

SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES



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

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

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THE SYNAGOGUE IN JAMES 2:2

Ferrell Jenkins, Akron, Ohio

Our brethren who support human benevolent institutions such as Mid-Western Children's Home encounter many difficulties. The chief one being the lack of scriptural authority for such arrangements. They have sought for the authority in James 1:26-27. This argument has been frequently answered in the following ways: (1) It is directed to the individual Christian, as the context clearly shows; (2) Even if the passage were directed to the local church it does not authorize the church to make contributions to a human institution.

The next step for the institutionalist is to run to James 2:2, "For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; (3) And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou here, or sit here under my footstool:" (King James Version). From this passage they conclude that the **assembly** means the **church** and that James 1:26-27 involves church action.

In my debate with bro. Larry Hood at Central City, Ky., in 1964, he made that argument. When I replied as I am about to here he made no further comment about James 2:2. In the debate with bro. Bill Heinselman in Akron, last December, he briefly mentioned the point without making what I considered a significant argument on it and I did not have the occasion to mention it. In the December GRATIS he said this: 'Besides the context of James 1:27 includes the church. Note the word 'assembly' in James 2:2.'

MY ANSWER

The word which is translated **assembly** in the KJV is the Greek word **sunagoge** (pronounced suna-go-GAY). The word is used 57 times in the New Testament and in the KJV is translated "synagogue" in all except two places. In Acts 13:43 it is "congregation," and in James 2:2, "assembly." I am confident that there is sufficient evidence to conclude that **sunagoge** in James 2:2 means the BUILDING and not the gathering. If this is so it seems highly precarious for a preacher to seek to prove a point which has

SPECIAL ISSUE IN OCTOBER

"The Woman's Covering"

The entire issue in October will be devoted to a study of First Corinthians 11:1-16. Hiram Hutto and James P. Needham have been asked to prepare objective studies on these verses. Roy E. Cogdill has been asked to prepare a study on the principles of Bible interpretation. Subscribe now and be sure to receive this special issue. Subscription is \$3.00 per year. If you want extra copies of this special issue, order now so we may know how many to publish. The price will be \$20.00 per hundred.

tom asunder the body of Christ on such questionable proof. Below is my evidence.

TRANSLATIONS OF SYNAGOGUE

The **KJV** has **assembly**; The New American Standard Bible has **assembly**, with the footnote, "or, synagogue." The American Standard has **synagogue** in the text, with a footnote, "or, assembly." Rotherham, in The Emphasized New Testament, has **synagogue**. The New English Bible says **place of worship**. From this we conclude that the translators had some difficulty in determining which was the correct word in this place.

THE GREEK LEXICONS

An appeal to the lexicons of the Greek will also show uncertainty on this point. It is important to distinguish between the definition given by the lexicographer and the application or comments made by him. Such works are simply the "tools" of the Bible student.

1. Bagster's Analytical Greek Lexicon, p. 385: "**a collecting, gathering; a Christian assembly or congregation, Ja. 2:2; the congregation of a synagogue, Ac. 9:2, et. al.; hence, the place itself, a synagogue, Lu. 7:5, et. al.**"

2. Thayer, Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 600: "...the name (synagogue) is transferred to an assembly of Christians formally gathered for religious purposes, Jas. 2:2 .. ."

3. Arndt and Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 790: "b. a Christian assembly-place can also be meant in Js. 2:2." This is the latest and most fully informed lexicon available.

From this brief survey one can easily see that the word **sunagoge** can have either the meaning **assembly** or **assembly-place** (synagogue).

THE COMMENTARIES

When we investigate the commentaries we do not accept a thing because a man says so, but we examine his reasons in order that we may draw our own conclusions. The commentaries cited here are based on the Greek text.

1. Lenski, The Interpretation of the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Epistle of James, p. 564. Lenski translates the word as "synagogue." He says, "We take **sunagoge** to mean 'a synagogue of yours,' for James mentions the places in it: 'here,' a prominent place, 'there,' an obscure place. 'Assembly' is not the meaning, for the fact that the congregation is assembled in its place of meeting is self-evident."

2. Marvin R. Vincent, Word Studies in the New Testament, 1:737: "In this passage alone the word is distinctly applied to a Christian assembly or place of worship. The simplest explanation appears to be that the word designates the **place** of meeting for the Christian body, James using the word most familiar to the Jewish Christians . . ."

3. Cambridge Greek Testament, p. 30: "It is at any rate clear that the **sunagoge** here mentioned is a Christian and not a Jewish place of assembly."

4. Macknight, Apostolical Epistles, p. 590-591: "The word **sunagoge** sometimes denotes an assembly of persons, sometimes the house in which such an assembly is held. Here 'your synagogue' does not mean a Jewish synagogue, but the house or room where the Christians assembled for worship . . ."

5. Rackham, The Acts of the Apostles, p. 79: "The Christians indeed, as we see from James 2:2, continued to call their places of meeting in Jerusalem synagogues: but the body which met there was the ecclesia (church) (Jas. 5:14)."

The conclusion, based on the evidence presented by these men who are experts in the Greek language, indicates that **sunagoge** meant Jewish synagogues in which Christians met or that the term was used of some other meeting place of Christians.

USE IN SCRIPTURE

With the foregoing information before us I believe that the safest way to determine what **sunagoge** means in James 2:2 is by the use of the word in other passages and the context.

1. **Sunagoge** was used of material buildings. According to Luke 7:5 a synagogue was **built**. Matt. 6:5 points out that hypocrites love to **stand** and pray in the synagogues. The scribes and Pharisees loved "the **chief seats** in the synagogue" (Matt. 23:6). Note that the sunagoge was (1) **BUILT**, (2) had **CHIEF SEATS**, (3) and that one could **STAND** in it.

2. The early Christians sometimes met in synagogues. In his persecution of the church (ecclesia) Saul sought letters unto Damascus "unto the synagogues." In these he expected to find some who were "of the Way" (Acts 9:2). Saul later told the Lord

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that he "imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee" (Acts 22:19). See also Acts 26:11. Remember that the Christians met on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). Synagogues would not be of much use to the Jews on the first day of the week. Christians of our time often meet in lodge halls and public school buildings without approving other activities conducted in the same building at another time. Another possible interpretation, according to the evidence above, is that the term **sunagoge** was applied to an **assembly-place** of Christians other than the Jewish synagogue.

3. How the word is used in James. James was written to "the twelve tribes which are of the Dispersion" (James 1:1). These were Jews by birth, but now Christians (1:2). They may have been meeting in synagogues as indicated above.

In James 2:3 we learn that one could "sit" or "stand" in the **sunagoge**. This harmonizes with what we learned about synagogues in point one. The church was commanded to "assemble" (Heb. 10:25) and a **place** was necessarily implied. The Christians sometimes met in a "house" (Rom. 16:5) and sometimes in a **synagogue** and possibly other places.

CONCLUSION

It is not our purpose in this article to argue that the word **sunagoge** in James 2:2 must, beyond a sha-

dow of a doubt, mean an "assembly-place"; I believe that the evidence favors this position. My purpose has been to show that when institutionalists seek to prove that James 1:27 involves the church by turning to James 2:2 they are resting their case on mighty shaky ground. How would you react if we had to build our case for baptism, singing, the Lord's Supper, etc. on such questionable proof?

One of the important and generally recognized rules of Bible study is that "No important teaching or practice is to be based upon doubtful or ambiguous Scriptures" (Kendrick, Rules of Bible Study, p. 90). Our desire is that all men would return to that path in religion which is unquestionably right and cannot be wrong.

— 491 E. Woodsdale Ave.

Comments to the Editors

"I enjoy reading the paper and get much information from the "articles which I treasure." — Mrs. Goldie McAlister, Lakeland, Fla.

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"Thanks for your good effort to keep the faith once delivered to the saints." — J. P. Halbrook, Jr., Belle Glade, Fla.

"I enjoy the paper very much. . . May the Lord bless you in your efforts." — Bob Harkrider, Caringbah, Australia.

"I enjoy reading Searching The Scriptures very much. I only wish many of our own supposed to be conservative brethren would do a little more searching instead of so much talking about things they know nothing about. . . I wish both of you a long and prosperous life." — Earl F. Pettyjohn, Houston, Tex.

WORD STUDIES in the Hebrew Old Testament



Harold Tabor, 2721 North Pecan St., Nacogdoches, Texas 75961

FOOL Part Two

The Hebrew word most frequently translated 'fool' in the O.T. is KESIL. It is also used most often in Proverbs. KESIL is from a root word meaning to be dull or sluggish and suggests a slow, self-confident person (Prov. 14:16). The idea of impiety and ungodliness are often implied.

The self-confident fool hates knowledge (Prov. 1:22); delights not in understanding (18:2); it is his sport to do mischief (10:23; his heart proclaimeth foolishness (12:23); his mouth poureth out folly (15:2); he retains anger (Eccl. 7:9); and is associated with slander (Prov. 10:18) and evil (13:19).

KESIL is a kindred word to NABAL. It is often used in the context with the idea of wisdom and distinguishes between a wise man and a fool.

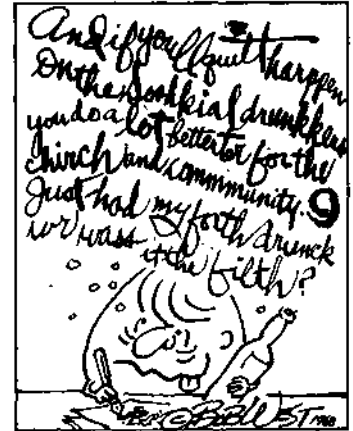
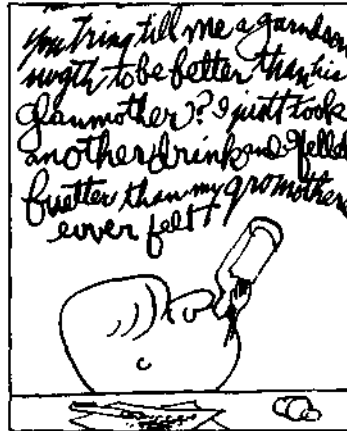
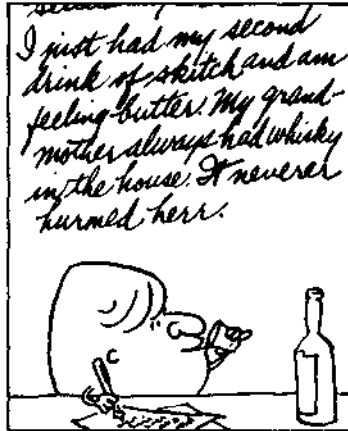
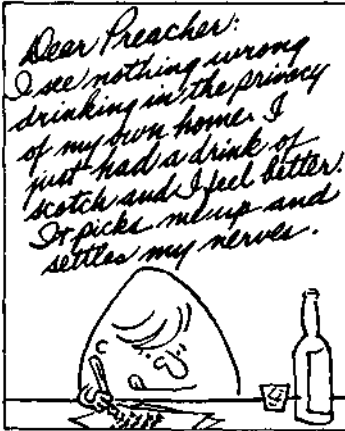
"The fool was he who was thoughtless, careless, conceited, self-sufficient, indifferent to God and His Will, or who might even oppose and scoff at religion and wise instruction" (I.S.B.E. p. 1124).

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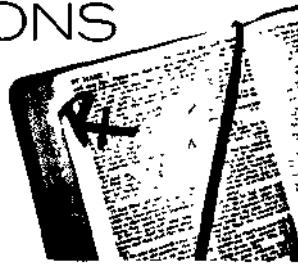
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SMOKING

The Public Health Service is required to submit regular reports on the Congress on the health consequences of smoking. This they did recently in a publication "The Health Consequences of Smoking, A Public Health Service Review: 1967 (PHS Publication, 1966. Revised 1968). They reviewed the research which has been done since 1964 when the original Surgeon General's Report was published. This report concluded, "Cigarette smoking is a health hazard of sufficient importance in the United States to warrant remedial action."

The present report is summarized as follows:

1. Cigarette smokers have substantially higher rates of death and disability than their nonsmoking counterparts in the population. This means that cigarette smokers tend to die at earlier ages and experience more days of disability than comparable nonsmokers.
2. A substantial portion of earlier deaths and excess disability would not have occurred if those affected had never smoked.
3. If it were not for cigarette smoking, practically none of the earlier deaths from lung cancer would have occurred; nor a substantial portion of the earlier deaths from chronic broncho-pulmonary diseases (commonly diagnosed as chronic bronchitis or pulmonary emphysema or both); nor a portion of the earlier deaths of cardiovascular origin. Excess disability from chronic pulmonary and cardiovascular diseases would also be less.
4. Cessation or appreciable reduction of cigarette smoking could delay or avert a substantial portion of

deaths which occur from lung cancer, a substantial portion of the earlier deaths and excess disability from chronic broncho-pulmonary diseases, and a portion of the earlier deaths and excess disability of cardiovascular origin, (p. 3&4 of the Report)

What else can one say? It could be noted that numerous studies financed by the tobacco industry have failed to show any relationship between smoking and cancer. It is interesting that the above cited Report says it is no longer a question of "does cigarette smoking cause disease?", but rather how much does it cause?

One of the jokes that used to go around when I was a boy concerned the brother who was trying to get another brother to quit smoking. The smoker replied that he didn't think smoking harmed his health so he didn't know what he had to gain by quitting. To this came the response that while it might not be known what effect quitting would have on his health it was certain that it would make him smell better.

Well now it has been settled. If you will quit smoking you will not only smell better but your health will be better too.

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CREATION? OR EVOLUTION? BOTH ACCEPTED "BY FAITH"

No. 2

The battle continues unabated between these two positions and dogmas, EVOLUTION and NATURALISM versus CREATION and SUPERNATURALISM. Both involve the question or "origins" — the universe, this planet, all forms of life, animal and plant, and finally the spiritually endowed being MAN. As mentioned in last month's article all of these involve matters about which man can have no personal knowledge. Neither the Evolutionist nor the Creationist was present when these various things came into existence. All any man can know about the past (and the issue discussed here certainly involves events of the far distant past) is (1) BY MEMORY (what he contacted, saw, heard, did, had demonstrated, etc.), and (2) BY TESTIMONY. And **both** the creationist and evolutionist depend on the latter, not the former.

Quote often the Bible believer, who accepts "the beginning" and "creation" as set forth in the Bible, is ridiculed, in various ways, for holding this position. He is said to be a "fundamentalist," "ignorant," "irrational," or "superstitious," because what he believes cannot be accepted "scientifically" — cannot be a "fact." And, there is nothing that provokes ridicule more than the fact his system is based upon, and accepted by, "faith." The evolutionist is always talking about the creationist and religionist and his "FAITH," and ignorance and "superstition" are equated with it. We are asked by the evolutionary adherents, "Did you ever see God, or do you know of anyone else who has? Did you see the universe originate, or do you know of anyone who did? Did you see **when** and **how** life came into existence? Did you, or anyone you know of, ever see animals, such as reptiles and anthropoids, when they first began to be such? And, were you present to observe, personally, **when** and **how** the first man BECAME a man? or, from **what** he originated?" Of course, to all of these questions, as far as any other HUMAN is concerned, the answer would have to be, "No."

Then he will begin to ridicule and endeavor to point up our "ignorance" by commenting, "and yet you swallow 'creation' hook, line and sinker. You superstitiously accept the old legend and tradition about how these things came to be and you just accept it all 'by faith.'" Now, when someone like this thinks he had made his point and exposed you rather thoroughly because of your "FAITH," ask **him** a few questions like these: "Have you ever seen, or

do you know of any human being who has ever seen, life (a living being coming into being from inorganic (dead) matter regardless of its 'combinations' and how many 'building blocks' were involved? Have you ever seen, or has anyone else ever seen, any one-celled creature become two, four, eight, sixteen celled creatures, or a multi-celled creature? Have you ever observed, and has ANY human being observed, an amoeba turn into a salamander? An invertebra become a vertebra? A reptile change into a bird? a creature without sex to one with sexual capacities? A creature with intelligence, moral capacity, and spiritual endowment into one with all of these? An anthropoid (such as ape or gorilla) into **half** man, **near** man? Or **ANY** OF THOSE JUST MENTIONED INTO MAN?" If your querist is honest and objective he will also have to answer in the negative. And yet he "swallows, hook, line and sinker," a dogma or myth for which he has no hint of **FACTUAL PROOF**. The Evolutionist teacher or student accepts something which cannot be proved by experimentation; it cannot be demonstrated in the laboratory; it is **NOT** going on today. It **IS NOT** and **CANNOT**, therefore, be a **FACT**, based upon scientific evidence. It is a philosophy — a dogma — which he accepts "BY FAITH."

But he is not only "in the same boat" with the creationists (which he doesn't like to admit) but he is in far worse shape, because the only way these two positions, involving doctrines **ACCEPTED BY FAITH**, can or should be resolved is by the **NATURE, CHARACTER, QUALITY, AND KIND OF TESTIMONY AND EVIDENCE UPON WHICH THE "FAITH" OF EITHER IS BASED**. The creationist welcomes such testing and comparison. His confidence is because he has a wealth of confirmed and documented evidence sustaining his position; he has the testimony of the **DIVINE BEINGS WHO ALONE WERE PRESENT WHEN ALL OF THE THINGS PREVIOUSLY MENTIONED HAD THEIR ORIGIN**. And the very science the evolutionists profess to rely upon gives any intelligent person a thousand times more scientific proof for belief in creation than it does for evolution. **ALTHOUGH WE WILL EXAMINE IN DETAIL ALL THEIR SO-CALLED PROOFS FOR EVOLUTION LATER**, ask the evolutionist, who confronts you, "what **fact** of 'science' and what **demonstration** of 'science' can be brought forth to bear witness for the fact of evolution from amoeba to man?"

To point up what **KIND** of faith the evolutionist has and how strong and durable is the foundation upon which it rests I want to quote from A. G. Tilney, in **EVOLUTION PROTEST MOVEMENT**, Pamphlet No. 133, Jan. 1966. His article is headed **SCIENTIFIC FAITH AND EVOLUTIONARY CREDULITY**, "When men cease to believe in God," said G. K. Chesterton, 'they do not believe in nothing; they believe in anything' — hence the paradoxical epithet of believing disbelievers. Man knows so little, depends upon so much, that he is by his very nature compelled to breathe and live, drink and walk (if not drive) by faith. But faith **perverted** and **unwarranted, unlimited** and unjustified, is not **REAL** faith, but credulity. When faith walks out by the door, credulity flies in at the window. Science is based upon faith. — and is justified by its fruits; it

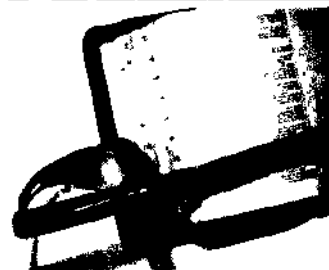
works; it gets you there. The discoveries of men of faith — who assumed that the universe must be taken seriously — that it was not 'a hoax or a nightmare' — that it was a unity, that its study led somewhere, got them somewhere — in astronomy, in chemistry, in physics, in Science generally. Their predictions came true — the calculations preceding the successful journey of Mariner IV worked;—(other illustrations cited — P.F.).

"But the CREDULITY — the MISBEGOTTEN, MISGUIDED, MISTAKEN, MISAPPLIED FAITH OF EVOLUTIONISTS — HAS GOTTEN THEM NOWHERE, THUS PROVING THAT EVOLUTION IS NOT SCIENTIFIC, NOT SCIENCE AT ALL. DARWIN CREDULOUSLY BELIEVED THAT FURTHER DIGGING WOULD DISCLOSE THE LOST PAGES OF THE VOLUME OF THE STRATA, — HE WAS WRONG. HIS FOLLOWERS CREDULOUSLY BELIEVED THAT EXTRA HUNTING WOULD BRING TO LIGHT THE 'MISSING LINK' — THEY WERE WRONG. IT WAS CREDULOUSLY BELIEVED THAT UNDISPUTED PRE-CAMBRIAN FOSSILS. FILLING IN THE GAP OR GULF OF THE FIRST THREE-QUARTERS OF UNDISCOVERED SELF-EVOLVING LIFE, WOULD IN TIME BE FOUND — THE CREDULITY WAS WRONG. IT WAS CREDULOUSLY BELIEVED (AND DECLARED HALF A CENTURY AGO) THAT LIFE WOULD BE SYNTHESIZED IN THE LABORATORY — BUT DESPITE THE BOAST CURRENT IN THE 'SUN' (7/12/65) UNDER 'FRONTIERS OF SCIENCE', 'FAITH' IS ONCE MORE MISBEGOTTEN, HAS BEEN AND WILL BE, PROVED WRONG. IT WAS CREDULOUSLY BELIEVED THAT MAN WOULD GET TO THE END OF MATTER, BUT AFTER THE ADDITION OF OVER A HUNDRED PARTICLES, MATTER IS NOW SEEN TO BE MORE INTELLIGENTLY AND SECURELY PATTERNED THAN EVER. When a young man, Huxley read a sentence in Lord Morley's essays, 'The next task of science will be to create a religion for humanity.' The words went home. They suddenly led him to believe that it was his mission in life to create such a religion. That is why he has adopted and boosted the pseudo-science of the Jesuit geologist Teilhard de Chardin as the most wonderful philosophy and theology ever. BUT IT IS SHEER CREDULITY — BOUNDLESS AND GROUNDLESS 'FAITH,' NEVER TO BE FULFILLED: 'Evolution, from cosmic star-dust to human society, is a continuous process. It transforms the world-stuff ... it is creative' (Evol. Ethics, 1943). Teilhard, starting from nothing at all, nevertheless ends, with EVOLUTIONARY CREDULITY, at the Omega Principle — amidst the smoke of the Indian rope-trickster" (pages 3,4). (to be continued)

BIBLES AND BOOKS

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"EATING IN THE MEETING HOUSE" No. 2

We continue our study of the use of church buildings. These lessons are, at least in part, a review of an article under the above heading which was written by a gospel preacher and college professor. (See the first article in the August issue.)

"If I Corinthians 11:22, 34 means that Christians cannot eat in a building in which they assemble for worship then where did Priscilla and Aquila eat (Rom. 16:3-5) ? Did Paul deprive them of the very place where he told the Corinthians they could eat — their house or home ? Their home was the meeting house of the church. Was it wrong to have a kitchen in it?"

In reply to this, I shall quote from an article by Robert L. Willis in reply to one by Burton Coffman which appeared in the GOSPEL ADVOCATE, February 20, 1964:

"The sophism that the early church met in private homes in which there were kitchens, and thus it is right to have kitchens in our church buildings today is plain foolishness. We may point out that the early church in all likelihood, in some areas, met in private homes where the barn for the animals was an integral part of the buildings. This, however, would not justify the building of barns onto our church buildings today. The church today must meet in certain areas in dance halls and other such buildings. This does not mean that WHAT we may find in these buildings should be a part of the church building when such is later erected. If all of us would become as concerned about working for the Lord as we are about eating and drinking and playing, we would probably become a little more successful in our religious action. There are some in the church today who seem to think that the whole sum total of Christianity is to 'eat, drink and be merry.' About all they know how to do is drink coffee and play."

Our brother asked the question: "Is it wrong to eat in a meeting house but right to drink there? I Cor. 11:22, 34 speaks of drinking as well as eating."

Providing drinking water, like rest rooms, is **essential** in an assembly of people, and is in no sense parallel to a church kitchen. He does not use common sense nor take the context into consideration.

In further consideration of the above question, the following quotation is worthy of careful consideration:

"We are presented the argument that if I Corinthians 11:22 forbids 'Church Kitchens' it also forbids drinking fountains. Superficially plausible, in-

deed, but what honest student of the holy scriptures would declare the drinking mentioned here to be the same as the drinking at the water fountains in our buildings of today. Does not prudence grant that whatever the specific acts of that distant day, which the inspired apostle forbade, the lessons for us hold forth a warning against mixing the world in the service and worship of the church? Does the partaking of a drink of water at the fountains we have today enter any way into the service and worship to God?

"Acceptable service to God is a 'heart' service. Respect and worship to God is paid understandingly. It therefore must be done by plan and intention correctly founded to be acceptable in the sight of God. Hence, the purpose, the end, for which things are provided should lead the wise to act correctly. The drinking fountain — what is its purpose? What is the intention which provides a place for mothers to take care of fretful babies? What is the purpose of a 'Church Kitchen'? Is it planned to give meat to the hungry as described in Matthew 25, and thus glorify God through the church? Or does it merely supply an avenue through which man may give vent to a social urge?

"Correctly founded judgment will surely consider the present needs, but in view of right principles and future results. Certain requirements of physical man know no bounds of time. Therefore, to provide seats for man to relax in during a period of service through which he could not stand by reason of physical fatigue; to provide a place to assuage thirst during a morning's service to God; providing a 'rest room' in view of the same reasonableness, offers not the least comfort to those who would supply the material building of the Lord's house with a place to feed the social and physical man, and which is provided with no higher intention than the bounds of this world.

"But, should we grant for the sake of argument that the 'Church Kitchen' of today is not a departure from God's way, we are still faced with what the future effect may be generations from now. And we know that only those things provided which enhance the glories of God's plan of simplicity, which in a thousand generations would not deviate from God's divine pattern, are the safe things to adopt and be governed by. Why, mortal man, strive for things questionable?" (Vaughn D. Shofner, PRECEPTOR, October, 1954)

As far back as I can remember, churches provided water and rest room facilities. It may have been a bucket and dipper and the house out back, but they did. And when they had all-day services and "dinner on the ground" and it came up a rain at eating time they sometimes went inside. They may have been inconsistent, but those brethren never dreamed of a church kitchen or the church erecting and maintaining a "fellowship hall" and they would have opposed such. The truth is, they did oppose such until recent years. It is a modern innovation among churches of Christ.

We quote again from our friend:

"Is it right to eat together (Acts 2:46; 11:3; Jude 12)? Who has the right to legislate as to where it is to be or not to be, just so it is not in connection with the Lord's supper. So long as we keep our worship

service separate from our social activities in point of time, by what authority does anyone legislate as to what may or may not be done in a meeting house if the thing is not wrong."

This has been answered. Certainly it is, not wrong for Christians to eat together. The scriptures which he gave do not support his argument. Acts 2:46 says the eating was "from house to house." It was not done in a church kitchen or fellowship hall. Acts 11:3 is irrelevant and has nothing to do with church action, much less a kitchen. Jude 12 certainly does not justify church sponsored and supported social activities.

He seems to think that we may do anything in the meeting house "if the thing is not wrong." That's the point! It is wrong to do anything in the meeting house which is not the work of the church or which is contrary to its true mission and the purpose for which the building was erected. To do so is to misappropriate the funds by which it was built and prostitute its true purpose.

He closes by saying: "The church is a family. Is it wrong for a family to eat together? The church is a brotherhood. Is it wrong for brethren to engage in social activities?"

Is he saying that the church may do anything which a family may do? That is what I infer from his statement, but such is not true. A family may do many things which the church cannot do. No, it is not wrong for "brethren" to engage in social activities so long as such is done on an individual or family basis. It is wrong for the church to engage in social activities, for the church is a spiritual institution. With so many churches engaging in social and recreational activities, it is not difficult to understand why Christianity is losing its influence. Informed and sensible people know that the church should engage in spiritual rather than social activities. The following quotation by E. Digby Baltzell, associate professor of sociology at the University of Pennsylvania, is typical of the thinking of many people of our time:

"It is my contention that the social activities carried on by our churches and synagogues since the war have tended to make the American people increasingly cynical about the real influence of religion in our lives. In other words, we, especially men and college graduates, are realizing that the church and synagogue are becoming places to meet rather than places of worship. It is, therefore, religious institutions and their leaders who are doing most to drive religion out of American life." (ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT, April 19, 1965.)

In our next lesson, we will conclude this study with some additional observations and quotations.

QUEST FOR A CHRISTIAN AMERICA

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THE GARNER-BARR DIFFERENCE

Dr. Albert Garner, Lakeland, Florida and Vernon L. Barr, Dallas, Texas are well known preachers and debaters in the Missionary Baptist Church. In recent years, I have met these men on the polemic platform and have found they are as far apart as the two poles on Baptist church membership. When I asked Dr. Garner if one had to be baptized in order to get into the Baptist church, he answered, "Yes." He took the consequences of his doctrine like a man and admitted it took more to get into the Baptist church than it did heaven. One Baptist preacher told me it took more to get married than it did to get into heaven!

Mr. Barr, evidently got tired taking a whipping on this point, so he concocted an entirely different theory. When I asked Mr. Barr if one had to be baptized in order to get into the Baptist church he replied, "I don't take the position that some of my brethren do that you are baptized into the Baptist church. You are received in by the members and then you are baptized in the church, not baptized into it. This may surprise him and maybe some of my brethren." Mr. Barr's answer didn't surprise me because I learned a long time ago not to be surprised at anything a Baptist preacher says in a debate. It is my firm conviction that a Baptist preacher can't talk five minutes without either contradicting himself or misrepresenting his opponent. Mr. Barr's position is out of step with most of his colleagues. He is the only one I have met who espouses this position.

However, Mr. Barr's troubles are not over. He is in grave difficulties with his brethren on other matters. For example, if one should meet both Barr and Garner he would leave the discussion not knowing when a man is in the Baptist church! Barr says one is "received into it," and Garner says one is "baptized into it." Let us say that Garner makes a trip to Dallas and conducts a meeting where Vernon L. Barr is pastor. Let me suggest that ten come forward and get saved, according to Baptist standards. Barr would have the church, take a vote and receive them into the Baptist church. Garner, would say, "Vernon, hold on a minute; these folks aren't in the Baptist church, they haven't been baptized yet." Barr would say, "Now listen Albert, you do it in Florida like you want to but here in Texas we receive them in." What a revolting development by two of the biggest preachers in the Baptist church!

But their problems are not over yet. Let us say that Mr. Garner decides to spend an extended vaca-

tion in Dallas. Since many Baptists "put off" the baptismal services for several weeks and sometimes months, let us say that the ten have not yet been baptized. The time comes to eat the Lord's Supper. Since Baptists practice "close communion" only Baptist church members are allowed to eat. They spread the Lord's Supper in Barr's Baptist church and get ready to observe. Garner moves over on the pew and whispers to Barr, "Vernon, you aren't going to let those ten new converts eat the supper are you?" Barr would reply, "Albert, please get quiet, I thought we had settled that a few weeks back; you know they were 'received into' the Baptist church." Garner rises to his feet and exclaims in audible tones, "I don't care what you say, Vernon, one can't become a Baptist without being baptized." The poor ten converts are sitting back in the audience in a state of frustration. One says they can and the other says they can't; one says they shall and the other says they shan't! It is a shame that two of the biggest preachers don't know when a man becomes a Baptist. One says they are "in" and the other says they are "out." Barr finally wins out and they are allowed to eat the Supper in Dallas.

Well, let us say that these ten new converts decide to take a little vacation down to Lakeland, Florida and see Dr. Garner's college and visit the church where he is pastor. While they are there the Lord's Supper is prepared in Dr. Garner's church and they get ready to eat. The ten new converts had eaten the Supper in Dallas so they get ready to eat again. Garner rises and says, "Hold on boys, don't touch that supper, you haven't been baptized yet." The ten frustrated converts say, "Yes, but brother Garner, we ate the Lord's Supper back in Texas." Garner would reply, "Yes, but I will have you to know that you are not in Texas today you are in Florida and I still say you are not in the Baptist Church."

This Garner-Barr difference gets bogged down on the matter of church discipline also. Both Barr and Garner says a man can be kicked out of the Baptist church because of unruly conduct. Garner told me he kicked them completely out of the Baptist church. I asked him how they could get back into the Baptist church the second time and he told me to sit down and tend to my own business! Let us say that two of these new converts went out and got drunk before they were baptized. According to Barr they are "in," so he would have to exercise discipline and throw them out of the Baptist church, (in Dallas) Garner would rise to a point of order and say, "Vernon how can you kick them out when they have never been in!" So the poor converts are still confused. Barr says they have been "in" but now they are "out" but Garner says they have never been "in" so they have always been "out!"

This reminds me of the story of the old man whose wife "nagged" him to join her church. He never had an "experience of grace" therefore the pastor and the members would not vote him in. Finally she "nagged" him so long, he decided to make up a story and tell it before the church to see if he could get in. So he presented himself before the church during big meetin' time. The pastor asked for his "experience" and he said, "Well sir, I was in the corn crib this morning shelling corn and the Lord appeared to

me and told me to go and join the church." The pastor said, "John, that was a wonderful experience, we will take a vote on you to see if we can let you in." They took the vote and the entire church voted unanimously to receive him in. On his way home while riding- in the old wagon his wife said, "John, I didn't know the Lord talked with you this morning, why didn't you tell me about it?" He replied, "Well, Ma, it really didn't happen but I had to do something to get in." She said, "John, you should be ashamed of yourself. Now, you go right back down that isle tomorrow night and tell the preacher that you lied." So the next night John walked the isle again. The pastor said, "John what are you doing back down here?" He said, "Preacher, I want to make a confession; the Lord really didn't talk with me last night, I told a lie." The preacher exclaimed, "John, it is a shame we must vote you out." He asked the congregation and they unanimously voted him out. On the way home his "nagging" wife said, "John, I was never so humiliated in all my life because of what you have done." He replied, "Shaw, ma, I don't care, I didn't want to be a member of that church anyway; They voted me "in" for telling a lie and voted me "out" for telling the truth!"

WANTED: BIBLE AUTHORITY

James L. Denison

The **Batesville Daily Guard** of June 21, 1968, published an article by the East Side Church of Christ entitled "The Need For Authority." We commend this article very highly!

The article states: "We must have authority for our religious actions. Col. 3:17. . . . If we cannot find Bible authority for acts performed in our work and worship, they are in vain, and should be ceased." We heartily agree! Also; that Bible authority can be established by a direct command, approved example, or necessary inference. Again we agree!

The article closed by asking, "Can you find authority scripturally approving your activities in religion?" **We hereby ask our more liberal brethren, WITH WHOM East Side is associated, this same question regarding** some of their teachings and practices.

We ask them: WHERE IS BIBLE AUTHORITY FOR:

1. A "brotherhood eldership" through which ALL congregations MAY perform a given work to which all are equally related? For example, Fifth & Highland of Abilene, Texas.

2. A "sponsoring church" arrangement such as exists for the HERALD OF TRUTH program of Fifth & Highland in Abilene, Texas.

3. Activating the church universal; either in actuality or principle?

4. The church (in its congregational capacity) building and maintaining — making donations to:

(1) Schools and colleges: such as Harding, David Lipscomb, Abilene Christian College, et als.?

(2) Homes for unwed mothers?

(3) Hospitals?

(4) Other benevolent institutions?

5. The church (in its congregational capacity)

supporting or aiding benevolently, non-saints?

6. Church kitchens and banquet halls; commonly known as "Fellowship" buildings.

7. Church sponsored recreation and entertainment; such as ball teams, hootenannys, greased pig chases, church parties, church suppers, etc.?

8. The church engaging in business enterprises: such as rental property, farms, nursery schools, parking lots, etc.?

Now brethren, all we ask of you concerning these practices is what you have asked of the denominations concerning their practices: "CAN YOU FIND AUTHORITY SCRIPTURALLY APPROVING YOUR ACTIVITIES IN RELIGION?" Book, chapter, and verse, please! If you cannot find Bible authority for them, then they ought to cease!! GAP ROAD CHURCH OF CHRIST

BATESVILLE, ARKANSAS (Written by James L. Denison of Tampa, Fla., for the Gap Road Church of Christ, and approved by them for publication.) (ADV.)

During my meeting with the Gap Road congregation of Batesville, Arkansas, June 20-30th, I wrote the above article at the request of the Gap Road brethren. It was published by them in the **Batesville Daily Guard** on June 26, 1968. There was no response from the several liberal preachers of that area; though several of the members of the liberal churches spoke favorably of the article. However, as a result of the article a "one-cup, non-Sunday School" group, through one of their preachers, J. W. Kornagay of Raleigh, N.C., challenged Gap Road to debate them on the "cups" and "Bible Class" questions. At the request of the Gap Road church for my advice, I suggested they accept the challenge and get Bro. Elmer Moore of Lufkin, Texas, who has debated these questions on other occasions, to represent them. I contacted Bro. Moore on Sunday night (6-30-68), and he agreed to meet Bro. Kornagay. The debate will probably take place the latter part of 1968 or early 1969.

James L. Denison
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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

Robert LaCoste, Glendale, Ariz. — The church in Glendale, Arizona which meets at 6801 No. 60th Avenue is in need of a preacher and would like to hear from anyone interested in the work. Contact the elders at the above address for further information.

Donald R. Givens, Novato, Calif. — Our gospel meeting with **Otis Moyer** which was scheduled for September, is now scheduled for October 6-11, 1968. One more has been baptized recently. Brethren in the Bay area of California are invited to attend the meeting.

R. A. Pentecost, Sr. — After one year with the church in Gibson City, Ill. I will be moving to work with the sound church in Roseville, Michigan (a suburb of Detroit). The church in Gibson City is seeking a preacher to work with her in the preaching of the gospel. Any preacher desiring to move to this area may contact: **Guy Moore, R.R. #2**, Fairbury, Ill. 61739. Phone 1-309-377-2876.

Tom Wheeler, Frostproof, Fla. — I just recently moved to Frostproof, Fla., to work full time with the Lord's church in this small city. I had preached here on Sunday for over a year. The church is at peace and we are looking forward to a good work in this area. The church is at peace and we are looking forward to a good work in this area. Anyone driving Highway 27 through central Florida would be welcome at any of the services. We are easy to find as the city is small. We have just completed a wonderful series of meetings with brother **Bob Owen** doing the preaching. Crowds were good, the preaching was the best, one was baptized, one restored, and the church I am sure was strengthened.

Larry R. Devore, New Carlisle, Ohio — Since my report in May, we have had two more baptized and four restored. Brother **Dudley R. Spears** preached in a meeting at Funston Avenue, June 15-21. I was in a meeting at Roseville, Ohio, July 15-21.

Rodney M. Miller, Haltom City, Texas — **Oliver Murray** will be with us for a meeting September 30-October 6. The summer months have been good to us, as we are showing good signs of growth. We have found two new families since the month of June. The meeting with Dad was no doubt a big help and boost to us. It also looks like that in the very near future we will be able to pay off the last six years of debt on the building and this will free us to do some much needed work.

James Denison, Henderson Blvd., Tampa, Fla. —

Harold Dowdy will be with the Henderson Blvd. church in Tampa, October 6-11. All in the Tampa Bay area are invited to attend.

Calvin C. Essary, Layton, Utah — I will be moving to Fontana, California in October to work with the faithful congregation there. The church meets at 9132 Sierra Avenue, Fontana, Calif. 92335, and correspondence may be sent to me there. The work will be continued here by brother David Settles, 1991 No. 1000 West, Clinton, Utah 84015. His phone no. is 825-1735. The congregation meets at the American Legion Building in Layton, 128 So. Main St., and is endeavoring to stand for the truth of God's word in this difficult area.

Johnie Edwards, Ellettsville, Ind. — 22 baptized, one restored, 2 identified at Ellettsville, Ind., during July and August. I was in the following meetings: Grant & Summitt St., Ports mouth, Ohio, 4 baptized, 1 restored in July; Waco, Ind., in August with 5 baptized; Pikes Peak, Ind., in August; Belmont Avenue, Indianapolis, Ind., in September 8-14. I will be at Youngs Creek, Ind., in October 7-13 and with the 9th Avenue church in St. Petersburg, Fla., November 6-13.

M. ROY STEVENS — A HELPER OF MANY

Dean Bullock

Our esteemed brother and beloved preacher passed away in the early morning of August 18, 1968 at the age of 69 years, 6 months and 22 days. He is survived by his faithful wife and companion of almost forty-nine years: Hallie Mae; by four sons: Eldred, Hulan, R. J. and Lanier; by a daughter: Nancy Ruth Page; by a host of other relatives.

Two funeral services were conducted for him. The first at Clute, Texas, at 10 a.m., August 19, 1968; the second at Yoakum, Texas, place of burial, at 4 p.m. the same day. I preached the sermon at Clute, assisted in the service by Homer Hailey who was in a meeting there. Herman Sargent conducted the service at Yoakum, assisted by Albert Jennings, local preacher there. Large crowds assembled at both places to mourn, with the family and multitudes of brethren in many sections of the country, the passing of a noble and generous man.

M. Roy Stevens was a remarkable and unusual fellow; a versatile individual. He was an efficient and effective preacher, a capable teacher, an excellent and outstanding song leader and teacher of music, a wise counselor, an energetic personal worker. He was one with a stabilizing influence among brethren; a spiritual builder. And one of those stalwart souls in whose home many persons found warmth, depth, delight and genuine hospitality. He had a fine sense of humor, a ready wit, a

cheerful disposition. People were attracted to him. He loved people and people loved him. More than that, he loved the Lord, the truth and the church.

Most of what M. Roy was to me is forever sealed in my heart. He led the singing, in his inimitable way, in the first meeting in which I ever tried to preach. As a young, immature and inexperienced preacher, I sought and received from him advice and assistance. Our paths crossed many times through the years. We worked together closely on numerous occasions. He was a source of strength to me. What he was to me he was to others. A host of preachers, song leaders and church leaders were encouraged and helped on their way by him. He indeed was "a helper of many."

M. Roy was baptized by his own father, Texas H. Stevens, in 1915. He served the Master for about fifty-three years. His good influence will live on. "He being dead yet speaketh." He still speaks by faith and example to sister Hallie Mae, to his children (three of whom are preachers, one an elder) and to many brethren whose lives were touched by his.

Only eternity can reveal the true impact of his life. "For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord."

Jerry Eubanks, 1701 Linda Street, Plant City, Florida 33566 — On June 1, 1968. I began my new work with the faithful Christians here in Plant City. The work thus far has been encouraging in that unity and peace exist. With such an pleasant environment among God's people, surely God will give to us an increase. Beginning September 29 and continuing through October 4, brother Ross Saunders, of Bradley, Arkansas will be with us in a gospel meeting. Bro. Saunders is a former preacher here in Plant City and much good is anticipated.

Prior to my move to Florida, I preached for the Embry Hills congregation in northeast Atlanta. Embry Hills is made up of fine people and my stay with them was a rewarding experience. **David Tant** is now working with that congregation.

never be engaged in by the teacher, but particularly is this true in dealing with this type of individual. This is the time to press and drive home scripture. If the Word of God cannot break and pulverize hearts of this nature, nothing will. "For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Heb. 4:12). Show the prospect that without forgiveness, the soul is lost (Mark 16:16, Luke 13:3). Demonstrate that only in Christ is there hope in this life, and in the life to come (I Cor. 15:19; I Tim. 1:1; 3:7; I Pet. 1:3), and that there is no peace of mind and real joy outside of Christ (I Pet. 3:21; Acts 8). Never high-pressure your prospect. Above all, do not give up easily. Make every effort for follow-up at a later date. Many prospects have been guided to accept the truth through other opportunities that have presented themselves.

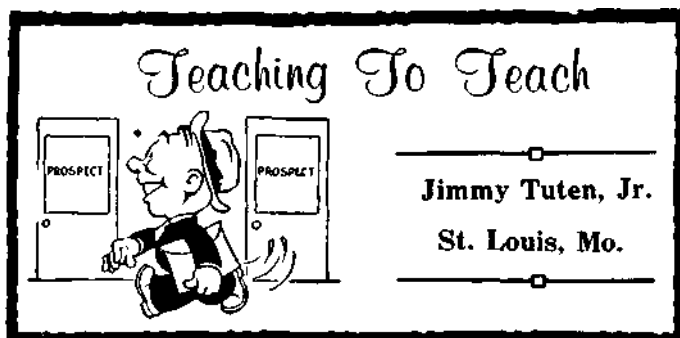
THE UNDECIDED

The personal worker will run into more people who fit into the "undecided" bracket than any other. One will have to determine the reason for the hesitation before being able to deal with it. Some are undecided because they feel that they do not know enough. Others are in doubt and some are just indifferent. Others become undecided because they feel that they cannot live the Christian life.

Let us look at those who feel that they do not know enough to obey the gospel. If the teacher has done a good job with his home study, and knows that the prospect has been instructed in the principles necessary to obedience, then all that remains is to inform the undecided regarding how much knowledge is necessary before obeying the gospel. Some honestly feel that they must understand all the ramifications, instrumental music, etc., when in reality if they know what the Bible teaches the alien to do in order to become a Christian, they know enough to obey their Lord. Stress can be laid upon Matthew's account of the great commission, "Teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things" (Matt. 28:19-20). God's order is TEACH, baptize, and TEACH ALL THINGS. This may be illustrated by turning to Acts 2 or 8, with such questions as "how much did the Eunuch know before he was baptized," or "how many sermons did the Pentecostians hear before they obeyed the gospel?"

As suggested, doubt and uncertainty often causes people to be undecided about obeying the gospel. There are two groups of doubters: the honest doubter and the dishonest doubter. As to the latter, if one is dishonest with reference to his dubiousness (whether or not one actually doubts in this condition is doubtful in and of itself), there is precious little that you can do. "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine" (Matt. 7:6). Re-affirm what the New Testament teaches for the honest doubter.

Indifference on the part of the prospect is another great obstacle. After having made your appeal from the Scriptures with the use of such passages as



OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

THE CLOSED MINDED, DEFIANT PROSPECT

In personal evangelism the greatest of all obstacles to be dealt with is the hard, prejudiced individual, who is closed minded and defiant. Trying to deal with persons of this disposition requires a lot of patience. Sarcasm, ridicule and rebuke should

Hebrews 2:3, it may be necessary to exhort your prospect with "many other words" (Acts 2:40). Usually an appeal to one's sense of responsibility, to himself, and to his family is most effective (Eph. 6: 1-4; Deut. 6:4-7). An argument with reference to the eternal resting place of the soul, with such questions as "if your children (father, wife, etc.) were to ask you for advice concerning their souls, and you were upon your death bed, would you advise them to follow in your steps?" This sometimes will get the job done.

"I HAVE BEEN BAPTIZED" OBSTACLE

Many prospects have been baptized into some denomination, and when they are confronted with the question of obeying the gospel, they excuse themselves with the statement, "I have already been baptized !" If, for example, your prospect was a Baptist, you will know in advance that if the prospect was baptized for the remission of sins, it was in spite of Baptist doctrine, and not because of it. You can tackle this problem by asking the following questions in the order given: "What is the purpose of baptism?" Then lead the prospect to answer according to the Bible. Then ask, "where did you learn that baptism was for the remission of sins? In view of the fact that Baptists do not believe that baptism is essential unto salvation, could you possibly have learned this from a Baptist preacher? Or did you learn this truth by visiting the church of Christ after you became a Baptist?" You will need to stress the fact that the prospect in all likelihood did not understand the truth with reference to baptism while joining the Baptist church, but gained this knowledge later, and in all likelihood back-tracked in his thinking. Such people have not been baptized according to the New Testament.

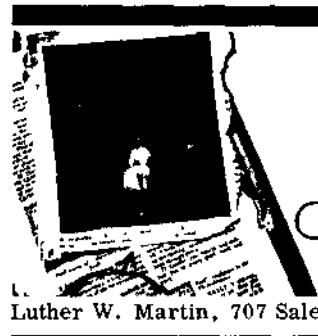
Some choose to build doubt in the mind of the prospect with reference to his baptism, by inquiring into the confession that was made before the prospect was baptized. If you do this, be sure to teach clearly the relationship between confessing one's faith in Christ and baptism. When this is done, the importance of confessing that "I believe that God for Christ's sake has forgiven me for my sins," before being baptized into the Baptist church is immediately understood. One cannot be baptized until he confesses his faith in Christ. An appeal with reference to making one's calling and election sure will bring about a response in most cases.

CONCLUSION

Remember that the gospel is a message for the whole world, and the responsibility of carrying that message to the world rests on the whole church! Convert that friend to Christ today! Learn to meet his objections.

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Reviewing the
DOCTRINES
OF
CATHOLICISM

Luther W. Martin, 707 Salem Avenue, Rolla, Missouri 65401

ROMAN CATHOLIC QUESTIONS ... AND THE ANSWERS GIVEN!

Most of the Roman Catholic publications with which I have come in contact, devote space to questions submitted by readers. The answers to those questions, are, of course, accurate and authentic, as far as Roman Catholic doctrine and practice are concerned. Therefore, when we copy and criticize these replies, we are making use of ACCURATE information. There can be no MISREPRESENTATION of Catholic teaching and practice by such a procedure.

(1) QUESTION: "How far back has the Church, founded by Christ, been called the Catholic Church?"

ANSWER: "The word was used as early as the close of the first century to indicate one of the marks of the Church, catholic or universal. For many centuries, the word was used in just that sense and its place might have been taken by one of the other words indicating the four marks — 'Apostolic' or 'Holy' or 'One.' There was a tendency to use the word catholic as the distinguishing epithet of the Church, which became common custom in England in the 16th century. Now the title 'Catholic Church' designates the entire embodiment of the faithful of both Eastern and Western Rites under the authority of the Pope at Rome. Except for a small body of High Anglicans, no other Christians use the name as a distinguishing title." (The Tablet, Oct. 29th, 1955).

COMMENT: Another priest, B. L. Conway writes: "The name Catholic as a name is not-applied to the Catholic Church in the Bible ... St. Ignatius of Antioch, writing to the Christians of Smyrna about the year 110 A.D., is the first to use the name." (The Question Box, page 132). The word 'catholic' was applied in early centuries to general or universal drugs which were held to be efficacious in the treatment of numerous diseases. Thus became known as 'catholicon.' Peter taught, and Luke wrote: Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom we crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for THERE IS NONE OTHER NAME UNDER HEAVEN GIVEN AMONG MEN, WHEREBY WE MUST BE SAVED" (Acts 4:10-12).

(2) QUESTION: "I think a good explanation of the meaning of Ember Days would help people to show more respect for them. What is the origin of

Ember Days? Why do we fast and abstain on these days?"

ANSWER: "Ember Days are the Wednesday, Friday and Saturday of a week at the beginning of each season. The origin of the name is not known but the practice is almost as old as the Church. It grew out of a practice observed by the heathens at Rome who, in their agricultural life, held pagan religious services at the beginning of each important season; in June for a bountiful harvest, in September for a rich vintage and in December for the seeding. The Church, when converting heathen nations, has always tried to utilize any practices which could be sanctified or Christianized. So, she borrowed this custom and held fasts in June, September and December as early as the end of the second century, adding a fourth season a century or two later.

"Now, by law fixed by Pope Gregory VII in the eleventh century, the Ember Days are observed on the Wednesday, Friday and Saturday after Dec. 13 (St. Lucy), after Ash Wednesday, after Pentecost and after Sept. 14 (Exaltation of the Cross). The observance of fast and abstinence on these days, begun in Rome, was taken to each newly evangelized part of the Western Church, so it is one of the oldest disciplinary practices we have. The purpose of this act of mortification and penance is the special sanctification of the four seasons, still retaining the notion of asking God's blessing on the goods of the earth, but especially for obtaining God's blessing on the clergy, for whose ordination the Saturdays of Ember weeks are set apart.

"The regulations for Ember Days at present require that all the faithful over 21 and under 60 years of age (past the 59th birthday) observe the fast by taking only one full meal and two light meals and in addition, all over 7 years (without any upper age limit) abstain from meat excepting at the principal meal." (The Tablet, Oct. 15, 1955).

COMMENT: "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain" (Gal. 4:10-11). Here is yet another practice of the Roman Catholics which they themselves admit, has no basis or foundation in Holy Scripture. In fact, in this above-given answer, they admit taking it from heathen practices ... making it 'Christianized' as they express it. Paul said ... "I kept back nothing that was profitable un-to you ... I declared ALL of God's counsel" (Acts 20: 20 & 27). Paul failed to mention EMBER DAYS!

(3) QUESTION: "Was Dec. 25 the exact date of Christ's birth? If so, where in the Scriptures can one find proof of this?"

ANSWER: "It is not known that Dec. 25 was the exact date of the Divine Savior's birth; and nowhere in the New Testament is there any clue to the correct month and day of the Nativity. Because of the obscurity of the Gospels on this point, there is no month of the year not assigned by some writer as that of Christ's birth.

"By the year 385 A. D., one finds St. John Chrysostom urging that Dec. 25 be observed as the Feast of Christ's Birth, and saying that the day had already been noted in the West for some time.

"The Dec. 25 date may have been chosen to coincide with pagan and Jewish feasts held on the same day, so that people's minds would be taken off these

religions and focused on the true religion.

"The opinion of St. Thomas Aquinas provides an interesting sidelight on the matter. He remarked that it was fitting for Christ to be born on the 25th of December, for this is just after the time when the light of day begins to lengthen, thus symbolizing the Light of the World, who comes 'to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.' Summa III, q. 35, art. viii. This, of course, is merely an argument of convenience and does not prove the point." (St. Louis Register, Nov. 11, 1955).

COMMENT: It appears that the whole observance is based upon an 'argument of convenience and does not prove the point.' The Encyclopedia Britannica states: "Christmas was not among the earliest festivals of the Church, and before the 5th century there was no general consensus of opinion as to when it should come in the calendar, whether on Jan. 6th, March 25th or Dec. 25th." (Vol. 5, Page 641.) Other historians have assigned such dates as May 29th, April 19th or 20th, while Clement of Alexandria set the date as November 17th.

"In Britain, Dec. 25th was a festival long before the conversion to Christianity, for Bede relates that the ancient peoples of the Anglii began the year on Dec. 25th, when we now celebrate the birthday of the Lord; and the very night which is now so holy to us, they called in their tongue 'modranecht', that is, mother's night, by reason we suspect of the ceremonies which in that night-long vigil they performed. In England, the observance of Christmas was forbidden by act of Parliament in 1644; Charles II revived the feast, but the Scots adhered to the Puritan view." (Encyc. Britt., page 642.)

"As late as 245 A.D., Origen repudiated the idea of keeping the birthday of Christ, 'as if he were a king Pharaoh.' " (Ibid, page 642.)

The holly, mistletoe, the Yule log and the wassail bowl are relics of pre-Christian times. In the 5th century, the Western Church (later known as Roman Catholic) ordered Christmas to be celebrated forever on the day of the old Roman feast of the birth of Sol (the Sun-god of Roman mythology) December 25th. The Eastern Church (Greek Orthodox) selected January 6th as the date for the celebration.

"The custom of making presents at Christmas is derived from ancient usage; but it has become consecrated by ages, and contributes greatly to make this festival an interesting event to families." (Encyclopaedia Americana, pp. 623.)

"The Christmas tree has been traced back to the Romans. It went from Germany to Great Britain, and is almost universal in the United States, where the customs of so many nationalities meet and gradually blend into common usage." (Ibid.)

THE BIBLE IS COMPLETELY SILENT CONCERNING SUCH AN OBSERVANCE. If God had desired that the physical birth-date of His Son be revered, He would have revealed the exact date in the Bible. Therefore, those persons interested only in following Divine Authority, must refrain from attaching any spiritual or religious significance to the date of December 25th.

Romanism's observance and celebration thereof is merely another instance of her resorting to heathen feasts and celebrations and making them "Christianized."

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THIS PERMISSIVE GENERATION!

Irven Lee

Many parents of this generation do not restrain their children. This is not peculiar to our own age, but it is now a very evident weakness. Eli stood condemned in his day "because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not" (I Samuel 3:11-14). These sons had been brought up in his house, but they were "sons of Belial; they knew not the Lord" (I Samuel 2:12). This brought punishment from the Lord upon the family. The message from the Lord to Samuel was: "Behold, I will do a thing in Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle" (I Samuel 3:11). They did reap. The unrestrained family destroyed itself.

One very strict period of child care follows a lax, unrestrained age. For a time doctors encourage mothers to have their babies on regular schedules for feeding. In another generation, permissive feeding is recommended. With permissive feeding tends to come the idea that children who are brought into "subjection with all gravity" are being mistreated and will therefore resent their parents. This is not Bible teaching. Some call this a Dr. Spock generation. Many of the young have not been restrained. They now have no respect for law or the rights of others.

The Bible teaches that children are to be brought into subjection, and the Bible is right. It is the law of God. The inspired teaching is to the effect that proper chastening yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness (I Timothy 3:4,5; Hebrews 12:5-11). Firmness has always been the rule of God (Proverbs 13:25; 19:18). The nurture and admonition of the Lord certainly do not leave out teaching nor deny the need for affection and love. The teaching and tender love go along with the rod of correction. There is no proper word of defense for the lack of discipline and restraint.

The government in a democracy tends to reflect the sentiment of the people. The strong arm of the law seems to be tied, at times, when mobs would steal and burn the property of others. Many are complaining of how the courts are making it harder and harder to prosecute the criminal. There is less protection of property and less safety on the streets. Society in general is blamed for the animal like nature of the young hoodlum and "hippie." Permissive-

ness has taken the sword from the "powers that be" so that Paul's estimate of government is ignored. He said: "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" (Romans 13:4). Maybe a reaction has set in that will change this and bring more respect for law.

Religious movements in America are vivid illustrations of permissiveness. Various denominations will condone about everything from drunkenness to immodesty and immorality. A man who uses his alcohol and pours out vulgarity and blasphemy may serve on the "board of stewards" or "board of deacons." How could the fight against ungodliness and worldly lusts be weakened more than it has been? Religious leaders are so weak in the faith that they recognize no binding law. Preachers and church leaders in general are interested in numbers, money, and display. Permissiveness has gone to seed, and churches of Christ are not free of this weakness.

It seems that those who preach funerals suppose that God is as permissive as they. The family of the irreligious and immoral reprobate are assured that the "loved one" is in heaven. Maybe he was once heard to say, "Lord, have mercy." Many are the passages that tell of the severity of God and of the fact that few enter into life (Matthew 7:21-23; 16:26,29; 25:31-46; John 5:28,29, etc.). It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God for He is a consuming fire (Romans 11:22; Hebrews 10:31; 12:29). Psychologists may build within man the permissive spirit, but God does not change. He is revealed as the God of peace, love, grace, and mercy; but the same Bible makes it very clear that there is severity. Are we too blind to see it? Few there be that find the way to life.

When parents teach their children obedience, these children will obey the law of the land and contend earnestly for the faith. If trained in the way they should go they will see the appropriateness of fear and trembling in working out their salvation. Let all good and worthy forces work toward an understanding that each must give an account to God, and that we should walk circumspectly (Galatians 6:7,8; II Corinthians 5:10; Ephesians 5:15). Do you have any influence? Of course you do! Then use it in building respect for authority, both human and divine.

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