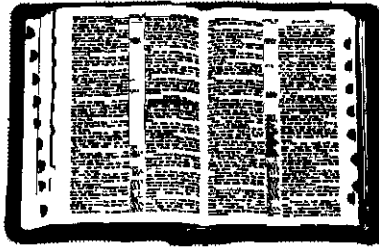


SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

"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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EXPOSITION: TEXT and CONTEXT

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THE SAVED CAN BE LOST

Some believe "once saved, always saved." In fact, we are told that if a child of God dies while drunk, or while in the act of adultery, he will be ushered right on into heaven. But the Bible does not teach such strange doctrine. It teaches that the saved can be lost. Let us notice how it can be done.

By Becoming Immoral

Saved people can be lost by becoming immoral. Listen to Paul: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness. . . and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21). What could be more definite and emphatic than those who practice the works of the flesh shall not go to heaven? The same thing is stated in 1 Cor. 6:9: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?" The apostle then proceeds to catalog some works of unrighteousness.

You may have heard it said that saved people would not commit immoral acts. But Noah, a preacher of righteousness (2 Pet. 2:5.), got drunk (Gen. 9:21), and righteous Lot (2 Pet. 2:7-8), also got drunk and while in a drunken stupor, committed incest with his daughters (Gen. 19:30-38). "Yes, but God would not let his children die in such condition," we are told. Then, get drunk, stay drunk, and live forever. Nonsense! Immoral conduct will send a child of God to hell.

By Not Bearing Fruit

Saved people can be lost by not bearing fruit. Jesus said: "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away" (John 15:2). Observe that the branch was IN Christ. The Bible teaches that only the saved are IN Christ. We read: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. . . ." (2 Cor. 5:17). We conclude, therefore, that the child of God (branch) loses his spiritual relationship with Christ by failing to bear fruit and thereby becomes lost. Jesus proceeds to state: "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned" (Jn. 15:6).

By Failing To Endure

In the parable of the sower, Jesus said: "They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away" (Luke 8:13). Notice that Jesus said these "hear, receive the word and believe." They are saved people. However, their salvation just lasts for a short while. In time of temptation they FALL away. How much plainer can it be revealed that saved people can be lost?

Jesus said to his disciples at Smyrna: ". . . be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10). This implies that they could cease being faithful before death and forfeit the crown of life. Paul said: ". . . for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9). Repeatedly, the Bible teaches perseverance in the life of the Christian. Peter wrote: "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 1:10-11). If the Christian adds to his life virtue, knowledge, temperance, etc. (2 Pet. 1:5-7), he shall never fall. But what happens if he fails to add these fruits of faith? He shall fall, and, consequently, he will not be allowed to enter into that heavenly kingdom.

By Ceasing to Believe

Saved people can be lost by ceasing to believe. The Bible teaches that believers can become unbelievers,

and we know that unbelievers cannot be saved. ". . . but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). The writer of Hebrews stated: "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (3:12). These were "brethren" that were addressed and they were warned about becoming unbelievers and departing from the living God.

Faith can be cast off, bringing damnation. Paul said of some of the younger widows: "Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith" (1 Tim. 5:12). Faith can be cast off or set aside, and when such happens, the end result is damnation. Faith can be shipwrecked. "Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck" (1 Tim 1:19). A person whose faith is shipwreck is in the clutches of Satan. Faith can be overthrown. Paul said of Hymenaeus and Philetus: "Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some" (2 Tim. 2:18).

Those who destroy their faith draw back unto perdition and have no hope of everlasting life without a trusting and active faith. "But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul" (Heb. 10:39).

Trying To Be Saved By the Law

Saved people can be lost by trying to be saved or justified by the law of Moses. When the people of God turn from dependence on His grace in the forgiveness of their sins to a self-dependence of perfect obedience to law, they fall from grace or favor with God. Man can only stand in covenant relationship with God by being washed in the blood of Christ for the remission of his sins. Whenever he repudiates that arrangement, and tries to save himself apart from it, he severs himself from God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Such was the potential problem in the Galatian churches due to the influence of the Judaizing teachers.

Listen to Paul: "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (Gal. 5:4). All of those who were about to return to the law of Moses in an attempt to be justified before God would be removing themselves from the grace of Christ. "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel" (Gal. 1:6). People of God can abandon Christ and when they do, they are lost—fallen from grace (cf. Heb. 6:4-6; Heb. 10:26-31).

In conclusion, let me point out that although one may fall away, he can come back to God, on His terms, through Jesus the Christ. James said: "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins" (Jas. 5:19-20; cf. Acts 8:22; 1 Jn. 1:9).

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Editorial

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THE QUALITY OF OUR SINGING

For several years now this writer has been concerned about the quality of singing which is found in so many congregations. It is difficult to speak of this without colliding with someone's sacred cow. But at the risk of aggravating some, we seek to provoke others who are willing to give thought to what is presented here.

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Col. 3:16). This verse links singing with the truth of the word of Christ. We ought not to sing that which is contrary to truth. Since singing not only is "to the Lord" but in order to teach and admonish one another, then it is possible to teach either truth or error in song. There is a paucity of scriptural truth in some of the songs popularly used among many brethren. Yet, Paul said the word is to dwell in us "richly." Not only "richly" but "in all wisdom." Wisdom involves the practical use of that which we know.

The injunction to "teach and admonish one another" places singing in our gatherings, else how would we hear and heed the admonitions taught? Since we are dealing with that which is public in nature, then other New Testament guide lines must be considered which concern public worship. "Let all things be done unto edifying" (1 Cor. 14:26). "Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Cor. 14:40). What is decent and orderly does not have to be cold, stiff and lifeless. In fact, Paul's instruction to the church at Corinth was in a context of the use of spiritual gifts. On the other hand, public worship should not be so casual as to lose reverence for the Almighty into whose august presence we have come.

What shall we sing? Whatever is sung in these gatherings must classify either as a psalm, hymn or spiritual song. A psalm is a sacred song, usually an Old Testament psalm chanted or joined with a melody all could follow. Not every psalm would be appropriate in the worship of Christians though many present unchangeable features of the character and workings of God which are always true and uplifting to contemplate. Psalms approving the use of incense, animal sacrifice, instrumental music or the expressed desire that enemies and their little ones be dashed against the wall, would certainly be unsuitable to be set to music and sung in gatherings of Christians. A hymn is a song of praise, an ode expressive of adoration and awe.

Some think that Paul employs elements of popularly used hymns of early Christians in some of his letters, as in Eph. 5:14, 1 Tim. 3:16 and 2 Tim. 2:11-14. The term "spiritual songs" is more general and would include sacred poems the sentiments of which are according to the word of Christ and which, when sung, manifest reverence toward Deity and offer safe and encouraging teaching to all present. Song leaders would be well advised to keep these terms in mind, with their stated objectives, when selecting songs for use in worship assemblies. We truly fear that these guidelines are often neglected.

The praise offered and the admonition given must emanate from hearts full of the grace of God. We are to sing "with grace in your (our) hearts to the Lord." Since it is "to the Lord"; then that means we must offer the best that is in us. If it is not from the heart then it is an empty mockery and creates a stench in the nostrils of the Lord of all. We see people terribly amused (some laughing aloud) when the most solemn themes are being sung. We see some standing defiantly with tightly sealed lips as if challenging anyone to even try to get THEM to sing. You can tell a great deal about the zeal of a congregation by the way its sings, or does not sing.

Whatever happened to the singing school? Why have brethren left it to the public school to teach boys and girls how to sing? Good congregational singing is a valuable asset to gospel preaching. When brethren wonder why we don't have meetings "like we used to", they might well consider their singing as a starting place. Have we allowed song leaders (or those who think that is what they are) to become so petty and jealous that they will create dissension should the elders invite a capable brother to come and give some singing instructions, and maybe lead the singing in a gospel meeting? Why should brethren think it acceptable to send away for a preacher to preach for a week (when they already have a local preacher) and think it might promote division to invite a talented song leader from another place to come and lead the singing? Are local song leaders more jealous than local preachers? Should brethren cater to such cheap attitudes? Local song leaders might even learn a few things from the talents of another.

For several years now we have been much concerned about the quality of songs selected to be used in public worship. We realize that all do not have the same tastes as to expressions of thought. The song that appears light to one may have greater expressive value to another. What some consider a beautiful song, others may regard as too "down-home", or corny. That is why it is good to have variety of scriptural songs. But since brethren have been using SACRED SELECTIONS by Ellis Crum, many congregations have been victimized by song leaders who prefer only the show-off quartet type songs, mainly of the Stamps-Baxter variety. We certainly do not object to all of the songs published by this company. But in a book with well over 600 songs, why must a congregation be limited to about 75 songs while some of the greatest songs of faith are never

used?

In the last 10 years of meeting work, every time "The Old Rugged Cross", or "Amazing Grace", or "Tell Me the Story of Jesus" was sung, I have had to ask for it. There are many songs which are reverent in tone, melodious to the ear, and expressive of rich spiritual thought which are not written on such a scale that it would take a trained opera singer to manage them. Recently, at a Sunday afternoon singing during a meeting in which I preached, I asked brother Theophilus Cook of the West End church in Louisville to lead "When Peace Like a River." He did so, very capably. Some came to me when it was over and said they had never heard that song. Some said they were moved to tears while they were singing it. Good singing lifts our spirits, points us toward heaven, challenges us to do better, encourages the broken hearted, fills us with awe at the thought of the great I AM.

I am not disposed to be a chronic censor of the song book. While there are some songs which are unscriptural (and we have never seen any song book totally exempt from all criticism), we certainly do believe in poetic license. It is possible to become so literal in our understanding of words that it would be impossible for some of the brethren to ever understand the book of Psalms or some of the prophetic writings where figures of speech abound. But for the life of me, it is hard to derive much spiritual food from "The Jericho Road", "Let Us Have a Little Talk With Jesus", or "I'll Be Somewhere List'ning For My Name." Some of the songs which the brethren seem to glory in, were written for Pentecostal-type camp meetings and were designed to show off bass, alto or tenor leads. The start and stop, hold your breath, let it out, pat your foot, up, down, in, out type of song seems to be what many of the song leaders prefer. Meanwhile, we have reared a generation of young people who do not know the great songs of faith. They are being greatly deprived and impoverished and we have many of our song leaders to blame for it.

During the Southside Lectures at Pasadena, Texas the first week of June, R.J. Stevens led the congregational singing. In addition to morning services and evening speeches, there were 30 minutes of congregational singing each night. Brother Stevens is not only an able preacher, but is one of the finest song leaders of our generation. He is capable but not a "show-off." And he leads singing—he does not make speeches. Deliver me from song leaders who do not know the difference! During that week I heard and joined in the singing of songs which I had not heard since I was a child. They were rich and expressive. Each night when the singing was over, I wanted more than ever to go to Heaven. There are a number of excellent song leaders who are capable of directing singing schools which would enrich any congregation. Good singing would help the preaching. It is hard not to do your best when you arise after a period of heartwarming psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Good singing teaches all present and is a powerful boost to evangelism.

We don't need choirs, quartets, or special performances. But we do need scriptural singing welling up from hearts that are awed by the grace of God. Whatever is done "unto the Lord" should be done to the best of our potential. Brethren, let's do something about the quality of our singing.

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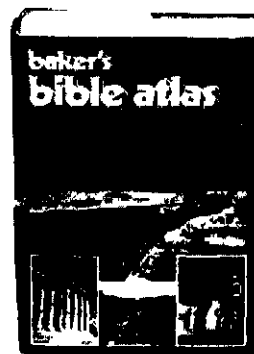
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SPECIAL FEATURE

THE HOLY SPIRIT

by
Franklin T. Puckett

THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (Acts 2:38)

The study of the Holy Spirit is so extensive and comprehensive that a thorough investigation of the subject would be impossible in the limited time we have. I have chosen **The Gift Of The Holy Spirit** as the subject for study this morning. The precise meaning of the above expression in Acts 2:38 is rather controversial.

What does "gift of the Holy Spirit" in this passage mean? Some confidently affirm that the "gift" is the Holy Spirit Himself. Others confidently affirm that the "gift" is a "measure" of the Spirit. Still others just as confidently affirm it is a blessing which the Holy Spirit bestows. It is quite evident that all of these answers cannot be right. The correct answer must come from the Bible, but what answer does the Bible give? This is the problem. In Biblical expression there is of-ten a great deal of ambiguity in the terms and word-forms employed. Many of the forms and thought-patterns found in New Testament writings were commonly employed by Old Testament prophets, and their meaning and proper use were quite familiar to the Jews of the First Century. We should, therefore, seek to project ourselves back into their time and circumstances, that we might better understand their use of such terms and expressions. The way they used them is the way we must understand them.

An Exegetical View Of The Passage

First, we must approach the study of the passage grammatically. We need to see what the text says—and what it does not say! In verse 37, those who were pricked in their heart cried: "Men, brethren, what shall we do?" The object of their question was to learn what they should do. The Holy Spirit responded through the Apostle Peter by saying: "Repent, and be baptized." This then, is what they should do. The action commanded extended to "every one of you." Obedience to the command must be "in the name," or within the authority, of Christ. The purpose, or design, of the action was "for (eis, unto, in order to) the remission of sins." The clause "Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit," declares the blessing promised to those who obey.

The passage says that those who obey the conditions stipulated "shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." That is all it says! It does not say they "shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit—as a **Person** to dwell **directly**, **immediately**, and **without means** or in-

strumentality, in your physical bodies." **This is what it does not say!** The point must not be merely assumed! For that conclusion to be established, positive proof of its correctness will have to be produced, and the proof is not in the passage itself.

What is the gift of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:38? Grammatically it may be either the Holy Spirit Himself, or it may be that which the Holy Spirit gives. The grammar does not determine whether the Holy Spirit is the gift or the giver. Some have labored diligently to prove that the grammar of the Greek text requires **tau hagiou pneumatou** be recognized as a Possessive Genitive, in which case it would be either attributive or subjective (Wallace). Others have as diligently sought to prove that the phrase is an Objective Genitive, or an Appositional Genitive (Roberts, Robertson, et al.).

The truth of the matter is the grammatical structure does not reveal the kind of genitive involved. While it is possible for it to be an Appositional Genitive, the classification of the governing noun (gift) to which it is related would more likely make it either a Subjective Genitive or an Objective Genitive. When the Genitive is used with Nouns of Action, it "indicates the thing to which the action is referred, either as subject or object of the verbal idea" (DANA AND MANTEY, **A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament**, Sec. 5, p. 78). Gift is a noun of action, hence, the rule may apply.

When it is subjective, the genitive produces the action in the verbal noun to which it is joined. In this case, the Holy Spirit would be the giver of the gift received by those who meet the condition stipulated. When it is objective, the genitive receives the action in the noun to which it is joined (Ibid.). Here the Holy Spirit would be the gift bestowed on those who repent and are baptized.

An illustration of both the subjective and objective use of the same genitive form. Subjective Genitive (2 Cor. 13:14). Objective Genitive (John 5:42). When viewed solely from the grammatical structure, **tau hagiou pneumatou** might be either a subjective or an objective genitive. "Some phrases are susceptible of either a possessive (attributive, subjective) or an objective signification" (GREEN, **Handbook to The Grammar of the Greek Testament**, Sec. 269, p. 218). In either case, the form would be the same, but the kind of genitive would have to be decided on the basis of accepted exegetical and hermeneutical rules. It cannot be arbitrarily assumed!

According to Greek lexical authorities, the precise meaning of the Genitive case in this and other similar passages must be determined on the basis of doctrinal truth rather than on grammatical form. "It is obvious from the preceding considerations that the distinction between the Subject and the Objective Genitive depends, not on grammatical, but on doctrinal reasons, and that these are to be carefully deduced from an accurate comparison of parallel passages" (WINER, **Grammar of the New Testament Diction**, Part III, Sec. xxx, p. 199).

This would make the conclusions of denominational

scholars at least subject to question, for they do not understand doctrinal truth. If they did, they would not be what they are. I am not, therefore, impressed by their conclusions, unless they can establish by Scriptural reasoning a sound, logical basis for such conclusions.

Let us examine some comparative passages where the same grammatical form is found. (1) The "gift of God" (John 4:10); (2) the "gift of Christ" (Eph. 4:7); (3) the "gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). In the first two passages the genitive (God, Christ) is clearly the giver of the gift, and in the third passage the genitive (Holy Spirit) could be the giver of the gift rather than the gift itself.

When it has been determined that a genitive is either subjective or objective, one is still faced with the problem of deciding whether it is to be understood literally or metaphorically. If it could be proved that the gift in Acts 2:38 is an objective or appositional genitive, it would not necessarily follow that the Holy Spirit when considered as the "gift" signifies the divine Person of the godhead. The term "Holy Spirit" could be metaphorical rather than literal. The names of persons are often used in the Scriptures metonymically.

In discussing metonymy, Dungan says: "God and Christ and the Holy Spirit are frequently mentioned, whereas the result of their efforts in the redemption of the race is intended" (DUNGAN, **Hermeneutics**, Sec. 59, p. 271). Fairbairn says, "for the sake of point and brevity, the object or person is identified with the result, or with the natural cause and instrument of effecting it, as if they were one and the same" (FAIRBAIRN, **Hermeneutical Manual**, Sec. viii, p. 160). Berkhof says that metonymy "indicates such relations as cause and effect, progenitor and posterity, subject and attribute, sign and things signified. Paul says in 1 Thess. 5:19, 'Quench not the Spirit,' when he refers to the special manifestations of the Spirit. And when in the parable of Dives and Lazarus, Abraham says, 'They have Moses and the **Prophets**,' Luke 16:29, he naturally means their writings" (BERKHOF, **Principles of Interpretation**, Chap. V, pp. 83, 84).

Bullinger presents several passages of Scripture, where Spirit, or Holy Spirit, is put for the gifts and operations of the Spirit. "John 3:34—'For God giveth not the Spirit by measure to Him:' i.e., the gift and operations produced by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a person, and cannot, therefore, be measured out or given by measure. The 'measure' must consequently mean the measure of His power or gifts bestowed." "Eph. 5:18—'Be filled with the Spirit:' i.e., not with the Person of the Holy Spirit surely! but with His operations: i.e., with the gifts which come through the ministry of the Word; as is clear from Col. iii. 16, where this effect is produced by the same cause: viz., occupation of the heart with God—the Word of Christ dwelling richly within us." "1 Thess. 5:19—'Quench not the Spirit:' i.e., do not hinder in yourself or in others the use of spiritual gifts" (BULLINGER, **Figures of Speech**, p. 540).

Since Bullinger was a Calvinist and believed in a direct operation of the Holy Spirit in a person separate and apart from the word of truth, and since his monumental work was reprinted and is distributed by Baker Book House—a Calvinist oriented press, his testimony on the point involved takes on even greater weight and should provoke thought on the part of some of our own brethren.

So, even if it could be proved grammatically that the genitive in Acts 2:38 is objective and not subjective (a thing that can never be done), the "gift of the Holy Spirit" most certainly could refer to an **effect produced** by the Holy Spirit rather than to the Holy Spirit as a divine Person. The true meaning of the phrase, therefore, cannot be determined on the basis of grammatical structure or terminology, but must be decided on the ground of doctrinal truth logically and Scripturally established both contextually and in uniformity with the totality of divine revelation. This calls for exegesis and interpretation. Again, that very fact makes the theological conclusions of denominational translators/commentators on the point in question at least suspect of error. To quote some new translation or Calvinian commentary does not settle the issue! I want to know the exegetical and hermeneutical principles that produced these translations and commentaries.

The Holy Spirit Is A Giver Of Gifts

While in some passages the Holy Spirit is the gift bestowed (John 7:39; Acts 10:44,45; 11:15-17), in others He is the bestower of gifts (1 Cor. 12:4; Heb. 2:4). When the Holy Spirit is spoken of as a gift bestowed, the reference may not be to the divine Person Himself, but, by metonymy, to the operations and effects produced by the Holy Spirit. In such cases, these operations and effects, together with the Spirit who produced them, are considered as a gift bestowed from God. When the Holy Spirit is spoken of as the bestower of the gift, the reference is to the identity of the divine Being who produced the operations and effects. In the first instance, emphasis is placed on the effects produced; in the second, emphasis is placed on the producer of those effects.

There is one Spirit (Eph. 4:4), but different gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12:4), any one of which would be "a gift of the Spirit," and when specifically marked out, would be in its distinctive limitation "the gift of the Holy Spirit." Objection! The word for "gift" in 1 Cor. 12:4 is not the same as in Acts 2:38. True! But the difference lies not in a distinction between kinds or classes of gifts. Both words may be and often are used for the same gifts. No matter what kind or how many the gifts may be, there is but one Spirit. That one Spirit cannot be divided up into "measures" and distributed out into bits and parcels, but He divides and distributes gifts to men "as He wills" (1 Cor. 12:11; Heb. 2:4).

There are different kinds of gifts which the Spirit bestows. There is **The baptism of the Holy Spirit** (Acts 1:5; 2:1-4; 10:44,45; 11:15-17). There are only two cases

of this gift being bestowed (Acts 2:1-4; 11:15,16). Study its nature and purpose. Miraculous powers were imparted through the laying on of apostolic hands (Acts 8:14-20; 19:1-6; Cf. 1 Cor. 12:7-11). These gifts ceased with the completion of divine revelation and the death of the last apostle and those upon whom they had laid their hands (Cf. 1 Cor. 13:8-10). Then there is the "ordinary" gift to those who repent and are baptized (Acts 2:38). This gift, whatever it may be, will be bestowed as long as men believe in Jesus Christ as Lord, repent of their sins, and are baptized in His name for the remission of sins. This gift does not belong to either of the preceding classes and is not miraculous or supernatural in its nature.

What Is The Gift Of The Holy Spirit in Acts 2:38?

Is it the Holy Spirit Himself as a divine Being bestowed on those who repent and are baptized? Or is it something which the Holy Spirit bestows on those who repent and are baptized? The answer cannot be decided on the basis of grammatical structure or possible definitions, but will have to be determined contextually and according to doctrinal truth.

A study of verse 39, which is a part of Peter's answer can be of help in understanding what the gift is. The conjunction **gar** (translated "for") connecting this verse with the preceding one is most commonly used to introduce the reason for or to give an explanation of that which precedes. If follows, then, that the reason for the statement "ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit", is "the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Whatever the promise is, it extends to the Jews and their posterity, and to all the Gentiles (Cf. Eph. 2:11-13). There are many promises, but this is a particular promise extending to successive generations of both Jews and Gentiles, and given to those who meet the conditions upon which the gift promised is predicated.

Now, what is "the gift of the Holy Spirit" involved in this promise? Is it the gift of "Holy Ghost baptism?" Question: Do all who are "called of God" receive Holy Ghost baptism? No! Such was never promised "unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

Is it the gift of "miraculous powers?" Certainly not! Such were imparted through the laying on of apostolic hands (Acts 8:16). While the gifts of Holy Spirit baptism and miraculous powers were promised, they were not and could not be the gift of Acts 2:38.

Is the gift, then, the third Person of the godhead, the divine Being Himself, to dwell—actually and literally, directly, immediately, and without medium, completely separate and apart as a person in the physical bodies of all who repent and are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins? If so where is that promise found? Give me the passage. I want to look at it and see what it says and what it does not say.

Is the gift a **blessing** given by the Holy Spirit, and bestowed in keeping with a definite promise upon those who meet the conditions stipulated? Gram-

matically it could be; definitively it could be; doctrinally it is! Furthermore, this blessing extends to "as many as the Lord our God shall call."

Well, what is "the promise" referred to in verse 39? Is it "the promise of the Spirit" in verse 33? Here again we are faced with the necessity of deciding whether this is a subjective or an objective genitive. Does it refer to a giving of the Spirit Himself, or to a promise given by the Spirit? Remember, it must be determined on a doctrinal basis in keeping with both contextual and analogical truth. Now, if it refers to the Spirit Himself, the gift was manifested in what was being seen and heard. But they were seeing miraculous demonstrations and hearing divine revelation. So, this could not be the gift of Acts 2:38, for this was never promised to all who repent and are baptized. If it refers to a promise made by the Spirit, that promise was fulfilled in the resurrection and exaltation of Christ to the throne of David as foretold by the Spirit through the prophets (2 Sam. 7:12; Psa. 16:8-10; 89:35-37; 132:10-12; Cf. Psalm 110:1-4; Zech. 6:13). This I am persuaded is the true meaning of Christ receiving "the promise of the Spirit" in verse 33.

Having been raised from the dead and exalted to the throne of David as promised by the Spirit, Christ now sheds forth this supernatural manifestation in keeping with His promise to the apostles (John 14:16,17,26; 15:26; 16:7,8,13; Acts 1:4,5). But the promise of Christ to the apostles, was not a promise to "as many as the Lord our God shall call," therefore it could not be the promise of verse 39.

In the supernatural manifestation of the Spirit on Pentecost, the promise of God through the prophet Joel became a reality (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:16-21). Acts 2:16-21 is an inspired rendition of Joel 2:28-32. Peter was speaking as the Spirit gave him utterance (Acts 2:4). Joel says, "It shall come to pass afterward;" Peter says, "It shall come to pass in the last days." It follows that "afterward" in Joel's prophecy means "in the last days," or in the gospel dispensation. The prophecy, then, has a dispensational fulfillment.

Joel says, "I will **pour out my Spirit** upon all flesh;" Peter says, "I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh." To pour out the Spirit was to pour "out of" or "out from," the Spirit. It was not the Spirit Himself that was poured out, but God poured out something from the Spirit. The preposition of is from the Greek apo, which is defined as "from signifying now Separation, now Origin" (THAYER, **Greek-English Lexicon**, p. 57). Winer says, "Apo is used to denote simply the point from which motion (action) proceeds" (WINER, **Grammar of the New Testament Diction**, p. 382).

Notice it is God who does the pouring. He pours out of (from) the Spirit, denoting the point from which that which is poured out proceeds. He does not pour out the Holy Spirit Himself, but the blessings and effects which proceed from the Spirit. These blessings and effects are as follows: (a) Prophetic revelation (Joel 2:28,29; Acts 2:17,18); (b) miraculous demonstration (Joel 2:30,31; Acts 2:19,20); spiritual salvation (Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21).

These can be correctly called gifts of the Spirit. The Spirit gave prophetic revelation to the apostles, and through the laying on of their hands the same power was given to others; the Spirit gave the power of miraculous demonstration to the apostles, and through the laying on of their hands the same power was given to others; the same Spirit also gave deliverance to the "remnant whom the Lord shall call," or salvation to those who "call on the name of the Lord" (Acts 2:21).

Deliverance equates salvation, and the remnant whom the Lord calls is made up of those who "call on the name of the Lord." One calls on the Lord for salvation through obedience to the conditions upon which salvation is offered (Rom. 10:13-16). So, salvation is a gift of (or from) the Holy Spirit, poured out along with and at the same time when divine revelation and miraculous demonstrations of the Spirit were given to usher in the gospel dispensation.

The supernatural gifts were poured out for a limited time upon a select few for the purpose of inspiration, revelation, and confirmation, but salvation is a spiritual gift poured out for all time upon all who obey the gospel, whether Jew or Gentile. This, then, is the gift contained in "the promise" of Acts 2:39, which extends "unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." And, as suggested by the use of the conjunction *gar*, herein lies the reason for and the explanation of "the gift of the Holy Spirit" in verse 38.

The charge of redundancy and repetition is made against this position. Answer: "Remission of sins" and "salvation" are not equivalents. Remission of sins is a condition of and precedent to salvation. Salvation is a consequent result of remission of sins. Hence, there is no repetition or redundancy in saying that in this passage salvation is "the gift of the Holy Spirit," which those who "repent and are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" shall receive. The charge is false and should be repudiated. This position is completely harmonious to the Abrahamic covenant of promise, the predictions of the prophets, and the revelations of the gospel.

A Study Of The Abrahamic Covenant Of Promise

God gave many promises to His people, but there was one promise, which, in the Jewish mind, stood out far above and beyond all others. This was the promise made to Abraham that through him and his seed all nations would be blessed (Gen. 12:1-3; 18:18; 22:16-18; Gal. 3:16-22). The blessing is declared to be an inheritance (v. 18), and is conditioned upon faith (v. 22).

This promise is said to be fulfilled in and through Christ (Gal. 3:16). The fulfillment was foretold by the prophets (Acts 3:24-26). Let us look at one of the prophecies (Psalm 2:1-8). It was fulfilled in the opposition to and rejection of the Christ (vv. 1-3; Acts 4:23-30). It was fulfilled in the resurrection and exaltation of the Christ (vv. 4-6; Acts 13:26-33; Heb. 1:1-5; 5:5). It was fulfilled in the blessings extended under an everlasting covenant—the gospel of Christ (v. 7;

Acts 13:34; Isa. 55:3; Heb. 13:20,21). The "sure mercies," or the "holy and sure blessings" (ASV) of David, were the forgiveness of his sins (Rom. 4:6-8; Cf. Psalm 32:1-5). This forgiveness was made possible only through the sacrificial blood of Christ (Heb. 9:22; 10:1-4; 9:13-17).

It was fulfilled in Christ's inheritance of the heathen (nations, NASV) for a possession (v. 8; Eph. 1:15-18; Acts 10,11 chs.). The promise and the inheritance are joined together (Rom. 4:13-16). When the inheritance is gained, the promise is fulfilled. The inheritance to be gained is imputed righteousness (Rom. 4:20-25), but righteousness is imputed to the man who through the obedience of faith obtains the forgiveness of his sins (Rom. 4:4-8). When one complies with the conditions of pardon, he obtains the blessing (is accounted righteous, not guilty, pardoned) in fulfillment of the promise.

Notice how closely the facts preached, the commands delivered, and the promise extended in Acts 2, harmonize with the outline of Psalm 2.

How Is The Promise Fulfilled To Abraham And To His Seed?

Who is the seed? "And to thy seed, which is Christ" (Gal. 3:16). There is one seed—not seeds. This could hardly refer to the personal Being of Christ, although it is through Him as a personal Being that the fulfillment of the promise is made possible. Paul says, "They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of promise are counted for the seed" (Rom. 9:8). The seed and the children of God are equated. The children of God constitute the body of Christ (Rom. 12:4,5). That body is one—not many (1 Cor. 12:12,20). Therefore, we conclude that this one body of Christ, though composed of many members, is Abraham's seed to whom the promise was made.

The promise, then, is fulfilled to Abraham, and to his seed (the spiritual body of Christ), who through the grace of God and a faith like that of Abraham obtain the forgiveness of their sins (Rom. 4:3-8,16). Consider the nature of Abraham's faith. What is the blessing promised?

It is the blessing given to Abraham upon the ground of his faith (Rom. 4:3,22). That blessing is being accounted righteous, or being justified (accounted not guilty, innocent, pardoned) (Rom. 4:5). Justification by faith is the blessing promised to Abraham and his seed (Gen. 12:1-3; Gal. 3:7-9). This justification by faith (being accounted innocent, not guilty, pardoned), is the blessing graciously bestowed upon those "whose iniquities are forgiven and whose sins are covered" (Rom. 4:6-8). Let it be remembered that forgiveness of sins is conditional, and he who would obtain the forgiveness of his sins in order that he might be justified, must obey the conditions upon which such forgiveness is predicated. The grace of God will grant forgiveness of sins to those who meet the conditions stipulated, but the grace of God in the forgiveness of sins is not promised to those who fail to meet those

conditions. This blessing (justification by faith) was accounted to Abraham on the basis of his faith (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:3), and is also granted to his seed (the children of God), who walk in the steps of Abraham's faith (Rom. 4:9-12, 22-25). Notice this blessing extends to both Jews and Gentiles (vv. 11b, 12; Cf. Acts 2:39). It was "witnessed by the law and the prophets" (Rom. 3:21,22), and is fulfilled "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (v. 24), to those "who believe in Jesus" (v. 26), whether Jew or Gentile (vv. 28,29).

How was the blessing made possible? Not by law (Gal. 3:10-12), but through the sacrificial death of Christ (vv. 13,14). Remember the "blessing of Abraham" is justification by faith (v. 8). This blessing was promised by the Spirit to Abraham and his seed (Gen. 12:3; Acts 3:24-26). Since inspired men spoke by the Spirit, the blessing foretold is a "promise of the Spirit" (v. 14). The "promise of the Spirit" does not refer to the Holy Spirit being given as a divine Person, but to the promise which the Holy Spirit gave of a blessing to Abraham and his seed.

The "promise of the Father" does not refer to the Father Himself being promised, but to a promise given from the Father (Acts 1:4). How and where is the blessing obtained and enjoyed? We become the children of God and Abraham's seed "by faith" and "in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:26). The phrase "in Christ Jesus" refers not merely to the object of our faith, but to inclusion in the spiritual relation denoted by that phrase. This involves union with and oneness in Christ. This can be seen from the reason and explanation (introduced by the preposition *gar*) in v. 27, of what was said in v. 26. Here it is, "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (v. 27). Therefore, those who by faith are baptized into Christ are the children of God in Him. In Him all the children of God are made one (Abraham's seed) and "heirs according to the promise" (vv. 28,29). Heirs of what promise? Clearly it is the blessing of justification by faith promised to Abraham, and to his seed (Gal. 3:8,16). Notice how these doctrinal truths contextually established fit in precisely with what is actually said in Acts 2.

CONCLUSION

The "gift of the Holy Spirit" in Acts 2:38 cannot be determined on the basis of either grammatical or definitive arguments. When considered contextually and in harmony with Biblical teaching concerning "the promise," the conclusion is reached that the "gift of the Holy Spirit" is justification by faith or spiritual salvation. This conclusion can be further strengthened by a contextual study of John 7:37-39; Acts 3:19-26; 5:27-32; Eph. 3:1-6. I only ask for an honest, prayerful, and fair treatment of the things I have said. I pray God that truth and only truth has been taught.

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ON BEARING BURDENS

QUESTION: A recent discussion in our Bible class on Gal. 6 left some problems unresolved for me. Please harmonize verses 2 and 5 and explain verse 4.—LD.

ANSWER: In order that these verses may be seen in the light of their context, let us read verses one through five:

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man shall bear his own burden" (Gal. 6:1-5).

Verse two obligates us to be of help to one another in the varied problems, trials, and necessities of life. If one is burdened with guilt, we are obligated to help him see his guilt and encourage him to cleanse himself of such in harmony with God's will. If he is depressed in spirit, full of sorrow, and in a state of despair, we are obligated, commensurate with our ability, to speak words of encouragement and comfort and perform deeds that will lift him from despair and relieve the pressure of whatever may be his burden. Thus, we are to "bear one another's burdens."

Verse five teaches us that we must bear our own burden of responsibility in "fulfilling the law of Christ." No one else can do it for me! You cannot obey the gospel for me. You cannot visit the sick for me. You cannot minister to the needy, speak words of truth and comfort for me. I must bear my own responsibility in such matters. Hence, different burdens are under consideration in verses two and five. In the original text (Greek) different words for "burden" appear, namely, "**Baros**" (V. 2) and "**Phortion**" (V. 5). The former primarily means that which is heavy while the latter simply means that which is carried. This variation in meaning is most fitting according to the use of the words in verses two and five.

Verse four can best be understood in the light of verse three which warns against self deception. We often deceive ourselves because we prove our work by the wrong standard. We bring others ("another"-V.4) into the picture and judge ourselves to be all right because

of their approval and praise. This, however, does not necessarily follow. Jesus said: "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets" (Lk. 6:26). We also deceive ourselves by measuring ourselves and our work by others. I have observed that when such is done, we usually measure ourselves by one who gives us a definite advantage. Paul warns against this, saying: "For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. . . . For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth" (2 Cor. 10:12,18).

Paul is teaching in verse four that if one would truly "prove his own work," he should leave others out of the picture and measure himself in the light of the proper standard. If you would see yourself as you really are, then stand yourself up beside the Lord. When one's life harmonizes with the Lord and His word, he shall "have rejoicing in himself alone (in the light of the true standard—mep) and not in another (without regard to others, either by comparison or by their approval and praise—mep)."

Restoration Footnotes

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THE LAST OF THE "OLD GUARD"

More than four decades have passed since the voice and pen of F. B. Srygley were stilled by death. But what R. L. Whiteside wrote of him at the time is historically accurate: "It can truthfully be said that there is not, there was not, another like him in all the earth." He meant that Srygley was so unique in character that the adherents of New Testament Christianity never saw but one of his kind.

Back in the 1880's when Srygley was beginning his evangelistic ministry in the hills and hollows of Northwest Alabama, he was already recognized as "a clear and original thinker, a deliberate and forceful speaker, and a free, social commingler with the people." (Larimore and His Boys, p. 171.) These and other qualities, natural and acquired, blended to make him the exceptional preacher Whiteside knew him to be.

Srygley's public life spanned the period of digression and division that diverted the once-unified restorers of "the ancient order of things" from their original goal of restoration and unity upon the Bible alone. The "progressive" leaders among his brethren, generally better educated and financed than their "conservative" counterparts, were already carrying many of the restored churches toward denominationalism when he began preaching. And by the time of his death in 1940, the disciples of Christ were permanently separated into two "brotherhoods" usually distinguished as "Disciples of Christ" or "Christian Church" (progressive) and "churches of Christ" (conservative).

Circumstances threatened for a time to thrust young Srygley into the "progressive" camp. But he had commenced his Christian life under the preaching John Taylor, T. B. Larimore, and James M. Pickens, men committed to "the Bible only" as their authority in religion. His godly parents had also accepted this standard and instilled devotion to it in their children. These early influences, together with his own study, led him to take his stand for the "old paths" and he never departed from it.

Srygley's remarkable life and work is enhanced by the fact that he was, insofar as the Gospel Advocate is concerned, the last of the "Old Guard," as the men of that journal were called in the heyday of its battle with digression and sectarianism. This distinction was acknowledged by younger co-workers of Srygley who themselves soon followed him across the dark river.

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These men saw his death as removing from the editorial staff of the Advocate what John T. Lewis described as "the last of that galaxy of men who for more than fifty years made the Advocate a tower of strength for the 'old paths.'"

But it was not longevity that endeared the grand old warrior to his brethren; it was rather the special nature of his' spiritual service. This is evident from the measured praise he received from his associates on the Advocate.

Whiteside said: "Occasionally there arises a man whose life, character, and work are so outstanding that we do not see how we can get along without them. Such a man was F. B. Srygley."

In the view of L. L. Brigrance, Srygley was "a great balance wheel" who "kept the rest of us from flying off at a tangent."

"Those who read his editorials," H. Leo Boles wrote, "can bear testimony that he waged a relentless warfare against every encroachment on the truth of God and against the enemies of the church of the Lord."

B. C. Goodpasture, editor of the Advocate at the time of Srygley's death and the one under whose guidance the journal later became a leading promoter of institutionalism, correctly described Srygley as a man who "would not wink at error in the practice of anyone, not even his most intimate friends."

And W. E. Brightwell saw Srygley as a person who "possessed all the essential elements of greatness, except the promotional proclivities of leadership." (Quotations from the Gospel Advocate, except as noted.)

There can be little doubt but that the departure of Srygley, "the last of the old guard," removed a major restraint from the Advocate's leftward drift. The 1940s saw the conservative voices in the paper gradually replaced by promoters and defenders of institutionalism, sponsored cooperation, and elements of the social gospel. No balance wheels were permitted a place on the staff and the Advocate's pages were closed to dissent, while the liberal "tangent" was pursued to the division of the churches across the land.

But whatever the Advocate became afterward, it was in no way due to weakness on the part of Srygley. He was a warrior to the very end "against every kind of encroachment on the truth of God." He did not spend his final days chasing rainbows and tiptoeing through the tulips with digressive brethren who had been his opponents in earlier times.

He was not only the last of the "Old Guard," but he was the "Old Guard" to the last.

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NEHEMIAH: LET US RISE UP & RESTORE The Place of Prayer, in Spiritual Revival—(Part 2)

In our last study together we saw in Nehemiah 9 the place of prayer in restoring the spiritual health of God's people. Then we made specific application to the needs of God's people today. One of the greatest needs of the church today is to develop this vital and living relationship with the Lord. We made the point that we need to know God in the most intimate way possible. We have substituted many things for spending time with God in prayer.

In years gone by, when life was slower and less complicated, our grandparents would rise early in the morning and spend an hour or two reading, studying, and praying to a God whom they knew, as did Moses, face to face. Then they would go to the fields to work: to plow, till or harvest. All day long these passages would be turning over and over in their minds as they meditated on spiritual matters. Was it any wonder/then that Christianity was a growing, meaningful and dynamic part of the lives of a generation or two now past? Our grandmothers would put on the back burner of the stove a pot of stew, which would simmer all day long until its contents had cooked down low. The smell would fill the entire house, and it would be ready just about the same time as the corn-bread was ready to come out of the oven, thus proving that success takes many key ingredients, the most important of which was TIME.

Today we live in the age of "micro-wave Christianity." We put the same ingredients in a paper bowl, and place it for 35 seconds in the micro-wave oven, and thus we have stew. But, you do not have the same stew that grandmother used to make. Why? You used the same ingredients, but not enough time was spent or allowed for producing the same result. So it is with our religion today. We live in a world of telephone poles and push-button phones, asphalt, chrome, double-knit, plastic and polyester for at least 16 to 18 hours a day. We spend little or no time in the spiritual realm of Paul's unseen world (II Cor. 4:18), and we wonder why the church is materialistic and worldly.

Our first proof of how far we have slipped is seen in our collective attitude toward prayer. Consider what we used to call our Wednesday evening gathering. We used to call it "prayer meeting." Now how many public meetings do we have each week devoted to prayer? Oh,

not a meeting called for some other purpose with a long prayer at the beginning and a short prayer at the end, but rather for the purpose of praying collectively for our needs? To my knowledge, there is only one congregation that assembles regularly, on Monday night, for the purpose of prayer. Brethren, that is SAD! Nehemiah, in Chapter 1, Verse 4, "sat down and wept and mourned for days; and was fasting and praying before the God of heaven." Then in Chapter 9, he seeks to pass on this ability to draw near to God in prayer to the people

Stop for a moment and analyze the needs of the congregation where you attend. Are there members who have grown cold and left the faith? Are there weak members who are not growing? What about the elders and the decisions that they need to make which will affect every member? What about their actions as to being examples and leaders in each phase of such work? What about the preacher and his lessons, sermons, and his family? What about the growth of the church and the salvation of souls in home Bible studies? What about opportunities to teach the gospel to friends and neighbors? What about the work of the men we support who are working in difficult areas? What about the division in the church over doctrines and personalities? In various places congregations are rocked to their foundations by division over decisions, qualifications of elders, and personalities. Usually, one hot business meeting after another explodes on Sunday afternoons. Sometimes, we get out our Bibles and try to study the Word, but usually that ends in more heated arguing. In such cases, what would have been the results if at the beginning of troubles, these "business meetings" had been replaced with "Prayer Meetings?" Or, where hours of bitter arguing had been replaced with hours of fervent prayer? YOU supply the answer!

Secondly, we can see just how far we have slipped individually by counting the days or nights that we have set aside an entire period of time for prayer to our God. Society has given us a phrase in relation to parenting: "It is not the quantity of time, but the quality of the time we spend with our children." Such is one of the dumbest things I have ever heard! Tell that to a teenager who has just fallen in love: "it's not the quantity, but the quality" and then limit the phone calls to 3 minutes. Even a teenager can and will remind you that "you can't have quality without quantity!"

So it is with God. We can't have quality time with God without the proper quantity of time. This is a daily process and even beyond. The need to get away for an extended period of time, as did Nehemiah, Daniel, Moses, Paul and the Lord, is ever before us. We not only have neglected our collective responsibility in prayer, but we have also neglected our individual responsibility. When is the LAST TIME YOU SPENT ALL DAY, most of the day, or even a greater part of the day in prayer? Our honesty is primary, because the Lord already knows! But what would we do in a whole day of prayer? Maybe we have failed here because we don't realize the need, or maybe because we are un-

certain as to what to do. The assignment to pray for more than 20 minutes would result in panic for most of us. What then should be the purpose for planning a day in prayer?

1. **It is a time for extended fellowship with God.**

In Mal. 3:1, the Lord gave attention to those that feared Him and had spoken to each other about Him. God seeks our fellowship. This we discussed in the last article. The poem of G.A. Studdert, after discussing what happened to Jesus when they nailed Him to a tree having crowned Him with thorns, says:

"When Jesus came to our town, they simply passed him by;

They never hurt a hair on him, they only let Him die.
For men had grown more tender, and they would not give him pain;

They just passed down the street and left Him in the rain."

Just so is our attitude when we ignore fellowship with Him.

2. **It is a time for a renewed perspective.**

From time to time we need to take inventory and see things from a different perspective. We need to sharpen our vision of the unseen and to give only the proper priorities to the tangible and material world. The Lord told the zealots in John 6: "to labor not for the meat that perishes, but for that which gives eternal life. It is during such periods of evaluation that we can determine the perishing from the imperishable.

3. **It is a time for intercession.**

Remember there is but one Mediator, and we know that our prayers and intercessions on the behalf of others are vital! The elders are charged with the care and feeding of the sheep, and what is more important concerning such care and feeding than prayer by each of us for them. Ask in any Sunday morning assembly who among those present does not need the fervent prayers of the Elders in his/her behalf? Now, another question: How often, as an Elder, do you spend time in what is most effective in answering those needs, — PRAYER? How much effort is put into praying for the marriages that are about to fail, for the besetting sins to be overcome, for the success of evangelistic efforts? The intercessory prayer for those in need demands days and nights be spent in prayer by those in places of spiritual leadership. How can preachers, elders, Bible class teachers neglect prayer and still hope to be effective?

4. **It is a time for adequate preparation.**

It was during this time of prayer (Neh. 1:4), that the Lord put in his heart what to do concerning Jerusalem (Neh. 2:12). In response to the prayer of this mighty man, God placed in his heart the wisdom to know what to do concerning Jerusalem. What a tragic thing it is not to be prepared to do what God gives us opportunity to do. We must be ready to give the answer, and that takes study. Beyond that, it is strength of providence that only God can give. The life of Joseph is a beautiful illustration of this principle. Gen. 39:21: "The Lord was with him . . . and granted him favor in the eyes of the prison warden." Isn't that what we

need over and over again? Simply, for the Lord to be with us and grant us favor in the eyes of people we are trying to teach or to serve? Why is it, when we teach a lesson, preach a sermon, or make a personal work presentation that people like it? Simply because of the power of God in the Gospel, and that He has "granted favor in their eyes."

Now, the question of purpose is behind us, and the question of HOW lies before us. How do we go about this type of activity?

First of all, it takes a place of privacy where one can be totally alone and without interruption or distraction.

Secondly, we should divide the day into three basic parts:

A. Worshiping & Glorifying The Lord. We need to read His word to help prime our spiritual pump. The Psalms are excellent to set the tone of the day, thanking Him for everything He has done for us in our lives. After expressing everything possible in specific words, we ought then to seek cleansing of our lives, for we are still sinners before Him who is perfect. Psalms 51 & 32 are examples of such cleansing. Here we need to examine our relationship with our brethren and note specific wrongs that we intend to correct and set right. Finally, a part of this day is for praise and worship. Psalms 103, 111, and 115 are wonderful examples. Or, seek to visualize Revelation 4 and 5 as praise to Him. Then take your song book and read/sing some of the more meaningful hymns to Him, as you make a "joyful noise to the Lord."

B. The Second Part of the Day Will Be The Prayer For Others.

Read Paul's prayer for the Ephesians and Colossians. This is the time for interpersonal prayer. Pray for others what you are praying for yourself.

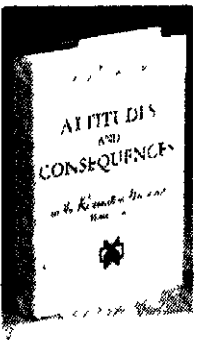
C. The Third Part of the Day Will Be Prayer For Yourself. Of course space prevents us from completing this discussion of what we need in this prayer. Yet, in general, we are looking for prayer of concern in your personal life, for spiritual growth, for God's presence, and for God's protection.

These are some of the necessities for spiritual renewal.

**Attitudes and Consequences
in the Restoration Movement**

By Homer Hailey. The aim of this work has been to trace the development of two attitudes toward the Scripture authority in the Restoration Movement: that of the early spirits in the movement, and another which grew up within it, leading ultimately to division.

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CONWAY SKINNER PASSES

by James R. Cope

After a lengthy bout with cancer Conway Skinner, in his early 50s, passed this life in a Jacksonville, Florida, hospital June 2, 1982. One of five children, with two sisters and two brothers, one of whom is a preacher, Conway was tremendously influenced by the great faith of his devout and aged mother who reared her family in Montgomery, Alabama, and who survives him, as do his devoted wife, the former Roberta Ledford, and three children, Darrell, Diane and Dale.

Though his geographical travels were not particularly widespread, his influence in the areas where and among the churches with which he labored was great and always for good. Most of his ministerial life was spent in the Southeast. He began preaching at age 16. He graduated from Alabama Christian College in 1951.

I first knew Brother Skinner when he labored with the Air Force Base Church in Valdosta, Georgia. In more recent years he worked with churches in Beaufort, South Carolina, and Tallahassee, Florida. He served as an elder at Westside in Tallahassee. Less than two years ago he began with Lakeshore in Jacksonville.

Brother Skinner never aspired to great personal recognition. He labored where he felt he was truly needed, whether in cities or among rural people. He held many gospel meetings for rural churches. He had a great interest in and an unusually strong sense of caring for the physically and financially unfortunate. An optimist of the first order, spreading sunshine was a part of his very being. Though very forthright in expressing his conviction on religious issues, he was exceedingly patient and charitable toward those of differing views. He was without egotism and reluctant to put himself forward. He was strictly a Bible preacher, conservative in his approach to Bible interpretation and life itself, yet he was most generous in the giving of himself in whatever his heart and hand found to do. He had a level head and was especially strong at ameliorating differences between brethren.

Whether at work or play, Conway gave himself unreservedly in the feat demanding his immediate attention. He sought to keep a strong and healthy body as a tabernacle for a strong and healthy spirit. He was a participant in sports and particularly enjoyed tennis. He was ever supportive of those who give themselves to strengthening the moral and spiritual fiber of youth while they train the mind in secular areas along with the physical body.

It was my privilege to be an honored recipient of the hospitality extended by Conway and Roberta on many occasions in different places. Truly "to know him was to love him" fits well the life and memory of this intelligent, capable, modest, sincere, godly gospel preacher. I loved him much. I shall miss him greatly.

SET FOR THE
DEFENSE OF
THE GOSPEL

T. G. O'Neal

P.O. Box 723
Bessemer, Alabama 35021



WILDERCROFT NEAR WASHINGTON, D.C.

During March 21-26 of this year I was with the Clintwood, Va. church and brother Jimmy Thomas in a Gospel Meeting. I have known both this good church and preacher for a good many years. Since my last meeting there, several years ago, much progress has been made by the church and I rejoice with them to see such.

On March 28 I preached for the Wildercroft Church in Riverdale, Maryland. This is just Northeast of Washington, D.C. The address of the meeting house is 6330 Auburn Avenue, Riverdale, Md.20737.

I was born in Washington, D.C. and it was a joy to return home, visit with brethren most of whom I had not met, and renew friendships with several I had known in other parts of the nation. I was much impressed with the Adult Bible Class that Lord's Day morning, both with its teacher, Jim Vaughan, and the way the class entered into the discussion of the topic of Bible Authority as they used brother Billy Moore's book on this subject as a guide. The congregation is overseen by three elders, Vernon Klemm, Sid Miller and Jim Vaughan. I was impressed with their desire to follow the Scriptures and lead the congregation in the Scriptural way as we spent an entire afternoon discussing current church problems.

The late, beloved Denton Neal preached for them for several years and laid a foundation upon which they are building for the future. I received the bulletin from this church for several years. In this bulletin, brother Neal often would write a short article on some subject.

The bulletin, The Open Door, of the Church at Grant and Summits Sts. Portsmouth, Ohio, of June 7, 1967, quoted from his pen as follows: "A LETTER OF JUST LAST WEEK from the "Women's Auxiliary for Christian Education of Alabama Christian College" reads: "Alabama Christian College, a Church of Christ related College, is planning to publish a new cookbook. We are collecting recipes from Church of Christ women. . . ." **THIS PROVOKES SEVERAL QUESTIONS** in my mind —and I hope in the minds of many others.

"1. How is this, or any other, college "Church of Christ related?" What is the "relation" to "the" or any "Church of Christ?" How did it get "related?"

"Is it related in the same way an AAMCO Transmission Shop might be "related," that is, members of the church of Christ operate it? If so, let's keep the

"relation" the same between the church and both the transmission shop and the college —and ALL HUMAN INSTITUTIONS.

"2. Does their solicitation of "Church of Christ women" exclude some "Christian" women, or do they just want to be sure to include some who are not Christians?!

"They will be offering "FAVORITE HOMEMAKERS RECIPES FROM THE CHURCH OF CHRIST" they say.

Will the "CHURCH OF CHRIST" Imprimatur on a book of recipes assure the same success, gastronomically, as the "meat," "bread of life" and "milk of the word" which it dispenses effects spiritually?

"THE CHURCH IS DIVINE, it has no "relations." Let's keep our speech "as the oracles of God".

An article from his pen appeared in *Guideposts*, the Wildercroft Bulletin, of Aug. 8, 1971, in which he said, "BRO. BATSELL BARRETT BAXTER, of David Lipscomb College, in a Nashville Tennessean newspaper ad and a widely mailed letter makes "AN Appeal to Churches of Christ." He notes that the college "must raise in contributions more than \$363,000 just to teach the Bible, over and above what the students pay for this service," and adds, "The only possible source from which it is reasonable to expect to raise this amount of money for this purpose each year is THE CHURCH." (last emphasis mine, dmn).

"After further noting that "to teach the word of God . . . is the primary mission of . . . the church" he says his appeal is "for churches of Christ to pay the actual cost of a service rendered to David Lipscomb College. Clearly asking "the church" to pay a human, secular institution to fulfill the "primary mission of the church." Maybe the church could hire the college to do its Bible school work too, and send its preachers to foreign fields—or the Missionary Society! No difference.

"Even this appeal is a pathetic commentary on our times and the state of the church of the Lord. It states that "Since 1891 churches of Christ have supported David Lipscomb College financially." But ONLY NOW HAVE THEY DARED to make a public appeal to churches for contributions. They knew that previously any such appeal would have been slapped down by the brotherhood—as was done by Bro. G. C. Brewer a number of years ago.

"The CHURCH IS GOD'S DIVINE institution and the gospel the divine, exclusive commodity of it and its individual members for doing God's divine work. Let no human institution presume to "sell" the commodity or the service to the divine institution to which it was given by the Lord."

In April of this year, Wilson Adams and family, the older son of the editor of *Searching The Scriptures*, moved to work with the brethren at Wildercroft. In May the elders invited the editor of this paper to preach in their spring Gospel Meeting.

My impression is that Wildercroft with the Wilson Adams family among them will make much progress in

the future. Wilson is a young man with much ability and maturity above his youthful age. I envision a strong, growing, faithful work at Wildercroft under the faithful preaching of this young evangelist and overseen by three good elders whose mature judgment has a good influence upon the congregation.

I urge the readers of *Searching The Scriptures* to visit this congregation when in the Washington area. You can worship God, encourage a young preacher, hear a good Bible lesson from him, and be uplifted in visiting some of your brethren in the area of the nation's capital and know something of what they are doing.

AN UPDATE ON THE WORK IN ITALY

Harold Fite

Several articles have been written over the past ten years on the work in Italy. I assume, therefore, that the Italian work is familiar to the readers of this paper. This article is an update on the work in that country.

From May 15 to June 10, my wife and I visited the faithful churches in Italy. We spent several days with the brethren in Rome, Poggiomarino, Trieste, Udine, Aprilia and Pomezia. The work has made progress since our first visit in 1977. With the return of Gianni Berdini, Stefano and Arrigo Corazza to Italy from the states three years ago, the work-force doubled. This has enabled the work to be expanded, with more opportunities being presented. Through radio, television and the printed page the word is being spread and people are beginning to take notice.

Arrigo Corazza is the preacher at Via Sannio in Rome. He is a young man with ability and does a fine job preaching the gospel. His father, Alessandro Corazza is now giving most of his time to publishing his paper *Sentieri Diritti*, and to translating and printing religious material for the brethren. The work with the paper involves correspondence and some travel. His mailing list for *Sentieri Diritti* has grown to 900, and he has approximately the same number receiving the correspondence course.

While brother Corazza has made some enemies through the paper, he has made many friends. He is receiving laudatory comments and agreements from unexpected sources. The paper is doing a lot of good.

In Poggiomarino, Vincenzo Ruggiero continues to do a fine work. The response from his radio broadcasts is most encouraging. He broadcasts three times a week from Poggiomarino and twice a week from Salerno. The requests for tapes of his lessons are growing.

Brother Ruggiero—with the help of his brethren—is building a studio in his parents old house which is located behind his house.

In addition to the work in the St. Martzano-Poggiomarino area, he is driving to St. Felice every Sunday afternoon to preach to a small group of brethren numbering 20 to 25.

The Lord's church is firmly planted in Poggiomarino, and is well known in the area. Brother Ruggiero has many friends outside the Lord's family. We pray that these friends will eventually become more than friends—brethren in the Lord!

Gianni Berdini is the evangelist in Trieste. Trieste is a city of 300,000 people. The brethren have an adequate place to meet in the heart of the city. The building contains an auditorium, two classrooms, office and foyer with an attractive tract rack. Their attendance runs around 25. Gianni writes and prints an excellent teaching bulletin.

Eighteen are receiving the correspondence course. Information about the church is attractively displayed in a glassed-in case on one of the main thoroughfares downtown, near a busy bus stop. Posters about the church are also located on public busses.

Udine is a small city of 100,000. One local family and an individual, and two American families make up this congregation.

Stefano Corazza is working in this area. In addition to the regular services, he is having two classes a week with two individuals, and has 16 taking the correspondence course.

Stefano is a hard worker working under the handicap of not having a public building in which to meet. The brethren meet in a private home. Building owners in Udine will not rent space to the church! And people are reluctant to attend a religious service in a private home. Some have said, "When you get a building I will come." It is my opinion that the potential of the work in Udine cannot be properly evaluated without a building. Plans are being formulated for a building. We pray that these plans will be realized in the near future.

Roberto Tondelli is the faithful evangelist in Pomezia. Roberto is a talented young man and a diligent and zealous worker. He has a radio program and helps his father-in-law (Rodolfo Berdini) on his television program. Several are taking the correspondence course offered by this congregation. Roberto looks for any opportunity to talk to people about Christ, and is an able interpreter.

The future of the work in Italy is encouraging when measured by the likes of Roberto Tondelli.

Rodolfo Berdini continues to do an excellent work in Aprilia. The brethren in Aprilia are a well informed and stable group. Brother Berdini has a weekly television program, professionally done, and with a punch! He presents strong and pointed lessons opposing the Catholic Church and its teachings.

While we in this country like to enunciate our right to free speech, there is no way brother Berdini could preach on American TV the way he is doing in Italy. He is receiving many favorable responses to his broadcasts.

Generally speaking, the brethren in Italy are assuming more and more of their financial responsibilities. Congregations are now having short meetings using the aforementioned preachers. The seven preachers have baptized approximately 25 in the past three years. Now that may not seem many ac-

ording to our standards, but in a country dominated by Catholics, it is a big step in the right direction.

An excellent foundation is" being laid, not only for the next generation, but for generations yet unborn.

URGENT

Rodolfo Berdini has lost, rather abruptly, \$125 per week of his support.

Gianni Berdini has lost \$400 a month of his support.

It is imperative that this amount be replaced. I plead with churches which are able, to give some consideration to the work in Italy. If interested, you may contact me (Harold Fite, see address on article) or write

Rodolfo Berdini
Viale Olivi, 79A
00040 Lavinio, Anzio
(Roma) Italy

Gianni Berdini
Via dei Moreri No 7
34133 Trieste, Italy

**SHOPPING AT
THE LORD'S STORE**

Frank Himmel

134 Janet Dr.
Destrehan, LA 70047



Laodicea was a proud, wealthy city. Its location, along with its garment industry and production of "Phrygian powder," an eye medicine, made it a center of commerce and banking. When struck by severe earthquakes in A.D. 60, its citizenry refused outside help in rebuilding the city. That same self-sufficiency characterized the church there. The Lord threatened to spit them out because they said, "I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing," not realizing they were wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. He suggested they go shopping to buy three things from Him (Rev. 3:18).

1. *Gold refined by fire.* The Laodiceans needed to understand the nature of real wealth. It is not composed of houses, land, securities, or other material goods, but "the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col. 2:2,3). Solomon, one of the wealthiest men of all times from a material standpoint, counseled, "Buy truth, and do not sell it, get wisdom and instruction and understanding" (Pro. 23:23). Such riches can be purchased only from the Lord.

But how can the poor buy gold? God said through Isaiah, "Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. Why do you spend money for what is not bread,

and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and delight yourself in abundance" (Is. 55:1,2). Come and listen. We need no money; just a willingness to exchange our pride, self-sufficiency, and ignorance for the truth that will enable us to lay up treasures in heaven.

2. *White garments.* Would that more people would buy their clothes at the Lord's store! His sportswear department does not have rack after rack of shorts and halter tops, nor the latest in alluring swim-wear. He carries no split skirts, tight pants, or low-cut blouses; nor does He specialize in "gold or pearls or costly garments." His men's shirts feature automatic buttons for those who cannot seem to remember to button up. His worshipwear section has only such attire as reflects the seriousness of the occasion of worshipping God.

Of course Jesus is speaking here of spiritual garments. White is the symbol of purity and holiness (Rev. 3:4). These white garments, like the gold, are only available from the Lord. Our garments are made white by washing them in the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 7:14); by putting on Christ in baptism (Gal. 3:27). They are maintained by our walking in the light to receive the continual cleansing of Jesus' blood (1 Jn. 1:8).

3. *Eyesalve.* These disciples could not see their own condition. They needed medicine for the spiritual eyes, to "look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4:18). This eyesalve corresponds to the discernment that Paul included in his prayer for the Philippians (1:9); the ability to apply the knowledge already purchased.

Perhaps many of us could use a good dose of eyesalve to better perceive the status of the congregation of which we are a part. We may need to wake up like Sardis, repent like Pergamum, or return to our first love like Ephesus. That eyesalve would also help us bring our personal lives into focus. It is so often difficult to see our own weaknesses and shortcomings, or recognize when our priorities are confused; when instead of "fixing our eyes on Jesus" (Heb. 12:2) we are looking aside. A little salve might open our eyes to opportunities, too: opportunities to teach, to encourage, to lend a helping hand.

The poor, naked, blind brethren at Laodicea needed gold, garments, and eyesalve which only the Lord could provide. Let us look to Him for all our spiritual needs.

**VETERAN FLORIDA
PREACHER GOES HOME**

We have just learned of the death of **BYRON CONNELLY**, veteran Florida gospel preacher. Brother Connelly labored fervently for many years and established many congregations in the state of Florida. We extend our sympathy to his good family. A more extended notice will appear later.

THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

Send all News Items to: Wilson Adams, 6334 Auburn Ave., Riverdale, MD 20737

FIELD REPORTS

JIM DEASON, 1200 Nashville Hwy., Columbia, TN 38401. I have been with the Jackson Heights church in this city for about 17 months. I have never enjoyed a work so much. In 1981 there were eleven baptized and seven restored. Three godly men oversee the flock at this place: Rufus Clifford, Jr., Reedy Nicholson, and Myron Thomas. Eight deacons serve: Hugh Stacey, Harold Vernon, Bradley Dugger, Morris Boshers, Charles Goolsby, Arthur Hanes, Larry Yeager, and Wayne Garner. In addition to these, many others are active in the work at this place. We have set up a Bible Class format whereby each member can study through the entire Bible as well as a number of topical studies in a five to seven year period. Home Bible Studies with both members and non-members are in progress regularly. We have had several to place membership and, sadly, we have had to withdraw from a few.

I am scheduled to meet Milton Paulk of the "Calvary Jesus Name Tabernacle" in public discussion the first week in October of this year. We will be discussing the subject of Holy Spirit Baptism for four nights. If you would like to attend, you can contact me at the above address or phone (615) 388-6811 or 388-7278. I will try and make arrangements for a place for you to stay. When traveling in the area, we would like to have you stop by and worship with us. There is easy access to the building off I-65. May God bless all of you in your labor in the kingdom.

DAVID L. ODOM, 2108 Ella, Beatrice, NB 68310. The reason I am writing is because I have somewhat of an emergency on my hands. The congregation which has supported me with the majority of my support since I have been laboring in Nebraska for the past five years can no longer support us due to internal problems there. This means that next month (July) we will be \$1450 short! If there is any way that anyone would be able to help us we would be grateful. The brethren here at Beatrice, and in Grand Island, where we travel every two months in order to work with them, want us to stay in Nebraska. We want to stay in Nebraska and help these small churches be built up. As you know, it is not easy to get men to come to such areas as this and stay for a long period of time, but we believe that this is what is needed, and are willing to do just that. For references about myself and the Nebraska work, contact: Harold Fite, Leon Odom, Floyd Thompson, Brent Lewis, and Roland Lewis.

BILL GASTON, c/o Wickett church of Christ, P.O. Box 24, Wickett, TX 79788. I have been working with the church in Wickett, TX for one year. I have been driving 65 miles each way twice a week while holding down another full-time job. The church in Wickett needs someone to work full-time with it. They can provide some support, but I still need \$1300 per month to make ends meet. If you could help it would be greatly appreciated. The church at Wickett is the only sound congregation in a forty mile radius. Much work needs to be done here. Write to me at the above address.

MIKE THOMAS, 1254 S. Enota Dr. NE, Gainesville, GA 30501. The church of Christ in Gainesville, GA has two sets of song books, Christian Hymns II and Christian Hymns III, that they will gladly donate to any brethren who would have need of them. There are approximately 60 books available in each set. If interested please write me at the above address or call (404) 536-4871. Postage would be appreciated.

PREACHERS NEEDED

SALEM, OH—As of August 1, 1982, we will be needing a preacher. Please write: church of Christ, 484 Georgetown Rd., Salem, OH 44460. Or call Ed Marino (216) 547-7431, or Tom Scott (216) 332-0895. The church can provide full support.

ROSE HILL, VA—We are a small congregation and are in dire need of a preacher. We have only about five to ten members. Most support would have to come from other places. If interested please write to the church at Rt. 1, Rose Hill, VA 24281.

THAYER STREET LECTURES

The Annual Thayer Street Lectures will be conducted September 20-23, 1982. Bill Feist will speak three times on "Satan"; Morris Hafley will present "Studies in Ecclesiastes" (3 periods); Tom Icard will deal with "A Christian and his Recreation, Job, and Possessions"; Phil Morr will speak on "Woman's Role in Society", "Remember Thy Creator", and "Family Responsibilities." Jeff Corey will speak on "Joshua"; Craig Meyer on "Samson"; and Steve Smith on "Elijah." Three evening periods will be devoted to congregational singing led by Lewis Willis. Some sleeping accommodations are available for out of town visitors. Write to: Church of Christ, 640 Thayer St., Akron, Ohio 44310.

NEW CONGREGATION—LYNCHBURG, VA

WILSON ADAMS, 6334 Auburn Ave., Riverdale, MD 20737. As you are aware, churches of the Lord along the eastern seaboard are few and far between, and Virginia is no exception. For years there has been a critical need for a work in central Virginia. On July 25th, that dream will become a reality as a new congregation will meet for the first time in the Larry Powell home at 1203 Westridge Cir., Lynchburg, VA 24502. Two fine and faithful families from the Georgia Avenue church in Roanoke will form the nucleus of the new group. Along with these, some others from the digressive Seven Hills church in Lynchburg have let it be known that they are leaving Seven Hills to join in with the new scriptural work.

Bro. Phil Holman and his family have agreed to move and begin work in Lynchburg in late August. Phil presently preaches for the Trezevant Avenue congregation in Memphis, TN, is in his thirties, and he and his wife have three boys. Phil told me that he has always had a desire to move to a place and help begin a new work. I have spent some time with Phil, heard him preach, and discussed at length several things with him pertinent to the new work. I was highly impressed, with not only Phil, but the entire Holman family. At this writing he has raised half of his needed support. The new congregation has committed themselves to doing all they can toward his support. Could you possibly help; either on a monthly basis or a one time basis? Yes times are hard economically. Yet, here is one willing to go to a place where a church is badly needed. Lynchburg has a population of nearly 100,000 and lies on the main route between Roanoke and Richmond/Norfolk. The work has all the potential for growth and stability. For more information on the new work contact Larry Powell at the above address, or phone (804) 237-3445. Bro. Holman's present address is 5294 Scrivener Dr., Memphis, TN 38134. Phone (901) 388-2751. For references as to Phil's work in the past you may contact:

Wilson Adams, Riverdale, MD
Julian Snell, Frankfort, KY
Ed Bragwell, Fultondale, AL
Boyd Sellers, Humbolt, TN
Lowell Blassingame, Pine Bluff, AR
Elders of the West Booneville church in Booneville, MS

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(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)