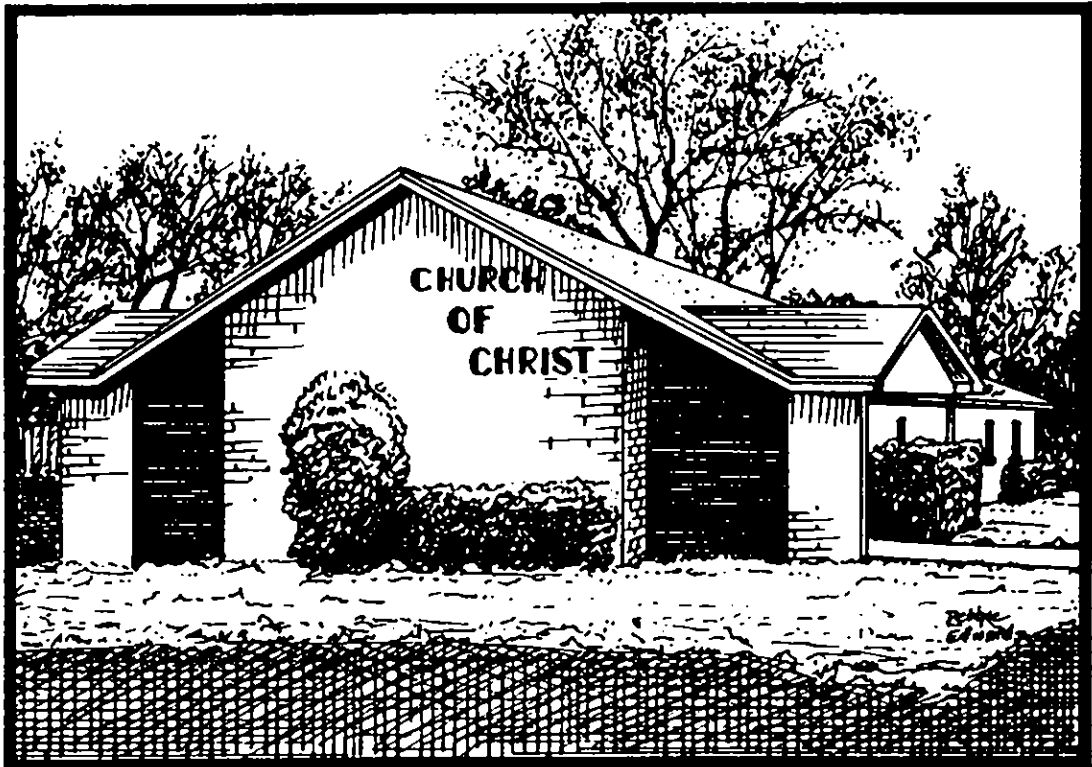


1986 PREACHERS' STUDY



N.W. 21st Street
Church of Christ

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Studies In Marriage

Terry Baze page 3

Sound Doctrine Under Fire

Jimmie Smith page 13

Grace In The Old Testament

George Battey page 23

Premillennialis: A System Of Infidelity

Alan Bonifay page 29

Study From Acts

Clovis Cook page 39

Preachers: Examples Of The Believers

Edwin Morris page 45

I Am Not Ashamed Of The Gospel or A Logical Defense of Our Position

Greg DeGough page 49

The Development of Elders

Doug Edwards page 59

Our Plea - Back To The Bible

Ronny Wade page 65

The King James And The New American Standard Bible

Jimmie Cutter page 73

Why I Must Preach

M. Lynwood Smith page 83

Moral Issues

Ron Alexander page 89

Current Unity Movements Among The Restoration Splinter Groups

Johnny Elmore page 93

Fellowship

Jerry Cutter page 103

A Crisis Of Knowledge

Ron Courter page 109

Divine Providence

Irvin Barnes page 125

Repentance

Allen Bailey page 131

The Church In Twenty Years

J. Wayne McKemie page 139

FORWARD

This year's Study Notes have experienced some set backs in actually getting to the final stages of printing, but we are thankful to the Lord that this volume is now before the Brethren. The subjects contained within this year's volume are worthy of reading, studying, and sharing with others. THE WATCHMAN continues to put forth the effort to present quality material for our reading public.

A note regarding THE WATCHMAN. The monthly publication has ceased due to various factors, however THE WATCHMAN will continue to publish the yearly Study Notes and other material as time permits. Currently, THE WATCHMAN has joined publishing efforts with THE CHRISTIAN EXPOSITOR.

There are some noticeable changes in the format for this year's publication. It is hoped that by the 1988 Study that we shall be able to fully upgrade the quality of the notes. Mike Heavin has taken the responsibility of publishing the 1987 Study Notes, and its format will be similar to what we hope to achieve with future publications.

We would like to extend our appreciation to the following for their help in publishing these notes. To my family who have suffered through many things to help me get these notes ready for publishing. A special thanks to Bill Verner for his part in getting the Study Notes published. Also to Neal Phillips who has done the actual publishing of the Study Notes. Lastly, but never last, are the participants in the study who prepared and sent to us their notes.

Finally, our aim is that you the reader will gain spiritual benefits from the contents of this volume. We sent this forth in the love of the Truth, and pray that it will produce fruit for the cause of Christ.

Lonnie Kent York -- THE WATCHMAN

* * * * *

The 1986 Preacher's Study, graciously hosted by the Twenty-First congregation in Oklahoma City, was marked by capacity crowds and excellent cooperation among all who attended. The congregation asked Don King and Raymond Fox to organize the topics and serve as moderators during the study. This year the study focused on a central theme, "The Church In Twenty Years." The purpose of the study was to stimulate everyone's thinking concerning the future of the Church. It is, without a doubt, essential that we take the time to stop and think about what the Lord desires the Church to be in twenty years and determine what attitudes and goals we must have in order to fulfill the Lord's mission.

One of the most challenging thoughts that surfaced in many of the talks was the necessity of fervently preaching the Lordship of Christ. The Church must be committed to the authority of Jesus as Lord and this commitment must be the grounds and motivation for our plea to restore New Testament Christianity, for our desire to preach the gospel to the whole world, and for our goal of leading our families in the path of genuine discipleship.

All of the speakers researched and presented their talks in an inspirational and, at the same time, scholarly fashion. Their studies provided much practical instruction about how to meet the various challenges that face the Church now and will continue to face the Church in the future. The study left a very positive and motivating view of the future with everyone who attended. These notes from the study will provide a valuable resource of material that will continue to inspire the cause of Christ in a positive way.

Raymond Fox

* * * * *

The Church of Christ at 3440 N. W. 21st Street in Oklahoma City, Ok. hosted the 1986 Preacher's Study. We selected Raymond Fox and Don King to conduct the study. These men did a commendable job in selecting topics, assigning speakers, and conducting the study.

The study was well attended by the local congregations and from visitors throughout the United States.

We wish to express our appreciation for the time and effort that was put forth by each speaker. They very aptly presented their topic in such a way that all could profit from them.

We also want to express our appreciation for the spirit of love that was manifested by the speakers and by the audience during and after each discussion.

Brother Lonnie York is to be commended for his good work in making this study available for all that are interested.

The Elders of 21st Street Church of Christ, Okla. City, Ok.

STUDIES IN MARRIAGE

By Terry Baze

INTRODUCTION

The subject at hand is one of great interest and importance to all in the Lord's Church, as well as a great many others. Questions concerning these issues have been discussed, disputed and debated as far back as the second century, but at no time with greater fervor than at present. The truth concerning this subject has been perverted, concealed and corrupted as is evidenced by the many discrepancies and contradictions of the positions offered as holding the truth. Dare any of us attempt to hold to a position on any subject which has been attained by so adulterating God's word.

We are doing a great injustice to this subject, to suppose that we may gain a full understanding or settle the controversy of it in an hour's time. As a result of this limitation, many pertinent questions will regretfully go unanswered and many arguments not addressed. We can only hope that by this brief study, our minds may be opened and enlightened to where we can take the thoughts presented here and through further study come to a knowledge of the truth on this subject, which deeply concerns the spiritual well-being of many individuals, and the spiritual and moral responsibility of many congregations.

We shall devote our time to the presentation of two topics:

1. Does the Law of Matt. 5:32 and 19:9 apply to all men today, or only to Christians (those in covenant relation with God)?
2. Does a Christian man or woman who has been put away for fornication (Matt. 19:9) have scriptural authority to marry another person?

DOES MATT. 19:9 APPLY TO ALL MEN OR ONLY TO CHRISTIANS

A. Is Matt. 19:9 part of the law of Moses?

1. Jesus abrogated the law of Deut. 24:1-4 in Matt. 5:32 and 19:9.
2. He said it was for the "hardness of their hearts" that such practices in Deut. 24:1-4 were allowed. The divorces of Deut. 24 could not be on grounds for fornication, for Jesus permitted divorce on grounds of fornication, while He condemned those of Deut. 24 on account of their hard heartedness.
3. Deut. 24 did not give grounds nor God's authority for divorce.
4. Deut. 24 assumes that certain conditions would exist, as they already had, and therefore provided a law (verse 4) to regulate such cases, but the law of verse four applied only if these specific conditions had been met.
5. Some thoughts concerning Deut. 24:
 - a. To lie with another man's wife, thus committing adultery, resulted in the death penalty for both parties under Moses' law.

- b. To marry a divorced woman was permitted in Deut. 24:1-4, without a death penalty.
- c. Therefore, the divorces of Deut. 24 were for reasons less than fornication, else the guilty party would have died.
- d. To marry a divorced woman (Deut. 24) was not considered as being adultery (having another man's wife.)
- e. Matt. 19:9 does not allow for the remarriage of a put away woman, therefore is not parallel to Deut. 24.
- f. The divorce of Deut. 24, so dissolved the marriage to the point where they could never marry one another again if she married another, while Matt. 19:9 and I Cor. 7:10-11 demanded reconciliation or remain unmarried.

B. Does Christ's law apply to unbelievers? (Matt. 19:9 included)

- 1. There are different laws for different institutions:
 - a. Civil governments are upheld by the sword and are provided for by taxation.
 - b. The Church is not upheld by the sword nor provided for by taxation, but by voluntary contributions.
- 2. There are different laws for different people:
 - a. Unbelievers are not commanded to assemble on the first day of the week, to commune, to lay by in store, to preach the word, discipline the immoral or marry a Christian.
 - b. Believers are commanded to do these things.
 - c. Unbelievers must believe, repent, confess and be baptized for the remission of their sins.
 - d. Believers must, when they sin, repent, confess and pray for the forgiveness of their sins.
- 3. The Gentiles for example, were not under Moses' law, for it was given only to the Jews (Deut. 5:2,3). The Gentiles, then, were not amenable to the marriage laws of the law of Moses.
 - a. Nowhere were Gentiles told not to marry a non-Jew.
 - b. Nowhere were Gentiles told to give a writing of divorce.
 - c. Nowhere were Gentiles told not to return to the first spouse, like Deut. 24 taught.
- 4. Just because Gentiles were guilty of sin, some of which were sins according to Moses' law, did not mean that they were amenable to the law of Moses. Likewise, simply because an unbeliever is guilty of sin, does not necessarily mean that the person is under the law of Christ. We can illustrate this point by considering the type anti-type relationship between Israel and Christians.
 - a. Israel was in Egyptian bondage until finally delivered when they were baptized in the Red Sea. Afterwards, the law was given to them once they had agreed to the terms of it, thus making a covenant with God. They were not amenable to this law before that time.

- b. As a sinner in the world, one is not delivered from their sins until they are baptized into Christ. After having thus agreed to the terms of Christ's covenant, they become amenable to it. They are not amenable to this law before this time.
- 5. A brief study of the great commission found in Matt. 28:19,20 shows that the gospel is to be preached to sinners and after their acceptance of it, the convert is then to be instructed in all of Christ's teachings. Until one obeys the gospel, they are not in covenant relation with God and they do not receive the blessings, promises, privileges and inheritance that comes with being a child of God. The alien sinner is not taught all things that pertain to Christianity, for they are not under Christ's law.
- 6. There is not just one marriage law for all people.
 - a. Just as the Gentiles were not amenable to Jewish marriage laws, unbelievers are not amenable to Christian marriage laws.
 - (1) I Cor. 7:39 - Christian widows are to marry a Christian. Is this taught to unbelieving widows?
 - (2) II Cor. 6:14 - Christians are not to marry unbelievers. Is this taught to unbelievers?
 - b. Paul did not apply the same law to a mixed marriage that he applied to a marriage between two believers.
 - (1) He addresses the single Christian in I Cor. 7:8-9.
 - (2) He addresses married Christians in verses 10 and 11.
 - (3) He addresses mixed marriages in verses 12-15.
 - (4) He gives no instruction to a marriage between two unbelievers. If Paul didn't, why demand that Christ did?
 - c. **I Cor. 7:10-15:**
 - (1) **not I, but the Lord:** Paul is here referring to what Jesus spoke during His public ministry: including Matt. 19:9.
 - (2) **let not the wife depart:** A divorce is under consideration.
 - (a) chorizo: This is the same word that Jesus used in Matt. 19:9, "let not man **put asunder**."
 - (b) All lexicons define this term as a divorce.
 - (c) The woman was "married" in verse ten and "unmarried" in verse eleven. The only way to get from a married state to an unmarried one, is by the death of a spouse or by a divorce.
 - (3) **But:** verse twelve indicates a different group or subject.
 - (4) **the rest:** are the rest of those who were married, by context, believers married to unbelievers.
 - (5) **speak I, not the Lord:** Paul says that Christ did not deal with this subject during His earthly ministry. Paul distinguishes between his teaching and the Lord's. Christ did not speak on the subject of an unbeliever leaving a believer.

- (a) If Christ did not speak on this subject, how can we bind what He said in Matt. 19:9 on them?
 - (b) How can Matt. 19:9 cover all marriages if Paul said Christ did not deal with all marriages?
 - (c) The fact that Christ did not deal with mixed marriages proves that Matt. 19:9 is not universal.
 - (d) If Christ's teachings in Matt. 19:9 covered all marriages, why did Paul use the contrasting introduction, "I, not the Lord" and give different instruction?
- d. Verse 12: "let him not put her away." Verse 13: "Let her not leave him." The instruction to the Christian is the same here as in verses ten and eleven.
- e. The remainder of the instruction is not the same. Verse 15: "if the unbeliever departs, let him depart, a brother or sister is not under bondage."
- (1) In verses ten and eleven both parties are under bondage to remain unmarried or be reconciled.
 - (2) In verse fifteen the instruction is much different.
 - (3) Nothing is said to the unbeliever, for they are not under the law of Christ.

C. What law are unbeliever's under today?

1. We have already shown that unbelievers are not under the law of Christ.
2. Those who were not under Moses' law were under some law, for had they not been under law they could not have sinned (Rom. 5:13). But they did sin (Rom. 3:9-23), so they had to be under some law.
3. They were under the law written on the heart (Rom. 1:18-2:15).
4. What is the law written on the heart?

God has always reigned as Lord over heaven and earth, and His moral laws were the standard by which nation after nation was judged and destroyed. The law of Moses was given to the Jews, yet God judged and destroyed nations not in covenant relation with Him. What law did they transgress? The universal moral law written on the heart of man. Every moral law given to man in the various moral codes of various covenants during the Patriarchal and Mosaic eras were, in essence, drawn from this moral law of God. This law is a reflection of the moral nature of God; and man, created in His image, has a sense of morality within him which is a part of his nature. Man may rebel and defy his moral nature, but he will be held accountable. (Gen. 6:5; 18:20; Deut. 18:9-14; Jonah 1:1-2; Heb. 1:12-2:20). Both Jews and Gentiles alike were sinners, not because they had broken Christ's law, but the law they were under. We know that the law of Moses was done away with at the death of Christ, but no scripture states that the law written on the heart was done away. To do so would abolish the very nature of man and moral law itself.

There is no evidence that the law of the heart included the teaching found in Matt. 19:9. People in the world who divorce and remarry for reasons other than fornication, do not commit adultery in so doing, for the law of Christ concerning Matt. 19:9 does not apply to them.

Furthermore, there is no scriptural evidence that the law of Matt. 19:9 was retroactive at conversion. In fact, the opposite is stated in I Cor. 7:20, where Christian converts are taught to remain in the state in which they have been called.

MAY THE GUILTY PARTY REMARRY?

A. The Traditional View

1. The position is as follows:

- a. Man is not to put asunder what God has joined together.
- b. God does not recognize divorces for causes other than fornication.
- c. If a man puts away his wife for some other cause, the original marriage still exists in the eyes of God.
- d. If the man remarries, he commits adultery because he is still married to the first mate in the eyes of God.
- e. He can be free to remarry only if he divorces his wife for fornication.
- f. The guilty party in a divorce may not remarry.

2. Problems with this position:

- a. A marriage may or may not have scriptural authority, but it is a marriage nonetheless.
- b. Those marrying, even if it is an unscriptural marriage, may not be said to be unmarried.
- c. A divorce may or may not have scriptural authority, but it is a divorce nonetheless.
- d. Those divorcing, even if it is an unscriptural divorce, may not be said to be married.
- e. It is a violation of language and reason to argue that a person is divorced and yet married to the person from whom he or she is divorced. This business of insisting that one may be divorced in the eyes of man and not in the eyes of God is nonsense. God may or may not approve of an action, but that does not mean the action does not occur. A divorce without scriptural authority is still a divorce and renders the divorced person unmarried. Married means married and divorced means divorced. Where does the Bible teach that one can be divorced and yet still married in the eyes of God?
- f. Jesus indicates that one can be really divorced without that divorce being authorized by God, for in Matt. 19:9 He speaks of the second marriage as a marriage, even though it is an adulterous relationship.
- g. In I Cor. 7:10-11 the woman went from "married" to "unmarried" even though there was no divorce for fornication.
- h. "Let not man put asunder" does not mean that man cannot put asunder what God has joined together.

- i. We are better off speaking of scripturally authorized marriages and divorces.
 - j. God recognized the divorces of Deut. 24 as severing the union to the point that it could not be reconciled, once a second marriage had taken place, even though the original divorce was not for fornication.
3. What effect does this have on the guilty party? The guilty party in Matt. 19:9 has a genuine divorce and they are not still married in the eyes of God. The innocent is divorced in the eyes of God and so also is the guilty. If the guilty is still married in God's eyes, why not the innocent? The fact that they are divorced, in and of itself, does not grant either party the right to remarry. A divorce neither authorizes or prohibits remarriage.
 4. The traditional view assumes that the reason a person with an unscriptural divorce may not remarry is because he or she is yet married to the person from whom they have divorced, thus committing adultery if remarrying. The reason why Jesus calls the forbidden marriage adulterous is another matter which we review later.
- B. Thoughts On Divorce And Remarriage In The Scriptures:** In our society, a legal divorce implies the right of remarriage. It must be emphasized however, that a divorce does not necessarily give one a scriptural right to remarry.
1. Divorce has to do with one action only: the severing of a marriage.
 2. In both the Hebrew and Greek terms used for divorce in the Bible, the meaning carries the idea of severing, loosing or dissolving. They do not mean to sever and join.
 3. If the connection between a scriptural divorce and right to remarry does not arise from the root meaning of the word divorce, it must be determined from the context as to whether or not such a right exists.
 4. There is no passage that indisputably proves that a divorce, whether scriptural or not, automatically entails the right of remarriage without specifically stating such. Deut. 24:1-4 is offered by some, where the KJV states "she may go and be another man's wife," but neither the Hebrew text or other translations agree with this rendering.
 5. I Cor. 7:10-11 is a case where a divorce occurred that did not entail the right to remarry. Likewise, Matt. 5:32; 19:9 if the divorce was not for fornication.
 6. The principle here is one recognized by us in every other area of doctrine; that we must have scriptural authority for all that we do (Col. 3:17).
- C. Thoughts On Matt. 5:32 and 19:9**
1. The rule of Matt. 5:32:
 - a. Whosoever puts away his wife causes he to commit adultery.
 - b. Whosoever marries her that is divorced, commits adultery.
 2. The exception of Matt. 5:32: Whosoever puts away his wife, except it be for fornication, does not make her to commit adultery. Why? He can make her commit adultery only if she has not already made herself one by her fornication. If she makes herself an adulteress, he does not sin by putting her away.

3. The rule of Matt. 19:9:
 - a. Whosoever puts away his wife and marries another, commits adultery. Matt. 5:32 did not mention his remarriage.
 - b. Whosoever marries her which is put away commits adultery.
4. The exception of Matt. 19:9: The exception applies to the one who does the putting away. He does not commit adultery when divorcing and remarrying, if he divorced her for fornication.
5. Observe that without the exception, all who divorce and remarry commit adultery. There is one exception for the one who does the putting away. The exception is not given to the person who is put away, for whatever reason. The person who has been put away for any cause is given no scriptural authority to remarry.
6. "Whosoever shall marry her that is divorced, commits adultery," states unqualifiedly that to marry a put away woman is adultery.
7. Does the exception clause apply to the last part of the verse as well as the first? "Whosoever shall put away his wife except for fornication and marries another, commits adultery, and whoever marries her which is divorced, except for fornication, commits adultery." If so, the guilty party is free to remarry according to some.
 - a. The last clause, "whosoever marries her which is put away," as it stands by itself, may correctly be applied to every divorced woman.
 - b. The exception clause may not grammatically be applied to the last clause. A simple diagram of the sentences in Greek or English will bear this out.
 - c. In Greek or English, the exception modifies only the verb of the first clause.
 - (1) The exception modifies the verb "put away" (apoluon).
 - (2) The exception is thus an adverbial clause.
 - (3) To modify the last clause, the exception must modify, "her which is put away" (apolelumenan).
 - (4) Apolelumenan is one word that is a participial substantive. It functions as a noun and is the direct object of the last clause.
 - (5) The exception would thus have to be adjectival.
 - (6) It is grammatical perversion to take an adverbial exception modifying the verb put away (apoluon), and in the same sentence elliptically make it an adjectival exception modifying "her which is put away" (apolelumenan).
 - (7) Is it true that unless we supply the additional exception clause, that what Jesus did say is grammatically incorrect?
 - (8) Can we understand what Jesus said unless we interject the exception where Jesus omitted it?
 - (9) To make the exception apply to the last clause is to add to God's word in order to sustain one's false doctrine.
 - d. There are other problems with this position, which we will now discuss. Suffice it to say, that neither Matt. 5:32 or 19:9 provide a scriptural right for the guilty party to remarry.

D. Thoughts On Adultery

All marriages in the New Testament are either scripturally authorized or they are unscriptural. A marriage is a marriage whether scripturally authorized or not. Those who marry without scriptural authority, commit adultery when doing so. These are marriages which God has not joined together.

1. The idea of adultery is adulteration, which means to debase, make impure, corrupt, defile, contaminate or putrefy, to violate or destroy the purity of.
2. Etymologically, it comes from a Latin word "adulteratus," that means, "to alter." Hence, we speak of adulterating food, water or the truth.
3. A person adulterates his or her marriage, or someone else's, by engaging in a sexual relationship with someone other than their lawful mate.
4. Adulteration, then, is the violation or perversion of a thing as it was intended to be.
5. The Hebrew term for adultery was often used in the O.T. for Israel's unfaithfulness to God. They adulterated their relationship with God (Hos. 2:21ff; 3:1ff; 4:12ff; Ezek. 16:23, 32, 37; 23:37, 43, 45).
6. The Greek term for adultery is often used the same way in the N.T. (Matt. 12:39; 16:4; Mark 8:38; II Peter 2:14).
7. Marriage, from creation, is the joining together of a male and a female by God (Gen. 2:18-25; Matt. 19:4-6). Those joining themselves together without God's sanction are guilty of adulterating marriage as God intended it.
8. A marriage may be adulterated in at least two ways:
 - a. According to Matt. 5:32a and 19:9a, fornication by a spouse is a perversion or adulteration of marriage as God intended.
 - b. Two people who join themselves together in marriage without God's authority according to Matt. 5:32b and 19:9b commit adultery.
 - c. This is one explanation as to why Jesus used the different terms of fornication and adultery in Matt. 5:32 and 19:9.
9. The adultery committed in Matt. 19:9 is not because the original couple is still married, but because they are not free to contract a second marriage. God joins people and binds them to their vows. One may be bound and yet not in marriage according to I Cor. 7:10-11. One may be bound and yet married to another according to Rom. 7:2,3. God may free one mate, yet not free the other from their vow. This distinction must be made clear.
 - a. The Bible uses marriage and divorce in referring to the physical relationship, whether it is scriptural or not.
 - b. Binding and loosing refer to the obligation and restraint imposed by God on the individual according to their vow.
10. The sin of unscriptural divorce and remarriage is the adulterous sin of covenant breaking against the original spouse and God. God nowhere gives this adulterous person the authority to remarry.
11. I Cor. 7:10-11 proves that a marriage relationship may cease and yet the parties may still be under covenant obligations.
12. God specifically releases the innocent party from those covenant obligations in the event of divorcing a spouse for fornication.

13. God nowhere, in His word, specifically releases the guilty party.
14. Note that adultery is committed when the unscriptural marriage takes place. "Whosoever marries her that is divorced commits adultery."
15. The present tense of the verb "commits adultery" (moichetai) shows that the adultery is committed as long as the second marriage exists.
16. May one repent of adultery and remain in the adulterous marriage? No, for repentance involves not only the realization of and sorrow for sin, but ceasing to engage in or perpetuate the sin. Could Herod and Herodias have simply said that they were sorry and continue their relationship? Absolutely not! For John said he could not have her, and if he could not have her, he must get rid of her.
17. Remember, that "adulterers God will judge," Heb. 13:4. Adulterers who die unrepentant will be lost, Rev. 21:8.

E. Why The Guilty Party May Not Remarry

1. The scriptures do not give the guilty party authority to remarry.
2. Those who unscripturally put asunder what God joined together are given no authority to remarry.
3. The belief that the guilty party may remarry is based on the silence of the scriptures, human assumptions, human reasoning and human analogies.
4. God does not relieve the guilty party from the vow they have made.
5. The guilty party did not put away their spouse for fornication, and that is the only exception given in order to have a scriptural divorce and scriptural divorce and scriptural authorization to remarry. One must put away their spouse for fornication, or there is no scriptural right for divorce or remarriage.
6. If both the innocent and the guilty parties are free to remarry, why did not Jesus tell us? He said the innocent could remarry, yet said nothing about the guilty being free to remarry.
7. God forbids the remarriage of either party in a divorce where no fornication takes place. Thus a person could be completely innocent and their spouse unscripturally divorce them, and they must remain unmarried or be reconciled according to I Cor. 7:10-11. The put away person should have committed adultery to avoid such a predicament. Some hold that they can go out and commit adultery after the divorce, then be put away again by their previous mate and then be free to remarry. Nothing that a little adultery won't take care of. Who can believe it??
8. Two men in a congregation could have affairs with the other's wife, get a divorce, marry the woman they have had the affair with, say they are sorry and continue the new relationship. Christian morality? God forbid.
9. Grammatically speaking, the exception in Matt. 5:32 and 19:9, applies to the first part of the verse, not the second.
10. The Bible states unqualifiedly in every passage dealing with this subject, that to marry a dismissed woman is adultery.
11. We have proven that one may be bound while married to someone else - Rom. 7:2,3.
12. We have proven that one may be bound to their vow and not be married to anyone - I Cor. 7:10-11.

13. When one vows or makes a covenant, they are bound by the terms of it. Your own violation of it does not make it void, nor release you from it. The Jews broke the covenant, but they were not released from it.
14. As long as one lives contrary to their vow, they are guilty; so it is with the marriage covenant. The two parties vow before God who joins them. God releases one only if they put away their spouse for fornication. The guilty is not released.

CONCLUSION

All of the processes of human reasoning, semantical gymnastics or emotional outcries can never take the place of Biblical Authority. Jesus states clearly that the innocent party may remarry. He says no such thing concerning the guilty. We must forever put a stop to such an insidious doctrine, which will damn souls to hell that practice and propagate it.

* * * * *

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Greek Lexicons:

Abbott and Smith
 Arndt and Gingrich
 Liddell and Scott
 Moulton and Milligan
 A. T. Robertson's Word Pictures
 Henry Thayer
 W. E. Vine
 Westcott and Hort

Other Sources:

Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage in the Bible - Adams
 To Have and To Hold - Atkinson
 Not Under Bondage - Bales
 Divorce and Remarriage - Duty
 Divorce and Remarriage in the Church - Ellison
 Marriage Is Honorable - Frost
 Except For Fornication - Hale
 A Study In God's Law of Marriage - Hendry
 What the Bible Says About Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage - Hicks
 Divorce, Repentance and the Gospel of Christ - Hicks
 Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage - Lusk
 Divorce - Murray
 A Christian's View of Divorce - Shaner
 Keeping The Lock In Wedlock

SOUND DOCTRINE UNDER FIRE

by Jimmie Smith

Questions for discussion:

Does "excessive" in Eph. 5:18 mean alcoholic beverages can be used in moderation?

Does "much wine" in I Tim. 3:8 mean a deacon is allowed to drink some wine?

Does Rom. 14:21 allow a Christian to drink alcoholic wine as long as it is not offensive to everyone?

Introduction

The scope of the problem: I venture that there is not a congregation of even moderate size who has been in existence for ten years who has not had to deal with the consumption of alcoholic beverages among its people. I once preached a sermon on alcoholism at a congregation where I was laboring, after which, a sister approached me at the back of the building and asked: "Who told you _____ (her son) keeps beer in his refrigerator?" My answer was, "No one, I did not know it until just now." Well, at the time, her son was being used in the services and none of the leaders knew of his imbibing. A couple of years ago I received three phone calls in one week concerning family problems involving alcoholic beverages and two of them were from our members. Every congregation I have had intimate dealings with has stood in opposition to alcoholic beverages and yet problems have arisen.

It is well accepted, without the need for documentation (as heralded by the news media), that America's number one drug problem is not marijuana, cocaine, crack, but alcohol.

I do not believe it is the Church's number one problem. Nevertheless one is naive (if not blind or ignorant) to think it is never a problem in the Church.

Such problems are not new. About 2500 years ago, Solomon penned these words: "Who has woe? Who has sorrow? Who has strife? Who has complaining? Who has wounds without cause? Who has redness of eyes? Those who tarry long over wine, those who go to try mixed wine. Do not look at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup and goes down smoothly. At the last it bites like a serpent, and stings like an adder. Your eyes will see strange things and your mind utter perverse things. You will be like one who lies down in the midst of the sea, like one who lies on the top of a mast. 'They struck me,' you will say, 'but I was not hurt; they beat me, but I did not feel it. When shall I awake? I will seek another drink.'" (Prov. 23:29-35, RSV).

Down through the ages, intoxicants have caused, perhaps, as much sorrow and unhappiness as have wars. Solomon very concisely stated the symptoms and expressed the futility of the person brought under the influence of alcohol. There is general agreement among those who accept the Bible as the Word of God that drunkenness is a transgression of the law (cf. Rom. 13:13; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:18; and I Thess. 5:7). There is, however, disagreement among Christians as to whether the scriptures permit the moderate use of alcoholic beverages, which is often referred to as "social drinking."

The miracle of Jesus turning water into wine at the wedding feast in Cana is sometimes offered as evidence that Christ approved of the moderate use of intoxicants. Similarly, Paul's admonition to Timothy to "drink a little wine for they stomach's sake"

is cited as approval by the apostle for social drinking. Paul did not say, "Take a little for the crowd's sake," or "for the host sake."

I am persuaded that one of the reasons for disagreement is that many Hebrew and Greek words are translated by the one English word wine. To understand the Biblical teaching on this subject it is necessary to examine the word in its context and the total teaching of the scriptures on the subject. Since my subject is entirely based on the New Testament Scriptures, I will have little to say about the Old Testament words.

The Old Testament Teaching on Wine

The Old Testament is very specific in its condemnation of wine with any appreciable alcoholic content. Solomon (as noted) commanded "not to even look at wine" that intoxicates. He also observed that, "wine is a mocker, strong drink a brawler; and whoever is led astray by it is not wise,".

In the Old Testament the word "wine" is translated from two different Hebrew words. Tirosh is translated "wine" 26 times, "new wine" 11 times, and "sweet wine" once. In Isa. 65:8 it is used to refer to grapes still in the cluster on the vine. Micah 6:15 mentions it as the juice from which fermented wine is made. So, tirosh is always used to denote an unfermented drink, or simply grape juice.

The Hebrew word "yayin," the most common word from which "wine" is translated, clearly means fermented wine. It is associated with drunkenness about 30 times and is condemned in 67 other references. In other instances it is mentioned without praise or blame. Yayin is not commended for use and is often condemned.

Another Hebrew word "shekar" is translated "strong drink" 22 times and refers to fermented drinks except grape wine. It is associated with yayin in nearly all cases. In nearly all of the references, it is condemned.

A study of the scriptures containing the Hebrew word translated "wine" or "strong drink" illustrates God's attitude toward intoxicating beverages for the Israelites. In Lev. 10:8-11, Jehovah made it a law that priests were not to serve Him in the tabernacle while under the influence of strong drink "lest ye die." Through the years we have preached that the tabernacle was a type of the church. Brethren, if God would not allow a drinking priest to officiate in His tabernacle, do you believe He will tolerate drinking disciples serving in the realm of the "royal priesthood?" Will Jehovah tolerate in the Christian priesthood what He strongly prohibited, with the threat of the death penalty, under the Levitical priesthood?

In Isa. 5:11-12 the Messianic prophet declared, "Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that tarry late into the night, till wine inflame them!" When wine is in their feasts "they regard not the work of Jehovah, neither have they considered the operation of his hands." In Hab. 2:15 we read, "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbor drink, to thee that addest thy venom, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness."

The Meaning Of Wine In The New Testament

In the New Testament the word "gleukos" is used only in Acts 2:13, and according to Thayer it means: "Sweet juice pressed from the grape." or unfermented grape juice. Other writers have declared that this was a sweet and intoxicating wine made by soaking dried grapes, pressing out the juice, and fermenting it. This may have been the case since there would not have been fresh grapes as early as Pentecost. This is the only use of gleukos in the New Testament.

The Greek word oinos is translated "wine" in all 33 places where it is used in the New Testament. It is a general word that can mean (1) vine and cluster, (2) pure grape juice, and (3) fermented wine.

Oinos is the root word in all three texts assigned me in this study. In one of the most respected translations of the Old Testament into Greek, oinos was used to translate tirosh and yayin, but never for shekar (strong drink). It is clear then, that words translated "wine" in the New Testament do not always refer to fermented intoxicating beverages. In Matt. 9:17 we hear of "new wine" (neos oinos) being put in new wine skins as the wise thing to do. What is put in the wine skin must be unfermented wine, or the story loses its point. If the wine is already fermented, then there is no danger of losing the wine due to its expansion while fermenting. McGuiggan said; "The new wine was put in the new skin to keep it from fermenting! Listen, if a skin of wine was closed up and sealed, and then permitted to ferment, a skin wouldn't survive it -- new or otherwise! The expansion power of carbonic gas is incredible -- it has been estimated that a cubic inch of sugar transformed into carbonic gas takes up about 40 times more room."¹

NEW TESTAMENT WINES

It is often stated that non-fermented, non-intoxicating wines were not possible most of the year because there was no method of preservation without fermentation. There is evidence, however, to the contrary. There were perhaps five methods of preserving juices and preventing fermentation: (1) boiling, (2) straining, (3) heat, (4) cold, and (5) addition of sulphur.

It must be understood that the fermented wines of the Bible differ from modern wines. Since there were no distilled beverages at that time, all intoxicating wines or strong drink were produced by natural fermentation. The alcoholic content obtained by natural fermentation was limited by the natural sugar content in the fruit (and temperature in the aging process).

The natural sugar content of grapes produced in Biblical lands permitted a maximum alcoholic content of up to 8% (McGuiggan says under ideal conditions maybe 12% for table wines of the highest sugar content). The strong drink (Shekar) that was so strongly condemned in the Bible (Prov. 23:31-32) probably had an alcoholic content of five to eight percent.

Modern distilled beverages (whiskey, gin, rum and brandy) can be made with an alcoholic content greater than 90%. Modern fortified wines can be made with alcoholic contents of 20%; ale can contain up to 14%; beer from three to six percent. In addition, beer contains lupulin, an active hypnotic narcotic. This comes from the hop, which is in the same family of plants as hemp, the source of marijuana. There is evidence that the combination of alcohol and lupulin in beer can have a very damaging effect upon the brain.

It must be remembered that God condemned "strong drink," which contained, probably, no more than eight percent alcohol, for use by the Israelites. There is no indication that God permitted the use of wines of lesser fermentation for social drinking. Would God then approve the social drinking of modern intoxicants that contain up to 12 times more alcohol?

DOES "EXCESSIVE" ALLOW MODERATION OF ALCOHOL?

"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." (Eph. 5:18, KJV). The ASV has "wherein is riot." The RSV has "wherein is debauchery." This passage is not saying, "Do not get drunk for that would mean you have partaken of excessive amounts of wine." "Commentators are in general agreement that 'riot' speaks of a state, not an amount. The word for riot literally means 'unsavableness.' The word then developed into the idea of abandonness, dissoluteness."²

It has been said, since Paul condemns "drunkenness," it is implied that he approved moderation. But, there can be no moderate use of the UNLAWFUL! Even the lawful is unacceptable if taken immoderately. The UNLAWFUL is UNACCEPTABLE in any amount.

In regard to intoxicating drinks, the discussion is whether or not it is lawful in the first place. That it is unlawful in excess we know, but then so is harmless food, for

gluttony is condemned by God. "Be not overmuch wicked," says Eccl. 7:17. Does this suggest the approval of wickedness in moderation? Could you, today, urge a man, "Do not get drunk on alcohol -- find your satisfaction in Jesus," without intending any approval of the moderate consumption? Of course you could! Then why not Paul? "Be not greedy of filthy lucre," does not suggest approval of the INCLINATION toward filthy lucre.

DOES "MUCH WINE" MEAN A DEACON IS ALLOWED "SOME" WINE?

I Tim. 3:8

We have already noted under the Jewish system, under the threat of death, priests were forbidden to drink any wine or strong drink when ministering in the tabernacle (Lev. 10:8-11). I think proponents must answer this analogy. "What about Christian priests?" Drunkenness is forbidden to all Christians; and the consequences are serious, if you should continue in this practice (Rom. 13:13; I Cor. 5:11; 6:10; Gal. 5:21).

In this same epistle Paul told Timothy to take a little wine for his stomach's sake (5:23). Timothy was obviously a "teetotaler." Paul did not so much order Timothy to drink wine, but gave him permission to do so, using a persuasiveness without which he no doubt knew Timothy would not swerve from his rule of life. "He expresses himself in such a way that there is no encouragement to the USE of wine as a beverage. He was not instructed to take it for pleasure; or to be sociable. He was told to take a little; not a lot."

"Hendriksen mentioned that Dr. Salvatore had written a book on Wine as Good and Medicine (Newsweek, July 19, 1954). William Ritchie maintained that not all wines in ancient times were medicinal; but that some were (p. 212)."⁴ Whatever it was, Timothy had to be admonished to USE some. Paul did not say that wine was good for every ailment. He did not teach all men to take a little wine, nor that Timothy should take it all the time, even after he regained his health. "If there is some medicinal use of wine today, but something else is better, common sense tells us to use the treatment which is best and which, although not available to Timothy, is available to us."⁵

James D. Bales quotes a Mr. Lees, "It is by no means certain that he would even use an intoxicating sort of wine at all, for Pliny's account of wine (book xiv) shows that some sorts in good repute were not fermented; and of adunamon ('without strength'), one of the artificial uina (wines), he expressly declares that it was given to invalids when the ordinary wines were deemed likely to be injurious. In book xxiii. chap. 26 he frankly remarks that 'to treat of the medicinal properties of each particular kind of wine would labour without end, and quite inexhaustible; and the more so as the opinions of medical men are so entirely at variance upon the subject.' (p. 374)."⁶

"Wine" can refer to grape juice. The term "wine" does not always mean that it has alcoholic content. In fact, it is sometimes used in the Bible to refer to the juice of the grape while it is in the grape; or just after it has been released from the grape. (Deut. 28:39; Jer. 40:10, 12; 48:33; Isa. 16:10; 55:8; Deut. 32:14).

The wine of I Tim. 3:8 is either intoxicating or non-intoxicating. If intoxicated? Then the deacon is told not to be addicted to intoxicating wine. Does this imply moderation is approved? (Many seem to think so). Put it in more direct terms, is the Lord saying the deacon is not to be a drunk? Can we not urge a man to avoid drunkenness without approving moderate drinking? To abstain from much wine, would not in itself imply that one should drink a little.

"To argue that by forbidding 'much wine' Paul approves some use of wine of any and every sort, is to adopt a mode of interpretation exceedingly dangerous, and wholly inconsistent with common sense. (1) It is highly dangerous; for once lay it down that what is not forbidden is approved, and the Bible becomes a book of the wildest licence: 'Thou shalt do no murder' becomes a permission to do anything short of murder; and 'Let not the sun go down upon thy wrath' is a reason for indulging in anger of any kind from sunrise to sunset! (2) It is inconsistent to usage. When the apostle Peter says that the enemies of Christ wondered that believers did not go to 'the same excess of riot' as themselves, he did not mean that Christians were guilty of any minor excess. '... not greedy-of-filthy-lucre' does not mean that Christians who are not elders were guilty of avarice, nor does

it justify avarice in the smallest degree. So in the present day a Christian may condemn some excess, without implying that a less indulgence would be commendable; ... times without number, teetotalers have blamed men for going 'so often' to the bars, without signifying any approval of occasional visits.

"Besides, it is morally impossible that Paul could have intended to approve of some use of all sorts of wine then made and used. Many wines were drugged; did he recommend these? In his day, also, even sober heathens disapproved of the use of fermented wine unless considerably diluted with water; was the Christian moralist less indifferent than pagans to sobriety? Various wines, too, were so nauseous to a modern taste, that no apostolic patronage, however explicit, would have induced English wine-drinkers to swallow them."

"If it is asked why Paul did not directly forbid all use of wine? -- both a special and a general answer may be given. (1) The particular answer is, that the term oinos (wine) included a great variety of drinks made from the juice of the grape; and as many of these were free from an intoxicating quality, and others were so weakened by water as to be partially non-inebriating unless voraciously consumed, a universal proscription would have ignored important distinctions that were well known to exist. (2) The general answer is, that, for wisest ends, the apostle refrained from condemning by name such which the development of Christian light and the operation of Christian love would hereafter show to be inconsistent with the principles of the Christian system; and which, therefore, would be renounced by true and enlightened disciples. Slave-holding, arbitrary government, bigamy and polygamy, lots and gambling, were not prohibited (in so many words). ... to obey the father in all things; to be like the Son in purity; to love as brethren; to do good, at all sacrifices, as we have opportunity; to suffer, rather than inflict wrong; to resist unavoidable temptation, and shun what we can; to make earth spiritually one with heaven -- these were first principles which, conscientiously lived out, would cover and comprehend all circumstances, and in the long run, banish evil from the world.

"Actuated by this spirit, the question will be -- not whether intoxicating wine is prohibited by name in the New Testament, but whether Scripture and experience afford us such a knowledge of its nature and results as, on Christian principles, binds us to renounce and discountenance its use?"⁸

I agree with Bales when he said; "In a society in which any use of wine, other than as a medicine, brought reproach on the church, the author does not see how that Biblical principles would permit a deacon to be given to any wine. And yet, in some societies, and in the society of Paul's day, a man who was not a total abstainer, but at the same time was not given to much wine, could serve as a deacon; if he possessed the necessary qualifications. No matter how one looks at it, this passage does not say that he cannot be given to any wine. There is a difference between taking no wine at all and taking a little wine. And although one passage may limit another, there is no passage which literally says, concerning the deacons, 'no wine at all.'"⁹

"Not given to much wine" is no more an approval of moderate drinking than to say, "do not be a drug addict" is an approval of the moderate use of heroin.

**Does This Passage Allow A Christian
To Drink Alcoholic Wine
As Long As It Is Not Offensive To Everyone?
Rom. 14:21**

The preceding verse reads: "For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence." Verse 21 is an explanation or enlargement of the meaning of verse 20. The flesh would be such as the Jewish convert regarded as unclean.

Albert Barnes commented on this verse: "Wine was a common drink among the Jews, and usually esteemed lawful. But the Nazarites were not allowed to drink it (Num. 6:3), and

the Rechabites (Jer. 35) drank no wine, and it is possible that some of the early converts regarded it as unlawful for Christians to drink it. ... The caution here shows us what should be done now in regard to the use of wine. It may not be possible to prove that wine is absolutely unlawful, but still many friends of temperance regard it as such, and are grieved at its use. ... Besides, the wines which are now used are different from those which were common among the ancients. That was the pure juice of the grape. That which is now in common use is mingled with alcohol, and with other intoxicating ingredients. Little or none of the wine which comes to this country is pure. And in this state of the case, does not the command of the apostle here require the friends of temperance to abstain even from the use of wine?"¹⁰

As William Patton pointed out: "In all the passages where good wine is named, there is no lip of warning, no intimations of danger, no hint of disapprobation, but always of decided approval." "The distinction in quality between the good and the bad wine is as clear as that between good and bad men, or good and bad wives, or good and bad spirits; for one is the constant subject of warning, designated poison literally, analogically, and figuratively, while the other is commended as refreshing and innocent, which no alcoholic wine is."

"But the position of the advocates of only one kind of wine is that 'the juice of the grape, when called wine, was always fermented, and, being fermented, was always intoxicating;' 'that fermentation is the essence of wine.' One exception will destroy the universality of this sweeping statement."¹¹

This passage is often quoted to show that the Christian has the liberty to drink intoxicating wine/drinks but for the sake of others he should forego that liberty. ,

There is no doubt that Paul is discussing the strong brother's right to forfeit his rights because of love for the weaker brother or sister. If, however, Paul regards the social consumption of intoxicating drinks as the saint's rights, then: (1) The one who drinks such with a clear conscience is the strong brother (in this area) because it is the weaker brother who has the scruples (14:1).

(2) He can support the liquor business because the right to drink it involves the right to share it with those of like faith. He who socially drinks intoxicating drinks ought to forego that liberty.

If there ever was a case where a man should have reason to relinquish his "liberty" this ought to be it. Ask yourself: "Is the booze industry a boon to society? Or a Curse? Forget the question of liberty -- IS IT or NO?"

But, unless the thing itself be lawful, it is not "liberty." What is there in this text which suggests the drinking of intoxicating drinks is a liberty?

Is it because Paul says: "Don't drink wine if it offends your brother?" That is no proof, because he says of "wine" he also says of "flesh" and "any other thing."

Do you realize that even if we knew for sure that the wine here was **not** intoxicating. Paul could **still** have said what he said, because he said it of "flesh" and "any other thing."

A number of brothers were insisting on their right to eat meats (pork, or that offered to idols). Paul makes it clear that this is not the liberty for which Christ died: "the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." Not only the "stumbling" of a brother, but the "peace" of the congregation is at stake.

"Eating and drinking" covers the whole of food consumption. People drank "wine" (they drank both kinds of wine - intoxicating and non-intoxicating) and that catches the "drinking."

If there is nothing in this text which DEMANDS intoxicating drink, then there is nothing which supports the pro-drinking position.

Some General Facts Concerning Alcoholic Consumption

"Every year forty million Americans hang crepe in their homes mourning over the living death of 10 million of their loved ones who are buried alive in the tomb of alcohol-slavery!"¹²

Near 20% of the nation's total hospital care costs in 1985 were from alcohol-related problems. In the Feb. 8th, 1981, Sunday Edition of the Arkansas Democrat, an article entitled "One in Five Families note Trials with Alcohol." In this article it stated that 70% of the populace in America drinks alcoholic beverages.

You are likely familiar with the beer commercial which bestows upon various groups of people the dubious honor of having the beer dedicated to them. For example, one of their commercials might say: "To all you steel workers who work and sweat all day to produce the nations steel -- this BUD'S for you!"

Imagine the effects of an ad campaign which would run the same products to these people:

1. "To all you mothers and fathers who are grief stricken over your teenaged son or daughter because alcohol has scrambled their brains and shattered their lives -- this Bud's for you!"
2. "To you women who are knocking yourselves out day after day trying to keep food on the table for your family; trying to be both father and mother to your kids because your old man is a drunken sot -- this Bud's for you!"
3. "Hey, all you kids whose dads come home mean and surly; threatening to beat you for nothing -- all because they are tanked up on our product -- This Bud's for you!"
4. "You who have had friends or relatives maimed or killed in a senseless traffic accident because of the guy who had 'only had a couple of drinks' -- This Bud's for you!"
5. "This Bud's for all the families who have been ripped apart because of fathers or mothers who could not handle alcohol. All you children who will grow up with a warped perception of family life and with all kinds of moral and spiritual scars; the millions upon millions through the generations whose lives have been ruined; who thought they were gaining prestige, but only brought to themselves shame; who have died prematurely or lived out their days in loneliness, disease, and mental anguish because of alcohol -- This Bud's for you!"

We often sing a song in worship, "No tears in heaven," and perhaps you, like me, thought you had heard about all the ungodly things one could say on radio and television until a popular country and western singer (Larry Gatlin), recorded a song in which he sang; "Will they have Mogan David in heaven ... If they don't, who in the h___ wants to go?"

Although disappointing as it may be to Mr. Gatlin and those who had pleasure in his song, there will be no such "wine" in heaven. Those who lavish such beverages shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven (Gal. 5:19-21; I Peter 4:3, "banqueting" is "a drinking ... a drinking bout" W. E. Vine, p. 170).

Since Gatlin apparently does not want to go to heaven because of no Mogan David, I wonder if he knows what hell is really like? Hell is described as being: "Everlasting" (Matt. 25:41-46); "Eternal Fire," "Destruction," "Sorer Punishment," "Second Death," etc.

Now, do you think anybody realizing this had really rather go to hell than give up their Mogan David? There won't even be a drop of water in Hell (Luke 16) little alone Mogan David, but those in Heaven will never thirst! (Incidentally, since recording that song Larry Gatlin checked into the Betty Ford Chemical Abuse Clinic because he was unable

to "dry out" on his own. He has now been sober for two years and lectures against alcoholic beverages).

L. O. Sanderson wrote: "If the places that sell whiskey would tell the truth in their advertising, the ads would read something like this: 'Wanted -- one hundred new customers as most of our old ones have dropped out. Ten committed suicide; twenty are in jail; fifteen are in the poor house; one was electrocuted for murder; three are in the mental hospital; and the rest are broke. We must have new customers -- young, fresh and strong for they will not live to stay with us long. Come to see us. We have brands that will cause you to disgrace your family, paralyze your mind, warp your body, and lose your friends.'"

CONCLUSION

I ask you to give serious consideration to the fact that even in the Old Testament, strong drink was much less intoxicating than modern beverages and it was firmly condemned.

The mere use of the word "wine" is no guarantee whatsoever that fermented, intoxicated wine is implied where allowed. And even the strongest fermented wines of that day were much weaker than those of today.

Early Christians were clearly warned about the use of intoxicating (however weak) beverages, even when it was a usual part of the diet, because of times and circumstances.

I say today, total abstinence from intoxicants is the only certain way to avoid intoxication. The God who condemned the "strong drink" of ancient times is not likely to approve of even moderate drinking of beverages, far more intoxicating and harmful. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

James D. Bales said: "Well did Dr. Ivy say: 'Let us inquire who is really responsible for the fact that the consumption of alcoholic beverages has created such a tremendous social evil in the U.S.A. the abstainers are not responsible. The heavy drinkers and alcoholics are not responsible because they are the worst advertisements that the consumption of alcoholic beverages have. What group then is responsible? It must be the occasional and moderate drinkers who can control their drinking. That is the group which glamorize the social custom of drinking alcoholic beverages, and is responsible for the perpetuation of the huge public health and social problem.'"

How is one going to use temperance when the very first drink affects the "self-control" part of the brain? (Neil Kessel and Henry Walton, Alcoholism, Penquin Books, 1969, p. 26).

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." (I Cor. 10:31).

"... abstain from every form of evil." (I Thess. 5:22).

"But now I have written unto you not to keep company if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard or an extortioner; with such a one, no, not to eat." (I Cor. 5:11).

If one wants Bible authority for alcoholic consumption, they will have to find it somewhere besides Eph. 5:18; I Tim. 3:8; and Rom. 14:21!

* * * * *

Footnotes

1. Jim McGuiggan, The Bible, The Saint, and the Liquor Industry, p. 112, 1977
2. Ibid, p. 125
3. James D. Bales, The Deacon and His Work, Shreveport, La., Lambert Book House, 1967, p. 24
4. Ibid, p. 24
5. Ibid, p. 25
6. Ibid, p. 25
7. Ibid, p. 25
8. Ibid, p. 29
9. Ibid, p. 31
10. Albert Barnes, Notes on the New Testament, Romans, Grand Rapids, Michigan, Baker Book House
11. William Patton, Bible Wines, Little Rock, Ark., Central Baptist Church Publications, P.O. Box 1146, pp. 74-75
12. Thomas Raves, Alcohol, tract, Ft. Worth, Tx., Star Pub., p. 3
13. Bales, op. cit., p. 35-36

N O T E S
(This page is blank on purpose)

GRACE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

by George Battey

THE PROBLEM STATED

Gal. 3:10-12 and other passages have led some to conclude that the Mosaic Law was a system of legalism requiring perfection from the Jews. This is a mistaken concept of the Old Testament.

The preachers of the Reformation Movement are, perhaps, the propagators of the idea that Moses' Law was a legalistic system requiring works of merit. The Reformers overreacted to the Roman Catholic system of meritorious works and went to the other extreme saying that salvation was by grace ALONE without works of any kind. The following quotation from Calvin shows the typical attitude toward Moses' Law:

By the Law, I understand not only the ten Commandments which contain a complete rule of life, but the whole system of religion delivered by the hand of Moses. ... In the precepts of the law, God is seen as the rewarder only of perfect righteousness (a righteousness of which all are destitute) ... The law was given, in order to convert a great man into a little man - to show that you have no power of your own for righteousness; and might thus, poor, needy, and destitute, flee to grace.¹

Calvin viewed the Old Testament Law as a "covenant of works" requiring perfectionism.

The problem with this line of reasoning is that if one views the Mosaic Law as a legalistic system requiring perfectionism, it will likely lead to a rather dim view of legal aspects of the New Testament.

Some within the Restoration Movement have fallen victim to this line of reasoning. K. C. Moser wrote two books, The Gist of Romans and The Way of Salvation. In these books he propagates the theory that Moses' Law was all law with no grace. Following are some examples of his reasoning:

...² ... under the Law of Moses ... the principle of works certainly prevailed

... since the law put man upon that principle, the principle of works, the Jews could not, therefore, be justified by the law. ... } the principle of works, as we have shown, necessarily excludes the grace of God.

If these things are correct, then I would like to know how any Jew living under the Mosaic Law was saved? Listen to Moser: "Under the Law, man was shut up to the principle of works. He had no sacrifice that could take away sins. For good reasons God placed man upon his own responsibility. It was do or be damned."⁴

If I asked, "Could the Law simply be used as conditions necessary for receiving the grace of God?" Moser would answer like this: "To condition justification upon the principle of works is to make grace void."⁵

Could a Jew be a son of Abraham and merely observe the Law as an expression of his faith in God? Moser says: "It was IMPOSSIBLE to be sons of Abraham through the law, because the law was of works, not of faith."⁶

With this line of reasoning, Moser has made it impossible for any Jew (including Moses himself) to be saved. Moser is wrong because Moses was saved! and he was a son of Abraham while observing the Law.

Anyone taking the position that the Mosaic law was legalistic, requiring perfectionism has made it impossible for any Jew living under the Law to be saved.

1. If one cannot be saved by following a system of legalism (as Gal. 3:11 teaches), and
2. If Moses' Law was such a system, then
3. No one living under the Mosaic Law was saved.

The above conclusion is inescapable.

As a whole, very little research has been offered to adequately explain how saints in the Mosaic economy were justified. We must exercise care so as not to leave the impression that the Old Testament was all law with no grace and that the New Testament is all grace with no law.

THE CORRECT VIEW OF MOSES' LAW

To give a correct assessment of Moses' Law, we begin with a very basic point: some saints living under the Mosaic system were justified! How they were justified is another question. Notice first a few saints who were accounted as righteous:

Zacharias and Elisabeth (Luke 1:5-6)
 Joseph (Matt. 1:19)
 Simeon (Luke 2:25)
 Moses and Elijah (Matt. 17:1-4)
 David (Rom. 4:6-8)

Other names could easily be given, but this is sufficient to show that some, at least, were deemed righteous and justified.

How these saints became justified is a deeper question. I maintain they were justified "by grace through faith" (Eph. 2:8-9) just like we are today. With this as a starting premise we begin a critical look at the law itself.

TWO COMPONENTS OF THE LAW

The Mosaic Law consisted of two distinct elements:

1. Legal Elements
2. Gracious Elements

Paul, himself, recognized these two elements in Rom. 10:5-8. "For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doeth those things shall live by them. But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;". It is interesting that verse five is a quotation from the Law (Lev. 18:5), BUT verses 6-8, which describe the "righteousness of faith" is ALSO a quotation from the Law (Deut. 30:11-14). Paul had the "legal" demands of the Law in mind when he wrote verse five, and he had the "grace" element in mind when he wrote verses 6-8.

As we focus upon the "legal" element, or requirement, we find that in isolation it contains no grace. When viewed alone in isolation, a "legal" element demands perfect obedience. This is why Paul wrote, "the law is not of faith" (Gal. 3:12), because faith and grace are twins. Paul was examining the legal demands of the Law completely divorced from any gracious elements. (This is now speaking of one element within the covenant, not the covenant as a whole).

As mentioned before, the Mosaic Law had not only "legal" elements, but also "gracious" elements. The Old Testament is teeming with hundreds of references to God's graciousness. (See Deut. 7:7-9; Dan. 9:9; Rom. 5:20 for just a few examples). The entire sacrificial system was a "gracious" element (Lev. 17:11). The ultimate example was forgiveness of sins which was offered to Israel (Ex. 20:6; 34:6-7).

Since the Law contained not only legal elements, but also gracious elements, God calls upon Israel to obey Him without any hint that they are being overburdened (Deut. 5:27-39; 30:11-14 NASV). Obedience to the Law could not be fulfilled by mere legalism. The law was not some fiendish trick God played upon man to trick him into thinking he could save himself when all along it was impossible.

1. The Law required love for God (Deut. 6:5).
2. It required love for one's neighbor (Rom. 13:8-10).
3. It demanded faith (Matt. 23:23; Heb. 2:4).
4. The Law was "holy, righteous and good" (Rom. 7:12).
5. The Law was "spiritual" (Rom. 7:14).
6. It was given for the peoples' "good always" (Deut. 6:24).
7. The Law was given so people might "set their hope in God" (Ps. 78:5-7).
8. The Law was to be in the heart (Isa. 51:7).
9. The Law required not only fleshly circumcision, but also circumcision of the heart (Deut. 10:6-10).

THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW

What place did the Law serve in the lives of the Jews? We might say there was an ultimate purpose and an immediate purpose; a long term goal and a short term goal.

1. **ULTIMATELY** the Law was given to point men to Christ (Gal. 3:24-25).
2. **IMMEDIATELY** the Law served as conditions necessary to receive the grace of God (Ex. 20:6).

Obedience to the Law was simply an expression of trust in God. The Law was designed to foster dependence upon God and His grace rather than upon man himself. If a man arrogantly focused his attention upon himself and sought the Law with a self-righteous attitude, thinking he merited, or deserved salvation, then the Law was an instrument of death and condemnation (11 Cor. 3:7-9). However, if a man would humbly submit to the Law depending on God's grace, realizing he could never merit, or deserve salvation, then the Law was an instrument of life (Ps. 119:93).

THE SACRIFICES

What place did the animal sacrifices play in the Mosaic system? Certain passages seem to indicate that when a sacrifice was offered the worshipper would be forgiven (Lev. 4:20). However, the New Testament indicates that an animal sacrifice cannot take away sin (Heb. 10:1-4). How may these two passages be harmonized?

Many hold to the idea that the animal sacrifices merely "rolled" the sins forward for one year at a time. Although Heb. 10:3 seems to teach this theory, it actually does not. There is no Biblical evidence for the "rolling forward" theory.

The sacrifice in view in Heb. 10:1-4 is that of the Day of Atonement. On this day sins were called to remembrance, but what sins? Were all the sins of one's entire past life remembered again? NO! Ezk. 18:21-22 makes it abundantly clear that once a sinner was forgiven of their sins they would NOT be mentioned again. God would not forgive the sinner and then bring them back up again next year.

The only sins that were remembered (as far as we have record) were sins of ignorance, which had not been cared for previously in the past year (Heb. 9:7 NASV). The faithful Israelites enjoyed actual and full forgiveness of sins under the Mosaic system, not just a "rolling forward" of sins.

Some will object saying, "If saints were actually forgiven BEFORE the shedding of Christ's blood, then His blood really was not necessary." In response, we must first realize the blood of Jesus was necessary to forgive the sins of these Old Testament saints. I am not saying the blood was unnecessary. I am merely saying that sins were forgiven in view of the blood that would someday be shed.

Most will admit that some people enjoyed actual forgiveness BEFORE the blood shed took place. In Mark 2:5, for example, Jesus said, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." Was this man actually forgiven? Were his sins merely "rolled forward" for a year? Was Jesus' blood necessary to forgive this man's sins? To ask these questions is to answer them. Now, if this man could be forgiven of sins before the shedding of Jesus' blood, why could not others?

Going back to Heb. 10:1-4, the writer is merely trying to show that the sacrifices themselves were not the BASIS of forgiveness. The sacrifices were merely CONDITIONS that must be met to receive forgiveness. The actual basis of forgiveness was the grace of God and the blood of Christ. To illustrate, baptism is not efficacious in and of itself. There is nothing in the water itself that magically removes sins. We believe that baptism is only a CONDITION that must be met and having met that condition we are forgiven by Jesus' blood. The sacrifices of Israel, then, served as conditions and in that sense they forgave sins (Lev. 4:20). However, they were not the basis of forgiveness (Heb. 10:1-4).

FIRST CENTURY MISCONCEPTIONS

Although the Mosaic law was not overburdensome, nor legalistic as God gave it, several New Testament passages seem to describe it as such. How may we explain those passages which depict the Mosaic Law in such negative terms?

The key to understanding these negative statements about Moses' Law is to realize that Judaism had become corrupted by the time of Jesus. Most of the negative statements are not so much against the Jewish perversions of the Mosaic Law.

Paul describes the Jewish perversion of the Law in the book of Romans. "But Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at the law. Why? Because they did not pursue it by faith, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone." (Rom. 9:31-32, NASV). Paul was not criticizing Israel for pursuing the Law, but he was criticizing the MANNER in which they pursued the Law - "as by works." Israel was using the Mosaic Law, not as conditions of salvation, but as the BASIS of salvation. The Jews thought they could keep the Law so perfectly so as to put God in their debt. Paul continues this line of reasoning into the next chapter: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." (Rom. 10:1-3).

Clearly there are two kinds of righteousness mentioned here: their own righteousness, and God's righteousness. Israel felt she could rely on her own works to save her. These Jews felt they deserved salvation. They did not realize their own righteousness was "as filthy rags" (Isa. 64:6). Because of their arrogance and self-righteousness, the Jews did not feel they needed a Savior. They felt they deserved salvation and they did not want Jesus. They "stumbled at the stumbling stone" (Rom. 9:32-33). Other passages enforce the

idea that the Jews were trusting their own works to save them rather than God's grace (cf. Rom. 2:23; 2:7-20; Luke 18:9-14; John 9:41).

Now, if a man decides to rely on his own works to save him, those works must be perfect. To be saved on the basis of works and law is to be saved without grace. That is why Paul wrote, "Cursed is every one who CONTINUETH NOT IN ALL THINGS which are written in the book of the law." (Gal. 3:10).

The Law of Moses NEVER taught someone to rely on their works. It never taught someone to boast. Jesus did not excuse certain one who "trusted in themselves that they were righteous" (Luke 18:9). He realized the Mosaic Law taught a humble submissive walk with God (Mic. 7:8) and so He condemned the self-righteous, boasting attitude which some had. No matter how well one may keep the Law of God, they are still an "unprofitable servant" and in need of mercy (Luke 17:10).

ATTITUDE AND LAW

To illustrate the New Testament treatment of justification we would like to draw some parallels from what constitutes true worship. Acceptable worship must include two components: a right attitude (spirit), and a right method (according to truth) from John 4:24. Here are the possible combinations:

#1	#2	#3	#4
wrong attitude	right attitude	wrong attitude	right attitude
wrong method	wrong method	right method	right method

Only # 4 constitutes true worship.

Likewise, acceptable obedience must include two elements: a right attitude, and a right law. Here are the combinations:

#1	#2	#3	#4
wrong attitude	right attitude	wrong attitude	right attitude
wrong law	wrong law	right law	right law

1 above describes the Judaizers whom Paul attacked in Galatians:

2 describes some denominational people.

3 describes some of us in the church.

4 is the only acceptable obedience.

Since Paul was attacking group # 1 in the book of Galatians, sometimes he will be focusing in upon the wrong attitude of the Judaizers while at other times he will be focusing upon the law which the Judaizers were attempting to bring into the church. A failure to make this distinction when reading Galatians may result in one attributing negative characteristics to the Law when in reality Paul was speaking about the attitudes of the Judaizers toward the Law.

CONCLUSION

We must exercise care in studying the Mosaic Law so as not to conceive of it as a legalistic system which allowed for boasting and glorying upon man's part.

A mistaken view of the Mosaic law has become one of the foundation blocks of those in the "Unity Movement." W. Carl Ketcherside (a major "Unity in Diversity" advocate) wrote: "Justification is available upon either of two conditions: law or faith. There is no other ground for hope." "After fifteen centuries of dealing with man in a legalistic covenantal arrangement, God sent His Son into the world. He was sent to condemn sin in the flesh and to institute a new and living way under which man would be justified by faith."⁸ "With the

coming of faith in Christ as the basis of righteousness, law was terminated as a system of seeking justification."

Ketcherside is laboring under the Calvinistic theory that grace and law cannot mix. He has made the monumental error of viewing the Mosaic law as all law with no grace and the New Covenant as all grace with no law.

We must not make this mistake of saying grace and law cannot mix. Moses' Law was grace and law intermingled. It served as conditions necessary to receive God's saving grace. The New Testament law serves the same purpose in our lives today. Let us not be guilty of accusing any Law God ever gave as a "law of works."

* * * * *

FOOTNOTES

1. John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, trans. by Henry Beveridge, Grand Rapids, Mi., William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1983, reprint, II, vii, 1, 8, 9
2. K. C. Moser, The Way of Salvation, Delight, Ar., Gospel Light Publishing Co., ND, p. 39
3. Ibid, p. 44
4. Ibid, p. 35
5. Ibid, p. 50
6. Ibid, p. 49, emphasis mine, GFB
7. W. Carl Ketcherside, ... that the world may believe ... A Study of the Covenants, Studio City, Ca., World Literature Crusade, ND, p. 144
8. Ibid, p. 145
9. Ibid, pp. 146-147

PREMILLENNIALISM: A SYSTEM OF INFIDELITY

by Alan Bonifay

A rash of paper-back books is flooding the religious market these days advocating the well-worn theory of premillennialism. One such production, which is very popular, is THE LATE GREAT PLANET EARTH. It is authored by Hal Lindsey, a graduate of The School of Theology at Dallas Theological Seminary. The thrust of the book is two-fold: (1) To espouse the premillennial theory of Christ's second coming; (2) To interpret present world political trends as signs of the imminent return of Jesus Christ. It is a dangerous book, and if believed and followed, will cause many to be lost. We shall investigate this system of infidelity by: (1) defining the issue, (2) examining the implications of the theory, and (3) discussing the meaning of Revelation twenty.

THE ISSUE DEFINED

The premillennial concept is the result of a gross literalizing of a few symbolic verses in the Book of Revelation, coupled with a complete disregard for scores of Bible verses of clearest import. The word "premillennial" is derived from two components: (a) **Pre**, meaning "before" and (b) **Millennium**, denoting a period of 1000 years. It suggests that Christ will return to the earth just prior to a 1000 year reign.

The premillennial theory contains several facets and for that reason, the following quotations are introduced to bring the main points into focus:

Baker's Dictionary of Theology (p. 352): "It is held that the O.T. prophets predicted the re-establishment of David's kingdom and that Christ himself intended to bring this about. It is alleged, however, that because the Jews refused his person and work he postponed the establishment of his kingdom until the time of his return. Meanwhile, it is argued, the Lord gathered together 'the Church' as a kind of interim measure."

A Handbook of Theological Terms by Van A. Harvey (p. 151): "Generally premillennialists believe that shortly before the second coming the world will be marked by extraordinary tribulation and evil and the appearance of the Anti-Christ. At his coming Christ will destroy this Anti-Christ and believers will be raised from the dead... There will then follow a millennium of peace and order over which Christ will reign with his saints. At the close of this time Satan will be loosed and the forces of evil will once again be rampant. The wicked will then be raised, and a final judgement will take place in which Satan and all evil ones will be consigned to eternal punishment."

Christian Doctrine - A Presentation of Biblical Theology by James A. Nichols, Jr. (p. 279): "For centuries the Jews have been scattered among many nations. In preparation for the return of Christ and the beginning of the millennium, they are being gathered back to their own land, according to prophecy, in a national restoration. David's throne will be reestablished at Jerusalem, and through these restored people as a nucleus Christ will reign with his immortal saints over the whole world."

To summarize: the premillennial view asserts that Christ came to this earth for the purpose of setting up His kingdom. He was, however, surprisingly rejected by the Jews. Hence, He postponed the kingdom plans and set up the Church instead: as sort of an emergency measure. When He returns, He will allegedly raise only the righteous dead, restore national Israel, sit upon David's literal throne in Jerusalem, and there reign for a span of 1000 years. After this comes the resurrection of the wicked and the judgment. It is difficult to imagine how a view could contain so many errors which seem to be inherent in this doctrine.

The basic fallacy of the premillennial concept is a materialistic view of the reign of Christ. This same notion was entertained by the ancient Jews, and actually, was responsible for their rejection and crucifixion of the Messiah. The fact is, this mistaken Jewish expectation of a literal, physical kingdom spawned the millennial doctrine that was taught in the early post-apostolic age. As one historian noted:

"The idea of a millennial reign proceeded from Judaism, for among the Jews the representation was current, that the Messiah would reign a thousand years on earth, and then bring to a close the present terrestrial system. This calculation was arrived at, by a literal interpretation of Psalm 110:4. 'A thousand years are in thy sight as one day.' It was further argued that as the world was created in six days so it would last 6,000 years, the seventh thousand would be a period of repose, a sabbath on earth to be followed by the destruction of the world." (Neander's History of Christian Dogmas, Vol. I, p. 248).

The necessary implications of premillennial doctrine is indeed grave. This heresy strikes treacherously at numerous facets of Biblical truth, and in reality, it is a subtle form of infidelity which must be vigorously opposed.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE THEORY

Christ's Rejection By The Jews

The premillennial view implies that the Jewish rejection of Christ was an unexpected miscarriage in the plans of God, whereas, the truth is that this rejection was plainly foretold by the Old Testament Prophets. Isaiah had prophetically said: "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" (Isa. 53:1). In the New Testament, when describing the rebellion of the Jews, John wrote: "But though he had done so many miracles before him, yet they believed not on him: That the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?" (John 12:37-38). Again, it was prophesied: "The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner," (Psalms 118:22). The fulfillment of these prophecies is found in Matt. 21:33-46. Verses 42-44 state:

"Jesus saith unto them, did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."

Having been foretold centuries before, the Jewish rejection of Christ should not have been a surprise to anyone!

The Kingdom

Nothing in the Scriptures is any clearer than the fact that the kingdom of God was to be established shortly after the death of Christ. Daniel the prophet declared: "And in the days of these kingdoms shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed" (Dan. 2:44).

The phrase "these kings" of the prophecy was a reference to the Roman kings (the 4th part of the image of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, Dan. 2:31ff). The Roman empire came into dominance in 63 B.C., and it fell in 476 A.D., hence, it follows that the kingdom of God **WAS** established sometime between those two dates: else Daniel was a false prophet! The premillennial assertion that the kingdom was not set up in the 1st century, rather that it is yet to come, strikes at the very heart of the inspiration of the prophets: therefore it is infidelic in substance.

John the Baptizer, Jesus, and the twelve disciples all preached that the kingdom was **at hand**, which literally means "is come near." Compare Luke 21:30 for the meaning of "at hand": "when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of our own selves that summer is now

nigh at hand." Thus, they preached the nearness of the kingdom of God, and such can scarcely be harmonized with the notion that it has not come.

Christ exclaimed, "Verily I say unto you, that there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." (Mark 9:1). Either the kingdom came within the lifetime of those to whom He referred, or they are getting very old. Observe, please: Jesus promised that the kingdom would come with power (Mark 9:1); but that power would accompany the reception of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8); thus, the kingdom would come with the arrival of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost (some 50 days after Christ's death, Acts 2:4). Therefore, the kingdom was at that time established.

When Paul wrote to the Colossians, he affirmed that God "delivered us out of the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear son," (Col. 1:13). The term "translated" means "to remove from one place to another." The tense of the verbs (hath delivered, hath translated) reveals that their entrance into the kingdom had already occurred at some point in the past.

When John wrote to "the seven churches which are in Asia," he stated that Christ had loosed them from their sins by His blood and made them "to be a kingdom of priests," (1:6). Furthermore, he was a partaker with them "in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ" (1:9).

The existence of God's kingdom on earth is further demonstrated by the fact that the same process which moves you into the kingdom also puts you into the Church. Jesus taught that the "new birth," consisting of being born of "water and the Spirit," enables one to enter the kingdom (John 3:5). This is simply receiving the Spirit's message (the Gospel) and being baptized in water, whereupon one is regenerated. This is the very thing which puts one into the body (1 Cor. 12:13), which is the Church (Col. 1:18). Hence, to enter the church is equivalent to becoming a citizen of the kingdom. Thus, the doctrine that the kingdom was postponed due to the rejection of Christ by the Jews is totally false. The kingdom of God was established on Pentecost fifty days after Christ's death!

The Church

The claim that the Church was set up as an "interim measure" due to Christ's postponement of the kingdom, actually suggests the idea that the Church is but an accident, which was no part of God's original revealed plan. You could scarcely over-exaggerate the error here. The Bible clearly teaches that the "manifold wisdom of God" is made known "through the Church," and this is according to the "eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:10-11). The Church was in God's plan from eternity. The death of Christ was known before the foundation of the world (1 Peter 1:19-20; Rev. 13:8). From this it is also known that the shed blood of that death "purchased the Church" (Acts 20:28).

If the death of Christ was thus known for ages, it is certain that the result of that death was likewise known, namely, the establishment of the Church. Actually, the Church is simply a body of baptized believers who have been saved from their past sins (Acts 2:38; 1 Cor. 12:13). The Church is the saved! (Eph. 5:23). If the Church is only an accident, that implies an accidental salvation.

That the Church is a part of God's original plan for human redemption is further seen in the types of the Mosaic age. The tabernacle (specifically the Holy Place) and subsequently the temple were types of the Church (1 Cor. 3:16; Eph. 2:21; Heb. 9:9). This, then, pictured its future establishment and its integral part in the plan of Jehovah.

The Promise to Abraham

The doctrine of premillennialism dogmatically asserts that God unconditionally promised Canaan's land to the descendants of Abraham. It is contended that the promise has never been completely granted, hence, the claim is made that Jews will eventually be

restored to Palestine in order that the Abrahamic covenant might be fulfilled. Indeed, some are declaring without hesitation that, with the establishment of Israel as an independent government in 1948, the Jewish restoration has begun, and this is the signal for the imminent return of Jesus. The anti-scriptural errors involved in this view are plenteous and pathetic.

Concerning Canaan, Jehovah promised Abraham, "Unto thy seed will I give this land" (Gen. 12:7). This land covenant with the patriarch involved all that land "from the river of Egypt, unto the great river, the river Euphrates" (Gen. 15:8). It was pledged to his seed forever (Gen. 13:15). Two questions are of concern here: Was the promise ever totally fulfilled? Was the promise in any sense conditional? An understanding of the answers to these queries devastates the premillennial theory.

First, when the Law of Moses was given a provision was made for the establishment of cities of refuge, where a manslayer who had killed without premeditation might flee for the preservation of his life. Initially three cities were to be set aside for this purpose. Moses declared that "if Jehovah thy God enlarge thy border, as he hath sworn unto thy fathers, **and give thee all the land which he promised to give unto thy fathers: if thou shalt keep all this commandment to do it, which I command thee this day, to love Jehovah thy God, and to walk ever in his ways; then shalt thou add three cities more for thee, besides these three.**" (Deut. 19:7-9).

Thus six cities of refuge would be evidence of the fulfillment of the land promise to Abraham's seed. A reading of Joshua 10:7-8 reveals that the cities of Kedesh, Shechem, Hebron, Bezer, Ramoth and Golan were assigned as havens of refuge - six cities - thus **"all the land had been given"**; the land covenant **has been fulfilled!**

This is further demonstrated by Joshua 21:43: "So Jehovah gave unto Israel **all the land which he swore to give unto their fathers:** and they possessed it and dwelt therein."

Additionally, it is specifically stated of Solomon's time: "And Solomon ruled over all the kingdoms from the River unto the land of the Philistines, and unto the border of Egypt" (I Kings 4:21; II Chron. 9:26).

Finally, Nehemiah rehearses the fact that God brought Abraham from Ur of Chaldees to give him the land of Canaan, and says "thou hast performed they words for thou art righteous" (Neh. 9:7-8). It is evident that the premillennial heresy implies the exact opposite of God's Word on this matter.

Premillennialists contend that Palestine was promised to Israel "for ever" (Gen. 13:15). This fails to recognize that the term "forever" is not always used in the Bible in a completely unlimited sense. For example, circumcision was an "everlasting covenant" (Gen. 17:13); the Passover was an ordinance "forever" (Ex. 12:15); and the Levitical system had an "everlasting priesthood" (Num. 25:13). These Old Testament institutions passed away with the abrogation of the Law. It is clearly demonstrated that "forever" sometimes has a temporary significance.

The truth is that the Old Testament clearly indicates that Israel's possession of Palestine was conditioned upon their faithfulness to God - a condition which they repeatedly violated. It was foretold: "When ye transgress the covenant of Jehovah your God, which he commanded you, and go and serve other gods, and bow down yourselves to them; then will the anger of Jehovah be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given you," (Josh. 23:16). That time eventually came and the Jews lost their "deed" to the promised land.

Jeremiah's Visual Aid

In the nineteenth chapter of Jeremiah, the prophet is instructed of Jehovah: "Go and buy a potter's earthen bottle." Subsequently, he is told to go to the valley of Hinnom and to prophesy to the inhabitants of Jerusalem concerning their sins and their eventual destruction. As a symbol of this promised punishment, Jeremiah is commanded to "break the bottle" and to proclaim its meaning: "Even so will I break this people and this city, as

one breaketh a potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again," (Jer. 19:10-11). This prophecy was partially fulfilled with a siege of the Babylonians in 586 B.C., but was completely and ultimately fulfilled with the destruction of national Israel by the Romans in A.D. 70.

After the Jewish nation was destroyed, it was so permanently scattered by the providence of God that it cannot be made whole again! Regardless of the fact that some Jews are migrating back to Palestine, they will never be restored as God's nation.

The Pronouncement Of Christ

Further confirmation of the fact that national Israel will never be restored is the plain teaching of Christ Himself. In Matthew chapter twenty-one, Jesus told the parable of the wicked husbandmen, the design of which was to emphasize how wretchedly the Jews had treated God's prophets, such rebellion reaching its zenith with the crucifixion of Christ. Because of their rejection of Jehovah's precious stone, the Lord said to the Jews: "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matt. 21:43).

The inspired apostle Peter unquestionably declares that the "nation" to be henceforth so blessed is God's "holy nation," the church (II Peter 2:7-10). The Bible is exceedingly clear; Christians are the seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:26-29), the "Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16).

Restoration Proof Text

The premillennialists purports to have a whole repertoire of proof texts to substantiate their claim for Israel's restoration. An examination of several of these will reveal a characteristic of deceitfully handling the Word of God.

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." (Isa. 2:2-4).

It is argued that this passage will be fulfilled with the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom. Actually, it is a prophecy of the establishment of the Church, which, according to I Tim. 3:15 is the "house" under consideration. This was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), which was the last days. "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams." (Acts 2:16-17).

If there is a dispensation yet to come, namely the Millennium, then Peter was wrong. We are not in the last days, but in the next-to-the-last days. Isaiah 2:4 does not predict a time of universal world peace, rather it characterizes the peaceful disposition of those who flow into the house of God - the Church.

Isaiah 11:1-16

This is a prophecy regarding Christ (1-5) and the establishment of His divine government in the Church. Again, the peaceful attitude or atmosphere of the Church is beautifully described (6-9) as being God's holy mountain, which is the Church (Dan. 2:35, 44). To clinch the matter, verse ten is quoted in the New Testament (Rom. 15:12) by an inspired writer, and is shown to be applicable to the reception of the Gentile nations into the Church. To suggest that it applies to some future age is to

totally disregard the inspired interpretation of the prophecy and to reflect on the credibility of the New Testament penman.

Hosea 2:14-23; 3:5

Hosea's prophecies are frequently said to point to Israel's restoration in the Millennium. The New Testament says otherwise. Paul quotes Hosea 2:3 and 1:10 in his letter to the Romans (9:25-26), and thereby shows that the restoration foretold by Hosea was of a spiritual nature, including both Jews and Gentiles. This would be accomplished in the Church. Hosea 3:5 speaks of Israel returning and seeking Jehovah and "David their king" (certainly not the literal David) "in the latter days." This is another clear indication that the Christian era, the reign of Christ, is in view (cf. Luke 1:32-33; Acts 2:30-36; 2:16-17).

Amos 9:11-15

This is a favorite passage for the premillennialists, but to no avail. It is argued that the rebuilding of the tabernacle of David refers to the restoration of national Judaism in the Millennium, at which time, Solomon's temple will literally be rebuilt and the Jewish economy be reinstated. In Acts chapter fifteen a question was raised among the early disciples as to whether Gentiles were obligated to circumcision. Peter, who had preached to the Gentiles first, denied such. James utters an inspired oracle, corroborating Peter, and in connection, he cites the words of Amos concerning the rebuilding of David's tabernacle. The rebuilding of the tabernacle of David was the entronement of Christ and the establishment of His Church. A part of this design was that the Gentiles might have the privilege of seeking the Lord. It would thus follow, if the tabernacle of David is yet in the future, as premillennialists contend, then all Gentiles are still lost!

Notice Acts 15:16-17: "After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things."

The claim that Judaism will someday be restored, in view of the books of Galatians and Hebrews, is absolutely incredible.

There are, of course, many additional prophecies which, according to the premillennialists, predict Israel's restoration: none of these demonstrates a restoration of national Israel in a future millennium. It may be suggested in summation that the Old Testament prophecies which speak of a restoration of Israel pertain either to a return to Palestine from the confines of the Babylonian captivity (606-536 B.C.), in the time of Cyrus of Persia (II Chron. 36:22-23). A number of prophecies in the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel are of this nature. Or the restoration of Israel to Jehovah's favor spiritually through the Church. Peter affirmed that a major thrust of the Old Testament prophecy was concerning salvation, which "the prophets sought and searched diligently," and which has now been announced through the preaching of the Gospel (I Peter 1:9-12). The premillennial doctrine virtually ignores the spiritual emphasis of Old Testament prophecy. Actually, it is crassly materialistic in character. It must be utterly rejected.

THE THRONE OF DAVID

The theory of premillennialism holds that Christ will return to this earth to be seated on the literal throne of David in the city of Jerusalem. The underlying fallacy of this view is its materialistic approach to the reign of Christ. The Lord's kingdom is not a worldly, political, economy, as was David's. Jesus plainly said: "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). Remarkably the premillennialists contend that Jesus' kingdom is of this world.

Isaiah prophesied that Christ would be heir to the throne of David. "Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even for ever" (Isa. 9:7). Additionally, the angel Gabriel informed Mary concerning her expected son, "He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:32-33). The question is not whether Christ was to sit on the throne of David: the controversy is concerning the nature of that throne. Is it the physical, literal throne of David? Or is it the spiritual throne of David? That Christ's reign on the throne of David is of a heavenly, spiritual nature is manifestly evident from these arguments.

The last king to reign on the Davidic throne of the Old Testament era was Jehoiachin (also known as Jeconiah, or abbreviated, Coniah). In Jeremiah 22:24-30 it was prophesied that he and his seed (Judah) would be delivered into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar and cast into a foreign land (Babylon). Specifically concerning Coniah it was said: "Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days; for no more shall a man of his seed prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling in Judah." The issue is clear - no descendant of Coniah would ever again prosper ruling from the literal throne of David. The fact is that Christ was of the seed of Jeconiah, both from a legal standpoint through Joseph (Matt. 1:12, 16) and from a physical consideration through Mary (Luke 3:27 via Shealtiel). It follows that Christ could never reign on David's earthly throne and prosper!

The prophet Zechariah prophesied regarding the Christ thusly: "Behold the man whose name is the Branch: and he shall grow up out of his place; and he shall build the temple of Jehovah and he shall bear the glory, and he shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both," Zech. 6:12, 13. This passage positively affirms that Christ will function as a priest and reign as a king on His throne simultaneously. According to Heb. 8:4, Christ could not act as a priest while on earth, because He was not descended from the priestly tribe. Since the Lord could not be a priest on earth, and since He is a King and Priest jointly, it follows that His reign as King cannot be earthly in nature: It is heavenly.

In II Sam. 7:12-15, King David was informed by the prophet Nathan: "And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom: He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom for ever: I will be his father, and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men: But my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away before thee."

This is a prediction of the reign of Christ upon David's throne is beyond question. In view of this promise David was told: "thy throne shall be established forever," (II Sam. 7:16). It is extremely significant to note in this connection that Christ is to be seated on David's throne over His kingdom while David is still asleep with the fathers (i.e. in the grave). In glaring contrast to this is the premillennial notion which contends that Christ will sit upon David's throne **after** the resurrection of **all** the righteous, including David.

Peter's sermon on Pentecost sheds light on this matter: "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day: Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up. Whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ." (Acts 2:29-36).

The purpose of the resurrection of Christ was that He might take His place on David's throne. According to verse 36, Christ is now ruling and reigning in His Kingdom upon David's throne. This, of course, is the fulfillment of the prophecy of Nathan in 11 Sam. 7, which stated that Christ would be ruling on David's throne while David was still in the grave.

The reign of Christ on David's throne is not an event awaiting future fulfillment. The Son of God has been reigning over His kingdom since the day of Pentecost. Hear His promise to early saints: "He that overcometh, I will give to him to sit down with me in my throne, as I also overcame, and sat down with my Father in his throne," (Rev. 3:21). Notice the past tense "sat down." Clearly Christ is now on the throne. If it be contended that this passage speaks of Christ on the Father's throne and not David's, it need only be replied that the Father's throne and David's throne are biblically the same. Solomon sat down upon the throne of David (1 Kings 2:12), which was in reality Jehovah's throne (1 Chron. 29:23). Hence, when Christ sat down on the Father's throne, He was on the throne of David! He is presently reigning and will continue to do so until all His enemies are destroyed, the last of which will be death (1 Cor. 15:25, 26). To speak of Christ on David's throne is simply to affirm that our Lord has "all authority in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). That to Him has been given "rule and authority, and power, and dominion" (Eph. 1:21); indeed that He exercises a regal reign characteristic of the great king that He is.

THE END - THE DAY - THE HOUR

Based primarily upon a misunderstanding of Revelation 20:1-6 premillennialists argue that there will be two resurrections of the dead. The first will occur at the time of Christ's coming and will consist of the righteous only. Following this, it is alleged, will be the 1,000 year reign of Christ on the earth. Terminating this will be the second resurrection (of the wicked) and then the judgment. There is no real support for this view. It contradicts numerous verses of clearest meaning. The scriptures teach that when the Lord Jesus comes that time will end; all the dead will be raised at the same time; judgment will occur; and eternity will commence.

The End

In 1 Cor. 15:23, Paul speaks of the "coming" of Christ. With reference to the second coming, he says, "Then cometh the end ..." (v. 24). It is obvious that the return of Christ is not to begin an earthly reign, rather it will bring to an end earthly affairs!

The Day

Jesus spoke of "the day" in which He would come (i.e., the day of His coming). In presenting this truth, the Lord referred to a divine destruction of former ages. "But as the days of Noe, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be" (Matt. 24:37-39).

Observe that on "the day" that Noah entered the ark, the antediluvian world was destroyed. The clear understanding of this passage is that the wicked will be destroyed in "the day" of Christ's coming. Certainly there is no room for a 1,000 year interval here.

The Hour

"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28, 29). This passage thoroughly negates the idea of two resurrections. It is hardly possible to conceive a clearer statement of the simultaneous nature of the resurrection of both classes.

Certainly there are contexts in which only the resurrection of the righteous is under consideration (John 6:44; II Thess. 4:13-14) but these by no means cancel the plain force of verses affirming a general resurrection of both the good and the bad at the same time.

The symbolic language of Revelation 20:1-6 must be brought into harmony with these clear and literal New Testament declarations of the coming of Christ, the resurrection and the judgment. One never interprets the plain, clear, and literal passages by the obscure, figurative, and symbolic passages. Rather, the symbolic passages must always be interpreted in the light of the literal and in harmony with the literal passages.

REVELATION 20:1-6

The 20th chapter of Revelation, verses one through six, is the very heart and soul of premillennialism. Indeed, it may be said, that if it were not for these half dozen verses, the theory would not even have a semblance of suggestion in the New Testament. Albert Barnes observes, "It is admitted, on all hands, that this doctrine, if contained in the scriptures at all, is found in this one passage only. It is not pretended that there is, in any other place, a direct affirmation that this will literally occur, nor would the advocates for that opinion undertake to show that it is fairly implied in any other part of the Bible. But it is strange, not to say improbable, that the doctrine of the literal resurrection of the righteous, a thousand years before the wicked, should be announced in one passage only." Note also this significant quotation from Geerhardus Vos concerning the relationship of the Book of Revelation to the premillennial view: "In regard to a book so enigmatical, it were presumptuous to speak with any degree of dogmatism, but the uniform absence of the idea of the millennium from the eschatological teaching of the New Testament elsewhere ought to render the exegete cautious before affirming its presence here."

Let us make a few observations concerning the purpose and form of the book of Revelation. The Church of the Apostolic Age was being severely persecuted, indeed, in subsequent years, it was subjected to a veritable blood-bath. The design of Revelation is to show: the relatively infant church would be heir to much persecution and suffering; the saints must persevere and by their faith overcome these trials; the Christ would ultimately be victorious over all His enemies. That the Book of Revelation is highly symbolic is evidenced not only by its content but also by the introduction. Christ "signified" the message by His angel unto John (1:1). The question naturally arises as to why the Lord chose symbols to be the vehicles of these truths. Symbolism frequently serves a two-fold purpose, to reveal and to conceal. The message of victory within the Book of Revelation, much of which is in the imagery that adorns the Old Testament, with which Christians were undoubtedly familiar, would be grasped by those early disciples. At the same time, the defeat of the persecuting powers was veiled to those not discerning the figures. One can well imagine how the trials for the Christians might have been intensified had they been discovered circulating a document which literally predicted the overthrow of their persecutors. As George Ladd points out: "In the Apocalypse symbolism becomes the main stock in trade, particularly as a technique for out living the course of history without employing historical names." It is thus a gross error to literalize the Book of Revelation, and this is precisely what the premillennialists have done with the first six verses of chapter twenty.

AN EXAMINATION OF THESE VERSES

An examination of these first half dozen verses in Revelation chapter twenty evidences these symbols:

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a. a key | f. thrones |
| b. a chain | g. a beast |
| c. a dragon or serpent | h. marks on foreheads and hands |
| d. an abyss | i. a resurrection |
| e. 1000 years | |

It is certainly a strange interpretation which contends that a figurative chain, and the dragon being thrown into a figurative abyss, which was locked with a figurative key, to be confined for a literal 1,000 years. It ought to be manifestly obvious that no literal reign of Christ upon the earth is here alluded to. Even if one does not understand the specific design of the symbols, he can see the symbolic import of the 1,000 years.

Perhaps this context is more significantly devastating to the premillennial theory for what it does not say, but which, if the theory were true, it surely would have mentioned. Noting is said about:

- a. Christ's second coming,
- b. The establishment of the kingdom,
- c. An earthly regime,
- d. A bodily reigning
- e. The throne of David,
- f. Or the Jews being regathered to Palestine.

Now, all of these elements are vitally important to the millennial view, yet they are conspicuously absent from this narrative.

Obviously the context of Revelation 20:1-6 is part of the design of the book as a whole. This section is a symbolic description of the revival of Christianity from a period of bloody persecution. For example, note that earlier (6:9-11), John had seen the "souls" of the martyrs "underneath the altar" crying, "How long, O Master, the holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" Here, John views the "souls" on "thrones" reigning with Christ. For awhile Christianity appeared to have been buried in tribulation, but ultimately it emerged; it was, figuratively speaking, resurrected. The Scripture speaks of figurative resurrections as well as literal one (Isa. 26:18; Ezk. 37:12; Rom. 11:15). "It would, therefore, not be inconsistent with analogy of prophecy if we should understand the Apostle as here predicting that a new race of men were to arise filled with the spirit of the martyrs, and were to live and reign with Christ a thousand years," (Hodge, Systematic Theology, p. 842). That this "resurrection" alludes to the triumphs of persecuted saints is further borne out by the fact that the "second death hath no power" over these reigning ones which harmonizes perfectly with chapter two verse eleven. "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." Thus, the "resurrection" of 20:6 is a figurative way of saying "overcome." The 1,000 years, of course, would also be symbolic in scope, suggesting either that the victory of God's cause as considered in this context would be lengthy in span, or possibly the 1,000 years may denote the completeness of the saint's triumph. At any rate it is certain that there is no support for the theory of premillennialism - Not in the book of Revelation - Not in the whole Bible. It is heresy.

STUDIES FROM ACTS

by Clovis Cook

"The Acts of the Apostles" is somewhat misleading: It leads the uninitiated reader to suppose that it deals with, or treats on all the acts of all the apostles, or nearly so to say the least, when in reality, it deals with, or treats on only a few acts of any of the apostles, and almost none of the acts of the majority. By omitting the two definite articles we obtain the title, Acts of Apostles, which answers well to the contents, representing some of the acts of some of the apostles, without pointing to the number of either. This seems to be the very title which the book bears in two of the oldest existing MSS. One of the two, the Sinaitic, simply styled it - Acts. The title was doubtless given after the book left the hands of its author; for the writers of that particular age were not accustomed to giving titles to their books; but it would be difficult to invent a better title than the one which we have mentioned: Acts of Apostles.

The book comes to us without external expression of its authorship; but in its opening salutation it is addressed to one Theophilus, and it claims to be from the pen of one who had written a previous treatise concerning the career of Jesus, addressed to the same person. This previous treatise is our third Gospel, and it is credited to Luke. We could doubtless introduce a great number of reasons and arguments as to why it is generally believed that the author of the third Gospel, is also the author of Acts, who of course is believed to be Luke. But my assigned subject is not to establish a title for a certain book of the New Testament, or to prove who its author may be, but rather, deal with three passages found in this book: Acts 3:21; Acts 3:19; Acts 2:38. It seems to me that the order of chronological sequence should be in reverse order: 2:38; 3:19; 3:21. However, we shall proceed as it is in the letter of assignment.

There are three key words found in these three verses, and if I understand my assignment correctly, I am to develop my part of this study in Acts as to the proper meaning of "until the times of restitution of all things" (3:21), "when the times of refreshing shall come" (3:19), and "ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (2:38). The question is: Do they all have reference to the same thing? Let us take a look at 3:21. Beginning with verse 20, "And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."

First, we must bear in mind that the word "restitution" is indicative of something **laid away**, put on hold or reserved, and is used with "from" (apo: in the Greek) which usually means "separation, departure, cessation, completion, reversal" etc. (Strong's). Therefore, Webster's first definition is: "1. Restoration to the rightful owner of something lost or taken away. ... 3. A return to a former condition." W. E. Vine says under "Restoration," "from the same Greek word: from 'apo', back, again (Restoration)." Thayer says, prop. (meaning it should be taken in its literal sense) "To be laid away, laid by, reserved" (b) Metaph. "Reserved for one awaiting him." (p. 63).

There seems to be no question concerning the tragic rejection of Israel, which brought about a break in covenant relationship between God and Israel. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; and this people will rise up, and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land, whither they go to be among them, and will forsake me, and break my covenant which I have made with them." (Deut. 31:16). See also Judges 2:17 and Ezekiel 16:17, all these things Moses warned against in Exodus 34:15. Breaking covenant relationship with God by the children of Israel, and later her treacherous sister Judah, who had seen all the things that backsliding Israel had done, when she went upon every high mountain and under every green tree, and there hath played the harlot (Jer. 3:6). In verse seven, "And I said after she had done all these things, Turn thou unto me. But she returned not ..." (B.C. 629). Also, in Amos the fourth chapter, beginning with verse six the prophet reels off several

providential hardships, "Yet ye have not returned unto me, saith the Lord." (B.C. 787). One hundred and fifty-eight years after the words of Amos, Jeremiah said she still had not returned. Judah did worse, and was called "treacherous sister." With reference to her return, it is said: "And yet for all of this her treacherous sister Judah hath not turned unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the Lord" (Jer. 3:10). The word "feignedly" means: "an untruth, by implication a sham, without a cause, deceit(-ful), lying, vain thing, wrongfully" etc. from a prim. root; "to cheat i.e. be untrue (usually in words); fail, deal falsely, lie." (Strong's, p. 121 in his Hebrew Lexicon). It appears that full restoration, as far as Israel is concerned, could only become reality spiritually speaking, for in this passage (3:21) it is stated: "... which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." So, everything that needs restoring, or reinstituted, including man himself who marred his image over six thousand years ago, his conduct, his religion, etc., may be included, and must be restored before the Lord's second coming.

Many of the prophecies concerning the restoration of Israel pointed to New Testament times for their fulfillment. There is a time frame during which the restitution of all things will be done. "And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you." (Acts 3:20). This definitely refers to his second coming. In the next verse it says, "Whom the heaven must receive" and in Acts 1:10-11, we read where he was received up into heaven. It may be that this process of restoration is working now. Religion is not on a national level now. Every one must work out their own salvation, for one of God's prophets prophesied saying, "I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion." (Jer. 3:14). I know any number of families where there is only one individual who is a member of the church in that family. So, "the restitution of all things may not mean the restoration of all peoples. The plan to bring all peoples back to God, is a perfect plan and accessible, obtainable, and available to all men, and for this express reason and purpose the apostles were told to go into all the world and present this plan." And, before the apostle Paul died he declared that the plan had been made known in all the world that was known to them: "For the hope that is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the gospel; which is come unto you, as it is in all the world" (Col. 1:5-6). And again, "First I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world" (Rom. 1:8). Also, "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven" (Col. 1:23). So, every man in A.D. 64, when this epistle was written, had heard of the plan by which restitution and restoration was to come about. Man's spiritual image which was lost in Adam can be reclaimed in Jesus Christ. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Cor. 15:22). To enter the Kingdom of Heaven: "Ye must be born again" (John 3:7). Also, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (II Cor. 5:17).

In my opinion there has never been complete restoration, either of man or of nations since the fall of Adam. But, when Christ was received up in to heaven, and on the day of pentecost, just fifty days later, everything that had been spoken by the mouth of God's Holy prophets on this subject of reinstituting and restoring, **all things** which perhaps had reference to the plan which had been kept "in a mystery" (I Cor. 2:7), and so well concealed and kept was this plan that the prophets who prophesied of the grace of God which was to come, inquired about the plan with all diligence (I Peter 1:10). And before the plan was revealed even the angels desired to look into the matter (verse 12).

Two things we must bear in mind: (1) That the promise that God made to Abraham (Gen. 12:3) and his seed (Gal. 3:13), not his fleshly seed, but his spiritual seed (Rom. 9:8) the people "whom he foreknew" the spiritual seed who are called in Gal. 6:16, "the Israel of God" is fulfilled in Christ the spiritual seed of Abraham (Gal. 3:29). (2) God had no covenant with the ancient kingdom of Israel in the sense of their state, through any of their kings. When the children of Israel demanded a king, they broke covenant relationship with God, for God said to Samuel, "they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them" (I Sam. 8:7). God did not approve of their plan, but He permitted it. Some make the tragic mistake of not being able to separate and make the sharp distinction between "nation" and "people." In 100 B.C., Elijah felt that all Israel had turned against God, but there was 7000 people who had not

bowed their knee to Baal. The national state under Ahab had been carried into complete apostasy, but a remnant of 7000 at this time of the faithful seed of Abraham remained.

Now verses 20 and 21, when it is all summed up, in my opinion means that at the second coming of Christ all reinstitutional and restoration work will have been completed. The plan of salvation was instituted on the day of Pentecost, and when this plan is accepted and obeyed it restores the fallen image of mankind, and fulfills the promise that God made to spiritual Israel: the faithful seed of Abraham. There are others who believe it means more, including those who believe the premillennial theory is a part of the "restoration," which of course are not supported by this text. It is, in all probability, most likely that the "restoration of all things," as taught by the prophets, is now going on under the reign of Christ. Dummelow believed: "It means the restoration of the whole universe to its original and planned perfection ... as in the new heavens and the new earth (II Peter 3:13)." McGarvey says, "This is to handle the word of God deceitfully" his Commentary on Acts, p. 63.

The children of Israel were divided into two kingdoms, both of whom rebelled against God, and were led away into captivity. There are two principle captivities mentioned in the Bible. The captivity of the ten tribes, and the captivity of Judah: the former in 842 B.C. and the latter in 604 B.C. When the captivity period was ended and they were free to return to their own land, some did, but most did not, choosing to remain in the country where they had been carried, preserving their racial distinction, continuing the religious observances and visiting Jerusalem from time to time (Acts 26:7). (J. D. Davis Bible Dictionary, pp. 120-121).

"And so all Israel shall be saved" (Rom. 11:26). The reference here is to spiritual Israel, not the hardened Israel of verse 25, but the saved Israel of verse 26. "For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel" (Rom. 9:6). The plan of salvation applies to the Jews as well as the Gentiles: both Jews and gentiles are subject to the same plan. No Israelite will ever be saved by any other plan. "And so" is of particular interest, because it means, "thus, or in the same manner" (Moses E. Lard). So, all the faithful seed of Abraham, which is God's spiritual Israel, will be saved.

In B.C. 446, Nehemiah obtained permission to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. His father Hachaliah being among those Jews that seems to have gotten a good settlement in the land of their captivity, chose not to return to their own country. There was only a remnant of the captivity left in Jerusalem. Nehemiah fasted and prayed for his people (Neh. 1:5-11). Now notice! "until the times of restitution of all things" which did not happen in the Old Testament times. Every prophetic arrow was aimed at one central target, namely, the blood purchased plan that reconciles both Jew and Gentile together in one body, and in this way the house of Israel and of Judah can be restored - notwithstanding, the Gentiles being no exception to the rule.

ACTS 3:19

"Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." Since this passage has been explained by McGarvey, Burton Barber, and others, perhaps, I will make several references to their comments.

Significantly, and necessarily, the command, how ever it is read, whether "turn again" or "be converted," was used by the inspired writers to indicate something that men must do; Faith was not mentioned in this passage as being a condition of pardon, nor in Acts 2:38, because the command to "repent" carries the assumption that they believed. A command based upon an argument, or upon testimony, always implies the sufficiency of the proof, and assumes that the hearer is convinced. Moreover, Peter knew that none would be likely to repent at his command who did not believe what he had said. So, it seems in the over all view of the situation, Peter proceeded naturally and safely in omitting the mention of faith.

In McGarvey's foot notes, he says: "In this vision the terms convert and converted are not found, in the original word being everywhere translated "turn." This better

rendering should promote a better understanding of an important subject." Repentance precedes the turning. Repentance is: "A change of will, brought about through sorrow for sin, leading to a reformation of life." There are two kinds of sorrow, Godly sorrow and sorrow of the world leads to death. For example, Judas, was sorry for his deed in betraying innocent blood, but it was not Godly sorrow for it led to death in which Judas took his own life.

"Repent and be converted" but since the better translation is "turn" then it behooves us to try and find out just what is intended by the use of the word. In commenting on the word "turn" or "turn again" McGarvey says: "We can now perceive more clearly than before that in the command 'Repent and turn again,' two distinct changes are required, which occur in the order of the words."

The word properly means "to turn; to return to a path from which one has gone astray; and then to turn away from sins and forsake them." Baptism is undoubtedly the consummation of the turning act. We may reach the same conclusion by another course of reasoning. The command "turn again," occupies the same position between repentance and remission of sins that the command "be baptized" in Peter's former discourse in Acts 2:38. He then said, "Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins;" he now says, "Repent and turn, that your sins may be blotted out." Granting, that the "blotting out of sins" is a metaphorical expression for their forgiveness, the forgiveness being compared to something erased or blotted out. Now they heard Peter command them to repent and turn for the same blessing which he had formerly told them to repent and be baptized for, they then could understand that the generic word was used with reference to baptism; not because the two words mean the same, but because men turned by being baptized. This seems to be the doctrine of the passage.

While the command to repent and turn again was for the primary purpose that their sins may be blotted out, two other consequences are mentioned as further inducements to compliance; first, "that so there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord;" and second, "that he may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus." The "seasons of refreshing" are placed here where "the gift of the Holy Spirit" was placed in Acts 2:38.

Now some think that the "times of refreshing" is yet future. But, since we have studied the deplorable condition that mankind had gotten themselves into during the Old Testament age, and more especially the nation of Israel, it must have come as a refreshing time and season, to these people to hear Peter tell them that they can now obtain the remission of their sins, or have them blotted out. This, no doubt, was like sweet music from heaven, to learn that they could be forgiven and justified from all things, from which they could not have been justified under the law of Moses (Acts 12:38-39). Many Old Testament scriptures predicted the New Testament age as a time of reconstruction, restitution, restoration, and renewing. In about 690 B.C. (but by no means do I claim correct and accurate chronology) as to when Joel, the second of the twelve minor prophets, with a prophetic eye looked into the future when the faithful seed of Abraham would see better days. Leaping over the years of their captivity he predicted a time of refreshing, for said he, "Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God:". "During these days the floor shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with wine and oil. ... and ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied - all this relates to the New Covenant and the time of the Messiah." (Introduction to Book of The Prophet Joel - Commentary, p. 656).

If there is anything that could refresh the soul more than to know that we live in a time when if we repent and turn unto God that through the blood of Jesus Christ, we can have our sins blotted out or remitted? Joel said, in that day a fountain shall come forth of the house of the Lord - also Zechariah said, "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness" (Zech. 13:1).

There is a fountain filled with blood,
 Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
 And sinners plunged beneath the flood,
 Loose all their guilty stain.

So, in my view, when the plan of salvation was revealed on the day of Pentecost, and the way into heaven was made manifest, those who had stained their garments (and who among us could plead innocent to such a charge?) could dip them in the blood of the lamb and make them as white as snow. What a pleasant thought in the days or times of refreshing!

I have been instructed to answer the question: "Does the gift of the Holy Spirit" and the "times of refreshing" refer to the same idea? My answer is yes. But the idea is not new to me. Foy E. Wallace draws an analogy between the two passages in showing that Acts 3:19 and Acts 2:38 teach the same truth. The Certified Gospel, by Foy E. Wallace, pp. 108-109.

ACTS 2:38

In order that I may execute properly, what I think is expected in dealing with the three passages assigned to me in Acts of Apostles, two of which I have explained to the best of my ability, and as exegetically as I know how, I shall now proceed to do the same with the passage under consideration.

The passage found in Acts 2:38 is difficult to understand, unless verse 39 is taken to be in the same context. That means that we must go back in the Old Testament history, and more especially the promise made to Abraham in about B.C. 1921, to put it in perspective.

In Gen. 12:2, the Bible says, speaking to Abraham, "And I will make of thee a great nation." God said to Abraham, "Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be" (Gen. 15:5). Also, in many other passages this promise is reiterated. However, it is not through the multiplication of the seed of Abraham, but through his faithful seed that all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.

The distinction of Abraham's seed into two kinds is intimated by our Lord himself in John 8:39, where Jesus says, "They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus said unto them, if ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham." This same distinction is made by Paul: "For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which be of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect. ... Therefore it is of faith ... to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not that only which is of the law, but that also which is of the faith of Abraham" (Rom. 4:13-16). But, again, "They which are the children of the flesh, they are not the children of God, but the children of promise are counted for seed" (Rom. 9:8). We must not overlook the seed argument in this matter. So, Abraham had two kinds of seed: (1) fleshly seed; (2) Spiritual seed or faithful seed, and of this seed came our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the statement made in Isaiah 53:10, where the Bible says "he shall see his seed" the passage also refers to the time when this prophecy shall be fulfilled by saying "when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin." This prophecy is talking about the Lord Jesus Christ, and it is very easy to connect Jesus with the faithful seed of Abraham through whom the promise was to be fulfilled. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed which is Christ." (Gal. 3:16). If Christ is to see His seed it will be through the faithful seed of Abraham to whom the promise was formerly made. Now, when God promised to bless all the nations of the earth through Abraham's seed, He was not speaking of a universal salvation, but a universal plan. Abraham knew when God said, "I have constituted thee a father of many nations" that he was not to be the father (fleshly father) of many nations. Surely, Abraham knew that God did not constitute (make a law, or government, make up, from or compose) him the father of his own fleshly children, for he was that by marriage. He knew there was to be but one nation. Abraham knew, for the limitation of the promises, for to Isaac, to the exclusion of Ishmael; and after that Jacob, to the exclusion of Esau. Besides that his descendants by Jacob was to be but one nation. Although the many nations of whom Abraham was constituted the father, are called his "seed" by no means could have led him to believe that these nations were to spring from him by natural descent. Anciently, not only a person's offspring, but those who resemble

him in his disposition and actions, were called his "seed." For example, wicked men are called "the seed of the serpent." Therefore, he must have known that those who were related to him by quality of mind, possessing his faith and courage, were more his children than those who were related to him only by fleshly descent. Abraham must have known that his seed by faith, were better qualified than those who were of natural descent, to receive the blessings promised in the covenant to his seed. Abraham was constituted the father of all true believers.

God promised that he would make a full end of all the nations that have oppressed thee (the natural seed of Abraham). But, yet, he said, he would not destroy them utterly (Lev. 26:44), and as to Jacob, God said that he would not make a full end of thee (naturally so because Christ the promised seed was to come through that faithful blood line). "There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall take away ungodliness from Jacob." (Rom. 11:26). Paul said, "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant." (Rom. 11:5). A remnant is used in this passage "of that which is left - a spiritual remnant saved by the gospel from the midst of apostate Israel." (W. E. Vine).

How do men become Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise? In Gal. 3:27, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ ... And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (1) That the promise to Abraham is fulfilled in this passage; (2) Isa. 53:10 comes to pass, "And he shall see his seed."

"But now, in Christ Jesus, ye who sometime were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." (Eph. 2:13). "And came and preached peace unto you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh" (Eph. 2:17). So, in Acts 2:38-39, "The gift of the Holy Spirit" not in any sense of the word, in my judgment, even remotely indicates a personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit. I believe "gift of the Holy Spirit" is something the Holy Spirit gives, which has to be explained by verse 39, "For this promise is unto you, (Jews) and to your children, and to all that are afar off (Gentiles), even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

The promise to Abraham, as to whom, when, and where, has been made clear by the Holy Spirit, called "the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38-39), and "Times of refreshing" (Acts 3:19), and "the restitution (restoration) of all things" (Acts 3:21) all fall in the same time frame, and may all in some manner refer to the same idea, though the phraseology with reference to each verse in Acts 3 - may differ, it undoubtedly refers to the same thing.

Since I believe that Acts 2:38 and verse 39 are to be taken in the same context, and cannot be understood or explained in any other sense, I would like to include one final note from The Certified Gospel, by Foy E. Wallace.

"This promise of Acts 2:38-39 is the same promise of Acts 13:26, 32: Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, to you is the word of this salvation sent ... and we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise that was made unto your fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us his children. It is the same promise of Gal. 3:14, 29: That the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith ... and if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. It is equated with Acts 3:19, which runs parallel with Acts 2:38: Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. The relation of the words and phrases of these passages are synonymic - they are amplifications extending the description of the blessings included in the Holy Spirit's gift of Acts 2:38 and projecting and explaining the promise of verse 39, as a result of the whole. All these passages together are a commentary on the gift of the Holy Spirit, Acts 2:38." (p. 644). This makes sense to me and I am inclined to agree with it.

Writings and quotations, in part, to which I have referred in these notes are: McGarvey's New Commentary on Acts; Burton Barber's Commentary on Acts; MacKnight; Adam Clarke; Matthew Henry; Foy E. Wallace; Smith & Davis Dictionary of the Bible; Strong's; W. E. Vine; Dummelow's Commentary; Webster.

PREACHERS: EXAMPLES OF THE BELIEVERS

by Edwin Morris

- I. What is the burden of leadership borne by the life of the preacher?
 - A. Paul was a debtor for what Jesus had done for him, and not for what man might have done. (Rom. 1:14)
 - B. A practical question arises here?
 1. Was Paul under any obligation that the rest of us are not under?
 2. Are we not in debt the as same as he?
 3. Are not all Christians under the same obligations? Every one is responsible up to the limit of their possibilities.
 - C. The role of a preacher is leadership and he has to bear:
 1. Criticism of himself, his wife, and his children.
 2. Misrepresentation of what he preachers.
 3. Financial: He cannot change jobs as brethren can. He goes right on with about the same salary. He has no benefits, retirement, hospitalization insurance, saving, etc.
 4. Convictions requires him to preach on controversial subjects.
 5. Often he is accused as Paul was in II Cor. 10:10, "For his letters, say they, are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible."
- II. In what ways are the members of congregations the reflection of the preachers?
 - A. Their attitude to the services, such as encouraging edifying services, lively services, attention given, reverence shown and general behavior in services.
 - B. The care he has for the members of the congregation and the work of the congregation. He should lead the way in promoting peace, love, and a Christian atmosphere.
 - C. Lead the way in showing friendliness, especially to visitors. This is more than introducing your self and shaking hands. How many times have visitors attended services and have been ignored as the members visited with each other. Sometimes preachers are not as friendly as they should be.
- III. How is the preacher to be a pattern of discipleship, commitment and love for the Lord?
 - A. Have a deep love to keep his commitments to the work he has undertaken. When he starts a work stay with it. Be a true disciple (close learner or follower).

- B. In traveling and being with different congregations do not accuse all congregations of being guilty of what one congregation might be guilty of. Do not spread rumors or be a tale-bearer!
- C. Preach the same truths: I Cor. 4:17; I Tim. 5:19-21; I Thess. 2:8, 10; I Cor. 11:1; I Tim. 5:1-2; 6:20.

IV. If Christians do not change or grow more devoted to the example of Jesus, in what ways might the preacher be at fault?

- A. May not have taught them the things they needed in order to grow (I Cor. 3:12-13).
- B. May not be of a sober mind. Sober minded -- of sound mind, sane, in one's senses; curbing one's desires and impulses, self-controlled, temperate. (cf. Titus 2:7-8; 2:1-6; I Tim. 4:15)
- C. Might not have conducted himself in such a way as to have influence. Influence is earned.
- D. Church is kept alive by what is taught in the pulpit.

V. How does worldliness affect the life of preachers?

- A. "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed to Thessalonica." (II Tim. 2:4).
- B. "And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection." (Luke 8:14).
 - 1. Pleasures -- sensual delight (natural delight).
 - 2. W. E. Vine -- pleasure, is used of the gratification of the natural desire or sinful desire.
 - 3. Choked is used metaphorically, of thorns crowding out seed sown and preventing its growth.
- C. Preachers can get too wrapped up in sports as well as other things. For example, one preacher wrote an article to the newspaper about what was being said about his favorite basketball team. Another, after services went to a home where some had gathered and while they visited he sat before the T.V. watching a wrestling match and incidentally it was reported he was going through the motions with them. A preacher should not let the activities of a meeting be more of a drawing card than the spiritual. I received an announcement of a young people's meeting where the social activities were right in with each service listed. Many times, at these meetings, as well as locally in the congregation, it becomes too competitive. There has been broken bones, bruises and even the loss of tempers. Sometimes preachers have been involved or present if not involved. I am not opposed to social gatherings when they are kept in their proper place.

VI. How much is self-discipline a problem for preachers?

- A. It is a problem to discipline self:
 - 1. To study;
 - 2. To be willing to take advice and use it;

3. To not be satisfied with present knowledge -- study more;
4. To admit that he is wrong or that he does not have the answer;
5. To accept constructive criticism;
6. Not to relate things spoken in confidence;
7. To learn to serve (I Cor. 10:33);
8. To be moderate; self-controlled;
9. To preach as taught in II Tim. 4:15.

VII. How can a preacher know whether he is successful or not in his work?

- A. How he is received and respected as a preacher.
- B. How his audience listens and receives his teachings.
- C. The spiritual growth of those that are taught.
- D. Results of his labors -- not just number of baptisms alone.
- E. Whether his services are desired by congregations. If he has to continually ask for work he needs to reevaluate.

NOTES
(This page is blank on purpose)

I AM NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL
OR
A LOGICAL DEFENSE OF OUR POSITION

by Greg DeGough

I. IS HESITATION AMONG CHRISTIANS ABOUT DEFENDING THE FAITH RELATED TO A PROBLEM OF CONFIDENCE IN OUR STRICT STAND?

A. A marked characteristic of the apostles' demeanor was confidence in the message that they were proclaiming.

1. As they stood before the rulers of the Jews (Acts 4:13).
2. The context shows that they (and God) considered this to be an important part of their attitude as they made presentation of the message (Acts 4:29-31; cf. Eph. 6:19-20; Acts 28:31; Heb. 3:6).

B. True confidence in a position rests on several fundamental principles: (The reason for defining confidence as "true" is so that we will recognize that a mere **show of confidence** does not always indicate the truth of a position. One could **falsely** believe that they understood their position, or **falsely** believe that their position was based on truth. They could also be **theoretically** consistent. This could make them appear confident, but of course, would not make their position true.)

1. **Proper understanding** of the position that one holds. (cf. Heb. 4:14-16; II Cor. 3:7-12).
2. **Knowledge combined with faith** that the position one holds is truth. (cf. Acts 4:14; 2:29; II Cor. 5:5-8; 10:1-6; Eph. 3:12; Heb. 10:32-35; 13:5b-6).
3. **Consistency** in one's practical application of the position. (cf. Isa. 32:17; II Cor. 10:1-6; I Tim. 3:13; I John 2:28; 3:16-22; 4:17; 5:14).

C. We generally recognize the following facts about some of the membership of congregations across the brotherhood:

1. Some members do not **understand** the position that Christ's Church holds with regard to the origin and necessity of authority in all matters. This can be easily seen when one cannot recognize unauthorized practices or teachings.
2. Some members understand and believe the position held by Christ's Church, but do not have **knowledge** that it is true. This fact can be seen in one who rejects all unauthorized practices or teachings, but is hesitant (or refuses) to defend the position when challenged.
3. Some members understand the position held by Christ's Church, but do not **believe** that it is true.
 - a. This is evident in one who is willing to accept, but will not actively introduce, unauthorized practices or teachings on the basis of an opposing position which they are unwilling to defend. (This may be the evidence shown in one's life when they have accepted a presupposition such as relativism.)
 - b. This is evident in one who actively introduces or defends unauthorized

practices or teachings on the basis of an opposing position.

4. Some members refuse to live consistent to the position of Christ's Church even though they may acknowledge that the position is true. In this case one realizes that they cannot consistently defend a position if they are not willing to let it govern their living.

D. Conclusions:

1. A Christian cannot maintain true confidence in the position of Christ's Church while the preceding facts about their understanding, knowledge, faith and consistency are correct.
2. It is true that individuals are hesitant to defend a position in which they lack confidence.
3. Therefore, we must conclude that a lack of confidence in the position of Christ's Church is a major factor in some Christian's hesitation to defend that position.

II. WHAT IS A LOGICAL DEFENSE OF OUR POSITION AND WHAT QUESTIONS MUST IT ANSWER?

- A. A logical argument is one that is consistent in point of reasoning and is characterized by clarity of reasoning. This type of argument is consistent with Jesus' demands that we use the minds that God has given to us (John 7:24; I Peter 3:15; Matt. 22:29-32).
 1. In order for us to present a sound, logical defense of our position we must:
 - a. Show that our position is arrived at by valid reasoning (I Thess. 5:21; II Tim. 2:15).
 - b. Show that it is based on truth (Eph. 5:9; John 17:17, God's Word). If the premises of a valid argument are not based on truth, the argument is not sound.
 - c. Show that it is possible to be (and we are being) consistent to that position in the real world (as opposed to theoretical consistency, Titus 2:1-8).
 2. If we are to present a defense that conforms to the above definition we must do away with unfounded rhetoric in our statement of that defense, for rhetoric (as the word is used here) does not fit the parameters listed above.
 3. We must also be willing to involve ourselves in serious, systematic study of God's Word so that we may be sure that the foundation of our position is the whole of the truth, not just a correct interpretation of one of its parts (Matt. 4:1-11).
 4. We must never be afraid of the proper use of valid reasoning and argumentation for that is where the consistency and soundness of our position will be clearly seen. Or, in the case where we are in error, we shall be able to recognize that error and correct our practice and teaching to bring them into conformity with truth (I Thess. 5:21; I John 4:1; Eph. 5:6-10; I Cor. 15:12-19).

B. What questions must this defense answer?

1. First, we must listen for the questions that are being asked **today**, which challenge the truth of our position.
 - a. This does not mean that we must ignore unauthorized practices or teachings simply because they have been generally accepted and not many are asking questions about them anymore. Any practice which is based on false answers to questions concerning its authorization is moot.
 - b. This suggestion is made so that we will pay attention to **contemporary** opposition to truth and be prepared to give a logical defense of our faith **at the point of attack** (II Cor. 10:3-7; I Peter 3:15).
 - c. "If I profess with the loudest voice and clearest exposition every portion of the truth of God except precisely that little point which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christ. Where the battle rages, there the loyalty of the soldier is proved, and to be steady on all the battlefield besides, is mere flight and disgrace if he flinches at that point."¹

B. Specific questions or arguments concerning the position of Christ's Church.

1. Does the fellowship of the saints rest solely on acknowledgment of the Lordship of Christ?
 - a. "I wouldn't dare to give into one man-made law. Let dictators get away with an anti-instrument law, and next they'll try one against divided classes, or divided cups, or something similar. And what can we do? We gave in to the one. We all are now refusing to use (and condemning) instruments that God loves. So next we give up our communion cups so we can have unity over the matter. And so on." (Notice the implication here: these issues stand or fall together! GD).
 - "I want no part of 'unity' built on weaker brethren demanding that all accept their human laws as the price of consolidation. I very much want unity, but it must be based on **common acceptance of Jesus as Lord** (emphasis mine, GD), rather than acceptance of human laws as regulative for every congregation."²
 - b. "Certainly the Church of Christ people are my brethren, but they are not the only brethren I have, **for all those who believe in the Christ and submit to his Lordship** (emphasis mine, GD) are my brethren."³
 - c. "The disunity in opinion was staggering (in an unnamed congregation in Asia Minor, GD), but Christianity survived because there were enough men always who understood that there may be unity in diversity **so long as men are committed with heart and soul to the same Lord.**" (emphasis mine, GD).⁴
 - d. "It is inconceivable to me that a man could be lost **who loves God with all his heart and trusts in the Christ as his Lord** (emphasis mine, GD), irrespective of doctrinal errors in his thinking."⁵

Note: "The Lordship of Christ" is a phrase that is often bantered about in the writings found in liberal journals. We also believe that the Lordship of Christ is the basis of our fellowship. What we wish to discuss in this study are the implications concerning authority that His Lordship involves. "The Lordship of Christ" is a set of contentless words to those who do not consider how to rightly do what He says!

2. Does the New Testament constitute a pattern for the preservation and establishment of the Church of Christ?

- a. "The problem with a restoration theology is that it rests on the premise that the mission of the church is to set up a 'true church' in which all the details of church life are exactly like they were in the first century world. It functions on the assumption that there is a blueprint or pattern in the New Testament that the church is to reduplicate in each succeeding generation. Such a theology makes the church's mission egocentric and past-oriented rather than outward looking and future-oriented."⁶
- b. "... the new covenant is not a set of hidebound laws regulating every act Godward by His people - in assembly or individually ..."⁷
- c. "The New Covenant is not characterized by detailed instructions as was the Law of commandments contained in ordinances. The reason for this is that man, in Christ, is made a partaker of the Divine Nature. God's laws are written in his heart, and put in his mind. He is reconciled to God, and has received the Holy Spirit who effectively communicates the sense of the written Scriptures to the heart ..."⁸

3. Does the silence of the scriptures about a particular practice approve or prohibit its usage?

- a. "... the 'law of exclusion' ... makes void the commandment of God, causes men to thrust the Word of God from them, and to honor men above the God of all flesh! It is a false law! It is a contrary law! It gives too much liberty to men, and too little to God. After all, it requires men to interpret God's silence, an endeavor marked by foolishness of the greatest magnitude. If one accepted the validity of this figmentary law, can you imagine the difficulties that would be introduced by the text, 'there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour' (Rev. 8:1). Think of what must be condemned and 'unauthorized' by that prolonged period of silence!"⁹
- b. Note: By this brother's argument there could not have been a half an hour of silence in heaven, for someone could have presumed that this was an indication that God had given him approval to play his instrument!

4. Does condemnation of a practice need authorization from God, but approval of the same practice need no such authority?

"There is a consistent pattern throughout the Word of God: God summarily condemns those that presume to speak in His Name on matters concerning which he has not spoken! ... No individual is **authorized** (emphasis mine, GD) to make the strong assertions that Mr. Lipscomb has made (concerning the **unauthorized** nature of instrumental accompaniment in worship, GD) unless God himself has undergirded those assertions with precise revelation ... How many things do we condemn because they are not officially authorized? ... To once again affirm our position: the postulate of Mr. Lipscomb is wrong! It is not authorized by the living God! It has as its sole source of authority the interpretation of man! For that reason we reject it! We oppose it! ... If men are to condemn something, let them make sure that God has condemned it! ... Unauthorized declarations are unauthorized and hence are to be refused; they are unacceptable. (What about unauthorized practices? GD). We insist that when condemnation is uttered, it must have as a foundation - an undisputable foundation - the clear and concise statement of the living God."¹⁰

5. Does calling for Divine authority for our practices in religious matters constitute "spiritual-shackling, ... Sinaitic legalism?"¹¹

- a. "... the Master brushed aside the whole consideration of punctilious legality in worship of the Father under the new covenant. It is not a matter of **where** or **how** - place and prescribed formula, He said."¹²
- b. Does talk about Divine authority merely mean that one is trying to justify "the application of the human traditions"? (Fred O. Blakely, "The Unity Sought by Christ," The Banner of Truth, Vol. 24, No. 10).
6. Are only explicit statements of command in the scriptures authoritative?
 - a. "All we need for settling the problem (that of whether Christians should partake of the Lord's Supper each first day of the week, CD) is to find this clear imperative somewhere in His book: 'All Christians must partake of the Lord's Supper weekly.'¹³
 - b. "We rule on this question (instrumental music, CD) as if we had a 'thus saith the Lord,' and we make anti-fellowship laws of our opinion."¹⁴
7. Does the gospel of Christ include any points of doctrine?
 - a. "Many of my brethren think the gospel consists of the entire New Testament!"¹⁵
 - b. Is "the teaching of Christ" (II John 9) the teaching **about** Christ, or the teaching that Christ gave, personally and through His apostles and prophets?
 - c. "This is 'the doctrine' that one had to bring - that Jesus had truly come in the flesh - if he were to be received into the home and be given blessing ... The doctrine that John speaks of is that Jesus has come in the flesh, that he is indeed the Son of God ... It is a travesty against both the Bible and decency to apply this passage in II John to people generally who happen to interpret the scriptures differently from ourselves."¹⁶

III. WHAT ARE THE LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES OF REJECTING A STRICT VIEW OF THE SCRIPTURES? (Is the equating of liberalism with compassion, love, and understanding a logical claim?)

A. We lose identity (I John 2:3-6)

1. When the need for scriptural authority in all matters is denied, the church, fellowship, unity, organization, doctrine, even salvation all become contentless words based on nebulous concepts. Men become the judges of what is acceptable or unacceptable.
2. "It has been suggested that we should fellowship all who believe in the deity of Christ, who love the brotherhood, and who avoid gross immorality. What about those who teach that 'the resurrection is past already, and overthrow the faith of some' (II Tim. 2:18)? Must we add belief in the future resurrection of the dead to the list of foundation facts. If so, how many more must be added? Where does the list end? In the final analysis one's creed must embrace all that God requires."¹⁷
3. Men's systems cannot maintain consistency for they would deny that the New Testament is a pattern for unity and fellowship in certain points of doctrine and yet they wish to appeal to it when the subject matter suits them. This is simply another form of creedalism.
4. "To insist on doctrinal agreement as a condition of unity is to predetermine failure ... The consensus of the whole church has always been

that four things are essential to man's salvation, the gospel, faith, baptism, and the Lord's Supper: ... We do not require doctrinal impeccability as a term of fellowship between Christians for the simple reason that to do so would exclude everyone who is not infallible ... We petition for the removal of those particulars in denominational practices which cannot be justified by scripture in accordance with the catholic understanding of divine truth."¹⁸

- B. We lose the ability to love our brethren (I John 5:2; II John 6).
- C. We lose focus.
 - 1. With regard to discipleship (John 8:31-32).
 - a. How can a disciple "stand firm in the faith" if the scripture is not the blueprint of that faith (Phil. 1:27; I Cor. 16:13; II Thess. 2:15; Col. 4:12).
 - b. How shall a disciple "not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of (this) mind" if he knows not a new pattern of thinking according to the will of God (Rom. 12:2; Phil. 4:8)?
- D. We lose respect and love for God.
 - 1. We only show love and respect for God as we obey His propositional revelation (I John 5:3; Psa. 50:16-23)
 - 2. When we lose respect and love for Him through not honoring His word, we lose His fellowship and the fellowship of the brethren (I John 1:6-7; II John 9-10).
- E. We lose Jesus as Lord. This is the crux of the whole matter (Luke 6:46). The scriptures are what the Lord Jesus has said!

IV. THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST IS THE FUNDAMENTAL FACT OF CHRISTIANITY (Rom. 14:9).

- A. His Lordship established by the resurrection.
 - 1. Jesus' right to power and authority was given Him as "heir of all things" (Heb. 1:2), when He was "declared with power to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead" (Rom. 1:3-4). That power was the "working of (God's) mighty strength" (Eph. 1:19), and as a result of the resurrection, Jesus "has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand - with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him" (I Peter 3:22).
 - 2. So, Peter declared the Lordship of Christ (Acts 2:32-36).
 - a. When Peter declared that "Jesus is lord" he was attributing equality with God to Him (Isa. 42:8; cf. Deut. 10:17; Rev. 19:16.¹⁹)
 - b. The Divine nature of His Lordship is the source of His authority (Phil. 2:9-11).
- B. The scope of Jesus' Lordship.
 - 1. His Lordship encompasses all men (Acts 10:36; Rom. 10:12). His Lordship will be acknowledged by all men at the Judgment whether they have acknowledged Him previously or not (Acts 10:42; Rom. 14:10b-11; Phil. 2:9-11).

2. The scope of Jesus' authority as Lord is inclusive (Matt. 28:18; Phil. 3:20-21; I Cor. 15:24-25; Eph. 1:10, 22; Col. 1:16-18; 2:9-10; I Pet. 3:22). There is no power or authority who does not fall under the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 3. His Lordship is efficient only for those who submit to Him as Lord (Rom. 10:9; Matt. 7:21-29; Luke 6:46). Then, and only then, He is "Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom. 1:4b); the "one Lord, Jesus Christ, through who all things came and through who we live" (I Cor. 8:5-6). He is not **our** Lord because He **belongs** to us, but He is our Lord because we are **His servants** (Rom. 14:4-8; 12:11; cf. 16:17-18).
- C. The nature of Jesus' authority as Lord.
1. The authority of the Father in Jesus' ministry is exemplary of the fact that the authority of a "Lord" is exclusive.
 - a. Jesus recognized the Father as Lord (Luke 10:21; 20:37).
 - b. The Father's authority was **exclusive** (John 8:25-29; 12:44-50; 14:16, 26; 14: 28-31, "kathos ... houtos" comparison).
 - c. These are not isolated statements. The pervasiveness of the idea of Jesus' complete submission to the Father is clearly seen in the gospel according to John (4:34; 5:19-30, 36, 41-44; 6:38; 7:16-18, 28, 29, 33; 8:15, 16, 28, 29, 38, 40, 42, 43, 47, 49, 50, 54, 55; 10:17, 18, 25, 32, 34-38; 12:27, 28; 14:10-14, 16, 20, 21, 23, 24, 26; 15:9-15, 21, 26; 16:5, 28; 17:1-8, 10, 12, 14, 18, 20-26).
 - d. The Spirit's mission was accomplished under submission to exclusive authority (John 16:12-15).
 2. The authority of Jesus is derived from the Father (Matt. 28:18; Acts 2:36).
 3. The authority of Jesus as Lord is exclusive by reason of the fact that He is the Son of God. His authority is that of God, given Him by the Father, whose authority is exclusive (Matt. 18:18; 7:21-29; Luke 6:46; Eph. 1:10, 19b-23; 4:15; 5:23; Col. 1:18; 2:10; 3:17; I John 2:3-6; II John 9). The only being not subject to the authority of Christ as Lord is the Father (I Cor. 15:25-28).
 - a. The exclusiveness of His authority can be seen in the designation of Jesus as "despotes" by Peter and Jude (II Pet. 2:1; Jude 4). The Greek word "despotes" carries with it the idea of "absolute ownership and uncontrolled power." It "was strictly the correlative of slave, 'doulos'." (Thayer, p. 130). We hereby understand the admonition in I Cor. 6:13b, 19b, 20; 7:23.
 - b. This exclusive nature is also clearly seen in the derived authority of the Apostles (John 20:21-23, "kathos ... kago" comparison). We have seen the complete submission of Jesus and the Spirit to the Father's exclusive authority as pictured above (where they both refuse to even speak words that the Father has not given them to say). May we then suppose that when Jesus sent the apostles **just as his father had sent Him** that they had freedom to practice or speak things that he had not authorized? or, may we suppose that we who have been given no authority at all, derived or otherwise, may then practice or speak things that are not authorized? Such suppositions are absurd!
 - c. The exclusive authority of the Lord, given to His Apostles by the power of the Spirit, is administered through inspiration. The New Testament scriptures are the written product of inspiration

(John 14:26; 15:12-15; I Cor. 2:11-13; Eph. 3:1-5; Gal. 1:10-12; Matt. 16:19; II Pet. 3:2; I Thess. 4:1-2). So, in whatever way we realize the authority of Christ, we see the same authority in the New Testament scriptures, for they are the substance of what Christ has authorized. The scriptures are exclusive in authority (I Cor. 14:37; II Thess. 2:15; 3:4, 6, 14).

- (1) The scriptures are clear; Jesus exercises His Lordship through His propositional revelation (Luke 6:46; I John 2:3-6, 24-29; John 6:63, 68).
- (2) So, Paul says, "... we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake" (II Cor. 5).

IV. WHAT IS THE NECESSITY OF OUR PLEA FOR RESTORING NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY IN THE LIGHT OF THE LOGICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST?

- A. The necessity of the plea for restoring New Testament Christianity is recognized in the pressing need to acknowledge the absolute Lordship of Christ.
 1. The scriptures show plainly that Jesus is absolute Lord. His authority is **absolute** and **exclusive**.
 2. The New Testament is the word of the Lord Jesus in propositional form, given by inspiration. Being the word of the Lord delivered by inspiration it is, therefore, **authoritative**.
 3. Therefore, calling for a return to the New Testament as our authority for teaching and practice is a necessity if we are to acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus Christ.
 - a. A return to the New Testament is a return to serving Jesus as Lord.
 - b. We are the disciples of Jesus **exclusively** only if we teach and observe what Jesus alone taught (Matt. 28:18-20; John 8:31-32).
 - c. We follow the Bible alone because we follow Jesus as our **one** Lord.
- B. The need for authority for a practice or teaching (Matt. 21:23-27; Matt. 15:9).
 1. The example in Matt. 21 shows us that a practice will have some authority, either God or man. When the question is asked, "Who authorized this practice?" the answer cannot be, "No one authorized it." In matters of religious practice, whatever is practiced or taught must be authorized in order for it to be practiced by anyone.
 2. Jesus tells us in Matt. 15 that man's authority is invalid in religious matters, making worship vain.
 3. We have established that Jesus has been given all authority as Lord. This means that men must either:
 - a. Do what He said and may do other things which do not contradict what He said.
 - (1) In this case, where is the need for His authority as Lord if one could practice something without His authority (by man's authority)?

- (2) Do only what He said and may not do other things which He has not said even though they do not contradict what He said (Col. 3:17).

C. The implications of silence of the Scriptures.

1. If scripture is truly silent about a practice or teaching then that practice or teaching is not **authorized** by scripture (because of the exclusiveness of the authority administered through the inspired Scripture).
 - a. To say that there is no scriptural authority for a practice or teaching means that it has not been authorized by the Lord, for the scriptures are the expression of the Lord's authority.
2. To say that the silence of the Scriptures is permissive is to say that one does not need authorization for a practice or teaching. Therefore, to say that the silence of the Scriptures is permissive undermines the Lordship of Jesus Christ by saying that one may practice or teach what He has not authorized.

* * * * *

Footnotes

1. Martin Luther, cited by Francis A. Schaeffer, The Complete Works of Francis A. Schaeffer: A Christian Worldview, Volume One, A Christian View of Philosophy and Culture, Westchester, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1982, p. 11.
2. Ray Downen, cited by Fred O. Blakely, "The Anti-instrumental Way of Unity," The Banner of Truth, Vol. 24, No. 10.
3. Leroy Garrett, "What is Christian Journalism?", Restoration Review, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 6.
4. Robert R. Meyers, "A Look at a 'Church of Christ' Shibboleth," Restoration Review, Vol. 4, No. 3, p. 72.
5. Leroy Garret, "Faith as Personal," Restoration Review, Vol. 4, No. 2, p. 40.
6. Victor L. Hunter, "Some Thoughts on Theology and Missions," Missions, March 1972, p. 6, cited by James D. Bales, "The People Without the Pattern?", The Spiritual Sword, Vol. 4, No. 4, p. 8.
7. Fred O. Blakely, "The Anti-instrumental Way to Unity," The Banner of Truth, Vol. 24, No. 10.
8. Given O. Blakely, "Pungent Points," The Word of Truth, Vol. 29, No. 3.
9. Given O. Blakely, "'The Law of Silence' - An Erroneous Law," The Word of Truth, Vol. 29, No. 3, p. 8.
10. Given O. Blakely, "An Unwise Man Speaks From The Past," The Word of Truth, Vol. 28, pp. 7-8.
11. Fred O. Blakely, "The Unity Sought by Christ," "Divers Musings for the Times," The Banner of Truth, Vol. 24, No. 10.
12. Fred O. Blakely, "The Glaring Perversion of a Text," The Banner of Truth, Vol. 24, No. 4.

13. Robert R. Meyers, 'The Lord's Supper: How Often?', Restoration Review, Vol. 3, No. 4.
14. Leroy Garrett, "The Urgency of Unity," Restoration Review, Vol. 3, No. 3, p. 80.
15. Leroy Garrett, "A Lesson From Billy Graham On The Difference Between Pre-aching And Teaching," Restoration Review, Vol. 3, No. 3, p. 80.
16. Leroy Garret, "How Men Use The Bible To Justify Their Divisions," Restoration Review, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 14.
17. Melvin Curry, written in the Forward to Ron Halbrook's, The Doctrine of Christ and Unity of the Saints, Marion, Ind., Cogdill Foundation Publications, 1977, pp. 12-13.
18. Fred Thompson, Jr., "What Kind of Unity Do We Seek?" Restoration Review, Vol. 4, no. 3.
19. Hans Bietenhard, Theological Dictionary of the New Testament (Kittel's), V, 273.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ELDERS

by Doug Edwards

When James A. Garfield took the office of the President of the United States in the late 1800's, he stated that he would be stepping down from the "office" of the eldership into a new position. I feel that most who read this could agree with him as to the importance of the eldership. Since no organization for the church is any larger than the local congregation, its leadership is the highest and most important on earth.

We are interested in the restoration of New Testament Christianity. It is not enough, though, to restore the name of the church, the scriptural method of salvation, or the proper way of worship, without also restoring scriptural church government, involving elders and deacons.

As we examine our brotherhood, we find very few elderships. Why? Have we failed in some ways? Have we done anything wrong? Where are we deficient? These are serious questions to consider.

It is the purpose of this study to investigate the work that we must do to increase our number of elderships. Instead of dwelling on past mistakes, we need to take advantage of the great potential before us. With God's help we should be able to increase our number of elderships in the next few years.

There are three areas of study that I would like to present:

1. How can we develop positive attitudes toward having elders?
2. What are the duties of the congregation towards elders?
3. What can we do to train men to be elders?

Developing Positive Attitudes Towards The Eldership

It is important to begin our study by noticing what we can do to improve our attitude toward the eldership. In some places the need for elders is not seen to be important or urgent. It is thought by some that the church can operate without them. To many there is just no need for these men. This attitude needs to be changed. How can we develop positive attitudes toward elders?

First, we need to effectively teach about it. You make Christians through teaching, and you will develop positive attitudes toward elders the same way. God has promised that His word will not return to Him void (Isa. 55:11). As preachers, we have the responsibility of preaching about this. Paul told the Ephesians elders, "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27). All of the counsel of God would surely include the need for elders. Paul also told Titus, "For this cause left I thee in Crete that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee" (Titus 1:5). Setting a church in order would definitely include teaching on elders.

We need to be preaching this everywhere we go. At our big meeting (4th of July, Labor Day, New Year's, etc.) we need to preach about the need for elders. At our Gospel meetings we need to mention it. At our Sunday preaching appointments, at our home churches we need to mention it. We need to discuss with our brethren at studies and social visits.

We also need to be writing about the need in our papers - The Old Paths Advocate, The Christian Expositor, bulletins and other sources. And when we do, write something positive. Do not write something negative. We need positive articles encouraging us to appoint qualified men. We do not need articles continually warning against appointing unqualified men. It seems to me that we already have done a good job in keeping unqualified men out of the eldership. Preachers, give us a little nudge. We tend to be a little negligent at times.

At the same time we need to create a real need for the eldership. We need to let everyone see that the need is urgent. It is a well known fact in business circles that companies rise and fall according to their leadership. Millions of dollars are spent every year to train leaders and hire them. They know from experience they cannot grow without effective, powerful leadership.

The same is true in the spiritual realm. There is that same desperate need among God's people for leadership. The progress of the church depends on leadership. No congregation will ever rise above its leadership. For too long, in some places, we have sought for "volunteers" and "born leaders" to do the job of leading the church. In the same period of time we have neglected to train and prepare men to take the leadership of the church. As usual, we have had to wait until the world has shown us that leaders are made and not born.

Perhaps a good thing to do is just to challenge the church. I think most of us enjoy a good challenge from time to time. Instead of brow beating the church, why not issue a challenge for them to reach their full potential.

I think a word to our teachers would be helpful. Certain things are expected from preachers. They are the ones who preach on controversial subjects, and often times the teachers do not. If teachers will teach on elders, it will reinforce the message of the preacher as to the need. There is, of course, the danger of members claiming that the teacher is pushing himself for the work. Is there anything wrong with making it known that you want to be an elder? After all, we do it when we want to preach. Perhaps it may be that the church is waiting for someone to show some initiative.

Second, we can develop positive attitudes toward the eldership by viewing some role models. We all like success stories. We all like to hear good news. Let us share the good news about the successful work of congregations with elders. Paul told the Thessalonians that he told several congregations of their success (II Thess. 1:4). Those who are elders need to be ready to share their talents and findings with others. I have written and talked with several elders during the preparation of this article, and they have been more than glad to help. There are many that are out there who are willing to help, but we need to ask them for help. Why not invite an elder to speak to the congregation for a Sunday or a week-end meeting on the theme of the eldership?

Third, we can help to develop a positive attitude toward the eldership by praying often and fervently to God for help. The writer of Hebrews said, "Let your conversation be without covetousness: and be content with such things as you have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and will not fear what man shall do unto me." (Heb. 13:5-6). This is a very comforting and reassuring thought. God wants us to have elders, He expects it. Since it is so important to Him and to us, don't you think He would help us in this endeavor.

Duties Of The Congregation Toward Elders

Whenever we talk about the eldership we often emphasize it from their point of view - the qualifications, their work, and other similar items. But in order for God's plan to work effectively, the church must recognize her duties toward the eldership. Responsibility is a two way street - the elders have it, but so do the members. Let me list some of the duties that the church has toward her elders.

First, we are to know and esteem them. Paul wrote, "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labor among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you: And to

esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. And be at peace among yourselves." (I Thess. 5:12-13). The word "know" means "to have regard for, to cherish, to pay attention to." This is more than just mere recognition of the names and faces of the elders. Christians ought to know the elders by the lives they live and the truth they teach. Members need to know the elders as friends and spiritual counselors. How can one follow the leadership of the elders unless they know their wishes?

The word "esteem" as used here means, "to think, consider, regard." We esteem very highly the President of the United States. He is given a special tribute because of the office he holds. The same should be true of the elder. We are to respect them very highly.

Second, we need to honor them and be slow to criticize them. Paul again wrote, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially they who labor in the word and doctrine ... against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses." (II Thess. 5:17-19). The responsibility of elders is no light thing. They put in many extra hours. They spend many hours doing the work of the church that no one ever knows about. Often, this comes after eight hours of work. Many elders receive no pay for their work. Many times they receive no appreciation for their efforts. So, we ought to be slow to criticize them and quick to honor them. Instead of complaining about them, give them the benefit of the doubt.

Third, we need to obey them and submit to them. The writer of Hebrews said, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable to you." (Heb. 13:17). Elders are given their authority from the New Testament. The New Testament reveals the mind of God. So, if we rebel against our elders we are really rebelling against God. As long as the elders are leading in accordance with the New Testament, we have a divine obligation to be obedient and submissive to them. We should be willing to follow the teaching of our elders even when we cannot see "eye to eye" with them on every detail.

Fourth, we need to imitate their faith. The Hebrew writer again said, "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation." (Heb. 13:7). It is good to imitate their faith because they are mature Christians. They have met some very strict qualifications. They are now on the battle line fighting for Christ. Watch them, copy them. Try to mold your lives after them. The New Testament in other places teaches us to imitate faithful men (I Cor. 11:1; I Thess. 1:6).

Fifth, we need to be at peace among ourselves. Paul said in I Thess. 5:13, "and be at peace among yourselves." Every member owes it to their eldership to be at peace with the church. The effectiveness of the mission of the church depends a great deal upon the peaceful attitude of the members. If there is division and strife within the congregation, the work of the eldership is made that much more difficult.

Training Men To Be Elders

As far as I know, there are no detailed methods of training men to be elders recorded in the New Testament. However, that does not mean that we are left with nothing at all. In the absence of specific plans we may be guided by general principles. As far as training men to be elders, I believe there ought to be three parties involved: the congregation itself, the prospective elder, and an evangelist.

The congregation must be worked with in order to train elders. In planting a garden, the ground must be first worked. You do not throw the seeds out, but first you prepare the ground. It is the same way with elders. It is helpful for the congregation to be work with to produce elders. A congregation that is divisive, full of gossip and shows no respect for leadership is in fact training its young men to shun the office of elder.

There are different groups within the congregation with whom work must be done. There are men, perhaps even some of the teachers, who will not qualify. They must be taught not

to be bitter and not to refuse to follow. Children must also be noticed. A child can disqualify their father by unfaithfulness or unruliness. They can also help their father qualify by receiving his teaching at home and helping him to gain experience. Women must also be encouraged to help their husbands, brothers, or friends to work toward being elders.

Prospective elders also have their own responsibilities to fulfill. As a matter of great importance he must desire this great work. Paul wrote, "This is a true saying, if a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." (I Tim. 3:1). The individual's desire is the key to the whole process. We can have churches provide the right atmosphere, have an evangelist ready, but if the individual does not desire it, it just may not work. What is the old saying, "You can lead a horse to water, but you cannot make him drink."

The prospective elder must prepare himself in the knowledge of the scriptures. A preacher spends many hours preparing for his work. He spends many hours alone and with others studying the Bible. The same type of effort should be spent by those wanting to be elders. It takes time and effort. Who wants a preacher with little or no preparation? Who wants an elder with little or no preparation.

It would also be good to prepare yourself a good library. Books are the tools of the trade. Preachers will spend thousands of dollars building up libraries. Elders should do the same. It might be a good idea to get a book list from a preacher or an elder.

The prospective elder needs to prepare himself to be able to express his thoughts and ideas properly and acceptably. One of the elder's many responsibilities is "holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince gainsayers." (Titus 1:9). To do this, one must know not only what the scriptures teach, but be able to present it in a way that is effective. Perhaps you may need some help in public speaking. Many preachers have had some kind of training in this area. Those who want to be elders should take advantage of every opportunity to take some public part in the worship of the church.

• The prospective elder should prepare himself by making a careful study of or memorizing the qualification of elders. This will help in your self-examination as you grow spiritually. The earlier that you start your preparation the easier it will be.

The prospective elder should make a careful study of what is actually required of an elder. Just what is an elder to do? What is his work and responsibility? Having made such a study, then begin to be what elders are supposed to be from the qualifications you have studied.

The prospective elder should seek help from others. Ask for advice from others. It might be good to talk to experienced preachers and elders. If possible study under an elder, much like a young man studies with a preacher. Be open for suggestions and accept constructive criticism.

The prospective elder must assume his responsibility in the home. Paul said, "One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity. for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God." (I Tim. 3:4-5). The responsibilities of the home are but a miniature of the responsibilities of the church. It is good training ground for the work of elders.

The evangelist can also play a great role in helping men to become elders. The greatest thing, at least to me, that the evangelist can do in training men to be elders is to continually encourage them. We all need encouragement. We all need help and a little push from time to time.

It is difficult to come up with an exact plan on training men because of the differences of each church. Some churches may have men that it may take a long time to qualify. Others may have men that are experienced and may qualify in a short time. There are, however, some points that are common to all that an evangelist may use to help men to be elders.

The evangelist may encourage them to study. I can think of no better way to start a man developing to be an elder than to encourage him to become a student of the Bible. In I Cor. 2:10-13 we find that the mind of God is revealed in the scriptures. Everything the elder will need will be provided in the scriptures. That means many hours of study.

The evangelist can encourage a man to develop as a teacher. One of the qualifications of the elder is "apt to teach," which means skillful in teaching. He must not only be a teacher, but be a skillful one. He must feed the flock (Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:2). He must be taught to develop, organize and present an edifying sermon. This feeding the flock will also include both public and private teaching. The elder must also be taught to combat false teaching, whether public or private (Acts 20:29-31; Titus 1:10-11). Can one do this by just living a good life? Can one refute the one in error or sin without a good knowledge of the truth? The need in this area is real, critical and demanding.

The evangelist can help prepare a man for the eldership by encouraging him to get to know the congregation. This means more than just shaking hands and being friendly at services. The man should get to know the members as friends - and that means all. This can be done by being hospitable (I Tim. 3:2). The prospective elder must be taught to develop the knowledge and ability to use the Bible to help people with problems in Christian living (Rom. 12:15). Also, they must be taught to develop the ability to train members to fulfill their talents (Matt. 25; II Tim. 2:2).

The evangelist needs to periodically evaluate how things are going. The President of the United States gives what is called a "State of the Union" message. Its purpose is to evaluate how things are going with the country. From time to time as evangelists we need to stop and try to take an objective view of the situation. Are we making any progress? Where can we improve?

The evangelist can encourage the prospective elder to get involved in the work of the church now. He should be taught as much about all areas as possible. He should be taught the financial matters of the church. He should learn as much as possible about the building upkeep. He should be taught to visit the sick (James 1:27).

Conclusion

After the death of Moses, the children of Israel were faced with a great decision. There was a great work before them, but they needed leadership. This urgent need was satisfied with the coming of Joshua. He had already associated himself with the work and was ready when the time came.

Today, we find ourselves in a similar condition with the children of Israel. We have a great work before us, but we need leadership. We need to be prepared. May God help us to develop men to be elders and lead our churches into the 21st century.

NOTES
(This page is blank on purpose)

OUR PLEA - BACK TO THE BIBLE

by Ronny Wade

A return to the Bible presupposes a departure. When and how did such a departure take place? What were the forces that created it? By the same token, how and when did the return occur and at whose instigation and under what circumstances?

The scriptures furnish us with the first record of the cycle of purity power, apostasy and restoration in the church of Christ.

The earliest forms of apostasy were advocated by the Judaizers, Greek philosophers, and those devoted to worldly lust. E. H. Broadbent in The Pilgrim Church says:

Departure from the original pattern given in the New Testament for the churches met very early with strenuous resistance, leading in some cases to the formation within the decadent churches of circles which kept themselves free from the evil and hoped to be a means of restoration to the whole. Some of them were cast out and met as separate congregations. Some, finding conformity to the prevailing conditions impossible, left and formed fresh companies. These would often reinforce those others which, from the beginning, had maintained primitive practice. There is frequent reference in later centuries to those churches that had adhered to Apostolic doctrine, and which claimed unbroken succession of testimony from the time of the Apostles. They often received, both before and after the time of Constantine, the name of Cathars, or Puritans, though it does not appear that they took this name themselves.

Those Who Followed The Plea Back To The Bible

Departures from the faith were largely responsible for the convening of the Council of Nicea and five other general councils, the last of which was held in 680.

In the eleventh century, Priscillian appeared urging a return to Apostolic practice. The Roman Church eventually was able to destroy most of his writings.

From 650-950 the "true Christians" otherwise known as Paulicians labored to maintain the Apostolic faith. They practiced baptism of believers, preceded by faith and repentance, met for Bible study and the observance of the Lord's Supper under the guidance of duly ordained elders. Scattered by persecution, under the Empress Theodora they established assemblies wherever they met.

In the early part of the 12th century Pierre de Brays, an able preacher traveled widely, establishing churches after the New Testament pattern.

Churches that never departed from the faith and were not influenced by the evils prevailing in the Catholic system existed in the Alpine valleys of the Piedmont from the earliest days of the Christian era. Probably from these faithful disciples, the wealthy Peter Waldo, of Lyons, because interested in the study of the Scriptures and led in a movement known as "the poor men of Lyons," which taught the Scriptures to the masses. This God-called man put new life into the churches and led an expansion of the true faith into surrounding areas, reaching even to Bohemia, where Waldo died in 1217. The Waldenses, though ravaged by persecutions and often reported to be extinct, have persisted in their testimony to the New Testament faith even until today.

The doctrines and practices of these brethren were grounded in the scriptures. Apart from the Bible, they had no confession of faith, no rules nor

any authority of men. To follow Christ was their chief desire. In matters of church order they practiced simplicity, electing elders who became the overseers of the flock, observing the Lord's Supper for all believers, and practicing baptism of believers, reiterating the Scripture, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Their apostles were consecrated businessmen who traveled by twos and did the work of evangelist. Regular individual reading of the Bible and daily family worship characterized their home life.³

John Wycliffe of England, rose to point the way out of a corrupt Church back to the Word of God. He came to acknowledge the infallibility and exclusive authority of the scripture.

In Hungary, John Huss appealed for the restoration of apostolic practices. He was later summoned to the council of Constance to answer for his heresies, there seized and cast into a dungeon, and condemned to die by burning. He died with this prayer on his lips, "God give me a fearless heart, a right faith, a firm hope, a perfect love that for thy sake I may lay down my life with patience and joy."

Martin Luther, in his attempt to establish the Reformation Church adhered at least, in part, to the principle of Sola Scriptura. This led him to defy the pope, abolish the mass, teach justification by faith, abrogate the celibacy of the clergy, restore preaching office, and discard compulsory fasts.

In many ways the Anabaptist movement was the culmination of the principles Luther espoused. Its passion was to discover in the pages of the Bible, the pattern of the church of the first century and to renew original Christianity in doctrine.

As Thomas von Imbroich stood in the court of Cologne about 1556, he declared, "The Scripture cannot be broken, nor shall anything be added to or subtracted from the Word of God which remains in eternity." Menno Simons' colleague, Dirk Phillips, wrote in his Vindication: "From these words it is evident that whatever God has not commanded and has not instituted by express command of Scripture, He does not want observed nor does He want to be served therewith, nor will He have His Word set aside nor made to suit the pleasure of men."⁴

Although by the sixteenth century there were clear differences among individuals bent on reforming polluted religious bodies, as one historian has remarked, an idea common to them all was "that the Christians of the sixteenth century were called to reproduce in thought and life the intellectual beliefs and usages of the primitive Christians" (I. M. Lindsay, History of the Reformation, II, 441).

Thomas Grantham published a series of essays on **Primitive Christianity** in 1678, referencing, among other passages, Acts 2:38, Acts 8:12, and Acts 10:47-48, and citing faith, repentance, and baptism for remission of sins as "the way of incorporation into the Church of Christ" (preface). Benjamin Grosvenor's book of sermons, published in London in 1728 urged all to be simply **Christians Only**. Robert Sanderman, son-in-law of the Scottish "Independent" (i.e., "Congregationalist") preacher John Glas, came to America in 1763 and organized a congregation in Danbury, Connecticut (he died in 1772 and was buried in the city cemetery in Danbury). Among other things, Sanderman distinguished between Old and New Testaments, advocated weekly observance of the Lord's Supper, and placed church government in the hands of elders.⁵

The Puritans who settled in New England in 1620 were religiously descended from English Congregationalists. Many wore the name Church of Christ and took the Bible only as their rule of faith and practice.

James and Robert Haldane, prominent in Scotland, eventually broke with the Church of Scotland, and the Congregationalist.

Among the radical decisions made by the Haldanes was the rejection of extracongregational church government. They came to teach that Christ was the sole head of the church and that local church government should be vested in a plurality of elders. Abandoning the doctrine of infant baptism, they eventually decided that only immersion of believers was sustained by the Scriptures. They early introduced the practice of every-Sunday observance of the Lord's Supper and of weekly meetings for social worship in which all members were allowed to participate with prayers and testimonies. They were strongly insistent upon the necessity of a pious Christian life by all professors of religion,⁶ and frequently resorted to strict disciplinary measures in their congregations.

James O'Kelly of North Carolina and Virginia, a Methodist, raised a disturbance toward the close of the 18th century resulting in a faction, that later called itself "The Christian Church." They renounced all rules of church government but the New Testament.

Five outstanding principles of the movement were:

1. The Lord Jesus Christ is the only Head of the Church.
2. The name Christian to the exclusion of all party and sectarian names.
3. The Holy Bible, or the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments our only creed, and a sufficient rule of faith and practice.
4. Christian character, or vital piety, the only test of church fellowship and membership.
5. The right of⁷ private judgment, and the liberty of conscience, the privilege and duty of all.

Elias Smith and Abner Jones led a movement that took place in New England about the same time as the O'Kelly movement. They organized a "Christian Church" at Portsmouth, New Hampshire and withdrew from the Baptist fellowship. In 1801, Jones organized an independent Church at Lyndon, New Hampshire. He was ordained by three freewill Baptist preachers, not as a baptist, simply as a Christian.

The spirit that seemed to characterize all these men and their efforts, was a desire to return to the New Testament pattern of doing things.

The Development of A Slogan

In 1807 there came from Ireland to America a man of great humility and deep Christian conviction, who was destined to initiate the greatest religious movement of peculiarly American origin in the history of the Church.

Other men had the same urges and the same aims, but it remained for him to state the slogan and basic principles that would guide the movement that he launched. This man was Thomas Campbell. His ancestors originally were from Western Scotland, where they emigrated to Ireland and settled in County Down. He was born February 1, 1763. His father was Archibald, originally a Roman Catholic, and served in the British Army, later became a strict member of the Church of England. In his youth, Thomas, became the subject of deep religious impressions and acquired a deep devotion for the Holy Scriptures. He eventually joined the Seceder Presbyterians and felt "called to preach." He was educated at Glasgow University and the theological schools of the Presbyterians. When granted the credentials to preach, he began a roving ministry in mission churches under the supervision of the synod. During this period, he met and married Jane Corneigle in June of 1787. On September 12, 1788 their first child, Alexander was born. He continued to preach and teach school. Later he became principal of the school at Rich Hill and preached in churches throughout the area.

Thomas became very concerned and upset over the narrow-ness and intolerance of the religious leaders of the day. Heavily burdened because of the division and strife in the

Presbyterian Church and the responsibilities of the church and school, he grew pale, dyspeptic, and weak. His doctor finally prescribed an extended sea voyage and rest. Alexander offered to take over the Rich Hill School and prevailed on Thomas to go to America. If he found America favorable, he would then send for the whole family who would join him later.

On April 8, 1807 he sailed, and 35 days later landed in the city of Philadelphia, whereupon he presented his credentials to the Anti-Burgher Synod of North America, and being received was assigned to the western part of the State of Pennsylvania. He soon discovered in America the same problems he had encountered in Ireland. The church had passed an act, prohibiting members of other Presbyterian bodies from partaking of the communion. Campbell felt compelled to express his regret over the division and encouraged all to partake of the emblems. This soon led to his expulsion from the synod. Now separated, with no official church connection, he was free to preach where and when he wished.

Friends invited him to speak in their homes. On one such occasion, in the house of Abraham Alters, located between Mt. Pleasant and Washington, Pennsylvania, Campbell delivered what would later become the slogan that guided the men of that day as they tried to restore primitive New Testament Christianity.

All seemed to feel the importance of the occasion and to realize the responsibilities of their position. A deep feeling of solemnity pervaded the assembly when Thomas Campbell, having opened the meeting in the usual manner, and, in earnest prayer, specially invoked the Divine guidance, proceeded to rehearse the matter from the beginning, and to dwell with unusual force upon the manifold evils resulting from the divisions in religious society - divisions which, he urged, were as unnecessary as they were injurious, since God had provided, in his sacred Word, an infallible standard, which was all-sufficient and alone-sufficient, as a basis of union and Christian co-operation. ... "That rule, my highly respected hearers," said he in conclusion, "is this, that WHERE THE SCRIPTURES SPEAK, WE SPEAK; AND WHERE THE SCRIPTURES ARE SILENT, WE ARE SILENT." Upon this annunciation a solemn silence pervaded the assembly. Never before had religious duty been presented to them in so simple a form.

Ultimately a meeting was called at the head waters of Buffalo Creek on August 17, 1809, to form a fellowship to be known as "The Christian Association of Washington." Twenty-one other members appointed with Thomas Campbell to work out a statement of purpose for the new organization and erect a meeting house. Near this meeting house in the home of Doctor Welch, Thomas composed the famous Declarations and Address.

In its form, it was a pamphlet of 56 pages containing four parts. (1) the declaration; (2) the address; (3) the appendix; (4) a postscript. There were 13 propositions set forth in the address. Frederick D. Kershner summarized them as follows:

1. That the church of Christ is "essentially, intentionally and constitutionally one."
2. That although this unity presupposes and permits the existence of separate congregations or societies, there should be perfect harmony and unity of spirit among all of them.
3. That the Bible is the only rule of faith and practice for Christians.
4. That the Old and New Testaments alone contain the authoritative constitution of the church of Christ.
5. That no human authority has power to amend or change the original constitution and laws of the church.
6. That inferences and deductions from the Scriptures, however valuable, can not be made binding upon the consciences of Christians.

7. That differences of opinion with regard to such inferences shall not be made tests of fellowship or communion.
8. That faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God is a sufficient profession to entitle a man or woman to become a member of the church of Christ.
9. That all who have made such a profession, and who manifest their sincerity by their conduct, should love each other as brethren and as members of the same body and joint-heirs of the same inheritance.
10. That division among Christians is anti-christian, anti-scriptural, unnatural and to be abhorred.
11. That neglect of the revealed will of God and the introduction of human innovations are and have been the cause of all the corruptions and divisions that have ever taken place in the church of God.
12. That all that is necessary to secure the highest state of purity and perfection in the church is to restore the original ordinances and constitution as exhibited in the New Testament.
13. That any additions to the New Testament program which circumstances may seem to require, shall be regarded as human expedients and shall not be given a place of higher authority in the church than is permitted by the fallible character of their origin.

Current Religious Atmosphere

A study titled Religion in America, 50 years: 1935-1985, the Gallup Report No. 236 is one of the most revealing studies published in recent years about this country. This 57-page report, dated May 1985, gives the careful reader the inside story of our nation's rapidly declining interest and commitment to things religious. The pages are filled with statistics on everything from "Religious Preference" to "Church Attendance" and "Prayer Life."

At first glance there are some encouraging facts in the report:

95 percent of Americans believe in God.
61 percent say religion can answer all or most of today's problems.
Seven out of 10 are church members.
Four out of 10 adults attended church in a typical week of 1984.
Nine out of 10 Americans say they pray.
Seven out of 10 believe in life after death.

George Gallup Jr. admits that his studies show a severe "gap between belief and commitment, between high religiosity and low ethics."

Although 95 percent believe in God, only 56 percent say religion is very important in their lives. This is a decline from 75 percent in 1952.

Although 95 percent believe in God, an all time high of 9 percent of the population does not affiliate themselves with any religious group. This is a 6 percent increase in the last 20 years.

Although 95 percent believe in God and 90 percent claim they pray, only 31 percent pray daily, and fewer than ever now say an audible prayer prior to meals.

Gallup cites what he calls the "glaring lack of (religious) knowledge" as one of the problems of religion today, and in typical Gallup fashion he provides more than adequate statistics to support his statement. Only 42 percent of evangelicals know who delivered the Sermon on the Mount, and just 46 percent can

name all four Gospels. With this information it is easy to see why people don't live up to their commitment. They don't know how nor recognize the importance of doing so.¹⁰

Even among those claiming to be descendents of the Restoration movement begun in this country in the early 1800's there is widespread disagreement as to the necessity of strictly applying the Campbellian slogan. James Deforest Murch, noted church historian and editor, from the Christian Church, has spoken out against the validity of the slogan: "Who is to decide what can be done in the area of silence? ... because all of us do things in the area of the silences of the Scriptures. And it is because we cannot agree as to what may be done in the silences, that we're divided. And this is because of a human 'shibboleth,' enunciated by one of the grandest men that God ever made (Thomas Campbell, JNC), but nevertheless a human 'shibboleth.'" ¹¹ He believes that the basis of the slogan is of human rather than divine origin.

Carl Ketcherside, another critic of the slogan says: "The authority of Jesus is absolute, but no human theory of it based upon deductions from the scripture need be so. There is every evidence that both schools of thought (on the question of instrumental music) realize that they cannot practically apply their rules in an absolute degree. Those who postulate the exclusiveness of silence are constantly called upon to explain and justify the things which they have adopted without specific mention or authorization. Those who accept the theory of the permissiveness of silence are ever seeking to lay down laws of restraint to control their membership" ¹²

Dwaine Dunning, in a recent article for ONE BODY echoes the sentiment of most conservative Christian Church people when he says, re: the reasons for division in the Church: "There is a simple reason for this. From its beginnings, the Restoration has extensively used a non-Scriptural rule of interpretation of Scripture which has forced one division after another. The situation is generally not recognized. Those who use this rule to oppose instrumental music and other things can claim the principle as having been used, and honored, since the beginnings of the Movement, and this is true. However, it is also true that no passage of Scripture states it. God has laid much stress on obedience to commandments, but He has not told us to forbid the uncommanded!" ¹³

Does everyone claiming to believe the slogan properly and consistently apply it? Obviously not. Herein lies a problem that has been with us from the beginning of the Restoration Movement. People both within that movement and without it, face the same problems in making proper application of this principle.

Are We The Only Ones?

Are we the only ones who claim to speak where the Bible speaks? Certainly not. There are a number of churches (denominations) that in varying degrees seek to do this very thing. Such belief's as: One God; Jesus as the Son of God; Virgin birth of Jesus; Inerrancy of the Scriptures; Immersion for baptism; Rejection of instrumental music; etc., all attest to the fact that an effort is being made to follow the scriptures.

What, Then, Is The Problem

The problem lies in the proper and consistent application of this principle. A problem that goes as far back as the history of departures from the word of God and man's attempts at Restoration.

The Double Standard, Applying The Rule Inconsistently

Roy Cogdill has well said: "More than a hundred years ago all through this land there was the disposition to cling to the 'old paths' in theory but not in practice. Brethren became dissatisfied with divine arrangement yet professed to be believers in divine truth. They preached then, 'We will speak where the Bible speaks and we will be silent where the Bible is silent.' This was more than a slogan, it is a Bible principle. 'If any man speak,

let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever, Amen.' (I Peter 4:11) These brethren then professed to continue to 'speak as the Oracles of God,' indeed they still do make that profession, but they were not willing to 'minister (serve) as of the strength which God supplieth.' They demonstrated that 'speaking where the Bible speaks and being silent where the Bible is silent' was to them just a slogan and not a divine principle at all. They went about organizing whatever they wished in the way of human institutions and societies to accomplish the work that God had designated as the work of the church. ... it is amazing to hear these brethren who 'went out from us because they were not of us' ... still talking about 'speaking where the Bible speaks and being silent where the Bible is silent.'"¹⁴

Moses Lard, represents the difficulty of consistently applying the rule, as well as anyone. Regarding instrumental music he wrote: "The question of instrumental music in the churches of Christ involves a great and sacred principle. But for this the subject is not worthy of one thought at the hands of the child of God. That principle is the right of men to introduce innovations into the prescribed worship of God. This right we utterly deny. The advocates of instrumental music affirm it. This makes the issue. As sure as the Bible is a divine book, we are right and they are wrong."¹⁵

Yet, regarding the missionary society, he said: "I am no great advocate for missionary societies; especially I am neither the advocate nor the apologist for any particular one. But what I do advocate and maintain, with strong, healthy will, is the right of the brethren to have and use these societies if they see fit. This extent unconditionally hath my advocacy, no more. If societies are efficient and do right, I am their friend; if not, my wish is their end. Not only do I maintain the right of the brethren to use these societies, if they chose, but I am willing and anxious to see them exercise this right till a full test has been made of missionary societies. This done, if from any cause it should become apparent that the societies should be brought to an end, then will I be ready for the work. As these societies are not enjoined in the New Testament, no one will seek to force them on the brotherhood. I, at least, will not."¹⁶

Perhaps, we have a clue as to why Lard dealt as he did with these two issues in the following statement: "This is our rule. The command to do a thing includes everything necessary to the doing. Sometimes one way may be necessary, sometimes another, but always the way that is necessary to the doing, and to do the very best that can be done, is enjoined, and a 'Thus saith the Lord' enjoins it. If then, a Missionary Society is necessary to the most effective support of preachers in destitute places, it is commanded in the command to support such preachers... All the machinery, then, that shall be found necessary in order that churches may work together in sending the gospel through the whole world, is authorized by that simple rule which was the boast and the strength of the Reformation in its early days. But not one single device,¹⁷ or law, or office, which effective work does not require, will it allow us to employ."¹⁷

Jacob Creath, however, puts the rule and its consistent application into proper perspective when he says: "We must speak where the Bible speaks, and we must respect the silence of the Bible, as well as what it says, says Thomas Campbell. You have only to do this one thing, and this war of words closes forever on my part. Here I rest the controversy until you produce the apostolic example or precept for your conventions. Your conventions stand upon precisely the same footing that the one now in session in Rome does - that sects, creeds, infant-sprinkling, organ-grinding in churches... stand upon ... as another advocate for all these innovations says, 'They are not expressly forbidden nor commanded.' Neither is Romanism nor Mohammedanism."¹⁸

Even Lard was well aware of the danger in arguing for things that had no scriptural foundation. Regarding expediency he wrote: "The subject of expediency, as interpreted by some of us, may yet prove the rock on which the reformation for which we are pleading goes to pieces. This is not said in the spirit of alarm; it is the utterance of a calm conviction. I do not deny that expediency is sometimes right, nor that the New Testament, in very special cases, sanctions it. Certainly not... When we plead expediency to justify practices unknown to the apostolic age, we are not within the limits of the expedient. We are then violating the word of God. Expediency is no law for innovation, either in faith

or practice; and he who pleads it to this extent has abandoned the only rule which can save us from ruin."¹⁹

How Do We Know Our Plea Is Consistent?

Only by a constant and diligent study of the Scriptures and a proper application of the same. Are we any different from anyone else? No! Do we make mistakes? Yes. Are we what we ought to be in every respect? Obviously not. Is this reason to forsake the truth we have already achieved, or compromise, conviction, conscience, or scriptural principle? NEVER.

Uncertain Sounds - We Must Beware

We are in constant danger of losing our identity and consistency. Eternal vigilance must be our constant plea. There are areas that bear watching:

1. Our inordinate pre-occupation with entertainment and recreation and the tendency to mix it with the work of the Church.
2. A tendency toward emotionalism and the spontaneous adoption of practices based of feeling, merely to be different.
3. The development and implementation of a "clergy"; pastor system; circuit rider; preaching system at the expense of scriptural evangelization and local church government.

* * * * *

FOOTNOTES

1. Broadbent, E. H. The Pilgrim Church
2. Murch, James DeForest, Christians Only
3. Ibid
4. Ibid
5. Guardian of Truth, Oct. 1986
6. Murch, Op. cit.
7. Hailey, Homer, Attitudes and Consequences
8. Richardson, Robert, Memoirs of Alexander Campbell
9. Murch, Op. cit.
10. McDonough, Bill, Gospel Advocate, Sept. 18, 1986
11. Murch, James DeForest, in a speech before the student body and faculty of Pacific Christian College, Long Beach, Ca., Feb. 8, 1967
12. Mission Messenger, Vol. 28, No. 7, July 1966, p. 121
13. Dunning, Dwaine, One Body, Spring 1986
14. Cogdill, Roy, "Do we believe in one Body?" bulletin Spring and Delta Church, Long Beach, Ca., Oct. 22, 1967
15. Lard's Quarterly, Vol. 4, Oct. 1867, p. 368
16. Ibid, Vol. 4, April 1867, p. 153
17. Op. Cit., Vol. 5, April 1868, pp. 199-200
18. Gospel Advocate, 1870, p. 566
19. Lard, Moses, Apostolic Times, Vol. 1, No. 3, April 29, 1869, p. 20

THE KING JAMES AND THE NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE

by Jimmie Cutter

This study is designed to help give some information on translations so better judgments can be made on selecting English translations. Obviously, not all translations can be considered, so two of the main ones suggested by Raymond Fox will be considered.

Today, people live in a multi-translation society in the United States. Never again will people see the day when there are one or two main English translations. The best thing that can be done is to equip people in a multiple translation society on how to make a proper translation selection.

The Early English Bibles To The Time Of Wyclif

Caedmon (670 A.D.), as far as we know, was the first to translate the Bible into Anglo-Saxon (the ancestor of our English). Other attempts were made, but they were always minor attempts (as was Caedmon's) and generally only glosses and paraphrases of the Psalms or one of the books of the Gospels.

John Wyclif (1330-1384) is thought to be the first man to translate the whole Bible into English. As far as it is known, Wyclif did not know Greek, Hebrew, or Aramaic, so he translated the Bible from the Latin. The New Testament came out in 1382 and the rest of the Bible came out shortly after that. Nicholas of Hereford translated a large part of the Old Testament.

Wyclif crossed swords with the Pope in several areas. He felt the only way to bridge the gap between the church authorities and the common people was to give the people the Bible. He was much hated for this. In 1408, Bishop Arundel influenced a provincial council to decree that no one could translate the Bible into English or any other language. In 1415, Wyclif's bones were dug up, burned and scattered over the river Swift.

From Wyclif to Tyndale

Between 1408 and the time of William Tyndale several important things occurred. First, there was the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453. As a result, scholars fled West with manuscripts and classics. Second, in 1492, Ferdinand expelled the Jews from Spain. The Jews stirred an interest in Hebrew in Europe, something that had not been characteristic of Christians before. Third, there was an intellectual awakening in all areas. Leonardo de Vinci, Copernicus, Galileo, Francis Bacon, Christopher Columbus, Marco Polo, and others made their advances during this time. Fourth, this was the time when the movable printing press was invented. The Gutenberg Bible (1453-56) was the first book printed. The printing press made books cheaper. It also allowed books to be printed with fewer errors and made it possible for scholars to discuss books with each other. Finally, the birth of the Protestant Reformation movement took place. Its main appeal was to authority in Scripture and therefore the right of man to work out his own destiny independent of the Catholic Church.

William Tyndale

Tyndale was born about one hundred years after Wyclif's death. Although not much is known about his early life, it is known that he adopted many of the views of Erasmus: the one who was really responsible for the Protestant Reformation.

Tyndale devoted his life to translating the Bible into English, despite the law of 1408 that warned against it. He first printed the New Testament into English at Worms in 1525 and shipped copies illegally back into England. This translation was the first English translation out of the original Greek, and later when the Old Testament came out, the first from the Hebrew and Aramaic into English.

Tyndale was betrayed by Henry Philip at Antwerp and arrested in 1535. In August of 1536 he was convicted of being a heretic and on October 6, 1536 he was burned at the stake.

Tyndale is important in studying the history of the English Bible because he rekindled a demand and interest for an English translation, and because large portions of the King James Version are reproductions of Scripture in the form that Tyndale put it into. It is estimated that 92 percent of the King James Version is as Tyndale's in the New Testament.

Between Tyndale and the King James Version

The eighty-six years between Tyndale's death and the making of the King James Version saw several translations produced, which greatly influenced the King James Version.

The first was the Coverdale's version in 1535. It depended heavily on Tyndale's version. It is practically a copy of it. He is the first to print the whole Bible into English (Old and New Testaments) and collect the Apocrypha and put it in a separate body between the testaments. He claims to have had the King's permission, so in the sense that this is true it is the first authorized English translation.

The Matthew's version came out in 1537. It was another revision of Tyndale's. He also claimed to have had the King's permission.

The Traverer's Bible came out in 1539. He was an excellent Greek scholar, but he knew no Hebrew. It was overshadowed by the Great Bible that came out that same year. It was the first Bible to be printed on British soil.

The Great Bible was the result of a proposal by Cromwell. It was named for its size. The Old Testament was actually Matthew's and the New Testament was Tyndale's. It was the first to use chapter divisions in an English Bible.

Mary Tudor came to the throne in 1553. She opposed all reform so the Protestants fled England for the Continent. Many of them gathered at Geneva, where they put out the Geneva Bible of 1561. It was the first English Bible to use italics to complete the sense and to use verse divisions.

In 1558, Mary Tudor died and Elizabeth came to the throne. As a result, all the Catholics fled England and the Protestants came home. In 1561 bishops in England set out to revise the Great Bible. The Bishops Bible of 1571 was the result.

While the Catholics were away on the Continent, they issued the Rheims-Douai Bible (1582). It was translated by Catholics from the Latin Vulgate. They argued that it was better to translate from Latin than Greek, Hebrew, or Aramaic.

The King James Version

The King James Version arose out of the Hampton Court conference of 1604. On the second day of the conference (January 16), John Reynolds suggested to James I that a new

revision of the Bible be made. Evaluations of King James would show that he was the least likely candidate to perform any kind of living service for Christendom, but for some reason this proposal caught his fancy.

Brancroft was chosen to exercise oversight in the project. Forty-seven men of proven ability were picked to take part in this work. These men were then divided into six companies.

It is generally believed that there were fourteen rules drawn up to direct the revisers. To summarize briefly, the rules make it clear that the revision was to be minimal. Only those things out of line with the original text were to be brought into line. The Bishop's Bible was specifically named as the one which they were to follow. Old ecclesiastical words were to be maintained.

The Preface to the King James Version

Another way to gain insight into the making of this version is by noticing the preface. Miles Smith, one of the translators, was responsible for writing the preface. The preface shows that it was a scholar's project. It was intended to be understood by the "very vulgar" meaning the simple, common individuals. The translators admitted that they did not know the meaning of a great many words they dealt with. They also recognized that serious objections were likely to be made to the work.

Authorized Version?

The idea that the King James Version is the authorized version seems to rest solely upon the printer's claim on the title page, which continued the phrase from earlier Bible's "appointed to be read in the churches." There are extant proclamations about the authorization of the Matthew's, the Great Bible, and the Bishop's Bible, but no record in history of an official authorization of the King James Version by Convocation, Parliament, Privy Council, or the King. In no sense does it imply divine authorization, nor does it imply compulsion because many kept reading the Geneva, Bishop, and Rheims-Douai Bibles after the King James Version came out.

The King James Version Success Over Its Competitors

The King James Version triumphed over its competitors. Baskers, the printer, was given a monopoly on the printing of it and that contributed toward the early success of this version. Also the fact that it was a better translation than all other English translations made it the most popular English Bible. At any rate, by the end of the 17th century the King James Version was the Bible of the English speaking world.

This victory was not gained without controversy. The King James Version was attacked vehemently by the Catholics on one side and by the Puritans on the other. There were criticisms from the main-stream church of Englanders as well. Hugh Broughton, the most reputable Greek scholar in England, said after examining the book, "I had rather be rent in pieces with wild horses, than any such translation by my consent should be urged upon poor churches." He insisted that the translators put error in the text and correct readings in the margins. Another man, John Selden, criticized the style of this version and said it was not native English. If it is remembered that an estimated 92 percent of the New Testament is actually Tyndale's, then one can see where Selden was trying to come from.

Early Printed Editions Of The King James Version

One valid source of criticism was the number of printer's errors that characterized early editions. According to modern standards, books reproduced in the 17th century were carelessly printed. These printer's errors created many oddities like "The Wicked Bible" so called because of the omission of "not" in the "seventh commandment" (Thou shalt commit

adultery); "The Unrighteous Bible" in which the unrighteous inherit the kingdom of heaven; "The Vinegar Bible" which has the parable of the "vinegar" in Luke 20; the running together of "headstone" (Zech. 4:7), a printing error of 1611 that remains uncorrected in the King James Version printings today; "strain at a gnat" (Matt. 23:41) where the 1611 version correctly had "strain out a gnat." These go to show that the printing of the Bible is a process subject to human error.

Which King James Version

There have also been numerous intentional changes made since 1611. Time and space will not permit mentioning many of these, but as early as 1612 there were changes made. Some of the more important changes were made in 1629 (the first omission of the Apocrypha - which did not become standard until the 19th century), 1638, 1659, 1683, 1701 (when Bishop Lloyd included Ussher chronology which is not generally thought to be incorrect but is still printed in this version), 1727, 1762 (major extension in the use of italics), 1769, 1873, 1932, 1962. As a result, it is impossible to speak of the King James Version as a currently circulating book. The King James Version's currently circulating differ in significant detail, though not in general content, from that of 1611.

Evaluation of the King James Version

Texts

The place to begin in considering the accuracy of a Bible translation is to notice the original text upon which it rests (i.e. Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic).

This version was based upon very late texts rather than early ones. Really, one should talk of the text behind Tyndale's translation since an estimated 92 percent of the New Testament was based upon it. The revisers could have known of fewer than 25 late manuscripts of the New Testament and they were carelessly used. Today, there are more than 5,358 manuscripts of the Greek New Testament. The Old Testament situation of 1611 was even worse than the New Testament.

The text the King James Version revisors used in the New Testament includes a number of phrases that the best Greek texts of today will not support. There are sixteen entire verses that credible Greek texts and all translations since the Revised Version and the ASV of 1881, 1901 drop (Matt. 17:21; 18:11; 23:14; Mark 7:16; 9:44, 46; 11:26; 15:28; Luke 17:36; 23:17; John 5:4; Acts 8:37; 15:34; 24:7; 28:29; and Romans 16:24). There are also a number of lesser phrases (not including the whole verse) which would not be adequately supported today and are again dropped in all modern translations since 1881 (egs: "openly" Matt. 6:4, 6, 18; "without a cause" Matt. 5:22; etc.).

On the opposite side of this problem, the text followed by the King James Version revisers lost certain phrases that are included in all translations since 1881 (Eg., Matt. 24:36 "nor the son"; Acts 4:25 "by Holy Spirit" etc.).

Loyalty To Text Used

This is a second area where the accuracy of a translation can be measured. The King James Version is rated good in overall accuracy. It is widely assumed that this version does not paraphrase and that it is literal throughout. This assumption is false. While this version would be judged by some to be more literal than some translations, it still paraphrases like all translations do. The structure of the Greek and Hebrew is so markedly different from that of English that an absolute literal translation would not be intelligible to English readers. Some examples of King James Version paraphrasing are "God save the King" (1 Sam. 10:24, etc.); "God forbid" (in Old and New Testament where the word "God" is not present); "would God" (Num. 11:29); "give up the ghost" (Gen. 25:8, etc.); "cast the same upon his teeth" (Matt. 27:44).

Smith, in his English-Greek concordance lists 100 words that are not translated by any English word, and since some of those words occur more than once, the total number of untranslated words given by Smith is over 1,000.

There are examples of where the King James Version missed the meaning of the text (Egs: Herod "observed him" should have been "preserved him" Mark 6:20; "I gave tithes of all I possess" should have been "all I acquire" Luke 18:12; etc.).

Another way accuracy of a translation is measured is by comparing it with archaeology. The cities of Palestine did not "stand in their strength" (Josh. 11:13); they stood on their "tells." Since tells had not been discovered in 1611, the revisors could not be expected to translate it "tell."

Communication

A third area of concern in accuracy of translation is that of communication. The unskilled reader must be able to understand clearly what they are reading. This was clearly the goal of the King James Version revisers. They sought to make this version understandable to the "very vulgar" or simple, uneducated, common individual. However, this version is not clearly understandable in many places today.

Confusion is created by a variety of spellings of persons and places (egs: Seth and Sheth; Jeremiah, Jeremias, and Jeremy; Noah and Noe; Isaiah and Isaias; Tyrus and Tyre; Areopagus and Mars Hill).

Coinage is also a problem. The coinage is either of 16th or 17th British origin or it is a transliteration (Egs: pound, penny, pence, mite, shekel, and talent).

Uniformity of rendering is also another significant matter of communication. The revisers insisted that to render the same Hebrew or Greek word with the same English word "savored more curiosity than wisdom." No one would argue that this is entirely wrong, but the question is whether or not they were excessive or not. For example, the Hebrew word "dabar" which means "thing" or "word" is rendered by 84 separate English words in the King James Version. The Hebrew word "sim" (to put or place) is rendered by 59 different English words in the King James Version. The Greek word "katargeo" (to make void) is found 27 times in the New Testament and found translated by 17 different English words. "Logizomai" which deals with Abraham's faith in Rom. 4:3 is rendered "counted," verse nine "reckoned," and verses 22-23 "imputed." This is confusion that leads to no benefit at all.

The opposite is also true. There are a number of places where distinctions should be made in the English but are not (Egs: "servant" for both "doulos" and "diakonos" in Matt. 22:1; a distinction should have been made between "repentance" and "regret" in II Cor. 7:10).

Understanding is also affected by the typological make-up of a translation. Many problems arise over verse divisions (I Cor. 12:31 should go with I Cor. 13) and chapter divisions. For some reason the paragraph indicators mysteriously disappear after Acts 20. Problems arise over the use of italics. In English Bibles italics were first started by the Geneva Bible, but the KJV continued their use. The most important thing to remember about the use of italics in the KJV is that the use of them has been fluid and not constant across the history of the KJV. The KJV started out with relatively few italicized words and got to the ultimate number in the Cambridge edition of 1873. Since that time they have slowly been reduced. There is no authority responsible for this fluctuation. Usually, it is simply the judgment of the printer or typesetter.

Many additions have been made in the KJV without being italicized (e.g. Matt. 6:2; "therefore when thou doest thine alms" - "thine" is missing in the Greek text).

There is a problem of Hebrew poetry. All poetry in the KJV is in prose. It was not until 1760 (Robert Lowth) that a viable theory of what poetry was all about came out.

There are problems with chapter summaries and headings. Some are misleading (for example: christological headings in the Psalms, Isaiah, Jeremiah, etc.). Other headings might be at least questioned (e.g.: Daniel 11, "tyranny of the Romans," etc.). Book headings, "Saint Matthew," etc., reflect the Catholic doctrine of sainthood. Ussher's chronology at the top of the reference column is perhaps the most famous heading problem. It cannot be blamed on the KJV revisers, since it was not put in until 1701.

Understanding the KJV

The majority of the KJV is understandable to anyone who reads English. Only a minority of content is not understandable. What does it mean when it says "Jacob sod pottage" in Gen. 25:29; "Thou shalt destroy them that speaketh leasing" in Psalms 5:6; "We do you to wit by the grace of God" in II Cor. 8:1, and many other such examples.

Trench points out that the word "its" had not arrived in the English language in 1611. As a result the KJV does not have any "its" in it at all (cf. I Cor. 15:38).

There are instances of where an already plural word is made further plural. An example is the word "cherubim" that is plural in the Hebrew, but it is rendered "cherubims" in the KJV.

There are places where punctuation needs attention. For example, in Isa. 9:6 there are only four pairs, not five.

There are strange spellings that lead to confusion. There is "discovered" for "uncovered" in Psalms 29:9; "specially" for "especially"; "adventure" for "venture," and many more.

Confusion is created by wrong prepositions. For example, "I know nothing by myself" should be "against myself" in I Cor. 4:4. "We have Abraham to our father" should be "as our father" in Matt. 3:9, and many other such examples.

The KJV is deficient in its use and omission of the article. For example, in I Tim. 6:10, "the love of money is the root of all evil" should be "a root of all evil."

There are mythical animals like the unicorn, dragon, cockatrice, which were probably thought to exist in 1611, but no longer are thought to exist (they did have problems with "horns of unicorns" in Deut. 33:17).

THE NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE

Fifty-eight scholars under the sponsorship of the Lockman Foundation of La Habra, California, put out the New American Standard Bible. The New Testament was published in 1963, and the entire Bible was published in 1970.

The Goals of the NASB

The stated goals of the Lockman Foundation were that the publication be faithful to the Greek and Hebrew, grammatically correct, and understandable to the masses, which are common aims of all recent versions. The foundation says that all of the participants were well educated in languages and literature. The NASB was intended for public and private use. It has been advertised extravagantly as "the literary masterpiece of this generation," "the major contribution of our generation to biblical literature," and "destined to surpass all other translations of Holy Scripture."

The ASV and the NASB

The producers state that their motivation for publishing the NASB was their regret that the ASV of 1901 was disappearing and their conviction that interest in it should be

renewed and increased. However, people should not think that because the ASV is good the NASB is better. In a free society the Foundation can name their translation whatever they please, but actually the gulf separating the two is such that the NASB should be evaluated as a new version. One cannot assume, as the title page tries to imply, that the NASB is an update of the ASV. Rather than claiming to be a revised ASV, the NASB actually only claims to "follow the principles used in the ASV."

The typographical make-up of the two is different. One of the merits of the ASV (and all other modern versions) was the printing of the text into paragraphs. The NASB reverts to the practice of printing each verse as a separate unit.

While the ASV used no quotation marks, the NASB adopts an elaborate system of them, sometimes very complicated with some passages with four sets of marks (cf. Isa. 36:10).

The basic text of the NASB is the same as that of the ASV (and every other translation that followed the ASV). The critical Greek text was used for the New Testament and the third edition of the Kittel Bible in the Old Testament. Sometimes the NASB chose a preferable reading over the ASV, and sometimes it chose a poorer reading. As a result of these many instances, the question is still very open as to whether the NASB attained its goal of representing the best available text.

The NASB committee members took a very conservative approach to the Bible. All pronouns referring to deity are capitalized.

The NASB introductory material states that they retained conjunctions occurring in the original text even though they were superfluous in English, because the Holy Spirit lead men to write that way. However, did not the same Holy Spirit lead men to write many idioms which the NASB converts to English idioms? Did not the same Holy Spirit lead men to write in word orders that the NASB changes? Did not the same Holy Spirit lead men to put in phrases without an article which the NASB supplies? Did not the same Holy Spirit lead men to write many articles where pronouns have been substituted by the NASB? We could go on with such illustrations.

Italics

The NASB italicizes words in at least 2,029 places in the New Testament. Despite the free use of italics, they cannot be depended on to inform the reader whether or not a word has been supplied in the text. For example, if a literal rendering is given in the margin the translators felt no need to use italics in the text. Elsewhere there are supplied words in the text without italics. The definite article is supplied without italics in many places. The reader can never be sure that the original had the definite article or not. No translation has ever been successful in indicating supplied words. It is a misconception to suppose that a translation can be done successfully that way.

Marginal Notes

Sometimes the NASB is criticized for being "severly literalistic," but it often makes things even more literal by supplying marginal notes. While many of the notes are helpful, many are not. It is not very helpful to know that "Jewish elders" means, more literally, "elders of the Jews" (Luke 7:30); or that "sinful flesh" is more literally "flesh of sin" (Rom. 8:3); or "His wife" is more literally "his own wife" (Acts 24:24). At the same time the alternate readings are not always helpful either. It does not help to know that an alternate of "the dead" is "corpses" in Mark 12:27; or that "staying" is "lodging" in Acts 10:6. When in one instance "congregation" carries a marginal note, "Or, multitude" in Acts 6:2, and then three verses further a second occurrence has the margin, "Lit., multitude," one wonders what principle was followed in determining whether "Or" or "literal" is used. In many instances what is given in the margin would have been preferable to that given in the text. It must be remembered that the marginals are not always dependable either (cf. Gal. 3:15; Lev. 4:14).

Consistency

Sometimes the NASB is not consistent in its rendering. At times "ho poneros" is rendered "evil" with "the evil one" given in the margin (Matt. 5:37; 6:13). At other times "the evil one" is given in the text with "evil" in the margin (Eph. 6:16). Elsewhere "the evil one" is used (I John 5:18-19) with neither italics or marginal readings given.

There is the problem of rendering two Greek words into the same English word which has lead to many abnormalities. For example, Jesus came not to "abolish" the law (Matt. 5:17), and then Paul says Jesus did "abolish" it in Eph. 2:15. Since two different Greek words appear in the text, the English should reflect the difference.

Contemporary English

The advertising of the NASB claims that it is "grammatically correct, contemporary English." Most would agree that it is a step forward in this area from the KJV or ASV, but it is certainly a step backward when compared to any other modern attempt.

The NASB claims that it is in contemporary English in one breath, and then in the next it claims to keep the original word order whenever possible. The result is that the NASB fails to attain current English style and vocabulary in many places.

Its language is not contemporary and its English is not idiomatic. This can be seen in reversed word orders like "wicked exceedingly" in Gen. 13:13; dangling clauses throughout (cf. Gen. 15:4; I Sam. 1:13; I Kings 18:39); pronouns retained in non-English style like "I and the father" (John 10:30); "Me and My father" (John 15:24); "Me and Barnabas" (Gal. 2:9), however, "you and me" is found in a number of places in the Old Testament and the New Testament even though the words are in opposite order; "both" used for more than two (Acts 19:16) and "less" for the superlative (Mark 15:40); "didst hide" (Matt. 11:25) and "didst send" (John 17:8).

There are poorly constructed sentences: "And the one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man ..." (Matt. 13:20). Many other sentences are woodenly literal (Luke 20:2).

Many expressions are redundant ("envisioned in visions," Amos 1:1; "every first born, the first offspring of every womb," Ex. 31:2). In other places words and phrases are understandable but not current ("begone" in Matt. 8:32). There are grammar slips ("she had born" in I Sam. 21:8 for "borne"). Prior to Jesus resurrection His relatives (Matt. 12:48) and those spiritually related to Him (Matt. 12:49) are "brothers," but after the resurrection His physical relatives are "brothers" (Acts 1:14) and those spiritually related are "brethren" (cf. Matt. 28:10; John 20:17; Acts 1:15).

The NASB is a hybrid of old English pronouns and current English verbs. For example, Psalms 45:7, "has" is found but the same citation in Heb. 1:9 "hath" is used. The NASB has "thou," "thine," "thee" in the Psalms and in address to divinity. But in the gospel inconsistencies are found since at judgement "you" is used and Jesus is addressed also as "you." It is hard to understand why "thou" is used in Peter's confession, and yet in equally confessional statements (cf. John 1:38; 6:68-9) "you" is found. Coins, weights and measures are a problem. Sometimes the NASB tries to use current values, which are always out of date in a few years (cf. Matt. 10:29), and elsewhere the translation transliterates the terms. Some distances are given in miles (Luke 24:13) and elsewhere the measure is retained (Matt. 6:27). Sometimes the current and transliterated use of these terms are given in the same verse (cf. Amos 8:5).

Conclusion to the NASB Evaluation

The NASB falls far short of what is most desired in an English translation. Some renderings are admirable, but a person that has a favorable disposition toward the ASV should not be lead into a blind acceptance of the NASB. There is inconsistency in the NASB's aim of retaining the Greek and Hebrew structures while straining for current

English - resulting in a wooden style. This hybrid style is certainly undesirable. As far as this writer is concerned, he would rather have the beautiful King's language of the 16th and 17th centuries or he would have a true contemporary English translation. Time and usage, rather than publishers and critics will actually determine whether or not a version commends itself in such a way as to become a "standard" version.

CONCLUSION

Evaluations of translations (in any language) are not an attack on the Bible. English phraseology is merely the clothing in which God's Word is dressed for communication purposes. Translation is a human process, not a divine one. The process of translation is subject to all the faults man is subject to. The perfect translation does not exist.

The basic duties of man can be learned from the worst translation. Alexander Campbell said, "Let me here say and let me be put to proof that there is no important item for which I can contend that I can not prove from the worst version I ever saw." The various English translations out today are much better than the translations out in Campbell's day, so his words can be confidently restated today. However, this is not to say that God's Word cannot be more easily grasped in some than they can be in others. A careful Bible student will not completely rely on any one version of the Bible, but will seek to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of all the versions he uses.

NOTES
(This page is blank on purpose)

WHY I MUST PREACH

by M. Lynwood Smith

The assignment for me is one that requires me to speak in the first person. I shall be required to make references to myself, which I am somewhat disinclined to do. But the topic is, "Why I Must Preach."

I cannot remember a time in my life when I did not want to preach. Oh, there were a few spots now and then when I became infatuated with a few surface notions, but these soon faded and the recurring dream was always there. One of the family stories is about a childish declaration that I made at the Mt. Olive Church, which is located just east of Brookhaven, during one of Brother N. L. Clark's summer meetings. Brother Clark was a Mississippi boy, who had made good in Ft. Worth, and would always come back to his native Mississippi for summer meetings. People, including my folks, came from far and near to hear this great man. At the noon hour, after the great dinner spread under the nearby trees, brethren were lounging beneath the trees discussing scripture, crops, etc. I took advantage of the empty church building (I was very small) and was in the pulpit yelling and shouting to an imaginary audience. Brother Clark came in to prepare for the afternoon sermon. His said he glanced at me and said, "Son, are you singing?" I replied, with stark astonishment at such a foolish question, "No sir, I'm preaching!" Even the serious and solemn Brother Clark smiled.

Thus, the dream possessed me at a very early age. And why should not the dream become a compulsion? There was every influence and incentive. Oh, no one ever said to me, "Lynwood, why don't you become a preacher?" No church or group of churches ever supported me to study the Bible to make a preacher. They didn't have to. The intrigue was there. But study I did. I studied what I had - the Bible and what few books that happened to be around the place that maybe Brother Harper had left or we happened to have on hand. Some of them were great books and they helped shape my future. I surely didn't have the money to buy books and no church ever bought a library for me. A Gospel Advocate of Firm Foundation catalog would come in the mail and I would search it through marking a book or two that I planned to get when and if I got the money. "The Church of Christ" by a Layman, or Phillips, is a special book to me. I found an old copy in our smokehouse, without covers. I didn't know what it was, but I saw it was a Gospel book, so I rescued it, put a home-made job of binding on it and found out from J. D. Phillips what it was. So, I will always have a tender spot for that book.

I, along with other preachers of this time, had little to distract us from our studies. We were not fortunate to have a youth rally about once a month. I probably would not have been allowed to attend anyway. At any rate, we would have been at home preparing sermons for the next weekend, or we would have been in a mission meeting in some school house or vacant store building. Several churches over the country owe their existence to such efforts. This was before the Gospel of fun and games became a vital part of making a preacher. Or it was before we realized we needed to first take an extended course in how to do personal work. So, I plowed the long cotton rows and studied at noon and at night and Saturday afternoons (which we were given as rest time).

Another great push in the direction of preaching was the great men who came into our home and who preached at New Salem. These men were held up as our heroes. They were considered the best, the smartest, and the wisest around.

I knew very little of movie stars and great actors. I was "deprived." Later I did hear of Clark Gable and, naturally, a few "True Story" magazines would somehow slip into the home circle and I saw some very beautiful ladies. I remember - I guess this was my wild streak - I did slip off and go to the show and saw the Lone Ranger (whoever he was).

But, seriously, the names that we honored were: H. C. Harper, N. L. Clark, J. D. Phillips, H. E. Robertson, Homer L. King, Homer A. Gay, and, later, Fred Kirbo, Ervin Waters, Clovis Cook. Those were the men who helped to make me what I am. My admiration for them was so great that when I graduated from high school, I broke a trend in the Loyd Star High School where it was the Methodist, the Baptist and sometimes the Presbyterian preachers who always gave the baccalaureate sermon. I lobbied and because of the love that the senior class had for me, I had Homer L. King travel from Lebanon, Missouri to do this honor. I have been Church of Christ all the way.

I had made a few simple efforts at appointments but after graduation I made my big move: a whole weekend in Lawrenceburg, Tenn. (I shall ever feel close to the Chapel Grove Church and especially the Orten family for taking me in as they did. They had two young boys, Billy and James, and two beautiful little twin girls). A terrible war was raging and I was never given a preacher's classification. I kept it appealed and the war ended with it still appealed. I was scared to death all the time. I made the Lord some great promises and, thus, I felt I **must preach**. I guess one of the first reasons I would give is because of the dreams I had. There are young men, and old ones, too, who would have been preachers if they had been given the right push, the proper encouragement. By and large, children like to please their parents. They might not admit it, but they do.

I love to linger around the memories of an old-time mother found in the Old Testament. Listen: "for this child I prayed; - therefore, have I lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the lord." (I Sam. 1:27, 28). These are the words of the wonderful Hannah of old. As she utters them she is looking into the face of her newborn baby boy whom God has given her in answer to her prayer. She is glad with the glorious joys of motherhood, and we in the distant day are interested in her. We lean across the centuries to get a look at her winsome face. We are interested in her, not because of her cleverness, though I am sure she was clever, we are interested in her not because she was a leader in society - we are interested in her because she was a mother, a successful mother.

The attitude and conduct of this mother toward this child caused him to become the great Samuel the Seer, who was one of the greatest voices from God through all the annals of the history of God's people. Old Testament history would be impoverished were his deeds and words removed. I know that Samuel could say as long as he lived the words of an old song: "Mother's prayers have followed me."

Do you have a son in your home? Have you prayed for him? Does he know you are praying for him? Can he sing the song: "I heard my name in mother's prayer?" God pity the child who is reared in a prayerless home. Hannah said, "Therefore, have I lent him to the Lord." Have you lent your child to the Lord? I think there are numbers of parents today who sit back in the audiences while their sons preach the Gospel with power and can say: "For this child have I prayed, therefore, have I lent him to the Lord." Make a preacher out of your boy - make a good one. Tell him there are still such things as faith, and when we sing "I'm walking by faith," we will mean it. He might not be as financially secure as some of his peers, but his riches will far exceed silver and gold and material things. There will always be the satisfaction of knowing he pointed someone to Jesus and, too, you can feel that somebody will step over the portals of the Four Square City because he preached the gospel. Besides, there will be countless numbers who will feel comforted and edified because he preached.

When the Lord wanted a great leader for His people long ago, He providentially kept Moses from the death that hundreds of other Israelite boys suffered and dropped him into the arms of his own dear mother, the greatest teacher that any young preacher ever had. And I am sure that her teachings played a great part in making his choice for God.

Timothy was complimented by the great Apostle Paul for having had a Godly mother and grandmother who taught him the word of God. Paul admonished him to ever be mindful of those from whom he had learned the scriptures.

Who are the heroes in many homes - Rambo, Rocky or even worse? Who is looked up to? Who is mentioned with esteem? The millionaires, the big business men of the community. Nothing is wrong with respecting and even appreciating honorable men in the business

world. We need them, but when that is spoken of in such admirable terms as to give the impression that that is the greatest goal in life, you need not expect many preachers to come out of such a climate.

Another thing that defeats the purpose to make good, sincere preachers and that's to constantly be putting emphasis on money and the ways to make it. It's little wonder dedicated preachers ever come out of some congregations - they let everybody know by their actions and desires and even words sometimes that the young men in the community who is making the most money is the one who has achieved life's greatest goal and is the real success. That is embarrassing when you are a preacher hardly making ends meet, because you love the cause. Did you ever see that preacher, or that ex-preacher I should say, who turned aside from the Cause because he got a good opportunity to "rake it in"? Did you ever see him take time out of his busy circle and grace a Gospel meeting one night? Have you watched the brethren flock around him and hang upon his every worldly word of wisdom? Preachers included. Have you seen the brethren show how they admire such genius and listen and slap their knees in hearty support of his business advice and his antidote of success? Some of the brethren who barely make it who have driven miles to support the meeting do not even get noticed. They do not even get a handshake. Such things must have a negative effect.

In answer to the question about one ceasing to preach I have this to say. It's a dangerous thing to become a preacher. I cringe when I see people taking it so lightly. I have never believed it was just a job, say, like selling insurance, running a grocery store, etc. It's more like a life. It's your life that you live and I do not believe a preacher can ever stop preaching the Gospel by Heaven's approval. Now, I am not saying that his style and type of activity cannot be changed. If he has been a traveling preacher, he might need to limit the circle of his work. Domestic and health reasons may require one to curtail his widespread labors, but I believe a real preacher who started out with the proper reasons and motives to begin with will never stop preaching as long as he can possibly do it. He might not be able to travel to California, but maybe he can go to the crossroads and there preach. It just might be that the latter would be the more fruitful of the two, anyway.

If any man sees an opportunity and does not do it because he is not under contract or is not being paid at the time, then he is preaching for hire. It is certainly not my purpose to imply that preachers should not be paid and supported for their work. The Bible is abundantly clear on that matter. But we preachers have a certain responsibility just as a Christian. And we are expected to do that whether we are working for a certain church or not, or being paid or not.

It was my privilege to live in the home of a man who was a preacher. He was not a "supported" preacher in the usual sense of the word. He worked for his living for the Texaco Oil Company, and his name was the late, beloved Tom E. Smith of Oklahoma. **No preacher**, hear me, no preacher ever worked any harder for the Church than Brother Tom. Along with his selling of insurance, which he did as a second job each evening, he always invited people to church and engaged them in Bible conversations. This resulted in Bible studies, which he held as a result. He was constantly engaged in preaching funerals and performing weddings. When I preached his funeral, I told the vast audience gathered there that day that he was one of the greatest "full time" preachers I ever knew. During vacations he often held Gospel meetings for some small church somewhere. As Paul "made tents" at Corinth he preached also, and I have seen many preachers of his kind do valuable work for the Church.

I know there are cases when brethren are not supported sufficiently, so the alternative is to stop preaching. The Church should be ashamed when it allows such to happen. But, even so, I would not stop preaching. Even if I became a field hand, I would still keep preaching. I did at one time. Now you might have the distinguished title of "full time" preacher, but, like I said, Paul was not always a full time preacher according to the modern connotation. He made tents. But he kept on preaching. In many cases you will preach just as much as when you were "full time."

By and large I have seldom seen the brethren let a fellow fall into destitution if he were delivering the goods and doing his best. I remember a couple of years ago in

Jacksboro, Texas, I was holding a little meeting for the little church there. It was small and weak and threatening to close its doors. At the request of the brethren for something to be done, I volunteered to hold them a meeting. I had been informed that they were unable to do much towards support. The church at Bridgeport paid for a motel room for me and we had a fine little meeting. Several were restored. I was happy as I could be. On the next to last night a brother from Wichita Falls walked up and handed me a check. I refused it and told him this was all taken care of and I was not expecting support from any church, and besides, I had been credited in Heaven with it. He stuck it into my pocket and said, "I know all about it, we probably would not have given it if it had been any other way." I was deeply touched. I could have gotten by without the money, but the attitude of the brethren was beautiful.

I have this to say to young preachers: Prove yourself - prove your worth. Do not constantly be picking fault with the brethren. In some isolated cases the brethren may need rebuking. In some cases they have given us more than we deserve. Learn to be grateful. It is a privilege to preach the gospel, regardless of whatever it may take, it is a privilege. I have seldom seen brethren neglect to support a deserving work. Sometimes, if I take on more responsibility than I can handle on the given support, then it is really not the brethren's fault. It is my mismanagement. However, the brethren should work out some solution, and I believe they will. But if we do not like preaching, if the setup is against our style and we cannot stand it, then preachers should quit and not be berating the Cause constantly or putting the brethren down. Just get out! Paul told Timothy to "endure" hardness as a good soldier. There is some hardness and we are commanded to endure it. We have an old saying that goes something like, "If you can't stand the hot grease, then get out of the kitchen."

Even with all the persecution that Paul endured (cf. II Cor. 2:11), he still could say that he thanked the Lord that he counted him worthy and put him in the ministry. He was grateful that he could preach.

In fact, no one should undertake to preach the Gospel unless he knows what he is doing. He should have a good understanding that it is not simply packing a suitcase and taking a trip with some other young fellow who does not know much more about it than you do. Playing more than you study, going only to the interesting places where the crowds are and the young people are having a social, instead of going down to the end of the lane in the back country or to that little group in some far away city where they need desperately someone to teach them the Gospel.

No better lesson could be stamped upon the hearts of all of us who preach than the story of Jeremiah. Here was a man who felt he had a message that he must tell. He was God's prophet. None of us have ever preached in conditions so hostile and unreceptive as he did. In fact, they disliked him and his message so much they tried about everything to stop him. He was abused. He was tormented and put into a well and left to die. This really had a negative effect upon him - for a moment, that is. Listen to his word once again: Let it ring into the heart of every Gospel preacher who has ever entertained the notion of desertion.

"O Lord, thou hast deceived me and I was deceived. Thou art stronger than I and hast prevailed: I am in derision daily, everyone mocketh me. for since I spake I cried out. I cried violence and spoil; because the word of the Lord was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily. Then I said, I will not make mention of Him nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forebearing, and I could not stay." (Jer. 20:1-9)

Although I know this was the case with an inspired prophet of God and his case is in a special class, yet in a more modified sense, at least, we must have the same attitude as preachers of the Gospel. I have known preachers in my time who almost duplicated this experience of Jeremiah. But let me point out that this can be done only by those who really have it in their heart. This can be done and will be done only by those who are for real. That last statement from the lips of the weeping prophet really weighs on our hearts today. Take it to heart, fellow preachers. "And I could not stay." This burning fire kept him from quitting. That same desire and attitude will motivate us today.

I give attention to the question: What attitude motivated Paul's statement in I Cor. 9:16? Let us notice the passage: "For though I preach the Gospel, I have nothing to glory of; for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the Gospel."

I give the comments of the commentary by F. C. Cook: "Probably the sense is, 'For if I should set forth the Gospel - whether by preaching or by teaching or even by writing - not possible for me is boasting. I glory in this only that while I do the work of an evangelist, I support myself by mine own labor. As to my evangelistic work itself, no possibility of glorying in that! For a necessity lieth upon me; my singular call from Christ, when He appeared to me near Damascus, marks me singular: an extraordinary responsibility; preach I must and that the Gospel, for woe is me if I do not set forth the Gospel to the end.'"

I believe this gives it as clearly as we can find it explained. Paul's statement cannot be accepted at face value by us who preach today. He, like Jeremiah, was in a special class. He dared to preach the Gospel and felt a woeful condemnation resting upon him because of his "singular situation." The "necessity" that was laid upon him - it was due to the miraculous call that had issued forth to him as an ambassador to the Gentiles on his road to Damascus.

In a very modified way I can and should be possessed with the same urgency to preach. But my work is not as important nor as demanding as was his.

In a lessor sense, the thought applied to the pioneer who preached. In one account Brother Ben Franklin tells about the hardships he faced in getting an appointment to preach. He had to swim a swollen river that was icy cold. And he even chronicled this statement: "Woe is me if I preach not the Gospel." His case was not the same as Paul's even, yet it was more so than mine today. Because if Benjamin Franklin had not made that appointment there were people in that day and age who may have never heard it again. They were blessed, if you please, for having an incentive to go as Jeremiah did. They could really feel that they were useful and, yes, even important. There is no telling how great our good preachers would be today if they had honorable incentives to bring them to preach. Think how demanding it would be if you could justly suppose that you would have a house full of people who had never heard the truth before? And you could entertain some hope of converting them.

It is little wonder that we preachers do as well as we do sometimes. We answer the commitment to come hold a meeting. When we get there the leader's children are at the school "to-do" the first night. One of the leaders is off on vacation. The brethren are not too excited. After all, they just had a meeting three months ago, and they have been having a preacher come in twice a month ever since, and they have another one booked in a couple of months. So you go through the motions. That is about all you can say. Now, brethren, I really cannot feel "woe is me" if I did not hold that meeting. In fact, I have wished I were at home numbers of times and my preaching partners have felt the same, because we knew there were any number of preachers who could come if we did not. And I really doubt it would be such a big deal anyway: many would not even be there if they can find something else to go to. But, naturally, there are always a few who will be faithful and will want to hear the Gospel; so, for this few we will always try to keep faith and keep going on. But we who preach today certainly cannot feel the great urgency and thrill of preachers that our predecessors felt in other years.

They are getting fewer and fewer it seems, but even now we have our moments of exhilaration. Now and then there is an honest one who hears the Gospel at the hands of some of us and demands baptism for the remission of sins. Then it, too, is thrilling to see our own who grow up to maturity signal the fact that they have not heard in vain, but now want to be numbered with the Lord's faithful few. But for these rewarding experiences we would despair.

But, thus, it is that I must preach. Too, as we grow older and the thrill of being noticed as a preacher or of just standing before an audience has waned, then we begin to think of how it will be after we are gone. Will there be others to carry on the work and Cause that we have labored so long for? Will the churches stand for the truth and wage a warfare as in our lifetime? Those thoughts press themselves upon our hearts. Then it is

that we feel we must work harder. We feel that we are running a race with the setting sun that has already passed the meridian and starts its descent to the west. Already shadows obliquely fall across the path. In such times I feel I must preach. I must instill in younger preachers the love of the truth, the love of the Church, the love of the old time way, the paths our fathers trod. Thus, I must preach.

The last trip the beloved H. C. Harper made to my home congregation found him in ailing health. Indeed, it was on that trip that as he journeyed on to California he was stricken and was sent home in a pullman car. Before he left, my grandfather insisted that he see Dr. Butler, our old family doctor. When he was examined the doctor advised him that his condition demanded rest and retirement - he should go home. With bowed head and quiet voice he said, "There is so much to do and such a short time in which to do it." He was speaking of the inroads being made into the brotherhood by digressive brethren of the cups and Sunday School faction. He felt he must preach.

These are a few reasons why I must preach. I have never taken myself too seriously. I am aware of my limitations. I really am thankful for whatever the Church has given to me. I am ever thankful of the work the Church and the brethren have given me through the years. Truly, I have felt very undeserving. This road began awhile ago down in a cotton patch in the poorest state in the union. Things have not gone as I had planned them at all. Great and many mistakes have been made and I certainly do not set myself up as an example of why people should preach. I have been more disappointed in myself than in anybody else. But the Lord let me preach, and I have never ever considered it a sacrifice, but an exalted privilege (although I would compare my feeble beginning, my lack of finances and my lack of many things with just about anybody today.) I have been on the verge of destitution (as I now look back), but it was unknown to me at the time for I was unaware that I lacked much and when I was aware of it, I did not mind much, for I had known all along that I just did not have what others had and it was not intended to be that way and there was no big worry. I was never too bothered that I did not have the clothes, the looks, the advantages that some had when we were beginning - the "town folks" for instance. Now all those things that marked my beginning - the borrowed money, borrowed suitcase, borrowed pants, the trip to the bus station on a pulpwood truck, missing the bus because the station was closed at midnight, with my suitcase inside, the walk home about dawn - all the way from town - my attempt to give up, but Carlos Smith would not let me.

All of these are part of a sad, sweet memory. Brother Harper used to say, "A rough sea makes a good sailor."

There are many things that I have not accomplished. I have many plans yet unfulfilled. But, forty and five years He has protected me and let me preach the Gospel - so, I feel I must preach!

MORAL ISSUES

by Ron Alexander

"Moral Issues" is a subject that touches each of our lives. Sometimes it affects us directly and sometimes indirectly. Sometimes it entangles an acquaintance, sometimes a friend, sometimes someone in the family and sometimes someone in the Church. Immorality has snared some of our most talented youth, has overtaken some whom we thought were stalwart in the Church, and may, at this very moment, be ambushing any number among us.

Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defines the word moral as: the quality of that which conforms to ideals or principles of human conduct; characterized by excellence in what pertains to practice or conduct, right and proper; conforming to a standard of what is good and right. As Christians, we accept the word of God as being the standard to which one must conform. The word morals is not found in the King James Version, however, in 1 Cor. 15:33 the word manners could correctly be translated as morals. Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words defines the word manners as: "manners (ethos), a custom, manner, ethical conduct, morals." Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon defines the word as: "morals, character." Technically, any conduct not conforming to the word of God could be classified as immoral. However, most of us classify certain types of sins as immoral. Sex related sins, such as; extramarital sex, unscriptural marriages, homosexuality, pornography and abortion are considered immoral by most of us. Others might place alcohol, drugs and several other sins into the immoral category.

Each day we are bombarded with a variety of temptations related to morality. Magazine racks are full of partially clad men and women. Rock, pop and country songs are filled with vulgar language and inferences. Television exposes us to profanity, immodest dress and indecent activities that strike at the heart of Christianity.

The past twenty five years have brought a deterioration of moral standards in our society. Marriage has endured a direct assault, shaking it to its foundation. Large numbers of people now sidestep marriage and simply live together. A cartoon recently depicted a car, cans stringing behind, with a sign saying; "Just Living Together." The Daily News, Springfield, Mo., recently reported an estimated two hundred and fifty "swinger" clubs in the United States, with an estimated four hundred thousand members. Clubs whose express purpose is to swap spouses. This number does not include smaller groups that might exist across the country. Marriage no longer occupies the exalted position ordained of God. Divorce has ravaged large numbers of homes in our society. The Daily News also reported that twenty three percent of children under eighteen now live with single parents, up from twelve percent in 1970. Premarital and extramarital sex are fast becoming the norm rather than the exception. Nearly one million teenagers will become pregnant this year and about four hundred thousand of those will have abortions. Even the sanctity of life is under attack.

Homosexuals have come out of the "closet" and now openly clamor for gay rights. Society not only tolerates homosexuality but many are beginning to accept this sinful activity as a viable life style. Some religious organizations have opened their pulpits to homosexuals and openly defend this way of life. By law, homosexuals can no longer be dismissed from their jobs, including teachers.

Without doubt, the Church has been affected to some degree by the deteriorating moral standards of our society. Scarcely a congregation has been left untouched. How many individuals and congregations bear scars from which they will never fully recover because someone became entangled in immorality.

Why has the Church been influenced by the decline of moral standards and our constant exposure to temptation. In 1 Cor. 15:33, Paul writes; "Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners." We have already seen that the word manners can

correctly be translated morals. Notice, Paul says that evil communications corrupt good morals. Vine defines the word communications as "company, associations." Macknight On The Epistles says, "not only discourses, but every kind of familiar intercourse; bad company." Thus, Paul says that evil associations or bad company corrupt good morals. Those with whom we associate directly affect our mind and our life. Literally, Paul is warning the Corinthians of those who reasoned against the immortality of the soul and a future state. A general application can certainly be made with this verse. If you and I expose ourselves to false doctrine or any type of temptation, our morals will be corrupted.

We live in a unique time. We no longer have to be with someone to be in "bad company." We can sit in our homes and be exposed to language, immodesty and indecent activities that strike at the heart of our Christian lives. Today, we tolerate wording in songs, language and scenes on television that would have sent us into shock twenty-five years ago. When we are first exposed to certain sinful situations, we just cannot believe that someone would be so brazen to be involved with such activities. But, as time passes, we gradually become tolerant, then later we are tempted. Albert Barnes, in his notes on I Cor. 15:33 says "we have less horror at vice by becoming familiar with it; we look with less alarm on error when we hear it often expressed; we become less watchful and cautious when we are constantly with the gary, the worldly, the unprincipled and the vicious..." No wonder we are encouraged in Eph. 5:15 "to walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise." Peter tells us in I Peter 5:8 "to be sober, be vigilant."

We must be aware of the environment in which we exist as a Church and as individual Christians. We need make a spiritual inventory of our environment, so we can focus on the positive and the negative influences we encounter each day. Once we have these influences in perspective, we can take positive steps to provide a better spiritual environment for ourselves and our children.

In II Chron. 12:14, speaking of King Rehoboham, the Bible says, "And he did evil because he prepared not his heart to seek the Lord." Notice, the reason he did evil was because he did not seek the Lord. Our desire to seek him must be stronger than any other desire in life. Jesus says in Matt. 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness..." In Prov. 23:7, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he."

Both the home and Church must cultivate a desire to serve the Lord and ultimately stem the tide of immorality. First, we must build stronger Christian homes. I am afraid that we have underestimated the importance of the home. We may realize its importance, but we have the tendency to think that since we are Christians, our children will automatically follow in our steps. Our young people must be taught, before marriage, that Christian homes begin with a loving devotion to God and Jesus must be the focal point of our lives. Recently, I ran across some thoughts by Alexander Campbell in his book Family Culture, pages 15-17 that fit our subject perfectly and I would like to share part of it with you. He was writing about Jacob calling the place where he had talked with God, Bethel.

"Now it occurs to us that what was true of Israel is still true - that all the Israel of God are a covenanted people - that the God of Jacob is still their refuge, and the Holy One of Israel is yet their King. Therefore, we should still build an altar and rear a pillar to his name. Every Christian dwelling should still have its family altar, and its monumental record of what God has said and done. If indeed as the Apostles say, the Christian people are severally and collectively, 'a habitation of God through the Spirit,' 'a holy temple,' 'a spiritual house' - then I ask, Should not their dwellings be houses of prayer and of song, and in them 'be heard the melody of praise' continually?

"We come, then, directly to the point, and affirm it is our conviction that all Christian dwellings should be Bethels - houses consecrated to God, in which his word should be read, his praises sung, and his name invoked on all the days of the year. Wherever the people of God under the first dispensation pitched their tents, they erected their altars to the Lord. Under the second dispensation they were, by divine commandment, daily to read or teach the word of God to their families. Then it became a proverb, that 'the voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous.'

"May we not then say to the righteous under the third dispensation, 'Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous, and shout for joy, all you that are upright in heart:' -

'for praise in comely for the upright.' 'Thy statutes,' said a Jewish king, 'have been my song in the house of my pilgrimage;' and will not a Christian father say as much of himself as his house as a Jewish king? Are not Christian householders as much bound by divine authority to bring up their families for the Lord - to nurture and train them for the royal family of heaven! And what son of God is there who has a heart, a tongue, and a Bible - children and servants under his care, and will not anoint his pillar, erect his altar, and worship the Lord constantly in his family? Thus teaching his children by his example how much he loves and delights in God, and with what pure affection and tender love he seeks their moral excellence and their eternal life.

"Need it be proved that those children who morn and even receive the parental benedictions along with their stated lessons from God's own book, have brighter evidence not only of the piety and godly sincerity of their parents, but also of their parental tenderness and affection!"

We must take time to build close family relationships. Our homes must provide a wholesome spiritual environment for our children and for our own continued spiritual growth.

The Church also plays a vital roll in warding off the onslaught of immorality. The Church must take a firm stand against immorality. Again, God's word must be at the very heart of our defense and our attack. Our people must understand the teaching of God about those subjects we consider to be immoral. The whole counsel of God must be proclaimed far and near. The gospel of Christ contains the only power capable of obtaining the final victory over Satan and immorality. Not only must the word be preached, but we must cultivate a love for it among our people. II Thess. 2:10 teaches that the apostasy would develop "because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved." One reason our people become involved with immorality is because we do not love the truth enough.

When Christians do become involved with immorality, the Church must deal with the situation. The ultimate purpose of Church discipline is to restore the guilty to the faith. Scriptural procedures must be followed in love for the guilty and the Church. If the guilty are not restored, other members of the Church will at least understand that such situations cannot be tolerated.

In closing, we must do everything in our power to provide a spiritual environment conducive to building a strong Christian life for ourselves and our children. We must study to show ourselves approved unto God, devoting ourselves to prayer and meditation. We must surround ourselves with companions and friends that will encourage us to live in the Lord's ways. We can have the ultimate victory over Satan and immorality.

NOTES
(This page is left blank on purpose)

CURRENT UNITY MOVEMENTS AMONG THE RESTORATION SPLINTER GROUPS

by Johnny Elmore

Today it is not my assignment to talk about the unlimited possibilities for a united brotherhood, or the specific things that are dividing the Restoration movement. My assignment is to speak about the current unity movements, or more specifically, the recent effort that has been styled the "Restoration Summit." Before I do, perhaps a little background would be in order.

Background Information

We are told that immediately after the Civil War, the Restoration movement numbered about two hundred thousand members. By 1875, this number had grown to four hundred thousand, and by 1900, there were 1,120,000. However, there were deep rifts in the movement, and by 1906, there were two groups listed in the governmental census. Today there are three major groups: (1) Disciples of Christ, who have become a full-fledged denomination; (2) Independent Christian Churches, who separated from the more liberal Disciples, but who maintain the use of instrumental music and other innovations; and (3) Churches of Christ, the greatest number of whom it can be said that the main difference from the ICC is their non-use of instrumental music.¹ One writer of the conservatives lists three causes of division: (1) the missionary society; (2) instrumental music; and (3) Sunday schools. Of course, he refers to Sunday school as a separate institution from the church, and excludes their own classes from consideration.²

There have been numerous attempts at unity. The Disciples and the ICC began their journey toward total separation in 1927 with the first meeting of the North American Christian Convention. Today the ICC tries to maintain as much distance as possible from the Disciples. But in the 1920's John B. Cowden and others formed "The Commission on Unity," which sent out copies of O. E. Payne's book in defense of instrumental music in worship. This resulted in the famous debate between N. B. Hardeman and Ira M. Boswell in Nashville in 1923.³

Also in the 1920's J. D. Murch, of the Christian Church and Claude E. Witty, of the Church of Christ, arranged a series of small meetings which finally resulted in a "National Unity Meeting" on May 3, 1939 in Indianapolis, In. The principal speakers were E. R. Errett, of the Christian Church, and H. Leo Boles, of the Church of Christ. W. L. Totty, of Beech Grove, In., described Boles' speech, which lasted one hour and thirty-one minutes: "He told them in no uncertain terms what had caused the division and what it would take to bring about unity -- that if they expected a compromise they were mistaken. Perhaps no greater address has been given since the Restoration, especially at a time when they were attempting to win us by smooth sayings."⁴ The attempt at merger was roundly condemned in *Firm Foundation* and *Gospel Advocate*, and Murch complained that "reactionary forces in the Churches of Christ rejoiced over the failure of attempts at reconciliation."⁵

There have been other efforts made to bring about unity, but most of these have been isolated efforts. Leroy Garrett described a meeting called by J. D. Murch and Reuel Lemmons in 1969, which took place in Memphis and St. Louis. Lemmons, who was then editor of *Firm Foundation* was asked if he saw instrumental music as the main roadblock to fellowship with the Christian Church, and his answer was no. He said: "The thing that really separates these two great groups of the brotherhood is their respective position regarding the scriptures," explaining that the Churches of Christ speak where the Bible

speaks and are silent where the Bible is silent, while the Christian Churches speak where the Bible speaks and where the Bible is silent, they feel they are free to choose. The suggestion was that since the New Testament is silent on instrumental music, the Christian Church should be willing to give it up for the sake of unity.⁶ Reportedly, Robert O. Fife responded that the suggestion was a reasonable one, but that his people would take the proposal more seriously when the Churches of Christ that have the Sunday school are willing to give it up for the sake of unity with the hundreds of Churches of Christ who believe it to be wrong, and for the same reason.⁶

Most of us are familiar with the names of Carl Ketcherside and Leroy Garrett, who succeeded in attracting a lot of attention to themselves with meetings called the "Annual Unity Forum" which began in 1966 and ended in 1975. Some of our own apostates and renegades were novelties in these meetings because they claimed to be "one cup" people. The meetings produced neither unity nor union and Garrett said that it was because Ketcherside was "largely rejected by his own sect."

My concentration in this study will be mainly on the latest significant unity movement which began in 1984. Who are the principals in this movement? Who do they represent? What are the grounds for their proposed unity? Can they be successful? These are the questions I hope to deal with in this study.

Who Do They Represent?

In the spring of 1984, a new tabloid called *One Body* began to be published by Don DeWalt, of Joplin, Mo., with Victor Knowles as its editor. The masthead declares it to be "a national biblical tabloid published to promote unity." If enough money can be raised, the publisher hopes to mail this paper to 22,000 preachers among the Churches of Christ, Independent Christian Churches, and Disciples of Christ, and an additional 350,000 Protestant preachers. On Aug. 7-9, 1984, a "Restoration Summit" was held at Ozark Bible College in Joplin, half from the Christian Church and half from Churches of Christ, hand picked men with "irenic" spirits, met together for discussion and study.⁸

The meeting at Joplin was planned by Alan Cloyd and Dennis Randall of the Restoration Ministry, which is under the direction of the Vultee Church of Christ, Nashville, In. Cloyd, a former member of the Christian Church, said: "Both groups share a common heritage. In recent years there has not been much exchange between us. This meeting was an effort to open a dialogue." In describing the Summit, he said: "We were able to deal in an extremely friendly and cordial way with the similarities and the differences that divide us."⁹

It seems clear to me that those who were invited to participate in the first meeting were men who were thought to be most susceptible to a spirit of compromise. At the opening session, Alan Cloyd set the tone in these words: "Keep it cordial. Above all things, brethren, love one another in this meeting. Now, if you're not equipped to do that please politely excuse yourself tonight and just go on home." He also told the men present: "You were chosen - in every case - because of the fact that you are sound in the faith, because of your knowledge of the Restoration Movement, and the two groups meeting here ... and you have been chosen also because of certain personality characteristics and traits. You are the kind of fellows that can discuss matters of mutual interest and concern without coming to blows. And we want to really stress that." As one writer commented: "The Summit had no teeth. It was purposely dehorned and neutered before it even started. The caffeine was taken out." The same writer laments that while they were told fifty of the "finest men" were invited to Joplin and that they represented the "main-line thinking" of the Church of Christ, this did not include such men as Guy N. Woods and Thomas B. Warren.¹⁰

An interesting and very revealing sidelight to the Summit in Joplin was the reaction to distribution of H. Leo Boles' speech in the "National Unity Meeting" of 1939. The speech, printed in tract form, was gathered up and apologized for publicly by Alan Cloyd, who later called Boles' language "crude and abusive." Just before the Summit took place, Guy N. Woods, long-time editor of *Gospel Advocate*, was replaced by Furman Kearley, a man who was present at the Summit, and who made several incriminating statements. This occasioned quite a backlash in the digressive Church of Christ. One man wrote an article

in **Contending For The Faith** which asked: "How reliable is the 'Old Reliable' now?"¹¹ Another writer in the same journal said: "The Advocate must be watched now with much vigilance."¹²

What Are The Grounds For Their Proposed Unity?

Since the Summit at Joplin, similar meetings have been conducted at Tulsa, Ok; Malibu, Ca.; and Milligan, In. In all of these meetings, nothing that has not already been worn threadbare by Carl Ketcherside and Leroy Garrett has been brought out. As I see it, the same old philosophies are advocated: unity-in-diversity, "upper-case and lower-case fellowship," hermeneutic principles, weak brother / strong brother applications, and love, Love, LOVE! I would like to take these up, one by one, and attempt to show their error.

Unity In Diversity

One of the philosophical grounds advocated by those in the new unity movement is the idea of unity-in-diversity. So far as I know, no real leader of thought has ever suggested that we must all totally agree on everything in order to have unity. In fact, the old slogan of the Restoration movement states: "In matters of faith, unity; in matters of opinion, liberty; and in all things, charity." But the diversity they are advocating involves matters of faith and practice. It seems to me that the thrust of the movement is to do two things:

Re-define Unity: Webster defines unity: "State of being one; singleness; absence of diversity."¹³ It makes as much sense to talk about a truthful liar, an honest thief, or the horns of a muley cow as to talk about unity-in-diversity, for the very definition of unity is "absence of diversity." William Fife of the Christian Church, writing in the first issue of **One Body** says: "Undoubtedly we need a new definition of 'unity.' None of the definitions we've used so far seem to be attainable."¹⁴ It reminds me of the old riddle we have used to baffle children. We ask a little child, "How many feet would a cow have if you call a tail a foot?" The answer, of course, is "four," because calling a tail a foot does not make it one!

Change the basis of unity: Carl Ketcherside has advocated making a distinction between gospel and doctrine. Others have subscribed to this change in the basis of unity and are now saying that unity is based upon the gospel only and that doctrine has nothing to do with unity.

Marvin Phillips, one of the movers and shakers of the Church of Christ in these Summit meetings, announced that he had re-studied the New Testament so as to determine those truly "essential" things in it. In presenting his format for unity, he said: "I'll die for these; I'll draw lines of fellowship over these." His list of six things is:

- (1) the Being of God;
- (2) the lordship of Christ;
- (3) the inspiration and authority of scripture;
- (4) the importance of the church;
- (5) the importance of the new birth; and
- (6) genuine commitment to these things.¹⁵

Leroy Garrett, in drawing up a "statement of faith" for a "para-church agency" to "help those who would be missionaries in foreign fields" also produced a list. His list states:

- (1) We believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God;

- (2) We believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Savior of the World, the risen Lord, and "the same yesterday, today and forever";
- (3) We believe in the gospel of the grace of God as the only answer to the sinfulness of mankind and the only solution to the problems confronting our world;
- (4) We believe in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and in the power of the Spirit-filled life;
- (5) We believe in the church universal as the Body of Christ and in the essential unity of all those who believe Jesus Christ as Lord.

He also added: "I would submit this statement on 'general Christianity' as a basis for a working fellowship. We should be able to support, pray for, work and accept anyone who believes these things. We should welcome all such ones to our churches and treat them as equals in Christ. If our own churches have trouble with this statement because baptism is not named as a condition for membership, this does not preclude their accepting them as Christians and treating them as such."¹⁶

We can easily see that both statements would not preclude union with all sorts of false doctrine such as instrumental music, tongue speaking, premillennialism, sprinkling, infant membership and a thousand other things.

Unity-in-diversity does not call upon people to stand for much of anything, defend much of anything, or scarcely believe anything, and that would undoubtedly appeal to many people!

In the first issue of **One Body**, Ketcherside writes: "Did it ever occur to you that the unity for which Christ prayed might come and we could not recognize it?" In other words, we may already be united and we just do not know it yet. As one fellow wrote: "That reminds me of the Jehovah's Witnesses' kingdom that came in 1914. No one ever saw it or knew it, but it must have come. They said it did!"¹⁷

I believe Ketcherside is wrong in making such a radical distinction between "gospel" and "doctrine." Paul was ready "to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome" (Rom. 1:15). He also preached the gospel to the Corinthians (II Cor. 11:7-8), and said that "they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel" (II Cor. 9:14). Certainly that support was not to come from non-Christians. Doctrine was preached to unbelievers. In giving the Great Commission, Jesus said, "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:20). The Romans had ceased to be "servants of sin" in that they had "obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you" (Rom. 6:17-18). Jesus said: "If any man do his will, he shall know of the doctrine" (John 7:17). Ketcherside maintains that fellowship is a state into which one is called by believing "one fact" and obeying "one act," and that fellowship cannot be extended or withdrawn. But fellowship can be extended or withdrawn. Paul commands, "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11). He also said, "Withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly" (II Thess. 3:6). Fellowship depends upon "walking in the light" (I John 1:7), and this involves doctrine.

The fact that people do not look alike or think alike and that family members may differ as to what cars they drive or brands of coffee they use has nothing to do with accepting God's word without addition or subtraction. God has not legislated on those things, but he has given us a doctrine to live by and to serve as a basis for fellowship.

Leroy Garrett said that I Cor. 1:10 could not have meant unity, but it is, in fact, one of the clearest definitions of unity. Paul said: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." Some division has the approval of God. Jesus said: "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division" (Luke 12:51). Paul commands division in the case of the fornicator in I Cor. 5, when a brother walketh "disorderly" (II Thess. 3:6), when brethren "cause divisions and offences contrary to the

doctrine" (Rom. 16:17), and when the "unfruitful works of darkness" are involved (Eph. 5:11). Division must come about when some "transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ" (1 John 9:11).

Solomon said: "Buy the truth and sell it not" (Prov. 23:23), but apparently some are willing to sell it to effect a "union" with others. Truth is given up when it is ignored, and when terms are redefined to mean something other than what God means. The unity-in-diversity doctrine is wrong because it teaches fellowship on the basis of walking in darkness, rather than walking in the light, as is taught in 1 John 1:7-9. Let us suppose that two men are lost in the darkness in a wilderness. They are lost from each other. A man appears carrying a lantern. One man sees the light and joins the man with the lantern. The other sees the light and joins the man with the lantern. What do the two men now discover? They are walking side by side. They are united. They have fellowship with each other.

Upper-Case and Lower-Case Fellowship

Another of the movers and shakers in the present unity movement is Rubel Shelley. In a speech at Memphis, In., he said: "I think of a brother of mine, for example, he preachers for a group that calls itself the Christian Church. I have fellowship with him in the upper-case sense because we both obeyed the same gospel. He is my brother. I think he's wrong on that issue of the instrument. We do not have fellowship, in the lower-case f, on that."¹⁸ Thus, according to Shelley, there are two levels of fellowship, upper-case and lower-case. He believes that upper-case fellowship is based upon the seven "ones" enumerated in Eph. 4:4-6, but he wants to define what is meant by "one faith." In the same Memphis speech he said, "There is one faith. The faith, when that term is used in the New Testament, doesn't have to do with orphan homes; doesn't have to do with instrumental music; doesn't have to do with the millennium." The one faith in the New Testament sense is the doctrine of atonement, the gospel."¹⁹ This is simply the old doctrine advocated and worn threadbare by Carl Ketcherside.

In **One Body**, he wrote: "In issues of personal conscience (cf. Rom. 14), personal preferences based on past experiences (cf. Acts 15:36-41), and failure stemming from causes other than willful rejection of the truth (cf. Paul's relationship with the church at Corinth), the born again body can practice a 'limited fellowship' which encourages and shares in all the good we see in each other and lovingly challenges and tries to correct the errors we observe."²⁰ He did not specify just what he meant by "limited fellowship" in that article, but in a bulletin published by his congregation, he did. He wrote: "Meaningful exchange can take place between the two groups of believers. On a national level, we can read each others books and journals -- and write for one another. We can attend each others lectureships and conventions -- and interchange speakers. On a congregational level, we can establish contact with one another during gospel meetings, VBS, and special activities. It would be wonderful to worship together and to have some pulpit exchange. The instrument creates a barrier at this point."²¹

Consternation was created by an incident in one of the smaller study groups at the Joplin Summit. Furman Kearley, present editor of **Gospel Advocate**, and Wayne Kilpatrick, another preacher of the Church of Christ, were trying to think of ways to get their members to study Restoration history. Kilpatrick suggested: "I wonder, too, if bringing Christian Church preachers into our class like this might not be a good thing. Let them come in and tell their history in a class situation." Kearley: "Yes, that's right." Kilpatrick: "I think you can ease from the class to the pulpit." Kearley: "Right, and you can get by with ..." Kilpatrick: "the class ..." Kearley: "telling history ..." Kilpatrick: "Yeah." Kearley: "... whereas if they're telling doctrine - heh, heh, heh." Kilpatrick: "And while they're telling history let them tell about doctrine ..." Kearley: "Yeah." Kilpatrick: "... to make us know that, 'Hey, we beligye alike on so much of this.' So that may be a beginning point - through the classroom."²² (Those classes are going to bring them to ruin, yet!)

It must be obvious to anyone who reads the New Testament that fellowship or joint-participation is conditional. We are to turn away from those who cause division (Rom. 16:17). We are not to fellowship those who are guilty of immorality (1 Cor. 5:11).

We are not to fellowship the disorderly (II Thess. 3:6). We are not to fellowship those disobedient to the word (II Thess. 3:14-15). We are not to fellowship those who leave the doctrine of Christ (II John 9-11). In fact, Paul said: "And have no fellowship (neither upper-case nor lower-case, JE) with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." (Eph. 5:11).

Rubel Shelley said: "If I were in a congregation where the will of that congregation, the decision of the elders, was that the instrument was going to be used next week, I wouldn't mount the pulpit and condemn them and divide the church." In a similar speech, he said, "I don't draw the line at the instrument. I don't think the Lord died over that. I'm not going to make that a test of my fellowship with you in Christ."²³ Of course, that is false because it suggest that the one opposing the instrument would be guilty of causing the division, not the one introducing the unscriptural practice. It would also suggest that one could remain a part of a congregation that practices such things as burning of incense and the use of images if the congregation wanted it, even though he would think it would be wrong. It would ignore the law of worship and the authority of Christ (Col. 3:17).

Shelley's argument that the basis of unity is to be found in Eph. 4:4-6 is wrong for he has to redefine the term "faith." He says: "The 'one faith' has nothing to do with our methods and procedures of doing God's work; it has to do with the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus and our response to that once-for-all act of atonement."²⁴ But it must be obvious that the "one faith" of Eph. 4:4-6 is not limited to the atonement. It refers to the objective system of faith, the gospel. In Acts 13, Sergius Paulus desired to hear "the word of God" (v. 7), but Elymas sought to turn him away from "the faith" (v. 8); however, Paul resisted him because he perverted "the right ways of the Lord" (v. 10), and Sergius Paulus was astonished at "the doctrine of the Lord" (v. 12). Therefore, these terms, the word of God, the faith, the right ways of the Lord, and the doctrine are all equal.

Hermeneutic Principles

Another effort in the approach to unity is to suggest a new hermeneutic. The suggestion is that our problem in not accepting instrumental music, it is a misunderstanding of the correct hermeneutic principle. Victor Knowles said: "We are not divided over the instrument so much as we are the implementing of Campbell's 'Silence' statement. One fellowship sincerely believes the silence of the Scriptures prohibits, the other just as sincerely believes that the silence of the Scripture allows expediency."²⁵

Dwaine Dunning, writing in *One Body* said: "The attitude toward the authority of Scripture is not the problem; there is solid agreement on this important topic. The difficulty is caused by the use of the 'regulative principle' by some who employ it to forbid instrumental music and other things, and the general non-use of the principle by those Churches of Christ who use instruments." He further argues that although Thomas Campbell anticipated the problem of what to do with the uncommanded, by admitting the right to use logic or inference, inferences must be correctly inferred. He argues, for example, that an inference cannot be drawn from the case of Nadab and Abihu, because in the rest of the chapter, their brothers disobeyed another specification, and were not punished. He says: "Moses was as mad as Moses E. Lard about it, too. But God did not destroy them. Is it that God only 'zaps' every other specification violator? Or was the sin of Nadab and Abihu something worse?"²⁶ Clearly it is the purpose of the current unity movement to mock those of us who fear to rush in where angels fear to tread.

Leroy Garrett proposed a new hermeneutic. He said: "I would suggest a different proposition: that the Scriptures are silent on any given subject means only that the Scriptures are silent on that subject, and no other conclusion can be drawn. Silence neither proves nor disproves anything. There is no such thing in either the law of God or man as 'the authority of silence' or 'the law of silence,' terms our people sometimes resort to on the matter of biblical silence. How can a law be a law when it says nothing (silent)? How can we say that God enjoins his will upon his church in reference to instruments, literature, communion cups, Sunday schools, etc. when he says nothing about these things in the Scriptures?"²⁷

That is certainly wrong. "For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood." (Heb. 7:14). Based on the silence of the Scriptures, no one from the tribe of Judah (or any other tribe besides Levi) could serve as a priest.

Also, on what basis would one oppose infant baptism, sprinkling, burning of incense, Coca-Cola on the Lord's Table? In the case of Nadab and Abihu being condemned, it seems pretty obvious from a reading of the text, that the reason the priests were not punished in the latter part of Lev. 10 was because they failed to do what God commanded, because they were not sure of their own worthiness to enter the Holy Place. It was an action of fear and reverence and not one of deliberate disobedience, as in the case of Nadab and Abihu.

Weak Brother / Strong Brother Applications

Among the things emphasized to promote unity was the admonition to use Rom. 14 and 15. Victor Knowles wrote: "This brings us to an interesting question. How much knowledge do we have to have before God will accept us? Even more interesting - before we accept each other? ... May I say, with all kindness and candor, that, first and foremost, we are not saved by how much we know about the Bible but by what Jesus did for us on the cross. We are saved by the grace of God and not by the amount of Biblical information we can cram into our cerebellums. ... It is my personal conviction that the key to setting our differences is found in these two chapters, Romans 14 and 15. I believe that God included them in the Bible to show us that brethren in Christ could have varying beliefs and yet continue in unbroken fellowship."²⁸

Ignored in this statement is the fact that Jesus commanded us to "know the truth," (John 8:32), and Paul commanded us to understand "what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5:17). Sometimes these people ask: "Is there anything you do not understand?" "Do you understand all the truth?" The suggestion is that if you can reach heaven without understanding it all, so can those who misunderstand about the worship, work, and organization of the church. If you do not understand all truth, then it follows that you could be wrong about the worship, work and organization of the church, therefore, you should not be dogmatic. This is like telling a third grade teacher that if he does not understand all mathematical truth, then it follows that he could be wrong about the equation $2 + 2 = 4$; therefore he should not be dogmatic. This is utterly ridiculous.

Love

A much-used word in all of the Summit exercises is love. One headline reporting the Tulsa Restoration Forum reads: "Love builds bridges." Victor Knowles reports: "All came with the spirit that 'knowledge puffs up' but 'love builds up.'" In another article, he said: "If you cannot concur I will love you just the same. 'loving you just the same' is my ultimate solution to our problem." Another writer said: "I am writing this the morning after a beautiful love affair in Tulsa while my wife was in Portland." He also says: "Our love should cover each other's sins."²⁹ I could give more quotes, but I think you get the idea.

As to the matter of love, I say that we are not divided by faithful brethren failing to show love. We are divided because some things have been introduced into the worship, work, and organization of the church to which others object. From the reports coming from the Summit meetings, it is obvious that some are willing to look upon all differences, including the use of instrumental music, as matters of judgment and experience. However, Jesus said: "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). True love adheres to the word of God.

A New Argument

There is one thing that I do not have time to pay attention to at length - perhaps it should be dealt with in a future study - and that is a bombshell dropped by Don DeWelt. In

a letter to Guy N. Woods, DeWalt argued that there is no authority for congregational singing in the New Testament. His argument is that since we sing without New Testament authority congregationally, why can't we use instrumental music without authority? In a long article, he denies that any of the nine passages mentioning singing in the New Testament involve congregational singing. As someone has noticed, this is a "two-wrongs-make-a-right" logic. Woods replied to this argument, saying in part: "Whatever else may be said about DeWalt's amazing affirmation, in this unprecedented pronouncement, he sweeps forever away every defence every Christian Church preacher has ever attempted, to justify the use of the instrument in congregational worship, on the ground that it is authorized in Ephesians 5:19, by the word *psallo*! Neither here, nor elsewhere in the sacred writings, he avers, is congregational singing commanded; hence, neither here, nor elsewhere in the New Testament is there authority for instrumental accompaniment for such use. Gone, then, according to him, because they never existed, are the grounds on which Briney, Boswell, Payne, Walker, and all other scholars among them, for a hundred years past, sought to show that the Greek word *psallo* signifies the use of a mechanical instrument accompanying singing in congregational worship."³⁰

However, in another statement, DeWalt said: "I sing congregationally because I believe Jesus and His apostles did it - the New Testament saints did it - the Jews and perhaps Jesus Himself did it in the synagogues. We shall all do it in heaven."³¹ But faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God, so I am just wondering how and why he believes it, if the word of God does not speak concerning it.

Holy Spirit

I do not wish to open a "can of worms" in this study, but I also detect among the principals of this movement a view that the Holy Spirit is leading them to unity. I do not disparage the importance of the Holy Spirit in our lives, but I believe there is an inherent danger in the subjective view that the Holy Spirit is leading in these efforts. For example, if I am convinced that the Holy Spirit is leading me immediately, I become instantly susceptible to the idea that maybe He wants me to speak in tongues, or practice some other form of Pentecostalism. If I accept the premise that the Holy Spirit is leading in these unity meetings, then I become susceptible to the view that unity is more important than trivial things like instrumental music, etc. Victor Knowles said: "The very Spirit of God that created the world, inspired the Scriptures, and raised Jesus from the dead is alive and working in our lives, bringing us ever closer to each other. As we meet together, greet one another, eat together, visit, study, and pray together, listen to each other, learn from one another, exchange ideas, ask questions, give answers, clarify misunderstandings and misconceptions, what is all this but the Spirit of God working among his people. ... The Holy Spirit of God will not lead us in unholy paths. He will not lead us astray. Where he leads we will follow. Lead on, O Holy Spirit!"³²

Rubel Shelley said: "Those who demonstrate the acts of the flesh - hatred, discord, jealousy, rage, selfish ambition, dissension, factions, and envy - are exhibiting 'flashes of the flesh' and need the personal indwelling of the Spirit of God in their lives to produce such fruits as self-control among other things. The only cure for a bad spirit is God's Holy Spirit." He is also reported as saying that "it is obvious the Holy Spirit has brought about these unity meetings and not our lectures, books and debates."³³

Can They Be Successful?

I certainly have not received the mantle of a prophet, but I do not believe the present unity movement will be successful in bringing unity between the ICC and most of what we call the digressive Church of Christ, and certainly not with brethren who we consider loyal to the truth. I do think this movement will be productive of causing yet another division among the brethren who employ individual cups and those who employ both the cups and the classes. The individual cups-anti-Sunday school brethren appear to be even more eager than some of the cups and classes brethren to have unity. I see another division shaping up, with *Image* magazine, edited by Reuel Lemmons, leading the liberals, and with *Firm Foundation* attempting to hold the line. Just where *Gospel Advocate* will stand is anybody's guess.

James Bond, writing in the *Guardian of Truth*, said: "After reading this magazine (*One Body*, JE) I was startled at the fact that these two parties were on the bank of becoming one body. I had not been keeping current on the changes the liberal brethren have made, and was amazed at the great distance they have traveled in the last half-century. My first response was, 'No way can these two groups unite, because of their differences.' But after taking pencil and paper, and enumerating some of the things the liberal churches of Christ have in common with the Christian Church, regrettably I found very, very few differences." He then lists sixteen things which they have in common, including the belief that instrumental music in worship is simply a matter of judgement.³⁴

Over fifty years ago a preacher named Floyd Decker left the Christian Church because they were involved in practices he felt were unscriptural. In the list he gave, I can find Churches of Christ, today, which employ every one of them. I personally do not see what has hindered their union so long.

If unity is achieved, there are only a few options. (1) Those associated with the Christian Church must give up the instrument and anything else not authorized in the scriptures and return to the New Testament pattern of worship. (2) Those of us associated with churches of Christ must quit teaching that the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship is sinful. (3) We must accept a unity in diversity. This view holds that each of us will go on teaching and practicing the things we believe, but will recognize and accept each other as brethren equally acceptable to the Lord.

From what I have read coming out of the Christian Church, they do not seem inclined in the least to the notion of giving up instrumental music and other innovations. On the other hand, some have estimated that 25% of the people in churches of Christ would not be opposed to instrumental music in worship.

Over and over in the writings of those involved in the current unity movement, the cups and classes brethren are chided for their inconsistency in accepting cups and classes and not accepting instrumental music in worship. So the cups and classes advocates are caught in the middle. I say they should have to face the issue until they either accept instrumental music or admit they are wonderfully inconsistent. The present spirit of compromise in the digressive camp reminds me of the limerick I used to hear as a child, and I predict that the result will be much the same.

There was a young lady of Niger
Who smiled as she rode on a tiger;
They returned from the ride
With the lady inside
And the smile on the face of the tiger.

We can only hope that some of those who have drifted off into liberalism in the last few years will be alarmed by this spectre of greater division and retreat to the safety of the Rock of Ages. In the meantime, let us be not dismayed nor discouraged. Let us realize that if unity is truly sought and desired, it would be a blessing and boon to our work of spreading the gospel, but if it does not come, we have lost nothing. Let us press the fight and give no quarter to the forces of digression and liberalism. The cause of Christ is growing each day. We are making progress in foreign fields and are achieving a degree of maturity on the domestic front. Let us fight faithfully on under the leadership of the one who has never lost a battle, realizing that after a while, when life's little day is done, and the victory is won, we can sweep through the everlasting gates of that city foursquare, with crowns of glory on our heads and palms of victory in our hands, and can hang up our armor on the jasper walls of that city and there on the glad plains of eternity, we can reap the handsome reward.

(references on next page)

References

1. James DeForest, CHRISTIANS ONLY, (Standard Publishing, Cincinnati, 1962), p. 193
2. Loren N. Raines, "Will Men Ever Learn?", GUARDIAN OF TRUTH, XXVIII (January 19, 1984), p. 43
3. Alan E. Highers, "The Fellowship Question," FIRM FOUNDATION, 103 (March 25, 1986), p. 165
4. Guy N. Woods, "The Joplin Unity Meeting," GOSPEL ADVOCATE, CXXVI (October 4, 1984), p. 580
5. Murch, p. 270
6. Leroy Garrett, THE STONE-CAMPBELL MOVEMENT, (College Press, Joplin, 1985), pp. 666, 667
7. Ibid., p. 668
8. Victory Knowles, "Restoration Summit," ONE BODY, 1 (November, 1984), pp. 3, 13
9. "Missouri: Leaders Discuss Issues," CHRISTIAN CHRONICLE, 41, (September, 1984), p. 1
10. Grady Miller, "The Joplin Meeting," CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH, XVI (June, 1985), pp. 3-5
11. David P. Brown, "How Reliable Is The 'Old Reliable' Now?," CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH, XVI (November, 1985), p. 1
12. Harrell Davidson, "Where Does The Gospel Advocate Now Stand?," CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH, XVI (September, 1985), p. 13
13. "Unity," WEBSTER'S NEW COLLEGIATE DICTIONARY, p. 930, (G. & C. Merriam Co., Springfield, Mass., 1961).
14. Walter W. Pigg, Jr., "An Examination of 'Unity In Diversity'," CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH, XVI (August, 1985), p. 4.
15. Dick Sztanyo, "Creeds, Unity, And Fellowship [2]," FIRM FOUNDATION, 103 (February 11, 1986), p. 69.
16. Ibid., pp. 70, 71
17. Pigg, p. 5.
18. Alan E. Highers, "Smooth And Fair Speech," CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH, XV (March, 1984), p. 3.
19. Ibid, p. 4.
20. Rubel Shelley, "Fellowship Without Compromise," ONE BODY, 2 (Winter, 1985, p. 26.
21. Victory M. Eskew, "A Review In Review," CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH, XVI (January, 1985), p. 13
22. Miller, p. 4.
23. J. Noel Meredith, "The Limits Of Fellowship In Galatians," STUDIES IN GALATIANS, p. 283, (Valid Publications, Denton, Tx., 1986).
24. Ibid., p. 285
25. Knowles, p. 20
26. Dwaine Dunning, "A Compact Overview Of The 'Argument From Silence' And Its Influence On The Restoration Movement," ONE BODY, 3 (Spring, 1986), p. 20
27. Leroy Garrett, "A Letter To The Editor Of Firm Foundation," ONE BODY, 2 (Winter, 1985), p. 12.
28. Victor Knowles, "Who Is My Brother?," ONE BODY, 3 (Spring, 1986), p. 31
29. Victor Knowles, "Love Builds Bridges," ONE BODY, 2 (July, 1985), pp. 1, 12
30. Guy N. Woods, "Is Congregational Singing Required In The Worship of God In The New Testament Church?," GOSPEL ADVOCATE, CXXVII (May 16, 1985), p. 290
31. Don DeWelt, "The Gordian Knot Of Instrumental Music, Part II," ONE BODY, 2 (Winter, 1985), p. 6
32. Victory Knowles, "The Holy Spirit's Path To Unity," ONE BODY, 3 (Spring, 1986), p. 5.
33. Victory Knowles, "Quest For Unity Continues At Milligan," ONE BODY, 3 (Spring, 1986), p. 4.
34. James Bond, "Church of Christ Liberal And Christian Church Unity," GUARDIAN OF TRUTH, XXXIX (December 5, 1985), p. 11.

FELLOWSHIP

by Jerry Cutter

The particular aspect of fellowship that I was asked to discuss was entitled: Two Views of Disfellowship. They were: (1) Disfellowship can be carried out only with regards to the specific sins catalogued in the appropriate passages and each passage specifies a certain procedure for those specific sins listed. (2) The passages on the procedure of disfellowship represent a general method of disfellowship that can be followed in dealing with unrepented sin.

In my limited time, what I propose to do is deal with the subject of fellowship, believing that the truth will easily fall into place concerning the two views. I cannot deal with every scripture having to do with sins and actions to be taken. Rather I will list many of them and you can ask questions concerning them during the question time.

- (1) Matthew 18, dealing with offenses, and especially verses 15-17.

"Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican."

- (2) I Corinthians 5, and the case of actual fornication.

- (3) Ephesians 5:1-11, having to do with sins we are to "have no fellowship with."

- (4) I Thessalonians 5:6, A statement concerning the "unruly, or disorderly."
"Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober."

- (5) II Thessalonians 3:6-14:

"Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us. For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread. But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing. And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed."

More instructions concerning the "disorderly," especially those who would not work.

- (6) I Timothy 4:7:

"But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness." A note to Timothy to "refuse" certain fables (for "refuse" see I Timothy 5:11).

(7) II Timothy 2:16-17:

"But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus;"

This is to "avoid" idle talk. In the same chapter, verse 22: "Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." verse 21: "PURGE himself from THESE (influences - teachers)." Verse 22: "FLEE also youthful lusts." Verse 23, "But foolish and unlearned (trifling) questions AVOID (refuse) ..."

(8) II Timothy 3:5:

"Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." Concerning those having only a FORM OF GODLINESS, "from such TURN AWAY (shun or avoid)."

(9) Titus 3:9, "But avoid (or shun) foolish questions ..."

(10) Titus 3:10-11:

"A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself." REJECT (refuse, shun and avoid) a heretic, or schismatic, after one or two ADMONITIONS.

(11) II John 9-11:

"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

For those who TRANSGRESS THE DOCTRINE, RECEIVE HIM NOT INTO YOUR HOUSE, and do not BID HIM GOD'S SPEED. That is, don't promote him in any way.

INTRODUCTION

The word fellowship is a fairly common term in the Bible, and it is applied to a number of things. Fellowship has to do with **association, communion, contribution, and a sharing in anything actively or passively.** In fellowship we are speaking of **sharing, participating** or becoming **a partner** in anything.

FELLOWSHIP: association, communion (I Corinthians 10:16); contribution (Romans 15:26); sharing, partaking of, participating in anything, actively or passively (Ephesians 5:11; II John 9-11; and Revelation 18:4).

DEFINING A PROBLEM: The doctrine is being presented that we all sin, thus we should, in order to be consistent, accept and fellowship everyone else in spite of any sins they may be committing. Also, everyone is at a different level of development, and thus despite our differences over the Bible, we should have **UNITY-IN-DIVERSITY.**

SET FORTH SOME PRINCIPLES

The fact that we all sin (I John 1:8-10) does not prove we should turn around and fellowship every sin anyone else might commit. **THE ANSWER:** Remember that it is one thing to sin, and another thing to **CONTINUE IN SIN,** I John 3:1-10. For example, we may not be able to keep a bird from lighting on our head, but we can keep the same bird from building a nest.

True, we are all on different levels of development spiritually, but we are not dealing with LEVELS OF DEVELOPMENT. We are dealing with SIN. Anyone who knows anything at all about the church knows great allowances are made for development. Romans 14 deals with this. In Romans 14, Paul IS NOT INSTRUCTING BRETHREN ON HOW TO FELLOWSHIP SIN.

Romans 14:1-3 "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him."

Roams 14:19-23; "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

Also, remember our subject deals with BRETHREN, or members of the church only I Cor. 5:6-13:

"Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person."

II Cor. 7:12: "Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, I did it not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you."

It deals with brethren who insist on CONTINUING IN SIN.

Scripturally we have no right to fellowship any sin, not even in our own lives. (Review the definition). Christians accept NO SIN, and when we sin, if we are honest with ourselves, we repent and pray for forgiveness. We not only should not live a life of sin, but we must ACTIVELY OPPOSE those who do, Ephesians 5:11, "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them."

One does not have to commit sin to be guilty of sin. Romans 1:28-32:

"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them."

Ephesians 5:11 (it is a sin not to oppose sins); II John 9-11.

Every sin requires an action on our part, but every sin does not require the same action. Some sins require a formal action. Others require only an exposure and simple

rejection on our part. (Some sins are devastating to the whole church just as some diseases are to the human body - e.g. cancer as opposed to a cut finger; they do not both require major surgery, and to treat them the same actually **harms the body**).

Examples of where **formal action** is required: Matt. 18:15-17; I Cor. 5; and Titus 3:10-11. (Note: We do not mix the actions: a special action is required for each sin, just as in treating diseases, each requiring a particular cure, though there is often an overlapping in treatments. The **big mistake** is trying to mix all these actions together and then coming up with a **master plan** that will apply to **every sin**. It will not work.)

An example of simple rejection is missing church, Heb. 10:25 "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." Nothing is said about formal charges. Long hair on boys, shorts on girls; proper attire for men and women; worldliness, and such like are other examples.

WHERE OUR STUDY STOPS

In all these cases our duty stops with an **action**, namely, of exposing the sin with the Bible (in LOVE), and then by living in such a way that the person involved will know we do not FELLOWSHIP their sin, and no one thinks we do either. For example: those who err in worship know we do not fellowship their errors, and we conduct ourselves in such a way that they or no one thinks we do (II John 9-11).

The fact that every member in a congregation communes together and contributes together (see the definition), or has a common fellowship in these matters, does not within itself show any particular member is sharing in any other member's sins. We **SHARE ONLY** in the things involved. If one is sinning, the fact you commune and contribute with that one does not prove you fellowship his sin, or that you wish to fellowship his sin. The Lord makes a careful distinction between the faithful and the unfaithful, sinners and saints, in any one congregation.

Notice Rev. 2:18-25:

"And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass; I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last to be more than the first. Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols. And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not. Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds. And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden. But that which ye have already hold fast till I come."

Some were guilty of gross immorality and others refused the immorality (verse 24), all in the same church.

A few in the congregation of Sardis had not sinned, Rev. 3:1-5:

"And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. 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. Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are

worthy. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; 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."

In III John, verse one, we have well beloved Gaius and in verses nine and ten the devilish Diotrephes, overflowing with malicious words. Both were apparently leaders in the same church.

Paul prophesied in Acts 20:28-31, the error that would arise among the elders at Ephesus.

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."

(Note: We do not stand or fall as an organization. We stand or fall as members in that organization.)

CONCLUSION

Every sin a person commits does not require that that person be disfellowshipped. However, no sin can be fellowshipped, regardless of who commits it, and regardless of whether it requires a formal action or a simple rejection, or whether it is in our life or someone else's life. We can refuse to fellowship a sin without disfellowshipping the sinner.

I can do nothing that makes me a partner, or makes me appear a partner to any sin, without becoming guilty of that sin. One must always make a clear distinction between sinning and CONTINUING IN SIN. Remember, too, we have NO SCRIPTURAL RIGHT to fellowship any sin, not even in our own lives.

Name one sin we can fellowship.

NOTES
(This page is blank on purpose)

A CRISIS OF KNOWLEDGE

by Ron Courter

Preface

The theme of the 1986 study was to focus on preparation and awareness of the church in twenty years. Our task was to exhort Biblically the need to know the word more fully, note the kingdom of heaven has had crisis of knowledge historically, and to share a few thoughts on things helping us to better understand the word of God. We did not intend to merely cite some hermeneutic rules, but speak of general thoughts and attitudes that help us not abuse the Bible. The goal is to permit the word of heaven to mold us, rather than our merely using it (Eph. 5:17-18).

History cries woe when the word of God is not free to be heard. But how dreadful and deceitful such a time is, if the word appears free, but in reality is shackled by improper use, corrupted use or no use. This latter danger has become Satan's most effective weapon in the battle of principalities and powers and the seeking of man's spirit. Why? Men believe the word has been spoken, but in reality it has not. Once men cried peace, where there was no peace and now men cry know, where there is no knowing. This is the climate of the hour and children of God are living in such a crisis of knowledge does not overshadow the Israel of today, as it once overshadowed the Israel of yesterday?

Introductory Remarks

We will watch faithfully one day at a time for His coming (for we are not expecting signs), but realize very soon members of the kingdom could be writing January 1, 2000 on their stationary. The church of the 21st century will to a large degree be what we glean and declare of the scriptures now. A crisis of knowledge is an ongoing concern of every generation of the king's children. The kingdom of the Messiah is in reality **never more than a disciple away** from a crisis of knowledge.

Every child of God has a role in the crisis of knowledge. Why? The kingdom of the New Covenant is a kingdom of priest, not simply a kingdom with priest (I Peter 2:5, 9). It is a kingdom known by knowing (Heb. 8:11). The larger the number of the membership not engaged in active Bible reading and study, the greater the indices of a crisis of knowledge.

No congregation serving for the Lord's glory and being a lifeful body of Christ can ignore the lack of disciples of Christ or the lack of scriptural knowledge in that body. Why? Let Paul's words in Eph. 4:11-16 answer. No teacher striving to edify the body can ignore the lack of knowledge among the hearers (Heb. 5:11). No teacher can ignore whether the hearers are merely made of flesh or have become fleshly (I Cor. 3:1, 3).

We must become very sensitive to the necessity of every child of God being a student of the scriptures to realize their commitment unto the Lord. Matt. 28:20 has the baptized being taught. Teaching is not a one way street. Many times the apostles spoke or wrote of something because the hearers did know. "Wherefore I will not be negligent to put always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth (II Peter 1:12)."

We desire to make each member very acutely aware they have a role in any crisis of knowledge spiritually. We will attempt to do this by noting:

1. The Bible emphasizes knowledge is essential to spiritual maturity and fruitfulness.

2. The Bible emphasizes that knowledge alone is not sufficient to averting spiritual problems and producing spiritual maturity.
3. The Bible does give examples and warnings of crisis in knowledge. Reasons do vary for such crisis (usually holiness), but these serve to reveal a crisis of knowledge is part of the question of a healthy kingdom.
4. We will speak of some tool principles or thoughts to aid in discovering scriptural truth and to assure the Bible controls us and we use the Bible properly.

Spiritual Growth And Maturity Demands Knowledge Of The Scriptures

Many consider Christianity as a system without knowledge or even anti-knowledge. This is probably due to the fact Christianity is a "faith system" founded on Christ and divine revelation. The opening conclusions are not necessary when faith of the Christian system is properly understood. Biblical faith is a response to valid and reliable testimony. It is not a blind leap divorcing cognition and emotion. It is not a leap by subjective knowledge from information not publicly available to all.

Spirituality involves knowing. It does not necessarily involve knowledge of every discipline, but it does not fear the knowledge of other disciplines. Why? The Christian believers in the unity of truth discovered by natural means or historically revealed by supernatural means. I Cor. 2:15 can be cited here without molesting the contextual principle. "But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judge of no man."

Knowledge is no man's saviour, but the Saviour of every man must be known through the light of the scriptures. A concordance opened to the words **know** and **knowledge** quickly reveals Christianity involves knowing. Paul often stressed **we know** and **we would not have you ignorant**. Knowledge can be abused, truth can be used selfishly and without compassion. But Christian stewardship involves coming to know the truth and bringing that truth to others. Every era of the Lord's kingdom is involved in an ongoing crisis of knowledge or its prevention. Thus, let us share a few scriptures encouraging us to know the word.

1. Isa. 55:8-12:

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the things whereto I sent it. For ye shall go out with joy, and be led forth with peace: the mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands."

- a. Compare our thinking with God's thinking.
- b. Compare the quality of our thinking with God's thinking.
- c. Consider the ability of His word to change us.

2. II Peter 1:2 "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord."

3. II Peter 3:18 "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ..."

- a. Growing in grace is to comprehend and realize in our life that all is done by the benefit of Jesus Christ.
- b. Growing in knowledge is to grow in spiritual truth
- c. The word **grow** means to enlarge. John 3:30 translated it **increase**.

d. The implied notion of the verb is to endeavour, striving to be continually growing. The contrast of falling from one's own steadfastness is offset by growth in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. The contrast is with verse 17 and stresses keep on growing unto the day of eternity (Bloomfield, Vol. 2, p. 750).

4. Col. 1:9-10 "...do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."

Paul's desire and request was in order that the brethren would recognize and acknowledge the Lord's will. Wisdom relates to an awareness of the full plan of salvation in Christ by His death. Understanding refers to a running together, a flowing together (cf. Mark 12:33). The idea is to conceptualize, instead of a bits and pieces spirituality. "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him;" (Col. 3:10). The knowledge was essential to walking worthy, being fruitful and increasing. A worthy walk is an appropriate walk. (cf. Phil. 1:27, as becometh; Eph. 4:1; I Thess. 2:12).

The increase is to strive for full knowledge. The manner for such is to speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:16). The source of this understanding for growing is to read the revelation (Eph. 3:4).

5. I Peter 2:2-3: "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious."

Let us crave the word, so that we may grow unto salvation. Desire is to yearn after and to long for. It is translated long in Rom. 1:11; earnestly desiring in II Cor. 5:2; greatly ... long in Phil. 1:8; desiring greatly in I Thess. 3:6; and lusteth in James 4:5.

Today, a major problem in growth of knowledge is mixing human thought and the word of God. It is the new wine, old bottle difficulty or the old garment, new patch problem of Jesus' day. We need to develop a complete Biblical system of approach to salvation and the problems of the flesh in continuing to be steadfast. The latter is lacking among us.

Many quote I Peter 2:2 but few quote verse three. This verse may be the key to lack of knowing and desiring to know. Forgiveness of sin, the promise of the out-resurrection and the giving to us through Christ seems to be lost to so many in the church. If we are not communicating the essence of our salvation in Christ is received and not earned, if we are not revealing the uniqueness of the church as portrayed by the words of the prophets of old, then many have not tasted the graciousness of the Lord. Therefore, knowledge of the Lord is not craved, tasted as being unique and appreciated as being adequate.

6. II Peter 1:5 -- Every effort is to be made to supply lavishly to our faith in Christ knowledge. We are to dedicate ourself to the light of the scriptures (Rom. 12:2).
7. Phil. 3:8 -- When Paul considered the worth of the knowledge of salvation by Jesus Christ everything else lost its glimmer and shine. How sharply these words sting in an age of distraction. The slogan of the day seems to be "every care but spiritual care."

Keeping Our Balance: Knowledge Has Its Limitations

When we cry of the need to know we must protect ourself from a sterile intellectualism and a very devious form of pride. Hence, let us recognize knowledge has its limitations. Knowing just to know is not a spiritual goal. Knowing just to put others down is not near as beneficial as knowing to leave God up.

1. Saving faith involves knowledge, but knowledge alone does not save. The testimony must be received and the individual's commitment to the Lord is primary. (cf. John 5:39; Acts 2:41; Heb. 4:2).
2. Knowledge alone does not assure congregational growth, but is a part of fruitfulness and edification. Remember II Peter 1:5 speaks of knowledge as one variable in the formula of fruitfulness. I Cor. 8:1-2 cautions correct knowledge can be abused for self-interest and to hinder foregoing liberties. A lack of love permits knowledge to be destructive to self and others.
3. Our receptivity and ability to know more fully is very dependent on fear of the Lord. Growth involves not only the nature of the seed, but also the nature of the soil. Our well being is dependent on transmission and respect for authority (cf. Prov. 1:7; Psalms 25:12).
4. There must be a knowledge of right for right to be done, but we must realize a knowledge of right does not assure right will be done. (Right is not intuitive). Many things in life cannot be understood, if we forget a knowledge of right does not mean right will be done. (cf. Rom. 3:20; 8:3; Gal. 3:21; Rom. 7:7-10, 15-19; James 4:17)

Yes, knowledge cannot save, but we shall not be saved without knowledge. Knowledge alone will not make me spiritual, but my spirituality will not progress without knowledge.

**A Crisis Of Knowledge Involves Lips Saying The Word Is Sufficient,
But In Practice It Is Not Given Systematic Pursuit**

The word of God is the Spirit's sword. A weapon of war cannot be used without knowledge. How shall error be fought without truth? How shall error be recognized without truth? Does one go to war with unfamiliar weapons? David's experience gives us fair warning. "I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them" (I Sam. 17:38-40). Paul wrote, "and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." It is a short sword or dagger. Thayer said (p. 393), "the Spirit uses it to subdue the impulses of sin and proves its own power and efficacy." It came by inspiration and the doctrine therein is effective to conquering spiritual enemies.

It is one thing to have possessions, but something else to possess your possessions. Obad. 17 states this principle: "and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions." Many have in their possessions a Bible, but they do not possess it. Many have a Bible in their possessions, but are not possessed by it. Many have a Bible in their possessions, are possessed by it, but not according to knowledge (Rom. 10:1-2).

A telling symptom of a crisis of knowledge is the confidence placed in man's disciplines, while asking the word of God to tag along. This is evident in the halo given to psychological sources. (Hear us out, for we are not attacking psychology). The difficulty is such efforts often select piece-meal portions from systems that have no place for revelation and the Lord of life. The writer of the statement may use the selected portion to argue against the very system one places it within. These solutions are temporary and will not move one closer to the Lord. They are founded on matching items with sound-alike verses.

We need more systematic efforts to aptly apply the word of God to the real problem and permit the word of God to define the real evil in the problem. We are much preoccupied with blemishes rather than diseased roots. "Having the sword of the Spirit is not owning a Bible, but knowing the specific principle in the Bible that applies to the specific point of temptation." (J. MacArthur, p. 31).

A knowledge crisis is constantly fueled due to man's tendency to trust in the creature more than the Creator. This is hidden on many occasions because man decides on the answer and then goes to the Bible to find a look-alike passage. He simply bottles his wisdom in Bible look-alike-wrappers. Hos. 4:12 reads: "My people ask counsels at their stocks, and their staff declareth unto them: for the spirit of whoredoms hath caused them to err, and they have gone a whoring from under their God." The manifestations of

untrusting hearts may be a message to preachers and teachers. It says you are failing to help people see their problems in Bible light and solutions. Body problems are largely heart problems, so do not expect change without discovering the real sin.

There is a void in our teaching to help people use the Bible to overcome their sins and their weaknesses. Great preaching always points out sin and rebukes it. But we must admit efforts to use the word practically and systematically to control the impulses of sinful habits need more attention. Possibly this void has arisen from local teaching that needs to be more Bible-centered and less mere moralizing.

We are asking the reader to ponder the problem of taking man's answers and sticking a Bible verse on man's wisdom, rather than letting the word of God present the solution. Man's way is only stumbling on half-truths. Let me illustrate for clarity. Do I labor with the alcoholic by bringing him to the steps of AA hidden under a few Bible verses? Do I labor with the alcoholic by bringing him to a systematic setting of faith founded on Bible truth that handles his support without tearing the scriptures from their historical truth?

Why are we stumbling? Our Bible foundation regarding sin is being left undeveloped. We are accepting answers from denominational writings that assume changes in the nature of man at conversion that are not true. Furthermore, we need to labor more to aid man to hide the word within to overcome temptation and give practical procedures to work such solutions to overcome sin. We do not desire to do violence to Isa. 29:13, but let us beware lest we begin to teach fear of God by man's precepts.

Crisis Of Knowledge In The Bible

1. Mark 12:24; Matt. 22:29: They were wandering out of the way, because they did not comprehend the power of God or the truth of the scriptures.
2. Acts 13:27: Their failure to comprehend what they read led them to fulfilling the scriptures in condemning Christ. (cf. I Cor. 2:1-8 and II Cor. 3:15).
3. Heb. 5:11: How sorely needed for some brethren to know the truth, as they slipped toward the Mosaic way and no sacrifice for sin.
4. Hosea 4:1-6: The Lord had a controversy with the inhabitants, because truth, mercy and knowledge were absent from the land.
5. Amos 8:11: men would wander the world over to hear the word spoken, but there was no doubt where it should have been heard. Israel had become so lifted up, she mocked the straight forward teaching of the prophets. (cf. Isa. 28:7-9, 20). The decay of the world seen in moral deterioration, social ferment and loss of governmental leadership has behind it a constant, singular force. It is spiritual pretense without the Lord and the scriptures.
6. Judges 2:1-23: The evolution of a crisis in knowledge is placed before us for careful study. We should examine it well.

Sundry Thoughts On The Transmission Of Knowledge

1. Truth of heaven would have to be told by God (I Cor. 2:9-11).
2. The authority of heaven established and confirmed called for preaching and teaching (Matt. 28:19-20).
3. The process is always truth given-truth told-truth heard-truth believed-truth told. The process is possible, clear and repetitive. It involves truth, teller and hearer. The key is always to get the belief back to the original source of truth, even when it is told by another. It must become your belief because of Jesus, the Son of God and the scriptures.

John 4 reveals many interesting things about the process of transmitting truth. The uniqueness of Jesus' behaviour was the stimulus for the interaction. Oh, how we have failed to understand the importance of behaviour. He ask a woman from Samaria for a drink. Now look at these verses and the process of transmission. Verse 29 reads, "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ." Verse 39 says, "And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did." Verses 41-42 read, "And many more believed because of his own word; And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."

A crisis of knowledge does not begin because another man taught us something from the scriptures. A crisis of knowledge does begin when we simply continue on and on from what another has told us. There comes a time when it must become our own, because we have searched the scriptures for ourself (II Tim. 1:5, 13).

Telling demands holiness of life and a life that is a part of the message (I Thess. 1:5). "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou has learned them;" II Tim. 3:14. It would seem every crisis of knowledge in the kingdom is actually a crisis of holiness. When holiness slips away we adopt a life-style that pulls us from prayerful meditation and hearing. A crisis of knowledge is more serious when we realize the real problem is not our ignorance, but why we are ignorant. Whatever degree of crisis in knowledge we now have in the church relates to a generation of people that have been failing to control their liberty in Christ. What are we saying? We are going to pay; a devastating price in spiritual maturity, if we do not realize every liberty does not need to be tasted. Everyone seems to know if ye love me, keep my commandments. But someone is forgetting if ye love me, do not be a slave to liberty. (cf. Gal. 5:13).

Whatever you do ponder the Biblical process of transmitting truth. Why? Therein lies the key to preventing or not preventing a crisis of knowledge.

4. God has revealed, has told, has confirmed. Objectively speaking the faith has been delivered. There is no need to wait for God to tell more (Jude 3).
5. Now what do I do? You tell it and you lead people to search the scriptures (Acts 17:11).
6. You must understand the process when revelation is not complete and when it is complete. Help people see from the Bible we have moved from the foundation and direct stage (cf. II Tim. 2:2). Remember we never waste time or effort on this subject, because people are confused over how to know the truth.
7. Every child of God must tell. A crisis of knowledge leads to a crisis in evangelism and growth. Why? Men who know the truth are somewhat reluctant or sometimes uncertain when to tell what. Now, how much more true this will be with those very conscious of knowing little of the word? What happens in such a void is men adopt systems that attack the priesthood of believers. This is attacking the foundation of the kingdom and only reinforces the lack of every Christian knowing.
8. Remember the process involves teaching the truth and the life of the teacher. The message must be understandable. Possibly this is the real thrust of Paul's words in I Cor. 9:19-22. Christianity will have cultural conflicts with any society, but all things in a culture does not have to necessarily conflict with Christianity. We desire men to believe in Christ, and be obedient to his lordship. It is possible for men to say yes by outward action and never respond to the gospel. We recognize men might say no due to crude handling of the message or improper understanding by the messenger. Both circumstances are very dissatisfying. But let us also recall "there are cases in the New Testament where people said "no" to the apostolic message without blame being placed on the messengers (Gurgenus, p. 27)."
9. We must be aware of stumbling blocks in the transmitting of truth. The understandable message can be lost by "church jargon" and "pew lingo." We guard against such by

letting the pattern of teaching and preaching be seen through many verses and not one, so the flow of the scriptures balance our conclusions. It is frightening to consider how much we often assume others know what we are talking about Biblically.

Ideally, we avert a crisis of knowledge when every member is a learner from someone who is more experienced in the word and a teacher of someone who knows less of the word. When children of the kingdom are not conscious of their responsibility as learner and teacher we invite a crisis in knowledge. A congregation that cannot edify itself due to a lack of development is in a crisis of knowledge. When a preacher is present to edify because none can and no diligent effort is made by preacher or members to develop instruments of edification within the congregation we have a crisis of knowledge. Preachers should be able to teach, but we do not make preachers just to have teachers. The church would do well to check her course. The key to transmitting is every child of God feeling responsible for knowing the word of God, so they will feel equally free to tell it.

Brief Considerations In The Preacher's Role Of Transmitting Truth

1. I Tim. 4:6
2. II Tim. 2:2; 4:2
3. I Cor. 14:3 Why did the forth teller speak?
4. Acts 18:24 Mighty conveys powerful, capable, able and strong.
5. Acts 20:20, 27, 31
6. I Thess. 2:1-14
7. Eph. 4:11-16

A crisis of knowledge cannot be escaped when men desire to preserve position for position's sake. A crisis of knowledge cannot be escaped when men simply want other men to speak for them, so they do not need to use their energy and time to edify the church. A crisis of knowledge cannot be escaped when men simply want to speak to the church, but do not want to use their energy or time to minister to the saints outside of the assembly. A crisis of knowledge cannot be escaped when neither Christian, preacher, teacher or bishop knows their role in light of the scriptures.

Warnings To Prevent Loss Of The Love Of The Truth

The concern of the Christian system is truth loss and gained. Why? Read John 8:31-32; Eph. 6:14; II Thess. 2:10, 13; I Tim. 2:4; Heb. 10:26. The question of truth in religion founded upon sound Biblical evidence is being eroded. The Christian is tempted to relax their constant pursuit of revealed truth in such an atmosphere without awareness. Men seem to move more and more from asking what is true to what is truth? Indifference becomes the deadly sin.

Many assumptions of the day are humanistic and utilitarian in origin and nature. Thus, we must ponder that religion is not vindicated on the mere idea of whether it contains a little good or much good. Reread the last statement again. Whately wrote, "For the more there is of good and true in any system, the more need there is to warn men against that admixture of evil and false, which is thus enabled to gain the greater currency (p. 13)." "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I unto the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice (John 18:37)." Spiritual inquiry focuses on truth. Let us ponder the following for the pursuit of truth:

1. The discovery of truth is not a mere invention of arguments.
2. The discovery of truth involves balancing an awareness of truth's value with an awareness of distrust of ourself. We must painfully acquire habits that assure we will be lovers of truth. No price is too great for this, for the fate of those that receive not the love of the truth is known now and forever.

3. When the ideal of judging each situation according to the evidence is said to be beyond possibility we have surrendered truth.
4. When the main concern is happiness, truth will remain an unfound treasure.
5. Discovery of truth does not call for indifference of will, but it does call for impartial judgment. The beginning of this statement has always plagued the writer, so we find value in sharing this thought. Indifference of will an indifference of judgment are not one and the same. They do not need to be. Read Whately's great words. "That we should wish to find truth on one side rather than the other, is in many cases not only unavoidable, but commendable; but to think that true which we wish, without impartially weighing the evidence on both sides, is undeniably a folly, though a very common one (p. 31)."
6. Ironically, the discovery of truth is often hindered because of aversion to doubt. The insecurity and difficulty of finding an answer commonly leads people to grab the first answer that comes their way. How many times have conclusions been quickly gathered in church problems, so circumstances could be laid aside rather than suffer through a righteous effort? We need to face the problem of doubt rather than accept falsehood and beware of any conclusion founded on inadequate evidence.
7. Discovery of truth must handle the problem of hasty decisions. There is the ever current problems of life calling for rapid decisions. Decisions must be made, for often to not decide is to decide. But beware of habitually developing hasty decisions in the pursuit of truth because a few practical happenings in life call for quick decisions.
8. The uncontrolled desire to be original often causes truth much misery. It is the self wanting to come to the light instead of desiring to bring the truth to the light.
9. We should not reject something as being true just because it has long been stated by the respected authorities. But we must also recognize truth has often suffered from the plea that this is what the venerated authority or respectable have long said is true.
10. The discovery of truth is often hindered by thinking long held errors that have manifested little ill are of no consequence. The question really is not old, not new but true. Men commonly determine to stay equal distance from two extremes, which eventually leads to being led by the two extremes one desires to overcome and expose. We do not see how such a path leads to restoring truth. The climate becomes governed by looking first for the expedient. What strides have truth made when men's first response was give me the expedient?
11. The discovery of truth has been hindered by sudden outcries against the pride of human reasoning. Pride from human reasoning is a distinct problem. But shall we permit such to result in a free guidance of heart based on obscure feelings this is good?

Finally, let us recognize the kind of creatures we are and never forget one of man's common quirks. Men are apt to take more pains in justifying their propensities, than it would cost to control them.

Considerations To Prevent A Crisis Of Knowledge By Improper Attitude And Handling Of The Word Of God

Respect for the word of God and the use of the word of God should compliment each other, but such is not always true. The Bible speaks of how it was to be handled and how it was mishandled. Paul told Timothy to rightly divide the word. The verb means to cut straight. Thayer defines, "To make straight and smooth, i.e., to teach the truth correctly and directly (p. 453)." Could Paul have been thinking of cutting pieces for a tent without regard to pattern and the confusing end?

Paul wrote, "hasten to show thyself approved unto God." The word "study" means to use speed. It is hasten, be diligent or eager. (cf. II Tim. 4:9, 21; I Thess. 2:17; II Peter 1:10). The word is translated "was forward" in Gal. 2:10 and "endeavouring" in Eph. 4:3. We are to conduct ourself in the pursuit of truth, so there is no cause for shame. A comparison of II Tim. 2:16 with verse 15 aids us to catch Paul's textual setting. Read also II Cor. 1:13 and 3:12. Paul did not corrupt the word in use or conduct, while many twisted it, never came to the truth and used it for personal gain. Let us reflect on some things that influence our understanding and handling of the word.

How do we view the Bible?

Dungan wrote, "The Bible is not a book with which to prove doctrines; it is the doctrine itself (p. 39)." Restoration is stimulated by hearing the word to mold belief instead of going to merely support what is already formed. "... instead of searching them for whatever they may contain, the doctrines have been first assumed, and then the Bible is compelled into some sort of recognition of the position (Dungan, p. 39)."

Many people come to the Bible only to find a passage or prove a doctrine already believed. This is often with no awareness of the implications or assumptions of that doctrine. (This is not condemning looking for a verse to refute a false view founded on study of the word). Unfortunately, the only kind of Bible study many members do is a mere verse snatching for preconceived ideas. The attitude "I have a sermon," so all I need now is a verse for it does not make sound teachers. We must be conscious "the Bible is not a book of proof for doctrines, but is the doctrine of God itself to men (Dungan, p. 76)." Men forget this when they make parables into allegories and use illustrations of a truth to teach a completely different thought than the writer was thinking. The application should follow the text instead of the text following the application.

It should be realized that character must precede ability in the choice of God's spokesman.

Handling the word calls for character disciplined in energy and morality. It calls for maturity to be evident in practice and judgment. Man typically goes from ability to character in his choices, but God works from character to ability in his choices. One might ask what does this have to do with a crisis of knowledge? More than realized! We are to hold fast as we grow, so we do not need to be overwhelmed with pressures as a novice in Christ by trying to be more than we are prepared for in function and expectation. We do not need the insecurity that much of our faith has been proven to us by others, because we have not had opportunity to learn the scriptures for ourself.

Why is the issue critical? "He who does not begin by preaching what he thoroughly believes, will speedily end by believing what he preaches" (Whately, p. 49). Preaching often involves situations where there is pressure to side with one group or another. We cannot permit such to have us speak beyond our understanding. We cannot permit hasty decisions because we have heard one side that appeals to us (Prov. 18:17).

Hasty decisions made in good faith to preach frequently put individuals into situations that does not aid them or others in spiritual development. Preparation without personal responsibility and discipline, plus immediate rewards can hinder the quality of the student, the level of knowledge and the integrity essential to the role of preaching. There are far too many occasions where lack of knowledge in the church determines the need for a preacher, which in turn creates a greater crisis of knowledge in due season.

Truth is simple, but never let it be said it is easy to know in the events of life. Truth is difficult enough to apply, let alone be forced into situations where the preacher has not had adequate time to know from studying the word. Remember, men generally will believe what they preach, even if, they did not come to believe it before preaching it through careful study of the word. Why do we mention such in the context of this writing? We would like to protect fine young Christians for development in character, maturity and use for the Lord's glory. We would like to see truth reign, not emotional pleas founded on half-truths.

An overview of the Bible and its essential to the student

He that makes an early effort to have a global view of the word will save time in study and use of the word. Christians have not been wise by ignoring the general structure of the Bible. Unfortunately, a lack of patience and direction have led people to neglect introductory study of the Bible.

Introductory material is not as introductory as many think when the Bible is studied first hand. We all bring predispositions to study that need the structure of the total. The patience involved is very important to the zealous, but undisciplined student. It prevents falling into critical errors in handling the word. It helps prepare for detection of the false teacher that skillfully mixes error and truth. A sample of things to help the reader understand the nature of the things we are speaking about follows:

1. The Old Testament by content is known as the law, prophets and psalms (Luke 24:44).
2. The Old Testament is simply referred to as the Law, when not speaking of it by content (cf. John 10:34; Ps. 82:6; I Cor. 14:21; Isa. 28:11).
3. The prophets can best be understood by placing them in the historical setting of the books of history in the Old Testament.
4. The Bible includes much historical material essential to understanding the content of the books. Ten of the seventeen books of prophecy indicate the king or kings under which the prophet lived and spoke. (cf. Isa. 1:1).
5. There are striking similarities in the Bible. Kings and Chronicles can be seen in one sense structurally like the synoptic gospels. The events are told more than once and one account notes reasons for events that the other account does not include.
6. Paul's writings can be set into the historical setting of the book of Acts, much like one sets the prophets of the Old Testament into the books of history.
7. We should always be alert to finding things that aid in capturing the overview and structure of the Bible. Names of books often help, such as Genesis meaning beginning or Exodus meaning exit. There is information to help outline a book, discover its theme or sees the writer's reason for writing. for example:
 - (1) What does Rom. 1:16 tell of the theme of the Roman letter?
 - (2) How does Acts 1:8 outline the book of Acts?
 - (3) What does I Cor. 1:11 and 7:11 tell of Paul's reason for writing?
 - (4) What does John 20:30-31 tell about the purpose of that writing?

This kind of information when woven into the overall structure of the Bible is very valuable. It does not permit the Bible to be torn apart for a reader's fancy. Realize how many people you meet that have no idea about the structure of the Bible. It is a complete mystery to many why you would read the New Testament before the Old Testament. You do not waste time by helping people with this information.

Many people do not care for introductory material because they want to study issues. What a mistake. Many doctrinal issues are put in proper light form seeing the structure of an epistle or noting its historical setting. How often people forget to whom an epistle was written so they misapply verses to the saved or unsaved. How often has Eph. 2 been used against baptism, but is forgotten the people of that epistle understood baptism (Acts 19:1-6)? How often is I John 2 used to try and tell sinners how to be saved, when the thrust of the writer was to tell a Christian how to handle a sin when they sinned?

Permit time in your study to learn an overview of the Bible structure. We complete this section quoting from Lockhart. "Now in the interpretation of the Bible as a whole it is not enough to study each part alone; but the correlation of parts must be observed and the place of each book or class of books in the design of the whole should be considered (p. 281)." Again, "... we cannot ignore its two great divisions, one produced in the preparation of the divine effort to save man, and the other produced in the ministration

of that salvation, the Old Testament and the New Testament (p. 281)." Never undervalue the importance of having a good overview of the Bible, because it gives one preparation to understand the precise message of the Bible, permits one to have an attitude that does not tear the Bible apart and makes one comfortable and confident in conveying truth to others in an unassuming fashion.

**The life and power of the Bible is appreciated by those who pursue
the great themes and principles that run through the word**

The grandeur and richness is for those that ponder from time to time the continual themes and recurring principles. There is nothing to whet the spirit's appetite more fully. The recognitions of the remedial scheme, the redemptive scheme seen in shadow and emerging in light humbles and makes one never want to exploit the word with tunnel opinions. The privilege and responsibility of being a child of God makes one see duty in a far different light than a group of detached rules. Let us illustrate what we are speaking of with an indefinite listing.

1. The grand sovereignty of the one true God. Relate this to the Bible stance that idolatry is intolerable and remember idols of the heart are as abhorrent as idols of the hand. This is the issue of Christian identity and what we glory in at this hour.
2. The central theme of the Bible is justification. Will the God of heaven do right? Yes. How will he do it? Through Christ. How will a loving God, a merciful God also be known as a just God? It took centuries to answer those questions and would you believe it was answered by a cursed death on the cross. God's justness and way of justification is answered in Christ. It is the most marvelous story ever written and the Bible totally revolves around that subject from beginning to end.
3. We think of justification as the grand theme of the Bible. But we do not see or feel the practical issue of this until we face the subject of law and grace.
4. The grand topic Biblically is the kingdom of the Messiah. Will the will of heaven come to earth and when? Would Christ teach an empty prayer? The kingdom is so much a part of the Bible narrative and discussion men forget to see the real subject. This is so true in the gospels, as Jesus prepares for the kingdom at hand.
5. Consider how the plan laid before the foundation of the world relates to God's glory. Let it be known in the church. When we begin to see how the church brings glory to God and salvation through the plan before the ages the church becomes unique beyond human reasoning.

A recognition of grand themes permits better understanding of phrases in the Bible that need the comparative context of the Old Testament and the New Testament. A consciousness of the conditions in the preparatory stage permits a better understanding in the concluding stage. For example, the phrase "whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved." The meaning of this phrase is universality of salvation by the gospel, but look what people have made of it today. They have taken an "anybody can" statement and made it a "however you can" statement. What does a passage like Heb. 8:11 mean without considering how and when one became a member of the Old Covenant people?

The themes of the Bible put us in our place. There is nothing to make the heart pound harder and the head bend lower than to see the grand themes unfold in the word. What else can make us more aware of what we are and what we are not? What can motivate one more to a life of thirsting and hungering after righteousness, instead of studying because I must or because I must let someone know what I know?

The question of Literalism

The handling of the word of God is never right, until we determine what we mean by accepting the Bible literally. Our study of the Bible always begins with words, but it does not end there. The word of God only serves God's purpose in our hands when we

approach the written word with the intent of finding the writer's intent. The crux of the literal understanding of the Bible is to capture the intent of the writer. The whole intent must be to discover the writer's intent. The examination of a word and its definition is essential to literal meaning and the historical, propositional nature of God's revelation. But frankly, unless we pursue the writer's intent and what he meant to say by what he said as our primary concern we will not further spiritual maturity or find ourself in the house of proper literal meaning. Dungan wrote, "We know intuitively that no man should be made to say what he does not intend to say (p. 98)."

There is no proper application until we understand the primary meaning of the terms and the intent of the writer. Dungan wrote, "... by applying its statements to subjects that were not before the minds of the writers; and therefore the whole war has been conducted in the absence of any teaching of the scripture whatever (p. 180)." He was lamenting proof, counter-proof situations where much Bible was quoted with no awareness of the harmony of the total word. The writer's intent was ignored and the word of God was exploited.

We must be cautious with text preaching to not exploit the true message. Morris wrote, "Textuary preaching has led to much confusion. For one to take a text, regardless of its context and press it into associations, and give it meanings that the writer never designed is to 'wrest the scriptures.' Our business as interpreter of the Bible is to get at the evident purpose and meaning of the writer. In no case should we ignore the speaker, person spoken to, the time, circumstances and evident purpose of the speaker, or writer. To ignore the time when a prophecy was uttered and the other features just mentioned, gives flight to the imagination (pp. 92-93)."

These words do not oppose text preaching, but a constant diet of such without precautions will not strengthen as needed. There needs to be a greater appeal for expository study. This means to expose or open up the scriptural meaning in its setting. When we see Bible literalism in the light of capturing the intent of the writer that moves us to be ever looking for the purpose of a given book. The reasons recommending searching for the scope of a book are many. We will stay within the intent of the writer, we can advise on specific Bible questions, while giving tools to the questioner for further study and we aid our memory because we remember chunks of information with meaning easier than bits of information.

There is a bald literalism that sounds so pure, but in reality will not and never can fully deliver Bible truth. Bible language is both literal and figurative in use. The bald literalism being promoted by many today is a source of great error. Remember, "... that to give a literal interpretation to all the terms, and phrases and figures of the Bible, is not only to understand it as we interpret no other book, but to turn it into nonsense (Mattison, p. 74)."

Old Testament prophecies cannot be interpreted literally if the Holy Spirit does not interpret them literally. We cannot disagree with the Holy Spirit's interpretation of an Old Testament prophet. Otherwise, we do not have the advantage of a completed revelation. What are we saying? We can indeed spiritualize, if the Holy Spirit has done that very thing. But we are not to spiritualize what the Holy Spirit has finalized. Wilmot wrote, "... the prophecies of the Old Testament must not be interpreted in opposition to the New Testament (p. 12)." Let us be able to explain what we mean when we say we take the Bible literally to prevent a crisis in knowledge.

We would like to pursue a thought that is not as important in some ways as the others, but this does not mean it is not worthy of some thought. The tendency of the Holy Spirit in revelation is to go from a general foundational statement to more detailed information to give the meaning of the foundation statement. **Great truths are typically revealed in the Bible, but not in one place.** The pattern of introducing a subject with a general statement and then filling in the details in other verses is important for many reasons.

1. It helps to eliminate the ever troublesome problem of over generalizing Bible statements that are limited in other passages.
2. It reminds us to be looking for comparative passages.

3. The conclusions reached from examining this tendency will not be without controversy, but the idea needs more exposure than it has been given.

Problems arise from foundation statements, because they do not manifest details, methods, or limitations. Unfortunately, these statements are not recognized and then built upon from other passages. The denominational world seems to have fallen prey to this kind of misunderstanding. They permit a general statement to stand for the process without examining the scriptures that unfold and build upon the foundation statement. People quote John 3:16 and never think this foundation statement must be detailed by the book of Acts. John the Baptist introduces the baptism with the Holy Spirit, but really tells little about its limitations or subjects. When such statements are over generalized a grand method of teaching from general to specific, from foundation to finish is abused. Mark 16 speaks of signs following, but speaks not of transmission or duration. Now other passages do tell more, but again this kind of passage is abused. Do not make a passage teach more than what it teaches or your hearers become confused and often conclude you are biased. Why? You did not introduce the evidence needed for further decisions on the subject.

We will complete this section with a quote or two. Hay writes, "In approaching the study of any doctrine or truth in God's word, it is well to remember that the practice of the Holy Spirit, in the writing of the revelation, has been generally, to give a key passage in which the basic principles of the doctrine or truth are stated and which will serve as the foundation upon which the whole revelation concerning the matter, found in different passages throughout the word, may be built up. Usually, there is only one such comprehensive statement (p. 135)." We might question the last sentence of this quote, but Hay has made a worthy observation that needs due examination. Later he wrote, "It is also important to bring together all the passages dealing with a particular truth before forming any conclusions regarding it. To isolate any passage from the whole body of truth revealed on a subject is highly dangerous and has been the cause of much unscriptural procedure and erroneous teaching (p. 135)." Bales coming from the other side so to speak writes, "However, it is a well known principle of Bible study that to get the complete view of any subject we must not limit ourselves to a study of one passage if there is more than one passage on the subject (p. 34)."

A difficult area in handling the word has been in applying and placing the teachings of Jesus in the Gospels

The gospels are the foundation of the New Testament, as the Law was the foundation of the Old Testament. The gospels are difficult to understand due to the language of the day (i.e., especially the idiom) and due to the fact we are in the major transition of God's plan for a new covenant. The full light and impact of the gospels and their relation to numerous doctrinal issues comes to the fore when we see the ministry of Jesus was a ministry of fulfilling and a ministry of preparation.

The ministry of Jesus fulfilled (Matt. 5:17-18) and the ministry of Jesus prepared (Mark 1:15). The gospels include a number of passages which speak, as if the kingdom was already a reality. The fact is all agree the kingdom had not yet come during Jesus' ministry. Those verses manifest Jesus' teaching was preparing for the coming kingdom. (cf. Matt. 23:13; 12:31; Mark 12:28-34; Matt. 11:12-13; 9:16-17; 18:3). The focal point of events and discussion in the gospels is the kingdom.

The key, then, that unlocks the gospel is seeing the ministry as fulfilling and preparing. He was under the Law and was completing it, while He taught the things of the coming kingdom. He was preparing things before the cross for after the cross. The parables, the conversations, the discourses all take on a central theme and are at home in the light of a fulfilling and preparing ministry.

The gospels have been neglected in their role of revealing the purpose of miracles to confirm new revelation. For example, Jesus' discussion of works and words, of John and miracles all relate to the confirming role of miracles. The gospel's purpose is to give evidence that Jesus was the Son of God and we could on that evidence come to believe Jesus is the Christ. But as you sort that evidence keep thinking about things that deal with

fulfilling, preparing and confirming. Do not be surprised if some passages suddenly take on new insight contextually.

We are going to mention one more principle in handling the word. We approach it with caution and ask you to give it careful thought. **The conveying of morality, ethics and life-style are not always done in the same fashion Biblically as matters of basic doctrine more positive in nature and less determined by human observation.**

What are we saying in this section? The church is losing its identity in everyday life. Why? We know people have many answers, but consider the following reflection. We are attempting to approach everyday decisions of life-style like we approach the question of baptism or the Lord's Supper. But does the Bible approach such areas always in the same way? Do we have a "shall do" and "shall not do" code pattern for these areas or do we move into principles? We know the area is not without insecurity, but we need to look deeper into our use of the word here.

Let us think for the good of the kingdom and not for evil. Let us think not to use liberty as a license for evil. Can I determine by command, example or necessary inference what recreations I can indulge in and what ones I cannot indulge in? We will answer no, won't we? Does this mean the Bible has nothing to say on such issues and there is no wrong to be concerned about? We will answer no won't we? We are forgetting this and becoming slaves of liberty and losing our identity as the body of Christ. These questions cannot be approached in the same manner as we approach many doctrinal issues. We are losing holiness we cannot afford to lose. The problem is not always rebellion, but sometimes a matter of confusion over setting the Bible stand. Therefore, we need to ask ourselves how the Bible approaches the life-style issues in comparison to how it approaches explicitly stated doctrines. This is true for the person abusing liberty and asking for explicit statements to show something wrong that must be pondered by Biblical principles. This is true for the teacher attempting to show something explicitly wrong without considering the nature of the Bible proof for that issue.

The subject area needs thought revealed for testing and understanding, because there is a void. It might well be this is where we need to learn some lessons regarding love that we have overlooked. Whately wrote, "Let it be observed, then, that it was no part of the scheme of the gospel revelation to lay down anything approaching to a complete system of moral precepts, to enumerate everything that is enjoined or forbidden by our religion; nor, again, to give a detailed general description of Christian duty, or to delineate, after the manner of systematic ethical writers, each separate habit of virtue or of vice (p. 215)." This is not asking for less restraint in behaviour, but a better understanding of how maturity is reached. We do not ask less of a man than a child when we relax the nature of the rules of behaviour as he grows, but there are some definite changes in the regulation of his behaviour and the maturity of his behaviour. It may well be your first reaction to this section will be very negative, but ponder it well before you reject it.

Practical Ideas To Help The Church Prepare Against A Crisis Of Knowledge

There is no substitute for the love of the truth and the fear of the Lord. But we can cultivate and reinforce spiritual truth, principles and behaviour with diligent efforts.

1. Emphasize daily reading of the Bible to the children of God, so they form a habitual need to feed the spirit.
 - a. Members may form a cooperative plan to encourage each other.
 - b. Reinforce such projects with group contract.
2. Develop systematic study of Bible subjects over a number of weeks.
 - a. Cultivate a climate of inquiry.
 - b. Develop an atmosphere to handle questions without confusion and expect maturity.
 - c. The teacher can utilize tests as part of the teaching-learning process.

- d. There needs to be a teacher experienced in the word to give direction and the study must be focused.
3. Consider whether brethren could hold a local meeting of three or four nights length.
 - a. Select topics and focus the speaker on his subject.
 - b. Work with the speakers and help them outline their subject.
 - c. You may find two speakers an evening limited in time is very profitable.
 - d. Introduce to them the idea of thinking Bible.
4. Congregational teachers often need guidance in covering Bible topics and having some goals in their teaching efforts.
5. A need to teach the family they share in the teaching of the church by helping the head of the house have a regular private time for study. We will not develop strong local teaching without wives that see such calls for time and is part of their Christian stewardship to help their husband have that time.
 - a. Develop book selection and subject areas for study and understanding.
 - b. People ask why develop book selection for Bible study? Many of us have little opportunity to discuss Bible subjects at the level we desire and with the people we need. Books become an answer for that need of discussion. They become our conversation with another over a Bible subject.
6. Develop an alertness for simple meaningful projects that Christians can engage in without massive organization. There are multitudes of meaningful projects that simply call for a little attention and effort by members of the Church.

Conclusion

It has been difficult to write on this topic, as the material came from information not prepared for written form. Our hope would be that in the present form it would serve to stimulate more refined thinking and efforts for truth. We have observed the church grow in knowledge and we have observed the church not grow in knowledge. A prevention of a crisis of knowledge begins with you and me and the available word of God.

Christians that have no need to study and converse regularly on the scriptures lead us back to a chained Bible in the hands of a few men. Ironically, the question is not whether such men are good or bad, but that men would care so little for truth that their habits would leave it for the few. This indeed would be sin and when we help to cultivate that kind of soil we are the sinner.

We cannot change the Bible, but we must interact with its teaching. Our thoughts, our presentation, our motivation needs to grow out of a Bible in our hands and in our heart. We cannot expect to simply mouth the arguments of others to convince others. The teacher must be trusted. The true reinforcement of the word you share with others is strongly tied to your total appreciation of Christ's death, the word of God and the holiness of your life.

* * * * *

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bales, J. D., The Hub of the Bible, Lambert Book House, Shreveport, 1960
- Bloomfield, S. I., The Greek Testament with English Notes, Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, London, 1855
- Dungan, D. R., Hermeneutics, The Standard Publishing Company, Cincinnati
- Gurganus, George, Guidelines for World Evangelism, Biblical Research Press, Abilene, 1976

Hay, A. R., The New Testament Order for Church and Missionary, H. H. Blok, Netherlands.

King James Version, The New Chain Reference Bible, B. B. Kirkbride Bible Co. Inc., Indianapolis, 1964

Lockhart, Clinton, Principles of Interpretation, The Christian Index Publishing Co., Des Moines, 1901

MacArthur, John, The Immortality of the Soul, Perkinpine and Higgins, Philadelphia, 1870

Morris, A. M., The Prophecies Unveiled or Prophecy A Divine System, The Courier Press, Winfield, 1914

Thayer, J. H., A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, American Book Company, New York, 1889

Whately, Richard, Essays on Some of the Difficulties in the Writings of the Apostle Paul, Warren F. Draper, Andover, 1865

Wilmont, John, Inspired Principles of Prophetic Interpretation, Reiner Publications, Swengel, 1965

DIVINE PROVIDENCE

by Irvin Barnes

I. Introduction:

- A. Divine refers to spiritual power in heaven above.
- B. Providence refers to making provision for another with deliberate forethought and wisdom.
- C. I will affirm that God, in heaven above, with forethought and wisdom, deliberately "provides for" His children here on earth.
- D. The topic will be dealt with in three divisions:
 - 1. God has provided "all spiritual blessings" by the New Testament scheme or system.
 - 2. God has provided certain truths, maxims, which demand that certain actions will bring certain consequences. An example: "he that soweth bountifully will reap bountifully, he that soweth sparingly will reap sparingly."
 - 3. God, through divine intervention in the natural affairs of His children, fulfills certain sure promises which He has made.

II. God has provided a New Testament Scheme or System for the salvation and benefit of the human race.

- A. This system is In, Through, With and by Christ.
 - Eph. 1:3 "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."
 - Rom. 8:32 "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things."
- B. What are some of the things which God has provided?
 - 1. Jesus, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man.
 - Heb. 2:9 "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste of death for every man."
 - 2. Redemption by the blood of Christ.
 - Eph. 1:7 "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."
 - 3. Deliverance from this present evil world.
 - Gal. 1:4 "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father."

4. Forgiveness:

Heb. 8:12 "For I will be merciful to their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." (cf. Eph. 1:7)

5. Salvation by Grace:

Eph. 2:8-9 "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." (cf. Titus 2:11)

6. Jew and Gentile reconciled, the gospel preached to every race:

Gal. 3:28 "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

7. The truth would be taught in all the world:

Col. 1:5-6a "For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; which is come unto you, as it is in all the world."

- a. God has provided that He would work out His will in us through the truth or through His word:

Phil. 2:13 "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do his good pleasure."

(Barnes -- "This meaning is, that God produces a certain effect in us; he exerts such an influence over us as to lead to a certain result in our minds -- to wit, 'to will and to do.'")

Heb. 13:20-21 "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

1 Thess. 2:13 "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."

8. The Church of Christ:

Matt. 16:16-18 "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Eph. 1:22-23 "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

9. Indwelling of God, Christ, and the Holy Ghost in the believer:

Christ: Eph. 3:16-17 "That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith."

Col. 1:27 "To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."

God: II Cor. 6:16 "... as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

Spirit: Rom. 8:9 "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you."

10. That we should be called the sons of God:

I Thess. 3:1-3 "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

(cf. Rom. 8:16-17; II Cor. 6:18; Gal. 3:26-27)

11. The resurrection of Christ:

I Peter 1:3 "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

12. The priesthood of Christ:

Heb. 4:14 "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession."

13. The second coming of Christ:

Titus 2:13 "Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the Great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

14. Resurrection of all that are in the grave:

John 5:28-29 "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth ..."

15. Hope as an anchor:

Heb. 6:19 "Which hope we have as and anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast,".

16. Death because of Sin:

Heb. 9:27 "It is appointed unto man once to die, but after this the judgment."

III. God has provided that certain attitudes, actions, ideas, or principles will result in a corresponding consequence or result.

A. Matt. 5:45 "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust."

1. God blesses both sinner and saint by sending rain on both. This is a natural law provided for by the providence of God.
 2. The lesson here is: We can be an imitator of God by doing good to both good and evil people.
- B. II Cor. 9:6-11 "But this I say, **He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.** Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: (As it is written, he hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: his righteousness remaineth for ever. Now he that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;) being enriched in every thing to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God."
- C. Gal. 5:9 "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." (cf. I Cor. 5:6)
- D. Gal. 6:7 "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for **whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.**"
- E. I Tim. 6:9-10 "But they that will be rich **fall into temptation and a snare,** and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."
- F. I Peter 3:10 "For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile."
- G. Illustrate this principle: Hear a denominational preacher explain a difficult passage of scripture. Gain knowledge from the same, would I say this was divinely arranged that I might hear and learn or the consequence of being religious minded and listening to a religious speaker as opposed to rock, or country music.
- IV. God has made certain promises and declarations in his word which are kept or fulfilled by divine intervention into the natural affairs of mortal men.
- A. God has promised to hear and answer prayer.
1. James 5:16 "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."
 2. I Peter 3:12 "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers."
 3. Matt. 7:7-11 "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?"
 4. I John 3:22 "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight."

5. I John 5:14-15 "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us; and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."

6. This passage answers the question: "How do we know God has answered our request?" We have confidence and trust. No absolute way of knowing. This is the same kind of trust we have in the blood of Jesus to ever avail for the forgiveness of sins or that in baptism God gave us the remission of sins according to promise.

7. James 1:5 "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

Upbraideth: will not blame, disgrace or discredit - will never make one ashamed for asking.

8. Col. 4:3-4 "Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak."

Here is a definite indication of God's intervention for the furtherance of the gospel in answer to the prayers of the Colossians.

9. II Thess. 3:1-2 "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you: and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith."

10. I Tim. 2:1-2 "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."

- B. God has told us through His word that He is in control of civil powers:

1. Rom. 13:1-7 "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For for this cause pay we tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour."

2. I Peter 2:14 "Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well."

- C. God has promised to send a strong delusion upon them who despise the truth.

- II Thess. 2:11-12 "And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

- D. As a loving father, God has promised to comfort us in time of trouble.

1. II Cor. 1:3-5 "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ."
 2. Heb. 13:5-6 "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."
 3. I Peter 5:7 "Casting your care upon him for he careth for you."
 4. Rom. 8:31 "If God be for us who can be against us."
 5. Heb. 4:16 "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."
- E. God has promised to give grace unto the humble, draw near to those who draw near to him and resist the proud. James 4:10 "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."
- F. God has promised chastisement for those whom he loves and scourging for every son whom he receiveth.
1. Heb. 12:6 "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."
 2. This promise was made in the context of difficulties and persecutions which were coming upon the Hebrew Christians. It seems here that because God allowed the suffering, the Hebrew writer accounted it as chastisement which in the long run would prove beneficial to the Hebrew Christians.
- G. The subject of death and divine providence demands some specific attention.
1. Death can be attributed to God in the context of various situations:
 - a. God has the power to cause any human being to die. Cases in point: Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11), and the rich farmer of Luke 12:20.
 - b. God, which cannot lie, has promised death as a consequence of sin. "In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." "In Adam all die." "It is appointed unto man once to die."
 2. God took the children (or allowed them to be taken) of Job to satisfy the purpose of Heaven.
 3. What Christian will deny that some who were seriously ill were spared for a time and as a result of the prayers of the faithful?
 4. James 4:15 "For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this or that."
- To learn this truth is to recognize our total dependence upon God, that His will must be done regardless of our own desires. All that we are or ever hope to be is subject to the will of God!
5. Summary concerning God and death:
 - a. God has the power! to bring death upon any person.
 - b. God has the right! Man sinned and not God and in spite of the promise of death.
 - c. God does not view death as we do, Ps. 116:15, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."

REPENTANCE

by Allen Bailey

INTRODUCTION

I appreciate the opportunity to present this study on the subject of **Repentance**. When this topic was assigned to me, I was asked to consider the following questions:

1. Why do Christians often fail to genuinely change their mind in response to the preaching of God's word? (Why is it that people repent or at least seem to repent and then return to their sinful ways?)
2. What is godly sorrow? How is it produced?
3. What should we be preaching about repentance?
4. What should we be preaching to bring about true repentance?

This is a serious topic because "True Repentance" is the difference between going to Heaven or going to Hell. As we begin this lesson we need to consider the fact that **repentance needs to be preached!** When was the last time as a gospel preacher or congregational teacher, did you preach on repentance? When was the last time you tried, one on one, to get someone to repent of their sins? How many sermons do you have that stress the real importance of repentance?

Repentance Defined

Thayer defines repentance on page 405: "to change one's mind, i.e. to repent (Jonah 3:9) ... to change one mind for the better, heartily to amend with abhorrence of one's past sins."

W. E. Vine defines it as "to change one's mind or purpose, involves a change for the better."

Repentance requires sorrow for offences committed against God which "results in outward turning from sin" Baker's Dictionary of Theology, p. 444.

Repentance is "a turning away from evil" (Goetzmann Dictionary N. I. Theology, Vol. 1, p. 358).

Repentance is defined as "to feel sorry or self-reproachful for what one has done or failed to do." "To feel such regret or dissatisfaction over some past action, intention, etc. as to change one's mind about" (Webster New World Dictionary, p. 1205).

In consideration of these definitions, please understand that repentance is not merely to change your ways, but it is a change of **mind** for the better. Obviously, when a person changes their mind for the better their ways should also improve. Repentance affects the whole man. It is not merely a substitution of one set of external actions and observances for another, but an inward turning, a recognition and disavowal of one's sin coupled with the embracing of a new way of life. A life changed by "true repentance" will undoubtedly be a life in conformity with the teaching of Christ, a life characterized by **fruit meet for repentance** (Matt. 3:8; Luke 3:8; Acts 26:20).

To suggest that "repent," that is, "a change of mind" will exhaust the meaning of the term is a serious error. That would not even necessarily demand sorrow because one can

have a change of mind from motives other than from sorrow. Any serious student of the New Testament knows that word meanings are often expanded by general usage and contextual considerations. New Testament scholars are virtually of one voice in affirming that "true repentance" involves a change of conduct in addition to sorrow for sin.

God Wants Us To Repent

The mercy of God in giving repentance or leading men to repentance is clearly set forth in the scriptures. Consider the following verses:

Acts 5:31, "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins."

Acts 11:18, "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."

Rom. 2:4, "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repent."

11 Tim. 2:25, "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of truth."

In the New Testament, repentance chiefly has reference to repentance from sin, and this change of mind involves both a turning from sin and a turning to God. God truly wants us to change our mind and change our ways when we have been following the ways of Satan. God wants us to Truly Repent.

One outstanding illustration of true repentance as God wants is found in Luke 15: the case of the "Prodigal Son." This young man chose to leave his father's house and go live a life of sin. Luke 15:17-19 records this man's change of mind and change of actions: "And when he came to himself, he said, how many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants."

This quality of repentance completely turns their back, 100% on the ways of the world and turns back to the father's house. In this illustration, the father represents God, and their is joy when one of God's children repents. "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance." (Luke 15:7).

Men Of All Ages Preached Repentance

We have just noticed how that God wants us to repent, and we consider the parable of Jesus illustrating what God expects of the one in sin and how graciously the father welcomes the penitent home. Now we shall consider the various cases in the New Testament where different ones have presented the message of repentance.

John The Baptist: Matt. 3:1-2, "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." In verse eight he encourages that they "bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance."

Jesus Christ: Matt. 4:7, "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Mark 1:14-15, "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God. And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." Matt. 9:13, "But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

The Twelve Apostles: Mark 6:12, "And they went out, and preached that men should repent." (compare the context in verses 7-13).

Paul at Athens: Acts 17:30, "And the times of this ignorance God winked at, but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent."

Paul's address to Ephesian Elders: Acts 20:21, "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

Peter at Pentecost: Acts 2:38, "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Peter at Solomon's Porch: Acts 3:19, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that yours sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."

Peter to Simon the Sorcerer: Acts 8:20-22, "But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God: Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee."

Peter's Second Epistle: II Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

Rich man declares need of repentance: Luke 16:30, "And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent."

All Have Sinned

The scriptures teach that we all have sinned. Rom. 3:23, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Due to this noted fact, God wants, and commands that we all repent. II Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

The step of repentance is so important that Jesus said "I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Luke 13:8).

If a person fails or refuses to repent and dies in their sins, listen to what Jesus says: "Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come." (John 8:21). It seems that often times when sin is present in someone's life, they will do everything in the world to get out of having to repent. Techniques used have been (1) denying the reality of sin, (2) some deny their own guilt (lie), (3) some try to cover their sin up, and (4) some try to justify their sin by blaming others.

The fact of the matter is, when we sin, we should face it, and truly repent, that is change our mind and actions regarding that particular sin in our life. There is no need to deny the sin exist, cover it up, or blame others because when all is said and done the sin still remains. When sin is present, the Christian thing to do is to genuinely repent of that sin.

What Is Godly Sorrow?

"For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season. Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death." (II Cor. 7:8-10, also cf. context in verses 2-16).

In the first epistle which Paul sent to Corinth, he felt it necessary to reprove them for their dissension and other disorders which had occurred and which were tolerated in the church. It was painful to him to write it, and he was aware that it must cause deep distress among them to be thus reprov'd. Paul said, "I do not repent." I have seen such happy effects produced by it; it has so completely answered the end which I had in view; it was so kindly received, that I do not regret now that I wrote it.

This verse was difficult to understand, because Paul first said "I do not repent," then he said "though I did repent." It seems after consulting Lexicons, Dictionaries, Commentaries, and Translations that what Paul probably was saying is: Now that I see the favorable results of the first letter I sent to you, I do not repent or regret it, although at first I did repent (regret) it because I knew it would cause you much grief and sorrow; even though it was for only a season. I have great reasons to rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that you sorrowed after a godly sort.

Notice verse ten again: "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death." Godly sorrow is sorrowing because of the sins we have committed. Godly sorrow is produced by faith in God, a sorrow that seeks to please God, to turn from sin to God, so leads to salvation. Sorrow for sin, is to see sin as God sees it. When a person is truly sorry he has sinned against God, he will obviously want to repent of his sins. This should never be regretted of, that is the sins we have repented of.

How Is Godly Sorrow Produced?

Godly sorrow is obviously produced when a person realizes their sinful condition and wants to make a change of heart, actions, and behavior. This person changes their mind for the better and now decides to live a godly life, to walk after the spirit, and to maintain the fruit of the Spirit instead of the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:16-26). Godly sorrow is produced from an open, honest, and sincere heart with a true desire to serve God acceptably.

As gospel preachers or congregational teachers who face brethren on a regular basis to break forth the bread of life, we must preach plainly against specific sins of the Bible and make a plea for people to be honest with themselves, others, and more importantly God. The rewards in Heaven offered to the saved should be a motivating factor behind causing godly sorrow to be produced. The horrors of hell should be equally a motivation factor for causing a person to see the dangers of sin, the consequences, and the future, thereby causing godly sorrow to be produced. What caused godly sorrow in one person may not automatically cause it in another, however before godly sorrow will ever be genuinely produced, there must be a receptive heart to submitting yourselves to God in complete obedience. When a person notices and realizes the benefits of godly sorrow it should prompt them to respond favorably. "For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter." (II Cor. 7:11) The result of godly sorrow when comprehended by sincere people ought to cause it to be produced!

Fruit Meet For Repentance

Matt. 3:8 -- "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance."

Luke 3:8 -- "Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."

Acts 26:20 -- "But showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coast of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance."

The expression "fruit meet for repentance" has really been tossed about by some. Consider the definition of the key terms of this phrase from Thayer:

Fruit -- "work, act, deed" (to exhibit deeds agreeing with a change of heart)

Meet -- "befitting, congruous, corresponding to a thing"

Repentance -- "A change of mind, to change ones mind for the better, heartily to amend with abhorrence of one's past sins."

John demanded that corresponding fruit be a part of Jewish repentance according to Matt. 3:8. When the men of Nineveh repented (Matt. 12:41), God saw that "they turn from their evil way." When the Jews on Pentecost were convicted of killing Christ, though "pricked in their heart" they were nevertheless told to repent (Acts 2:37-38). When a person truly repents, they should bring forth work, action, deeds, befitting or corresponding to a change of mind for the better.

Instances Of Repentance

There are several cases in the scriptures where people repented. Their fruit which they produced shows clearly that their repentance was genuine.

The Jews under the preaching of John the Baptist: Matt. 3:1-6

"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, **Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.** For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. And the same John had raiment of camels hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins: and his meat was locusts and wild honey. Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region about Jordan, **and were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sin.**"

Obviously this is a case of true repentance, for the Jews confessed their sins and were baptized.

The parable of the two sons: Matt. 21:28-32

"But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not; **but afterward he repented, and went.** And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir; and went not. Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They said unto him, The first. Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not; but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him."

A clear cut case of genuine repentance. The son who first refused to go work repented (changed his mind for the better, showed fruit meet for repentance by his actions, deeds, and works) and later worked. Whenever we repent, we should make this type of turn about in our life, then produce the deeds to show our sincerity.

The parable of the lost son: Luke 15:17-21

"And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, **Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.** And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. **And the son said unto him,**

Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." (cf. entire context, vs. 11-32)

The younger son chose to leave home and to live a sinful life for years. After a period of time difficulties set in and he lost his friends, his money was gone, he was hungry and he was in a lowly state. He repented! He now repented (changed his mind for the better, produced deeds, actions, and works, that coincided with that repentant heart).

One thought I would like to inject here is that we see clearly that a person can genuinely repent even at the lowest of economical problems or personal problems. Some people often misjudge an others motives for returning, but let us be careful about passing judgment on someone, since we cannot know assuredly what was in their heart.

Why Do People Sometime Repent And Then Return To Their Sinful Ways?

Selfish -- Matt. 19:16-22

"And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions."

This rich young ruler was for a while willing to make whatever changes required of Jesus. He persistently asked: What must I do? What lack I yet? When Jesus finished telling him, he went away sorrowful for he loved his riches. Had he not been so selfish, he could have had a part of the kingdom of Heaven also. He appeared very unwilling to sacrifice his money and to follow Jesus.

Some have not transformed their mind: -- Rom. 12:1-2

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

When a person repents, they should think of different things than they did before their repentance.

Phil. 4:8 "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

The best way I know to get rid of bad or evil thoughts in your mind is to replace them with godly thoughts. Think like God's word teaches us to think.

Some do not know what to do to overcome their weaknesses:

If there was a fornicator, what should that person do? Obviously, quit the sin. We should apply scriptural support to help this person to have the word of God to rely on.

I Cor. 6:18 -- "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body."

I Cor. 6:9-11 -- "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."

We must learn to apply scripture to each temptation the devil puts before us like our Lord did in Matt. 4:1-10. "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." (v. 4). "It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." (v. 7). "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." (v. 10).

Failure to understand how temptation works: James 1:12-16

"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren."

Some flirt around with sin, as if they can handle it:

My dear friend, the only way to deal with sin is to directly:

- (1) Depart from it -- II Tim. 2:19
- (2) Abstain from it -- I Thess. 5:22
- (3) Hate it deeply -- Amos 5:15
- (4) Do not give it refuge -- Eph. 4:27
- (5) Do not allow it to dominate -- Rom. 6:12
- (6) Understand how subtle it is -- II Cor. 2:11
- (7) Overwhelm it with righteousness -- Rom. 12:9
- (8) Have no fellowship with it -- Eph. 5:11

Whenever you repent, you need to make changes in whatever area that your sin was manifest.

Conclusion

In our study on repentance we have discussed the following:

- Defined Repentance
- God want us to repent
- Men of all ages have preached repentance
- Showed that all have sinned
- Defined Godly sorrow and showed how it is produced
- Explained "fruit meet for repentance"
- Giving situations where people repented
- Considered why some repent and then return to their way of sin

It was interesting to me to notice how consistent repentance was taught in the scriptures respecting our salvation.

- Repentance and faith toward God Acts 20:21
- Repent and turn to God Acts 26:20
- Repent and do works meet for repentance Acts 26:20

- Repent and confess their sins Matt. 3:1-12
- Repent and were baptized Matt. 3:1-12
- Repent and be baptized for remission of sins Acts 2:38
- Repent and pray God Acts 8:22

THE CHURCH IN TWENTY YEARS

by J. Wayne McKamie

It does not take a lot of living to learn that nothing stands still for very long. At this moment we are at the portals of another year. Change is a very constant thing. And all changes are not bad. There are some changes that we expect, some that we even hope for. There are some, however, that should never occur.

Tonight we are here to discuss preachers and preaching. We are here to discuss our attitudes and goals, and the future of the Lord's cause on earth; in short we are here to take a long hard look at ourselves.

The Church in twenty years! The very thought is awesome. But think, we must. Prov. 29:18 tells us that where there is no vision, the people perish. We cannot wait to be dragged into the 21st century.

I deliver this lesson with several understandings. I understand that I am neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet. I do not know what the future holds. I understand that we are looking at a constantly changing scene against the backdrop of an unchanging word of God.

There are many constants; for them I am very grateful. Please hear everything I say tonight against the backdrop of Dan. 2:44; Matt. 13, and James 4. God is ever the same. His product, the Word, is ever the same. Clearly stated propositions that can be appropriated by the human intellect are ours for the reading. However, the Word itself demands that we study the signs of our times.

Turning our eyes to these times leaves one dazed. The only constant thing we see is change itself! The field, the world, the hearts, the soils, are factors that we must consider. Without a doubt we are affected by this changing world more than we would like to admit.

The Church in twenty years is going to be affected by the people coming into it. Lets take a look at those who constitute our field in this country.

Minorities Birth Rate:

Puerto Ricans -- 2.1 births per female
Blacks -- 2.4 births per female
Hispanics -- 2.9 births per female

Average Age:

Whites -- 31
Blacks -- 22
Hispanics -- 22

Numbers:

1986 -- 26.5 million Black
14.6 million Hispanics

2020 -- 44 million Blacks
47 million Hispanics

In thirteen years (2000), one of every three you meet will be non-white. This is already true in Texas. I do not see this as a problem; it is a challenge. We need to plan for it. Let us face it. We really have not done much for our minorities in this country. There is so great a need to develop preachers in and for our minority groups.

Another area that will impact our work greatly is the American home. We already wrestle with this problem. We are affected by the times. Twenty years ago divorce among Church members was practically unheard of. Tonight there are few families even here that are untouched by this evil. The serpent's book of death contains the names of many of our own. In the survey I did, losses of up to 48% occur among our young and young to middle age families.

Out of every one hundred children born today, statistics indicate the following:

1. 12 were born out of wedlock.
2. 40 were born to parents who will divorce before the children reach age 18.
3. 5 were born to parents who will separate before they reach 18.
4. 2 were born to parents of whom one will die before the children reach age 18.
5. Only 41 will reach age 18 in what the world calls normal.
6. 59% of the children born in 1983 will live with only one parent before reaching 18. This is now the normal experience.

Further statistics reveal real problems ahead. Among them are:

1. In 1955, 60% of American households had a working father, a housewife mother, and two or more children. In 1980, that unit was found in only 11% of our homes; in 1985 it is found in 7% of our homes.
2. 50% of our women are in the work force. This figure jumps to 70% if women of working age are counted.
3. In 1986 the "typical" family includes any of the following:
 - a. Single parent, male or female, with one or more children.
 - b. A female bread-winner with a child and a live-in husband.
 - c. A previously married couple with a combination of children.

The family, by definition, in 1986 is "a combo of people not related by blood or marriage but by voluntary association."

The most basic building block of society is shifting. Expect this to continue. The Church will not go untouched.

Brethren, the winds of change blow and they blow in gale proportions. In my short time, I have seen us move from agrarian to industrial, from industrial to informational. We are in a new era, like it or not. Technology is turning the world inward upon itself. The global village is here. We are in transition. If there has ever been a time to think, to plan, and set goals, it is now! Who are we? What are we about? Where do we want to go? What do we want to achieve?

The greatest need of the Church today, and twenty years hence is, and will be, leadership. We have people who want to grow, achieve, and do the father's will, but often lack the leadership to get it done. There is a grass roots cry for leadership, for training, for scriptural guidance. Never has leadership been so important. Never have we had a priority so great.

Truth does not assure leadership. While truth provides for it, demands it; we are the ones that must develop it. It is appalling that 59% of our brethren have no plans for developing elders, deacons, preachers; do we not all read from the same Book? The Word demands it! Are we not forced to the conclusion that we either do not know the Word or that we do not really care?

There is indeed a crisis among us: A terrible lack of Biblical knowledge. Hos. 4:6 has never been truer: "My people are destroyed for a lack of knowledge." Isa. 5:13, "My people are gone into captivity because they have no knowledge." Heb. 5:12 is so applicable. There is distinct correlation between the way we live and what we know; between what the leadership of a congregation knows and what is accomplished. We must have leaders who will lead us to accept the destiny of our design (Eph. 3). Leaders whose "senses have been exercised" to sort out what matters from what does not; the sacred from the secular, the primary from the secondary, and growth from change (one is permitted; the other is not). We desperately need men who know, and will lead the Church to know that what this world needs is not a Church bent on social change, soap and soup, fun and food. We need men who will stand in the gap and show the world a city that is set on a hill whose streets are not laced with denominationalism's idols. We need men who will remind the Church that it is not here to amuse a generation of self-seeking egotist.

The winds of change blow brethren, and they blow universally. In Great Britain, for example, several of our leading brethren are greatly concerned about the falling away that they see. They state that many are following doctrines that the Church once condemned. Individual cups (since 1956), the pastor system, women leading in prayer are prevalent. An attitude of "it doesn't matter," "it's up to the individual," and such like prevail. One of their leaders predicts that in twenty years they will have women evangelists, women elders, and that their "Old Paths" movement of 1920 shall have ground to a halt. Influential brethren are silent, the digressive machine rolls; he feels that it is highly unlikely that they can turn it around!

Both at home and abroad we are faced with a monumental task: stop the assimilation trend. It is not going to happen, it is happening! We cannot sit idly by and just watch.

Movements tend toward three distinct stages. There is a beginning stage characterized by ferment urgent evangelism, distinctive people, and great unity. The second is a degeneration of the first. Evangelism drops off, in-camp conflicts rise and power struggles are evident. In the third, evangelism is almost non-existent, the people settle down to Church going; peaceful coexistence is the order of the day, and alliances are made with those who were once opposed. This is assimilation!

Many of our main line digressive brethren, by their own admission, are in the throes of assimilation. Their pulpits are diluted and polluted. Preaching is no longer distinctive, definitive. Their work and worship is being restructured along denominational lines; the spirit of compromise is everywhere; emphasis is on the social and recreational; and entertainment is the order of the day. The digressives are there!

The matter of utmost concern, however, is where are we? I will tell you where we are. We are more like the world than we have ever been! We talk like the world, dress like the world, go to the same places of entertainment; in short, we are, in many instances not only in it; we are it! We are confusing the world. They do not understand why we are trying to change them. They see no difference. We are already like them.

The Church in twenty years? Real problems face us unless we get back to being the distinctive people God intended us to be. A peculiar people, a holy nation; the light and salt. Remember, salt preserves, flavors, stings, and makes people thirsty. May the Lord grant us boldness to emphasize what makes us unique. Let us develop a ruthless honesty. Tell it like it is. The human mind still knows its master's voice. The Word is still living and powerful. It is contemporary. That which is eternal must ever be contemporary.

The mandate is clear. Distinctive people of God preaching a definitive Word. Let the trumpet give its certain sound. The world preaches fiction like its fact while we preach fact like it is fiction. There is a fine line between "what's he talking about," and "who cares what he is talking about." Living in a world that interprets silence as approval

demands that we preach the Word! And, in that we cannot preach what we do not know, we must study.

Skills are not developed by wishing they were ours. Parents may love their children and still lack parenting skills. Doctors may wish to help people and not have the surgical skills. Preachers may love souls if they are unprepared. Little wonder, then, that we are commanded to "study" (II Tim. 2:15); and admonished to become wise master builders (I Cor. 3:10-15). There is a big, ugly, pagan world out there; a few scriptures and the gift of gab is not going to get the job done. Surely none of us feel over gifted tonight!

Facing the future and getting prepared for the 21st century is going to require greater accountability and specificity. We are going to have to demand more of ourselves. We must set demanding standards, and find or develop those who will help us reach them. What can we do? We can pray for laborers to enter the field. We can support preachers who can and will train others. We must support preachers to preach, to go, to train, to write. We must become mature and competent stewards of the grace of God. We seek goodly pearls, hundred-fold fruit. We must not succumb to the tyranny of the second best.

The Church in twenty years? It will depend largely on the people in this room and those like you. Let me drop the mantle of responsibility on you: our people will be about what we teach them to be! Accept it! That is the way it is. God give us some Jeremiahs. Jeremiah grew sick and tired of a wayward people. He was worn out with them. He was tired of preaching to the unrepentant; he was weary of prisons. He decided to no longer speak in His name. Oh, but a fire burned in his bones! He grew weary of forebearing. Preach, he must. May God grant us a double portion of the spirit of this man, a spirit that will ever move us to touch the lives of all men. Lord, open our eyes to catch a vision of the lost legion of this world. There are billions who have never heard! But we have! We are the ones who have heard the joyful sound, we are the ones with the commission, we are the ones with the mandate, we are the debtors. May we grant ourselves no rest or peace until we take the message to every accountable human in every tent, in every house, in every hut, on every street and lane of every city and village, of every country and district of every state of every nation in the entire world!

The following survey was sent out to 337 individuals. Of these, 128 were returned, or 38%.

PLEASE CIRCLE THE MOST APPROPRIATE ANSWER:

1. During what years did the Church in your area experience the most growth?

- a. 1946-60 23%
- b. 1960-70 20%
- c. 1970-80 29%
- d. 1980-86 33%

Many new congregations responded; more evangelistic in new congregations. England - 1839-1920; Bro. Stewart (1929-1939) the war years.

2. Our congregation has grown primarily by:

- a. converting totally new people 31%
- b. converting members' children 43%
- c. converting member's relatives 27%
- d. brethren moving in 23%

3. The number converted by our congregation per year is approximately:

- a. 1-5 84%
- b. 6-10 16%
- c. 11-20 3%
- d. 21+ 0%

4. Most of our converts are the result of:

- a. gospel meetings 20%
- b. home studies 15%
- c. preacher's local work 16%
- d. member's work 53%

5. Our greatest number losses have been:

- a. our elderly 19%
- b. our young people 24%
- c. young to middle-age families 24%
- d. brethren moving 40%

6. For the last 5 years, the Lord's Church in our area has been:

- a. growing 43%
- b. holding its own 41%
- c. decreasing 21%
- d. dead 2%

7. The Church growth rate in our area has been influenced most by:

- a. instability of the family 13%
- b. rising divorce rate 5%
- c. decline in moral values 23%
- d. lack of dedicated Christian workers 70%

8. Our congregation:

- a. has elders and deacons 14%
- b. has no plans for elders and deacons 59%
- c. will soon have elders and deacons 20%

9. In your opinion, where should most of our future work and money be concentrated?

- a. home towns or new areas in home states 49%
- b. in states in USA where no Churches exist 23%
- c. key population centers in world 13%
- c. foreign fields 26%

10. Over the last 15 years, our preachers quality of preaching has:

- a. improved greatly 47% (improved in ability; more liberal)
- b. declined 18%
- c. became more conservative 4%
- d. became more liberal 20%

11. The greatest problem facing the Church today is:

- a. lack of knowledge and training 32%
- b. little emphasis on evangelism 7%
- c. apathy 53%
- d. materialism 27%

12. In order to be an effective force in the 21st century, we need to begin preparing now by: (Various answers, but basically leadership and training).