

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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Things Written for Our Learning

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Warner Robins, Georgia 31093



It was a cloudy spring day. The kind of day the farmers dreaded in Carteret County, N. C. They did not know if they should try to work in the fields or go to the house—or to the little country store nearby. On such a day the writer used to love to drop in at the country stores and "Set around". The tractors and trucks would drift in at the slightest pretense of rain until it would "slack up" so they could go back to work.

On such occasions, if the preacher would bide his time and wait for the right moment, usually an opportunity would arise to discuss the Bible. Sitting on a soft-drink crate turned end-wise while sipping on a Pepsi and eating a Clark bar, the preacher would wait for the inevitable questions to come.

"Ain't you that 'Church of Christ' preacher from town?"

"Well, I am the preacher for the local church of Christ but I am a gospel preacher."

Silence followed, then another question.

"You folks don't believe in the Old Testament, do you?"

"Yes sir, we sure do."

Another silence, more prolonged.

"Well, I heard y'all went by the New Testament."

"That is correct."

Puzzled, the farmer pondered what had been said in an effort to harmonize what to him seemed to be a contradiction. His was the problem of so many. When we in the Lord's church tell people that we follow the teachings of Christ in the New Testament and that the Old Testament has been taken away,

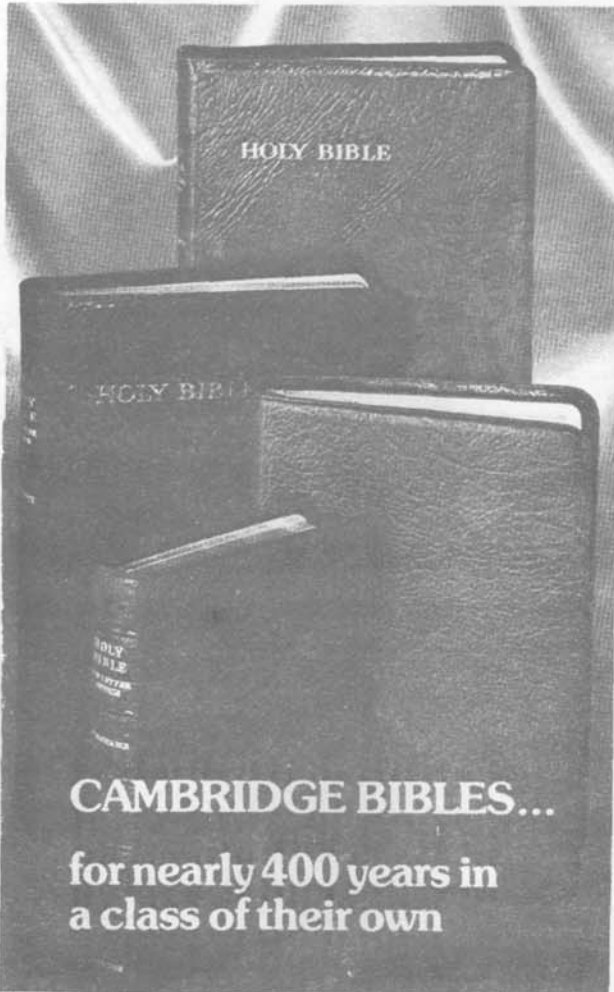
they seem to think we are saying in reality that the Old Testament is now useless, serves no purpose, should not be studied and perhaps even discarded. This, to many, seems almost, if not in reality, a form of blasphemy and disrespect for the Bible.

Our purpose in the articles appearing in this paper under the above caption will be to eradicate false ideas concerning the use of the Old Testament scriptures today and to draw from these writings practical and down-to-earth applications where possible.

Paul in Romans 15:4 said by inspiration with reference to Old Testament writings, "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." In the previous verse Paul alluded to an Old Testament passage in Psalms 69:9 making the application to Christ. Although Paul and all the apostles taught the law of the Old Covenant was no longer binding after the New Covenant came into force, they all taught that these "aforetime" writings "were written for our learning." That is the purpose they now fulfill. That is the reason we do not discard it and the reason we do continue to study from it and to learn what we can about God's dealings with His people and also those who were not His people in days gone by. Though the law of God has changed, the principles by which God operates do not change. Therefore, by studying the Old Testament we gain insight as to how God will operate today when the New Testament is in effect. Such study for the purpose of learning more of God and His Will can only be to our advantage. Someone has aptly described the matter in these terms: "The Old Testament is the New Testament concealed and the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed."

Since we are unable to state the case any more clearly than this, we shall draw heavily on this explanation as a most appropriate launching pad for such a column as this. Let us learn what we can from the "things written aforetime" which things "were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."

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Editorial

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"THOU WAST AS ONE OF THEM"

The book of Obadiah concerns itself with a divine judgment upon the nation of Edom because of its behaviour when Judah was invaded by an enemy. The Edomites traced their ancestry to Esau, twin brother to Jacob, and their small kingdom lay adjacent to that of Judah. The event under discussion was either the time of Jehoram, when the Philistines and Arabians joined forces to attack Jerusalem in 848-844 B.C., or when the Chaldeans destroyed Jerusalem in 586 B.C. The weight of evidence favors the latter event. Jeremiah and Ezekiel speak of this (Jer. 49:7-13; Ezek. 35:1-10). This is evidently the same time referred to in Psalms 137:7 which says "Remember, O Jehovah, against the children of Edom the day of Jerusalem; who said Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof." (Commentary on the Minor Prophets by Homer Hailey, p. 28).

When this tragedy befell Jerusalem, Edom stood by, watched it happen, encouraged the enemies of Judah and even "rejoiced over the children of Judah in the day of their destruction" (Obadiah 12). Did Edom actually participate in this invasion? Oh no! But they might as well have done so, as far as the Lord was concerned. "In the day that thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the strangers carried away captive his forces, and foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, even thou wast as one of them" (Obadiah 11). They did not lay a hand on Judah. They did not tear down one brick from the wall. But they DID sympathize with the enemy who did this! To stand there and secretly rejoice when their own kinsmen were under siege and not lift a finger to help them was not really neutrality, it was criminal complicity.

If there was ever a time when some of my brethren need the lesson of this book, it is now. A few years ago, the views of W. Carl Ketcherside on "unity in diversity", difference between "gospel" and "doctrine", and Calvinistic views on the grace of God and imputed personal righteousness of Christ, began to get a foothold among some young preachers. Regardless of which extreme Ketcherside has pursued, he has always attracted the attention and devotion of some immature young men. Several elements joined forces to give impetus to this assault on the walls of spiritual Zion. The ecumenical spirit was in the air. The anti-war

movement carried over into the religious realm. The idea that all truth is relative and besides, "nobody is perfect" minimized the importance of absolute adherence to an absolute standard. A spirit of rebellion against authority, egged on by situation ethics, also helped prepare the seedbed for this error. There was a developing taste for works of Calvinistic scholars and an unhealthy awe for denominational scholarship. Besides, everyone knows that factions and parties are wrong. When all these ingredients came together the end result was an uprising against the truth. Those who had tasted this new wine were no longer satisfied with the same old gospel. It was too dull for them. They backed off from conflict, stopped waging war against denominational error, and certainly against error among brethren, and preferred to make love (denominational style) than war. But isn't it strange how much trouble can be stirred up by those who insist that our troubles are all unnecessary anyhow?

In keeping with advice from Father Carl they determined to stay in the camp of the Lord and work like termites from within. They would work on the young, the babe in Christ, the ambitious for attention and the brother who evidenced already a spirit of compromise. They would form cells to meet privately away from the watchful eyes of elders and any of "the old guard." They would help these prospects for enlightenment to realize a greater degree of "spirituality" than they had ever known. Chain prayers, spontaneous singing and devotions in the dark - Ah yes, that should do it! Away with the backward papers of "fighters" and militant opposers of error! Instead, read CHRISTIANITY TODAY, MISSION MESSENGER, MISSION and INTEGRITY - these are far better! The trouble with the more aggressive brethren was that they lacked "love."

Well, the movement is now out of the dormitory room and the cell meeting. It has been openly advocated in papers published even by those claiming to be conservative. It has been the means of disrupting congregations. Divisions have occurred because of it and these continue to the present hour. Those regarded as gospel preachers have come out in their preaching and writing to advocate salvation by faith only, call plain gospel preaching which demands obedience to the will of God "legalism", and have urged that the perfect righteousness of Christ is imputed to the Christian so that the grace of God will save an erring brother whether he repents or not. Oh yes, and about that love, we have learned how it behaves. We have seen some of the very "sweet" brothers get angry enough to become red clear to the top of their heads, resort to intemperate outbursts, and even stoop to publish one of the worst examples of slander we have ever seen which was intended as a parody on TRUTH MAGAZINE, called facetiously FALTH MAGAZINE and which viciously depicted Cecil Willis and James W. Adams as religious tyrants.

While all this was going on, there have been those noble souls who said they were opposed to the error which threatened to completely destroy the church and replace it with something which is not a thirty-third cousin to it, but whose major help in the battle has been to sit in the grandstand, occasionally arise to shout something about "partyism", "politics", and "pontifical spirits" while throwing bricks at those who were bruised and bleeding in the battle for principle. About all we have heard from some quarters has been what ought not to have been said, or the WAY it should have been done. Make no mistake, in every battle over righteous principles, even the advocates of truth do not have infallible judgment. Neither do the grandstand quarterbacks.

Meanwhile, the work of error goes on. It is not over, brethren. Some are even more vocal than before. It appears that some of the leading agitators of these false views have determined to bask in the sympathy offered them by men who ought to be exposing and opposing them and bide their time in hopes that the whole thing will blow over. If Edward Fudge and those of like persuasion have altered their stated positions, we have certainly seen no evidence of it. To make heroic martyrs of men who compromise truth is wrong. One does not have to join a party or faction to stand up alongside faithful brethren in opposing error and upholding truth. Such folks do have something in common and should not be ashamed of one another. What was that about "politics"?

The Lord was not indifferent to the fact that Edom stood "on the other side" when Jerusalem was under attack. He said "thou wast as one of them." When fire breaks out in the kingdom of God, it ill becomes faithful servants of Christ to stand by and sympathize with the arsonists (whether they are personal friends or not) and criticize those who are doing their best to extinguish the flame. If you know a more dignified, scholarly, mature, respectful manner to deal with the arsonists and put out the fire, by all means do so.


This is not the only issue which needs attention but it is one which needs attention now. We do not need to preach on it every time we stand up, but we do need to instruct and warn brethren about it. What about you, my brother? Are you helping or just watching? Every article in every issue of this paper will not be devoted to this problem, but we intend to do what we can to uphold the truth of God's word and expose this evil work for what it is, even identifying from time to time those who are implicated. That practice will not suit all the brethren. But we are convinced that it conforms to the practice of our Lord and his apostles.

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THE INFLUENCE OF A GODLY MOTHER

James McDuffie Barnes was a faithful preacher of the Gospel in Alabama for nearly sixty years, from 1856 until his death in 1913. When the Alabama Christian Missionary Cooperative was formed at Selma in 1886, Barnes was present for the occasion and raised strong objection to the organization, contending there is no scriptural authority for such. Afterwards he was instrumental in steering many preachers and churches away from this innovation that opened the door for the Christian Church digression in the state. His persuasive power for truth and right was immense throughout the years of his ministry. H. Leo Boles said of him, "No preacher has had such an influence in Alabama as J. M. Barnes."

Mary Lumpkin Barnes, the mother of J. M. Barnes, was a young woman when she was baptized in 1828 by William McGauhy, one of the pioneer preachers in South Alabama. She later married Elkana Barnes and to their union J. M. Barnes was born. Mary Barnes was a remarkable woman, known for her "clear reasoning and unerring knowledge on religious subjects." "Her profound Biblical information and superior wisdom in matters of business as well, were often appealed to by saint and sinner alike, and many were the business entanglements unraveled by her, out of court, for her friends and neighbors." (Alabama Christian, Feb. 1906, p. 1.)

In 1854 J. M. Barnes left his father's plantation near Strata to attend Bethany College, the school operated by Alexander Campbell at Bethany, Virginia. As he was preparing for his departure, his mother handed him a sheet of paper on which she had written some words of religious counsel and encouragement. "Her heart was heavy with sorrow to see him go, and her tears fell fast on the paper as she handed it to him. He tacked the paper to the lid of his trunk, where it remained until it was destroyed by the fire which burned his home in 1883. Among the words he still remembers on that paper (this was written around 1897, EK), he quotes the following: 'Be kind and courteous to every one. Be polite and respectful to those older than yourself. Treat others as you would have them treat you. Trust God and serve him, and he will take care of you.'" (F. D. Srygley, Biographies and Sermons, p. 399.)

Mary Barnes' words of wisdom to her young son, as he left to venture far from home for the first time, would have meant little to him had they not been undergirded by her righteous life. These simple words of truth may seem old fashioned to us, and they are. But they are still good advice to young people as they try their wings in the world and cut the apron strings of home. Parents today could do no better thing for their children, to help them for time and eternity, than to instill these basic principles of right conduct. How vastly different the home, the church, the country, and the world would be if the children of the present generation walked in the shadow of women like Mary Barnes!

The Moving of the Prophets

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How are we to be convinced of the absolute trustworthiness of the Bible—to be certain that it came entirely from God's mind? The surest method is to look into its heart, to see whether its writings match its claims. And what grander or more demanding claim is there, which would be harder for a believer to demonstrate or easier for a skeptic to disprove, than this one: "Thus saith Jehovah, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, Jehovah of hosts: I am the first, and I am the last; and besides me there is no God. And who, as I, shall call and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I established the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and that shall come to pass, let them declare . . . have I not declared unto thee of old, and showed? and ye are my witnesses . . . declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done; . . . I have declared the former things of old; yea, they went forth out of my mouth, and I showed them: suddenly I did them, and they came to pass" (Isa. 44:6-8; 46:20; 48:3).

Such marvelous claims does Jehovah make for Himself, and so does the Book which claims to breathe His breath. To foretell with unmistakable accuracy and detail, future and unknown events that are far beyond human ability to foresee, and then to witness with our own eyes the exact fulfillment of such prophecies, constitutes the strongest possible proof that the foreteller spoke by supernatural inspiration. The Scriptures claim to be the product of exactly that kind of inspiration.

If it is God's book, the Bible will clearly show us the proof; if such is not forthcoming, we must scorn those claims and look for guidance elsewhere. But if we can show that the Bible does, indeed, live up to

the majestic claims expressed in Isaiah, we must then be convinced that it is Jehovah who speaks through its pages. And what can we then do but submit ourselves entirely to its teachings, implicitly trusting its power to lead us to salvation, and its divine wisdom to furnish us completely unto every good work.

The mountain of evidence is so great, it is difficult to be brief and selective. We would do well to discuss the predictions of the coming of the Messiah which, considering their large number and clear fulfillment, would consume many pages and afford much profit. We might also talk of those great cities, whose histories and present states are undeniable monuments to the Bible's inspiration, as their fates were, long before they came to pass, specifically and accurately foretold in that Book: such cities as Jericho, Babylon, Ninevah, Tyre, Sidon, Samaria, Petra and Jerusalem. And it is hard to pass by those numerous prophecies of that eternal kingdom which was to come, and which were actually fulfilled in the events of Acts 2. When we consider those Old Testament writers, it is as Everest said:

. . . the Eastern world is written all over with the fulfillment of their prophecies: the valleys of the Euphrates, the Jordan, and the Nile; the morasses of Babylon, the pasture lands of Ninevah, the slopes and hill-tops of Jerusalem, and the bare rock on which once stood Tyre, the mistress of the Mediterranean. The fate of the ancient nations can not be recounted without bearing testimony to the inspiration of the prophets: Arabs and Egyptians, Babylonians and Phoenicians, Greeks and Romans, all passed away in obedience to prophetic doom. The voice of prophecy was the voice of God. (**THE DIVINE DEMONSTRATION**, pp. 358-9)

These would be bountiful sources for the proof we seek, but we wish to center upon one specific people who will always, in every generation of history yet to come, be an indisputable testimony, which every man can witness for himself, that the Bible is from God. The people of Israel—the Jews—are a living monument to God's mighty providence and to the heavenly origin of His Scriptures.

We will make our case on these three points: (1) that God promised, long before it came to pass, to build the Jewish nation through Abraham and to give them the land of Canaan; (2) upon the "birth" of this nation, He foretold, through Moses, its entire history some fifteen hundred years in advance; and (3) the Bible's accurate prediction of the Jews' present state and of the total extinction of all those nations which oppressed her during the pre-Christian age, can be accounted for only by admitting that this Book is not of human origin.

Even while Abram was old and childless, God prophesied, "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great;" (Gen.

12:2). Upon receiving this promise Abram and Sarah went into Canaan, where Jehovah appeared and said, "Unto thy seed will I give this land: . . . for all the land that thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth . . ." (Gen. 12:7; 13:15-16).

As though these were not enough details to have to fulfill precisely, further minute predictions were made. In Genesis 15, God was reaffirming His promises to Abram when He expanded upon them: "... thy seed shall be sojourners in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge: and afterward shall they come out with great substance. . . . And in the fourth generation they shall come hither again" (vv. 13-16).

These specific prophecies stand out: a great nation would come from Abram's son, as yet unborn to him and Sarah, both of whom were beyond the age of reproduction; this nation would serve a foreign country for four hundred years; in the fourth generation, they would leave that country with great substance and proceed to capture Canaan, at that time inhabited by the Amorites.

The accurate prediction and fulfillment of such detailed and far-reaching prophecies defy all human capacity. What mere human could conceive of making such staggering promises to a childless couple of old age, to say nothing of trying to predict such exact details of the destiny of a non-existent nation?

These prophecies were uttered a full twenty-five years before Isaac was born to Abram; eighty-five years before the birth of Israel (Jacob), the nation's father; two hundred fifteen years before Israel and his eleven sons joined Joseph in Egypt; six hundred forty-five years before Moses, in the fourth generation (Ex. 6:16-20), led the new nation out of Egyptian bondage, despoiling Egypt of her wealth; and six hundred eighty-five years before Joshua led them across the Jordan to begin conquering their promised land.

Our first argument is completed when we hear Joshua say: "So Jehovah gave unto Israel all the land which he swore to give unto their fathers; and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. . . . There failed not aught of any good thing which Jehovah had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass" (Josh. 21:43,45). Seeing that every prophecy was fulfilled exactly as promised, who is ready to explain it away by saying that someone had made a lot of lucky guesses?

Egypt gave birth to Abram's promised nation. Even as she was suffering the pains of death, Israel was delivered through the Red Sea to take her first free breath in Sinai's wilderness. And when only three months old, her entire history for the next fifteen hundred years was written down in Deut. 28-30. As long as she was true to the Law, specific blessings were promised; when she forsook the Law,

specific curses were promised. Even a casual reading of the Old Testament and of secular history will prove the unfailing accuracy of those three chapters. Moses prophesied that a fierce nation would come upon them from afar, as swift as an eagle, showing no mercy to young or old, and would destroy their cities. The besieged ones would become cannibals, and even the tender and delicate woman would eat her own child. Huge numbers of the Jews would perish, while multitudes would glut the slave market until no one would buy any more of them. They would be oppressed for all time, and become a hiss, a proverb, and a by-word among all nations.

Josephus' graphic description of Rome's siege of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. is like reading Moses' writings all over again. Every detail of the prophecy was fulfilled. If one wants to read it for himself, here are the references: Josephus, Wars, Book 6, chap. 3, paragraph 4, p. 818; and chp. 9, paragraph 2, p. 831. There are limits to the power of human foresight. As Fisher said:

Prophecy which is fulfilled under circumstances that forbid the supposition of mere coincidence or accident . . . necessarily involves supernatural agency. Nothing else can account for the conformity of the event with the prediction.

. . . . They were prophecies which did not spring from any statesmanlike sagacity or power of forecast. Argument number two, therefore, stands upon the centuries of history's testimony, open to public inspection by every generation, and even yet is unscathed by the skeptic's searching eye.

Though far removed from Josephus, every new day forces us to see, with our own eyes, the miracle of fulfilled prophecy as we behold the present state of the Jewish people and of those nations which shared her history in Old Testament days.

The Jews had forsaken God and were being punished, having been given over to Babylonian captivity. Jeremiah, writing six hundred years before Jesus was born, wrote this prophecy: "Fear not thou, O Jacob my servant, saith Jehovah; for I am with thee: for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee: but I will not make a full end of thee, but I will correct thee in measure, and will in no wise leave thee unpunished" (46:28; cf. 30:10-24). Two predictions: the utter destruction of all those ancient heathen nations and the preservation, through all generations, of the Jews.

What have become of the Philistines, the Hittites, and the Amorites; who can show us some Assyrians, Babylonians or Persians; and who can trace his origins to any of those ancient peoples? There is not a single representative today of any of those pagan nations, except of Egypt; and that because God vowed to make an exception in her case (Isa. 19; Ezek. 29-30).

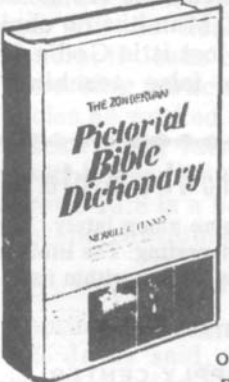
And while all trace of those mighty people has vanished from the earth, there are Jews to be found

every where, throughout the world. The destruction of the one and the preservation of the other are ever-present, living testimonies of fulfilled prophecy. It is a standing miracle which we cannot help but see. Alexander Campbell said:

No other volume presumes to give the whole history of time and of man but the Bible. The book . . . contains the history of one family for seventy generations, and foretells its future fortunes to the end of time. The Ishmaelites, the Idumeans, the Israelites . . . and their countries, together with Egypt, Syria, Moab, Ammon, Amalek, Babylon, Tyre, Sidon, Nineveh, as well as the Chaldean, Medo-Persian, Grecian, and Roman Empires, . . . are written out on the living pages of the sacred books of Prophets. . . . Persons, places and events, ages before their appearance, are foretold with the accuracy of history, by Him who speaketh of "the things that are not" yet in existence "as though they were."

The fulfillment of prophecies which were spoken and written centuries before is a perfect demonstration of the divine inspiration of the prophet's message. And if God's Holy Spirit is so clearly seen to have guided those men in their preaching and writing, who can fail to place his complete and unwavering confidence in that Book which was revealed, word for word, with the same care and perfection as characterized God's universe of Genesis one and two? That divine Spirit who "moved upon the face of the waters"—that mighty Spirit who raised the Lord eternally from death—is the same Spirit of the omnipotent God, who carried along those prophets of old as they perfectly foretold the future course of the world's history, and of man's redemption from sin.

There is absolutely no accounting for the supernatural knowledge of those ancient prophets, except that given by the apostle Peter: ". . . no prophecy of scripture is of private interpretation. For no prophecy ever came by the will of man: but men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:20-21).



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CALVINISM—No. 5

In his system of theology, John Calvin taught that all were born in sin, thus depraved; that only certain ones were selected to salvation because Christ's death was limited for those elected to salvation; but those elect required a supernatural act of the Holy Spirit working on their heart to save them. Once the elect were saved, they were secure to the point that they could not be lost. One preacher advocated the doctrine of "once saved, always saved" or "once in grace, always in grace" by saying, "A child of God can go from the arms of a harlot to the arms of Jesus." Another preacher said on the same point, "If I killed my wife and mother and debauched a thousand women, I couldn't go to hell—in fact, I couldn't go to hell, if I wanted to. If on the judgment day, I should find that my loved ones are lost and should lose all desire to be saved, and should beg God to send me to hell with them, He couldn't do it; and if He did, He would be a liar because He said, 'No man can pluck them out of my hand.'" Sam Morris, a Baptist preacher, expressed what his two fellow Baptist preachers said in these words. "We take the position that a Christian's sins do not damn his soul. The way a Christian lives, what he says, his character, his conduct, or his attitude toward other people have nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul . . . All the prayers a man may pray, all the Bibles he may read, all the churches he may belong to, all the services he may attend, all the sermons he may practice, all the debts he may pay, all the ordinances he may observe, all the laws he may keep, all the benevolent acts he may perform will not make his soul one whit safer: and all the sins he may commit from idolatry to murder will not make his soul in any more danger. . . . The way a man lives has nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul."

Eternal Security

Having seen the doctrine of eternal security in the words of some preachers, note these statements from Calvinistic creeds. "Those whom God hath accepted . . . called and sanctified . . . and given the precious faith . . . can neither totally nor finally fall from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end and be eternally saved . . . This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their

own free will; but upon the immutability of the decree of election. . . . And though they may . . . fall into grievous sins, and for a time continue therein, yet they shall renew their repentance and be preserved through faith in Christ Jesus to the end." (*Philadelphia Confession of Faith*, Article 17; *The Hiscox Guide For Baptist Churches*, pages 176-177). "We believe the Scriptures teach that such as are truly regenerate, being born of the Spirit, will not utterly fall away and finally perish, but will endure unto the end" (*New Hampshire Confession of Faith*, Article 12; *Ibid.*, page 198).

Christian Can

The New Testament sets forth certain things the Christian can do that will cause him to be lost. A brother may "perish" (I Cor. 8:11). Paul could be "a castaway" (I Cor. 9:27). One could be "moved away from the hope of the gospel" (Col. 1:23). Paul said, "some shall depart from the faith" (I Tim. 4:1). Paul warned, "For some are already turned aside after Satan" (I Tim. 5:15). James said that "brethren" can "err from the truth," need to be converted, and the soul can taste of death (Jas. 5:19-20). Peter said some "cannot cease from sin" that they are "cursed children" and that they have "forsaken the right way" (2 Pet. 2:14-15). Some, Peter said, could be "led away with the wicked" and could "fall from your own steadfastness" (2 Pet. 3:17).

Hebrews Warned

The Hebrew Christians were warned of the need of being faithful. They were the house of God conditioned upon their "holding fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (Heb. 3:6). They were encouraged to "harden not your hearts" (Heb. 3:8). They were told they could have "an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God (Heb. 3:12). They could be hardened through sin (Heb. 3:13). They could come short of entering into rest (Heb. 4:1). They could fall in unbelief (Heb. 3:11). They could draw back to perdition (Heb. 10:39). One could "fail of the grace of God" (Heb. 12:15). They could be "carried about with divers and strange doctrine" (Heb. 13:9). Why all these warnings if man cannot fall from grace and be lost?

If

Faithfulness and salvation is conditioned upon "if" in several passages. Men would be the Lord's disciples if they continued in his word (John 8:31). Men were saved if they remembered what Paul preached unto them (I Cor. 15:1-2). Men were reconciled to God if they continued in the faith (Col. 1:21-23). Men could keep from falling if they did certain things (2 Peter 1:10). Men are saved if they walk in the light (I John 1:7).

Proof Texts

There are several passages which those who teach

the impossibility of apostasy use that we will note here. However, due to space we will not be able to notice all passages, but just some of the major ones often used.

(1) John 3:36. The believer is said to be one that "hath everlasting life" and it is argued that one cannot lose that which he "hath." There is a salvation that is "nearer than when we believed" (Rom. 13:11). Eternal life is to be had, but one is to lay hold on it (I Tim. 6:12). Eternal life is had "in hope" (Titus 1:2; 3:7) and "in promise" (Titus 1:2; I John 2:25) and is "reserved in heaven" (I Pet. 1:3-5; Mk. 10:30). Eternal life is not actually possessed now, but will be in heaven. One can depart from the faith (I Tim. 4:1), "overthrow the faith" (2 Tim. 2:18), "cast off their first faith" (I Tim. 5:12), and make shipwreck concerning the faith (I Tim. 1:19-20).

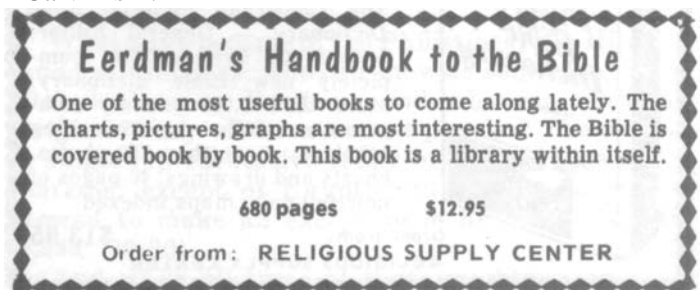
(2) Rom. 8:35-39. This passage is used to prove nothing can separate one saved from the love of Christ, which it does teach, but this is supposed to also mean that nothing can separate one from Christ or salvation. The love Christ has for man and salvation in Christ are two different things. A mother's love cannot be separated by prison walls where her son is, but he is separated from her there. Before man was "reconciled to God" he was lost, yet in this lost state "God commendeth his love toward us" (Rom. 5:8-10). We can separate ourselves from Christ but not from his love.

(3) John 10:27-29. Jesus said of some "they shall never perish" and some think this proves the impossibility of apostasy. Being a sheep, and being in the hand of God is conditioned upon (1) hearing the voice of Christ (verse 27), (2) believing (verse 26), and (3) following Christ (verse 27). None can rob Christ of his sheep, but one of the sheep can wander astray.

Rom. 2:11

"God is no respecter of persons." If God allows one to be lost and saves another then he is a respecter of persons.

Calvinism is false from start to finish. It makes man unaccountable for anything he does. He is born a sinner, but not responsible for it. He is saved, but has nothing to do with his salvation. He is kept saved, but did nothing about it. Man has no choice, it is all up to God, and if one is lost it is God's fault and not man's. Such is the false teaching of Calvinism.



EXPOSITION:
TEXT and
CONTEXT

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MIRACLES —NO. 4

We devote this part to our studies on miracles to a refutation of the arguments used by those who claim that God is working miracles today. Space will not allow a consideration of every argument, but we will notice the ones which are most frequently used.

Jesus Is The Same

The argument based on Heb. 13:8 is the first one to which I direct your attention. The verse reads, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever." The proponents of present-day miracles say that since Jesus does not change, and he worked miracles in the first century, he must work them today. Their problem is that they confuse the *nature* of Jesus with the *methods* of Jesus. Hebrews 13:8 is speaking of the nature or character of Jesus. He never changes. His divine nature is always the same. However, he has changed his methods.

While on earth Jesus limited the preaching of the approaching kingdom to the Jews (Mt. 10:5-7), but after his resurrection he commanded the gospel to be preached to all men (Mk. 16:15-16). He changed his method. Jesus once lived as man lives—in the flesh, but he no longer lives in that fashion. In like-manner, Jesus once worked miracles, but we showed in the previous article that he does not work miracles today. He is the same person, but his purpose changed.

To use Heb. 13:8 as a proof-text for miracles today is making the passage prove too much. If being the same today shows he works miracles now, then being the same *forever* would prove that he will work miracles in heaven. Who is ready to say that Jesus will be healing diseases in heaven? Furthermore, if Jesus being the same proves that he is still working miracles, he would have to work all the miracles he worked during his earthly ministry. Are the dead being raised, or are the multitudes being fed with a few loaves and two fish? Certainly not! Hebrews 13:8 is a beautiful passage, but it does not teach the continuation of miracles.

Do Greater Works

Another argument often used is built on John 14:12. Jesus said, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do." We are told that not only

may believers work miracles today, but even do greater miracles than Jesus worked. There are two things promised in the verse: (1) The believer would do the works Jesus did, and (2) The believer would do greater things.

Paraphrased, Jesus is saying that "believers would do the miracles he did, and even greater things than miracles shall they do." Miracles were worked by the apostles and first century Christians, but in what way did they do greater things than Jesus? You will notice that "works" is italicized after "greater." Thus, Jesus did not say believers would do "greater miracles," but they would do something "greater than these" (Jesus' miracles). No man ever worked greater miracles than Jesus, but believers were to do something greater than Jesus did.

The only plausible conclusion is that believers would do greater things than Jesus' works by preaching the gospel to the whole world. Though miracles were important to reveal and establish truth, the saving of mankind through the proclamation of the gospel was more important. Lenski states that the greater is to "convert sinners by God's grace, carry the gospel to the ends of the earth, save souls for life eternal. . . . These are greater because in miracles only omnipotence and goodness are revealed but in saving souls all the grace of God in Christ Jesus. The great works deal with the material, the greater with the spiritual (Jn. 5:20-21)."

Where is the person who can even do the works Jesus did, much less do greater miracles than Jesus? The passage is abused by the pseudo-miracle workers. The verse says that believers would do the works Jesus did. This we concede happened among first century Christians. But this was temporary (1 Cor. 13:8-13). However, the Lord indicates there is something greater than miracles, namely, the saving of the world.

Signs To Follow

Mark 16:17-18 is a very prominent text among the "miracle workers." We read, "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." Verse 20 of this same chapter shows why these signs followed believers — to confirm the word. When the word was confirmed or established, these miraculous activities ceased because the purpose ceased.

Who is there today who can take up a venomous snake or drink deadly poison without being harmed? Those who have foolishly tried it have suffered physical injury, even death. Yet, a poisonous viper did no harm to Paul (Acts 28:3-5). It is interesting to observe that proponents of present miracles want to symbolize snakes and poison, but literalize devils, tongues and the sick. They want to make serpents,

"false teachers," and poison, "false doctrine," but this is wresting the scripture, and violating the rules of interpretation. There is nothing in the passage, or context, which warrants such handling of the text. Their proposition is that Mk. 16:17-18 is still in effect today, but they cannot demonstrate their proposition. Hence, their proposition is fallacious.

Call For The Elders

James 5:14-15 is one of the favorite scriptures of the pseudo-miracle workers. It reads, "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up . . ." You will notice, first, the sick was among the brethren—not of the world. Second, the sick was to call for the elders and not the preacher. The modern "healers" do not fit within the framework of this scripture. They are not elders. In fact, these "healing churches" do not have Bible elders. So, they can find no consolation in this passage. Third, the sick is to call for the elders of the church—just not any church. Fourth, the elders are to anoint the sick with oil, and fifth, the prayer of faith shall save him (cure him).

According to 1 Cor. 12:9 faith was one of the miraculous gifts. Some contend that elders were endowed with the gift of faith; that through their request on behalf of the sick, God responded by raising them up. Since we do not have elders today with miraculous faith, the verse is no longer applicable in the sick calling for the elders.

Looking closely at the passage, however, there is nothing that absolutely demands a miracle being worked. Elders are simply called to pray for the sick, anointing him with oil and God will raise him up. God hears the prayers of the righteous (v. 16) and he will answer their prayers, even the requests for the sick. Anointing with oil may suggest the use of oil for medicinal purposes. Elders, and all Christians as well, are to minister to the needy—to visit the afflicted. Administering oil would fall in this category. James 5:14-15 does not fit the application that "miracle workers" make of it.

Healed By His Stripes

Quite often "miracle workers" put miraculous healing in the atonement. They will quote 1 Pet. 2:24 to try to substantiate their claim. It states, "... by whose stripes ye were healed." This is taken from Isa. 53:5. Thayer's lexicon says the word, "heal," as used by Peter, means, "to free from errors and sins, to bring about (one's) salvation" (p. 296). Peter was speaking, therefore, of spiritual healing rather than physical cures. It is the same kind of healing David spoke about when he said, "heal my soul" (Psa. 41:4).

If the apostle meant healing of the body, then all of those to whom he addressed his letter had been physically ill—"ye were healed." Did only those

with bodily afflictions obey the gospel in Asia Minor? Too, if healing is in the atonement, when a Christian gets sick, is not it an indication that he has sinned? Would not a Christian who gets sick have to repent and ask God's forgiveness for his sickness? Certainly he would if healing and good health are in the atonement.

Testimonies

In conclusion, a few words need to be said about testimonies. One of the main features of a "healing campaign" is the testimonials of those who have seen or experienced great miracles. "I know miracles are real because of what happened to me," we are told. The word of God is set aside and human experience is substituted in its place. Aunt Mary testifies how she was healed of an ulcer and Uncle John testifies how he was cured of arthritis and the audience will take the word of aunt Mary and uncle John before they will the word of the apostle Paul and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Actually, testimonies establish (?) more than the "healers" want to allow. They establish (?) that God is with the Catholics, Mormons, Christian Scientists, Pentecostals, even the witch doctors, because all of them give testimonies of the great miracles worked among them. Yet, they all contradict one another in what they teach. This makes God inconsistent as he would be endorsing these movements that stand at odds with one another. The inconsistency and divisiveness of these groups show that God is not with them in miraculous operations.

Let us keep in mind that whether God works miracles today is to be proven by the Bible and not by human testimony and experience. "Let God be true, but every man a liar" (Rom. 3:4).

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THE WASTE OF BOOZE

The name of Sam Morris, Baptist preacher, is probably familiar to many readers because of his oft-quoted, extremely consistent, extremely false statement on the impossibility of apostasy. In a tract published several years ago, he affirmed that a Christian could run the gamut of sin from adultery to murder and it wouldn't affect his salvation in the least. The first time, I believe, I saw his statement to that effect quoted was in the Grider-Sherrell Debate. (Would someone please return that book.)

There is at least one area in which we're co-antagonists with Mr. Morris. I'm speaking of his unrelenting fight against booze. On Jan. 15, 1975, Morris delivered the 40th Anniversary Broadcast of the "Voice of Temperance" over Radio Station K-DRY, in Almo Heights, Texas.

The facts and statistics he related in this message will be of interest and benefit to our readers. Here they are as reported in *The Sword of the Lord*, Feb. 14, 1975:

"The drinking people of America consumed an estimated amount of 4 billion, 100 million gallons of BEER in 1973. They consumed 415 million gallons of distilled spirits; and 347 million gallons of wine. That gives us a total of 4 billion, 862 million gallons of beer, wine and distilled spirits.

"That is equal to a 15,000-square-foot lake. It would overflow a reservoir 25 feet deep, 1/4 of a mile wide, and 4 miles long. It would provide 150 million people with more than 32.5 gallons each of alcoholic beverages in 1973.

"According to records provided to me by the Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Division of the United States Treasury Dept. in Washington, the Beer, Distilled Spirits, and Wine Makers in 1973 used in the manufacture of alcoholic beverages 14 billion, 433 million, 957 thousand, 218 pounds of food grains, fruits, juices, concentrates, sugar syrups, molasses, and other raw materials.

"That was sufficient corn, wheat, rye, rice, sorghum, barley, grapes, fruits, juices, syrups, concentrates, sugar, molasses, and other cereal materials to feed 20 million starving people during 1973.

"The drinkers paid the stupendous sum of \$21.5 billion for alcoholic beverages of all kinds in 1973. But that is only a minor part of the financial waste

in 1973 inflicted upon America by the traffic in alcoholic beverages.

"The Health, Education and Welfare Department submitted a report to Congress in July, 1974 which estimated and itemized the alcoholism costs to the American economy as follows: \$9.35 billion in lost production of goods and services; \$8.29 billion in health and medical costs; \$6.44 billion in motor vehicle accidents; \$4.5 billion in fire losses, 'a considerable portion linked to alcohol'; \$2.2 billion in welfare costs; \$500 million in criminal justice cases; and \$135 million in social service costs.

"That means that the combined estimated cost of buying alcoholic beverages plus the alcoholism costs inflicted upon the American economy in 1973 was in excess of 50 billion dollars. The total federal revenue tax from beer, wine, and distilled spirits was only \$5.15 billion . . . a loss of nearly 10 to 1. How long would you operate a private business at this loss ratio?

"The greatest of all waste inflicted by the liquor traffic is the human waste. It is generally accepted now by practically all informed, reliable authorities that there are now an estimated 9 million hopeless, helpless, chronic drunkards in America known by the modern term "alcoholic." Several million more are well on the road to that condition. They didn't get that way drinking buttermilk, branch water or lemonade . . .

"They fill our mental hospitals, they crowd our relief rolls, they populate our penal institutions, and they crowd rehabilitation centers.

"Orphans' homes, boy's homes, rescue homes for girls and youth centers can't find facilities to take care of the children of alcohol-wrecked homes. Divorce courts are jammed with alcoholic cases. Some 25,000 people are slaughtered each year on our streets and highways involving alcoholic drivers. Thousands of others are permanently injured for life or killed in plane accidents, boating accidents, hunting accidents, and brushes with law-enforcement officials. Hardly a day goes by in one of our metropolitan centers that the daily newspaper does not carry one or more articles telling about a killing, knifing, clubbing, or rape in which alcohol was a vital factor."

Brother Grider, in the afore mentioned debate, responded to the argument: "God wouldn't let a Christian die drunk" by observing that a Christian could, in that case, live forever if he stayed drunk. According to Baptist doctrine he would have to sober up to die and go to heaven.

I wonder if that would be considered a work?

Lemmons Veering Left of Middle

A few years ago it appeared that The Firm Foundation was foot dragging in the "progressive" march. It was the sentiment of many conservatives that those connected with and influenced by that journal were not departing as far and as fast from

the New Testament as were those aligned with the Gospel Advocate.

Within the past couple of years the trend has reversed itself. The Gospel Advocate has become somewhat of a champion of the "conservative-liberal" cause. The editorial attitude toward apostasy from Music City seems to be, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further: and here shall thy proud waves be stayed."

Meanwhile, the word from Texas is growing less firm all the time. Brother Lemmons has now given public endorsement to the view that binding authority cannot be established by approved examples and necessary inferences. In his editorial of December 10, 1974, he wrote:

"We have glibly tripped off our tongues for the past hundred years the slogan that things are proven to be scriptural in three ways: (1) divine command, (2) necessary inference, and (3) approved example. The more we dig into this matter the more we are convinced that the only way to prove a thing essential is by divine command . . . It is our conviction that unless an example has a command in the background that is clearly visible, it is not binding."

Well now. What about that!

Ralph T. Henley, writing in the Gospel Advocate, Feb. 20, 1975, calls Brother Lemmons' hand on this matter and offers a short list of implications involved in such a position. He points out that there is no command to: (1) have unleavened bread on the Lord's table; (2) have deacons in the church; (3) appoint elders in the church; (4) meet on the first day of the week for the Lord's supper; (5) call ourselves Christians. Brother Henley also remarked: "We should be extremely hard pressed to disprove Premillennialism, the impossibility of apostasy, sprinkling, instrumental music, soul-sleeping, eternal punishment, the intermediate state, the scheme of redemption, fulfilled prophecy, and thousands of other positions of false teachers, as well as that which is true if we are not permitted to draw inferences from one passage to another."

Surely no one would opine that Brother Lemmons wrote his comments without due consideration of the consequences of such a philosophy. But just in case, let it be noted that in his Dec. 10 editorial he gave commendation to a new booklet by Milo Hadwin, *The Role of New Testament Examples as Related to Biblical Authority*. Hadwin argues in this booklet that elders and deacons are permissible, but not required where qualified men are available, and the Lord's supper EACH Lord's day and ONLY on the Lord's day is permissible but should not be bound.

It's been said a long journey begins with one step. There are many churches across the land that are not on that trip. They're not having problems over the questions above and neo-Pentecostalism and such like.

Why?

Could it be those churches didn't take the first step away from Bible authority when the long journey commenced?

American Fairy Tale

Larry Hafley has kindly forwarded an AP release from the Florence (Alabama) Times-Tri-City Daily. The article relates the heartbreaking story of a Milwaukee teen:

"Amy, 15, had always gotten straight As in school, and her parents were extremely upset when she got a B on her report card.

" 'If I fail in what I do,' Amy told her parents, 'I fail in what I am.'

"The message was part of Amy's suicide note."

The article quotes Dr. Darold Treffert, Director of the Winnebago Mental Health Institute at Oshkosh, Wis., to the effect that the number of teenage suicides in the U.S. has tripled in the last ten years. He says an estimated 30 teenagers a day take their own lives and that more than half the patients in the nation's psychiatric wards are under age 21.

Dr. Treffert blames what he calls "The American Fairy Tale." Five themes of this "fairy tale" are: "more possessions mean more happiness; that a person who does or produces more is more important; that everyone must belong and identify with some larger group; that perfect mental health means no problems; and that a person is abnormal unless constantly happy."

Oh that the Amy's of this world would open their eyes to the value of the Lord Jesus and His will for their lives. They would learn that one's life consisteth not in the abundance of things he possesses, that he who gains the world and loses his soul has lost all, that we may "identify" with an innumerable company of angels and with the general assembly, and church of the firstborn, and with God the Judge of all, and with Jesus . . . , that in the midst of problems He will never leave or forsake us, and that there is a joy (that's peace bubbling over) much more meaningful than the shallow happiness the world loans out.

Those Impossible Years

By Bob Buchanon

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QUESTION: First, in Matt. 25:31-46, is Jesus talking about when He comes the second time or is this taking place now? Second, is there to be one (only one) day in which all nations (every man, woman and child) will be judged?—M.E.B.

ANSWER: In Matt. 25:31-46, Jesus is talking about the final judgment which will take place at His second coming. These verses are an answer to the last of three questions asked by the disciples (Matt. 24:3) which question concerns His second coming and the end of the world. I have shown in former articles in this column that Matt. 24:4-34 refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, and that verses 36-25:30 refer to His second coming. Verses 31-46 give us a picture of the judgment and the end of the world.

While Jesus is reigning on His throne of glory now (Matt. 19:28), and while He is to turn the kingdom (over which he has reigned throughout the "regeneration") back to the Father at His second coming (1 Cor. 15:22-28), He will not do so until this work of judgment has been accomplished. Judgment has been given unto Him (Jno. 5:22; Acts 17:31).

Furthermore, this judging involves an eternal separation of the righteous and the wicked (vs. 41, 46) which is not true of the present, but will be at His second coming.

Concerning the second question, Yes, there is to be only one day in which all will be judged. Matt. 25:32 says, "And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." The word "nations" does not mean countries or kingdoms of this world, but rather individuals of all nations, as the context shows. It is so used in Matt. 28:19 and Gal. 3:8. Nations as such are not baptized, but individuals of all nations are. The spiritual blessing in the promise of Gal. 3:8 is likewise bestowed upon individuals of all nations, and not upon nations as such. The meaning of verse thirty-two is that all people of all nations of all time will be gathered before Him.

Furthermore, the Scriptures teach that all people of all nations of all time will be raised and judged at the same time, namely, on the last day.

The righteous will be raised on the "last day" (Jno. 6:40, 44). The wicked will also be present and will be judged at the same time—"the last day" (Jno. 12:48). 2 Thess. 1:6-10 teaches that both the

wicked (those who have troubled the saints) and the righteous (those troubled by the wicked) shall receive their eternal sentence (one "tribulation" and the other "rest") on the same day ("that day"-v. 10) which will be at His coming. Again, both the righteous and the wicked shall be raised and judged at the same time (Jno. 5:28, 29). Paul teaches that there will be a single resurrection involving both the "just" and the "unjust" (Acts 24:15). These Scriptures combine to show that there will be one day in which all will be judged.

SPIRITUAL WORSHIP

by Rodney Miller

The reason why worship is unchangeable is that the New Testament teaches that worship must coincide with the nature of God himself (John 4:24). The nature of God is "A SPIRIT" so we must worship him in "Spirit and Truth." All that follows from God will coincide with the concept of God's spiritual being. For example, the Nature of God's Kingdom, the church, is spiritual because it coincides with His being. The social gospel of hot dogs, hamburgers and recreation is foreign to His spiritual nature. The nature of God's Revelation, the New Covenant is also spiritual because it coincides with God's divine nature. Thus it follows that the kind of worship taught in this New Covenant is going to harmonize first with the character of God and then secondly with the nature of the Kingdom and the Revelation.

As we observe the differences between the Old and New Covenant where under one Instrumental Music was allowed and under the other it was not, we can also see this is because of the Nature of the Revelation to man. Noticing the differences between the two covenants we can clearly see the difference between the two types of worship:

Material Old Covenant— Heb. 8:9	Spiritual New Covenant— John 4:24
A Literal Temple in Jerusalem—1 Kings 6:2	A Spiritual Temple in the Christian—11 Cor. 6:16
A Literal Priesthood of Aaron—Ex. 29:44	A Spiritual Sacrifice of our Bodies—Rom. 12:1
A Literal Circumcision of Flesh—Lev. 12:3	A Spiritual Priesthood of All Christians—1 Peter 2:9
A Literal Instrument of Music in Worship—11 Chron. 29:25	A Spiritual Circumcision of the Heart—Rom. 2:29
A Literal Sacrifice of Animals—Lev. 1:15	A Spiritual Instrument - the Heart—Eph. 5:19

1. The Old Covenant was written to "children" in their level of spiritual maturity. In Heb. 8:8-13 note verse 9; "on the day that I took them by the hand." As a Father leads a child by the hand so the Old Testament led the "Children" of Israel.
2. The physical nature of this covenant meant that it was a material and tangible type and so was the worship contained in it. Consider the contrast between the material covenant under

the Old Testament and the spiritual covenant under the New Testament.

Now our worship is unchangeable in that this New Covenant is not to children like the Old, but to the spiritually mature Christian making it in harmony with the spiritual nature of God. Then when one begins to consider changing any part of this spiritual covenant he is changing it from the eternal, divine, and spiritual nature of God into a corruptible, material and temporal form like that which was done away.

When the Holy Spirit, as I Cor. 2:9-10 states, searched the deep thoughts of God and revealed them to us in regard to worship here is what He found in God's mind. WHEN? Acts 20:7, I Cor. 16:1-2, Heb. 10:25 **ON**

THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK. WHAT? Eph. 5:19, Col. 3:16 **SING;** I Cor. 16:1-2 **GIVE OF OUR MEANS;** Acts 20:7 **LORD'S SUPPER;** Acts 20:7 **PREACH;** Acts 2:42 **PRAYER.**

HOW? I Cor. 14:40 **"IN AN ORDERLY MANNER,"** the situation of spontaneous worship that is in such vogue today was a problem in the church at Corinth and they were reprimanded for their confusion. God is a being of order, as seen in nature, and thus to be in harmony with his character our worship must be in order.

In conclusion, worship is not geared to our likes and dislikes. Cain tried to worship on this basis and was found unacceptable. Our worship is based on what pleases God and what is in harmony with his nature or character. There are many problems in the religious world today when men try to worship a spiritual being such as God, by using material and tangible means. Tithing, instrumental music, clergy and clerical apparel are but some of the ways in which many fail to realize they have incorporated material and physical aspects into what should be spiritual worship.

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THOSE WONDERFUL PREACHERS' WIVES

by Wallace H. Little

Others have written tributes to their wives; I want to do the same for mine, and those of all faithful preachers. I suspect if brethren were more aware of their contributions to the work of local churches, they might want to pay them rather than their preacher-husbands. But here goes anyway. . . .

It would be difficult to list all the things a wife does to assist her husband in his preaching . . . and impossible to put a dollar value on them. Generally, these might be classified as "churchin' ". But because she does the "churchin' ", he is freed to do the necessary study and preparation so he can do the preachin'. Many preachers' wives, this one included, work at secular jobs also in order for the family to

eat. In a very real sense, they make it possible for their husbands to preach. Having preached eleven years while supporting myself, I have some practical experience on how effectiveness is reduced if a man must support himself while preaching.

In spite of her tremendous although indirect contribution to the work of the local church, the preacher's wife is frequently subject to unjust criticism and unfair demands. If she works, she is not an adequate companion; if she doesn't, the family may suffer because she is "lazy". She is expected to be the unpaid assistant and fill the role of Bible class teacher, and sometimes congregational baby-sitter whether she wants to or not. She is assumed to know more Bible than other female members of the church but if she does, and uses it, she is "parading it".


Among her functions is putting up (and sometimes putting up with) visiting preachers, other guests, strays and "church bums", visiting all the congregation's sick and taking charge of providing help to the needy as the church's feminine organizer. She is generally assumed to be responsible for addressing and mailing the bulletin, and often expected to handle the administrative work connected with this as well. She is the congregational counselor, crying-shoulder and confidant. If the church owns the preacher's house, she sometimes ends up as the church's casual entertainer ("After all, the church does own the house, so why can't I drop in when I want to? I'm a member here too!").

In most cases, she does all these things without complaint, grateful to God for the privilege of helping in His work in so many ways, knowing if fellow-saints fail to credit her, God will balance the scales. Many congregations would be severely limited without her, and many preaching husbands bewildered and nearly lost if she ceased helping with his work.

So I say, let's acknowledge their contribution, and grant them the tribute which is theirs, those wonderful preachers' wives; we could scarcely do without them. They are real help-meets, bless them!

P. O. Box 1306
Marshall, Texas 75670

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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

DEATH NOTICE

Fred Cook Eaton, former elder at Westvue in Murfreesboro, Tennessee and largely responsible for the beginning of the North Meadow congregation, passed away on March 2, 1975 as a result of a heart attack. He is survived by his wife, Ezma, three children and four grandchildren. His funeral was conducted from Woodfin's Chapel by the writer on March 3 before a packed house of friends and relatives. This writer owes much to Fred for the help and encouragement he gave. He was a good friend to all *gospel* preachers and he had no time for compromising the truth. I am glad his life touched mine.

Thomas G. O'Neal
Bessemer, Alabama

NEW CONGREGATION

EDWIN HAYES, Bowling Green, Kentucky. On March 2, 1975 the North Franklin church had its beginning. About 30 were in attendance for the first meeting. They are meeting in a dwelling house six miles north of Franklin on Route 31W. To my knowledge this is the only conservative congregation in Simpson County. This marks the second time in less than a year that West End has been instrumental in helping to start new congregations. Our attendance will still exceed 200 and we will continue to grow. Our prayers are for the success of this new work.

PREACHER NEEDED

FORT WALTON BEACH, FLORIDA. The Northside church is seeking a full-time, sound gospel preacher to begin work here the first week of September, 1975. He would need partial support from outside sources. The church here consists of about 30 members who can supply approximately \$300 per month toward his support. If interested write Northside Church of Christ, 520 Mary Ester Cutoff, Fort Walton Beach, Florida 32548, or call H. N. Ubanks (904) 243-3603.

REPORT ON NIGERIAN PREACHING TRIP

(FOLLOWING ARE EXCERPTS FROM A REPORT ISSUED BY KARL DIESTELKAMP concerning a six weeks preaching trip which he and ROBERT E. SPEER made to Nigeria October 1 - November 15, 1974). Nigerian brethren are doing a great work under what most Americans would consider nearly impossible conditions. In most places there is evidence of great poverty. Persecution from idolaters, Muslims, denominationalists and liberal brethren are not infrequent. Many churches meet in mud buildings with packed dirt floors, thatched roofs, no electricity, running water, screens or glass. Others meet in rented rooms, school buildings, member's houses and others have adequate block buildings. We saw no air conditioned buildings (though temperatures ranged upward of 115 degrees), carpeting, pews (only plank or bamboo benches or hand-made school desks) or other "conveniences" which we consider "necessities" in the U.S.

Yet, with all these material things lacking, we found something tremendously encouraging. Everywhere we went we found strong brethren. I am not saying there are no weak, untaught, unfaithful brethren in Nigeria - they are there as in the U.S. But, we did find faithful and strong brethren in every place we went - men who stand and preach the pure gospel in the very face of hardship, suffering, opposition and persecution.

Men who depend upon walking, bicycling (in many cases as much as 15 miles one way), public taxis or trucks to get them to places of preaching. Very few have cars (3 preachers), some have motorcycles and some have bicycles - many have no support, but they go out and preach anyhow.

The following "statistics" are given that you may rejoice and, with us, thank God that we were able to be used as we were. We drove over 4,000 miles in a rented VW, preached in six states of Nigeria. Our sermons were translated into 7 different languages and we preached in 84 different villages, towns and cities a total of 187 times. We worked briefly with 83 different churches with a total "inside" attendance of 7,949. Conservative estimates of the street preaching "outside" attendance was 7,209 which means that together Speer and I preached to over 15,158 people in six weeks. In addition many, many hours were spent studying with individuals, participating in discussions and visiting brethren where we could not preach. Together we know of 36 who were baptized during our stay and since arriving home have heard of at least 15 more who first heard the gospel during our street preaching. Literally hundreds of names and addresses were taken from those expressing a desire to study further and these are being followed up by Nigerian brethren. Thank God.

CHURCH AT WORK

PLAINFIELD, INDIANA. According to the bulletin from the Plainfield church, edited by Olin Kern, the plans for 1975 call for over \$30,000 to be spent in the support of gospel preaching. The weekly budget calls for \$1,096.30. The following men are being supported in gospel work: E. J. Ebong in Nigeria (total support); Paul Williams in S. Africa; Jay Guyer in Holliston, Maine; Paul Smith in West Lafayette, Indiana; Roscoe Combs in Seymour, Indiana; Fred McKinney in Minneapolis, Minnesota; Morris Hafley in Danville, Indiana; John Berlin in Warrenton, Missouri; and Olin Kern in Plainfield. In addition the church has assisted Cecil Willis on expenses to the Philippines and William John for a preaching trip to the Bahamas. For many years this congregation has been standing for the truth and sounding out the word throughout the world. May the zeal of these brethren provoke others to more good work.

PAR ST., ORLANDO, FLORIDA. According to the February issue of the Par Street ANCHOR, edited by the preacher, Roger M. Hendricks, the budget for 1975 calls for \$52,000 of which \$45,000 will be spent in direct support of gospel preachers. In addition to full support for Hendricks at Par St., ten other men are assisted in the work. These are: Wayne Sullivan, Orlando, Florida; Don Taaffe, Dundee, Florida; Warren Needham, Titusville, Florida; Tim Wells, New Smyrna Beach, Florida; Marvin Young, St. Cloud, Florida; Gary Ogden, Asheville, N.C.; J. W. F.vans, Mobile, Alabama; DeWitt Clinton, Canby, Oregon; S. V. Ekanem, Nigeria; and John Zacchaeus, Nigeria. Plans also call for a young preacher to work with them during the summer months.

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IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

Baptized	135
Restored	66

(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)

Others are interested in what is taking place where you worship. Let others know of those who obey the gospel or are restored to their first love, of teaching activities of the congregation, of growth and development. This edifies others. Make your reports brief and send them to the editor at P.O. Box 68, Brooks, KY 40109.

July Special Issue

The Family Under Fire

10 articles by regular contributing writers of **Searching The Scriptures**, aimed at helping to fortify the home front in the face of a world set in opposition to basic family values. Articles range from preparation for marriage to various relationships of the home, to divorce, abortion and other special problems confronting the family and closing with an article on Til Death Do Us Part.

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