

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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BEACHHEADS OF LIBERALISM

Larry Ray Hafley

Webster defines a beachhead as "a position on a beach secured by an invading force and used to land troops for further operations inland against the enemy." Beachheads precede bastions. It is manifestly easier to rout the seed than to uproot the plant, therefore, a study which reveals the beachhead may avoid the necessity of attempting to scale an entrenched bulwark. This is assuredly true concerning both physical and spiritual combat. Thus, soldiers of Christ need to be capable of identifying a beachhead in embryo before it blossoms into an adult bastion.

The purpose of this article is to "mark" the beachheads of liberalism regarding the work of the church. No minute matter is being examined, for liberalism has infidelity as its root and absolute, abject apostasy as its destiny. No "alarmist" attitude has begotten this undertaking, but the knowledge that "to be forewarned is to be forearmed" has prompted this effort. One who warns of trouble does not necessarily stir strife. If so, it would make Jesus, Paul, Peter, and John "strife stirrers." Jesus said, "Beware of false prophets." (Matt. 17:5). Paul said, "For I know this that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you" (Acts 20:29). Peter said, "But there were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you" (II Pet. 2:1). John said, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." (I Jn. 4:1).

Unscriptural thoughts and actions are the children of improper attitudes toward the Scriptures in general and the authority thereof in particular. A refusal to hear or discuss an issue with an open mind leads to the adoration and propagation of error. Prejudice never serves the cause of truth to ultimate advantage. It stifles judgment, rejects or perverts fact, and irrationally suppresses information and self-ignorance with arrogance. The Proverb author said, "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him." (Prov. 18:13). Untold numbers of brethren have been blinded to the truth by the blight of a closed mind. Investigation before acceptance or condemnation will prevent "ruination." Error fears inventory; truth demands it. "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh

to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God" (John 3:20,21).

Another improper attitude, or beachhead of liberalism, is the refusal to require Bible authority. There is a prevailing idea among many that the church does not have nor need scriptural ordination for all that it would do. This is the purest presumption, the rankest rebellion. If any principle or practice can be established by human will and design, then **anything** can be. To establish one tradition not of God is to approve them all, and if this be true then we may as well join the Catholics and be done with it! Still, though, the clarion call of the Spirit of God defies the devices of man and repudiates his repugnant provisions (Prov. 14:12; Jer. 10:23; Isa. 55:8,9). All teachers of the word of God need to emphasize not only the **need for** but also the **application of** scriptural authority. To fail to do so will adversely affect the church. God has left a pattern of sound words which are complete in every detail of life and godliness. Let us apply it in all avenues, areas, and aspects of our service to King Jesus.

A failure to respect the silence of the scriptures has restrained sound waves of truth from the ears of potential righteousness. Troublemakers in the first century, like those of the present, "subverted souls" by not observing the law of silence (Acts 15:24). "It doesn't say not to" will authorize everything from instrumental music and infant baptism to the counting of beads and communion on "Good Friday." The perils of walking outside the voice of God must be instilled and installed in the heart of every disciple. The error of Nadab and Abihu, (Lev. 10:1,2) and the disobedience of Saul (I Sam. 15) should be taught to the mind and to the attitude of every saint. Unless and until a Christian recognizes and realizes his responsibility to walk solely by the direction of the Spirit via the truth, he is a fountain of danger, a source of digression.

Another beachhead or foothold of liberalism is the exaltation of a man or sect of men. When admiration becomes adoration then truth is sure to be raped by partiality and partyism. To be a devoted friend, a "lover of good men," (Titus 1:8) is desirable but to permit friendship or kinship to determine one's position is detestable. The desire to be accepted in one's social circle which consists of Christians is a natural

one, however, the way of truth is not paved with the interpretation of friends nor with the expectation of popularity. In the last analysis, only you can determine whether 'tis nobler, grander, and wiser to be a pawn of men or a servant of the King of men.

The desire for that which is "big" is a beachhead for unscriptural congregational entanglements. The seemingly insatiable craving to "make the church known" or "give us a national image" is a sick attempt to "make us a king. . . like all the nations" (I Sam. 8:5). Those who seek to "project our glorious brotherhood to the world" are gospel perverts not gospel preachers. Their intentions may appear to be Bible based, but the chief idea is to promote another centrally controlled project which has a "visionary" eldership to "assume" oversight of the initial "venture." No opposition to the church being well known exists, but when this is attained by social opportunism rather than by plain gospel preaching then the eternally purposed church is overshadowed by the imagination of men. All such affronts must be cast down, not compromised; there is no alternative (II Cor. 13:5).

Let every church do its own work under its own organization and resources. Preach the truth, edify yourselves with the same, care for your needy saints, and God will be glorified. Cast off delusions of congregational grandeur. Refuse to be led by emotion-charged slogans and professional, institutional promoters. You do not have to contribute to any human agency whether it be a college or benevolent society to please God. That this affirmation is true is manifest because no New Testament church did either of the above, and they certainly glorified their Author.

The initial inroads, the beachheads of liberalism are legion, but allow this brief survey to conclude with the hope that souls may consider its cancerous course and avoid its pitiable plight.

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EDITORIAL

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To produce a neat, well-balanced and profitable religious journal such as **Searching The Scriptures** is not an easy task. Several problems constantly arise to make the goal seem "mission impossible." It is far easier to find fault and "editorialize" from your favorite arm-chair than to solve the problems. I have asked myself many times: Why do I continue to publish this paper? No doubt it is taking years from my life and taking valuable time I would like to use in other service for the Master. I have honestly sought for the answer within my own heart as I sat in the quietude of my office during the mid-night and early morning hours, and during the busy day trying to meet the dead-lines imposed in such a work as this. It certainly is not for financial gain because I have learned after ten years that such a paper by itself is operated at a loss rather than a profit. I am not doing this work for personal honor and praise because I have learned that an editor makes enemies and invokes the wrath of former

friends and brethren when he tries to do his work with a good conscience. The only reason I have in spending my time, effort and money to continue to publish this paper is to teach the gospel of the Son of God.

I fully realize that two important factors are absolutely essential to accomplish this goal: I must get good, scriptural material in the paper that will provoke Bible study. I must get subscriptions in order to get the paper into the hands of people who will read it. For both of these important factors I must depend upon you who read this paper. Several men have been interested enough to respond to the request to write for the paper. Several men and women have been interested enough to send several subscriptions; some have helped since the very beginning. Some others have contributed articles which can and will be used as space is available.

I receive an average of more than 200 letters each month making some comment regarding the paper. I sincerely appreciate these letters and comments. The majority are encouraging, some of which appear in part under "Comments to Editors." Others are very critical and demanding. I try to profit from every letter and adopt all suggestions that I believe to be helpful. However, I know that no man can please everyone. Long ago I quit trying. I strive to please God in all things and hope others will be pleased with the effort. I realize that the final decision for what goes into this paper and what does not go in is my own. I also realize that mistakes and poor decisions are charged to me, and rightly so. I accept the blame and shall try to do better with every issue.

Several wrote about the mistake in the March issue, of which I was aware as soon as it came from the press. The conclusion of T. G. O'Neal's article and the beginning of Joseph Lee Block's article were missing. Brother Block's article was reprinted in the April issue and the ending of brother O'Neal's article will appear at the end of this editorial.

Ordinarily we would attempt no explanation and just accept the blame for the error. But because two articles are involved and several have written about the matter, we wish to make the apology and correction. For the past seven or eight months I have not been able to do the proof reading myself (which I have done since the paper began) and some errors escaped my attention until the paper came from the press. As I made up the March issue for the printers I was working on page 15 at 3 a.m. and nearly exhausted, I did not discover that I had not concluded O'Neal's article until the paper came from the press. It was too late to do anything but apologize to brother O'Neal and brother Block, and I now do so publicly. The April issue was at the printers and I did not have the chance to correct the matter in that issue. I hope this will not happen again with anyone whose article appears in this paper.

Let me ask you who read this paper to first renew your subscription. This is necessary if we keep the paper going and if you continue to receive it. You may have been receiving Searching The Scriptures because some friend or relative sent it to you. Second, send a club of subscriptions — four for \$10.00 — and help us build a larger circulation. Do this today; tomorrow you may forget.

(Conclusion of the article by Thomas G. O'Neal which appeared on page 247 of the March, 1969 issue. We begin with point 6 — Ed.)

(6) Another thing that this church evidences is that the real problems in the church in recent years has NOT been over 'orphan homes.' The real problem has been the authority of the Bible and a strict observance of it by churches. All liberal churches will one day practice the very things Madison is now if they follow the liberal views to their logical conclusions.

(7) These facts reveal how the Madison church and Ira North have so compromised the gospel with the world that the world is singing the praises of Madison. The Lord said his followers would be treated otherwise. (John 15:18-19). Therefore, it seems that the Madison church is not following the Lord.

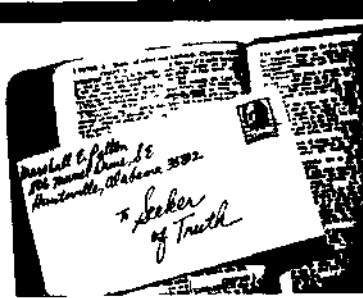
(8) In a copy of the Westvue Messenger, our church bulletin, Jan. 16, 1969, I challenged Ira North to debate the following proposition with him affirming and me denying. "Resolve: The Madison Church of Christ is following the Bible." I predict that he will not debate. Why? Because he is practicing so much denominationalism that he can not defend by the Bible.

(9) Why has the Madison church become so denominational? Not only has her preacher departed from the faith, but consider some evidence from the eldership. Alvand C. Dunkleberger is one of the elders of the Madison Church and is also editor of the Nashville Banner. He said on the editorial page on Dec. 25, 1967 that "Christmas day" is the birthday of Jesus Christ. Said he, "Significantly, wherever dwells the spirit of the One whose birthday we honor today, the minds of people turn to thoughts of peace." On the editorial page on April 13, 1968, he wrote an editorial about Easter being the day on which Jesus Christ came from the tomb. That is not all! On Dec. 4, 1967, Dunkleberger wrote an article about "Francis Cardinal Spellman". Of Spellman he said, "Dedicated to the cause of world peace, but recognizing the dangers of alien philosophies seeking to overthrow institutions of the Free World, Cardinal Spellman set an example of working patriotism, along with religious consecration." Think of that; an elder in the church saying that a man connected with an institution whose principles are opposed to Americanism can set an example of patriotism to our country. But they he also said that he was a man "devoting himself to the cause of Christianity wherever duty called." An elder in the Madison church saying a Roman Catholic Cardinal was a Christian and devoted himself to Christianity — is it any wonder why the Madison church has departed from the faith into denominationalism?

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QUESTION — I would like a run down on the following verses and their true meaning: Isa. 65:17-20; 66:22-24; Rev. 21:1; II Pet. 3:13, 14. Is there to be a new heavens and a new earth after this one has passed away, wherein dwelleth righteousness? — J.M.H.

ANSWER — The answer to the above question must be affirmative — Yes! There will be "new heavens and a new earth" after this one has been dissolved, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Peter says so in II Pet. 3:10-14. He says that we look for it because our Lord has promised it. Just as surely as our "Lord is not slack concerning his promise" (II Pet. 3:9), just that surely it will come to pass. However, just where and what this shall be are matters on which a great deal of controversy prevails. In fact, many fanciful theories have been propagated through the misuse of the references cited above. The faithful Christian, however, will be careful not to accept speculative theories, but rather that for which he has Bible proof.

It does not necessarily follow that because the expression "new heavens and a new earth" appears in all of the references submitted by our querist that the same thing is referred to in each instance. In fact, a careful study of the expression shows it to have a literal and figurative meaning. The context and all else revealed determines its use and meaning. In Gen. 2:1 reference is made to God's work which is detailed in the preceding chapter. The "heavens" included the atmosphere that immediately envelops the earth or the "firmament" and the region of the sun, moon, and stars. This was part of and necessary to the dwelling place which God prepared for man, i.e., the earth itself. In this instance the words "heavens" and "earth" go together and identify the dwelling place which God prepared for man.

In Isa. 65:17-20; 66:22-24 we find a description of the conditions, circumstances, and environment of God's people after their restoration from Babylon to their home land. In all these matters the change from the former to the latter was to be so great that the prophet spoke of it as "new heavens and a new earth." Obviously, the expression here is figurative and not literal. It is descriptive of the new order that prevailed after their restoration in contrast to the old order while in exile in Babylon.

In Revelation 21:1 we find the expression used again in a figurative sense. This is obvious from the context. It is descriptive of a new order prevailing for God's people after emerging from battle, suffering, sacrifice, and bitter oppression. The vision that

follows involving the "holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband," is descriptive of the victorious church. Old conditions, enemies, and powers have been destroyed. Now she appears triumphant and in glory. Whereas she was persecuted and oppressed, now she appears in beauty, "as a bride adorned for her husband," and as an object of admiration. The place from which she makes her appearance is heaven — signifying, beyond doubt, her true identity. Indeed, she is of God!

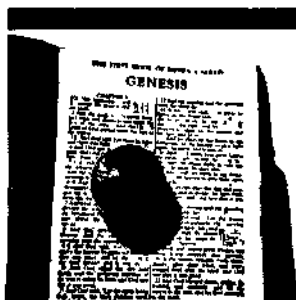
In II Pet. 3:14, 15 the context deals with what will actually happen when Jesus comes. The "heavens and the earth, which are now," are to be dissolved. God's people will then have a new dwelling place. This is that for which we look — even "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." This is a direct reference to heaven — the eternal abode of the righteous.

In II Pet. 3:5-7 a contrast is drawn between the "heavens and the earth," which "were of old" and the "heavens and the earth, which are now." The "world" of the former was destroyed by the flood.

Since the word "world" often refers to the people on earth (Cf. Matt. 5:14; John 3:16; II Cor. 5:19), I conclude that in this instance it refers to the Antediluvians who perished in the flood. The "heavens and the earth" which "were of old" must be identical with that of Gen. 2:1. The "heavens and the earth, which are now" refer to the same since the flood, hence, the literal dwelling place of man. Peter points out that these — not the **world** thereof, as before, but the heavens, and the earth themselves — are "reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." This day of judgment will be when the Lord comes (v. 10). At that time "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (v. 10). "All these things," says Peter, "shall be dissolved" (v. 11). This does not leave room for the idea of some that the "new heavens and the new earth" for which we "look" and "wherein dwelleth righteousness" will be the old, literal "heavens and earth" renovated by fire. The context shows that the literal "heavens and earth" shall be "dissolved." For this reason we look for a new dwelling place — the abode of the righteous after Jesus comes again, even heaven itself! Just because the word "earth" appears in the expression identifying the abode of the righteous does not necessarily mean the literal earth is involved. Remember, according to its use elsewhere, the expression simply signifies a new order of things or a new dwelling place for God's people. This dwelling place for the righteous, after the coming of Jesus, the Bible calls **heaven**.

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THE "DAYS" OF CREATION (GEN. 1 AND 2) — LITERAL OR FIGURATIVE? (NO. 3)

In the two previous articles we have stressed the well known rule and law of hermeneutics and insisted that "day", in Gen. 1 and 2, must be accepted in its ordinary, normal usage, unless something in the context shows it must mean something else. We have shown that the "days" were tied together and identified by evening and morning", with its "darkness and light." These were Hebrew expressions denoting "solar" days. Note for example Dan. 8:14 where the ASV mentions 2300 EVENINGS AND MORNINGS while in the A.V. notice the footnote on the word "days." All "days" in Gen. 1 and 2, just as in Gen. 7 and 8, must be regarded in this normal sense. Only 2 passages show plainly by the context something else is meant and the context sets forth that meaning. These are Gen. 1:4-5 and 2:4, discussed in the two previous articles. Each creation day is associated with a numeral (one through six) and this is never done, scholars say, unless an ordinary day is meant. Then, God's "work" of creative activity is made the basis for, and definitely tied to, Israel's six days of "work" followed by a day of "rest" they (like God) ceased from their labors. (Exod. 20:8-11).

In this paper we want to conclude this specific study by considering three other arguments to show the "days" of Creation were "days" as we know them, and **COULD NOT HAVE BEEN AGES OF MILLIONS OF YEARS EACH.** (1) On the third day God **CREATED** the vegetable kingdom (Gen. 1:10-13)—grass, herbs, fruit trees. But we all know this realm needs sunlight or sunshine (the experience a few years ago with the natural grass in Houston's Astrodome proved that) but, according to the evolutionist's "theory", the next "age" or "**eon**" the lights were set in the firmament of heaven to **GIVE LIGHT ON THE EARTH** (Gen. 1:14-15) and the sun was set in the heaven to rule the day and **TO GIVE LIGHT UPON THE EARTH** (vs. 16-17). This all happened on the **FOURTH** day (vs. 19). How did the grass and plant world survive this age of millions of years with **NO LIGHT** being shed on the earth? We have already asked, based on Gen. 1:15-16, how could the plant world survive 1/2 an age or eon while it was dark and then 1/2 an age while it was light? Both of these activities made up the cycle of **each one** of the Genesis days. **Half** of it was darkness. Half of "an eon" had no light, if this day-age theory is true! Before proceeding to the next point and because of the problem some pose and the quibble they make, "there couldn't be a **CYCLE**, or earth revolution and

a solar day before the 4th day when the sun and moon were set to regulate such". It would be well to, always remember that should we grant this (although **DIVINE POWER COULD CAUSE AND COULD REGULATE ANYTHING AS HE SAW FIT UNTIL "NATURAL LAW", BY HIS POWER, WAS INITIATED**), IF THE 4TH, 5TH AND 6TH WERE DAYS OF ORDINARY LENGTH THEN THERE IS **NO ROOM FOR EVOLUTION SINCE ALL ANIMALS AND MAN WERE CREATED ON THE 5TH AND 6TH DAYS!** Since the theory of evolution is the **ONLY REASON**, that the first three days were infinitely long periods such as ages. Moreover **ALL** of the 6 days were described in the same way and tied together just the same. And if the first 3 days were "ages", while the last four were regulated by the sun and were "solar" days we are still faced with the problem considered under No. (1).

(2) Plants, as noted, were all created on the 3rd day, while the animal creation was created the 5th and 6th. This includes insects, birds, etc. So here we have **TWO "AGES"**, from the time all plant life came into being, **before ANY** of the animal world was created. But, for several reasons, admitted by all, plant life can not live or survive without the animal world. We are told in God's "law" of checks and balances how insects and birds destroy certain things to make possible the survival of the plants and trees. We also know how some plants reproduce by the work and assistance of the animal world. They could not continue to live without such and **COULDN'T SURVIVE A SHORT SPAN OF TIME, MUCH LESS 2 "AGES" OF MILLIONS OF YEARS EACH.** It is interesting to read how the pollination of a flower takes place, and how the flower is fertilized by pollen being **PLACED** on the stigma to produce the sperm cells necessary to fertilize the cells in the ovary. Now no other **PLANT** did this "**PLACING**" —the plants depended upon the "birds and bees", of the animal realm, to do this and **NO PLANTS**, depending on this method, could have survived and **would exist today** had it been necessary to wait through long ages (**FAR BEYOND THEIR LIFE EXPECTANCY**) for the animal world to appear.

(3) Adam, the first spirit-endowed creature, came into being on the 6th day (1:31). This was the crowning work of God's creation and according to the narrative he was the last created. So, consider this action as **LATE** on the 6th day as you desire, he **WAS** created on the 6th day. He lived throughout the 7th day (and there is no rule to make this day anything but exactly the same as were the other 6 days. Israel's rest was made as an analogy to it (Exod. 20) where "day" is put for "day" in **all** of the seven. But Adam lived far beyond that 7th day. He had a full life for 930 years (Gen. 5:5). How did Adam live through the 7th day, if it were an age of millions of years and yet live to be only 930 years of age?

(Note: We may later discuss other things relating to Gen. 1 and 2 (chaos — gap — reconstruction view, Creation Day - Revelatory view, "Two conflicting accounts of creation" ?) but next month we shall begin, and continue for a good many months, the seven basic arguments used to prove Evolution. We shall examine them and deal with them thoroughly. P.F.)

BIBLE LANDS AND CUSTOMS



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THE FERTILE CRESCENT

The flow of Old Testament history from the geographical point of view may briefly be described as the migration of the Hebrew people from Babylon to Egypt and their final settlement in Palestine. Such a statement by itself, of course, is an oversimplification, because throughout the entire span of Israel's history the nation engaged in communication, commerce, cultural exchange and conflict with nearly every important political power of the ancient Near East. Most of the events recorded in the Old Testament, none the less, are confined to the lands of the Fertile Crescent. In fact, it is not until one studies the New Testament that his geographical and historical perspective must broaden westward to include some of the lands and nations of Europe.

1. The Land of the Five Seas

One geographical factor contributing to the unique situation of the Fertile Crescent is the mass of salt water which compresses the two continents of Eurasia and Africa into this "land of the Five Seas." Look at the map in figure two (last month's issue) and locate the Persian Gulf, the Caspian Sea, the Black Sea, the Mediterranean (called the "Great Sea" in the Bible), and the Red Sea. Although these bodies of water naturally hindered close physical ties between Asia, Africa, and Europe, they became the channels of extensive maritime trade among the ancients several thousand years B.C.

2. The Land of Mighty Mountains

The mountains are another contributing factor. Picture the center of these mountains, the Ararat range of the Old Testament (Genesis 8:4), which are situated between the Caspian and the Black Seas, as the hub of a huge wagon wheel. Several mountain ranges extend from this hub in all directions like narrow spokes. The Caspian range skirts the southern end of the Caspian Sea. Just east of the Tigris-Euphrates valley, running parallel to it, lies the Zagros chain. The Taurus range reaches westward into Asia Minor, hugging close to the northern shore of the Mediterranean. Finally, there is the Lebanon chain which extends down through Palestine and along the eastern shore of the Mediterranean as far as the Gulf of Suez between Sinai and Egypt.

Thus, the mountain chains form an almost impenetrable dome above the Fertile Crescent. Travel through them is channeled into narrow passes, like the Cilician Gates which cut through the Taurus range above the ancient city of Tarsus. This means that trade and travel in ancient times was restricted

almost entirely to the Fertile Crescent. It is no accident that famous cities of the Old Testament were located along these major trade routes.

3. The Land of Sun and Sand

The third contributing factor is the dreadful desert which lies to the south. The desert region stretches across the country between the Euphrates and the Jordan Rivers and southward into Arabia. Along the northern edge of the Arabian Desert is a fringe of grasslands, scanty because of meager winter rains. When the rain fails, the nomads enter the Fertile Crescent to find pasture for their animals, causing conflict with other tribes already established there. Who has not read, for instance, of the invasion of the Midianites during the period of the Judges? These people came out of the desert region like locusts to feed upon the green fields and pastures of Palestine, so God used them to punish Israel because of sin (Judges 6-8). The continual transition from the desert to the fruitful and productive lands by the nomads somewhat tells the history of the Fertile Crescent, which was drenched with blood from these countless wars.

It is difficult to appreciate the beauty of Palestine unless one compares it with the barren waste lands that lie all around it. Palestine was indeed "a land flowing with milk and honey" to the Israelites who had spent forty dreadful years in the desert.

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THE NASHVILLE DENOMINATIONAL CHURCH OF CHRIST

I continue this month with a review of the sermon preached by brother John McRay on May 12, 1968, at the Otter Creek Road church in Nashville, Tenn. In last month's article we called attention to his attitude toward the Bible. This is the real trouble for all he has said reveals an unsound attitude toward the Book.

Next he says, "We have restored, brethren, a great deal of the New Testament church, ... In church government, I think we have what the apostles left behind. In Acts 14:23 they went everywhere appointing elders in every church. This is the residual government that they left behind them. In later years, the church in Philippi (Phil. 1:1) was governed by elders and deacons."

Now I wonder where McRay learned that deacons ever governed the New Testament church. The verse says, "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:" This was an address with the deacons included, but no indication that the deacons ever ruled in the affairs of the Lord.

Who did rule in the church in New Testament days? I Tim. 3:1 and 5 shows that bishops were to rule or take care of the house of God. In I Peter 5:1-4 we learn that the elders were to take "the oversight thereof" and in Acts 20:28 we learn that elders were the overseers of the church. Nowhere in the New Testament does one read of the deacons being rulers, overseers or care takers of the church. If so, in what New Testament passage?

Where is the idea of deacons ruling in the church coming from? The answer is from denominationalism. The Baptist denomination has no elders to rule; instead the deacons rule. It appears that McRay has been in too close association with the Baptist and not in enough association with the Word of God. If deacons rule in the church where McRay preaches, what difference is there on this point and in the Baptist church?

Next, McRay says, "But we have not restored the entirety of the New Testament church in just the way it was practiced in the first century. I am not sure that in all instances we would restore it; in many instances we cannot restore it." Then he goes on to list some things that have not been restored about the New Testament church. But before I notice what those things are, notice with me his statement "we have not restored the entirety of the New Testament church in just the way it was practiced in the

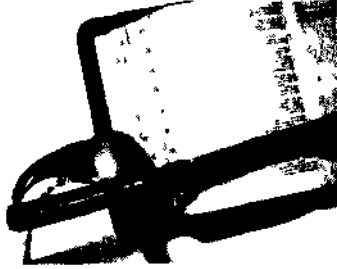
first century." Now what is it that we need to restore that has not been restored? Is the plan of salvation taught by faithful gospel preachers today not the plan of salvation as taught by the apostles and prophets along with the evangelists in the first century? If not, what part are we failing to preach that they preached? Is the worship of the church today not like the worship of New Testament churches? If not, what items of worship did they have that we have failed to practice. How does the twentieth century church of the New Testament differ in church government from the first century church? What work are we doing now that first century New Testament churches did not do? Did they not preach the gospel, edify her saints and minister to her needy? What more do we need than this? I want to know what there was about the first church that we do not have today?

Then some items are mentioned which he thinks probably could not be restored among which are (1) elders with a miraculous measure of the Spirit, (2) women who pray and prophesy, (3) evangelist to administer discipline, (4) gifts of the spirit such as those mentioned in the first part of I Cor. 12, (5) an evangelist to appoint elders, (6) the concern for the needy, and he then says, "And so we could go on and on this morning telling about the things that characterized the first century church that are not a part of this church today. Much of this, as I have said, we could not restore. Some of this we could restore." What I would like to have McRay tell us is which of the above items we can and cannot restore. True, the miraculous age of the church passed away (I Cor. 13:8-10). Aside from the miraculous age with things that were not to be a part of the church forever, what is there that we today do not have that the first century Christians had? He says of I Cor. 14:26-33, "Now we have not restored that type of first-century worship. It is the nearest thing to pattern in any **one** example in the New Testament that we can find of how the early church worshipped. Yet, we have not tried to restore that element of the pattern of first century worship." Does he think we should try to restore this miraculous part of first century worship? If not, does he say we "have not restored that type of first-century worship?" If we are not suppose to restore that kind, why complain because we have not? If we could, and did, we would be doing that we had no business doing.

Another thing he says, "We have not restored the great concern on the part of the early church for the widows and the orphans of which we read in I Tim. 5." Where does I Tim. 5 mention orphans? In what verse?

He says, "We do not have the presence and 'the spirit' of the apostle Paul to enable us to deliver such a person to Satan for the destruction of the flesh (I Cor. 5:4)." When a congregation today has the same kind of a case as Corinth had and they do with it what Corinth did, how come they do not have the spirit of Paul with them? Paul was absent in body and present in spirit at Corinth when they delivered such a person to Satan. Why would not Paul be absent in body and present in spirit today when a church was doing the will of God as commanded by the apostle Paul?

Using the SWORD OF THE SPIRIT



Eugene Britnell, 8909 Mayflower Road, Little Rock, Ark 72205

WHAT IS WRONG WITH MR. DAAB?

An article in the Arkansas Democrat (March 9, 1969) reported that Mr. Roland E. Daab of Columbia, Illinois has attended Sunday school for 2,600 consecutive Sundays, or fifty years of perfect attendance.

What's wrong with Mr. Daab? Is he never sick? Does he have no relatives to visit or who visit him on Sunday? Does he ever take a vacation?

This man may be wrong in his religion, I don't know, but he is certainly zealous and consistent — and that's more than can be said of many who know the truth. Evidently he practices his religion. The primary reason who he attends regularly is that he wants to!

A major problem in many churches is absenteeism. As the Lord's day approaches, members pack up and ride off in all directions. The church must operate with those who are left and get by the best it can.

I am concerned about our attitude toward the Lord's day. The only day of the week which belongs to the Lord in a peculiar way is the day many feel is theirs to use as they please. If we have many more wars, presidents, heroes and other special occasions to celebrate, this nation will soon become one giant holiday. It is disgusting to realize that our Congress had nothing better to do than move four more holidays to the week end so that people could celebrate and run around even more. No doubt this was the result of the pressure applied by certain selfish interests who profit by the travel and entertainment of people. I know one thing; it won't help the Lord's church. And I read recently where someone proposed having two "week ends" in ever week. Many of our people are guilty of the idolatry of which Paul wrote when he said, "Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play" (I Cor. 10:7).

Frequent visits and forsaking the classes and services of the home congregation have a bad influence in many ways. For one thing, it gives children a distorted sense of values. What parent would think of having a child attend a different school each week? How could the child ever get an education? The public schools would not tolerate such a practice. But when such is done with reference to the Bible classes, it says to the child that secular education is more important than spiritual education.

Absenteeism hinders Bible class work. With many absent to return to class next week, the teacher is faced with a frustrating problem. He or she must begin where the class ended last week, knowing that those who were absent have missed an important link in the chain of thought, or else burden and hinder the

rest of the class by a lot of review and repetition. No wonder we know so little about the Bible!

Some who claim to be Christians — members of the body of Christ — are often guilty of wilfully absenting themselves from the services of the church on the Lord's day. It may be that they do not understand the number of sins involved and duties neglected when they fail to attend.

When you forsake the worship service on the Lord's day, the following sins are usually involved:

1. You disobey the command of the Lord to assemble for worship (Heb. 10:25).
2. You fail to meet your appointment with the Lord (Matt. 18:20).
3. You disobey the command to take the Lord's supper upon the first day of the week (Acts 20:7).
4. You fail to give as you have been prospered (those who wilfully forsake don't send their contribution—I Cor. 16:2).
5. You neglect your spiritual development (Heb. 5:12-14).
6. You fail to assist the church in its great mission of saving the world
7. You fail to engage in other items of acceptable worship (John 4:24).
8. You fail to stay prepared to meet Christ should he come or should you die without repenting (Matt. 24:44).
9. You may lead others astray by the influence you have over their lives (Matt. 5:13-16).
10. You "crucify the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame" (Heb. 6:6).
11. You count the blood of the covenant wherewith you were sanctified an unholy thing (Heb. 10:29). (Note how this verse is connected with verse 25.) The fruit of the vine in the Lord's supper is called the "blood of the covenant" in Matthew 26:28.
12. You may be on the road to complete apostasy as described by Peter when he said, "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 righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them" (II Peter 2:20-21).

If all members would obey the commandment found in Hebrews 10:25, they would become stronger in the service of the Lord and the church would function much more efficiently and effectively.

Yes, the Lord's church could use members like Mr. Daab.

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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

JAMES P. MILLER TO KENTUCKY

James P. Miller, co-editor of **Searching The Scriptures**, began work with the 12th Street church in Bowling Green, Kentucky the first Lord's day in May. After sixteen years with the Seminole church in Tampa, Florida, brother and sister Miller return to their native Kentucky to serve the Master. They will be missed in the Tampa area and throughout the southeast.

Brother Miller and I have been engaged in this work for over ten years, beginning with the "Southeast Newsletter" in 1958 and bringing into being **Searching The Scriptures** in January, 1960. In debates, lectures, meetings, writing and in personal labors for the Lord we have had a unique and close relationship. We have shared joys and sorrows, problems and success. We have traveled many miles together in preaching the gospel of Christ. We have studied together, prayed together and labored together, and in all this there has not been one unkind or harsh word between us. My love and respect for Jim is well known to all who know both of us. I value his counsel, appreciate his labor in the kingdom, and love him as a brother in the Lord.

I pray that both Jim and Bobbie may have many years upon the earth to serve the Lord. I pray that their work with the 12th Street congregation in Bowling Green, Kentucky will be successful and pleasing in the eyes of the Lord. This is the only kind of success that is worth the snap of your finger. Brother Miller will continue to work for the success of **Searching The Scriptures** throughout Kentucky and the nation.

H. E. Phillips

CHURCHES RECONCILED IN CINCINNATI

(James P. Miller — We are glad to publish this report and know that it is a fine step in the right direction. I knew after my meeting in Blue Ash in February that better things are in store for the churches in greater Cincinnati).

The Blue Ash church, 4667 Cooper Road, Cincinnati, Ohio 45242 and the Pisgah church, Rt. 42 at Dimmick Road, Pisgah, Ohio 45069, met together and on February 23, 1969 published a statement of reconciliation, signed by five brethren of each congregation. The following is a part of the statement:

On this day the brethren of the Blue Ash church and the brethren of the Pisgah church met in joint session to resolve differences of several years standing between the two congregations. Recognizing that in times of stress and disagreement, brethren's emotions often overrule good judgment and that sin is easily and often committed on both sides of a controversy, we have met to clear our conscience before God and before man. We recognize further that such sins are often difficult to define. Accordingly, we of the two aforementioned congregations do hereby solemnly

declare that whatever sins we as congregations or individuals have committed we are sincerely sorry for and ask our brethren and our heavenly Father to forgive us. With this statement we further make known to our neighboring churches and all concerned that all differences separating us as brethren have been fully resolved and we are now in full fellowship in Christ our Lord.

The Blue Ash church, 4667 Cooper Road, Cincinnati, Ohio and the Evendale church, Glendale-Milford Road, Cincinnati, Ohio published a statement March 2, 1969 just as the one above. We rejoice that peace again reigns among these brethren involved.

Giles M. Painter, Newton, N. C. — We would like to report a new work that began, March 2, 1969 in Newton, N. C. with thirteen Christians and a total attendance of nineteen. It is our desire to walk in the old paths, free from the innovations of men to earnestly contend for the faith. Any interest, helps, etc., contact the Newton Church of Christ, Rt. 2, Box 117A, Newton, N. C., phone 704-464-8476. Visit with us when in the area.

The Church of Christ, 536 N. poplar, Montebello, Calif. 90640 will send the **Words of Life** to any man or woman in the Armed Forces. The **Words of Life** is a weekly bulletin-type paper published by brother **James E. Cooper** that deals with "First Principles." Those desiring to take advantage of this offer should write to the church.

Joe F. Nelson, 1093-B Dewey Road, Key West, Fla. 33040 — We would like to make brethren aware of the Lord's people who meet at 22 Shore Drive on Big Coppitt Key, Florida. This is the only congregation that we know of this side of Perrine, Florida that stands for the truth. Our attendance averages 26 each Lord's day. Worship with us when in the Keys.

Larry R. Devore, P. O. Box 5, New Carlisle, Ohio 45344 — Brother Fred A Shewmaker from Wilmington, Ohio, preached in a meeting at Funston Avenue church, March 3-9. One confessed sins during the meeting and two have been baptized since the meeting.

The Southeast congregation, Portland, Oregon — We are happy to report that three have been baptized at Yale, Ill., and six baptized at Hildalgo, Ill. through the efforts in two meetings of Robert J. LaCoste.

Robert J. LaCoste of Southeast church, P. O. Box 06326 Portland, Oregon 97206, is moving to work with the church at Globe, Arizona. The Southeast congregation is accepting applications for an evangelist. Phone: 1-503-771-9518.

Gale Cummings, Altus, Oklahoma — The church here will appreciate you letting your readers know that **Foy W. Layton**, preacher for the Westside congregation in Irving, Texas, will be with the Southeast

church in Altus, Oklahoma in a Gospel Meeting May 5-11. He will also be with the 19th & Calla Avenue church in Frederick, Oklahoma from the 12th thru the 15th of May. Bro. **John Wilson** is the preacher for this church. Both of these congregations would like the names of any men of families moving into this area as a result of a recent change of command of an Air Force unit from Tinker AFB to Altus AFB. Please notify John Wilson, P. O. Box 1070, Frederick, Okla. or Gale Cummings, Box 955, Altus.

Grant B. Caldwell, 4313 32nd Ave., Kenosha, Wis. 53140 — During the past eight months, we have been associated with the church in Kenosha, Wis. The Lord's people here have proven without any doubt that they are willing to withstand all trials and continually march forward in the cause of the Master. During our time here some five people have been restored. We have continued hope of growth and development both spiritually and numerically.

Ben Puterbaugh, 2797 Russell St., Portage, Ind. — I am writing in behalf of the congregation here at Portage, Indiana. They are in need of acquiring a man to begin working with them starting this summer.

This summer will complete three years of my working with them, and I will be moving to Cottage Grove, Oregon.

The congregation here has been averaging about 60 over the past few months, but as the area population is increasing steadily, there is much opportunity for growth. The brethren are "sound" and some are very able and willing workers.

Financially, they are able to provide \$120 per week at the present time, and thus it would be necessary for most individuals to raise some outside support.

If anyone is interested they can write to: Church of Christ, 2797 Russell Street, Portage, Indiana 46368.

Voyd N. Ballard, 6801 No. 6th Ave., Glendale, Arizona 85301 — The work goes well here at 60th Avenue in Glendale. We just closed a good meeting with Bro. **Choice L. Bryant** of Fresno, California doing the preaching. We had good crowds every night and Bro. Bryant did an outstanding job. He preaches the gospel in its fullness and completeness.

One was baptized during the meeting, and we had one restored a few days before the meeting.

Clark C. Buzbee, P. O. Box 278, York, Ala. 36925 — For the past two and one-half years I have been working with the Lord's people in York, Alabama. We have also had a part in the work at Boligee. Six have been baptized, and thirteen of the Lord's people have been restored. The Lord willing, my family and I will be moving to Moultrie, Georgia this summer. I will be working with the Central church there. The church here in York will be needing a man. He will need outside support, but the church here owns their building and they have a nice, large three bedroom, two bath home they can provide in addition to about \$50.00 per month in salary. Anyone interested may write me or George Fletcher, York, Alabama 36925.

Vestal Chaffin, 4204 Sunflower Avenue, Louisville, Ky. 40216. **Don Bassett**, of Memphis, Tenn., will be with the Shively church in a gospel meeting, April 25th through May 2nd. Our work here moves along very well. Two have been baptized recently. When you are in the Louisville area, visit with us.

SASSERS RETURNING TO NIGERIA

Yes, brethren it is true, my wife and I and our four children, Whit, Jimona, Tami and Jori Lyn, have decided to return to Nigeria to enter once again into the work that we learned to love so well while we were there two years, 1964-1966.

We had not intended to return so soon, but brother James Link, the brother that had been preparing to go, was unable to do so because of the condition of his wife after an auto accident.

We looked around, high and low, for a man to take his place, but was unable to find anyone else to go. So, with brother Wayne Payne coming home this summer, and with our longing to return to Nigeria anyway, and with the desperate need for at least two white brethren to be there together at all times, we made up our minds to go.

Well, now brethren, since you know why my family and I are going to Nigeria, it is left up to you to see to it that we get there, are supported well while there, and have working funds to work with while there. I am not ashamed or embarrassed to ask you brethren to help financially in this great effort at this time. On the contrary, I am happy to be able to ask. For I know that you need to be involved in such efforts as this for your own good and I know from experience that you will not let me and this effort down. You will be more than happy to have an opportunity to help preach the gospel where it is received so well. Where the fruits are so many fold.

Brethren, I am an experienced man that has served his Lord in Nigeria before. A man that is mature in age and mind. I love the Nigerian people and know how to work with them. I was with brother George Pennock in the work over there before and will be privileged to be a fellow worker with him again this time, the Lord willing.

I am now engaged in a good work here at Griffith, Indiana. The brethren are paying me a good liveable wage, I am living in a nice brick house. I am enjoying the work with these good brethren here. So you see, I am not running from anything or anybody, but I feel that I need to go to a work where I am needed even more and where not many brethren want to go.

Brethren, here are the needs, and how they can be met by you, and when they should be met: We will need travel funds both ways before we leave the States. We will need a car for transportation while we are there. We will need monthly living support. We will need rent money and working funds.

Any individual or congregation that will help, can send to any of these needs. We plan to leave in September 1969. Our time for raising the necessary funds is very limited. Please do not hold back or delay your sending to this need. Delay is a killer of precious time and a cause of concern on the part of those trying to go to do this work. Please heed this call now. If there is any congregation that thinks

they may be able to take care of my support or rent money by themselves, please contact me right away. My address is: James W. Sasser, 630 East Ash Place, Griffith, Indiana 46319. My telephone number is: area code 219, 923-3819. Make all checks payable to James W. Sasser and send them to the above address. Thank you in advance brethren for your liberal help. Yours in His Service. Jim Sasser.

HARKRIDER REPORT FROM SIDNEY

February 12, 1969

"The best laid plans o' mice and men gang aft a-gley." This familiar line from the pen of the Scottish poet Burns rings in my mind as I begin this report. Three months ago we had the "best laid plan" to move 300 miles to Gunnedah to assist the brethren in preaching the gospel in that city as well as in Armidale and Inverell. However, this was not to be, for we soon learned we were to be the parents of our fourth child next July. Arline has been considerably ill with "morning sickness" combined with a low blood sugar complaint similar to the condition she experienced the full nine months with Amy, our youngest child. My concern for her well-being has necessitated the change in our plans. After much serious consideration we decided to remain in Sydney until next December in order to keep the home surroundings as stable and familiar as possible during the next few months. The Lord willing, we shall return to the U.S. by the end of 1969.

We have moved, however, to a different residence as the owners of the house we rented the last 20 months are returning from America. Our new address is 18 Koorabel Ave. Gynea, N.S.W. 2227; Australia; telephone 525-4597. All correspondents please note the mailing address:

From: 23 Milba Road Caringbah, N.S.W. 2229 Australia	To: (effective now) P.O. Box 52 Caringbah, N.S.W. 2229 Australia
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When there is so much work to be done in so many places, as the case is in Australia, it is difficult to know where to go and what to do first. We constantly pray for the Lord's wisdom and divine guidance that His will be done. Much work is before us in the Sydney area, and our time will not be ill spent by remaining. Our reasons for having made plans to move to Gunnedah had been prompted by the need in that area and out of joy that the work in Sydney was soundly begun. Jim Everett was remaining to devote full time to the work, and Phil Morr, of Romulus, Michigan, was tentatively planning to move to this area in July. These facts have not changed, and even though we are now also staying there is plenty of work for us all. Jim and I have been extending ourselves assisting as many other congregations as we possibly can; in fact, all six male members of the Pork Hacking church have been called on to teach and preach as both Jim and I frequently are away at the same time. One of us is in Wollongong (50 miles south) every Sunday and Wednesday nights, and one is in Newcastle (100 miles north) every fourth Sunday, combined with occasional trips to Gunnedah, Armidale, and Inverell area. In addition, we have assisted other

congregations by conducting gospel meetings as often as possible. For example, Jim will be preaching in meetings the whole month of March, and I will be gone two or three weeks in April, the Lord willing.

I wish I knew what could be said or done to encourage other faithful men to come labor in Australia for the next 3 to 5 years. At least seven different areas (some involve more than one congregation) are asking for faithful men to come help, and it would be difficult to say which place was in greatest need, for they are all worthy works. This is only the minimum number needed as many, many cities in Australia have no known congregation existing. Could you, dear Reader, or do you know of some faithful man who would give a few months of his life preaching the glorious gospel to lost souls in this country of Australia? "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few" (Luke 10:2).

ONE BAPTISED IN JANUARY: Summer school holidays combined with the Christmas season make the months of December and January the slowest of the year so far as studies with aliens is concerned. However, we all rejoiced to assist Mrs. Wiseman obey her Lord in baptism on January 22nd. She is a good friend to Mrs. Tucker, who was baptized a year ago, and through this influence Mrs. Wiseman willingly studied the Scriptures and responded in sincere obedience. Our number increased too by the move of Max and Cathie Burgin and four children to Sydney. This family seems to be sound in the faith and will be a boost to the work. Presently we are distributing 5,000 copies of the current issue of "Doing Truth", and we pray that through this printed page new contacts may be taught the truth. The Port Hacking church now numbers 18 members (6 Americans, 12 Australians), and combined with our children we have a total of 29 meeting together.

We are thrilled to report that the renovations to the building are almost completed, and within the next week or two we will begin meeting in the auditorium which should comfortably seat 60 people. When this work is finished we will send a picture and a complete report to those who so generously helped make this possible.

In closing, please accept my sincere appreciation to all who have assisted us in this work through your prayers, contributions, and personal letters. And most of all, we give thanks to God for the church in Hueytown, Alabama which has so faithfully had fellowship in the work both by sending my full monthly salary and by constantly supplying moral and spiritual encouragement.

"Finally, brethren, pray for us that the word of the Lord may have free course and be glorified, even as it is with you" (II Thessalonians 3:1).

— Robert Harkrider

Robert A. Bolton, 610 E. LaDeney Dr., Ontario, Calif. — I am half-way through my 4th year with the good church in Ontario, California which averages more than \$2,000 per month in direct support of preachers at home and away. In 1968 there were 8 baptized, 7 restored, and 10 identified. Meetings in Ontario in 1969 will be with H. Osby Weaver, April 7-13 and **W. L. Wharton, Jr.**, September 8-14.

February 3-14 I was with the 5th Avenue & 12th

Street church in Yuma, Arizona in a singing school and gospel meeting. My meeting schedule for the rest of 1969 is as follows: Northside in Tucson, Arizona, April 14-20; Market Street in Salem, Oregon, April 27-May 4; and in California, at Studebaker Road in Long Beach, May 12-18; Palm Springs in November, and Apple Valley at a time yet to be decided.

When in Southern California, visit with us in Ontario — only 35 miles from downtown Los Angeles on Inter-State # 10.

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES continues to be among the best papers I receive. I would certainly like to find someone who would sell me Bound Volume 1 & 2 for my files.

Leo Rogol. Rt. 4 Box 12D, Greensburg, Ky. — Brother Paul C. Keller, of Moundsville, W. Virginia, preached in a meeting at the Greensburg church of Christ March 17-23. One was baptized during this meeting.

Since moving to Greensburg, we have had three baptisms and four restorations. The work is progressing very well and more good is being accomplished all along. I began my work here the first week of August, 1968.

James L. Denison, 3402 Henderson Boulevard, Tampa, Fla. 33609. May 5, 1969. "On April 4, Colin Williamson of Ocala, Fla., closed a meeting for us at Henderson Bly'd with one baptism. Since that time we have had three other baptisms. On May 2, I concluded a meeting with the Westside congregation in Tallahassee, Fla., with one baptism. My next meeting will be with the Gap Road congregation in Batesville, Ark., late this summer."

M. E. Patton — I have recently been with the Thomas Blvd. church in Port Arthur, Texas (Mar. 30-Apr. 6) which resulted in four baptisms. Don Givens has recently moved there from California to work as evangelist. He is well received and is off to a fine start with this good church. April 14-20 I was with the University Heights church in Lexington, Ky., which resulted in fifteen baptisms. Robert Crawley is the efficient, highly esteemed, and faithful evangelist here. This church is showing a great deal of zeal and knowledge in the Lord's work. I go next to Spring and Blaine in St. Louis, Mo. — May 4-11. After this I will be home for most of the summer before my next meeting. Ferrell Jenkins of Tampa, Fla. will be with us at Weatherly Heights in Huntsville, Ala. June 1-8.

Donald R. Givens, 4349 Vassar, Port Arthur, Tex. 77640: We have had ten baptisms at the Thomas Blvd. congregation in the past six weeks. Four of these were baptized during a meeting with brother Marshall Patton. Bro. Patton did an excellent job of preaching the powerful gospel. Any congregation will benefit greatly by calling on him for a meeting. We continue to enjoy the work at Thomas Blvd.; and the congregation is blessed with three fine elders and a good spirit prevails. When in southeast Texas, visit with us.

HOLY SPIRIT IN THE NEW BIRTH

J. T. Smith, Dayton, Ohio 45410

The denominational world "thrives" on talking about the New Birth, conversion, and their being saved as a result of a direct operation of the Holy Spirit. Usually those who tell you about their receiving "it" (instead of Him) will tell you that it is unexplainable, that they consider it "better felt than told."

Many times those who talk about the Holy Spirit and conversion will cite John 3:3-8 in an effort to try to show the mystery of the new birth. It is certainly a mis-nomer to refer to the new birth as conversion. For even though there can be no Scriptural conversion without the new birth, the new birth can certainly take place without true conversion following. We will explain this in our next article. However, just here, we want to continue our thought of the Holy Spirit in the new birth.

Jesus said we are "born of water and of the Spirit." Almost every Bible scholar, without exception, will tell you that the word "water" in John 3:5 is a reference to baptism in water. In fact, most reference Bibles will cite Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; I Pet. 3:21 as references to look up on the word "water" in John 3:5. "But," someone says, "read about the Spirit and the mystery of it." "It is like the wind." "It is better felt than told." Stop and consider for just a moment what Jesus is saying about the Spirit. He is simply saying that when folks are baptized in hamony with the Scriptures, their sins are washed away by the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 1:5; cf. Acts 22:16) and you can see no outward change at the time the Spirit removes our sins or operates on us. Paul explains it by saying that God operates on us — that he quickens or makes us alive spiritually when we are baptized (Col. 2:12-13). Hence, being born of water and of the Spirit puts one in the position of "being led by the Spirit" that we might be converted to Christ.

Next month, we will talk about the word "conversion" and "being led by the Spirit."

WHY I BECAME A CHRISTIAN, A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

PART NO. 3

Joseph Lee Block

In 1943 we arrived in New York and settled in Flushing, L.I. My wife attended the church services in the Manhattan church of Christ (at that time a true church). I went with my wife a few times and then found myself wanting to go. We met some wonderful people there and they accepted me for what I was, never asking me any questions. Nevertheless, I told them that I was of Jewish Faith. I was still attending the services at the synagogue three times a day, 7 days a week, and also attending the services from time to time at the church of Christ.

After a few months of attending the church of Christ services, I found myself asking Ed Couch, who was the preacher there, some questions. Ed re-

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<p>Tampa, Fla SEMINOLE CHURCH OF CHRIST meets at Rome Ave & Wishart Blvd <i>Schedule of Services</i> LORD S DAY Bible Study 9 45 a m Morning Worship 10 45 a m Evening Worship 6 00 p m Wednesday Bible Study 7 30 p m Evangelist James P Miller W N Meyer</p>	<p>Decatur, Ga. GLENWOOD HILLS CHURCH OF CHRIST meets at 2957 Glenwood Avenue <i>Schedule of Services</i> LORD S DAY Bible Study 10 00 a m Morning Worship 11 00 a m Evening Worship 7 00 p m Wednesday Bible Study 7 30 p m Evangelist J Edward Nowlin Phone 377 7782</p>	<p>El Cerrito, Calif CHURCH OF CHRIST meets at Colusa & Lynn <i>Schedule of Services</i> LORD S DAY Bible Study 9 45 a m Morning Worship 10 50 a m Evening Worship 6 00 p m Wednesday Bible Study 7 30 p m Phones 524 2422 233 3757 and 234 5085</p>	<p>Charlotte, N C. CHARLOTTF CHURCH OF CHRIST meets at 5327 York Road <i>Schedule of Services</i> LORD S DAY Bible Study 10 00 a m Morning Worship 11 00 a m Evening Worship 6 00 p m Wednesday Bible Study 7 30 p m Evangelist Jerry Parker Phone 523 8867</p>	<p>Tallahassee, Fla. WESTSIDE CHURCH OF CHRIST meets at 2150 Belle Vue Way <i>Schedule of Services</i> LORD S DAY Bible Study 10 00 a m Morning Worship 11 00 a m Evening Worship 6 00 p m Wednesday Bible Study 7 30 p m For information phone 222 2881 or 877 3832</p>
<p>Jackson, Tenn HOLLYWOOD DRIVE CHURCH OF CHRIST meets at Hollywood Drive at Hattan <i>Schedule of Services</i> LORD S DAY Bible Study 10 00 a m Morning Worship 11 00 a m Evening Worship 6 00 p m Wednesday Bible Study 7 30 p m Evangelist L Earl Fly Phone 424 2821</p>	<p>Pascagoula, Miss 25th STREET CHURCH OF CHRIST meets at 1 3 Mi from Hwy 90 on Chico Rd <i>Schedule of Services</i> LORD S DAY Bible Study 10 00 a m Morning Worship 11 00 a m Evening Worship 6 30 p m Wednesday Bible Study 7 30 p m Evangelist Ronald Lehde Phone 762 9692</p>	<p>Jacksonville, Fla. HYDE PARK CHURCH OF CHRIST meets at Corner Lake Weir & Conant Avenue <i>Schedule of Services</i> LORD S DAY Bible Study 10 00 a m Morning Worship 11 00 a m Evening Worship 7 00 p m Wednesday Bible Study 7 30 p m Evangelist Jamie Rhoden Phone 781 5704</p>	<p>Birmingham, Ala. ELM STREET CHURCH OF CHRIST meets at 1625 Elm Street S W <i>Schedule of Services</i> LORD S DAY Bible Study 10 00 a m Morning Worship 11 00 a m Evening Worship 6 00 p m Wednesday Bible Study 7 30 p m Evangelist Dennis L Reed Phones 788 8335 and 785 3000</p>	<p>Murfreesboro, Tenn WESTVUE CHURCH OF CHRIST meets at 316 Kings Highway <i>Schedule of Services</i> LORD S DAY Bible Study 9 45 a m Morning Worship 10 45 a m Evening Worship 7 00 p m Wednesday Bible Study 7 30 p m Evangelist Thomas G O Neal Phone 893 3355</p>
<p>Miami, Fla SOUTHWEST CHURCH OF CHRIST meets at 1450 S W 24th Avenue (Coral Gables Area) <i>Schedule of Services</i> LORD S DAY Bible Study 10 00 a m Morning Worship 11 00 a m Evening Worship 6 00 p m Wednesday Bible Study 7 30 p m Evangelist K A Frazier Phone 443 3376</p>	<p>Nashville, Tenn. FRANKLIN ROAD CHURCH OF CHRIST meets at 3915 Franklin Road <i>Schedule of Services</i> LORD S DAY Bible Study 9 00 a m Morning Worship 10 00 a m Evening Worship 6 30 p m Wednesday Bible Study 7 30 p m Evangelist D W Claypool Phone 832 9456</p>	<p>Gainesville, Fla NORTHEAST CHURCH OF CHRIST meets at 1433 N E 16th Avenue <i>Schedule of Services</i> LORD S DAY Bible Study 9 00 a m Morning Worship 10 00 a m Evening Worship 6 30 p m Wednesday Bible Study 7 30 p m Evangelist John Witt Phone 378 5023</p>	<p>Leesburg, Fla. CENTRAL CHURCH OF CHRIST meets at 2220 West Main St <i>Schedule of Services</i> LORD S DAY Bible Study 10 00 a m Morning Worship 11 00 a m Evening Worship 6 00 p m Wednesday Bible Study 7 30 p m Contact G R Wheeler Phone 787 7916</p>	<p>Clearwater, Fla. HERCULES AVENUE CHURCH OF CHRIST meets at 601 So Hercules Avenue <i>Schedule of Services</i> LORD S DAY Bible Study 9 00 a m Morning Worship 10 00 a m Evening Worship 6 00 p m Wednesday Bible Study 7 30 p m Evangelist Preston Weeks Phone 442 9267</p>
<p>Columbus, Ga. CHURCH OF CHRIST IN ROSE HILL meets at 2216 Hamilton Avenue <i>Schedule of Services</i> LORD S DAY Bible Study 10 00 a m Morning Worship 11 00 a m Evening Worship 6 00 p m Wednesday Bible Study 7 30 p m Preacher R L Morrison Phone 323 9302</p>	<p>Concord, N C. CHURCH OF CHRIST meets on Poplar Tent Road 2 mi West of US 29 & US 601 Bypass <i>Schedule of Services</i> LORD S DAY Bible Study 10 00 a m Morning Worship 10 50 a m Evening Worship 7 00 p m Wednesday Bible Study 7 30 p m Evangelist Jack G Byars Phone 782 3645</p>	<p>Lake City, Florida CHURCH OF CHRIST IN LAKE CITY meets at 400 S Hernando cor Dade <i>Schedule of Services</i> LORD S DAY Bible Study 10 00 a m Morning Worship 11 00 a m Evening Worship 7 00 p m Wednesday Bible Study 7 30 p m Phones: 752 2829 - 752 4230 - 752-6323</p>	<p>Oak Lawn, Illinois BURBANK MANOR CHURCH OF CHRIST meets at 8230 So Laramie Ave <i>Schedule of Services</i> LORD S DAY Bible Study 9 30 a m Morning Worship 10 30 a m Evening Worship 6 00 p m Wednesday Bible Study 7 30 p m Evangelist Paul Foutz Phone 499-1834 or 423 6703</p>	<p>Ft. Walton Beach, Fla. NORTHSIDE CHURCH OF CHRIST meets at 105 Racetrack Rd off Beaf St, 1 Block <i>Schedule of Services</i> LORD S DAY Bible Study 10 00 a m Morning Worship 11 00 a m Evening Worship 6 00 p m Wednesday Bible Study 7 00 p m Contact H N Eubanks Jr Phone 243 2660 A D Puterbaugh Phone 242 2441</p>

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<p>Norfolk, Va. HAYGOOD CHURCH OF CHRIST <i>meets at</i> 1084 Ferry Plantation Rd. Corner Haygood Rd. (Virginia Beach) <i>Schedule of Services</i> LORD'S DAY Bible Study ... 10:00 a.m. Morning Worship 11:00 a.m. Evening Worship 6:00 a.m. Wednesday Bible Study .. 7:30 p.m. Contact: David Waldron Phone: 499-2504 John Peddy Phone: 486-4203</p>	<p>Cincinnati, Ohio BLUE ASH CHURCH OF CHRIST <i>meets at</i> 4667 Cooper Rd. <i>Schedule of Services</i> LORD'S DAY Bible Study 10:00 a.m. Morning Worship 11:00 a.m. Evening Worship 7:00 p.m. Wednesday Bible Study 7:30 p.m. Evangelist: Fred Stacey Phone: 891-3174</p>	<p>Orlando, Fla. PAR AVENUE CHURCH OF CHRIST <i>meets at</i> 15 W. Par Avenue <i>Schedule of Services</i> LORD'S DAY Bible Study 10:00 a.m. Morning Worship 10:50 a.m. Evening Worship 7:00 p.m. Wednesday Bible Study 7:30 p.m. Evangelists: Roy E. Cogdill and Peter J. Wilson Phone 425-2900</p>	<p>Chattanooga, Tenn. NORTH HIXSON CHURCH OF CHRIST <i>meets at</i> 5484 Old Hixson Pike <i>Schedule of Services</i> LORD'S DAY Bible Study 10:00 a.m. Morning Worship 11:00 a.m. Evening Worship 8:00 p.m. Wednesday Bible Study 7:30 p.m. Evangelist: John Clark For information phone 877-1708</p>	<p>Ft. Worth, Texas (Haltom City, Northeast) CHURCH OF CHRIST <i>meets at</i> 6101 Linton on 121 Freeway <i>Schedule of Services</i> LORD'S DAY Bible Study 9:45 a.m. Morning Worship 10:45 a.m. Evening Worship 6:00 p.m. Evangelist: Rodney Miller Phones: TE 8-0185 and 284-9875</p>
<p>Cordale, Ga. CORDELE CHURCH OF CHRIST <i>meets at</i> 610 16th Avenue East <i>Schedule of Services</i> LORD'S DAY Bible Study 9:45 a.m. Morning Worship 11:00 a.m. Evening Worship 6:30 p.m. Wednesday Bible Study 7:30 p.m. Evangelist: Frank Jamerson Phone: 273-6849 — home 273-6362 meeting house</p>	<p>Knoxville, Tenn. ISLAND HOME CHURCH OF CHRIST <i>meets at</i> 1804 Allen Avenue <i>Schedule of Services</i> LORD'S DAY Bible Study 10:00 a.m. Morning Worship 11:00 a.m. Evening Worship 6:00 p.m. Wednesday Bible Study 7:30 p.m. Evangelist: T. E. Akin, Jr Phone: 573-3846</p>	<p>Valdosta, Ga. CHURCH OF CHRIST <i>meets at</i> 1000 East Gordon St. <i>Schedule of Services</i> LORD'S DAY Bible Study 10:00 a.m. Morning Worship 11:00 a.m. Evening Worship 6:00 p.m. Wednesday Bible Study 7:30 p.m. Evangelist: J. D. Mosley Phone: 242-2007</p>	<p>Key West, Fla. BIG COPPITT CHURCH OF CHRIST <i>meets at</i> 22 Shore Drive <i>Schedule of Services</i> LORD'S DAY Bible Study 10:00 a.m. Morning Worship 11:00 a.m. Evening Worship 6:00 p.m. Wednesday Bible Study 7:30 p.m. Contact: Joe F. Nelson for information</p>	

mind me of Rabbi Springer, a kind, lovable and patient man. He was well liked by the congregation. I told Ed Couch the way I was brought up and also asked him a few things about the Christian religion. The answers he gave were simple, but he told me to study the Holy Bible if I wanted to learn more. I did this. I began studying the Bible and found things that I could not understand. I went to Ed with everything that was troubling me and he always found time for me. He was a very patient man. I took a copy of the Holy Scriptures from the Jewish translation and found at that time that they varied in my mind too much.

One day Ed asked me what I was looking for. I told him that I did not know, but that I did believe that there were some things missing in my life and I was going to find them one way or the other. He did say that the answer to all our problems was in the Bible, and for me to study more and more. He told me something else: not to rush things"; whatever I was seeking I would find. To me I was too anxious to find the answer quick because I was in trouble. He told me to take it easy, but I thought in my mind that he had what he was looking for, so it was all right for him to talk that way, but I soon found out that we are all looking for something.

Some of the folks from the Manhattan church lived in Flushing, Bayside, Great Neck, Little Neck and various communities in the area, decided to get a building in Flushing so the folks from these areas would not have to travel very far in winter. A building was found in Flushing and the folks all got together to help this church get started. I was happy that they permitted me to assist them in getting

this church started. They worked very hard and never thought of themselves. As they were working I was asking questions and they never got too busy to answer me. I owe a lot to them and most of the hard work was done by Ed Couch.

(continued)

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