

SEARCHING *The* SCRIPTURES

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



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

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WHO MAKETH THE DUMB?

Jas. P. Miller

In the long ago Moses stood before the Lord and issued this complaint: "And Moses said unto the Lord, O, my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou has spoken unto thy servant; but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. And the Lord said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the Lord?" (Exodus 4:10,11). Needless to state, the Lord did not accept this excuse on the part of Moses. I marvel that we have so many brethren today that must be afflicted with the same trouble. Indeed, they are now slow of speech.

In the middle and late 30's and early 40's, the great men of the church cried aloud against many of the very dangers that now confront the church. To be specific: many said we will never agree to the putting of colleges teaching secular subjects in the budget of the churches. They were sure that this was wrong and a violation of the word of God.

They were not slow of speech then. Why are they so slow of speech now? Is it possible that it was popular to be against the so-called "college question" then and that it is not popular today? Or could it be that the powers that exist in the church are too great for them to oppose? Perhaps they are afraid of being called "anti" or some other distasteful term. One fact remains, if it was right for them to speak then, it is right for them to speak now; and if it was wrong to have the church pay the bill for the colleges then, it is still wrong today. The truth of God's word has not changed and will not change. They need to speak as they once spoke.

Again, a few years ago brethren were against the church entering the recreation field. They were positive that it was wrong to build and maintain facilities for social pleasure in the meeting houses and from the treasure of the churches. Now many of the greatest congregations in the land are openly active in these things. Halls are constructed for the pleasure of the brethren and are called by the nature of their use: Recreation Hall, Fellowship Hall, etc. and yet, no word from many brethren. We are led to inquire, has the truth changed on these matters? Was it wrong twenty years ago and right now? What has happened to the mission of the church that she no longer has only spiritual objectives? Why are the very men who pointed this out as one of the dangers to the church so slow of speech today? Is it possible that

they are afraid of the truly "liberal" element which may be leading the march in our time?

One of the great truths that the champions of Zion stood for only yesterday was that both sides of all matters had a right to be heard, and that the truth could stand any investigation. Open invitations were made to men of all faiths to test their beliefs in the light of what was written. True, some brethren were called "fighters" even then, but it was a proud designation. Time and time again the battle was joined with error on every side and the victory was in the power of truth. Was this right yesterday and wrong today? Is it possible that the truth could defend itself a few short days ago, but is now helpless? Papers published by brethren that for generations had opened their pages to men of opposite views suddenly dropped curtains on their columns and gave the readers only one side of the issues. Thousands of brethren know this is not right, and a decade ago said so in no uncertain terms. Why today are they so slow of speech? All agree that with only one side of any matter heard, the destiny of the church can be no better than the human wisdom that decides which side is to be heard. This has been the practice of the sects for centuries, but we have a right to expect something better for the people of God. These men who cried out for full discussions yesterday cannot even give the plea of Moses who said, "I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoke unto thy servant." They affirmed themselves to be the spokesman of God a short while ago. Is it possible they do not have the same revelation now that they had then? If it is the same, then why are they so slow of speech?

Where are the voices we used to hear on the all-sufficiency of the church? Where are they who said that God's blood-bought body was complete and needed nothing. Where are the men who boldly affirmed that the church was its own missionary society and could do the work without any added human arrangement. Where are the men who fought against attaching arms and legs of human organizations unfounded in the revelation of the Almighty to the holy body of the Son of God that would make it exactly like the denominations round about? Why are these voices still? One thing is sure, these men did not so "learn Christ."

All knew that a new force made up of men who had not tasted the fires of controversy was being formed in the church of the Lord. Men who, for the greater part, had been in the minority when these voices of yesterday were heard are the ones leading the march today. The "would still be in the minority today if good men who were God's spokesmen yesterday were not now so slow of speech.

DEPARTURES FROM THE FAITH

No. II C. L. McLean,

Romulus, Michigan

In the first article in this series, it was pointed out that both Christ and His apostles taught that departures from the faith would come. In I John 4:1 the apostle John said, "Beloved believe not every spirit but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."

In our discussion of the theme, it is not our purpose to arouse prejudice or to incite hatred of any kind. The word of God tells us God hates every false way (Ps. 119:104). I believe this ought to be the attitude of every child of God as it was the attitude of the writer of Psalms. But remember while God hates every false way, He loves the souls of men and women and desires the salvation of the soul of every individual. For in II Pet. 3:9 we read, "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." It is because of the fact that God wants all saved that we study this theme and because we like God are interested in the souls of men and women in religious error. Only the truth of God will make us free (John 8:32).

In our study of the theme in this article we wish to call attention to Paul's teaching in II Thess. 2:3, "let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition." In these words Paul declares that Christ's second coming would not be until there be a falling away. He further teaches that when the falling away would take place that *THE MAN OF SIN* would be revealed. And verse 4 further states that the man of sin would shew himself forth as God.

Departures from the faith have almost always stemmed from man's willingness to set aside **BIBLICAL AUTHORITY** for their practices in religion and replace a **THUS SAITH THE LORD** with their own opinions and traditions. Many of the departures that have disrupted the true bride of Christ have come from setting aside God's revealed truth on the subject of Church Government. Those who have a knowledge of the truth know the church of Jesus Christ is congregational in government (Acts 14:23, Phil. 1:1-2, Acts 20:17, I Pet. 5:1-2). The local congregations were independent of each other, each having its own elders, each being a unit within itself. In the New Testament there were no synods, associations, conventions, or confederations. There were no **ORGANIZATIONS** larger or smaller or other than the local congregations in the New Testament History of the Church. In our next article we plan to deal with some departures from the simple plan of organization revealed in God's word for His church.

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EDITORS

H. E. Phillips
P. O. Box 9095
Tampa 4, Florida

James P. Miller
2523 W. Diana
Tampa, Florida

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Editorial H. E. PHILLIPS

We are nearing the end of the first year of **SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES**. We have had a steady growth from the first issue. Several who have been receiving this paper have done so through the generosity of a friend or relative. It is time to think of subscribing for the second year. You could spend your money in no better way than to purchase good reading material which will help to make better servants in the kingdom of God. Why not send \$2.00 now with your name and address and receive this paper for a full 12 months?

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We have received a few letters requesting that this paper not be sent to their homes. We will, of course, honor such requests because we do not want to waste time and effort where it will do no good. There are always some who do not want to hear and learn the truth on many subjects. It seems to be their opinion that if they do not read what they disagree with, all will be well with them and no one else will learn the truth. A well informed person on all matters will be far better able to judge what truth is and what error is. We are living in an age of deception. Even the religious bodies of our day are more and more closing their ears to what God has said and refusing to hear or read what does not agree with their present beliefs. How can one be sure he is right if he will not learn? We are not asking people to believe what they read in this or any other religious

journal without comparing it with the word of God. We are asking that you read what is written in these pages and judge it with the Bible. If right, accept it and obey it; if wrong, reject it and try to teach us the truth.

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THE ELDER AND HIS ONE CHILD

Jimmy Tuten, Jr., Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

From time to time the question of the number of children God requires an elder to have, keeps coming to the forefront. This is an indication that the minds of some brethren are not settled on this important subject. It shows that it is also a subject that needs more attention than it has been getting in some quarters.

This writer feels that he is one among a number of faithful brethren who would like to see this subject given a serious and exhaustive study by some of our able brethren who are preaching the gospel of Christ. He would like to see the conclusions of such a study presented through the medium of such fine periodicals as SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES. This writer does not concur with the conclusion that "enough has been said on the subject to convince the brother who is studying seriously the qualifications for an elder." If this conclusion be correct, then why all the questions from time to time relating to this subject? It is very common to hear the question coming up at the various gatherings where Gospel preachers are assembled and the way some brethren act when the subject is brought up, you would think they were either afraid to speak out on the subject or do not want to go against "our traditional view".

This writer is certain that there are many who are much more capable of handling this subject and for this reason does not present this material dogmatically. The Bible teaches us to "Search the scriptures" and to "hold fast to that which is good" (I Thess. 5:21). The mark of a true inquirer is an open mind for "knowledge advances by steps, and not by leaps" (Macaulay).

It is the conviction of this writer, after having investigated the subject to the best of his ability, that an elder must have a plurality of children. In offering reasons for such a conclusion, he does not claim originality nor to present any new material on the subject. His conclusions are based on what he has learned and gleaned from others.

The Apostle Paul tells us that "a man" who desires the office of the bishop, must meet the qualifications laid down in the inspired Word. Those qualifications are found in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9. "Must" is a translation of "dei" and means "It is necessary, there is a need of it, it behooves, is right and proper" (Thayer). One of the qualifications that is necessary for a man to have in order to qualify for the office of a bishop, is "faithful children" (I Tim. 3:4; Tit. 1:6). In both passages, "children" is a translation of "tekna". The question before us is this: will "tekna" admit the singular at all? We know that "teknon" as found in I Timothy 3:12 can be translated singular or plural. But, will "tekna" allow a singular translation? Before this writer are several letters written to various scholars, seeking the answer to the question stated above, i.e., "will 'Tekna' admit the singular?". The scholars answered according to their scholarship, each agreeing that "tekna" could not be satisfied with the singular. Such answers as: "'Tekna' is undeniably plural, not singular", "'Tekna' can only be plural", and "'a' is the plural ending, 'on' is the singular ending. In this passage I fail to see any problem", were received. The conclusion of these letters is this: "Tekna" will not admit the singular. It is neither general nor generic. Hence, an elder must have a plurality of children.

Let us also note that "man" in our text (I Tim. 3:1), is restricted by the context to masculine gender and is not "generic" in meaning. There are passages in which "man" is generic in its masculine construction and an example of this is found in John 3:3-5. This is not the case in the verse under discussion. Because of this, many attempts to bring up parallel statements to show that an elder can have one child, fail. We often hear such statements as, "parents who have children attending the grammar school, please stand". This is suppose to show that an elder can have one child. However, it is not parallel for plural parents demand plural children in such sentence construction. The text says "If a man" (Singular), desire the office of a bishop he must have his "children" (tekna, plural) in subjection. Notice the plural "deacons" in I Timothy 3:12 demands plural children, but here "children" is a translation of "teknon" which can be translated singular or plural.

Since "tekna" is specifically plural and is used with the singular "man", the writer sees no basis for concluding that an elder can have one child. If he can have one child or more, then why did not the Holy Spirit choose the generic term "teknon" to indicate this? It seems that the answer is evident since the Holy Spirit used "tekna" which can never be translated singular. God wants the elder to have a plurality of children. Looking at it from a human standpoint, we know that a man with one child does not have the opportunity to demonstrate his ability to keep peace and harmony in his home as would the man with a plurality of children.

Invariably, in a discussion of this nature, a number of other passages are brought up. The writer fails to see how this helps our study of I Timothy 3:4 and Titus 1:6. Its definition and use in this passage is the thing of interest since these are the passages that are constantly under fire. In my desire to know the meaning of baptism in Mark 16, I do not go to such passages as Colossians 2:12. I conclude that baptism is a "burial" in this passage due to the definition of

the word found there. So it is with "tekna". Since it is plural I must contend that an elder MUST have more than one child.

I feel that the safe course is for a man to have a plurality of children if he desires the office of a bishop. In the spirit of love, let us hear from you.

GOSPEL PRESS, INCORPORATED

Earl Fly, Tampa, Florida

Gospel Press, Incorporated, is an organization composed of a Board of Directors with Chairman, President, Vice-President, etc., with offices in Dallas, Texas and Nashville, Tennessee. Its expressed purpose is to preach the gospel to millions through advertisements in national magazines, tracts and answering inquiries of readers. It has not yet announced that it will send out preachers directly. Alan Bryan is president and Paul Hunton is vice-president. I assume that the salaries of these two preachers are paid by Gospel Press, and I suppose that other preachers will be added as needed.

This missionary organization was conceived in the mind of Ray Tenpenny, an elder at Central Church of Christ, Nashville, Tennessee, and was born in the fall of 1955. (*Nashville Banner*, April 19, 1956, page 11). Its brochure was mailed in January, 1956, to a church for which I preached, stating that "Contributions will NOT be solicited from congregations to Gospel Press." In the February 23, 1956 issue of the *Gospel Advocate* this statement was published: "The Gospel Press is not doing the work of the church, nor is it soliciting or accepting contributions from congregations." This implied that it would be wrong to do so. But recently a complete reversal of this position was made known.

The Belmont Heights church in Tampa received a letter postmarked September 26, 1960, from the Nashville office of Gospel Press, signed by Vice-President Paul Hunton, requesting a contribution from this church to Gospel Press. He stated that "In our fall campaign we are asking every congregation to give the fifth Sunday contribution in October . . ." Upon receipt of this letter the Belmont Heights church authorized and instructed me to write to Paul Hunton asking him the reason for their change, and for Bible authority for church contributions to any missionary organization of human origin. We pointed out that Gospel Press was essentially an exact parallel with the sinful Missionary Society of yesteryear which alienated brethren and divided churches, and therefore we could not support it.

A few days later we received his reply stating that they had "assumed that everyone had read of the revised position of the Board of Directors of the Gospel Press." But he offered no reason for the change. Neither did he quote one scripture or give one Bible reference as authority for churches contributing to and thus working through such a Missionary Organization to preach the gospel. He ignored the fact that Gospel Press is a twin sister to the Missionary Society of yesteryear. He did state that salaries and expenses are paid from individual contributions, as if this makes any difference. He concludes by saying, "I hope this answers your questions and you will encourage the church to send a sizable contribution in October." Actually he did not answer a single question in our letter. I am certain therefore that this church will not support by any size contribution an organization which exists without God's authority or approval.

Will the advocates of the resurrected Missionary Society concept in the form of Gospel Press attempt to defend it by the Bible? Thus far we only have the word of *vice-president* Paul, not the *apostle* Paul or any other apostle. Here is the defense given in *Christian Chronicle*: "Why is it that we as people apparently have to fumble and bumble, quarrel and fuss, sit and 'fiddle around' while the purveyors of error launch out with staggering campaigns to convince the rank and file of our nation?" (October 21, 1960). The editorial then refers to the efforts of the Knights of Columbus, and comments that we are "fiddling while souls of men burn." But where is the Bible verse that authorizes it?

What will the host of brethren do who have tried to justify other human organizations while rejecting the Missionary Society? Will they become men-pleasers by revising and reversing positions and arguments to defend the thing they once fought? Will preaching be changed to conform to the new practice? Will some of the more conservatives sit silently by until their shocked consciences can be retrained to accept the new "on the march" program? Will the *Gospel Advocate* and other publications which rejected and fought the Missionary Society now condemn this similar organization? Will brethren who have been contending that "the church is its own missionary society but not its own home" now fight the Gospel Press? Will they actually become "anti-missionary-society"? Or will they apologize to the Christian Church for fighting it in the past? The significant answers to these questions will be answered by future history.

Brethren, the foundation principle adopted by many that the church may contribute to and thus work through a human organization to do its work will allow *ANY ORGANIZATION* to do good works for the church. It will not only allow Benevolent Organizations and Gospel Press, but also Hospitals, Medical Clinics, Hotels for strangers, Publication Society, National Building Corporation to construct church buildings, Architectural Firms to draw the plans, Loan Associations to supply the money, Food Processing Organization to supply food for the hungry, etc., *all supported by church contributions*. If the principle allows one it allows all.

We are living in perilous times for the church. Human reasoning, worldly wisdom and the fathers' traditions are becoming substitutes for God's word. The dark, ominous clouds of another major apostasy are clearly visible and rapidly approaching. We are witnessing the begetting and conception of another denomination, and soon history will reveal its tragic birth and digressive growth. Churches are already being divided and thousands will be lost, all because man's wisdom has replaced God's book. Even some preachers will be castaways after having preached to others, as they deceive and become deceived by good words and fair speeches. It is the greatest tragedy of our generation.

Brethren, we still need Bible authority for all we preach and practice (Col. 3:17). We must continue to abide in I the doctrine of Christ, and we dare not bid God speed to those who do otherwise (II John 9-11). We must walk, not by sight, but by the faith which comes by hearing God's word (II Cor. 5:7, Rom. 10:17). We must not defile the temple of God, whether in worship, doctrine, name, work, organization or manner of life, lest God destroy us (I Cor. 3:17). The scriptures of God are able to make us perfect! and they furnish us unto every good work (II Tim. 3:16,17). In apostolic days the church was all-sufficient to preach to I the lost, care for its needy and edify its members without contributing one cent to any human organization of man's wisdom. It still is sufficient! *It is God's organization to do*

God's work in God's way. Let us all be content to walk in the old paths wherein is salvation.

DO YOU BELIEVE IN THE ALL SUFFICIENCY OF THE BIBLE, THE CHURCH ?

J. Frank Ingram, Pensacola, Florida

In searching the scriptures, your writer has found that the Bible teaches, God has granted unto us (his people) *ALL* things that pertain unto life and godliness (II Pet. 1:3). It further teaches that *ALL* (every) scripture inspired of God is profitable for teaching (to remove ignorance), for reproof (to remove doubt by bringing sufficient evidence), for correction (to set aright from a droopy position), for instruction which is in righteousness (led from an immature state to maturity), that the man of God may be complete (or to the end that one may become whole, complete, or the perfect man of God) (II Tim. 3:16,17). These men spake not the will of man but of God as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (II Pet. 1:21). To God's infallible word, I now direct your attention.

The scriptures teach that there will be those among the flock who will arise, speaking perverse things, bringing in their heresies, doctrines to draw away disciples after them and not after Christ our Lord (Matt. 7:15-20; Acts 20:28-31). We have many in the body of Christ, who at one time were faithful to the word, but no longer; who have risen to the point that as gods they are legislating and dictating things not in God's word, hence dividing the church, setting brother against brother. My faith is not in these men but in God. Many are dictating through their destructive papers vicious lies and attacks built more upon here say than fact. God will judge them all. Jealousy and envy are playing a prominent part in their attitudes and conduct. They are jockeying for a prominent position among men rather than becoming humble servants of God. It is setting the church of our Lord back at least 100 years.

It is my firm conviction that Jesus Christ is to be *THE HEAD* over *ALL* things to the church (Eph. 1:22; Matt. 28:18). He sent the Holy Spirit to guide and direct the church in *ALL* things pleasing to Him (John 14, 16). While Jesus was here the members of his fleshly body were subject to His will, therefore helping Him to do His work. I cannot picture my Lord shifting his personal responsibility to someone else even when extremely tired, can you? Little influence he would have had, if he did. The Lord built and purchased the church and gave her a work to do. To do this efficiently, he gave the doctrine to govern the church, and to help men become qualified elders (bishops to oversee this work on a congregational basis. Not by districts, states, or countries, but through the congregation over which they (the elders) have the oversight. When this is done the pattern of God is followed and He is glorified. When elders oversee the work where they are bishops doing God's work, they are developing God's children in God's way. When they shift this work to someone else or some human institution, they reflect upon God's wisdom and weaken the body of Christ where they have the oversight. Put one of your hands in your pocket and shift the work to the other and the one in the pocket will shrink and become extremely weak. To be strong it needs to be used and exercised. So with the elders of any congrega-

tion, they have the responsibility to develop, encourage, and strengthen the church where they are in doing the Lord's work rather than shifting it to someone else. I charge the church of the Lord today with doing this very thing, **SHIFTING RESPONSIBILITY.**

Christian Schools, homes for the homeless, hospitals, social functions and recreational activities are fine in their place. Schools are not the work of the church. The church is charged with being the pillar and ground of truth (I Tim. 3:15). In the beginning of the early church servants (deacons) were appointed to look after the needy of the Lord's people that it would not reflect upon the church and God's work. Paul teaches first that man is to take care of his own that the church may not be burdened with such matters. We need to do more teaching on this matter than we have. Of course, until this is done we may have to assist them, but in the times we are now living there are an exceptional few which should be the permanent charge of the church. As to homeless children (I believe in helping them and the aged), I have helped many to find homes and have a standing list of those who want them. Here then, are homes already existing with open arms to take them in without establishing organizations, at great cost, that call themselves homes. We ought to be happy that we do not have many dire cases around us. We stand ready where I labor to assist when these emergencies arise (that's the only scriptural cases you'll find in the Bible) but because we do not do it every day doesn't mean that we do not believe in benevolence. As a father, I am to provide for my children, but that doesn't mean I have to do something to prove I will. Why certainly not. When the time arises I'll help them and so will you. So it is with the work of each congregation. Hospitals are fine, but they do not come under the work of the church. Some are now trying to build a Church of Christ Hospital out in the West, and they will. See what I mean? Once you have set aside the word of God there is no stopping place. I'm also afraid of the trends of these Bible camps. It was said by a preacher, one of the counselors, near us at a camp, "Boy, these camps are just the thing. Get these children away from their parents and you can really baptize them." Some seven and eight years old. Then there are the progressives who are allowing space and adding space for parties, etc. at the places of worship. It's the social gospel today rather than the Gospel of Christ. The Lord's money has been given to do the Lord's work and provide a place to do it and worship God in Spirit. Can you picture God allowing under the old law things brought into the tabernacle or temple of God that many are bringing in today? Wedding and baby showers, birthday parties, suppers, pool tables, etc. One is social and the other (worship) is of and to God. It was sanctified unto God for his service. Today our buildings (although not holy) were erected for the purpose of worshipping and serving God but this is destroyed when the social activities of the home are brought into it. Why have our homes at all? Sell them and move into the church building. Now I realize the building isn't holy, **BUT** for what purpose was it built and whose money was it erected with? If for no other reason, it is not expedient to associate spiritual functions with the social. When we do we become like the denominations about us. I believe in social functions and enjoy them as long as they are not looked upon as a work of the church. There are some things I do as a child of God which is placed upon me as such.

There is more to Christianity than Hearing, Believing, Repenting, Confessing and being Baptized into Christ. Peter said to grow in grace and in knowledge (I Pet. 3:18). This cannot be done by ignoring or shifting responsibility to

others. Centralization of authority and work is going to destroy the local congregations because they are turning over to others what God commands them to do in their own sphere. No church has- a right to exist as the church of our Lord when they go beyond the All sufficient organization of the local congregation. ONLY when an emergency arose in other congregations did others send to the elders of that (the congregation in need) congregation, who in knowing the flock could rightfully distribute to those in need.

Yes, I am diametrically opposed to any organization that would drain the finances of a local congregation thus hindering it from doing the work of the Lord under its God given elders. Let each congregation do its work to the best of its ability (it may be little or it may be much) and then when a situation arises beyond its control, out of the ordinary, let others assist her.

I wish it were possible to either ignore the trends today or go along with them, which is the easy way, but I can't. My conscience in view of God's word will not permit me to do so. Brethren, somebody is wrong and I hope those who are will wake up before it's too late. I commend you to God and his word.

"I WILL LOVE THEE"

Wilbur Hunt, Palmetto, Fla.

In Psalm eighteen, David expresses his thanks to and praises of God because of God helping, saving, delivering, and blessing him. The psalm begins with the following three verses. "I will love thee, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer: my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies".

Later, in verses 30 to 33, he says these words. "As for God his way is perfect: the word of the Lord is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him. For who is God save the Lord? or who is a rock save our God? It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect".

What lessons can a Christian learn from these six verses so as to glorify and serve God better? First of all, God is the true and sole Source of strength, safety protection, and salvation or deliverance based on His tested and all-sufficient Word. Paul, in Philippians 4:13, says that "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me". This should be the attitude of each Christian.

Second, trust in God is a personal matter. This is seen in the personal pronouns. "I" appears four times. "My" appears ten times, the tenth time in verse 32 along with "me". God is interested in the welfare of each individual person, and desires the salvation of each person. Christ died for each person. However, it is up to each person to decide whether to trust and obey God or not. Joshua, in Joshua 24:15, left it up to each person to decide between God and the pagan gods, and expressed his choice in these words: "but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord". The goodness and wrath of God should prompt each person to desire to know, serve, and obey God in faith, truth, and sincerity in accordance to what God has revealed in His word.

Finally, there are things we must do. One thing in loving God and His word. A second thing is realizing one's personal need for God, and what God can do for one if given a chance. Third, there is calling upon God in prayer for help, guidance, and so on. However, it is all summed up

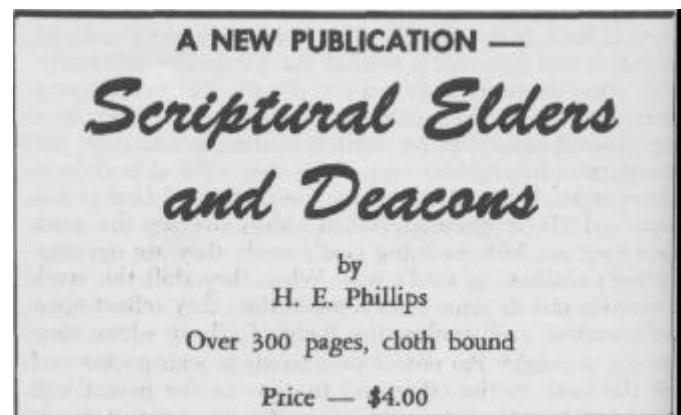
in obedience and faithfulness to God and His word so as to enjoy His blessings and escape His wrath. In view of these things, let us love, trust, serve, and glorify God better than we have done in the past in truth and sincerity.

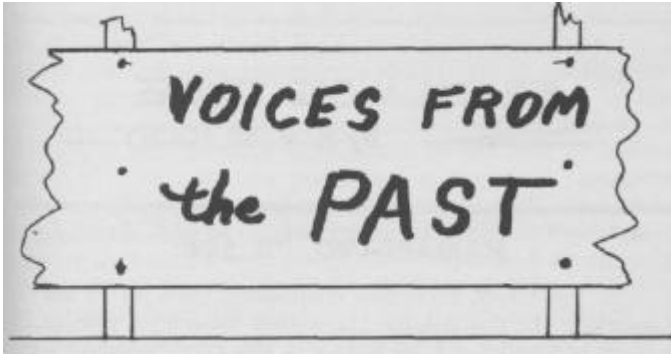


Some who would discredit the Bible point to the science of geology and ask, "What about the differences between geologist and the Bible?" The geologists are concerned with details as to the origin of the earth. They must begin with one of several hypotheses. Some have considered the origin in light of the planetesimal hypothesis; that the earth originated from a grouping of particles ejected from the sun under the influence of a passing star. Some accept the gas-nebula hypothesis. This begins with an earth about the size of the present one but composed of gas with a temperature of at least 3,000 degrees centigrade. This mass cooled, the water vapor condensed and the water cycle between clouds and oceans began to produce weathering, soils and sediments. A more recent hypothesis is that of a unitary beginning for the entire universe due to an explosive radiation from an area in space by which suns and planets were formed suddenly by this activity.

There are other hypotheses as to the origin of the earth and of our universe. What can we say of these? We can see them for what they are; guesses—notion—the products of the minds of men. Man has always sought to know the unknown yet he has never discovered all truth. Man must strive to learn but by the same token man must realize that because a conclusion has been reached it is not necessarily the correct conclusion. Man was not present when God created the heaven and the earth. God did not explain in detail steps how this creation was performed. When I read the many and varied explanations of men as to the beginning of the world I am reminded of the question the Creator puts to Job in Job 38:4, "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou has understanding."

Today there are many without this understanding who attempt to answer this question and convince others that they have the answer. We are aware that investigation is necessary and good but "beware of science falsely so called."





THEY ARE DOING IT NOW

Ward Hogland, Fort Smith, Arkansas

(The following article appeared in the *Gospel Guardian* of September 14, 1960, page 4. Brother Ward Hogland wrote of some conditions as they appeared in 1950 in the church. Read this and compare ten years later—ED.).

An inquiring member asked an elder of a certain congregation for his authority in allowing certain innovations to creep into the church. His reply was not scriptural but at least he told the truth. He said, "I have no scripture for it but they are doing it now!" The antecedent of the pronoun **THEY** was some other congregations in that vicinity.

I use this to introduce certain trends of digression within the pale of the church. It seems that the opening to the flood gate of digression is predicated simply on some large wealthy congregations allowing an invasion of ungodliness to be made in the church. People today are studying the church instead of the Bible. We need to remember it is not what the church teaches but what the Bible stipulates. It is not what the church practices but what inspiration allows. Paul said, "All scripture is given by inspiration." But the Lord said to the church at Sardis, "I do know thy works that thou hast a name that thou lovest, and art dead" (Rev. 3:1). This proves conclusively that the Bible is our standard and not some church.

Some members and even elders of the church have become drunk on the wine of progress in terms of large numbers. Many today are more concerned about large numbers than in converting some of the half baked members already in the church. Some may be interested in knowing what I mean by a **HALF BAKED MEMBER** and here is my answer. I mean a member of the church who is heard making statements like this: "I don't know just why I am a member of the church of Christ." "I don't see any harm in the instrument in our worship." "I don't see why good Baptists and Methodists won't be saved." "I don't believe in public debates" (disputes). Understand now? I hope so.

The church today has been bombarded with pleas for missionary work. No one is a more ardent believer in missionary work than I am. Some say I don't believe in mission work but I do. A Sabbatarian also accused me of not believing in the Old Testament, but I do. He sought to brand me with this simply because I taught that the prohibitions and inhibitions of the Old Covenant are not binding in this era of the world (Cor. 12:14). Yes, I believe in missionary work but I still contend that the church grows from the inside out and not from the outside in. It has always been my contention to stabilize the members already in the church and the growth will take care of itself. If not why not? This is God's plan. In Acts 2:42 "And they continued

steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship and the breaking of bread, and in prayers." Later "they went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:4).

A child can't jump until it learns to walk. It seems that some congregations have tried to jump the Pacific when they were not capable of rowing across the Mississippi river! How much have we accomplished if we convert people abroad and go into digression at home? But **WAIT!!** I know what you are thinking. You think I am a pessimist and I may be. The Jews thought Jeremiah was when with tears in his eyes he plead for the old paths. I know that we have some who think the church is a million light years from digression. But I happen to know that while some good elders were waving goodbye to their missionaries on the front steps the wolf was that very moment slipping in the back door! This is what Paul had in mind when to the Ephesian elders he said "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—Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with **TEARS**" (Acts 20:28-31).

This brings us to what **THEY** are doing. I offer the following as evidence of digression:

1. **HE MADE A HIT**—Not long ago an elder said, "Our preacher sure has made a hit with the sectarians, they all love him!" This from an elder in the church! The pathetic thing about this is the fact that he was an elder and should have set a Christian example before the flock. He was actually boasting about his preacher's standing and instead of praying over the matter and trying to help the preacher, (I mean "Pastor") he was actually encouraging him in his downward trend. Are gospel preachers really obligated to make a hit with the denominations and their preachers? If so why not sign a peace treaty and approve their false doctrine? Why not join the ministerial alliance? I understand some have!! Why not have a union meeting and really make a hit? Friends it is either right or wrong. If it is right, endorse it. If it is wrong, condemn it with all the force at your command. Did Paul make a hit with the false teachers at Lystra? I think not. They stoned him and carried him out of the city for dead (Acts 14:19). I have yet to find where Paul made a hit with false teachers anywhere. Not long ago an elder of the church told me that he knew Paul condemned false teachers but we couldn't afford to do it now because we are living in a modern age. This sounds more like the statement of an infidel than an elder. If we can't trust Bible examples, to whom shall we go? The very idea of modernizing Christianity! Paul said "Be ye followers of me even as I also am of Christ" (I Cor. 11:1). No, Paul wouldn't have made a very good "pastor" for this congregation. It seems that today churches are demanding pastors instead of preachers. I still believe the Lord expects elders to rule, deacons to serve, members to work, and preachers to **PREACH!!** Some preachers are trying to please the church rather than the Lord. Remember the Lord is the paymaster and not the church. Yes, I know you receive your monthly or weekly check from a congregation but that check isn't a passport to eternal bliss!! You remember that the Lord will pay you for service rendered to himself and not to some congregation. Did Stephen make a hit with the ungodly Libertines and Cyrenians? No. They killed him (Acts 7:60). Did Peter make a hit with the false teachers of Judea? No. They put him in jail (Acts 12:5). Did the Lord make a hit with the religious sects of

his day? No. They crucified him. He scathingly denounced their hypocrisy. He had no words of flattery for their sanctimonious displays and patronized none of their pretensions. I realize the refusal to accept any rule of faith but the Bible incurs the displeasure of the denominational world, but choose ye this day whom ye will serve.

2. THE FELLOWSHIP HALL-While in a meeting in Texas a few weeks ago I learned that a certain church had instituted a fellowship hall in the basement of the church. Out of the church treasury they had purchased ping pong tables, snack bar, and etc. This was all done for the entertainment of the young people. All they need to do now is to take down the name CHURCH OF CHRIST and put up First Christian, and an organ and they have it! If not why not? I am not opposed to entertaining young people. I tried to entertain a fine group not long ago. But I am opposed to doing it out of the church treasury because I have found no scriptural authority for it. I wonder if young Timothy played ping pong in the basement of the church at Lystra to entertain his grandmother, Lois, during the dismal hours of Pagan wars? I wonder too if the church paid for the ping pong balls.

3. THE SOFTBALL LEAGUE-I am not opposed to soft ball. I like it. I indulged in a good game not long ago. But I will question the scripturality of the church owning a team. We hear much today about the church of Christ ball team. If the church can own a ball team could they not own a drug store? Or a nylon factory? All faithful Christians know we must be governed by what the Bible says and not by what it doesn't say. Who and where is the man so blinded he can see no danger here? Let us retain our identity by keeping the church pure.

4. THREE OUT OF FOUR-A young minister in one of the colleges owned by the brethren took an informal survey of other preacher students. This was the result. Approximately three out of four did not believe in public debates (disputes). Three out of four did not believe in a public refutation of false doctrine. Three out of four believed it best to get along with the denominations even at the sacrifice of truth. It might prove interesting for someone to take a formal survey of all preachers and find their attitude on certain matters. The result might be alarming! We need to remember that Paul's preaching incurred the displeasure of the religious sects of his day. He preached the truth with such power that he "Turned the world upside down." Computed by the standards of men Paul was a miserable failure but to the Lord he stood as a tower of strength and as the scriptural giant of his age. I am thankful that all have not bowed the knee to the image of baal. Remember Christian friends it is not what THEY are doing it is what the Lord authorizes. May God help us to forget the religious propaganda and theories of psychology within the pale of the church and remain loyal to God. With the church being bombarded with preachers of this type the battle is going to be bitter and long but with the help of God we should win. We can win!! We will win!!

SCRIPTURAL ELDERS AND DEACONS

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BIBLICAL WORD STUDIES

By E. V. SRYGLEY, JR.

HAMARTANO, "I SIN"

In the Greek Bible the commonest verb for "I sin" is *hamartano*. In this column the author intends to present, in a series of articles, a brief history of this very important verb.

In the present article are presented some thoughts on the etymology of *hamartano*. The etymology is quite uncertain, but the most likely view is that the verb is derived from a privative ("not") plus *meiromai* ("I share in," "I participate in"). Hence, the verb would be derived from *ameiromai*, "I fail to participate in."

On the question of etymology see Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament*, p. 227; Bullinger, *A Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament*, p. 703; Cremer, *Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek*, p. 98.

HOW PEOPLE WERE SAVED

BETWEEN THE CROSS AND PENTECOST

D. W. H. Shelton, Tampa, Florida

"Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace" (Eph. 2:15). "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, triumphing over them in it" (Col. 2:14,15).

Jesus took the law out of the way, not at the very moment he died, but by virtue of the fact that he did die, not only to save people from their sins, but also to fulfill the law (Matt. 5:17,18).

In his death Jesus made atonement for our sins. Peter said he bore our sins upon the cross (I Pet. 2:24). I am sure no one will claim that your sins and mine were removed the very moment he died, we had not been born, but when ones sins are removed, it will be by virtue of the very fact that he did die to save people from their sins (Rom. 5:8).

In Gen. 2 we learn that the creation had been completed, except the woman, Adam has been placed in the garden: "And the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to dress and keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:15-17).

I will leave it to any scholar that this is a much more emphatic statement than either (Eph. 2:15, or Col. 2:14,15). Here God said to Adam *the day* thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die, and yet we know that Adam lived more than 900 years after God made that statement (Gen. 5:3-5). Paul never said once that the day Christ died the law would cease to function and that it would *not* apply to any one after that day, and Jesus said: "Think not that I am come to de-stroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth

pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matt. 5:17,18).

I now call your attention to the system of electing, selecting, or choosing of things, animals and people by the method of casting lots. It was introduced *in*, and used *throughout* the Mosaical dispensation by the God of heaven (Lev. 16:7-10). But not mentioned in the New Testament after the close of that period. The children of Israel were to inherit the land of Canaan by lot according to their tribes, number and names, and everything is specified accordingly (Num. 26:52-65, 32:33, 33:54, 34:13 and Deut. 3:1-19). By lot was their inheritance, as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses, for the nine tribes, and for the half tribe (Joshua 14:2). This method was still being used in Solomon's day for he wrote: "The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord" (Prov. 16:33). "The lot causes contentions to cease, and parteth between the mighty" (Prov. 18:18). We know too that the soldiers cast lots for the Saviour's garment when they crucified Him (Luke 23:34).

The last recorded act of this method is found in the first chapter of Acts where God by lot, chose a successor to Judas the betrayer (Acts 1:21-26). This must have been the last act and close of the law of Moses for the next day, well, at least the next verse is the beginning of the new law (Acts 2:1-47).

This Scripture tells us that 3,000 had their sins removed on Pentecost, so Christ took away their sins and ours when He died on the cross, just as he took the law out of the way, namely: he made provision for both to be done when the proper time had arrived. All Bible students know that Christ's death would have been in vain had he not been raised from the dead (I Cor. 15:12-23, Matt. 5:17-18). Jesus was not made head of the corner until he arose from the dead (Ps. 118:22-24, Acts 3:10-12, Rom. 1:4). After he arose from the dead he had all authority in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18). Yet he did not begin to exercise that authority until he had gone back to heaven and was exalted at the right hand of God (Acts 2:32-36). Angels, authorities and powers were not made subject unto him until he had gone into heaven (I Pet. 3:22). His kingdom did not come with power until he had gone into heaven and received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 16:18, Mark 9:1, Acts 1:1-11).

Since salvation was not being proclaimed in Christ's name between the cross and Pentecost, it was either obtained on some other condition, or else there was no salvation for the people who died during those 53 days. The facts in the case are, my friends, the law of Moses was still in effect, and people were still being saved between the cross and Pentecost in exactly the same way and on exactly the same terms which had been available since God gave the law to Moses. The law was not and could not be displaced until it was superseded by the gospel. We all know that the gospel did not begin to function as a power to save people from their sins until Pentecost (Acts 2:36-42).

Many people believe and teach that Christ literally abolished the law the very moment he died, and that it no longer applied to any one.

To those who believe and contend for this I now direct you to Paul's statement in II Tim. 1:7-10: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the

power of God; Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath *abolished death*, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."

Now, does any one want to contend or insist that death was removed from the earth when Christ was raised from the dead? Well it was; the Bible says it was, and yet, you and I know that death still reigns today and will reign until Christ comes again (I Cor. 15:24-26).

Conclusion: Christ abolished the law on the cross exactly as he abolished death when he arose from the dead. He made provision for both to cease when the proper time arrives.



A NEW BOOKLET ON DIVISIONS, WHO IS RESPONSIBLE?

This is the sermon preached by James P. Miller at Franklin Road in Nashville, Tennessee on October 13, 1959. It deals with the present issues that confront the church by applying the question of the Apostle Paul found in I Cor. 4:7 "who maketh three to differ from another? The booklet in 14 pages in length and is 9 by 6 inches in size. It is bound in an attractive blue cover. Every member of the church should read and study this sermon. The future of the church of our Lord is at stake. The Organ, the Missionary Society, Authority, Silence, Human Institutions, Support of the Preacher, Oversight, and the Purity of the Church are all dealt with in the booklet. In quantities of five or more the price is 20c a copy. Send your order today, to Phillips Publications, P. O. Box 9095, Tampa, Florida. Other sermons printed in booklet form in this great series are as follows and can also be ordered at the same price.

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- Volume IX, "The Care Of The Needy," by Herschel Patton
- Volume X, "The Individual Christian's Responsibility," by Bennie Lee Fudge
- Volume XI, "When Should One Change?" by James A. Allen

The News Letter Reports

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

RICHARD DEWHIRST has moved from Elyria, Ohio to Bedford, Ohio where he is now preaching for the fine church that meets in that city. Bedford is just between the great city of Cleveland and Akron, Ohio. The brethren, 75 strong have just completed a beautiful building valued at \$75,000 without outside help. This shows what brethren can do when they have a will to work. E. L. FLANNERY preached at Bedford before DEWHIRST . . . JOHN E. WHITE of the Bedford congregation also preaches monthly at Windham, Ohio and in other places as needed. . . . JOHN FANT is now preaching at Norwalk, Ohio. He came to that section from Brantford, Ontario, Canada. . . . E. A. DICUS a business man of Cleveland continues to preach for the Lorain Avenue church in that city. DICUS has done much good in the years he has preached the gospel in Cleveland. We need more like him. . . . TOMMY GAUMER preaches for the Superior Avenue congregation in Cleveland. TOMMY is one of several sound preachers working in this section. . . .

JESSE F. WISEMAN is an example of an experienced preacher willing to work in a hard field. He is now preaching at Wooster, Ohio. He worked for several years with the Brown Street congregation in Akron. . . . JIMMY HISER the preacher for the church in Sharon, Pa., preached in a meeting in Elyria in October. . . . OLIN KERN preaches at Berea, Ohio and was the speaker in a very successful meeting in Hamilton, Ohio where ELLIS WEBB is the local evangelist. . . . PAUL KELSEY has moved from Kent, Ohio. . . . PAUL CASEBOLT is the new preacher for the Kenmore Congregation in Akron. . . . PAUL WILLIAMS has moved from Alliance, Ohio to Broad Street in Columbus. . . . GEORGE LAMASTERS works with the church in Barberton a suburb of Akron. . . . FRANK PUCKETT continues to do a good work with the Thayer Street congregation in Akron as does CECIL WILLIS with the church on Brown Street. These men are towers of strength in that section of Northern Ohio. . . . The Thayer Street church started a Television Program over Channel 49 in Akron at 12 to 12:30 each Saturday. . . . HUBERT MOSS is now preaching at Indiana, Pa. . . . WELDON WARMOCK is preaching at Grove City, Ohio. . . . E. C. KOLTENBAUGH the fine preacher for the church in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio to soon move to the northwest. . . . L. J. NICKLAS preached in a meeting at Revenna, Ohio. . . . THOMAS G. O'NEAL the preacher on a new radio program at Jasper, Alabama over station WARF at 12:15, Monday through Saturday. Those in that section will want to listen to this able preacher. . . . BEN SHROPSHIRE in a meeting with the Central church in Louisville November 6-13. . . . PAUL BROCK of the West Shore congregation in Jacksonville the speaker in a meeting with the West Bradenton church where OAKS GOWEN labors. . . . QUENTIN McCAY holding a meeting at Berney Point in Birmingham and YATER TANT at North Birmingham both in November. . . . HERSHEL PATTON in a meeting at Florence Villa in Tampa. . . . CURTIS FLAT of Florence, Ala., preaching in a meeting with the Temple Terrace Congregation in that Florida city. This is the location of Florida Christian College. . . . GROVER STEVENS of St. Louis busy in a number of places. Grenada, Miss., Kilgore, Texas, Lafayette, La. and Kennett, Mo. to name a few. . . .

CONNIE ADAMS the speaker in a meeting at Gordon, Ga., early in November. . . . JOHN GASAWAY is the preacher at Gordon. . . . IRVEN LEE conducted a meeting with the Forest Hills church in Tampa, November 6-16. . . . HOMER HAILEY the preacher at Drew Park in Tampa where HARRY PAYNE labors at the same time. . . . R. L. ANDREWS conducted a meeting with the North Street congregation one week later in Tampa. PAUL ANDREWS preaches there. . . . JAMES P. MILLER back in Orlando for a meeting with the Par Avenue congregation. . . . Several baptized recently at Seminole in Tampa where Miller preaches regularly. . . . HARRY PICKUP speaker at Florence Villa in Tampa. . . . DUSTY OWENS works with the Florence Villa church. . . . JOHN IVERSON of Bessemer, Ala., the preacher in a gospel series at MacDill Avenue in Tampa, COLON WILLIAMSON their new preacher. . . . JAMES R. COPE to Woodbury for a meeting, familiar ground to him. . . . CLINTON HAMILTON the preacher for the new University church in Tampa. This congregation will meet in the section of the city where the new University of South Florida is found. . . . HARRY PICKUP in a meeting at Castle Heights in Tampa in the early part of November.

HAROLD TRIMBLE--Three have been baptized and three restored in the new congregation in Lackland City. If you have loved ones in the Air Force or Lackland Hospital, please call on us for help. We are the nearest congregation to Lackland Air Force Base. We invite you to regular worship at Cedarhurst and Farrell, Lackland City.

DOYLE MILLS is now preaching at Municipal Airport church in Valdosta, Ga. He recently moved from Trion, Ga.

JOHN S. KATROS—I'm writing in regards to a new congregation which was started the first part of September, and is presently meeting at a home, located at 1097 Avenue 0, N.E. in Winter Haven, Fla. Brother Ronnie Henderson of Lake Wales, Fla. has been doing the preaching since we have started. At present we have nineteen attending services.

CHARLES E. MURRAY--I have just completed work during the summer months with the Cork congregation, near Plant City, Fla. I will resume studies at F.C.C. this fall and will be available for full or part time work preaching. For reference contact the following congregations: North Street, Belmont Heights, Habana Ave. and Cork. Also Paul Andrews, minister for the North Street church in Tampa. My address is 8417 Ashley St., Tampa 4, Fla.

JIMMY TUTEN, JR.—Recently brother Farrell Jenkins of St. Louis preached a series of gospel sermons for the Northside church of Christ in Ft. Lauderdale (August 28-September 6). This effort was well supported by sound churches in this area with a large number of non-members from the city attending. Brother Ferrell did an excellent job of preaching. During the meeting one was identified with us and two were baptized into Christ. Besides these, one has been restored and four have identified themselves with us before and after the meeting. We hope to go into our building program within the next six months.

DENNIS L. REED—Harold Dowdy held the meeting for the San Mateo congregation here in Palatka, September 19-25. We had a very profitable meeting and brother Dowdy is a very sound and capable gospel preacher. I was with the

church in Deland for a meeting, October 3-9. The Lord willing, I will be in a meeting with the church in Mineral Springs, North Carolina, October 24-November 2 where Joel Plunkett is the regular preacher.

T. B. LARIMORE WAS AN "ANTI"!

E. L. Flannery, Lawrenceburg, Tennessee

From a tract, which is an abridgement of two articles that appeared in the *Christian Standard*, June 22 and June 29, 1946, written by S. S. Lappin, Bedford, Indiana, I quote:

Larimore was in every way unique. Such men usually have hobbies or angularities that have to be ignored or condoned by their admirers. Not this man. He was no faddist. He kept his body in sane control and used it to the limit as the vehicle of that unresting soul. He lived in the spirit, not in the flesh. He sought always to be well by the use of good judgment and well-reasoned right living. He once said: "I am anti-medicine, anti-narcotic, anti-stimulant, anti-hogmeat, and anti-gluttony. If I could go back to the cradle and come through life again, having my present convictions relative to these things, I would avoid all of them." . . .

Such a man would have an aversion for tobacco. And he did. It was abominable to him. But he would not offend his brethren who were addicted to its use. He but bore witness according to the facts and in the light of the gospel. And very many who heard him, through sheer admiration for his own clean character and wise judgment in all things, voluntarily put the offensive thing out of their lives (pp. 15-16).

T. B. Larimore was a great and good man. All men of conviction are "anti" something! Larimore was not as "anti-instrumental-music-in-worship" as he should have been, but thank God he was "anti" something, including the mourner's bench conversion, and sin in the lives of professed Christians!

Some preaching does more entertaining than edifying; some more complimenting than exposing of sin; some more pacifying than purifying; some more consoling than censuring. It is not the amount of preaching that is troubling the world either way. It is the kind of preaching that we should be concerned about. The kind of preaching that entertains, generalizes and lulls into a state of self-satisfaction is not worth the time and effort to do it. The only successful preaching is that taught in the Bible. It must draw the line between sin and righteousness; it must prick the heart as a two-edged sword; it must convict the sinner of his evil life and urge him to correct it; it must hurt those who are not doing exactly what they ought to do. That is the kind of preaching the apostles did, and it is the kind of preaching Christ wants done today. Preaching a sermon from the New Testament should not aim at gaining the approval of anyone but God.

* * *

Thomas J. Curran said: The moment our democracy ceases to respect God it will cease to respect your value as an individual. The moment it ceases to respect your value as an individual, it ceases to be democracy.

PRAYER

Leslie E. Sloan, Palmetto, Florida

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (Jas. 5:16). Perhaps no subject in religious matters has received more speculation than the subject of prayer. This of course is not due to a lack of revelation in the word of God nor to any contradictory scriptural statements. But rather it is ascribed to the short sightedness of man or his failure to study or rightly divide the word of truth. To those who have studied the Bible know that there is no duty or privilege more frequently emphasized than that of prayer. Speculation on this or any other Bible subject only leads men into deeper trouble. Let us study the word of God on this subject to find out what it teaches.

THE KIND OF PRAYER IS IMPORTANT

In our text James tells us that a certain kind of prayer avails much. This we must believe. The question is raised, "How much is much?" That, James did not say. To the extent of the promise, we are uncertain, but the word much expresses the idea of abundance. A soldier in battle aims for the heart of the enemy but only wounds him and causes him to be out of action for a while. Even though the bullet did not hit the mark, it still availed much. The same way with the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man. James did not say that the petitioner would be granted his full petition. So in answer to prayer, we expect to receive just what is promised. James gives us an example: "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth for the space of three years and six months" (Verse 17). James here confirms his teaching by an Old Testament example. The example referred to here is found recorded in II Kings 17:18.

A DEFINITE NEED EXISTED FOR THIS PRAYER

They were not having too much rain, the crops were not damaged by an abundance of rain, the rivers were not overflowing their banks. The need of this prayer existed in a different nature. God's people, as was the case so many times, had gone off into idolatry. The old prophet Elijah stood alone on the side of the Lord. Elijah wanted above everything else to bring them back to the true God. This prayer was his way of accomplishing this task. The need was in the people and their spiritual condition.

A DEFINITE PURPOSE EXISTED IN THIS PRAYER

Prayer should always have a definite purpose. The one by Elijah was no different. His purpose was to show the children of Israel that they were following false gods and that there was only one true God and that was the God of Heaven. Elijah believed that if he could do this, he would be able to bring about their return to God. We can see that the purpose was an unselfish one. The prophet had not thought of himself in this but was thinking of the people. Too many prayers are not answered today because they are designed to be consumed upon the lusts of the one doing the praying.

A DEFINITE HUMILITY EXISTED IN THE ONE DOING THE PRAYING

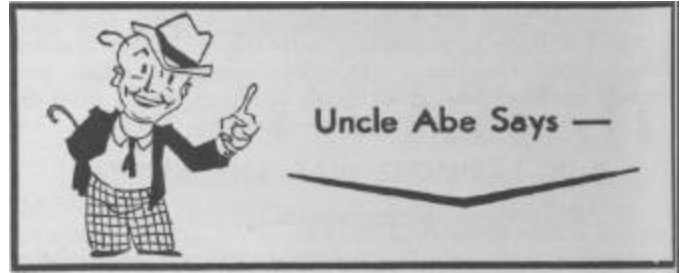
The record tells us that Elijah dwelt by the brook Cherith and the Ravens fed him by bringing him bread and flesh in the morning and bread and flesh in the evening, and

he drank of the brook. Such an humble and obedient life by this prophet of God and at the same time desiring the spiritual welfare of the Children of Israel. Truly an example of an humble and righteous servant of God.

**A DEFINITE BLESSING
RESULTED FROM THIS PRAYER**

It rained not on the earth for the space of three years and six months. As a result of Elijah's prayer and obedience to God, the children of Israel were shown that they were in error and that God alone was God. Hence, they returned to their first love. There were 450 prophets of Baal and only one true prophet, Elijah. Therefore, as suggested in our text numbers mean nothing but the condition and attitude of the one praying. God answered Elijah's prayer but no one heard the false prophets of Baal. After accomplishing his purpose, Elijah prayed again and the heaven gave forth rain.

The prayer of example shows us exactly what James said in verse 16. Men need to realize that for God to answer prayer, there must be a righteous person doing the praying. Many have the mistaken idea that just anyone, saint or sinner, can pray to God and get an answer. Yet the Bible plainly declares, "We know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth" (Jno. 9:31). Prayer is a wonderful power in the hands of righteous people. So pray often, pray earnestly, and live righteously in order that God will hear your prayer. Get in a position to pray to God by being obedient to the gospel of Christ. Just remember that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Pray for others. Pray in faith. Pray according to the will of God. Pray in a thankful manner. Be grateful for all the good things that we enjoy. And pray as Jesus did when he said, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do" and "Thy will be done and not mine".



I have often wondered why people are so eager to disregard and disobey the Bible. It seems that with the slightest suggestion of an error in the word of God many people hasten to magnify the charge of error and go their way upon the assumption that the Bible is a book of the same calibre as those written by man. Why are men so easily persuaded that the Bible is not a perfect guide? Why are they so hostile to this Book?

First, it is true that man naturally resists that which claims to be so perfect that no improvements can be made. The Bible makes the claim to be absolutely perfect and does not permit man to make any changes for the better in his own view. This claim causes some to search for errors and weakness just to make it on their own level.

Second, the Bible claims to have the complete control over sinful man. It is the only power of God to lead men from darkness to light. Anything that claims absolute power and control over man is resisted by those who dislike authority, and there are many such people today.

Third, Man does not like his sinful and weak practices exposed. He would rather have his good points emphasized and his sinful life covered and ignored. The Bible does not do this. It exposes the hypocrites, it pronounces doom upon all who deny Christ and despise his word, it quickens the anger of those who are condemned for building their own religions, it shuts out of the kingdom all who are immoral and anti-spiritual. Many will not accept the Bible as the word of God upon these grounds.

Fourth, the Bible is a revelation "once for all delivered" and cannot be changed. Some would prefer a revelation that could be added to or revised every generation to meet the needs of a changing world, but the Bible will not be changed or modified. This provokes the hatred of millions of people.

Man must learn that the word of God is the mind of God and cannot be lowered to the level of man's thinking. As God's ways and thoughts are far above man's, so the word of God is as far above man's writings.

AM I PREJUDICED?

- Do I listen only to those who express my present views?
- Do I have a tendency to misrepresent others who may disagree with me?
- Do I become angry when one differs with me on a religious matter?
- Does my respect for one decrease when he differs with me?
- Do I think that I am so right that there is hardly a chance that I am wrong?
- Do I always ask those who agree with me, instead of those with whom I disagree, what "they" believe?

A YES spells PREJUDICE.

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