

SEARCHING *The* SCRIPTURES

Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.—John 5:39.



"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."
—Acts 17:11

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THE PEOPLE WERE RESTRAINED FROM BRINGING

Connie W. Adams, Orlando, Florida

The children of Israel had not been out of Egypt long when God instructed Moses to make the tabernacle. God gave Moses a pattern for it and arranged for human agency to be employed in building and furnishing it. Every man who was of "willing heart" was to bring an offering and supply whatever portion of the labor he could. (Exodus 35:5). This was in addition to the tithe required of all. It was an opportunity for them to show the depth of their gratitude for what God had done for them. In Exodus 36 the account is given of their liberality on this occasion. "And they brought yet unto him free offerings every morning." (Exod. 36:4). Then the wise men among them came to Moses with this report: "The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work, which the Lord commanded to make." (36:5). The next verse says the people were told not to make anything more for the tabernacle. "So the people were restrained from bringing." (36:6). The extent of their abundant labor and giving may be better understood against a background of events fresh on their minds. Not long before, their ears had heard the bitter commands of abuse from harsh task masters and their backs had bled from the lash. They were enslaved in a tyranny from which there seemed to be no escape. Then Moses came. They saw the power of God wrought through him. Still remembered was the passover night and their deliverance from the death plague while all Egypt wept over the loss of the firstborn. Despair turned to hope at the Red Sea when by miracle the waters parted, and gave rise to joyful song on the other side. Yet remembered was the smoking, quaking mount with the barriers beyond which neither man nor beast should go. The tables of stone written by God with the laws and ordinances to govern them were much on their minds. No they had an opportunity to show their gratitude for what they had received. This they did, not because they were made to do it, but out of willing hearts in deep gratitude.

Though this tabernacle, made with hands, was the place where God put his name and said he would dwell, the Hebrew writer informs us that it as a type or shadow of the "true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man." (Heb. 8:1-5). The liberality of Israel in building the first tabernacle finds its counterpart in the work of building up the church, the place where God's spirit dwells and in which salvation is offered to men. The importance of that work should never be forgotten by God's people now.

1. **God Planned It.** As God planned the deliverance of Israel, so it was his eternal purpose to redeem men through Christ and establish the church. (Eph. 3:10-11).

2. **God Gave a Pattern For It.** In both tabernacles God used human agency, but he did not turn them loose to make either of them according to human fancy. He gave a pattern that their efforts might be lawful. Christ is the chief corner stone. The apostles and prophets laid the foundation as they preached Christ. (Eph. 2:19-22; I Cor. 3:10-11). The structure is according to divine instruction. All the vessels of ministry were sanctified with the blood of Christ. It must serve a divine purpose or mission. The building is in a state of continual growth as each delivered soul becomes a living stone built up into an holy temple in the Lord. Each stone has a place to fill, each member a work to do.

3. **The Work Depends Upon Our Liberality.** If the circumstances of delivered Israel explained their liberality and sacrifice, then surely the circumstances of those in Christ should urge even greater response on our part. The state of our bondage was far worse than that of Israel. The **deliverer** was greater than Moses. That we could escape the just condemnation of sin is much more amazing than being brought through divided waters. Thus the **nature** of deliverance incites gratitude. We have a better sacrifice than the lamb slain the evening of the passover. The covenant sealed with that blood is better, being established upon **promises**. From these considerations, we have every reason to respond even more liberally to the building up of God's spiritual house, the church, than Israel ever had for bringing so much that they had to be restrained.

We have not been required to tithe, but all of us are required to "lay by in store upon the first day of the week, as God has prospered" us. (I Cor. 16:2). Each one is to do this of that which he has (2 Cor. 8:11), of a ready mind (v. 12), bountifully (2 Cor. 9:6), and cheerfully (v. 7). All this is to be done according to the purpose of one's heart. The response of grateful hearts for divine favors is good for the cheerful giver. Thus it is more blessed to give than to receive. (Acts 20:35). Do you know many people of God now who would need to be restrained from bringing? If so, why do congregations have trouble meeting a reasonable program of work? Why must many things go undone that ought to be done? Is it that we are all poverty stricken? Think again of Israel in the wilderness. All they had was what they had gathered in haste as they left Egypt. It had to last them until they were established in Canaan. They had no weekly or monthly salary guarantee. They were certainly not very securely settled. Even the tabernacle was

portable. But now people who live in three bedroom houses with 2 baths, with carpets on the floors, food freezers, television and stereo sets, with regular salaries with the prospect of retirement pension plans and Social Security, people who can take vacations of hundreds or even thousands of miles each year, will drop in a dollar to two and murmur about the preacher meddling if he preaches on giving. They will go out of town on Lord's days or on vacations and forget all about their financial obligations to the work of the congregation of which they are a part. Yet many of these plead poverty and complain about how difficult it is to make ends meet. All of this reminds me of Haggai 1:3-11. The prophet asked the people "Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses, and this house lie waste?" He appealed to them to consider their ways. The futility of their efforts to prosper without considering their duty to God was then set forth. "Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages to put into a bag with holes." God did not overlook their selfishness. "Ye looked for much, and lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the Lord of hosts. Because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house. Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit. And I called for a drought upon the land, and upon the mountains, and upon the corn, and upon men, and upon cattle; and upon all the labor of the hands." As God did not excuse their selfishness, every man running to his own house while the service of God languished, neither will he excuse selfishness now that causes the most prosperous people in the annals of history to leave undone the greatest work God ever entrusted to man. If we could stir Christians everywhere to the same spirit that marked Israel when the tabernacle was built and furnished, with their deliverance fresh in their memories, then no financial problem would be too great for the church. This was the spirit of the early disciples as they even sold houses or lands to carry on the work. Brother, how far are you from that generous spirit which caused Israel to have to be restrained?

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Editorial . . .

H. E. PHILLIPS

PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED

Many of those who are true to the Book regarding the institutional and social gospel questions have other problems which must be scripturally solved. The unscriptural support by the church of human organizations is not the only test of faithfulness to Christ and his word. All things must be made true to the pattern.

One problem is the personal conflict between brethren over matters of choice that have no relation to authorized matters. Such matters as the color of the meeting house, how long a gospel meeting shall continue, and how much to pay the preacher have served to alienate brethren. These are matters of choice and do not involve unscriptural practices in themselves. It makes no difference what color the meeting house is, the place to meet is authorized in the scriptures. If the Lord had authorized any certain color, then of course no other color could be used. A gospel meeting is authorized, but the number of days is not specified. This is a matter of choice. Paying the preacher is authorized (I Cor. 9:4-14; II Cor. 11:8), but the amount is not specified. It is entirely a matter of choice and does not involve unauthorized principles. Brethren can be faithful to Christ and surrender their preferences in all these questions. The difference between things in this category and human institutions supported by the church to do any work is that the latter is unauthorized—unscriptural, and the former is authorized. The church is the only organization authorized in the New Testament to do the work of the church, but the color of the building in which the church meets involves no principle of the New Testament. One can be true to the word of Christ and allow any color. It has nothing to do with either the organization or function of the church.

Why should I insist that a certain thing be done MY way, if it involves no scriptural principle, when it causes broken friendship and loss of confidence? Why must I insist that MY plan be adopted when most brethren disagree in these matters of personal choice? Of course, when some scriptural principle is involved, there is no choice. We must obey God rather than man.

Another problem is the disciplinary action against brethren who depart from righteous living and scriptural practices. In some sections where digressive innovations have caused division, the church is small and discipline is delayed because they do not want to lose members. The fact is that the ungodly are not considered to be in the body by Christ. To retain them on the membership roll does not add strength to the church, and in every case hinders the healthy growth of the church. In many cases those against whom action is taken will retaliate with charges and counter-charges. Jesus said, "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand." (Matt. 12: 25,26). Why will brethren willingly continue in their sins and refuse to repent and seek reconciliation? Why will one strive to justify his sin by charging others with equally serious sins? The only course to take in forgiveness is to repent and turn from the sin. It is a matter of faith that the ungodly be withdrawn from (Rom. 16:17; II Thess. 3:6,14), and the attempt to justify sin by charging others with sin will not provide forgiveness. This problem must be resolved in a scriptural manner.

Another problem of a very serious nature is the general indifference of brethren. Those who will fight against all forms of innovations in the church have become so indifferent to their responsibilities that the church is suffering. Gospel meetings do not generate interest with many. Attendance is lower than it should be. The desire to become teachers and to assist in reclaiming the unfaithful is very weak with most members of the church. Among the liberal element the summer camps, parties, shows, "fellowship" functions, and such like keep the attendance high, but we cannot use these unscriptural practices in building up the kingdom. The only force is the pure gospel of Christ. This problem must be solved, and plain, forceful teaching is the only answer. One can go to hell as easily by leaving his first love as he can by departing from scriptural practices in doing the work of the church. One is not faithful to Christ who will not seek first the kingdom and will not manifest his love for Christ and his word.

COMMENTS TO EDITORS

"I enjoy your paper very much. Keep up the good work." — L. E. Collier, Maitland, Fla.

"We appreciate the fine work that is being done by Searching The Scriptures. Keep it up." — Lowell Blasingame, Grenada, Miss.

"I enjoy so very much reading Searching The Scriptures. May God bless your good paper and all its readers." — Mrs. Edythe Kean, St. Louis, Mo.

"There are so many good lessons in your paper. I enjoy so much this paper; I would not want to

miss a copy. I have sent in several subscriptions to relatives and friends. Thank you for a good religious paper." — Mrs. Maude Fielding, Plant City, Fla.

"I have appreciated Searching The Scriptures from its very beginning and it is proving itself an effective tool in maintaining the purity of the gospel. I especially appreciate your appeal to the text of God's word in your articles. The citing of passages and quoting from the inspired book are practices too swiftly being forsaken by others, both in writing and speaking." — Roy Whitworth, Fort Meade, Fla.

"We still appreciate you, and the others that work with you in publishing the paper. I full well believe that it and others have done immeasurable good in providing a barricade for evil and its flow. God bless you all." — W. C. Hinton, Jr., Nishinomiya-City, Japan.

"The last issue of the paper was excellent. Appreciate your front page article, especially your point on marriage." — Thomas G. O'Neal, Jasper, Ala.

"After reading 'The Social Gospel' I found myself wishing I had it in tract form. Do you plan to print it in a tract?" (Yes.—Editor) "I would like to see your paper discuss the merits and scriptural authority for churches to provide scholarships (on merit basis) to young persons attending Bible colleges as an alternative to aid to the colleges. Has this been tried anywhere or does the Bible forbid it?" — Peggy Charlton, Falls Church, Va. (We will deal with this question soon — Editor).

"You are doing good with the paper. I have taken it from the beginning and enjoy it greatly." — Richard Weaver, Cullman, Ala.

"My faith has been made stronger from the many fine lessons you men have written in that wonderful paper, Searching The Scriptures. Please renew my subscription and keep up the wonderful work you are doing." — Florence Jedlicka, Hialeah, Fla.

"If one soul is worth more than the whole world — money isn't the important thing. It is the saving of this one soul. Can you give a figure on the number of people that have been baptized into the Kingdom by listening to the Herald of Truth? Via the Missionary Society, Etc.,?" — Anon., Panama City, Fla. (I have no idea how many have been baptized via Herald of Truth or the Missionary Society. However, All who have been baptized into the Kingdom through this means, and then endorse and assist in the promotion of these human systems, turn right back to sin and are no better off than before they were "baptized into the Kingdom." — Editor).

"We have thoroughly enjoyed each issue and I feel it has helped us to appreciate the Truth more. Your labors and those of brother Miller and others responsible for this magazine are doing such a good work." — Mr. and Mrs. E. C. Young, Miami, Fla.

"I continue to enjoy reading Searching The Scriptures and encourage you to keep up the good work." — Ross Saunders, Lebanon, Ky.

"Keep sending Searching The Scriptures. I usually read it through the day I get it. I loaned the last copy for a church member to read." — Samuel Heaton, Indianapolis, Ind.



Every where in the religious world men are retreating from the doctrine of the super-natural. This denial of the miracles of the Bible constitutes what is perhaps the greatest threat to the word of God in our time. It strikes at the very heart of all that God has said and done for the human race. I am alarmed when brethren who have been in the faith a number of years, calmly sit in a Bible class and give a human explanation of a miracle. It is even more alarming to know that the great majority of our young men who will fill the pulpits of tomorrow, are in their studies exposed to this kind of thinking. Regardless of what it is called, modernism has a way of taking even the strong into error a step at a time. It is so easy to be carried away with a modernist explanation of how the Red Sea parted to let the Israel of God across, or to explain the properties of clay in the healing of the eyes of the young man born blind that we seem to forget that this was **God in direct action**. It needs no explanation from us or any other set of men on earth. It needs to be believed as the result of the evidence that proves it true.

If we would just stop and think, everything we hold dear in the word of God started with the super-natural. In the very first verse of the Bible we find that the EARTH was made by God by a miracle. In Genesis 1:26 MAN was created by a great and wonderful miracle. The LORD came to earth born of a virgin (Matt. 1:22, 23) in one of the greatest miracles and made known His Divinity by the miracle of the RESURRECTION. The CHURCH began on Pentecost in Acts the second chapter with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and a great miracle. The SECOND COMING of Christ will be miraculous when he comes from heaven with a shout. (1 Thes. 4:16). Brethren, let the modern theologian follow any course that seems good to him; the saints must never be deceived. Let us weigh the evidence that tells of the super-natural in the word of God and speak out against any attempt to explain the direct action of Almighty God in the light of human learning and experience. We need to remember that our Father in Heaven does not depend upon our ability to make his word acceptable unto men. We need to be kind and patient with our brethren who are unaware of their lack of faith and bold and aggressive with those who have set themselves up as critics of God.

HEROES OF FAITH

Too many times brethren are a little like the Roman Catholics in this regard: The catholics feel that all of the saints have been dead for years and we are the same way about the heroes of faith. We read of God's great in ages past that suffered for their convictions and were persecuted for their belief in things divine. In the recent division over the

all-sufficiency of the church of the Lord we have seen many heroes of faith. Men who lost their jobs, their friends, their own fathers and mothers. Men who have suffered the rebuke and ridicule of those with whom they had worked in the years that are past. Men who did not know how they would feed their families and men who went back to the factory and the field rather than compromise the truth. No, brethren, all of the heroes of faith are not dead. Out of this great sacrifice on every hand we see the cause of truth rise again. New churches are springing up all over the world. The result of these heroes' efforts may never fully come to the attention of the brotherhood, but each in his own place and each in his own way has paid the price and shed the tears that have put the "old ship of Zion" back in the blue waters of God's eternal truth. I Marvel!

AUTONOMY OF CHURCHES — No. 3

Oaks Gowen, Bradenton, Fla.

Through the years we have assumed the principle of "congregational autonomy" to be believed and accepted by all who held to the restoration plea. This assumption prevails today, and may be the reason why little or no teaching has been done on the subject of "congregational autonomy."

"Autonomy" is defined as: "**The power or right of self-government.**" When the word is used in connection with a congregation of God's people, it means that the congregation is free from any rule and government of another congregation. We have shown that though there is no statement in the Bible which says in so many words that churches of Christ are autonomous, nevertheless, the principles of the right and power of churches to be free from others and to govern themselves is plainly taught in God's word. We have set forth three principles upon which the doctrine of autonomy of churches rests, namely: (1) Nature of Organization. It is local, congregational. (2) The Equality of Churches. (3) Pattern of Cooperation. To deny either of these principles is to deny the doctrine of "congregational autonomy."

The first departures from the New Testament were made in the corruption of the organization of the church. Bishops were distinguished from presbyters, and were given a higher rank. The following is taken from "Ecclesiastical History"—Vol. 1, by Mosheim, pp 30, 31: "The power and jurisdiction of the bishops were not long confined to these narrow limits, but soon extended themselves, and that by the following means. The bishops, who lived in the cities, had, either by their own ministry, or that of their presbyters, erected new churches in the neighbouring towns and villages. These churches, continuing under the inspection and ministry of the bishops, by whose labours and counsels they had been engaged to embrace the gospel, grew imperceptibly into ecclesiastical provinces, which the Greeks afterwards called dioceses. But as the bishop of the city could not extend his labours and inspection to all these churches in the country and in the villages, so he appointed certain suffragans or deputies to govern and to instruct these new societies;

and they were distinguished by the title of chorepiscopi, i.e. country bishops. This order held the middle rank between bishops and presbyters, being inferior to the former, and superior to the latter." Please note that Mosheim says the churches established by these over-grown bishops, in a short time, "grew **imperceptibly** into ecclesiastical provinces." He continues: "The churches, in those early times, were entirely independent; none of them subject to any foreign jurisdiction, but each one governed by its own laws. For, though the churches founded by the apostles had this particular deference shown them, that they were consulted in difficult and doubtful cases; yet they had no juridical authority, no sort of supremacy over the others, nor the least right to enact laws for them. Nothing, on the contrary, is more evident than the perfect equality that reigned among the primitive churches; nor does there even appear in this first century, the smallest trace of that association of provincial churches, from which councils and metropolitans derive their origin. It was only in the second century that the custom of holding councils commenced in Greece, from whence it soon spread through the other provinces."

Many additions to God's order of things in the churches have been made by making a distinction where there is no difference. Bishops, elders, pastors, overseers, shepherds and presbyters are all the same group of men in the New Testament, not six different groups of offices. We can see from the above account given by Mosheim that "congregational autonomy" was soon lost when the nature of organization and the equality of churches were disregarded.

BIBLICAL WORD STUDIES

By E. V. SRYGLEY, JR.

KOINONIA, "FELLOWSHIP," AND COMMUNISM

No. 3

ITS LACK OF SOCIALISM

The community of goods in the early church was no socialistic experiment in economics. It has already been shown, of course, that the aim of the community was supplying the needs of poor Christians; not the establishing of socialism or a peculiar economic system wherein would be equality.

If the community of goods had been a socialistic experiment it would have required a statutory abolition of private property and a corporate administration of the whole wealth of the community, to say nothing of its need of the consigning of the individual earnings to a common purse. Such an elaborate system is so completely foreign to the situation in the early church that it is utterly ludicrous even to think of comparing the two.

ITS LACK OF UNIVERSALITY

At first glance this thought may seem to be

repetitive; however, it involves a somewhat different thought. The community of goods was not universally practiced even in the first community, for if it had been, why would special mention be made of the generosity of Barnabas, Acts 4:36, 37? This special mention would not have been made if the community of goods were universally commanded and understood.

It is to be noted also that the community of goods of the early church was apparently not practiced later, and in other places. Later in the history of the church we learn that Mary the mother of Mark possessed her own house, Acts 12:12. The needs of the poor Christians during the famine in Judea were supplied voluntarily and according to individual ability by the disciples in Antioch, Acts 11:27-30. There was not in Antioch, therefore, a compulsory community of goods. A later contribution for the "poor saints in Jerusalem" was supplied voluntarily by the more well-to-do Christians, Rom. 15:26. It must be noted carefully that Paul says the Christians of Macedonia and Achaia "thought it good" to make the contribution. It was not, therefore, a compulsory community of goods.

The disproportionately great number of poor people in the Jerusalem church probably explains why the community of goods did not continue in the later apostolic church. For at least two reasons there was this very large number of poor people in the Jerusalem church. In the first place, the church was established among the poor and lowly in Israel (generally speaking). Secondly, many of the Jews converted on Pentecost were undoubtedly foreign Jews who had come to Jerusalem to attend the festival of Pentecost. These people would, therefore, be away from home and without an inexhaustible supply of food and clothing.

To the writer it seems most imperative, therefore, to observe that there is no evidence that a community of goods was carried on in the later apostolic church although relief of the poor was a general practice. Cf. Gal. 2:10.

WHICH ONE IS TRUTH?

J. T. Smith, Tampa, Fla.

Will our own brethren LIE? Just one year ago the brethren in New York City were sending out pleas far and wide trying to raise funds for the sixteen-story building they were going to build. A picture appeared in the Nashville Banner showing B. C. Goodpasture (editor of the Gospel Advocate) and Burton Coffman (minister for the Manhattan church of Christ in New York) "drooling" over a scale model of this "high monument" that was **supposed** to show Christ to the world.

About the same time the picture appeared, a brochure was mailed all over the country with these facts concerning the new building:

1. "Height: Sixteen Stories."
2. "Construction: White glazed brick fireproof,
3. "Dual-purpose: church facilities on the first four floors and basement; Resident apartments (cooperation) on twelve floors above church's portion."

4. "The apartments will be sold (emphasis mine JTS) deemed to respectful purchasers under a standard cooperative set-up."
5. "Estimated cost of entire structure: \$2,300,000"
6. "Estimated sale price of apartments: \$1,800,000"

Shortly after this appeared, I wrote an article and put in my bulletin making these observations: "I wish we were at liberty to buy lots, build houses, and sell them for a profit to finance a new building. But, I know that this is not what the Bible says about financing the work of the church . . . The Lord's work is to be supported only by free-will offerings of Christians (I Cor. 16:1-2), for the Bible nowhere authorizes the church to raise money any other way . . ."

The next week after this article appeared, I received a note from one of my preaching brethren, (John Allen Chalk, minister for the Broad Street church of Christ in Cookeville, Tennessee) stating: "This is not a scheme but rather the most sensible way to get the church out of the real estate business . . ." Thus, pleas were made for their "gigantic structure" as being the most sensible way to get the church out of the real estate business, (doesn't it seem a little peculiar that these brethren devised a plan to GET OUT of the real estate business even BEFORE they got in the real estate business) and "put the Lord in business" in New York.

Now, brochures are being sent all over the country with explanations as to why they ARE NOT building their skyscraper. They now say there is just one reason for this change. "This dual-purpose building is no longer economically feasible. There is certainly rejoicing about it in Manhattan where we HAVE ALWAYS KNOWN (emphasis mine JTS) that a single-purpose church structure has far more appeal than any other type building." If this is not an admission of deception, then I don't know what it could be called. They got their "foot still further in their mouth" when they admitted that: "We are excited and thankful for the prospect of building the only type of edifice possible under the circumstances and the kind which MOST OF US HAVE WANTED FROM THE VERY FIRST." (emphasis mine JTS)

Yes, brethren all over the country have "run themselves ragged" trying to defend and uphold (as brother Chalk did) the hands of the brethren in New York, who now say that they did not think that the apartment building was WHAT WE NEEDED any of the time.

How can brethren allow themselves to be led so blindly into one of these "schemes" without even questioning what is being done? Did they munism. All of this is utterly inevitable, unavoidable--HONESTLY believe the first way to be the best, or is this way best? WHICH ONE IS TRUTH?

OBSERVATIONS

by Tychicus

All is not well in the institutional camp and it is going to be rather interesting to watch them settle their differences since most of them claim that they

do not believe in discussions among brethren. Their present trouble lies in the fact that some of them want just plain institutionalism while others want institutionalism with all the trimmings. Church connected recreation and entertainment is their number one problem at the present time. It seems that some of the brethren have not learned that institutionalism is a package deal, and that those who foster it have other things in mind besides camps and kitchens. They do not talk about them now; to do so might ruin their changes of selling the brethren on some of the innovations that have already been introduced. Will the institutionalists divide over plain and fancy institutionalism? That remains to be seen.

Some who have leaned in their direction are now wondering about the ability and the authority of men who are trying to plan work for all the churches, not only present, but for generations to come. Even if they were scriptural, who has the wisdom and foresight to plan these programs for a coming age? It is strange indeed that men feel that they have great ability in the handling of the resources of others when they have not demonstrated that ability in the management of their own affairs.

There is really very little difference between institutionalism and Premillennialism. The Premillennialists claim that the church is just an accident; that the Lord had a kingdom in mind, but when the people rejected Christ, He set up the church instead. The institutionalists teach that the Lord intended to start the church, but they also teach that the church is not sufficient to accomplish what God wants done. Premillennialists teach that the church is an after-thought or substitution. Institutionalists teach that it is inadequate. Paul taught that the church was in God's eternal purpose and was purchased with the blood of Christ (Eph. 3:9-10; Acts 20:28). The same blood that purchased the church also purchased our salvation. If the church is not perfect, then we cannot be sure that our salvation is perfect, since the same blood purchased them both. Indeed, why should we need to belong to an imperfect organization in order to enjoy salvation?

The whole institutional system is modernism wrapped in a neat package. No people ever left the word of God until they had lost faith in it, and all of this talk about "where there is no pattern" and that "the Scriptures do not say not to do this or that," shows that we have many of that tribe among us. Someone could do the brotherhood a service by studying the lives of those who once knew the truth and have since gone modernistic, and write a book on their findings. This should prove to be a very interesting and enlightening book. (Tychicus lives a long way from Florida.).

THINKING ABOUT PEOPLE

W. C. Hinton, Osaka, Japan

The roar of the subway is heard, the people move toward the edge of the platform and you are in the midst. The doors slide open. People rush inside amid much pushing and shoving to fill the coaches, but outside you observe six or eight people pushing the

people in the already filled car to make a space in which to stand. It seems futile. Three platform conductors rush up putting their backs to the people outside the coach and push together. Now the car that seemed full has the eight people inside as the doors slide shut. The subway gathers speed and as it winds its way under the active city the occupants are thrown from one side to another, until finally a stop looms ahead. No sooner than the subway is stopped, the doors slide open and the people almost pop out of the coaches due to their compressed state. Now you are caught up in the myriads of people that spill out on to the platform up the steps and thru the wickets to join the throng of people amid their several pursuits. You pause and look about you. The faces flash by. You are viewing part of the five million three hundred people that compose Japan's second largest city of Osaka.

As you stand there thinking of Christ and that these people need desperately to learn of Him and His will and loosed from idol tolerance and pagan philosophies. "How, How??" you ask yourself, "can this be done?" The people are too many and the workers are too few. You reflect on the 22 Christians that compose the saints in Osaka, you experience a feeling of despair. Their number needs to be multiplied by 100 or 1000 to expect Osaka to be won for Christ. Your head sinks and your heart approaches the very brink of despondency and dejection. No, this will not do, you must shake off this feeling of self-pity and uselessness. I am here and something can be, **NO must** be, done to hold out life to those that desire such.

Oh, such a feeble mind! I remember now something from that perfect pattern and guide — God's Holy Word. The first or chief city of that part of Macedonia was Philippi into which Paul and Silas came preaching the Word (Acts 16:12ff). What of their converts — two groups. The jailer and his and Lydia and her household were baptized. A small number indeed in a great city. But we read in a letter addressed to the saints at Philippi about eleven years later that Paul could speak of a fully organized congregation of saints interested in preaching the Gospel beyond their own area and in ministering to those of the saints in need of physical help. A tribute to real Christianity, which is active and is characterized by the growth that is needful and demanded by the Father. Yet, it will work in the same way here. No need to fly in teams of missionary survey crews, build colleges, outstrip the denominations in offering trinkets of "bait" and tokens of idolatry and minimize the fundamentals of authority from an open-minded study of the New Testament. Was that Paul's approach to the problem of getting Truth to those at Philippi or any other city he visited?? Can we change or improve on something divine in nature?? in Acts 16: 6-10 we see they were very directly under the Spirit's influence and direction.

Yes, I am sure, what we need today is more activity in **APPLYING** the so-called Great Commission. How many sermons have you heard based on or contained within it the idea of the "teaching every nation" in the Commission?? Numbers, I am certain. **BUT** it is not enough to hear, we must couple our hearing and understanding to an applica-

tion of Truth — Concrete in nature. To whom have you gone? Have you just consigned the people of the world to Hell, thinking that if you selfishly save yourself and maybe your family that surely God will be pleased?

The work here in Osaka will grow! We know this is true! For we are using the Word as our example and realize it will take time as it did in Philippi, but we are not willing to be slack in service, rather, eager to seize the opportunities for Truth and an exultation of Christ — The Son of God.

HOLT-DEAVER DEBATE

Paul Brock, Jacksonville, Fla.

On the nights of June 25, 26, Charles A. Holt affirmed in the Lake Shore building, Jacksonville, Fla. the following: "The Scriptures teach that in the field of benevolence (assisting those in physical need) churches are limited or restricted in the use of their funds from their treasuries to those who are saints (those who have been baptized into Christ)" Roy Deaver denied this proposition.

The following two nights, June 27, 28, Roy Deaver affirmed the following proposition in the Springfield building: "The Scriptures teach that a church may contribute to Boles Home, Quinlan, Texas."

This writer served as moderator for Bro. Holt and Thomas Warren served as moderator for Bro. Deaver.

FIRST OF TWO

At the close of the Brock-Walker debate in Aug. 1962, Bro. George Darling announced that Springfield was ready to enter into a discussion. He did state they wanted "top men," and I am sure they felt more than accommodated in our selection of Charles Holt. It was agreed between Lake Shore and Springfield that there would be two discussions so that more time could be given to each proposition. The next discussion (which will take place when Springfield is ready) will concern the Herald of Truth and sponsoring churches.

THE ATTENDANCE

Attendance at both buildings was excellent with about 400 on Monday and Thursday and 350 on Tuesday and Friday. More than thirty conservative preachers stayed in town for the discussion with many driving in from south Georgia and as far south as Tampa. Brethren were in attendance from California to the West and Michigan to the north with Tennessee, Georgia and Alabama well represented as well as Florida.

THE DISCUSSION

A finer spirit could not have prevailed. Both speakers and audiences were in excellent deportment. The men pressed their points without a trace of bitterness nor manifest anger. The audience was courteous and attentive with no signs of any kind of demonstration.

It would be impossible to review all the arguments and answers without extended articles over a period of months. I will mention one or two highlights to show the trend of the discussion.

Many will be interested to know that once and for all, the "Constituent Elements" argument is dead. These brethren have used this off and on, using it then dropping it, ever since its creation. That thing they thought so invincible lies in complete ruins. It took brother Deaver two floundering speeches to present it in his first affirmative night. Bro. Holt so completely annihilated the thing Deaver never even flashed it on the screen again. He declared it to be untouchable and if brother Holt attacked it any place "He will have to suffer the consequences." Deaver further stated that wherever Holt attacked it there is where they would pitch the battle. Holt showed the first element, which states, "The church is authorized to care for orphans," to be wrong. He showed other elements wrong also and pointed out that Deaver's kind of reasoning had been employed by all false teachers. When Deaver came the second night he never pitched his battle where Holt attacked! In fact he pitched no battle, but instead showed cartoons with truck loads of fertilizer, and another with a hand and wanted to know how Holt was paid. In answering Deaver, Holt used about twenty-five charts. He used about 45 in all the discussion.

Holt pointed to the difference in their approaches to the problem. Deaver appealed to syllogisms, logic and human wisdom while Holt's appeal was to the word of God.

One night Deaver called on Holt to join hands in the fight against liberalism. The next three nights Holt kept asking Deaver, "What liberalism?" He had charts pointing out the liberalism in Jacksonville and other places and called on Deaver to point out one particle of liberalism which he opposed. Deaver completely ignored this for three nights.

Deaver placed the following limitations on churches helping alien sinners. (1) Nature of the Need, (2) Wisdom and judgment of the elders, and (3) Opportunity. Holt showed that Deaver's limitations were all couched in human wisdom (what the elders decided) and not one word about the limitation set by God. Deaver refused to deny Clinics, hospitals, schools, "Cows for Korea" etc. Neither would he ever state his position on the home under an eldership except to say, "I am not one of those middle of the road boys". Deaver argued from Matt. 5:43-48 that God sends the rain and sun on the just and unjust that we must be characterized by this same law of love. Holt showed that God did not withhold the rain and sun from Baptist and Catholic orphanages, and from the Negro and mentally retarded but there were no arrangements in Deaver's plan for these in Boles Home or any other.

It was a real good discussion and good was done. We have already seen it at Lake Shore. Last Sunday two came from a liberal church and announced their intentions of worshiping with us.

We at Lake Shore are more than pleased with the superb work of Bro. Holt and look forward to the next discussion.

TAPES

Bro. H. E. Phillips can supply tapes. Write to him at P.O. Box 17244, Tampa, Fla. 33612. He may also have a word to add concerning publication.

(Tapes of the four nights discussion will be furnished for \$12.00. It will be recorded on new, strong tape.—Editor).



When Charles Darwin's book, "Origin of Species" was published and released it was widely read and discussed. Immediately controversies arose over the validity of the theories of evolution and natural selection. Powerful forces in religious groups as well as in scientific circles did not accept the conclusions drawn by Darwin. Some scientists, such as von Baer, the German embryologist, accepted the theory of evolution but did not accept the theory of natural selection. Darwin's health, so it was claimed, kept him from public discussion of his theories, but Thomas Huxley carried forth his banner. It was through the efforts of Huxley that Darwin's theories were sent forth to the world. Huxley was opposed in a debate on one occasion by a Bishop Wilberforce who "begged to know, was it through his grandfather or his grandmother that he claimed descent from a monkey." Through the efforts of Huxley some of the religious opposition to the theory of evolution was modified.

Cell study was fairly well worked out as to the structure and behavior of the various cell parts by the closing years of the nineteenth century. Cell chromosomes were identified and their behavior during cell division was carefully noted. Weismann undertook to bring this work together for he felt that the heredity material must reside on the chromosomes of the nucleus. He set forth the "germ line" theory, pointing out that germ cells or reproductive cells were set aside early in the organisms development and were not influenced by the other cells of the body. If this theory be true then the theory of the inheritance of acquired characteristics would not only be false; it would be impossible. Furthermore, the suggested mechanism for such inheritance, Darwin's theory of pangenesis, was shown to be a rather absurd and unscientific guess. (Darwin visualized the pangenesis as being formed in all parts of the body and, bearing the traits exhibited there, coming together to form reproductive cells.) There was never any evidence whatsoever for this so-called theory proposed by Darwin. To give it the honor of calling it a theory, in the absence of a good deal of evidence to its existence, was to say the least dishonest. In grasping for a straw to hold his theories together, Darwin came up with this notion of pangenesis. This will give some indication of how unscientifically he reached some of his conclusions on which the theory of evolution was based. Many of the conclusions on which the theory stands today are no more scientific than this one set forth by Darwin.

DANGERS CONFRONTING THE CHURCH

No. 3

Thomas G. O'Neal, Jasper, Ala.

Another danger confronting the Lord's church today is the danger of losing sight of our plea to the world. We as a body have almost forgotten what we have been saying to the world in days forever gone.

The apostle Peter said in his first epistle, chapter four, verse sixteen, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; . . ." This has been the battle cry for decades by gospel preachers. We have quoted such passages as the above, (I Cor. 4: 6, 2 Tim. 3: 16-17; Gal. 1:6-9; Jude 3) and others showing the world that we must remain within that realm of divine authority. We have pointed up the fact that it is not enough to say that the Bible does not say, "Thou shalt not," but we can only do that which the Word of the Lord authorized. We have challenged the world to ask us for the authority for our doctrine and practice and we would put our finger on book, chapter, and verse. But today this no longer is the cry of gospel preachers, or I should say of those claiming to be gospel preachers. Any real **gospel** preacher will welcome the opportunity to give Bible authority for what he is teaching and practicing.

I can remember that in gospel meetings preachers would state to the audience that we are ready to study the New Testament with you any time you would like for us to come into your homes and do so. That if you find something that the Bible teaches we should be doing that we are not doing we will begin to practice or teach that very thing. While if you find us teaching or doing anything that there is no divine authority for, you will be our best friend if you will call our attention to it, and we will stop it today. But this is not often heard anymore, is it? Why? The reason is that many churches of Christ are doing things for which there is not one verse of Bible authority!

Those who fill the pulpits of some churches preach sermons entitled, "Where There Is No Pattern." We can hear if we will listen of preaching being done telling us that we do many things for which we do not have Bible authority. We have told the world in times past that we "speak where the Bible speaks and are silent where the Bible is silent", but from the way some are preaching now, one would never know it unless told by someone. Then, if one were to listen to some sermons and think for himself, he would know that the plea or cry was only from the lips. One could see it if looking at many actions for which there is not divine authority.

One of the dangers then facing the church is our taking our eyes off our plea to the world of "speaking where the Bible speaks and being silent where the Bible is silent." We, in many instances, have forgotten in which direction we are headed.

Since we have lost sight of our plea to the world, we have stopped teaching the will of Jehovah as we should. There was a day when members of the Lord's Bride were called "Walking Bible Encyclopedias" but that is no longer true in many

instances. We have quit giving chapter and verse in sermons and debates. Debates—many in the Lord's church have probably never been to one. As a result of our not giving chapter and verse for what we teach, many do not know the Bible well enough to know when one is quoting from the Bible and when one is just speaking. Israel of old was destroyed because of lack of knowledge (Hos. 4:6), and the Israel of God today can be destroyed due to lack of knowledge also.

May God ever give us the desire to stand upon His Word and cry to the world that we will give book, chapter and verse for what we do and teach or will quit it. May God hasten that day when we will all have that attitude.

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The News Letter Reports

"... THEY REHEARSED ALL THAT GOD HAD DONE WITH THEM..."—Acts 14:27

Robert J. LaCoste, Glendale, Ariz. — We are leaving July 1st to the new work in Glendale, Arizona. The church address is: 1761 No. 55th Dr., Glendale, Arizona. En route I will conduct meetings at: Fairview, Missouri, July 7-16. Brother Searcy White is the local preacher. Prescott, Arizona, July 21-31. David Curtis is the local preacher. August 2-9, Globe, Arizona. Robert Ewell is the local preacher. August 14-25, Lamar Road church, Glendale, Arizona. This church is looking for a preacher. Just before I left Temple Terrace church in Tampa, Florida, two were baptized and one placed membership.

Ross Saunders, Lebanon, Kentucky — I am to begin a series of gospel meetings under a tent in a nearby community of Pleasant Valley, July 10, the Lord willing. This is an area of strong Christian church influence. We covet your prayers in this effort. Immediately following the Pleasant Valley meeting, on July 22, I begin a meeting at the Sycamore church of Christ, about 20 miles from Lebanon, Ky. The regular preaching is done by brethren Jimmy Alford and Hubert Royalty who otherwise labor and worship with the Lexington and Danville congregations respectively. In addition to the Pleasant Valley meeting, this congregation tentatively plans a tent meeting in August in Springfield, Ky.

Will Crawford, Lake Butler, Fla. — A gospel meeting will begin at Brooker July 28 and continue through the first Lord's day in August. Colin Williamson of Tampa, Florida will do the preaching. All in this section of Florida are invited to attend this meeting.

Paul E. Ball, Grady, Ark. — We are continuing to grow. Last year we baptized seven and had one restored. So far this year our attendance has been very good. We had two to be identified with us.

Lee Gunter, Largo, Fla. — Charles G. Maples was in a gospel meeting with us June 16-21, 1963. Attendance was good.

Harold Dowdy of Jacksonville, Fla. reports 6 baptized and 3 restored to the Lord in May . . . Bill Reeves will move from Miami to San Antonio, Texas in July to establish a church among the Mexican people of that city. He has been laboring with the Spanish people of Miami. . . Herschel E. Patton of Lawrenceburg, Tenn. was with Eugene Crawley in a meeting at Shelbyville Mills, Tenn., which began June 9. . . Irven Lee recently moved to Jasper, Ala. to work with the new North Jasper church. The meeting house is located on Highway 5, about one-half mile north of intersection 5 and 195. Lee spoke in a meeting here June 23-30.

A. C. Grider of Meridian, Miss, will be in a meeting at Walton's Chapel, Tenn. July 1-10. He will also be at Grenada, Miss, for a meeting July 29-August 7. . . Roy E. Cogdill of Canoga Park, Calif. was in a meeting at Meridian, Miss. June 2-9. . . Harris J. Dark of Murfreesboro, Tenn. was in a meeting at Eastland Avenue in Nashville, Tenn., June 16-23. Rufus R. Clifford is the good preacher

at Eastland. . . . Ralph R. Givens, who preaches at Oceanside, Calif., reports that one was recently baptized and one restored to the Lord.

Homer Hailey was with S. Leonard Tyler and the Sixth Street church in Pine Bluff, Ark., June 9-19 in a gospel meeting. . . Bill Cavender of Longview, Texas was with the Orange Highway church in Port Arthur, Texas, June 28-30. John Iverson is the preacher at Orange Highway. . . Harris J. Dark was at Morganford and Thologan church in St. Charles, Mo. in a meeting which began June 9. . . Edwin Hayes of Palmetto, Fla. was in a meeting at Millertown, Ky., June 11-20. . . Martin Lemon of Franklin, Tenn., was in a meeting at Alamville, June 16. . . Robert Jackson was in a meeting at Locust St. in Mt. Pleasant, Tenn., June 10-16.

Irven Lee did the preaching in a meeting at Perry Heights in Donelson, Tenn., June 9-16. Harris J. Dark labors with this congregation. . . Bob Crawley was in a meeting with the College View church in Florence, Ala., June 9-16. . . The Ninth Avenue church in St. Petersburg, Fla., where William Lewis preaches, supported him in a meeting at Mt. Airy, Maryland which began June 17. Only three families compose the church in Mt. Airy. Brother Lewis recently closed a meeting at Grand Avenue in Chicago with 14 restored and 3 baptized. Harvey J. Williams of Gary, Ind., was in a meeting with Highland church in Hammond, Ind., June 9-16. Lloyd Barker is the regular preacher at Highland and spoke June 9 and 16 at Glen Park in Gary.

Please send your reports of meetings and results. Many are interested in what the churches are doing in carrying the saving gospel to the world.

THE MERIDIAN DEBATE

A. H. Payne

In keeping with the tradition that the moderator in a religious discussion report those events of general interest, this brief analysis is submitted. The brevity of these remarks in no way reflects upon the quality of the debate, but is the safest way of remaining impartial in the presentation of these facts.

BACKGROUND

The church in Meridian, Mississippi was at one time at peace and at work, but the divisive doctrine of digression began to be pressed upon several members by outside forces, which, as has been witnessed nationwide, resulted in a faction across town, endowed with a physical plant, preacher and a surplus of financial and moral support from those of like views. No phase of the work of the loyal church which meets on 7th Street was hindered by this division. To the contrary, the contributions, attendance and activities have steadily

increased under the capable oversight of godly elders, through the ministration of zealous deacons and the combined efforts of a dedicated membership. Recognition must be extended Reginald Ginn, Walter Henderson and A. C. Grider, as faithful preachers of the gospel, who, along with the afore mentioned brethren, have fought the good fight.

THE DEBATE

For six evenings, March 18-23, 1963, brethren A. C. Grider and W. L. Totty defended what each believed to be the truth. The propositions that were under discussion have appeared in this and several other religious journals, thus a restatement is unnecessary. It might be noted that they were essentially the same as the Birmingham Debate. Brother Grider affirmed the unscripturalness of churches of Christ building and maintaining benevolent organizations the first three evenings, then brother Totty affirmed the scripturalness of churches of Christ supporting the Herald of Truth the last three sessions.

Attendance was excellent most every time. Visitors were evidenced from West Texas to Florida and from Alabama to Canada and most all in attendance were commended for their good decorum.

Among the outstanding developments of these six sessions, there are three that are herein submitted:

1. Both disputants, in their very first speech, admitted that they were discussing matters of FAITH and not opinion. This matter was settled the first hour of the debate.

2. For the twelve speeches that were allotted to brother Totty, not once did he ever admit what the discussion was about. He would not admit that the first proposition had to do with churches of Christ building and maintaining benevolent organizations, but discussed "three children up a tree" whose parents had drowned and asserted that his opposition would let them run in thee alleys and eat out of garbage cans with the cats and dogs. He did not once discuss or define the arrangement involved in the second proposition, namely, the Herald of Truth. He spent his speeches on extraneous matters.

3. During the debate brother Totty issued two propositions and the invitation to brother Grider for a discussion at Garfield Heights, Indianapolis, Indiana. Brother Grider accepted the invitation and signed the propositions for debate at Garfield Heights. Dates for this discussion are pending.

RESULTS

Good will always be the results of a religious discussion when folk come with an honest heart. Good results have already been realized from this discussion. The 7th Street elders have reported a substantial increase in contributions and attendance since the debate. Several people have learned the truth and are diligently at work at 7th Street as a direct result of the debate. A. C. Grider is to be commended for his fearless stand in defense of the truth.

TAPE RECORDING

Speech by speech review of this debate has been tempting, but this writer does not have the time nor these publishers the paper to run such. The transcription, as it happened, is available for those who would like to hear all that was said, and it will be worth your time and money. Contact A. C. Grider, 2914 7th Street, Meridian, Mississippi or this writer, 1570 Maria Drive, Jackson 4, Mississippi for the tape recording. We will lend you our tapes or will put you in contact with someone in your area that has the recording.

CHARTS

There was such an interest shown by those attending the debate in the numerous charts used by brother Grider that several are of the opinion that they should be made available to the brotherhood in inexpensive booklet form. If you would like to see these charts in print, get a letter in the mail at your earliest convenience encouraging brother Grider in this work that it might be done immediately. Elders, preachers and teachers will find these charts useful in classes, debates, sermons and personal work and study.

THE LETTER TO THE CHURCH IN SARDIS

Curtis E. Flatt, Florence, Ala.

Read Revelation 3:1-6. Sardis is mentioned in the New Testament only in connection with this letter. However, much is told about the Sardis church in this brief appearance.

INTRODUCTION

Jesus introduced himself to the church in Sardis by saying; "These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God." In Revelation 1:4 the seven Spirits which are before his throne are said to be sending these messages to the churches along with Jesus Christ. Some think the number "seven" indicates completeness and Jesus is saying that he has complete control of things by speaking of the seven. Whatever the indication is, Jesus said he had these seven Spirits of God. And we know that he did have the Spirit without measure. "For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. The Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into his hand" (John 3: 34, 35). Jesus further described himself by saying, "These things saith he that hath . . . seven stars." The seven stars were the angels or the messengers of the churches (Rev. 1:20). Jesus was certainly conveying the idea that everything pertaining to this church was in his hand and he had something to say unto her, and he had the right and power to say it.

I KNOW THY WORKS

Again Jesus began by saying, "I know" and "I know thy works." This was his way of saying he was fully aware of all their record. All was open to him. He was ready to speak unto them and he knew wherein he spake. He knows all about us,

too. He is not sending a letter to any of the churches today, but he knows all about us and will one day speak what he knows. Woe unto the church whose record is like the record of the Sardis church!

I KNOW THAT THOU HAST A NAME

Jesus began the actual message in a striking and dogmatic manner. Without any preliminaries, he uncovered their real condition. He said: "I know . . . that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." It is not possible to know the standard people used to decide this church was alive. But, being alive, is the way men thought and spake of this church. They had a name. They had a good appearance in the sight of men. They had a good reputation as a wide-awake, active church. Men considered the church great but Jesus did not see it that way. Men have a different standard of greatness to the standard by which Jesus measures.

If a church is large, nearly, every time men will say, "that church is a live church." But size is not a true indicator of the spiritual condition of a church. I large church may be and often is indifferent and ungodly and full of driftwood, but it does not necessarily have to be that way. On the other hand, just because a church is small, we ought not to assume that it is a Godly church. Some small churches are just as worldly and ungodly as the large churches. Size is not a true standard of measuring the greatness of a church no matter how often it is used as such.

If a church is wealthy or claims wealthy members, men often think highly of it. But God judges not by that standard. Many churches who have wealthy members often cater to them until the church becomes unlike what she ought to be. Wealth is a false standard of measurement.

If a church has prominent members or if she uses prominent people as a drawing card to attract others, men often get the idea that such a church is really on the alert and pleasing in the sight of God. But God does not use such a standard. He gave the gospel, not prominent people, to draw men to him (II Thess. 2:14).

If a church has many activities going, and if she has frequent special functions, men will invariably say, "that church is a live church." Don't we all know of such examples about us? But if God should voice an appraisal, it might be altogether different. For, while a church is to be a working church, much of the activities in and around some churches are not much akin to the work a church is charged to do. I read of a woman who said, "I'm so busy doing church work I don't have time to save the lost." That gives a pretty good appraisal of so many activities which seem the attraction to many today. They mean much as men view them. It may well be that Jesus looks at them with an altogether different eye.

If a church has a list of committees assigned to this task and to that task and if she is contributing to some of the big name institutions of the day, men will say, "that church sure is alive." To see this, one has but to take a casual look at the book **CHURCHES OF TODAY**. When you do, please note what prominent men in the churches think it takes to make a live church.

If a church gives whole-hearted endorsement to a certain religious publication, it is not difficult to be "on the march" in the appraisal of men. But God never did indicate that he makes these things the basis of his appraisal. Jesus said: "I know . . . that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead." It did not make any difference what men thought or said. Jesus knew this church was dead. What a dreadful pronouncement! Not only was this so, but Jesus said the things which did remain were ready to die. Some were sickly and weak and ready to die.

BE WATCHFUL

Jesus then said, "Be watchful." This is one of the most frequent appeals in the New Testament. Someone, who stopped to count, said this appeal in its various forms is found nearly a hundred times in the New Testament. There are so many things wherein it is necessary to watch. Failure to watch brings calamity. "If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." Christ is coming at a time when we know not. We need to be ready lest we be taken unawares. "Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame" (Rev. 16:15).

STRENGTHEN THE THINGS WHICH REMAIN

"Strengthen the things which remain," is the next admonition. Each member has the responsibility of growing in the grace and admonition of the Lord (I Peter 2:2). Elders of the church are to see to it that members are edified and strengthened (Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:2). The strong members are to help the weak members. "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves" (Romans 15:1). Strengthening is a requirement in every church. It is especially needed in Sardis.

I HAVE NOT FOUND THY WORKS PERFECT BEFORE GOD

Jesus further said: "I have found no works of thine perfected before God." (ASV) What a dreadful statement! As a congregation, they had no works complete or perfected. Think what it would mean to have to face Jesus like that. But how far removed from this are many of the churches of today?

REMEMBER

Jesus called upon them to remember how they had been blessed by receiving all the blessings God had provided for man. They had been equally blessed with others. The Jerusalem church or the Antioch church had not been blessed more than Sardis. We have been blessed more than many. Surely, we have been blessed just as abundantly as they were blessed. They needed to remember, and we all need to remember, what has been done for man. No eternal blessing is denied us if we are willing to remember and comply. We ought to be able to profit by the sad plight of the church in Sardis.

HOLD FAST

This admonition to hold fast was a general admonition to the whole church. Some in the church were holding fast and he calls upon all¹ to hold fast. Christians are to continue (I Tim. 4:16). Christians are to persevere (Eph. 6:18). Christians are to endure (James 1:12). Christians are to be faithful (Rev. 2:10). All of this is what Jesus had in mind when he called upon the church in Sardis to hold fast.

REPENT

Sin was so prevalent in this church that he called upon the whole church to repent. When sin stands between God and one of his Children, repentance stands between the child and restoration. You will recall Peter's advise to Simon. "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee." (Acts 8:22). Repentance is one of the great needs of our times.

THE FAITHFUL FEW

"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." Just a few were concerned. This is the way it is in so many places today. The faithful few keep things going. There may be many on the roll and there may be many present on Sunday morning, but just a few carry the burden. Is there any connection here with Matt. 7:13,14? "Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and FEW there be that find it."

HE THAT OVERCOMETH

"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels." Think of these promises! Those who overcome will be clothed in white raiment and will not have their names blotted out of the book of life and will hear their names confessed before the Father. The opposite of that is sure to be true also for those who do not overcome. What a terrible thing to think about being deprived of the blessings some will have, and to have one's name blotted out of the book of life. Being a member of the church is a matter of great consequence on the one hand and a matter of great reward on the other.

Jesus closes with the familiar exhortation: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches." Can we profit from this?

"THE PREACHER HAS NOT VISITED ME"

Earl Fly, Orlando, Florida

This is a common criticism of preachers throughout the brotherhood by many who feel neglected and get offended because the preacher has not

visited them. Though they had no special need for a visit, they think the preacher is negligent in his duty. Some of the weaker members even forsake Christ because of the alleged offense.

But why criticize the preacher for not visiting all the members? Why not the elders, deacons, teachers and all members? And has the critic ever visited all the other members? If not, should they get offended?

While social visiting is enjoyable, gospel preachers cannot scripturally or conscientiously leave their God-given duties to become professional Pastors in making regular social calls as a matter of duty. Such would require most of his time. Suppose there are 100 families in a congregation. If only one visit was made to each family each month, it would require 25 visits per week to 25 different homes! And then some would probably criticize him for not coming more often! Very little time, if any, would be left to do the work of an evangelist.

Preachers are not antisocial or unfriendly because they do not regularly visit the members, but they simply realize that their God-given duties must not be neglected for personal pleasure. It would be easier to forget about studying, preparing, writing, preaching, teaching the interested in various homes, visiting and exhorting the negligent, meeting false teachers in discussions, et cetera, and spend the time flitting about as a social butterfly to chit-chat with the members, but the preacher would be negligent in God's sight, and many souls would be lost (including the preacher's).

The idea that it is the duty and work of a preacher to make regular social calls on all members is an unscriptural idea borrowed from denominational churches, which regard the preacher as their Pastor. Some Christians even refer to the preacher as their Pastor. Others who reject the title of "Pastor" for the preacher, nevertheless expect him to do the work of a Pastor. It is just as wrong to do the work as to wear the title. The preacher's work is clearly revealed in the New Testament and professional social visitation is no part of it.

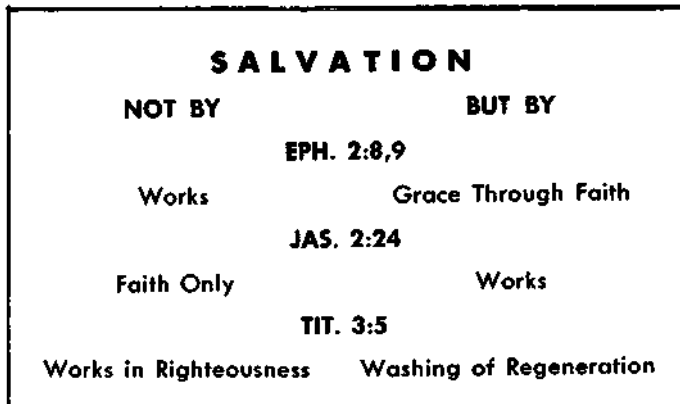
Members should realize that the preacher must spend many, many hours each week studying and preparing to preach and teach both publicly and privately. It takes several hours as a usual rule to prepare one sermon or write one article. He is to "give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine" and "meditate upon these things," giving himself "wholly to them" that his "profiting may appear to all." (I Tim. 4:13, 15). Many visits are made day and night to teach God's word, exhort the unfaithful, encourage the weak, et cetera, of which most members know nothing because the preacher does not (and should not) make detailed public reports of such calls. But because they know nothing about such work, many think the preachers are doing nothing. Moreover, in addition to his work as an evangelist, he has duties which all Christians have to visit the sick, attend to family responsibilities, et cetera.

Preachers must continue to resist the pressures of untaught brethren to make them professional Pastors. They must continue to do the work of an evangelist as revealed in God's word, despite these many unjust criticisms. Do not misunderstand: I

am not saying a preacher cannot or should not make a social visit. Certainly, if he receives an invitation or arrangements are made, and time, work, an other circumstances permit, let him accept if he so desires. It is **good** for Christians to associate together as often as possible, but duty to God and man must come before personal pleasure. **Brethren, think on these things!**

AN ANSWER TO THE SECTARIAN PERVERSION OF EPHESIANS 2:8,9

L. A. Mott, Jr., Gainesville, Ga.



One can quote the word of truth without teaching the truth. Satan did (Matt. 4:-6). Jesus' reply to the second temptation begins, "Again it is written . . ." (verse 7). Satan had lifted one text from the Bible and used it for his purposes without regard to the relation of this text to other Bible truths. Thus, Jesus would tell him, "That is not all the Bible says on that subject."

The following important principle of interpretation springs from Jesus' words: The Bible explains itself; any one verse must be viewed in the light of all the passages in the Bible which have a bearing on the same subject. This rule is vital to a correct view of nearly any Bible subject.

Notwithstanding its relevance and importance in Bible study, this rule has been largely ignored by Protestant preachers. Nearly all of them deal with the Bible in exactly the same way as did the devil.

The use of such passages as Eph. 2:8,9 to substantiate the unscriptural position of salvation by faith without further acts of obedience is a case in point. Let us get the passage before us that we may examine it and see what bearing it has on the subject of whether baptism is necessary to salvation from alien sins: "... for by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, that no man should glory."

Protestants argue: (1) Salvation is by grace through faith. Baptism is not mentioned. Therefore, it is not necessary. (2) Salvation is not of works. Baptism is a work. Therefore, salvation is not by baptism.

I invite your attention to an examination of these positions. Actually, **three** passages in the

new Testament speak of salvation as being **not** by certain means, and as being by certain other and different means. These three passages are illustrated in the diagram at the beginning of this article. Eph. 2:8,9 is the only one of these passages which is generally noticed by Protestants. The other two, Jas. 2:24 and Tit. 3:5, are ignored. But let us read all three of the passages and accept all the Bible says on this subject. Then we shall have the truth.

Eph. 2:8,9 lets us know that we are saved by grace through faith, **not** by works. So let us just accept this for what it says. But let us not press more into it than is actually there. Let us not assign an arbitrary definition to any of these terms which would be out of harmony with other plain statements of the scripture. Whatever these verses mean, they must be considered in the light of the other two related verses.

Now to the second one: "Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not only by faith" (Jas. 2:24). Thus, James tells us that we are justified by works and **not** by faith only. Notice that we have works on both sides of the chart. We are saved by works; we are not saved by works. It is obvious that "works" in Eph. 2 is to be understood in a **limited** sense, or else we shall have a contradiction between Paul and James. "Works" in Eph. 2 does not include just any and every kind of works that could be named.

Observe also that James denies that the faith by which we are justified (that on the right side of the chart) is of the nature described by him at verse 14, faith **without works**, or faith alone.

The third passage is another from Paul: "But when the kindness of God our Saviour, and his love toward man, appeared, not by works done in righteousness, which we did ourselves, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, which he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that, being justified by his grace, we might be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Tit. 3:4-7).

God saved us **not** by works in righteousness which we did ourselves, but he did save us **through** the washing of regeneration. Observe that the "washing of regeneration" is clearly distinguished from the works in righteousness. Whatever the "washing of regeneration" is, it is and must be on the right side of our chart, grouped with other things to which our salvation is ascribed. Certainly it is not included in the "works" on the left side which are excluded. That the expression refers to baptism is proved by everything else the Bible says which has any bearing on the subject:

(1) In the only other occurrence of **loutron** (washing) in the New Testament, Eph. 5:26, we have **"the washing of water."**

(2) Paul is told, "Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins" (Acts 22:16).

(3) The word **paliggenesia** (regeneration) means **new birth** (Thayer, p. 474), and the new birth involves **water** (Jno. 3:5).

(4) Rom. 6:4 shows that "newness of life" follows baptism.

(5) Peter shows that baptism in water is not a mere cleansing of the flesh (1 Pet. 3:20,21). This shows that baptism contains the suggestion of some sort of washing.

If we let the Bible explain itself we cannot doubt that the "washing of regeneration" is baptism.

It remains now to consider one last passage and the argument is complete: "For ye are all sons of God, through faith, in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ" (Gal. 3:26,27).

"For" at the beginning of verse 27 is translated from the Greek conjunction *gar*. Thayer describes the function of this conjunction as follows: "It adduces the Cause or gives the Reason of a preceding statement or opinion" (p. 109).

Now notice the force of *gar* in Gal. 3:27. Paul has said: You are sons of God, through faith, in Christ. **Gar** "adduces the Cause or gives the Reason" for this: "as many of you as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ." Look at it again: You are the sons of God, through faith, in Christ. The reason is: You were baptized into Christ and put on Christ. This passage demonstrates conclusively that **the faith which made sons of God included baptism**. Thus, Paul's statement that we are saved by grace through faith does not rule out baptism, for baptism is involved in this faith.

CONCLUSION: THE ARGUMENT SUMMARIZED

The issue in this discussion resolves itself into this: Does baptism belong on the left side of our chart or the right? Most Protestant preachers put it on the left. God put it on the right. **I am insisting that we should leave it where God put it!**

THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS

Wilbur Hunt, Palmetto, Fla.

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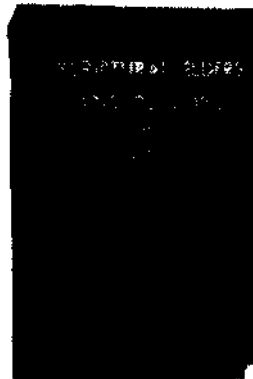
But this promise is conditional, so how can one receive this blessing? First of all, one must confess and recognize his sins. Second, one should pray to God. Third, one should be godly, righteous, and upright: Live as God directs; and have the proper attitude. Fourth, one should recognize God as his Hiding Place, Preserver, Deliverer, and Guide. Fifth, one should be willing to be instructed and guided, and to use his understanding. Finally, one should trust in God in order to receive mercy and other blessings. Is the reader living as God directs he should be doing?

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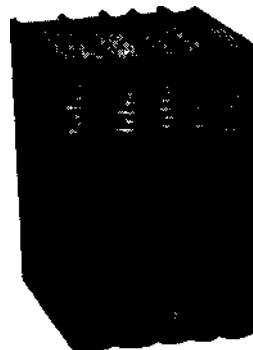
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