For a special treat, I would suggest reading an article by brother Warren entitled *Are Preachers Christlike in Refusing to Debate*?, (Gospel Guardian, Vol. 4, No. 44, p. 8).

MISSION: I am also a regular reader of this publication which is produced by ultra liberal brethren who do not believe in the verbal inspiration of the scriptures, the harmony of the scriptures. and stand against just about everything that has distinguished the church of Christ from human denominationalism. They openly and frankly advocate denominational concepts of the church. I can remember it's having published an article or two from those who oppose them. While I would find myself more (not all by any means) in agreement with the doctrinal philosophy of the Spiritual Sword, I must admit that there is more substance to Mission's claim to "openness." Mission is definitely "open," especially to those who will question the verbal inspiration, harmony, and pattern concept of the scriptures, and who will put the church of Christ in the same category with human denominations. One will read Mission for a long time to find a writer who sees anything good about the church of Christ. They constantly tell us what is wrong with it. Briefly, what they think is wrong with it is what I think is right with it.

TORCH: Ever since I took the editor's chair, TORCH has been open journalism on display (I don't mean it wasn't before). I have frequently given opposing articles preference over those written by friends and supporters. Our openness is one of the most frequent subjects of comment in our mail. In four years of editing TORCH, we have carried two debates and numerous exchanges. I have published a regular column of comments from our correspondence both favorable and unfavorable. I have often stated that TORCH is not a tool for partisan politics or propaganda. A Mission writer listed TORCH in the category of "Defenders of the Faith." I gladly accept the "label," but not his definition of it. I have said before and I say now again that whenever I get to the place that I can hear nobody's voice but my own, I will chuck my chair and toss my typewriter. The Bible is the only written document I believe to be infallible. That excludes all religious

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periodicals including TORCH.

GUS NICHOLS: Brother Gus Nichols is an able student of God's word. He has successfully defended the truth against denominational preachers on many, many occasions. It remains a fact that he identified himself with the institutional movement about 25 years ago and has never, to this day, had a formal debate on these matters. And yet, he remains unsurpassed in misrepresentation and abuse of those he calls "the antis." I am not saying that everyone should have formal debates. I am not even saying such is the best way to teach. But it is quite strange that one who has had so many formal debates with denominational opposition should persistently refuse to meet his own brethren for whom he obviously holds so much contempt.

In 1962 brother Nichols came to Clarkson, Kentucky for a series of lectures on the issues. It was widely advertised that he would have a question and answer period following each lecture. Several of us attended, and found that the whole thing was a farce. He had a question and answer period, but he would accept only the questions he wanted to deal with; all others were declared "out of order." He would give us only enough time to ask the question, he would take as much time as he desired to answer it, and if we tried to return to the question, he would say, "I've already answered that."

This is what these brethren call "openness." They are about as open as the official newspaper of the Communist party in Russia! It is just amazing how closed an "open" journal can be! It is amasing how passivistic a pugnacious preacher can become!

TORCH carried the lengthy exchange with Howard Winters on singing spiritual songs to instrumental accompaniment even though the board of the Carolina Christian, which he edits, refused to do so on grounds that it violated their policy. The religious positions I hold are open to question any time as all TORCH readers know. But when they are challenged, you can count on my doing my best to defend them by the scriptures. (I won't roll over and play dead just because someone disagrees). If I can't successfully defend what I believe by the scriptures, I will gladly change. If this is not open journalism, what is?

HAWK-WEST-NEEDHAM

I have made repeated references to Ray Hawk's continued harping on our debate on the proper use of the church building. He just

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can't let it alone. He is still debating it. He is obviously dissatisfied with his efforts in the written debate. (You can order it from the editor at \$1.00 per copy). He wanted me to carry a three page article by him about the debate which I agreed to do provided he would carry it and my reply in The Bible Beacon which he edits. He replied: "I will be happy to print it in the Bible Beacon IF the owner and publisher will do so. He is a former 'anti' preacher but does not want to print the issues in the paper unless it was in debate form as we had."

Meanwhile, brother Hawk got into a discussion with brother Bob West, author of *Theophilus*, over these matters. Almost every issue of his weekly bulletin has some comment on the issue we debated along with some comment or criticism of me in connection with his discussion with brother West.

As the West articles will show, he tried to get brother Hawk to give him space in his bulletin in order to reply to his criticisms, but Hawk refused.* Brother Hawk, like so many of his brethren. prefers to attack from ambush where he can have an iron curtian of protection from the opposition. He has a very strong and convenient ally in "a former 'anti' preacher" who is "the owner and publisher" of The Bible Beacon which he edits. It is not passing strange that these "former 'anti' preachers" all act the same way? As soon as they get into the camps of the liberals, they start slamming journalistic doors! Even while knowing that the owner and publisher of the paper he edits would not publish his tirade against me, brother Hawk sends it to me thinking I would publish it in TORCH! Nobody ever accused me of being smart, but then, I am not that stupid! If he is going to further the debate in TORCH, then I must be allowed to do the same in The Bible Beacon.

One reader questioned the fairness of my charge that brother Hawk is trying to prejudice his audience, and suggested that maybe he is just contending for what he believes is right. If this be the case, one wonders why his position must seek the advantage of an iron curtain of protection from opposing positions. When one attacks from ambush and refuses to allow his audience to hear the other points of view, he has a weak position or a weak character, or both. Jesus said we judge a tree by its fruit. I may not be an expert fruit inspector, but I believe something is wrong with a

^{*} The West articles, Ray Hawk Vs Theophilus, will begin in the January issue. Since there are several parts to the articles we have delayed their appearence in order to have them in the same volume.

tree that bears this kind of fruit. If brother Hawk is not trying to prejudice his audience, why doesn't he allow his opposition to reply where he attacks them — his bulletin? He is not totally unacquainted with such a practice since he sent me an article in reply to something in TORCH. Sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander!

When brother Hawk refused brother West space in his bulletin to reply to his attack upon his position, I offered him space in **TORCH** to make reply. So we have another example of the liberal's concept of "openness." Their "openness" reminds me of a fellow who was standing on the street corner selling "apple pie." When customers complained that it didn't taste like it had any apples in it, he replied: "It doesn't, that's just the name of it."

Brother Hawk justifies his refusal to debate the kitchen-in-thechurch-building issue on the ground that the 'antis' disagree on the matter, which he hasn't proven. He is constantly challenging and engaging denominationalists in debate in the area where he lives, does he make it a condition of accepting a debate with them that they must all agree among themselves? Ray accused me of engaging in a "debater's dodge." Look who is talking! They saya drunk man always thinks the other fellow is intoxicated. I have also heard it said, "It takes one to know one." It is very obvious who is dodging. He accepted and engaged in a debate with me without imposing this agreement-among-yourselves condition. What changed the rules? Ray had a big appetite for a debate with me (which was his first), and he has had and continues to try to have debates with denominational preachers in his area, but his appetite for debates with those he calls "false brethren" has been suddenly satisfied. He continues to talk about the "antis" and "false brethren" where he has the advantage of an iron clad protection from the opposition, but will not agree to further discussion where equality and fairness prevail.

If Ray things this is too harsh, or is not absolutely true, let him agree to repeat our discussion on the same proposition for four nights where he preaches and for four nights where I preach. If I am wrong about him I want to know it, and I will apologize.

CONCLUSION

OPENNESS, that's a good word. I like it. The liberals talk about it, I practice it. If you don't believe it, try me out. I believe in openhandedness, openmindedness, and openbibleness in teaching and practice whether written or oral.

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Dishonest

(If Anyone Can Think of a "Nicer" Word For It, Tell Us!)

Ron Halbrook

We have taken The Spiritual Sword from its beginning and saved every issue. It has excellent material written by those liberal on church organization and related matters, in an effort to stop ultraliberalism regarding fellowship with errorists, inspiration, the virgin birth, evolution, miracles, etc. In other words, they are trying to put out with one hand the fire they set with the other hand.

Most of the material appearing is excellent. The writers generally use the hand which is trying to put out the fire and leave the hand that sets it in their pockets. If these brethren had been practicing the principles generally taught in the Sword, the issues which have divided brethren in the last 25 years could never have arisen. One exception appeared in the October, 1970, issue; Gus Nichols wrote "Do Good Unto All Men" in an effort to justify church donations to human institutions such as orphanages, widow-care homes, and such like. He did not get around to telling us whether hospitals are included, nor whether orphanages and colleges "stand or fall together."

On October 17, 1970, we sent editor Thomas B. Warren and writer Gus Nichols a short reply to the Nichols article, assuring them by personal letters that we had "every intention of keeping an open mind" to any points for further study they could offer. We requested our short article ("Discussing a Defense of the Faith") be published in the Sword in the interest of open study. Neither letter was answered; the article was not published nor returned and no explanation was ever given.

"Discussing a Defense of the Faith" pointed out that in the history of the church in America, "The acceptance and defense of such boards [for churches to do benevolent and missionary work] signified a charge in attitude toward authority, though it was not recognized by many well-intentioned men at the time. The change eventually caused many departures from the divine pattern . . . Do not the acceptance and defense of such boards signify a change in attitude toward authority, unintentional though it may be? Will not such a change cause many departures from the divine pattern?" We also discussed his use of scripture, but the questions asked seem appropriate for discussion in a journal dedicated to resisting current changes in attitude toward authority.

RON HOLBROOK preaches for the Belshire church in Nashville, Tennessee and is working on his Masters Degree at Vanderbilt University.

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Brother James P. Needham published our article and pointed out this "silent treatment" is typical of brethren who "despise the truth!" (TORCH, May, 1971). In correspondence brother H. E. Phillips concurred, saying, ". . . you will find most of those who are concerned with that sort of work have degenerated in attitude to the point that they are openly dishonest with the brethren as well as with the work of God." Is the language of these men too hard? Let's bring things up to date and see.

The April, 1974, issue of The Spiritual Sword carries an article entitled "Who Is Really Open?" by associate editor Garland Elkins. He chides ultra-liberal Mission Magazine for its claim to openness and for its editor's charge that the Sword is closed. At the Abilene Christian College lectures in February, 1974, editor Victor Hunter "of Mission Magazine charged that his magazine was open, but that The Spiritual Sword was closed."

Brother Elkins responds,

The Bible definitely teaches the necessity of being openminded for truth . . . It is the purpose of the elders of the Getwell congregation and those of us who write in the **Spiritual Sword** to make sure that we are not prejudiced . . . We strive to show no partiality, that is we strive to be fair, not biased. We sincerely seek to be open for truth as were the noble Bereans (Acts 17:11-12).

... We contend the **Spiritual Sword** is open for truth and so open are we, that we are willing to allow truth to be tested by error. We are willing that truth and error should have a confrontation.

Elkins then proposes a discussion in which both viewpoints can be stated as "the way to demonstrate which paper is really open . . ."

Is the editor of Mission Magazine willing to do this? If not, their claim of openness is forever exploded!

Is Mission Magazine really 'open'? Or, are they like the Jews of Jesus' day, do they, 'say and do not'? (Matt. 23:3).

In keeping with brother Needham's appeal for "Golden Rule Treatment Among Brethren" (TORCH, May, 1971), we have a proposal for the Editor of Mission Magazine. Why not challenge the editor and writers of the Spiritual Sword to practice what they preach or else publicly admit "their claim of openness is forever exploded!" Elkins complained the Mission folks, while claiming to be open, only "occasionally have an article written by a sound

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brother." Even then, they "attack the article" like the "Gospel Guardian of a few years ago." Editor Hunter might well point out that Tom Warren and Spiritual Sword would not publish a dissenting article of only seven paragraphs ("Discussing a Defense of the Faith") — even to merely "attack the article."

Elkins rattles his sword for a public "debate, either written or oral or both," with the Mission people.

If written, let the Editor of Mission Magazine and the Editor of The Spiritual Sword have equal space in a book with each bearing half the cost of publication. If oral, let it be taped and also put in book form with similar financial arrangement.

Hold on just a minute, brethren! Brother Needham points out that Gus Nichols

... has not had the first debate on the issues. He has written and lectured through mediums where he had an iron curtain of protection from the opposition. Brethren have tried desperately to get him to discuss these issues, and to this good day their score is ZERO (TORCH, May, 1971, p. 106).

Now this is the same Gus Nichols who writes in the Sword with "an iron curtain of protection from opposition," who "has probably had more debates with denominationalists than any gospel preacher now living," and who once "would debate the time of day at the drop of a hat" (Ibid.). We propose that Editor Hunter AGREE to a public "debate, either written or oral or both" ON THE SAME DAY that Gus Nichols agrees to a public "debate, either written or oral or both." Brother Needham and several other representative men have been "sitting on ready" for a long, long time. Fair arrangements can be made "at the drop of a hat" — and this writer is "sitting on ready" to help make the arrangements, if necessary.

Yes, we agree that Mission and its editor should debate when the Sword and its editors do. Yes, openness sounds like an excellent idea. Now let's get on with it! As for those unwilling to do so, they judge themselves as despisers of truth, dishonest men — and "their claim of openness is forever exploded!"

(Copies sent to Spiritual Sword editor Thomas Warren and Gus Nichols, and to Mission editor Vic Hunter.)

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Plain Speech

Billy K. Farris

There is much confusion in the religious world today. There are more than three hundred different religious bodies in the United States alone, all teaching different and conflicting doctrines, and almost all claiming the Bible as a basis for their different doctrines. Actually, the religious confusion and doctrines taught by them are not based on the Bible, but upon the traditions and commandments of men. (*Cf.* Matthew 15:3, 9). The creeds, disciplines, manuals and catechisms of these religious bodies have confused the world. People today do not know what to believe.

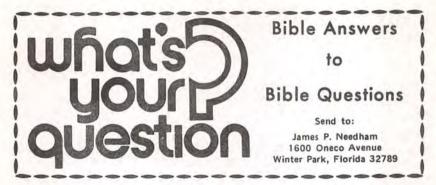
A popular religious view is that the Bible cannot be understood; that it is too confusing and that anything can be proved by the Bible. To the contrary, the Psalmist said, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105) and "The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple" (Psalm 119:130). Jesus said, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them. I will shew you to whom he is like: He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth, against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great" (Luke 6:46-49). The apostle wrote, "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling . . ." (Ephesians 1:18) and "How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)" (Ephesians 3:3, 4). It should be evident that the Bible can be understood.

The remedy for religious confusion is God's word and men who will speak plainly from it; preachers who will "preach the word" (2 Timothy 4:2), not philosophy, astrology and economics. Those who will speak "the things which become sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1) using "sound speech, that cannot be condemned" (Titus 2:8). The world needs men who "hold fast the form of sound words... in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 1:13).

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QUESTION: Degrees of Punishment and Reward

"Does the Bible teach degrees of rewards and punishments?" --Ohio

This is a controversial question, but an interesting one. The author firmly believes in degrees of punishment and reward in the life to come for the following reasons:

1. There are degrees of sin: During the trial of Jesus, He said to Pilate: "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto you hath the GREATER sin" (Jn. 19:11). We know there are three degrees of greatness: great, greater, and greatest. There is an old adage that says, "There are no big sins and little sins." This is true, but this is not to say there are no GREAT sins and GREATER sins. All sin is GREAT, but this passage says some sins are GREATER than others. To deny degrees of sin would flatly contradict John 19:11. Since the Jews had "the GREATER sin," Pilate must have been guilty of GREAT sin. This raises the question of what is the GREATEST sin? There must surely be such. Its identity is not absolutely certain, and is not the subject of this study.

But look again, "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is WORSE with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them" (2 Pet. 2:20,21). If there are no degrees of sin, how could "the latter end be WORSE . . . than the beginning"?

If these passages do not teach degrees of sin, they do not teach anything.

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2. Degrees of sin argue degrees of punishment: This is demanded by scripture, logic and justice. It makes absolutely no sense for there to be degrees of sin, but equality of punishment. Will a good moral man who just neglected to obey the gospel be punished to the same degree as an Adolph Hitler who murdered millions? Such would be out of harmony with justice, one of the outstanding attributes of Jehovah. But then there are scriptures which definitely affirm degrees of punishment.

Luke 12:47,48, "That servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with MANY stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with FEW stripes. For unto whomsoever MUCH is given, of him shall be MUCH required; and to whom men have committed MUCH, of him they will ask the MORE."

James 3:1, "My brethren, be not many of you teachers, knowing that we shall receive the GREATER CONDEMNATION." This passage may indicate that MEN require more of the teacher than they do of a non-teacher, but such is definitely not the point in Luke 12:47,48. There Jesus is illustrating a lord's reckoning with his servants.

Also, the parable of the talents is a divine demonstration of varied responsibility, thus varied accountability. The one and two talent men did not have to account for five talents. This is clearly corrobrated by the Bible's affirmation that men will be judged "according to their works" (Rev. 20:12).

This does not mean that some people will have an EASY time in hell. Since, as we have seen, all sin is GREAT, then punishment of sin will be GREAT and will all be EVERLASTING (2 Thess. 1:7-9). There is no crossing the great fixed gulf between the regions of the damned and the saved (Lk. 16:26). In other words, the "coolest" place in hell will be "hotter" than anyone will want to endure for an eternity. (Obviously, that is a poor way to express it, but such is common terminology). Nobody should take any comfort in the fact of degrees of punishment. Those who do are doomed for eternal disappointment. Why not be freed from sin by obedience to the gospel (Rom. 6:17,18), and through faithful service, make preparations to enjoy the eternal bliss of heaven?

3. Degrees of punishment argue degrees of reward: The scriptures very obviously teach *degrees of punishment*. To admit this is to necessarily infer *degrees of reward*. To say there are degrees of punishment but equality of reward is to argue that there is more justice in hell than in heaven! It is neither logical nor just to say that a person dying in infancy will receive the same reward as the apostle Paul who worked so hard and suffered so much for

Christ (2 Cor. 11). Some people have trouble harmonizing this concept with the parable of the laborers (Mt. 20:1-16), since the people hired at various hours (some working longer than others) all received the same reward. The point is, that they all received eternal life, but nothing is said of their various capacities to enjoy it.

DEGREES EXPLAINED

It seems difficult for some to explain how there could be degrees of punishment and reward. The explanation seems quite simple. It is the spirit of man that lives after death (Jas. 2:26; Eccl. 12:7). That is, his intellect, his conscious self. The rich man was told, "Son, remember... in thy lifetime..." (Lk. 16:25). Consciousness is the key to understanding punishments and rewards. Consciousness presupposes the faculty of memory. At least part of the suffering in hell will be one's ability to remember the misdeeds of one's life. It stands to reason then, that the fewer the misdeeds, the lesser the suffering from remembering them. Hell is spoken of as eternal fire. All shall receive the same MEDIUM of punishment, but it will affect some to a greater degree than others. For instance, we might treat a pin scratch and a gash with iodine. The bigger the wound the more it will burn. It is the same solution, but the degree of absorption differs, thus the degree of suffering varies.

The same is true in degrees of reward. Two people attend the SAME classical concert. One has a love for music, but has an untrained ear. The other has extensive training in the field of classical music. Both enjoy the concert, but the DEGREE of enjoyment is greater in the person with the greatest preparation.

It has been said that heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people. So the Bible teaches. But hell is also a prepared place for a prepared people. The person who works the HARDEST and the LONGEST will enjoy heaven more than anyone else because he is the best prepared for it. And just so, the person who lives the most ungodly life will suffer most in hell because he is prepared for it.

This is one of those deeper subjects that is interesting to study, but about which there should be no great excitement. We have tried to deal fairly with the evidence presented, not to postulate some favorite theory. It is not necessary to understand all about heaven or hell in order to go there. We should continue to study such matters with open minds. We should not cause any disturbance over, or make an hobby of such subjects. Regardless of how one understands the matter, it will not affect his destiny in the end.

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The Moslem Discussion

Hiram O. Hutto

On the nights of October 21, 22, 24, 25, Dr. Salah El Dareer and I were engaged in public discussion in the Engineering Building on the University of Alabama in Birmingham campus. The discussion concerned some of the differences between Jesus Christ and the New Testament and Mohammed and the Koran.

Monday and Tuesday nights I affirmed that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God, was crucified for our sins, and the New Testament is God's final revelation.

On the first two nights I showed that since this is an historical question, it must be decided, not on sentiment, not emotion but on historical evidence. We showed that we have *EYEWITNESS TESTIMONY* concerning this proposition:

1. That Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, 2. that he performed miracles - gave objective, verifiable evidence, to support that

claim. 3. that God audibly endorsed that claim and people who heard and saw the evidence have left us a record of it; and, finally, the Jews condemned Jesus to death because he made such a claim. It was also shown that by the expression "only begotten Son of God" no kind of "physical" sonship was being affirmed nor that God had a wife, but when Jesus claimed to be the Son of God he was claiming Godhood, Deity, and equality with the Father, though subordinate as to function. A number of charts with substantiating scriptures were introduced.



In reply Dr. El. Dereer asserted that "sonship" simply meant servant or dearness. Further, he claimed, the words "son of God"



were never found on the lips of Jesus. To which it was shown in John 9:35-37; John 10:36; Matt. 26:63-64, Jesus made express claim to being the Son of God.

Then Dr. El Dareer began to attack the New Testament as it now exists, as being the result of interpolations, additions, etc. of Hellenistic efforts, and that in fact we have practically nothing of the actual words of Jesus. He further claimed that since Jesus wrote nothing, and that we have no documents before 70 years after Jesus lived we can have

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no confidence in what we do have.

Then it was shown that we have evidence in the form of quotations from early Christian writers that go all the way back to



practically within the lifetime of the apostles. Furthermore, if he rejects the New Testament because Jesus wrote nothing, then he would have to reject the Koran because Mohammed did not write it. In fact, he did not write anything because he was illeterate and could neither read nor write! In addition to this, we do not have the original copy of those who did write it and that the earliest writings of that document that we do have are no nearer in time to the original than the ones of our New Testament.

To this last statement, Dr. El Dareer took serious exception claiming that we have the original Koran, meaning that some of

the original documents, etc. of the Koran are in existence today. But we showed that those scholars who have studied the sources inform us that this just is not the case.

We further showed that Jesus claimed that he would be crucified, that we have the eyewitness testimony of one who saw him die, even seeing the Roman soldier pierce His side with the spear; that the Jews admit that he was crucified, that his enemies admit that he was crucified, that historians claim he was crucified. Furthermore, Jesus claimed that



his death would be "for the remission of sin" (Matt. 26:28).

It was also shown that the New Testament is final because:

Jesus promised the apostles that they would be guided into ALL truth and that promise was fulfilled, therefore:

1. There is no ROOM for the Koran

2. There is no NEED for the Koran

HIRAM O. HUTTO preaches for the Midfield church in Birmingham, Alabama. His affirmative arguments in the discussion were excellent and superbly presented.

3. There is no USE for the Koran

On Thursday and Friday nights the 24th and 25th of October, Dr. El Dareer affirmed that the advent of the prophet Mohammed is clearly foretold in both Old and New Testaments, and the Koran is God's final revelation. Oddly enough very few scriptures were introduced in affirmation of this proposition and as was shown in the discussion, most of these were fulfilled in Jesus Christ and not in Mohammed.

It was also shown that the Koran could not be the word of God because:

- 1. It contradicts God's TRUE revelation the Old and New Testaments. (A number of instances were cited to show this.)
- 2. The Koran contradicts itself. (Passages from the Koran were used to substantiate this.)
- 3. The Koran ascribes to God qualities that are unworthy of Deity. (Again, a number of passages from the Koran were used for this purpose.)

All in all it was a good discussion, at least it seemed so to me. Good order prevailed throughout. Dr. El Dareer was a congenial respondent. However, I must say in all fairness that most of his material was assertion without even any attempt at proof.

Plans are under way for printing the discussion. At this writing no completion date has been determined.

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Plain Speech - continued from page 11

"Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech" (2 Corinthians 3:12). People in search of religious truth should want to hear plain speech from those who preach. The disciples asked Jesus to speak plainly (John 16:29). Jesus urged, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

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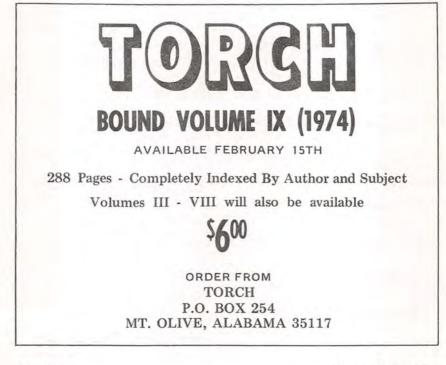
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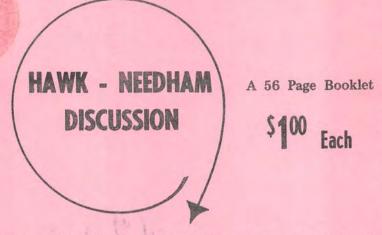
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