

GOSPEL GLEANER



Volume 11

Number 1

SOME CHANGES

Bill Dillon

Effective with this issue, some noticeable changes will be evident in the printing and publishing of the *Gospel Gleaner*.

The *Gospel Gleaner* will no longer be under the oversight of the Heath Church of Christ in Kevil, Kentucky. The Mabelvale Church of Christ in Mabelvale, Arkansas will henceforth assume the responsibility of the *Gleaner*. The Heath church has invested hundreds of hours of time, as well as dollars, over the last ten years to publish the *Gospel Gleaner*. A heartfelt thank you is given to all those brethren for their sacrificial labors. Special gratitude is given to the Allen Carmichael and Larry Davis families for helping the paper get as far as it has.

Brother Ronnie Whittemore will no longer be co-editor. This task will now be carried out by brother Dennis Gullede, preacher for the Mabelvale congregation. Brother Whittemore has given unselfishly to insure the success of the *Gleaner*. Sincere appreciation is expressed to Ronnie for being a major contributor to the good achieved by this paper in years past. Though brother Ronnie will no longer be co-editor, yet, the *Gleaner's* pages will still be open to him. We trust that the readership of this gospel publication will continue to benefit from his good writing.

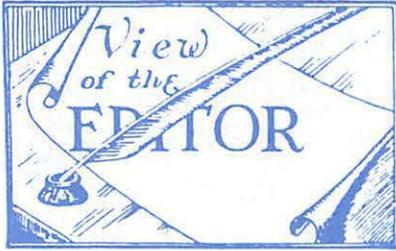
Also, our readers should take note that the *Gleaner* is now a sixteen page publication instead of twelve pages formerly. And further, though this

paper will continue to be issued quarterly, yet, its circulation is increasing to 5000. Future expectation is that the *Gospel Gleaner* will continue to have a magnified voice in teaching others.

However, one matter does not and will not change. The purpose of this publication remains fixed. As it was stated on the front page of the very first issue:

THE PURPOSE OF THIS EFFORT IN RELIGIOUS JOURNALISM IS TO HELP REMOVE THE DARKNESS OF IGNORANCE THAT HAMPERS SO MANY OF OUR FELLOW MEN IN THEIR COMPREHENSION OF GOD'S WORD. THE SINGULAR HOPE FOR HUMANKIND IS THE SIMPLE GOSPEL OF CHRIST. IN A DAY WHEN MUCH OF WHAT PASSES FOR RELIGIOUS FERVOR IS ONLY EMOTIONAL CATAGION, WE HOPE TO PRESENT IN AN OPEN AND LOVING WAY THE WONDERFUL TRUTHS OF HOLY SCRIPTURE. WE STRIVE TO BRING SINNERS TO THE SAVIOUR BY STANDING FOR THE POSITIVE TRUTHS OF HEAVEN AND STANDING AGAINST WHATEVER MILITATES AGAINST THE GOOD OF HUMANITY. IF WE CAN HELP ONLY ONE SOUL COME TO A KNOWLEDGE OF TRUTH, OUR LABORS SHALL NOT BE IN VAIN. GREAT IS TRUTH AND MIGHTY ABOVE ALL AND WILL PREVAIL.

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Volume 11 Number 1
January - March 1995

The *GOSPEL GLEANER* is a quarterly publication of the Mabelvale Church of Christ in Mabelvale, Arkansas.

The *GOSPEL GLEANER* is also supported financially by interested sister churches and individuals and is mailed free of charge to its subscribers.

The *GOSPEL GLEANER* is dedicated to restoring New Testament Christianity. We welcome your comments and questions regarding any article found herein.

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THE POWER OF THE WRITTEN WORD

Bill Dillon

The famed radio commentator Paul Harvey once said, "There is no scalpel ever honed as sharp as a ball point pen." This was his way of saying, "The pen is mightier than the sword." The printed page should not be under-estimated; the power of the printed word is more powerful than all other forces combined. The printed page can change the world for better or worse. "A drop of ink can make millions think."



The first-century church had neither electronic typewriters, word-processors, ball point pens nor any other writing instruments, yet, with the tools they did possess, they wrote words which for 2,000 years have influenced the lives of all mankind and led them closer to God.

As of a few short years ago, our nation's printing presses annually produced 12 billion linear miles of words or a total of over 3 quadrillion words.

Why is the printed page so important?

1. *It is permanent.* Oral words soon vanish. Paul's written words, fashioned while the great apostle was a prisoner of Rome, have long outlasted the empire itself.

In Daniel 5, the Lord used the handwriting on the wall to inform Belshazzar of his spiritual deficiencies; a permanent message to all ungodly rulers down through the ages.

The written words of Moses in Genesis 1, describing the beginning of all things were the very words quoted by the Apollo 8 astronauts on December 21, 1968 as they orbited the moon.

2. *It is personal.* The written word is as personal as you can get. It speaks from the author to each individual who reads it. Two minds can meet together as one by means of the written word.

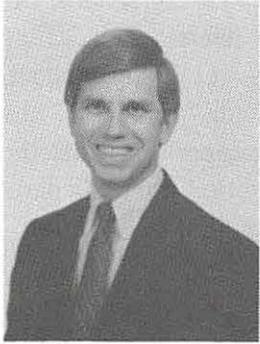
3. *It is powerful.* The written word has all the dynamics to move and persuade men. The incisive words of Hebrews 4:12 tell us "the word of God is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword."

The written word is powerful and will continue to bear fruit in this life and that which is to come.

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STAYING THE COURSE WITH *GOSPEL GLEANER*

Dennis Gullede



In January 1985 when *Gospel Gleaner* first saw the light of printed day it was my pleasure to be associated with the paper as one of its staff writers. For several years I wrote the column entitled "Women Of The Word," and have contributed articles under the "Perverted

Passages" and "Pinpoints" columns. Now, it is my special honor to serve along side of my long time friend and colleague Bill Dillon, as the paper's new co-editor. The work of Ronnie Whittemore, who served in this capacity for the past ten years, has been nothing short of excellent. Ronnie's contributions to the paper have helped to make the *Gospel Gleaner* the excellent publication that it is. We owe him a huge debt of gratitude!

As the new co-editor I pledge to you, the readers of *Gospel Gleaner*, my intention to help keep the paper the sound and stable influence for truth that it has proven itself to be. We will stay the course of soundness, carrying only those articles which are written with a respect for the authority and all-sufficiency of God's word. We will stay the course of timelessness, by resting solely upon a "thus saith the Lord" for all that is taught within

these pages. We will stay the course of timeliness by dealing forthrightly with matters which relate to daily living and those issues which trouble the church of today. We will stay the course of "balance" by refusing to get caught up in church politics and lending the pages of the *Gleaner* to extreme views of opinion, except as truth may be called "extreme." We will stay the course of a proper attitude by respecting Paul's inspired injunction, "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (Ephesians 4:15).

We are grateful to so many who have helped *Gospel Gleaner* succeed over the past decade. To all those who have read the paper and passed it on to others, those who have benefited from it and told others, those who have written for it, those who have prayed for the good it is capable of doing, those who have given the many hundreds of hours and dollars to make *Gospel Gleaner* a viable voice for God's truth, we say "Thank You."

We at the Mabelvale Church of Christ want to continue that tradition and stay the course. I am especially grateful to the elders at Mabelvale for taking on the *Gospel Gleaner* as a work to be overseen by the Lord's church at Mabelvale. The Mabelvale elders are Johnny Boyd, Dale Morris, Harold Pigue and Gene Sullivan (photos below).



Johnny Boyd



Dale Morris



Harold Pigue



Gene Sullivan

CHRISTIAN CHARACTER



HEARTFELT RELIGION

Ronnie Whittemore



Many false accusations have been made against Christians concerning their beliefs and practices. For example, the Lord's people have been accused unjustly of not believing in the Old Testament. However, no one believes in the Old Testament any stronger than Christians.

They do not believe that the law of Moses is in effect because the Bible teaches that Jesus abolished that law (Colossians 2:14), but that is a far cry from not believing in the inspiration and precepts of the Old Testament (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Corinthians 10:11; Romans 15:4). Sometimes, God's people are accused wrongly of not believing in music in worship. Yet, Christians believe stronger than any people that we must worship God with music, not mechanical music, but vocal music because that is what the Bible teaches (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16).

Another unjust accusation is that members of the church of Christ (or Christians) do not believe in "heartfelt religion." This writer believes firmly and undeniably in "heartfelt religion." However, he as other people who follow God's Book, believes what the Bible describes as "heartfelt religion." The world, in general, defines "heartfelt religion" as "a religion that is better felt than told;" they consider "heartfelt religion" as the mere emotions of the heart. What the Bible teaches and what the world believes are two different things. The world announces: "Being religious is all that matters. One religion is as good as another." They consider that one's feelings are the most important thing. Someone says: "I am *saved* because I *feel* good and

I *feel* good because I am *saved*." The Ethiopian's "feel good" (rejoicing) occurred after completing his gospel obedience in baptism (Acts 8:39). Salvation involves more than emotions.

The Bible makes distinctions concerning the functions and conditions of the heart. The "Bible heart" consists of four chambers: (1) The intellect, (2) the emotions, (3) the will, and (4) the conscience. In order to believe properly in what the Bible describes as "heartfelt religion," then all parts of the heart must be considered in light of salvation.

THE INTELLECT

The intellectual part of the heart is that part which thinks (Hebrews 4:12; Proverbs 23:7), reasons (Mark 2:8), understands (Matthew 13:5), and believes (Romans 10:9-10). The intellect of man becomes darkened by sin (Matthew 9:4; Ephesians 4:18). Therefore, the intellect must be changed by testimony or the fact of the gospels (Psalm 119:130; John 20:30-31; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4). For example, a lawyer will endeavor to change the mind of a jury about his client by appealing to their intellect. He wants them to think, reason, understand and believe that his client is innocent based upon the evidence which he presents. He will not rely only upon the emotions of the jury. That would be foolish. "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" (1 Peter 1:22). Faith is based upon evidence or testimony (Romans 10:17; Hebrews 11:1).

THE EMOTIONS

The emotional part of the heart is that part which desires (Romans 10:1), loves (Matthew 22:37), trusts (Proverbs 3:5), suffers anguish (2 Corinthians 2:4), and rejoices (Psalm 33:21). When sin enters a person's life his emotions can be a sign which marks the presence of sin. He may become angry with himself or others; he may become uneasy; he may experience sadness and guilt. Many physical illnesses can be directly related to the sin in people's lives. Their emotions are corrupted by sin. However, the emotions of the heart can be changed

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HEARTFELT RELIGION

(Continued from page 4)

by divine love (Romans 5:8-9; 2 Corinthians 8:). One's love for Christ and His Word will replace one's love for sin. "We love him, because he first loved us" (1 John 4:19).

THE WILL

The will is the part of the heart which intends (Hebrews 4:12), purposes (Daniel 1:8), obeys (Romans 6:16-18), and determines (1 Corinthians 7:37). When the heart becomes evil (Genesis 6:5), deceitful (Jeremiah 17:9) and corrupt (Ephesians 2:3), then a change must be made; otherwise, that soul will be lost. The will is changed by the motives of the gospel. Parents place motives before their children to induce obedience. God also places powerful motives before men and women to induce them to obedience. One such motive is His goodness. "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" (Romans 2:4). Another motive is His wrath and judgment. "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men..." (2 Corinthians 5:11). "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:31). Friend, has your will been changed by the love or wrath of God?

THE CONSCIENCE

The conscience is the part of the heart that condemns (1 John 3:20-21), troubles (John 14:1), and is pricked or cut (Acts 2:37; 7:54). If the conscience is taught or trained correctly, then the conscience should be the means by which a man recognizes his error. If one continues in sin, then the conscience may cease to function and become hardened or seared (Hebrews 3:13; 1 Timothy 4:2). But the conscience is changed by obedience or right doing. The person who mistreats his fellowman (if he is honest) can never have peace of mind or a clear conscience until he corrects it. Likewise, the sinner must understand and believe what God has done through Christ. "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled

from and evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" (Hebrews 10:22).

The world defines "heartfelt religion" as an emotional experience or a "feeling." But friend, do you believe in the "heartfelt religion" that the Bible describes? It consists of four chambers: The intellect, emotions, conscience and will. "*Is thy heart right with God?*"

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SOME CHANGES...

(Continued from page 1)

By the grace of God, we will continue to reach the lost and edify the saved by means of the printed page.

We continue to solicit the prayers and support of all our readers.

Editor's Note:

A special word of thanks is given to the good Mountain Home Church of Christ in Mountain Home, Arkansas for their financial support and encouragement. The elders of the Mountain Home congregation are: Lindel Anthony, Theo Rowe, Robert Lawyer, T. J. Henderson, Jimmy Horton and Jack Jones.

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Sunday Morning Bible Class	9:30
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:00

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Dennis Gullede, Evangelist

A DEACON IS A SERIOUS FELLOW

Allen Webster



He may have a quick smile and love a good joke, but a deacon is a serious fellow. To be qualified to be a deacon, one must be "grave" (1 Timothy 3:8). The meaning of the Greek word is "august, venerable, honorable," Thus a deacon is serious in respect to the Lord's

work. He is sensible, sober minded, reverent and of good judgment, and not childish.

In practical terms, what does this mean?

A DEACON IS SERIOUS ABOUT LEARNING GOD'S WORD. He is a good Bible student. He does not know everything, but he is a disciple (learner). He takes advantage of each opportunity to grow in knowledge of the Word (1 Peter 2:2) and hungers and thirsts after righteousness (Matthew 5:6). He is diligent about personal study (2 Timothy 2:15).

Thus, one qualified to be a deacon always participates in the church's Bible School program. He may be a teacher or he may be a student, but you won't find him "skipping school."

A DEACON IS SERIOUS ABOUT SAVING SOULS AND BUILDING UP THE CHURCH. A man spiritually mature enough to be a deacon understands the value of a soul (Matthew 16:26) and the urgent necessity of reaching the lost (Luke 14:23). His earnest desire is to see the church grow in number, faith, love, and dedication. He is willing to do his part to see it happen.

Thus, one qualified to be a deacon actively participates in the visitation program. He can be counted on to be at meetings, to make his visits, and to go beyond the call of duty in caring for the elderly, shut-in, sick, wayward, and lost (James 1:27; Matthew 25:41-46).

A DEACON IS SERIOUS ABOUT THE BUSINESS OF THE CHURCH. There is a "business" side to church work. Meeting houses must be built and maintained. Grounds must be looked after. Bills must be paid, budgets must be set, and financial

matters must be carefully recorded. Deacons are men who are interested in taking a lion's share of these responsibilities. This frees elders' hands to do more important tasks (shepherding wayward sheep, edifying the saved, and converting the lost).

Thus, a deacon is one who participates in the business meetings of the church. He can be counted on to make time to attend, to conduct himself in a Christian manner, and exemplify a willingness to carry out the elders' decisions without dragging his feet. It has been said that there are three ways to get things done: Do it yourself, hire someone, or forbid your kids to do it! In the church, the way to get something done is to assign it to a deacon. He is a serious worker.

"Deacon" is not a title to be worn, but a job to be done. He is a servant, not a symbol. As we consider men to do this important job, let's seek out those who have shown by past actions a faithfulness to attend Bible classes, visitation meetings, business meetings, and to support whatever good works the church conducts (Gospel meetings, work days, singing schools, youth meetings, fellowships).

He may not look like he was weaned on a pickle and drinks vinegar for breakfast, but a deacon is a serious fellow!

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Neglect

*There's a dusty Bible I mean to read;
There's an hour I'll keep to pray;
And I'll turn each dream to a golden deed
When I get the time—someday.
So we have thought and so we have said;
Yet how sad it is to relate
That, busy with less important things,
We waited until too late.*



BIBLE BAPTISM

Foy E. Wallace, Jr.

The basic principle of all obedience is understanding, "He that hears the word and understands it..." (Matthew 13:23). "Go preach the gospel...He that believes (the gospel) and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:15,16). Believing that Jesus Christ is the son of God is not all that must be understood in rendering obedience in baptism--there are other essential principles of the gospel faith.

Institutions with design carry the necessity of understanding the design. Example: The Lord's Supper --"Do this in memory of me." No man can observe the Lord's Supper "in memory" of Christ without knowing it. The preposition "for" in Acts 2:38 is *eis* in the original, and the preposition "in" of 1 Corinthians 11:23 is the same *eis* in the original. No man can take the Lord's Supper in order to (unto or into) the memory of Christ if he does not know it, and for the same reason no man can be baptized in order to (unto or into) the remission of sins or salvation, if he does not know it. One cannot accidentally obey God.

If it is not necessary to understand the purpose of baptism, why is it in every case emphasized from the preaching of John to the last verse on the subject in the New Testament? If it is not to be understood, then, that part of the subject is non-essential and when we preach the design of baptism we are preaching something not necessary to be believed, therefore, preaching a non-essential. Why debate on the design of baptism if its design does not have to be believed or understood? Why debate on a non-essential?

Is there a single case in all the New Testament where the person baptized did not understand the purpose of the act?

It is sometimes said that the purpose is not a part of the command. Let us see:

Acts 22:16 says: "Arise and be baptized and wash away your sins." The subject understood is you--with the triple predicate--and fully rendered with each part supplied, it reads: You arise and be baptized and you wash away your sins. Arise is part of the command; be baptized is a part of the command; wash away your sins is part of the command. No man can do that who believes his sins have already been washed away.

It is said that "to obey God" is the main purpose of baptism. Then why is that purpose not stated? Is it not singular that the New Testament failed to mention the main purpose in connection with the command, but on the other hand emphasized the non-essential purpose or the purpose not necessary to be believed? "Remission of sins," "into Christ," "shall be saved," "newness of life," and all other expressions are just one design stated in different ways. Baptism has only one design. Alexander Campbell established this premise, and laid it down in that very proposition, in his book on *Christian Baptism*. I mention this because so many refer to Campbell on the subject.

We are sometimes asked: If it is necessary to believe that baptism is for the remission of sins, then should we not make it a part of the confession and ask every one, "Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and do you also believe that baptism is for the remission of sins?" This is dodging the issue. Try it on the other contention. If the main purpose is "to obey God," then, the argument would require that it also be made a part of the confession: "Do you believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God and are you being baptized to obey God?" It is a poor rule that will not work both ways. As a matter of fact, all sincere people in religion perform every act of religious service with the general motive to obey God. Baptism has a very specific purpose--just as does the Lord's Supper--and the general idea that it is a command, but not essential to salvation or that it is a duty but the duty of one already saved is a perversion of Bible teaching. If one can be scripturally baptized with such a belief then all our preaching on the subject is inconsistent.

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ONE NATION UNDER GOD-KNOWS-WHAT

David Dawson

Its amazing the way things turn around, and just how quickly they seem to do just that. It wasn't long ago that Satan reigned with an iron hand from the Kremlin, and now the former realm of Godless communism is opened up to Christianity, with millions of Bibles being distributed there and churches in America advertising for people to go to Russia to preach the word of God.

Meanwhile, here in America, the "land of the free and the home of the brave," this great "Christian nation," this "one nation under God," things have been changing as well.

Not too many years ago, the word "pregnant" wasn't used in mixed company; now we openly discuss all sorts of delicate subject matter, even in front of small children. Our little ones are being taught that homosexuality is an "alternate lifestyle," perfectly acceptable, and we are handing out condoms to our teenagers and telling them we "know they are going to engage in fornication, but to do it safely," thereby giving our approval, instead of teaching them that the ONLY safe sex is abstinence, not to mention the fact that fornication is sin. We, like Israel, in Jeremiah's day have lost our ability to blush (Jeremiah 6:15).

Separation of church and state is a good concept, and helps to guarantee religious freedom, but our courts have gone overboard in their pursuit of this idea. Separation is one thing, but persecution is another, indeed. Let me quote a few instances I read about just recently. Last December, a town in Virginia banned caroling in public places, and carolers were forced to sing behind barricades. An 11 year old girl was told that by reading her Bible on the school ground, she had established a national church. Another student was ordered to stop reading his Bible on the school bus. A second-grader wasn't allowed to show a videotape to her class because it contained a religious song.

There is a god that is being taught our young ones in school. It is the many faced god of humanism. It's doctrine is that of sex-education (and where has that taken us?), ethical relativism, nature-

worship, acceptance of "sexual diversity," and evolution as fact and not as theory.

We, in our pursuit of "the American dream," have abdicated our responsibility to rear our children and insisted that government do this for us. We have been too busy chasing dollars. And so, we have lost a generation of young people, who will shortly rule our world, and return the same care to their parents that they have received in their formative years. Not funny, is it?

Pray to God that its not too late for us to salvage our families from ruin. Let us begin anew to teach our little ones, by precept and by example the right ways of the true and living God. We discussed opportunity last week, remember? The opportunity to teach your children comes at an early age, and is quickly gone. We as a nation have let this opportunity slip by for one generation. If we don't return to God, the dark ages of religious ignorance and persecution will be repeated.

"Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Proverbs 14:34).

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SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday Morning Bible Class	9:30
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Bill Dillon, Evangelist

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION

John T. Polk, II

INTRODUCTION: (Revelation 1:1-3)

1. Book written for the immediate future "shortly come to pass" (1st century--JTP, 111), 1:1,3; 4:1; 22:7, 12, 20.
2. John wrote first-hand account ("all things that he saw"), *not* an edited version of other witnesses, v. 1-2.
3. Revelation is designed and written *to be understood*, thus it is *not* the most difficult book in the Bible to comprehend, vs. 3.

DISCUSSION:

I. JESUS CHRIST IS KING OF HIS CHURCHES (Revelation 1:4-3:22).

- A. Described to the churches (1:4-20).
 1. As SUPREME POWER (1:4).
 2. As The SAVIOR (1:5).
 3. As The SACRIFICE (1:5b-6).
 4. As The SIGHT to end all sights (1:7).
 5. As The SUPPLIER of all blessings (1:8).
 6. As The SPEAKER to John, the Secretary (1:9).
 7. As The SON OF GOD to His Body, the church (Colossians 1:18) (1:10-20).
- B. Describes the churches (2:1-3:22).
 1. Ephesus (2:1-7) - Legal but loveless.
 2. Smyrna (2:8-11) - Materially poor but spiritually rich.
 3. Pergamos (2:12-17) - Persistent in persecution but permissive in purity.
 4. Thyatira (2:18-29) - True worshippers but tolerant of a whore.

5. Sardis (3:1-6) - Outwardly dedicated but outnumbered devoted.
6. Philadelphia (3:7-13) - Slight but wrong.
7. Laodiceans (3:14-22) - Materially rich but spiritually poor.

II. JESUS CHRIST IS KING OF HIS EARTH (Revelation 4:1-11:19).

- A. The God of heaven (4:1-11).
- B. The God of earth (5:1-8-5).
 1. The 7 sealed book opened: the world punished, righteous persevered (5:1-8:1).
 2. The 7 trumpets sound: the earth injured, but the righteous insured (8:2-11:19).

III. JESUS CHRIST IS KING OF PALESTINE (Revelation 12:1-22:21).

- A. Woman produces a male child (12:1-7).
 1. Beasts battle (13:1-18).
 2. Lamb prevails (14:1-5).
 3. Gospel preached (14:6-7).
 4. Babylon falls (14:8-13).
 5. Judgment (14:14-20).
- B. 7 vials of God's wrath given (15:1-16:1).
 1. Sore upon marked beast-worshippers on earth (16:2).
 2. Death to the sea (16:3).
 3. Land waters turned to blood (16:4-7).
 4. Sun scorches men (16:8-9).
 5. Darkness of pain upon the seat of the beast (16:10-11).

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OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF REVELATION (Continued from page 9)

6. Euphrates dried up to allow invasions at Armageddon (16:12-16).
 7. Into the air, great earthquake (16:17-21).
 - C. The great whore, Babylon, destroyed (17:1-18:24).
 - D. Kingdom given to another people (19:1-22:21).
 1. Song of praise to God (19:1-5).
 2. Invitation to the marriage (19:6-10).
 3. The Word of God on a white horse (19:11-21).
 4. Binding of Satan and persecution of the beloved city (20:1-10).
 5. Judgment out of the books (20:11-15).
 6. New Jerusalem comes down as a bride (21:1-27).
 7. Heaven for the saints (22:1-17).
- IV. KING OF THIS BOOK (Revelation 22:18-21).
- A. Obedience urged (22:6-9).
 - B. Time frame of book's events specified --"at hand" (22:10-13).
 - C. Condemnation to all who refuse to conform to the doctrine (22:14-16).
 - D. Invitation remains open to any who would obey (22:17).
 - E. Condemnation to all who pervert the doctrine (22:18-19).
 - F. Conclusion with reminders of Christ's:
 1. Arrival in judgment with world affairs (22:20).
 2. Grace in warning His People before events began (22:21).

BIBLE BAPTISM (Continued from page 7)

To say that a man can believe that he is saved before he is baptized, and then be baptized to be saved, is to argue that what a man believes has nothing to do with what he does.

It is frequently said that if one is satisfied we have no right to question them. Why should we hold an inquest? Paul evidently "held an inquest" over the Twelve in Acts 19. True, the same things may not be wrong in the case before us -- but something was wrong there and something else just as vital may be wrong now. Satisfaction is not salvation. Apply the argument to other things people believe and do in religion and where would it lead? If it can be applied to baptism, why not to everything else?

It takes more than the right act to constitute valid baptism. The right act based on the right belief: Error preached, error heard, error believed, is error obeyed. Truth preached, truth heard, truth believed, is truth obeyed.

Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." This cannot be made to mean "You may believe error but if in your error your aim is to obey God, then your error will make you free, anyway." Such apologizing for denominational error cannot advance truth. It is much easier to teach people to obey the gospel than to defend them in their error.

Editor's Note: This article is a reprint from the August 1938 *Bible Banner*.

This article could not be more timely than it is today. It is still an issue (in some circles) as to whether or not one needs to understand the purpose of baptism in order to fully comply with God's will. Indeed, as brother Wallace has shown, if one does not understand the purpose of baptism he does not understand baptism at all! We would not treat any other command of God in the irresponsible fashion that some are treating baptism as per this controversy.

THE ELECTIVES OF LIFE

Bobby Dockery

Life is a school...From the moment we are born, we begin to learn and we really never quit learning until we die. Though we have many teachers, in the school of life, if we are wise we will learn from the world's greatest Educator--Jesus Christ!

In most schools there are two kinds of courses--required courses and electives. Required courses are mandatory; elective courses are optional. The first must be taken; the latter may be taken. As in other schools, the school of life offers both kinds of courses. There are some things in which we have no choice...There are other areas where we are free to make up our own minds. Among life's required courses are sorrow, death and the judgment (Cf. Hebrews 9:27). They come to all. It is what we do with life's electives, however, which determines how well we do on the required curriculum. Consider some important electives of life...

1) Whether your life is a blessing or a curse. You can break hearts or mend hearts; you can be a somebody or a nobody; you can be an asset or a liability; you can bring misery or joy into the lives of others. Moses told the children of Israel, "I have set before you...blessing and cursing..." (Deuteronomy 30:19). Young people can choose to bring honor and joy or grief and heartache to their parents (See Proverbs 23:25; 17:25). What we do with our lives is up to us--we can leave behind us a trail of happiness or a trail of misery and woe.

2) Which road you walk in life. Jesus said: "Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter by it. For the gate is small, and the way is narrow that leads to life, and few are those who find it" (Matthew 7:13-14). You can choose to live for God or the Devil, to serve Christ or Satan. Everything depends on our choice of roads. Man wants to argue that it does not make any difference--that there are many roads to God.

But Jesus insisted that there are just two ways through life--one going upward to God and one going downward to destruction. And then He told them that their own choice would determine which it was to be!

3) What your eternal destiny will be.

Just as there are two roads in life, there are two destinations at the end of it. There is heaven, the home of the soul; and there is hell, the place of eternal punishment (Revelation 21:8). To live with God in eternity we must make preparation in life. Unending fellowship with God begins with obedience (Hebrews 5:8-9). The choice is ours to make. God allows us to make it freely.

The story is told of an old man in a little village who was highly respected for his great wisdom. A group of boys devised a scheme which they thought would discredit him. One of them approached the wise man with a bird concealed in his hand and asked, "Is the bird in my hand alive or dead?" -- meaning to release it if he said "dead" but crush it if he said "alive." The old man answered, "It is up to you. His life is in your hands. You can do with him as you will."

So it is with us! Life has been placed in our hands. What we do with it is up to us!

4377 E. Huntsville
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What Must I Do to Be Saved?

1. Hear the Gospel - Acts 15:7
2. Believe the Gospel - Mk. 16:15-16
3. Repent of sins - Acts 17:30
4. Confess Christ - Rom. 10:9-10
5. Be baptized for the remission of sins
Acts 2:38

What Must I Do To Keep From Falling?

1. Read your Bible daily - II Tim. 2:15
2. Add to your Faith the Seven Christian graces - II Pet. 1:5-11
3. Attend every service - Acts 20:7; Heb. 10:25
4. Be faithful unto death - Rev. 2:10

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF UNDERSTANDING THE NEW TESTAMENT

Max Patterson

1. Words are to be used and understood in their primary or historical sense, and in the meaning in which they can be proven historically to have been used. The object of language is the communication of thought. Unless words are taken in the sense in which those who imply them know they will be understood, the words will fail to accomplish their design. Take, for example, baptism. Beyond doubt the historical sense of the word "baptize" is to dip, or immerse. We have no right to give the word any arbitrary meaning, such as sprinkling, as is used in the world today.

2. We have no right to put any arbitrary construction upon, or to draw any strained inference from words or laws. When a word or law is plain, whether expressed in general or specific terms, it should be interpreted to mean that the words have been plainly expressed, and consequently no room is left for personal construction. In the case of the New Testament and the word baptize, the words of the New Testament describe its meaning. "Therefore, we are buried with our Lord..." (Romans 6:4). Man has no right to assign other meanings to words than those plainly conveyed. We are not to read meanings into the Word of God.

3. If the Word of God is not perfectly plain and explicit in all of its terms of salvation, it is no binding force whatever. How can a person be held responsible for obedience to a law that is hopelessly obscure? Certainly it would be a reflection on deity to say that Jesus did not make Himself perfectly clear. How could God hold one responsible for something he could not understand? If we had not come to the great commission with preconceived ideas, we would have little difficulty understanding it (Mark 16:15,16).

4. The expression of one thing is the exclusion of another. Since baptism means

immersion in every lexicon and the New Testament says it is a burial for the remission of sins (Colossians 2:12; Acts 2:38; 22:16), anything believed other than this must be rejected.

5. It would be of no service to us if Christ had commanded us to do anything (including baptism) if we could not know what he meant.

6. Next to the authority of the New Testament, which is paramount, the admissions of learned men offer strong proof of the meaning of words. Hundreds of scholars who practice otherwise have admitted that baptism was originally immersion. The truth forced them to this conclusion. Even in 1995 there is a great awakening to the truth of God, especially in the area of baptism.

The law requires obedience, and we have no right to change or in any way alter its demands. "No crime is greater than disobedience." Obedience is the crowning grace of all. No more significant words are in the Bible than those of Jesus Christ, "Ye are my friends, if you do whatsoever I have commanded you" (John 15:14).

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REMEMBER GRANDMA?

"Grandma used to get up on Sunday morning, cook a big breakfast for her large family, milk three or four cows, churn, clean house, kill and dress the chickens for dinner, dress the children, then go with the family in a buggy or wagon five miles to the worship and get there early! Today, breakfast comes in a cereal box, the milk, butter & chicken (prepared for cooking) comes from the grocery store; and the distance to the church building is covered in an automobile, yet some just can't make it in time for Bible Study."



MANAGING THE LORD'S BUSINESS

(Matthew 25:14-30)

Mike Kiser



I do not believe, at first glance, that this parable has much application to those who are outside of Christ. Those of us who are members of His body should take notice. This parable is about "stewardship." Stewardship concerns more than money, it is about our whole life. A steward was a manager of another's household. Such was: Eliezer (Genesis 15:2); Joseph (Genesis 41:40-44); and the queen's treasurer of Acts 8. Jesus used the idea to teach about privilege and responsibility.

I. THE REQUIREMENTS OF A GOOD STEWARD.

- A. He must be aware of his position.
 - 1. He is the property of his master, "his own servants" (vs. 14).
 - 2. Christians belong to Christ (1 Corinthians 6:19,20; 1 Peter 1:18,19).
- B. He must be loyal to his master.
 - 1. His efforts are not put forth to gain advantage for any other.
 - 2. Christians cannot have a divided interest (Matthew 6:24; Colossians 1:13; 3:1).
- C. He must be faithful in his service.

- 1. Intellect, brilliance, breeding, education, etc. are not required.
- 2. Christians are rewarded on this count (1 Corinthians 14:2; Revelation 2:10).

II. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF A GOOD STEWARD.

- A. We must be good stewards of our minds (Hebrews 5:14).
- B. We must be good stewards of our abilities.
 - 1. There is a great difference between men, "according to..."
 - 2. Divine attention was paid to faithfulness, not the number given.
- C. We must be good stewards of our influence (Matthew 5:13-16).
 - 1. Define: "power rising from rank, or station, or knowledge."
 - 2. It is exerted at home, on the job, at church, etc.
- D. We must be good stewards of our responsibilities (1 Peter 4:5; 1 Thessalonians 2:4).
- E. We must be good stewards of our wealth (2 Corinthians 8:11, 12).

III. THE REWARD OF A GOOD STEWARD.

- A. There comes a day when account must be given.
 - 1. "After a long time." It is not a question of "will He" but, "When?"
 - 2. This great doctrine is all through the Scriptures (Ecclesiastes 12:13,14; Acts 17:30, 31; Romans 14:12; Revelation 20:12,13).
 - 3. This account will be demanded from everyone! No one is excluded!
- (Continued on page 14)

- B. Jesus will reward faithful stewardship (2 Timothy 4:8; Revelation 3:21).
- C. The reward is a matter of "grace," not works! (Ephesians 2:8-10).
 - 1. The verdict of self-abasement (Luke 17:10).
 - 2. "Thou hast...few things...I will...many things..."

IV. THE REJECTION OF AN UNFAITHFUL STEWARD.

- A. Their excuses will be rejected.
 - 1. They go so far as to reflect wrongly upon the character of the Lord.
 - 2. Their ground of excuse is the very reason for acting differently.
- B. Their character will be rejected.
 - 1. "Wicked and unprofitable" ...on the ground of doing NOTHING!
 - 2. We are warned (Judges 5:23; James 4:17).
- C. Their position will be rejected.
 - 1. Nothing in the "upper kingdom" (2 Peter 1:5-11).
 - 2. Only eternal misery and despair. (Contrast: Revelation 21:4; 22:5, 11).

If this is the judgment of the Lord upon His servants who have wronged Him; then what about those who are His out and out enemies? (see: 1 Peter 4:17, 18).

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In 1699, a son was born to the house of Cruden, in Aberdeen. He attended school and graduated; he fell in love with a blithe, pretty lassie and she jilted him; he went stark mad, and was confined. Released, he went in shame to London, to become first a proof-reader and then (how, no one will ever know!) French reader to the Earl of Derby. His French was proof-reader's French: when he came to a puzzling passage or words hard to pronounce, he would read them letter by letter, line after line. The Earl fired him.

He opened a book shop near Royal Exchange, became book-seller to Queen Catherine, and wrote a book known to fame as *Cruden's Complete Concordance*. Generations of scholars, preachers, and certain critics of evil intent have examined it. They have found no errors and just two omissions: Huz is not mentioned as the brother of Buz, nor the name of the power of the apothecary with which the bridegroom is anointed in the Song of Solomon!

The Concordance gave him an open sesame to the lairs of scholars everywhere and even to the Court of King George III, who received him warmly. He gave himself over to prison reform at Newgate, got himself arrested and locked up for punching a blasphemer in the street. One day in 1770 friends found him dead in his room, on his knees, his head fallen forward on an open Bible.

"The Minister's Monthly"
Vol. 1, No. 1; Sept. 1955

"Behold, to Obey is better than Sacrifice"

1 Samuel 15:22

THANKFULNESS FOR LIFE'S LEMONS

Tom Rook

Taking life's lemons and turning them into lemonade is not always easy. Every cloud may have a silver lining, but finding it can sometimes be very difficult. Bible commentator Matthew Henry, after being robbed, wrote in his diary: "Let me be thankful. First, because I was never robbed before. Second, because although they took my wallet, they did not take my life. Third, because although they took my all, it was not much. Fourth, because it was I who was robbed, not I who robbed."

The apostle Paul knew how to accept and live with life's circumstances. "I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: everywhere and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need," he tells us (Philippians 4:12). Concerning an affliction Paul describes as "a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan," the Lord had explained to him, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9). Paul had to learn to find strength in weakness.

Paul encourages us to "In every thing give thanks" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). The joy and contentment we have found in the Lord Jesus Christ means "Giving thanks always for all things unto God" (Ephesians 5:20). Only this special relationship allows such an understanding that comes overnight. Only by patience and spiritual maturity can we find that silver lining even in the darkest of clouds. Hope that springs eternal allows us to see beyond the weakness, turmoil and suffering to the strength, peace of mind, and awareness of God's every abiding presence. As Paul explains, "...we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory: While we 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 Corinthians 4:16-18).

May our thankfulness even include what we might initially write off as a troubling "thorn in the

flesh." And like Paul may we always remember, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13).

"If you can't be grateful for what you receive, be grateful for what you escape."

12510 Grandview Road
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TEN RULES FOR PREACHERS

1. Always be prepared.
2. Always be ahead in your work.
3. Be of good cheer. A good word is as easily spoken as a bad one.
4. Stay balanced. Don't continually harp on certain subjects. Preach the whole counsel of God.
5. Remember a sermon's strength is not necessarily its length.
6. Get to the church building early and greet brethren as they arrive.
7. Always be accessible. Never leave brethren with the impression that your schedule is more important than their need. Talk to them if they come; your studying can wait until later.
8. It is better to put ten men to work than it is to do the work of ten men.
9. Never fear criticism. Thunder is harmless. It's the lightening that kills.
10. Fight only when you must. Wisdom is knowing what to ignore. Ignore much.

READERS' RESPONSE



Dear Brother Dennis:

Congratulations in your announcement of January 29 that you will be co-editing *The Gospel Gleaner*! I have received this paper for many years and have appreciated the good work that has been done. I know that under your good help, the paper will continue to be sound in faith and balanced in teaching. Gary Colley, Austin, TX

Dear Dennis:

Please add my name to the mailing list for *Gospel Gleaner*. Jim Duty, Medina, OH

Dear Brother Dennis:

I have meant to write you on several occasions to express my appreciation for your fine articles and your scriptural soundness.

Please continue sending me your weekly bulletin. I would appreciate receiving the *Gospel Gleaner* mentioned in your front page article. Thanks. Harold McRay, Lawton, OK

Dear Dennis,

I hope that all is well there in Arkansas. I am writing to request that you put me on the

subscription list for the *Gospel Gleaner*. I would appreciate it. Thanks. Dean Kelly, Lake City, FL

Dear Brother Dennis,

I read about the Mabelvale church's assumption of the oversight of a quarterly publication called *Gospel Gleaner* in the January, 1995 edition of the *Arkansas Christian Herald*. I would like to be placed on the mailing list for this publication. Dusty L. Weaver, Conway, AR

Dear Brethren:

Please put me on your mailing list for *The Gospel Gleaner*. I have fond memories of my several visits with the Mabelvale congregation. Ralph Casey, Norcross, GA

Dear Brethren:

I would very much like to receive the *Gospel Gleaner*. I get the *Arkansas Christian Herald* every month and enjoy it very much. I pray you will have a long and fruitful life in the work for the Lord. Mildred Hayes, Jacksonville, AR

Brother Gullledge:

Would you please put me on the mailing list of the *Gospel Gleaner*. Harry Hass, Denison, IA

Dear Brethren:

Please put me on the mailing list of the *Gospel Gleaner*. Orville Coleman, Sherwood, AR

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GOSPEL GLEANER



Volume 11

Number 2

FAULTY MEASURES OF SERMONS

James W. Boyd

"It could have been preached in any denominational building in the city," is a comment sometimes heard regarding some particular sermon that somebody heard that was preached by one of our brethren. The comment is meant to convey a weakness regarding the sermon, the lack of distinctiveness, something that even those in error would approve. But is that really a very exact and competent measure of a given sermon?

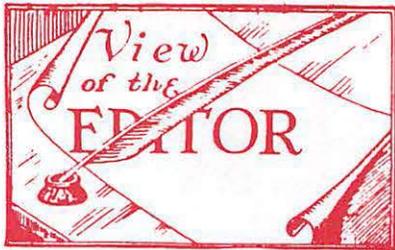
There are many denominational people, even though in gross error regarding the church, the plan of salvation, the manner of worship, and many other matters, who are strong when it comes to moral matters. Should not our brethren be preaching the moral standards of Christ? When we do we should not be too surprised that moral-minded people who differ with us on other essential matters would approve of the lesson. Over the years I have been aggressively active in opposing the advance of the sale of alcoholic beverages and have been very outspoken about it. I have received as much or more support in such efforts from denominational people than I received from elders of the church where I was preaching at the time. I am equally sure that there are some places among brethren who would cringe if their preacher preached as stout a sermon on moral matters as I have heard denominational

clergymen deliver publicly over radio and television.

A preacher cannot preach on the basic fundamentals that make us distinctive from denominations every sermon he preaches, except possibly with a phrase or two because the subject material just is not that different from what others might also believe. But that does not make the sermon weak or compromising. If a preacher can be heard time and time again and his messages seldom, if ever, make the distinctive plea of New Testament Christianity apart from denominationalism, then there is reason to conclude the preaching is weak and compromising. But on any one given lesson it is neither fair nor competent to dismiss it as being something less than it ought to be simply because it could have been preached in some denominational building and approved.

In my sermons I try to never omit the plan of salvation, even if it is only briefly stated or summarized. There is no way to give the plan of salvation without it being distinctive from what denominations will teach. But I am confident I have tried to preach many sermons the subject and content of which, except for the plan of salvation, would be as quickly accepted by some

(Continued on page 11)



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The *GOSPEL GLEANER* is dedicated to restoring New Testament Christianity. We welcome your comments and questions regarding any article found herein.

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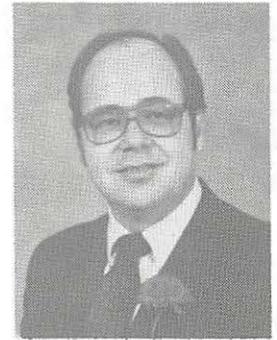
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THINGS WE BELIEVE

Bill Dillon

The church of Christ has no authoritative creed or formalized set of beliefs. But there are certain fundamental truths taught in the Holy Bible to which all should subscribe.



The God We Trust

God is the fountain of all authority and source of all power, wisdom and goodness. The Hebrew writer said, "without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that his is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). God is the magnificent being described as spirit (John 4:24); light (1 John 1:5); love (1 John 4:8); and as a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29).

However, of all descriptions, the most appealing is God as the Heavenly Father. Psalm 68:5 declares, "A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows is God in his holy habitation." Again, "I will cause them to walk by rivers of waters in a straight way wherein they shall not stumble; for I am a father to Israel" (Jeremiah 31:9). It was Jesus Christ who unfolded the truth of the Fatherhood of God in all of its fullness and beauty (John 14:9).

Our God is a Father to us in both a creative relationship (Acts 17:28,29) and also in a redemptive relationship (John 1:12). All men have the opportunity to come into a spiritual relationship with God through Jesus Christ by faith and obedience (Galatians 3:26,27).

The Fatherhood of God is, for Christians, one of the most comforting doctrines in the Bible. God's people are strengthened by knowing we are the special objects of His constant care and His everlasting love. We also believe in:

The Christ Who Came

Though He existed from before all time, yet, He divested Himself of everything, except His deity, to come to earth and die for man. Paul stated it in this manner: "Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:6-8).

The crucifixion of Jesus Christ was the greatest crime of the ages.
(Continued on page 8)

THINGS COMMON - THINGS DISTINCTIVE

Dennis Gullede



God has always required that his people be and remain a separate people. This distinction is best described by the word "peculiar" in the KJV New Testament. According to Thayer it means, "that which is one's own, belongs to one's

possessions; a people...for his own possession" (*Lexicon*, p. 504). Just as instructive is the translation of Titus 2:14 which says, "a people for his own possession" (ASV). It denotes a people who enjoy a special, personal and genuine relationship with God.

In every dispensation of time God has had those who have enjoyed such a relationship with him. In the patriarchal age there was a separate family. The fact of separation began with Noah who found favor in the eyes of God (Genesis 6:8-9). It continued at the call of Abram (Genesis 12:1-3). In the Mosaic age there was a separate nation. It began when God called the Israelites out of Egypt (Exodus 8:20). They formed a separate nation at Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19:4-5; 1 Kings 8:53). Their separation and holiness was to be maintained (1 Kings 9:6-9). It was not. In this the Christian age God has a separate church (1 Peter 2:9). As a peculiar people uniquely his we are to demonstrate this distinction by our speech (1 Peter 4:11), doctrine (2 Timothy 1:13) and lives (Romans 12:1-2). To deny that God has a separate church today (among all the various churches that exist) is to deny the obvious (Ephesians 5:25-26).

In this world of prolific religious division churches of Christ must strive to maintain their distinction as God's called out body. We are in danger of losing our moral distinctiveness by becoming more like the world around us (Matthew 5:13-16). Every problem in the world will eventually find its way into the church. Look at

the worldliness which infiltrated the church at Corinth (1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 6:9-11). Note the many New Testament warnings against the sin of worldliness (James 4:4; 1 John 2:15, etc.). We are also in danger of losing our doctrinal distinctiveness as certain change agents among us serve their agenda of making churches of Christ more like the denominations around us. This seems to be their clearly defined goal. It is an objective that must be defeated!

We in churches of Christ stand in two relations with our religious neighbors. One relation is with regard to things common. It is hard for some to appreciate our claim not to be a denomination since we have certain things in common with them. They seem not to be able to see beyond the externals. Another relation is with regard to things distinctive. Some people, however, see no distinctions. They think "all churches are the same," and, "we must learn to agree to disagree." This is the stuff denominationalism is made of.

It is true that we have some things in common with our denominational neighbors. First, we believe in the same God (Ephesians 4:6). Second, we follow the same Bible. In those exceptions where people allow for extra-Biblical authorities (Book of Mormon; Methodist Discipline), and a free-wheeling operation of the Holy Spirit separate and apart from the word of God, most people follow the same Bible. My denominational friends who differ with me doctrinally read the same Bible that I do. The Bible is the sole voice of God today in religious matters (2 Timothy 2:15; 3:16-17). Third, we have the same goal - heaven. Denominationalism believes there are many ways to heaven - many belief systems that will save one's soul: "We're all going to heaven, just taking different roads." The distinctive New Testament teaching points to but one way (Acts 4:12-13; Ephesians 4:4-5).

(Continued on page 4)

THINGS COMMON-THINGS DISTINCTIVE (Continued from page 3)

Fourth, we have the same spiritual, moral and social concerns in life. Many denominational people, though in gross doctrinal error, are strong when it comes to moral issues affecting our culture. Should we not be as strong on the moral standards of Christ? Some preachers would be quickly relieved of their pulpits if they preached sermons as strong on moral matters as some denominational preachers do. Fifth, we hold to some of the same Bible doctrines. We believe, along with them, the love of God, the deity of Christ and the existence of heaven and hell (except where modernists deny the reality of these things).

It is important to have things in common with men (unity!). It is more important, however, to have things in common with God while we hold to the distinctive gospel which will save men's souls (truth!).

While it is true that we in churches of Christ share some things in common with our religious neighbors, it is those areas wherein we are distinctive which ought to demand our attention. There are fundamental truths which make the New Testament church distinctive from protestant denominations. There are those identifying marks which distinguish the divine from the human. Certain distinctives set the New Testament church apart from denominationalism.

1. THE TRUTH ON BIBLE AUTHORITY (2 Timothy 2:15). Those desirous of pleasing God must have a proper attitude toward his word (Deuteronomy 4:2). The Bible either authorizes what we must do in our work and worship before God, or it does not.

There is heard today what is called "the new hermeneutics," which is a debate centered around the need for Biblical authority for what is to be done in Christian worship. It is not really a new hermeneutics, but the same old denominational approach being given renewed emphasis. It is mostly a reaction on the part of some brethren who do not like what brethren have

typically taught for years (the old hermeneutics). It ridicules the need for Bible authority and says, "If the Bible doesn't condemn it we should be allowed to practice it." The Bible does not say we cannot have instrumental music in the worship, put women in as elders, practice infant baptism, dedicate babies, or dance in the worship. The new hermeneutics would justify anything the Bible does not forbid. The distinctive approach, however, would ask, "Where do we find New Testament authority for these things?" (Colossians 3:17).

2. THE TRUTH ON SALVATION (Acts 2:37-38). In the New Testament, remission of sins is placed after repentance and baptism. One denominational viewpoint on the place of baptism in God's plan of salvation is that it is an act of obedience which shows that one has already been saved from his sins.

Peter's command in Acts 2:38 entails two directives: repentance and baptism into the name of (by the authority of) Christ. Both repentance and baptism stand in equal relation to salvation. Both are "for" the remission of sins, not "because of" the remission of sins. Some in the church are now denying that we have the correct order. However one cannot teach the order of repentance, baptism and salvation as given in Acts 2:38 and not be distinctive from denominationalism.

3. THE TRUTH ON WHAT THE CHURCH IS. The New Testament church is that body of baptized believers called out of the world, over which Christ reigns as head and is directed by the Holy Spirit through the word of truth. The New Testament does not teach that the church is non-essential (Ephesians 5:23), or plural [denominational] (Ephesians 4:4).

The church of Christ is distinctive from anything known among men. My background and commitment is not to "the Church of Christ that was born of the American Restoration Movement," but, to that distinctive blood-bought institution which the New Testament reveals. Why would anyone not want to follow God's distinctive pattern today? What about you?

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THE CHURCH THAT MULTIPLIED

(Acts 6:7)

M. W. Kiser



There is a great deal of interest in "church growth." Sometimes even we talk about it! There has been no end to the manuals and workshops on the subject. After all has been said and done, more has been said than done! It is hard for us to imagine the apostles

calling the saints round the world to Jerusalem for a "Soul Winning Workshop." What a contrast between the times of then and now. With mass media, and mass transportation, we still can't get to the masses. We sometimes feel we have been massacred by the devil while the preacher massages our ears. Why did the early church prosper?

I. THEY WERE A SPIRITUAL-MINDED PEOPLE.

1. There is a difference between being "spiritual" and "carnal." (Romans 8:4-8).
2. Genuine conversion lies at the heart of the difference (see: John 3:3-5; Romans 6:1-6, 16-18; Acts 2:37-41).
3. They bore the fruit of the spirit in their lives (Galatians 5:22,23).

II. THEY WERE A STEADFAST PEOPLE.

1. The "key" verse is Acts 2:42.
2. Notice the areas of their steadfastness in the faith:
 - (1) The apostles doctrine.
 - (2) Fellowship.
 - (3) Breaking of bread. Christ suffering kept before their eyes.
 - (4) Prayer (Acts 12:1-5; 1 Thessalonians 5:17).
3. It was sometime later before there were admonitions about "forsaking the assembly" and "leaving their first love" or "being lukewarm."

III. THEY WERE A SUFFERING PEOPLE.

1. Their founder and head had been crucified; but the work of his enemies failed when he was raised and ascended (Matthew 16:18).
2. The lot of their Master became the lot of the early leaders.
 - (1) The apostles under no circumstance backed down (Acts 4:16-21; 5:28).
 - (2) The early membership was scattered and persecuted (Acts 7:54-8:5).
3. The Epistle of First Peter states: 2:21; 3:12; 4:15-18.

IV. THEY WERE A SINGLE-HEARTED PEOPLE.

1. They knew that division would ruin their cause (John 17:20,21; 13:34,35).
2. They were united in faith and practice (Ephesians 4:4-6).
3. They were not of a mind to compromise the message for anyone (Jude 3).

V. THEY WERE A SACRIFICIAL PEOPLE.

1. Again, they lived in the very
(Continued on page 15)

KNOCK ON THAT DOOR!

Allen Webster



You cannot go to heaven without knocking doors. No, we are not talking about the kind of high-pressure door-to-door poison peddling done by the Latter Day Saints and their cousins, the "Witnesses." This is not even an article on the merits

of door-to-door evangelism as practiced by campaigning Christians or flyer-circulating teens.

This is an article about the merits of other kinds of door-knocking. Notice three:

KNOCK ON THE DOOR OF SALVATION. Jesus said, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture" (John 10:9). He is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). Without Him there is no going, knowing or growing.

A door provides access. Jesus provides us access to God, grace and glory. "Through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Ephesians 2:18). "By whom also we have access by faith into his grace wherein ye stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:1). By His blood we have access into the holy of holies (Hebrews 10:19), or heaven at last.

To knock on the door marked "JESUS," one must adhere to His plan of salvation. From His own lips you may read what is required of one to be saved (John 3:16; Luke 13:3; Matthew 10:32,33; Mark 16:16) and to stay saved (Matthew 5-7).

Some will wait too late to knock on salvation's door. "And the door was shut" (Matthew 25:10), will be the most tragic words ever to sink into the sin-soaked minds of the separated. They, like those who must have beat on Noah's ark as the water swirled around their knees, will want to enter a closed door. "When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath

shut the door, and ye begin to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer...I know you not whence ye are..." (Luke 13:25-26).

Only those who have "knocked His door" will be ready to open to "hear His knock." A parable teaches, "And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching...Be ye therefore ready also, for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not" (Luke 12:36-40). When He is "at the doors" (Matthew 24:33), will you be ready?

KNOCK ON THE DOOR OF PRAYER. "And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find, knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Luke 11:9,10).

This is a door that leads to the great storeroom of God's blessings (1 John 5:14). Catch this promise, "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matthew 21:22)! Notice that this is a certain kind of prayer -- it must be a "believing" prayer. It must come from the root of our hearts and not just the roof of our mouths (James 1:6). John adds good commentary: "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight" (1 John 3:22; cf., John 15:7).

It is not the arithmetic of our prayers, how many they are; nor the rhetoric of our prayers, how eloquent they be; nor the geometry of our prayers, how long they may be; nor the music of our prayers, how sweet our voice may be; nor the logic of our prayers, how argumentative they may be; nor the method of our prayers, how orderly they

(Continued on page 7)

KNOCK ON THAT DOOR

(Continued from page 6)

they may be; but the faith of our prayers, how deeply this prayer is felt by me (adapted from Moody Monthly).

How many Christians live in deep poverty when they could live in the lap of luxury? And just because they did not ask the Father for an "allowance." James says, "...Ye have not, because ye ask not" (4:2). He stipulates further, "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (4:3). So this teaches that we miss out on God's blessings being too shy to ask and too selfish to obtain.

Prayer is important. The Bible does not say that we should preach all the time, but it does say that we should pray all the time (1 Thessalonians 5:17). The Bible is predominantly a book on prayer. It has been reckoned that out of 667 prayers for specific things in the Bible there are 454 traceable answers. Knock on the door of prayer, God is still listening.

KNOCK ON THE DOOR OF OPPORTUNITY. Christ set before the little church at Philadelphia "an open door" which no man could shut (Revelation 3:8). He is still opening doors for His saints. Look to the mission field of India, South America, Africa, and Russia.

Who would have thought ten years ago that there would be more of an open door to preach the gospel behind the Iron Curtain than in the "One Nation Under God?" This very day Christians stand with open Bibles before Russian school children. If one did that here the ACLU would have him in court the next day! God opens doors where we cannot see a crack in a wall!

The door of opportunity is marked **PUSH**. The opportunistic Paul was always watching for open doors. He "rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how that he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles" (Acts 14:27). He found a "great door and effectual" opened at Ephesus (1 Corinthians 16:8,9) and another in Troas (2 Corinthians 2:12). He asked the church at Colossae to pray "that God would open unto us a

door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ" (Colossians 4:3).

Sometimes opportunities come on the heels of defeat and in the midst of trials. Albert Einstein said, "In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity." Paul found an open door at Ephesus, but, he said, "there are many adversaries" (1 Corinthians 16:9). A German proverb states, "God gives the nuts, but He does not crack them." Another said, "If you are looking for a big opportunity, seek out a big problem." Don't be afraid of opposition. Remember, a kite rises against, not with, the wind.

What "open doors" has the Lord set before you today? Did it come in the form of a question from your child or a co-worker? Did He give an opportunity to shine your light before non-Christian friends (Matthew 5:16)? Did He send difficulties so that the opportunity to lean upon Him would be noticed? Did He send one who needed part of the money He gave you (Ephesians 4:28)?

What "open doors" has He set before the church where you worship? Do we look at the missionary's request letters as opportunities for "laboring together with God" (1 Corinthians 3:9) or nuisances begging for a free-ride? Do we see money in the bank as principle to acquire interest or opportunities to buy Bibles, print tracts, send missionaries, support the weak, help the poor, and to reach out to damned souls on a collision course with judgment?

Thanks be to God for open doors! Go ahead -- knock on that door!

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HOW GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION SAVES US FROM SIN

1. Hearing the gospel destroys interest in sin.
2. Believing the gospel destroys pleasure of sin.
3. Repentance destroys the practice of sin.
4. Confession destroys allegiance to sin.

5. Baptism destroys the guilt of sin. "... ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Col. 3:9, 10).



THINGS WE BELIEVE

(Continued from page 2)

And yet, it was the supreme manifestation of the love of God (Romans 5:8). God is so great that He took a curse (Christ's death) and made it into a blessing (man's salvation).

There will never be another Saviour because the world will never need another. Christ's sacrifice is sufficient for all men down through all ages of time (Hebrews 9:26-28). He came. He conquered. He lives.

There is also:

The Word We Accept

Joseph Cook stated: "If an inhabitant of another planet were to visit our sphere, and should ask to see the most significant, victorious, and precious object known to man, I, for one, should unhesitatingly show him the Bible."

Someone else has written: "The Bible begins by telling whence we and all things have come; it ends, by telling whither we and all things end. It tells of the entering in of sin and woe; it gives a promise of redemption and of triumph over sin; it shows how the way was prepared for the Deliverer. The story of human redemption through Jesus, the Son of God, spans the ages. The Bible wonderfully and marvelously tells of it all." The Bible is the book for all times. This time. That time. Any time. All time.

The English poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge reflected: "In the Bible there is more that finds me than I have experienced in all other books put together."

Isaiah, in the long ago, stated the conviction of the believer: "The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of God shall stand forever" (Isaiah 40:8).

Finally:

The Church We Are

Every Christian has eternal citizenship in that Kingdom which shall stand forever. The

Kingdom (church) is built upon the one foundation of the deity of Christ (Matthew 16:16-18). Why would anyone want to be in any other religious organization. The doctrines of men, methods of organization, or ordinances, no matter how impressive they might otherwise be, are foundations as flimsy as sand.

It is not a matter of choosing a church that just offers social benefits and business contacts with little emphasis on spiritual things. It is not a matter of affiliating with a religious group that caters to our entertainment needs, although there is nothing wrong in enjoying worshipping God with others. It is a matter of seeking salvation which Christ came to give. The salvation Jesus brought is in the church that He died to establish (Acts 2:47).

It is a matter of having our citizenship in a Kingdom that will last not only for a few short years here on earth but will continue to endure long after this life is over. We need to be in the Kingdom without end (Daniel 2:44). Such a Kingdom we have. Such a Kingdom we are.

These things we confidently believe because they are undeniably taught in God's Word.

612 E. Fourth St.

Mountain Home, AR 72653

MOUNTAIN HOME CHURCH OF CHRIST

College And North Streets

P. O. Box 192

Mountain Home, AR 72653

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday Morning Bible Class 9:30

Sunday Morning Worship 10:20

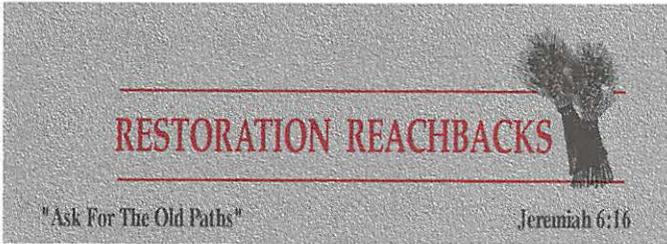
Sunday Evening Worship 6:00

Wednesday Evening Bible Study 7:00

Telephone (501) 425-4330

Office Fax (501) 425-8118

Bill Dillon, Evangelist



RESTORATION REACHBACKS

"Ask For The Old Paths"

Jeremiah 6:16

A MISTAKE

B. C. Goodpasture

"Many preachers spend their time to combat the sects, to expose their errors, and to show the mistakes they made. This is alright if this work is kept in its right place, and not permitted to crowd out more important work. There is great danger that we let opposition to the sects and to error to usurp the place of fidelity to God and the practice of the truth. It is easier to fight error than it is to practice truth. It is more in harmony with our fleshly nature to fight error and erroists than to subdue the flesh and obey God. So we often substitute that for this. Much of our zeal is for party dogmas rather than for practice of the truth.

"Much of the preaching consists in opposing and exposing the errors of others. This party zeal becomes a substitute for love of truth and the practice of godliness. Many preachers seem to think that the way to convert the world is to expose religious error. Hence the preaching to the world is chiefly opposition to the sects. If the sects were all destroyed, it might be easier to convert the world, but the work of converting the world would still have to be done.

"The wisdom of the serpent, as well as the harmlessness of the dove, is needed in preaching the gospel. It is more important to preach the truth than to expose error. This was the order of Jesus and the apostles. They first presented the truth of God, the working principles of the religion of Christ. Jesus first gave the sermon upon the mount, the exhibit of the practical truths of the religion he came to establish. He then opposed error as it conflicted with these truths. If we would practice this order now, it would greatly

help us in our work. We would do better work, and do it more effectively.

"When we go to a new place especially to preach, it seems to me common sense, as well as divine wisdom, would prompt us to first present the truth of God concerning the way of salvation, and stir up opposition as little as possible until they had seen the truth as a connected whole. To stir up the prejudices of the people is to prevent their seeing the truth with impartiality and fairness. It does them a wrong and defeats the end in view. There is very great danger in making ourselves sectarians in opposing sectarians. When we go to a new place, let us present the truth in as kind and gentle, yet as earnest, spirit as possible. Present the truth in the spirit of truth, and oppose error only as others bring them up to conflict with the truth. Do it with earnestness, but do it in a spirit of kindness and love, and prove by experience that the order of Jesus and the apostles is the best for us and for the world." (David Lipscomb, *Gospel Advocate*, November 28, 1907, p. 761).

If anyone is inclined to think that the author of the foregoing was a "softie," the reflection is not upon Lipscomb. Those who are acquainted with the writings of Brother Lipscomb know that he was unwaveringly loyal to the truth. They know that he was fearless and thorough in exposing false teachings. He seemed always to have the wisdom to say the right thing at the right time - an oft - absent quality.

In preaching the gospel one needs wisdom. One ill-timed and ill-advised sermon can block the progress of the gospel in a given community for at least a generation. We recall a promising work, well begun, in a southern state, which was wrecked by a vicious sarcastic, bitter, devastating, and ill-timed attack on denominationalism. It has been a quarter of a century since that meeting; but many who attended it have never been back to attend a service of any kind. The church there has not grown during the years that followed. It is highly probable that, if the course suggested in Brother Lipscomb's article had been followed, the

(Continued on page 11)

CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

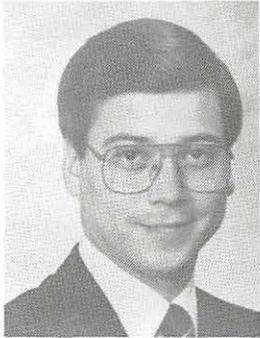
"Ye Are The Salt Of The Earth"

Matthew 5:13



WHAT KIND OF PLACE IS HEAVEN?

Ronnie Whittemore



No doubt, all of our curiosities have been aroused as to wonder, what kind of place is heaven? The Bible describes that heaven is a real place for real people (John 14:1-6). Heaven is not the "figment of someone's imagination." Heaven is not

a myth or a fairy tale. Heaven is the dwelling place of God (Matthew 6:9) and the home of the redeemed (Revelation 22:14). Because of our finite minds, God has used earthly language to describe the infinite beauty and wonders of heaven. We know about heaven, only that which the Lord has revealed. Therefore, based upon God's Word, what kind of place is heaven?

(1) *Heaven is a prepared place.* In John 14:2-3, Jesus said, "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Concerning Christ, the second person of the Godhead, the Bible says, "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:3). The creation of heaven, earth, man and all things therein are described as "very good" (Genesis 1:31). The sweet Psalmist commented thusly, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork" (Psalm 19:1). In Psalm 8:3-4, "When I consider thy heavens, the

work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man that thou visitest him?" Therefore, as man gazes upon the beauties of the earth and the glory of the skies, are there any reservations as to the grandeur and magnificence of heaven? Heaven is a place prepared by the Executor of creation.

(2) *Heaven is a perfect place.* In Revelation 21:27, "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." What joy it will be to abide in a place which escapes all suffering and sorrow, all hatred and anger, and all fear and dread. Heaven is a place of righteousness, not wickedness. God has given the perfect Word (James 1:25; 2 Timothy 3:16-17) to make perfect people (Matthew 5:48) who may obtain perfect peace (Revelation 14:13). God has always prepared the best for His people. Adam and Eve were given Eden or paradise. The Israelites were granted a "land flowing with milk and honey." The family of God will be blessed with "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Peter 1:4).

(3) *Heaven is a permanent place.* In 2 Corinthians 5:1, Paul wrote, For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." How long will heaven last? It will last just as long as God lives (Deuteronomy 33:27) and just as long as hell lasts for the wicked (Matthew 25:46). Heaven is a place of constant rest and everlasting companionship with the Godhead, the angels and the saved. Heaven is a prepared place, a perfect place and a permanent place, "for there shall be no night there" (Revelation 21:25).

Friend, heaven is indeed a prepared place for a prepared people. The slothful and wicked will not reside there. The indifferent and backsliding will not abide there. The fearful and abominable will not live there. Are you prepared?

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FAULTY MEASURES OF SERMONS

(Continued from page 1)

denominationalists as they would my brethren, maybe, sometimes quicker because some of my brethren get squeamish when certain truths that they dislike are preached.

Let us not be too hasty in judging the value or the soundness of sermons. All sermons must be according to "thus saith the Lord." If they are, and if one preaches the whole counsel of God, both positively and negatively, he will be very distinctive over the long haul. But there just might be certain sermons that are needed with which other people may agree, and they are as sound and Biblical as any other.

Some measure the soundness of a sermon by the number of Scriptures used. Sermons should include the Word of God, and passages pertaining to the given subject should be cited. But some subjects, though solidly based on Scripture, need not have a long array of passages. Many good sermons have been preached from just one verse. It is a mistake to measure a sermon by the mere number of Scriptures quoted or cited. The soundness of a sermon should be measured by whether the Scripture has been handled aright or rightly divided, properly taught and applied.

These two false measures of sermons could lead us to negate some of the best lessons we could ever hear if we fall victim to using them. The real test is: Is it the truth? Is it what God's Word teaches?

In view of these observations, how foolish it is to measure a preacher on one sermon. Brethren make mistakes in hiring preachers on the basis of a "try-out" sermon almost exclusively. It takes more than one delivery to know about a preacher and the message he preaches.

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A MISTAKE

(Continued from page 9)

result would have been quite different. There is "a time for every purpose under heaven." We need wisdom to "discern the signs of the times." Jesus warned the disciples against the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees; and he unsparingly denounced their sin in his farewell address at the close of his public ministry (Matthew 24). The sermon on the mount came at the beginning of his ministry. Imagine what would have been the result if he had reversed the order.

No one should expect to teach persons the truth by pursuing a method of procedure which would fill them with prejudice and cause them to close their hearts and ears to the truth in the beginning. We were recently told the story of some well-meaning young brethren who, in a town where the church is unknown, launched a radio program and a bitter and relentless attack on the local denominations. The result: the radio audience was reduced to a minimum; the prospects of starting a church in that town were, at least temporarily, blighted; and the door of opportunity has been shut for years. But they "got them told!" Was that what they were trying to do? or were they trying to save souls?

The preacher should study - give diligence - to present himself unto God-not to some radical preacher or paper - a workman that needs not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth. A man will not be wrongly handling the word of truth if he follows the example of our Saviour. Jesus first sought to teach men the principles of his kingdom; later, and at the proper time and in the proper manner, he denounced error whenever he found it.

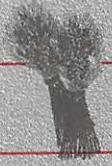
Gospel Advocate
(July 24, 1952, p. 474)

**The only people with whom you should try to
get even are those who have helped you.**

INTERESTING INQUIRIES

"Understandest Thou What Thou Readest?"

Acts 8:30



THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD

John T. Polk, II

QUESTION:

"Explain the providence of God and how it works."

ANSWER:

The *how* is simple to explain, the *why* too wonderful to understand. "Provide" ("pro" - forward + "videre" - to see) is from a Latin expression meaning "to look ahead, procure beforehand, to supply for use." Since people cannot certainly know what is on the morrow then they are powerless to adequately provide all necessities for themselves (cf., Proverbs 27:1; James 4:13-17; Ecclesiastes 9:11). Understanding our limitations, then, the warning is "if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever" (1 Timothy 5:8). Man's attempt to know the future, and thereby provide all he needs for himself, causes many a call to psychic hot-lines, much gambling and lotteries, visits to shamen, palmists, mediums, even perversions of Bible prophecies, all vainly seeking more knowledge than man can know or that God gives. It is all for nought. But if the future is not in man's power, then in whose power is it?

The term "providential" has come to be associated with God, for Scripture and experience has taught that with men "hindsight is 20-20" but with God "foresight is 100%". The True and Living God (Jeremiah 10:10), who created heaven

and earth out of nothing which can be seen with our physical eyes (Genesis 1:1; Hebrews 11:3; Romans 1:20), told Abraham to offer Isaac, his son of promise whom he loved, for a burnt offering (Genesis 22:1-3). Abraham's faith in God withstood this test and God stopped Abraham from actually sacrificing his son. On his way up the mountain Abraham fully believed "God will provide for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering" (Genesis 22:8). Then "Abraham lifted his eyes and looked, and there behind him was a ram caught by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son. And Abraham called the name of the place, "The-LORD-Will-Provide" or Jehovah Jireh (Genesis 22:13-14). That God provides the means for obedience should be in the heart of every Christian. Only God can see ahead in time and perfectly position whatever His People need, thus enabling them to obey His Word. So clearly is this taught throughout the Old Testament that David, with hindsight said, "The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous" (Psalm 34:15 quoted in 1 Peter 3:12); and, "I have been young and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his descendants begging bread" (Psalm 37:25).

Jesus taught this in his Sermon on the Mount: "But when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words. Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him" (Matthew 6:7-8)... "Therefore do not worry, saying 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:31-33). The promise of Scripture is that God has given his people what they will require to do His will.

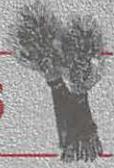
The New Testament says nothing to change this concept. Christians can "walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7) because they serve the

(Continued on page 14)

FAITH FUNDAMENTALS

"Add To Your Faith"

2 Peter 1:5



WHEN DOES FAITH SAVE?

Guy F. Hester



Hardly would anyone deny the necessity of faith to the salvation of one's soul. The Bible clearly teaches that one cannot be saved without faith. The Hebrew writer declared: "But without faith it is impossible to please him:

for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). Jesus said, "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). Again, "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32). Jesus told some who believed on him that the devil was their father. "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it" (John 8:44).

Furthermore, "even of the rulers many believed on him but...they would not confess it, lest they be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the glory that is of men more than the glory that is of God" (John 12:42-43, ASV). They believed on Christ but they were still lost, for they refused to confess him, and Paul said that it is with the mouth that one confesses unto salvation. "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord

Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:9-10). Is a person who loves "the glory that is of men more than the glory that is of God" saved? The faith that saves is the "...faith which *WORKETH* by love" (Galatians 5:6). To really love God is to "...keep his commandments" (1 John 5:3). Therefore the "faith which worketh by love" is faith which keeps his commandments.

The theory that a person can be saved by faith alone is contradictory to the statement of James which says, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and *NOT BY FAITH ONLY*" (James 2:24).

God healed Naaman of his leprosy but not until faith led him to obey the command to dip seven times in the river Jordan (2 Kings 5:14).

"By faith the walls of Jericho fell down..." But not until "...after they were compassed about seven days" (Hebrews 11:30).

Noah was saved from the flood by faith but not until he "...prepared an ark to the saving of his house" (Hebrews 11:7).

"By faith Abel offered." "By faith Enoch...pleased God." "By faith Noah...moved with fear, prepared an ark." "By faith Abraham...went out." (Hebrews 11:4-8). In each instance faith had to WORK.

The passage which we sometimes refer to as the golden text of the Bible says, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Some have imagined that since baptism is not specifically mentioned in this verse that it is not essential to salvation. Repentance is not mentioned in this passage either! We know that one must repent in order to be saved because Jesus said, "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish (Luke 13:3,5). Now if we can go elsewhere in the New Testament to find that repentance is essential to salvation, why can't

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THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD

(Continued from page 12)

God who provides! It is not faith blindly following what it knows not but serving the God who supplies what we'll need when we get to that point. It was God's "foreknowledge" that sent Jesus Christ to die for our sins (1 Peter 1:17-21) and determined that those saved by Christ must be like Him (Romans 8:29). Jesus was delivered up by the "foreknowledge" (Greek *prognosis*) of God (Acts 2:23). A doctor's "prognosis" of an illness for mankind's affliction of sin was exactly right and on time (Galatians 4:4-7)!

God *never* "providentially hinders" his people from doing his will! No one has ever been stopped by God's providence from obedience to his will. God's providence is for every sinner to hear the gospel and "he who believes and is baptized will be saved" (Mark 16:15-16). God's providence for every Christian is to "look forward" and "know beforehand" that this earth will be destroyed some day and thus "be diligent to be found him in peace, without spot and blameless"...beware lest you also fall from your own steadfastness, being led away with the error of the wicked" (2 Peter 3:14-18).

That God provides cannot be challenged -- why He does so is to say "I love you." Providing for the one loved is incontrovertible evidence that he is loved!

125 The Trace
Dover, TN 37058

WHEN DOES FAITH SAVE?

(Continued from page 13)

we go elsewhere in the New Testament to find that baptism is also essential to salvation? Jesus said, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16). "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the

name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved" (Romans 10:9). These New Testament scriptures state plainly that belief (faith), repentance, confession and baptism are all essential to salvation.

To be saved, a person's faith or belief (Mark 16:16) must lead him to repent of his sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38), confess his faith in Christ as the Son of God (Matthew 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10) and be baptized "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38; 1 Peter 3:21).

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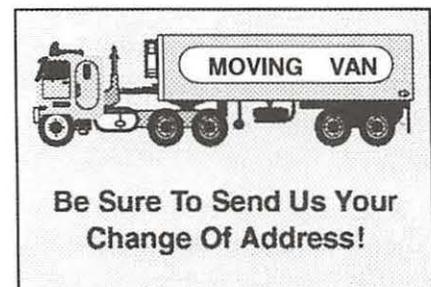
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Sunday Morning Bible Class	9:30
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:00

Telephone (501) 455-2548

Dennis Gulledege, Evangelist



THE CHURCH THAT MULTIPLIED

(Continued from page 5)

shadow of the cross (2 Corinthians 8:9).

- 2. This thought occurs often in the early chapters of Acts 2:44,45; 4:32.
- 3. Growth requires a certain priority in our thinking (Matthew 6:33).

VI. THEY WERE A SOUNDING PEOPLE.

- 1. The Lord had given them the agenda (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15,16).
- 2. We watch them in the book of Acts (2:40; 5:42; 8:4).
- 3. Christ was the center of all that they preached (1 Corinthians 2:2; 2 John 10).
 - (1) It was a message that demanded faith and obedience (Romans 10:9, 10).
 - (2) It was a message that was without partiality (Acts 17:30; 2:38).
 - (3) It was a message of rigid discipline (Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 5:11).

God's plan must be faithfully followed if the church is to prosper today. We are not wise to measure ourselves by ourselves. Let us follow this grand example.

922 Heritage Drive
Sylacauga, AL 35150

ARE YOU?

Terry Hightower lists 44 ways to tell if you are a "New Hermeneutiker." Among the cleverest:

You might be a "new hermeneutiker" if:

- 3. You never met a denominational sermon you didn't like.

5. You sign to debate the proposition, "All debates are sinful."

8. You've ever spoken on "Let's Unshackle Our Women" at a funeral service.

19. Your wife tells the architect for your new house, "But we hate blueprints."

20. You say "fantastic" or "dynamic" more than five times in the first paragraph of your bulletin editorial.

33. The keynote speaker at your favorite university lectureship screams, "Brethren, we're anchoring, we're anchoring!"

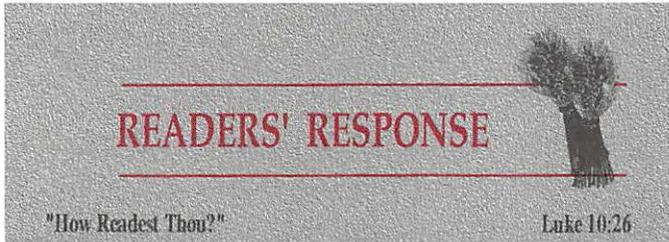
34. When asked, "What must I do to be saved?," you reply, "I'll get back to you on it."

44. Your waiter serves and charges you for five items you did not order, answering your protest with, "But you didn't say not to bring them," and you say, "You got me there."

Taken from "Preacher Talk," Magnolia Bible College, Kosciusko, MS

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READERS' RESPONSE

"How Readest Thou?"

Luke 10:26

Dear Brethren:

I find encouragement from reading the *Gospel Gleaner*. Please add my name to the mailing list. Thanks so much. Marie Kee, Danbury, CT

Dear Brethren:

Thank you for the copy of *Gospel Gleaner*. It looks good and its message is good. May God richly bless you in this good work with great success. Charles E. Cobb, Scottsboro, AL

Dear Brothers:

I have seen and read copies of *Gospel Gleaner* and appreciate your straight forward truth of the good news of Christ. This Bible teaching is so much needed by the young couples of today. God be with you and he will bless you all always. Frances Murray, Eagle, MI

Dear Brethren:

I enjoy the *Gospel Gleaner*. At a time when Satan is so busy claiming so many, causing

them to defect from the Lord's army, it is time for us to be busy, reinforce, fortify, stand among the faithful so God can deliver us. We have many, Jereboam's among us. Attacking the word, attacking the church, compromising, etc. I have never witnessed so many false teachers "coming out of the woodwork." We can survive, we can win, but we must study so we can refute. Pray that God will raise up strong elders. This is the key. Keep up the good work. Leopold Lee, Baton Rouge, LA

Dear Sirs:

Thank you. I really enjoy the *Gospel Gleaner*, as I'm not able to get out very much so I look forward to the *Gospel Gleaner*. When I've read it I pass it on to my elderly aunt. Mrs. Ila Masters, Joppa, AL

Dear Brethren:

Received my copy of Vol. 11, Number 1 of the *Gospel Gleaner* yesterday. I really like the looks of it, it has some of the best material I have seen in a while. God bless the good work. Thank God for you good men. Charles E. Maxwell, Cookeville, TN

Dear Brethren:

Please add my name to the mailing list for *Gospel Gleaner*. I appreciate the good work that you are doing. Kenneth McClain, Indianapolis, IN

GOSPEL GLEANER

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GOSPEL GLEANER



Volume 11

Number 3

YES - THE BIBLE IS OUR SOLE GUIDE

Max R. Miller

"At the council of Trent, Bishop Nachianti, ...maintained that Scripture was the only authority, because in the Gospel everything was written which was necessary to salvation; but he was enormously outvoted, and it was decided that 'unwritten traditions were to be accepted with the same veneration as the Holy Scriptures.'" (F. W. Farrar Quoting Ranke, I, p. 203).

One view is that the scriptures alone furnish people completely in that which is necessary to salvation and that we can resort to it as the final authority in religion. The other view is that the Scriptures of God are not sufficient as a guide and therefore must be supplemented by traditions. Now the question before us, **which view is the truth?**

In searching for the answer to our question we find that God's people under the law recognized the inspired books of the Old Testament as authority. Isaiah said, "To the Law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to his word, it is because there is no light in them" (Isaiah 8:20). Through the prophet, God made it clear that His written word was to be recognized as authority in religious matters. Christ Himself recognized the authority of the Old Testament, and when He was tempted of Satan He appealed to the Scripture. With each temptation Jesus said, "It is

written," (Matthew 4: 4,7,10) and then He quoted from the Old Testament.

After the law of Moses was given to the children of Israel, the elders built up a collection of human traditions. They contended that this tradition was as binding upon the people as the written word of God itself. But Christ and His disciples ignored tradition for "He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition" (Mark 7:6-9). Thus, Christ forever repudiated and rejected man-made traditions as authority in religion.

The word "tradition" is derived from a word which means "that which is carried over." Tradition is that which is repeated or carried over from one generation to another. Peter said Christ died to redeem men from the "vain manner of life handed down from your fathers," (1 Peter 1:18).

(Continued on page 11)



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The *GOSPEL GLEANER* is dedicated to restoring New Testament Christianity. We welcome your comments and questions regarding any article found herein.

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WHERE IS THY GOD?

Bill Dillon

The question "Where is thy God?" in Psalm 42:3 was originally asked from the standpoint of devastating calamities falling upon the life of David. In the eyes of his contemporaries, David was a good and great man; consequently, they thought he should have been spared rebellions and insurrections. As the people looked upon David; some asked jeeringly, others in shocked surprise, "where is thy God?"



Events of recent times have brought the same inquiry to the lips of many of our countrymen. The April 19th, 1995 bombing of the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, sent feelings of pain, shock and fear into the hearts of Americans everywhere. Where is God when boys and girls are blown to bits by paranoid maniacs and death is decreed to innocent people?

Catastrophes and calamities have always been snapping at the heels of humanity. Being innocent has never guaranteed anyone immunity against needless bloodshed and the horrors of the times. Jesus even warned his followers "In the world ye shall have tribulation" (John 16:33). Paul also noted that temptations are common to man generally, not just to the ungodly (1 Corinthians 10:13).

We need to remember the question, "Where is thy God?" was asked by the onlookers not by David himself. David did not need to ask it. He was too busy following God's will for his life. David did not say "where is thy God," but, "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want" (Psalm 23:1). To the bystanders, Jehovah may have seemed as deaf and dumb as Baal, but David knew better. So do we! We know, "The eternal God is thy refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms..." (Deuteronomy 33:27).

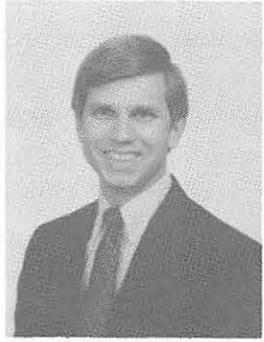
Our greatest need today is not for further explanation about this or that occurrence or act of terrorism; it is rather for more men and women who will hear the gospel of Christ and obey it and be about the business of living for God. We will get more understanding about the tragedies of life when we use the understanding we have to follow Him "who went about doing good" (Acts 10:38).

The question: Where is God? The answer: He is closer than breathing and nearer than hands and feet.

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"HOLY AND REVEREND IS HIS NAME"

Dennis Gulledge



The title of "Reverend" is typically used by well-meaning people as a designation of honor and dignity for a minister, or, preacher. The custom has grown until it is considered by many a lack of respect not to so address him, and many

ministers love to have it so. In the urgency of people to append a title of honor to those of a sacerdotal caste in the denominational world they have gone far beyond the Bible in so doing. Often times gospel preachers are called "Reverend" by those who do not know any better, and sometimes by those who should know better.

It is generally known that we in churches of Christ do not refer to our preachers as "Reverend." In giving their reason for not employing the term "Reverend" when referring to preachers, brethren often say that the word is used only once in the Bible and it is applied to the name of God and not man, and that it amounts to the highest degree of blasphemy to apply it to man. The sole passage where the word "reverend" is found is in Psalm 111:9, which reads, "He sent redemption unto his people: he hath commanded his covenant for ever: holy and reverend is his name." The only problem with the above argument is that it is not true, and error cannot be convincingly refuted by erroneous reasoning. The truth (God's word) is sharper than any two-edged sword (Hebrews 4:12), and we do not need to defend the truth with the dull sword of faulty reasoning.

THE ORIGIN OF CLERICAL TITLES

It is well to ask, "What is the origin of the titles of honor such as "Reverend," which are so popular in religious circles?" The answer to that question takes us back to the early days of the

apostasy predicted in the New Testament (2 Thessalonians 2:1-4; 1 Timothy 4:1-4). Prior to that all Christians were on an equal plane as priests in the household of God (1 Peter 2:5), and are still. Christians were simply called "brethren," as those who professed the same faith and religion (Acts 6:3). By the close of the second century, however, came the concept of a "clergy" class, which exalts some preaching brethren over and above others (the "laity"). It was thought that the ministry shared the characteristic of the priesthood, Judaistic. Make no mistake; this notion surfaced several centuries after the New Testament was completed and bears no relation to any apostolic practice or Biblical teaching. In the first century there were no "Reverend Peters" and "Pastor Pauls." There was no "Saint John," except in the sense that all Christian are saints (Philippians 1:1).

In the early 1800's when men were actively pursuing a return to pure New Testament Christianity (the American Restoration Movement), they began to recognize the sinfulness of the "clergy and laity" dogma. When the framers of the *Last Will And Testament Of The Springfield Presbytery* withdrew from the Synod of Kentucky in 1804, and drew up this document to express their total abandonment of all authoritative creeds except the Bible, they wrote, "Item: We will that our name of distinction, with its *Reverend* title, be forgotten, that there be but one Lord over God's heritage, and his name One." In showing that the New Testament church has no honorary titles to confer upon any of her members, Alexander Campbell called the title of "Reverend," "the superlative of blasphemy" (*Millennial Harbinger*, August, 1853, p. 473). In 1865 the *Millennial Harbinger* carried a quip showing that at least one denominational preacher of note had rejected the title of "Reverend" for himself: "(C.H.) Spurgeon has renounced the title of *Reverend*, and refused

(Continued on page 4)

HOLY AND REVEREND IS HIS NAME

(Continued from page 3)

any title but his own name." How interesting! Where are the denominational preachers of today who will do as Spurgeon did many years ago? Do they unite with him in this?

THE WORD "REVEREND" IN THE BIBLE

It is true that the word "reverend" refers only to God in Psalm 111:9. It is also true that the word occurs only one time in the King James Version. It is not true, however, that it occurs only once in the Hebrew text from which the English word "reverend" is translated. And it is not true that the Hebrew word for "reverend" is applied only to God in the Bible. Reverence is to be extended to men (Ephesians 5:33; Hebrews 12:9). And, may we not overlook the fact that the word "holy" stands in exactly the same relation to the name of God as does the word "reverend" in Psalm 111:9. It is not wrong to speak of men as "holy," or else we cannot explain 1 Peter 1:15-16 and Hebrews 3:1. Of course, the word "holy" is often abused as a title of religious significance, such as, "Holy Father," or, "Holy See." It is clearly wrong to use "holy" as a title of honor, as any term would become wrong if so employed.

Our word "reverend" comes from the Hebrew word *yare* (yaw-ray). This word occurs 373 times in the Old Testament instances which I shall now list. It is translated in the King James Version by: "be afraid" (76 times); "dread" (1 time); "fear" (242 times); "reverence" (2 times); "afraid" (3 times); "be feared" (4 times); "be had in reverence" (1 time); "dreadful" (5 times); "fearful" (2 times); "fearfully" (1 time); "reverend" (1 time); "terrible" (24 times); "terrible acts" (1 time); "terribleness" (1 time); "terrible things" (4 times); "affright" (1 time); "make afraid" (2 times), and "put in fear" (2 times).

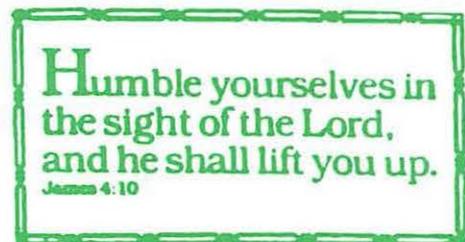
According to *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance Of The Bible*, the Hebrew word *yare*, means, "to fear...to revere...to frighten...reverence." If we add the 143 times the

corresponding Greek term is used in the New Testament to the 373 times the Hebrew word (in its various forms) is used in the Old Testament, we have the root word for "reverend" appearing 516 times in the Bible.

The reason it is wrong to use the word "Reverend" as a religious title for preachers is not because it is used only once in the Bible and applies only to God. We have seen that neither of those statements is true when you consider the original Hebrew term. In fact, neither "holy" nor "reverend" is used as a title for God, but is simply descriptive of his character. For example, a form of the Hebrew word *yare* is also used in Isaiah 18:2 to describe the Ethiopians as "terrible." David employed a form of the term *yare* in Psalm 139:14 to say, "I am *fearfully* and wonderfully made." Many other passages could be cited showing the different forms of *yare* variously translated.

The reason it is wrong to use the word "Reverend" as a religious title for preachers is because there is no Scriptural basis for the distinction between the so-called "clergy and laity" classes. The very system which sanctions such distinctions is a grand departure from speaking where the Bible speaks (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Peter 4:11). It is also wrong because Jesus clearly condemned the use of special titles of religious honor for his people (Matthew 23:8-10). Such titles of distinction are totally foreign to the spirit of Christ; they are foreign to anything taught in the Bible and ought to be foreign to all people who would speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where the Bible is silent.

10822 Mabelvale West Road
Mabelvale, AR 72103



SERMON SKETCHES

"Preach The Word"

2 Timothy 4:2

WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

(Job 14:7-10)

M. W. Kiser



1. I know that some of Job's questions were very difficult for him because he did not possess the light we have to view this momentous theme of immortality (II Timothy 1:9,10).

a. photisantos - having illuminated; shed light upon something.

b. You cannot illuminate something that does not exist.

2. We are talking about some things that we do not like to have intrude upon our thoughts, and when they come we would like to banish them as quickly as possible.

3. How much better it is to be familiar with the topic than to be caught by surprise and confusion when the time approaches.

I. A SOLEMN STATEMENT "man dieth."

A. A universal event (Romans 5:12).

1. Wise men die. Solomon.
2. Strong men die. Samson.
3. Old men die. Methuselah.
4. Young men die. Absalom.
5. Rich men die. Solomon.
6. Religious men die. Daniel.
7. Powerful men die. Belshazzar.

B. An unavoidable event (Ecclesiastes 8:8).

- C. An irreparable event (Hebrews 9:27).
 1. No time will be left to serve God.
 2. No time will be left to think of the benefit for the soul.
 3. No time left to carry out any of life's plans.
 4. No time left to prepare for our eternal state!
- D. A fast approaching event (James 4:14; Job 7:6; 9:25).

II. A SERIOUS CONSIDERATION "and wasteth away."

A. Does man just waste away at death?

1. Man is more than just a physical body (II Thessalonians 5:23).
2. At death, the spirit and the body part company (James 2:26).
3. At death, the body is all we see (Matthew 27:58).
4. We bury the body, and it goes back to the dust, into a state of corruption (Genesis 3:19; Ecclesiastes 3:20; 12:7; John 11:39. Acts 2:27; 13:34-36).
5. That is the reason why we emphasize spiritual values (Matthew 6:25).

B. There are some popular notions entertained by our religious neighbors that are not so.

1. Annihilation. That we all cease to be when we die.
 2. Soul sleeping. That we are in a state of unconsciousness between death and the resurrection.
 3. That immortality is conditional; promised when
- (Continued on page 15)

YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN WHAT HAPPENED SUNDAY!

Allen Webster



Preachers see some unusual things from the pulpit. People are so used to watching TV they forget preachers can see them! After a while the unexpected becomes commonplace, and he is able to keep his composure though "the walls

come tumbling down."

When Christians gather for worship each Lord's day, something special happens. Their common bond is strengthened as they pour out their heart's gratitude toward the loving Father. It is a time of worship (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1,2), rejoicing (Psalm 118:24), examination (2 Corinthians 13:5), and Christian fellowship (Acts 2:42-47). It is the highlight of their week. In Acts 20:6,7, Paul delayed his journey for seven days so he could worship with the saints.

People of all ages are present. Small children, teenagers, young adults, mature couples, and senior saints have all come to express their love for God. While worship is formal, it is not cold or impersonal (John 4:24). Personalities are involved, and whenever such is the case, it can be interesting. Each Sunday, seemingly insignificant events occur which are spiritual strength indicators.

Last Sunday you should have seen what happened in worship: (1) *Pages rustled*. As the herald "preached the word" (2 Timothy 4:2), the hearers "searched the scriptures" to see "whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). It is music to a preacher's ears to hear many pages turn after reference is given for reading. This indicates that Christians are thirsty for the word (1 Peter 2:2) and "hungering...after righteousness (Matthew 5:6). While some do not bring Bibles and are more interested in the "in conclusion" than the "thus saith the Lord," most are sincerely desiring to learn more of the way to heaven.

(2) *A baby cried*. Some get upset when a child cries during services, but it is a good sign to thinking adults. What if none cried? It would mean that there were no babies, for they will make noise (despite the noble efforts of concerned mothers). A church with no babies is most likely a dying church with no young families. If no babies cried, it would indicate that parents did not see the need to train them in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). Caring parents want children to learn about God from their first Sunday on planet earth. They do not want them to be able to remember the first time they came to a worship service. Parents understand that they will learn to be quiet as they grow.

(3) *A sister nodded*. No one except the preacher probably saw it, but a faithful Christian lady nodded in agreement with a sermon point. She would not speak out to say "amen" like her husband (1 Corinthians 14:34), but she encouraged the preacher just as much without saying a word. It means a great deal to a gospel preacher for those who agree to let it be known. Further, those who may be visiting or weak are encouraged to know that the sermon is expressing both the preacher's convictions and those of other Christians.

(4) *A child took notes*. Isaiah said, "...and a little child shall lead them" (11:6). How this proves true time and again (1 Timothy 4:12)! "Out of the mouths of babes" come some of the most profound statements. To see a young person interested enough in the Bible to take notes is a good sign for the future of the church (2 Timothy 3:15). It is also a positive reflection on parents and Bible class teachers who encourage such (2 Timothy 1:5).

(5) *Tears were shed*. God's word touched good and honest hearts and tears of joy were shed over "one sinner that repenteth" (James 5:16, 19,

(Continued on page 14)

CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

"Ye Are The Salt Of The Earth"

Matthew 5:13



THE PURPOSE OF PREACHING

Ronnie Whittemore



Millions of people hear sermons, yet multitudes of these people do not know the purpose of sermons. But more surprisingly, there are many preachers who do not know the purpose of preaching. Merely quoting or reading scripture is not preaching. Just talking without scriptures is not preaching. Having to say something is not preaching; however, having something to say is part of preaching. The preaching of the gospel of Christ is not outdated and never will be! It does not matter what some may say about it. The truth of God will prevail and remain. God has designed that preaching be the means of causing people to know the truth and thereby, be saved (1 Corinthians 1:18-23). Yes, the public proclamation of God's Word is where the Lord has placed the emphasis. But what is the purpose of preaching? Many people in the world do not know. Many people in the church have forgotten. The Bible explains the purpose of preaching.

TO DECLARE "GOOD NEWS"

Speaking of the process of salvation, Paul wrote that men preached "...glad tidings of good things..." (Romans 10:15). It was "good news" when the Lord was born into this world (John 1:14; Matthew 2:10; Luke 2:10-11). It was "good news" when John, God's prophet and Jesus'

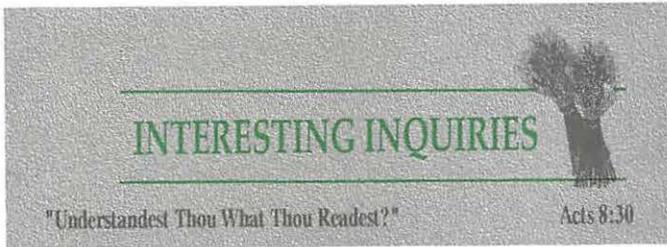
forerunner, declared that Jesus was and is "...the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world" (John 1:29). It was "good news" that Jesus fulfilled the Father's Will and was baptized, not for His sins (Hebrews 4:15), but to obey the Father (Matthew 3:13-17; Hebrews 5:8-9). It was "good news" that Jesus promised His apostles: (1) the Comforter (John 16:7, 13), (2) a prepared abode (John 14:1-3), and (3) a crown of life (2 Timothy 4:8). But the real "good news" upon which all other "good news" is based concerns Jesus' death, burial and resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Romans 5:6-11). Without His resurrection from the dead, the promises of Christ are worthless. However, because He did arise from the tomb, men have hope and eternal life.

TO PRESENT THE TRUTH

God has loosed the method of preaching. One may preach through the media (newspapers, periodicals, television, radio, etc.); one may preach various types of sermons (topical, textual, expository). Sermons may be presented by use of sheet charts, slides, or other visual aids through an overhead projector. But God has bound the message--TRUTH. Jesus said, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32). Jesus identified His Word as Truth (John 17:17). He also said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). Yet, is it not true, that the major thrust of "preaching" in most places is not the truth of God? Men preach philosophy, theories, ideas, messages of self-esteem, etc., but not the TRUTH!

TO INFORM THE LISTENER OF SALVATION

The gospel preacher has the obligation to preach the truth and people have the obligation to listen. The salvation for some lost soul is the end that is sought every time that a preacher stands to
(Continued on page 12)



INTERESTING INQUIRIES

"Understandest Thou What Thou Readest?"

Acts 8:30

GUARDIAN ANGELS

John T. Polk, II

QUESTION:

"Do we have 'guardian angels'?"

ANSWER:

There is an appealing doctrine that says everyone has a specially-appointed heavenly angel to "guard" or miraculously intervene in each person's life in times of temptation, weakness, suffering or death. Popularized in movies like "It's a Wonderful Life," this idea is prevalent even among those who believe in God's Word! Unfortunately the concept was taught by the Devil, not God!

"Then the devil took Him up into the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said to Him, If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: "He shall give His angels charge concerning you, and, In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone. Jesus said to him, It is written again, You shall not tempt the Lord your God" (Matthew 4:6-7).

The Devil mis-applied Psalm 91:11-12 to make it appear that Jesus would be prevented from harming Himself because angels sent for that purpose would "guard" Him. First, Jesus' response was to quote Deuteronomy 6:16 to show that no man, not even God's Only-Begotten Son, can recklessly disregard God's Laws to test God's resolve. Hurling oneself headlong toward hurt is no test of God's will to help, but is a test of a person's "common sense" and knowledge of the

law of gravity. According to Deuteronomy 6:16 and Jesus' use of it, God will not be dared to respond. Secondly, Psalm 91 stresses dwelling, abiding, taking refuge, and making "the Most High your habitation" (verses 1, 4, 9). It says that one who conceded to God's Laws is safe, not one who challenges. God tempts no one with evil and He "cannot be tempted by evil" (James 1:13). Since James 1:13 in the New Covenant teaches the same truth about God as Deuteronomy 6:16 in the Old, then God still will not send angels to guard those who disregard his will!

Matthew 18:10 says, "Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven." This cannot be teaching the "guardian angel" doctrine for: (1) It has already been shown to be a doctrine of the Devil; (2) These angels are in Heaven, not on earth; (3) Jesus teaches that He, not angels, saves (verses 11-14); (4) God's will is that no one perishes (Matthew 18:14), that all should come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9), that all should come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4), but God does not guard everyone from being lost; (5) where have the "guardian angels" been for: the children in the Oklahoma City bombing (1995), Susan Smith's sons she drowned (1994), POW's/MIA's of W.W.I, W.W.II, Korea, Vietnam, et. al., and millions of other victims past and present who have suffered in this life? Since "there is no partiality with Him" (Ephesians 6:9), why have "guardian angels" supposedly been sent with partiality? If "guardian angels" are taught, then experience doesn't confirm Bible truth for the very first time in the history of mankind!

Angels sinned (2 Peter 2:4) and served the Devil (Matthew 25:41), maybe the "angel" someone thought was helping them actually was weakening their resolve to serve God by making them think "God will bail them out" therefore they could disregard God's Laws. If it is the Devil's doctrine, maybe it is also the Devil's angels. If not, why not?

God's Angels are "sent forth" (Hebrews
(Continued on page 14)

"MAY I SPEAK TO THE OWNER?"

Daniel F. Cates

Recently I received a phone call from an unknown party. The voice on the other end was from someone whom I thought to be a non-Christian. This presumption is based upon the first request which she made of me, "May I speak to the owner?"

At first I was surprised by such a question, but after a while the realization hit that many in the church have the same manner of thinking. Some think that, or make it sound as if, the Lord's church has a human owner. How often have members of the church said, "I am going to so-and-so's church tonight," or "This is my church"? Certainly this is often something which is taken for granted, but perhaps it is a subject which deserves consideration.

When I mentioned the conversation to my brother-in-law recently he jokingly said, "Why didn't you say that would be a long distance call?" A long distance call indeed. The church belongs to no man save He who took the form of man to go about His business of purchasing the church (Philippians 2:6-11).

Christ came to earth to give Himself and His own life, for men (Ephesians 5:25). Consider the Christ who died upon the cross, the One who spake in that very crucifixion scene His love for men, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

How important was the blood shed upon the cross! The blood: The price of salvation (Acts 20:28; Romans 5:9; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:8,9). Those who will come into contact with the blood of Christ through baptism will find redemption therein (Romans 6:4; 1 Peter 3:21). Redemption, or the state of being redeemed, is that of having been purchased, or bought back. Christ died in order to purchase the church for the redeemed of God (Ephesians 5:23). Those who are in the church (having been added to it) are the only men, of accountable state, who will be saved. The matter is that simple.

Perhaps the confusion is not limited to who purchased the church (1 Corinthians 6:20), but includes the very question of what the church actually is. When one says, "I have got to go to the church," what is he saying? He is implying that the church is the physical building. This is not the case. Christ's death was to purchase men's souls, not wood, brick, paneling, or any other materials which are only temporarily here. Paul wrote, as recorded in Ephesians 5:27, "That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish." Was Paul speaking of building upkeep and maintenance? No, Paul was speaking of the necessity of men remaining holy (Romans 12:1,2).

The church is made up of Christians. The church is not a "place." When a building burns, the church is not destroyed. The church is not of human origin. No man can say, "this is my church." It was in the mind of God from the beginning of time (Ephesians 1:3-12; 3:9-11). The church is not an organization which is composed of many denominations. It is a unified body (Ephesians 4:4-6) which should be free of any division (John 17:20, 21; 1 Corinthians 1:10). Any who would be divided are guilty of erring from God's plan for unity! The church is a body with the obligation of preaching God's Word, and is not satisfied until that has been done (2 Timothy 2:2). The church is a body which seeks to carry out the commission of Christ to spread the Gospel to all the world, to teach, and to baptize (Matthew 28:19,20; Mark 16:15,16; Luke 24:46,47).

These principles may seem rather obvious to most of us. However, we ought to consider the things some people inadvertently say about the church. These things could have a negative impact on Non-Christians. Bear in mind, "The good Shepherd giveth His life for His sheep" (John 10:11). -9300 Treasure Hill Road, #1004, Little Rock, AR 72207.

THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

Kenneth Bray



For a Study of the church, no better passage could be examined than Matthew 16:13-20. In this text Jesus brings out the truth concerning his identity, then in addition to his identity, he also deals with the identity of his church. He said:

"...upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (16:18). Here in this text five important questions regarding the church are answered.

The Church - What Is It? The term "church" is used here for the first time in the New Testament. The Greek word which is translated "church" in this passage means: a called out people. Jesus, therefore, was referring to a certain group of people when he promised to build his church. His church is the people, and his people compose the church - they are one and the same. The saved are added to the church (Acts 2:47) which is the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22,23). The church is not a physical building, a denomination, nor a group of denominations. The church is the called out (saved) people who have been reconciled to God.

The Church - Who Built It? Jesus said: "I will build my church." The little word "my" makes a tremendous difference. For example, for one to speak of "a" gold mine is one thing; to speak of "my" gold mine is quite different. The only church in which reconciliation is found is the church that Jesus owns. Since Jesus owns the church, the reconciled people who compose it obviously will wear his name and honor his will (Colossians 3:17; Acts 11:26).

The Church - What Is Its Foundation? The church is based or founded upon "this rock" (16:18). The only foundation that could be firm enough to withstand the power of Satan is the foundation truth stated by Peter: "Thou art the

Christ, the son of the living God" (16:16). Regarding this same matter, Paul stated that no one could lay any foundation equal to that of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:11). Reconciliation occurs only in the church based on the bed-rock foundation of the deity of Christ.

The Church - What Is Its Strength? Just as Satan attacked Jesus while he lived on earth, so he will also attack the church built and owned by Christ. Regarding this attack upon his church, Jesus said: "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The attacks of evil will come in many different forms, yet the forces of evil will not prevail (which means to overcome or to defeat) the church in which salvation and security are found.

OBSERVATION - To have salvation one must appreciate all the factors that make it a reality. God's grace makes it possible; the blood of Christ is essential; the gospel of Christ informs the world about the truth related to salvation; and the church of Christ is the place where it is found. Where do you stand with regard to the Lord's body, which is the New Testament church?

215 E. Main St.
Livingston, TN 38510

GOD'S CHURCH

Most people think the New Testament church is
built of brick and wood and stone
And after Sunday services stands empty and
alone.
But God's own church is made of souls, who
spread both far and wide.
The story of His wondrous love and Jesus cru-
cified.
A living church - a family royal; with Christ the
king to reign.
Which after stone and wood are gone, forever
will remain.

-Selected

YES - THE BIBLE IS OUR SOLE GUIDE

(Continued from page 1)

Knowing that Christ died to redeem men from the effect of human tradition, Paul said, "If ye died with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, do ye subject yourselves to ordinances? Handle not, nor taste, nor touch (all which things are to perish with the using)" (Colossians 2:20-22, R.V.).

From the New Testament Scriptures we learn that Christ credited the Old Testament books as the only authority for God's people under the law. He warned the Pharisees that they were worshiping God in vain when they followed tradition (Matthew 15:9).

When Jesus spoke "the people were astonished at his doctrine; For he taught as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Matthew 7:29). After Christ rose from the dead He said to His apostles, "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18, R.V.). There is no question but that Christ now has all authority in spiritual matters, and we must submit to His will. Jesus and His teaching are inseparable; to receive His doctrine is to receive Him and to reject His doctrine is to reject Him.

The Bible is our **sole authority** in religion for the Scriptures claim that authority for themselves. In 1 Peter 4:11 we read, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God." Peter said the Scriptures are the oracles of God, and when man is speaking in behalf of Christianity he must speak as the oracles. In 2 John 9 (R.V.) we read, "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God; he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son." In this passage, the Bible testifies that if we go beyond the teaching of Christ as given by the apostles, we have not God.

God gave the Bible, and He clothed it with divine authority. He told the children of Israel to go to the law and the testimony (Isaiah 8:20). Christ said, "search the scriptures" (John 5:39). Jesus said further, "the word that I have spoken,

the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48). The word of Christ is now the rule of living and it shall be the rule of judging. The fact that Christ will use the Bible as the standard by which He judges us is proof that it is now **authoritative**. In closing, in the Bible the Lord taught that we must not add to His word or take anything from it (Revelation 22:18, 19). Yes, the Bible is our sole guide in matters of faith and religion. (From *The Beacon*, February 13, 1986).

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Sometimes friends write us asking about the cost of a subscription to Gospel Gleaner. Subscription is FREE! We are happy to put you on the mailing list, however, we do ask that you keep us advised of any address changes. Returns cost us \$.50 each. If your paper is returned because of an incorrect address your name will be dropped from the mailing list until we receive your change of address. -Dennis Gullledge, Co-Editor.

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Sunday Evening Worship	6:00
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:00

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Dennis Gullledge, Evangelist

THE PURPOSE OF PREACHING

(Continued from page 7)

preach. In James 1, the writer gives the process of salvation: (1) The word of truth must be preached, (2) the word of truth must be heard, (3) and the truth must be heeded (James 1:18-25). A preacher may instruct his listeners (Acts 2:40; 16:32), but unless the hearer acts, salvation will slip away (Acts 2:41; 16:33). It is not only important what we hear, but how we hear (Luke 8:18).

TO SHOW THE CONSEQUENCES OF SIN

If there is one ingredient that is noticeably missing in public preaching in this generation--this is it! Yes, other ingredients are missing, such as, the scriptures, sincerity, honesty, etc., but man must be convicted of his sins (Acts 2:37; 4:2; 7:54). Sin separates man from God (Isaiah 59:1-2). No amount of human rationalization will change this truth (Ezekiel 18:4; Romans 6:23). Yet, people deceive themselves into thinking that sin will go unnoticed and unpunished by God. "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Revelation 21:27). Paul warns all men of the destructive power of God (Hebrews 10:31; 2 Corinthians 5:11). Since all men have sinned (Romans 3:23), all men are separated from God unless they are reconciled to Him by the body of Christ (Ephesians 2:14-17). Gospel preaching must instruct hearers about the consequences of sin.

TO PRODUCE FAITH

The purpose of miracles in the first century was to produce faith (John 20:30-31). Likewise, man needs the Word of God (evidence, testimony of God) to produce faith in this century. Peter proclaimed, "...Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe" (Acts 15:7).

Jesus said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (John 6:44-45). Without preaching or teaching of God's Word, there can be no faith (Romans 10:13-17).

Other points could be listed, such as, restoring the erring and edifying the saved, as purposes of preaching, but these suffice in demonstrating to us that God knew what He was doing when He designed preaching to save souls!

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Bill Dillon, Evangelist

—  —
You quickly lose
interest in the
church if you
have nothing
invested.

FRIENDLY PERSUASION

If, indeed, all mankind were equally in love with truth, we might have only to propose a change for the better, and all would embrace it. But just the reverse of this is the true history of society. The more clearly and forcibly an unpopular truth is argued, the greater will be the dislike to it by all who are interested in representing it to be error.

Pride, ambition, and selfishness are all powerful allies of error. The pride of the understanding is the most invincible of all sorts of pride, especially when religion is the problem. And as long as there are conflicting creeds, sects, and divisions among religionists, so long will it be our duty to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints.

Never was there so much need to study as in the defense of the truth. We must conciliate the passions, while we besiege the understanding. We are not to suppose all our opponents to be knaves and impostors to be disinterested and obstinate. We must remember that in this world of weakness and error, the good and virtuous are often enlisted under the banners of error. There are honest differences of opinion, and men equally sincere on both sides of many questions.

Friendly and persuasive were the words and arguments of the prophets, apostles and our Saviour to these who appeared honest in their convictions, but severe and tart were their reproofs to such as appeared obstinate in error. Courtesy and kindness will be our best guides, and a good example will often achieve more than a thousand arguments. --Alexander Campbell (1830).

GOSPEL GLEANER INDEXED

Daniel F. Cates

There is now available an index of the Gospel Gleaner which covers all of the articles since the beginning. It is available in two formats,

first on an IBM Microsoft Windows based cardfile or .crd file (which will come with instructions), and second a hard copy format which is nearing completion. The information will fit on one 3.5" or 5.25" 1.44 megabyte high density disk, and will be available at no cost, in either 3.5" or 5.25" format, the only requirement being that the disk be provided by the one placing the order. Also, for either the disk or hard copy version it is requested that postage also be paid by the recipient. There is no charge for the time or materials spent in its development. The index is very thorough and is divided into four categories: title, subject, author, and column (e.g. "Women of the Word"). For further information contact the Mabelvale Church of Christ. The address is located in the front of this publication.

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GIVE THEM WHAT THE WANT SO THEY'LL KEEP QUIET

Dave Smith

It saddens the heart when we hear a parent give a child what he wants simply to keep him quiet. How often it has occurred that a child has thrown a temper tantrum just so he could get his way.

Have you noticed that this same type of attitude has infiltrated the church of our Lord? There are those who have begun taking the same approach as the aforementioned child (throwing a tantrum); and to appease them some churches have compromised the truth and given in to their desires. Liberties have been taken with God's Word to "keep them quiet."

For instance, the "instrumental music" argument (as well as most, if not all, others) has left the realm of truth and reason and has been based almost solely on feelings, desires, and emotions. When these feelings aren't met or these desires aren't fulfilled, then the tantrum begins because someone didn't get what they wanted. Some have gone so far as to hold the church up for ransom: "If you don't give me what I want, then my family and I will go somewhere else." To keep this from happening, all too many have backed off from what the truth has said (in the name of "Keeping the peace") and have compromised for the sake of keeping the numbers in check.

There can be no tampering with God's holy and divine word, even for the sake of keeping the peace. Whether it be the Old Testament or the New, God has always commanded (and demanded) that his people do things His way, with no additions or subtractions (Deuteronomy 4:2; 2 John 9; Revelation 22:18,19). And with those same restrictions, He placed consequences for any who failed to abide by His instructions (2 Thessalonians 1:8,9; Revelation 22:18,19).

Faithful Christians must, therefore, remain steadfast in their resolve to do God's will. Rather than giving in to the tantrums of some and "giving them what they want" to get them to "be quiet,"

we must "give them what they need" so they will recognize that doing things in ways other than how God has prescribed will lead them down the path to eternal condemnation.

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GUARDIAN ANGELS

(Continued from page 8)

1:14) but not assigned "to minister for those who will inherit salvation." If an angel is sent from heaven for any purpose he would be (1) on an exceptional mission, not a routine assignment; (2) "unwittingly entertained" (Hebrews 13:2), not identifiable; (3) unable to change any of the Bible's stated teaching (Galatians 1:6-9).

Jesus' disciples were in error when they supposed that Peter had an angel, for it was actually Peter, himself (Acts 12:15). Many today also are looking for an angel from God when they should be seeking to be with the disciples (Matthew 28:18-20)!

125 The Trace
Dover, TN 37058

YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN WHAT HAPPENED SUNDAY

(Continued from page 6)

20). Genuine Christian love for each other and the lost sometimes finds itself expressed in tears (Luke 19:41; Acts 20:37). "Misty eyes" at sermon's end may reflect determination to live a more faithful life and walk more directly in the light (1 John 1:7).

Guess what happened in worship! Insignificant? Hardly.

P.O. Box 512
Jacksonville, AL 36265

WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

(Continued from page 5)

we are saved; and then received at the resurrection.

- C. These ideas and doctrines flatly contradict the teaching of the scriptures.
1. We all will live forever (Matthew 25:46; Romans 2:5-10; Revelation 14:11).
 2. We are seen to be in a conscious state after death (Luke 16:19-31).
 3. All are seen to possess immortality even after death (Matthew 22:32).

III. A SOBERING QUESTION "and where is he?"

- A. Where is the infidel after death?
1. He once sat in the seat of the scornful; and asked, "who is the Lord that I should obey his voice?"
 2. Now, he is in a world where not a single unbeliever can be found!
- B. Where is the profane man after death?
1. He once was on the street blaspheming; feeding his animal passions at will.
 2. His tongue would now long for a drop of water from the finger of a once despised child of God.
- C. Where is the worlding after death?
1. He was known to be good, always pulling down his barns to build bigger ones.
 2. But, he is not numbered with the redeemed (Colossians 3:5,6; Revelation 22:15).
- D. Where is the infant, small child, and the innocent person after death?

1. Aborted, abused, afflicted, and abandoned.
2. The special object of our Lord's love and concern (Matthew 19:14).

E. Where is the faithful child of God after death?

1. He was preparing, expecting, and looking for the day.
2. Now, he is with the Lord (Romans 8:38,39; II Corinthians 5:6-8; Philippians 1:21-23; Revelation 14:13; Luke 16:25).

1. Friends, we have tried to discuss this question, not in a technical, but in a very practical way.

2. The question is not a foolish and untaught question (II Timothy 2:23); but one upon which the word of God has much to say.

3. Now, I want to conclude with this word: there was a time when you were not...(name some events in the Bible and history of the world); but there will never now be a time in which you will cease to be.

4. "A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify,
A never dying soul to save,
And fit it for the sky."

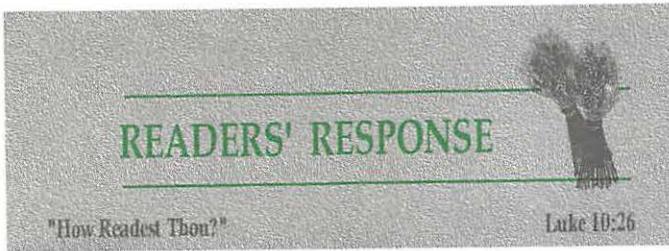
922 Heritage Drive
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No one ever said on their deathbed: I wish I would have spent more time at work!



Yea, I hated all my labour which I had taken under the sun: because I should leave it into the man that shall be after me Ecclesiastes 2:18

And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men. Colossians 3:23



Dear Sirs:

Recently a friend told me about your paper and suggested I send for a copy to see what it is like. She highly recommended it. Thank you very much. Katherine F. Sample, Lansing, MI

Dear Brethren:

We read in your bulletin about the *Gospel Gleaner* and Rob said he would like to have it so will you please put us on your list? Ina & Rob Young, Murphysboro, IL

Dear Brethren:

Please send me the *Gospel Gleaner*. I am a gospel preacher in the Florence, Alabama area. It is an excellent publication and would be a blessing if everyone could read it! Perhaps I can send some support in the future. God bless this work. James R. Choate, Tuscumbia, AL

Dear Sirs:

I have just finished reading the *Gospel Gleaner* and I believe it is one of the best. First time I've ever had one to read. Want to thank you.

GOSPEL GLEANER
P. O. BOX 345
MABELVALE, AR 72103

Address Correction Requested

Would you please send me the price for having one sent each month. Thank you. Mildred M. Pierce, Ronan, MT

Dear Brethren:

I picked up a copy of *Gospel Gleaner* at the Memphis School of Preaching Lectures and liked it very much. If possible, I would like to be added to your mailing list. Thank you. Dave Dugan, St. Louis, MO

Dear brother Gullede:

I noticed in a recent issue of the bulletin from the church here that you have become co-editor of the *Gospel Gleaner*. Would you please add my name to the mailing list? I would appreciate it very much. J. F. Dancer, Jr. Adamsville, AL

Dear Brethren:

I enjoy reading the *Gospel Gleaner* and trust that it will continue a great growth. We are glad the work at Mabelvale is growing and pray God that it will continue. Daryl Busby, Dongola, IL

Dear Brethren:

Thanks so much for the *Gospel Gleaner*. I enjoy reading so much all the articles that are contained therein. Keep up the good work. Myrtle Poindexter, Alina, TN

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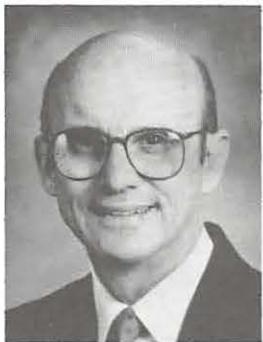


Volume 11

Number 4

THE HOLY SPIRIT

Kenneth Bray



From time to time we need to refresh our thinking regarding certain fundamental Bible subjects. For example, we need to keep in mind the value of faith, the truth about the plan of salvation, the danger of sin, the distinctiveness of the

New Testament church, and various other vital subjects. The Holy Spirit falls into this category as well. Here are five fundamentals regarding the nature and work of the Spirit.

1. The Holy Spirit and the Godhead

- The term "godhead" is used three times in the King James Version of the New Testament - Acts 17:29; Romans 1:20; Colossians 2:9. This term is used to denote that which constitutes deity or God. The Holy Spirit is not an urge, a feeling, or some such inanimate thing; He is deity, a part of the Godhead. In the great commission, Jesus made this clear when he said: "...baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 28:19).

2. The Holy Spirit and Inspiration -

The Bible is the complete revelation of the mind and will of God to humanity. The result of this revelation (the scripture) furnishes the man of God

to every good work (II Timothy 3:16,17). The actual revelation of God's will was accomplished by the direct action of the Holy Spirit. The writers of the Bible were guided, led, and protected by the infallible direction of the Spirit of God (John 16:13; II Peter 1:21).

3. The Holy Spirit and Conversion -

According to the statement of Jesus to Nicodemus, those who experience the new birth are people who are "born of the Spirit" (John 3:8). The Holy Spirit has been responsible for the conversion of every person since the Day of Pentecost. He accomplishes his work, not by a direct revelation to the lost sinner, but only through the medium of the gospel, which is the "power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16).

4. The Holy Spirit and

Sanctification - The person converted to Jesus Christ through the preaching of the gospel, must then be set apart (sanctified) as a new creature in Christ. All the saved are "sanctified by the Holy Ghost" (Romans 15:16). The method used by the Holy Spirit is described by Jesus in this statement: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17).

5. The Holy Spirit and the

Resurrection - Although all the dead shall be
(Continued on page 4)



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The *GOSPEL GLEANER* is dedicated to restoring New Testament Christianity. We welcome your comments and questions regarding any article found herein.

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WILL THE CHURCH SURVIVE?

Bill Dillon



Will the church of Christ be in existence tomorrow? Will worship services continue to be conducted? Will there be more and stronger congregations than there are now? All these questions and many more we would like to know regarding the church of tomorrow. James wrote "ye know not what shall be on the morrow" (James 4:14a) thus, no one can foretell the future. Although those who claim to speak with authority about the future to be must be branded as fakes and charlatans; nevertheless, there are some truths we can teach with certainty.

While there is much apathy, apostasy and adversity facing the Lord's church today, if certain conditions are met, then certain statements can be said to be true:

1. **THE CHURCH WILL BE HERE** (Matthew 16:18; Daniel 2:44). History tells us that many unholy political efforts and godless governments have attempted to crush the life out of the church. Every age has had its unbelievers declaring that God is dead and the Bible is false. Mighty Rome burned Bibles and drove Christians into the catacombs but the church lived on.

Truth is timeless. While Deity remains the same (Hebrews 13:8), yet, our understanding of the will, nature and purpose of God will grow. The church will survive if Christians today will give themselves wholly to a deeper perusal of the Sacred Page and allow God's written revelation to have a positive effect upon their lives.

Any writing may be said to be "scripture" but there is only one book that can correctly be termed "Holy Scripture." The church's survival depends on every child of God becoming more intimately acquainted with its contents and not be carried off by every new whimsical and fanciful teaching that comes along (Ephesians 4:14,15).

2. **THE CHURCH WILL SURVIVE** if Christians will pray. They who neglect prayer do so at the peril of their soul (1 Thessalonians 5:17; Luke 18:1).

3. **THE CHURCH WILL SURVIVE** if Christians will grow exceedingly in faith (2 Thessalonians 1:3). Faith has always been a principle of growth.

4. **THE CHURCH WILL SURVIVE** if Christians will practice brotherly kindness and humility (Hebrews 13:1; Ephesians 4:32). Reports of brethren who engage in spiritual cannibalism (biting and devouring one another) are too common.

(continued on page 4)

"NO LONGER A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST"

Dennis Gullede



The responses we get from readers of *Gospel Gleaner* are for the most part positive. I would say that 99% of our readers who have responded have said that they love and appreciate the paper. Bill Dillon and I are grateful for the positive

public support which the paper has received through the years, and continues to receive in the wake of the cosmetic changes which it has undergone recently. Most people support our efforts to teach God's unchanging truth in a plain, straightforward, loving and balanced fashion and are kind enough to tell us so.

On occasion we do hear from a reader who wants to be taken off our mailing list. Sometimes they give us a reason for their request and sometimes they do not. A recent note came to us from a Kentucky reader who was plain spoken about his reason for no longer wanting to receive *Gospel Gleaner*. He wrote: "Dear Sirs: Please do not send any more papers to me. I am no longer a member of the church of Christ and have no plans to ever be again. So, please take me off your mailing list."

I regret very much this brother's feeling the way he does. It is not his attitude toward *Gospel Gleaner* which disturbs me. It is impossible to please everybody and it would be wrong to even try. Paul was not out to please men. He wrote, "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Galatians 1:10). The *Gospel Gleaner* has not and will not assume a people pleasing posture.

It is our brother's attitude toward the Lord's church that is so extremely regrettable. To disdain the church of Christ is an equal insult to Christ who built it and purchased it with his own blood (Matthew 16:18; Acts 20:28). There are several

reasons why this is the case. First, the church is the body of Christ and Jesus Christ is the head of the body, which is the church (Ephesians 1:22-23). To hate the church is to hate the head which directs it. Jesus said to his disciples, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you" (John 15:18). Second, the church constitutes the body of saved people everywhere and Christ is the Saviour of the body (Ephesians 5:23). To reject the church is to reject the Saviour of it. When Saul persecuted the church he persecuted the Saviour! (Acts 9:1-5). Third, the church is the object of Christ's love. Paul said, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25). To disdain the church is to do equally to the one who loves it and gave himself for it, that is Christ. If a man says, "I love Christ," and hates his church, he is a liar: for he who loves not the Lord's church which he has seen, how can he love Christ whom he has not seen?

Our brother may wish his name removed from any membership roll or congregational participation, and that objective he may achieve to his own satisfaction. However, when he obeyed the gospel through faith, repentance, confession and baptism the Lord added him to the church. (Acts 2:41, 47). One may think that he can disassociate himself with the church after becoming embittered and disenchanted; he may leave the church and align himself with a denomination or he may go back into the weak and beggarly elements of the world (2 Timothy 4:10; 2 Peter 2:20-22). In either case he has erred from the truth and become an apostate (2 Timothy 2:17-18; James 5:19-20). An unfaithful Christian has a way back to the Lord through repentance and prayer (Acts 8:22). If we confess our sins the Lord has promised to forgive us (1 John 1:9). Therefore, we pray that this one will repent of his rejection of the way of righteousness.

(Continued on page 4)

THE HOLY SPIRIT

(Continued from page 1)

raised at the last day (John 5:38,29), yet the child of God can look forward to a "glorious" resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:42-44). This glorious resurrection is affected by the Holy Spirit. Paul described the Spirit's part in the resurrection thusly: "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Romans 8:11). Just as God (the Father) by the Spirit raised up Jesus from the dead, so He shall raise us up by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The role of the Holy Spirit is vital to the spiritual welfare of every saint. We need to be aware of the tremendous spiritual resources at our disposal due to the presence and work of the Holy Spirit. - 215 E. Main St., Livingston, TN 38570

WILL THE CHURCH SURVIVE?

(Continued from page 2)

Our brotherhood must be characterized by enlarged souls not swelled heads. Humility is a shining virtue that has been misplaced. G. K. Chesterton once said: "The wickedest work in the world is symbolized not by a wine glass, but by a looking glass." He was right to suggest that vanity and pride have sent more people to the madhouse than any other vices.

5. THE CHURCH WILL SURVIVE if it practices the evangelism of Jesus. Jesus drew all races (John 4; 6:37): We must take the Lord at His word that He will bless and forgive *all* who come to Him in truth. No saved soul can remain indifferent or antagonistic to those of other races. God's color line is the color of *sin* not *skin* (Isaiah 1:18).

6. THE CHURCH WILL SURVIVE if it practices pure and undefiled religion (James 1:27). The slow, the weak, the helpless, the infirm, the sick and the needy as well as the wayward and the bewildered are included among those who are in the Saviour's embrace (Matthew 11:28-30).

7. THE CHURCH WILL SURVIVE if its leaders are men of heroic endeavor, constant courage, profound faith, unfeigned devotion and utmost obedience. Leaders are needed who will say as Joshua of old--"but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).

If the church is to survive, we must be willing to pay the price. Heaven awaits. -612 E. Fourth Street, Mountain Home, AR 72653

NO LONGER A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

(Continued from page 3)

We will honor our brother's request and remove his name from our mailing list. He does not have to read our paper in order to be saved. Our dropping his name from our mailing list will be of small consequence to his eternal destiny. Of eternal consequence, however, is the Lord dropping his name from the Book of Life (Revelation 3:5).

Also, one does not have to be a member of churches of Christ to read *Gospel Gleaner*. We hope and pray that our readership among the untaught will expand in order that we might have a part in leading them into the way of truth via the power of the printed page. -10822 Mabelvale West Road, Mabelvale, AR 72103

MOUNTAIN HOME CHURCH OF CHRIST COLLEGE AND NORTH STREETS

P.O. BOX 192

MOUNTAIN HOME, AR 72653

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday Morning Bible Class	9:30
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00
Wednesday Evening Worship	7:00

Telephone (501) 425-4330

Office Fax (501) 425-8118

Bill Dillon, Evangelist

CHRISTIAN CHARACTER

"Ye Are The Salt Of The Earth"

Matthew 5:13



EXTORTION IN THE CHURCH

Ronnie Whittemore



According to *Vine's*, the word "extort" (*harpax*) means: "to pillage, plunder, rob, seize, carry off by force." A form of this word (*harpax*) is used in 1 Corinthians 5:10-11 in describing a person that engages in these described acts. The English dictionary defines *extort*, literally as "out-twist," or "to get (money, etc.) by violence, threats, etc." (*Webster's New World Dictionary*). A limited view of this evil is its association to the covetous and greedy who seek to take advantage of the poor and less fortunate. A broader view includes false brethren who hold the church and its elders hostage through various threats to get their way.

Across the brotherhood, congregations are being subjected to the wicked tactics of a vocal minority. These groups consist of brethren who insist on a direction contrary to the Bible. They consider themselves "contemporaries" versus the "traditionalists." They may want to follow the pattern of denominationalism. They may want the church to be a giant social club. They consider what they term as "positive" preaching as the only kind of acceptable preaching. They shudder when denominational dogmas are challenged. Their hearts skip a beat when emphasis is placed upon doctrine and virtue.

A common avenue of action involves criticism of the preacher, with smoke screens, such as, his "mannerisms," with a special

emphasis that they do not disagree with his teaching (which they do). They disparage the elders as being "out of touch" when they try to "hold fast the form of sound words" (2 Timothy 1:13). They refuse to participate in programs and activities which promote Bible study and worship.

Yet, in many places, extortioners are getting their way! Elders are giving in to the threats, being deceived into thinking that they will "come out ahead" if they tolerate this behavior. Shame on the elders for their lack of wisdom and courage. Shame on brethren who lack fortitude to stand for the truth. And shame on extortioners who hold the church hostage. Spiritual ignorance wrapped with immaturity and deceit will devour the Lord's church. "For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work" (James 3:16). -3078 Gurley Pike, Gurley, AL 35748

CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED DURING THE PAST QUARTER

Clifford & Jacquelin Babcock Silver Springs, FL.....	10.00
Eva Lee Johnson LaFayette, GA.....	25.00
Edward Anderson Livingston, TN	5.00
Dathel Russell Cahokia, IL	20.00
Harold & Janelle Blevins North Augusta, SC.....	5.00
Anonymous Indianapolis, IN.....	10.00
Mountain Home Church of Christ Mountain Home, AR	1200.00
Mabelvale Church of Christ Mabelvale, AR.....	500.00

THE DEVIL'S WORKSHOP

Allen Webster



It is said that an idle mind is the devil's workshop. The Bible does teach that a lazy man is working for the devil, especially if he is supposed to be laboring in the Lord's vineyard (Matthew 20).

THE SLUGGARD'S VINEYARD IS OVERGROWN.

The sluggard does not care for his business. "I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction" (Proverbs 24:30-32). God wants a man diligent about his business (Proverbs 22:29).

THE SLUGGARD'S BED IS OVERUSED.

"How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man" (Proverbs 6:9-11; cf. 24:33,34).

THE SLUGGARD'S SKY IS OVERCAST.

Have you noticed that a man who does not want to do something can find plenty of "reasons" why he cannot do it? Solomon noticed that, too. "The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing" (Proverbs 20:4). "The slothful man saith, There is a lion without, I shall be slain in the streets" (Proverbs 22:13). "The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason" (Proverbs 26:16). Watch being quick with an excuse, it may say to others that you are lazy.

THE SLUGGARD'S BANK NOTE IS OVERDUE. Laziness and riches are not brothers. "He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand; but the hand of the diligent maketh rich. He that

gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame" (Proverbs 10:4,5). "Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger" (Proverbs 19:15). Paul taught that "...if any would not work, neither should he eat" (2 Thessalonians 3:10).

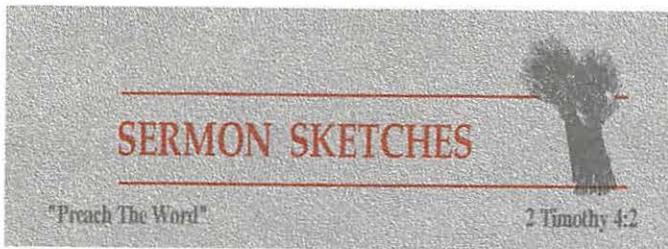
THE SLUGGARD'S TONGUE IS OVERWORKED.

Since he is too lazy to work, he has time to be a busybody in other men's matters. "For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their bread" (2 Thessalonians 3:11,12). The young widows who did not remarry were also likely to wander from house to house being busybodies (1 Timothy 5:13; cf. Proverbs 20:3; 2 Kings 14:10; 1 Peter 4:15).

THE SLUGGARD'S SOUL WILL BE OVERLOOKED. At Judgment Day, the sluggard will desire to be chosen by God, but Jesus taught that those who were too lazy to help the hungry, naked, sick and prisoners would be denied entrance into heaven (Matthew 25:26-30).

Let's put in some overtime (Ephesians 5:16 --day, John 9:4; night, 1 Thessalonians 2:9), overtake our obstacles (Philippians 4:13), overcome our weakness (Hebrews 12:1), overwhelm the devil (1 Peter 5:8), and overflow with love (1 Thessalonians 3:12). Let's put the devil's workshop out of business! -P. O. Box 512, Jacksonville, AL 36265





THREE KINDS OF WORSHIP

(John 4:23,24)

M. W. Kiser



The word "worship" in its various forms appears 191 times in the Bible. The sum of the sense of the word is to humble oneself in adoration, reverence, and religious service, with piety and honor toward another. It could be directed toward the false or the true. (see:

Matthew 4:9-10; Acts 12:20-23; Acts 10:25; Revelation 19:10; 22:8-9). There are three kinds of worship unto God:

I. WORSHIP IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH.

- A. What is the meaning of these two expressions?
 - 1. "Spirit" - Comes from the inner man, as opposed to the outward. (Old)
 - 2. "Truth" - not after shadows (O.T.) but substance (New).
- B. What are the avenues of expression in Christian worship?
 - 1. Reading (Colossians 4:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:27; 1 Timothy 4:13).
 - 2. Exhortation (1 Timothy 4:13; Acts 11:23).
 - 3. Doctrine [teaching] (1 Timothy 4:13; Acts 2:42; 20:7).

- 4. Lord's Supper (Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:17-34).
- 5. Prayer (Acts 2:42; Philippians 4:6).
- 6. Fellowship [giving] (Acts 2:42; 1 Corinthians 16:1,2).
- 7. Singing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; see 1 Corinthians 14:15-19).

C. The worship time is important because it was ordained of God to inspire and edify the members. Those who forsake it and set aside worship invariably set aside the whole work of the church (Hebrews 10:25).

II. WORSHIP IN TRUTH WITHOUT SPIRIT.

- A. We need to understand what worship IS NOT! (see Acts 8:27; John 4:20).
 - 1. It is not the totality of one's life; but an approach unto God.
 - 2. It is not an accident; but a conscious purpose of the person deliberately presenting himself to God.
 - 3. It is not an act without intent; but something done with intelligence (Acts 17:23).
- B. How to have the outward without having the inward: just sing words, pray without faith; day dream; eat the Lord's Supper with an impenitent heart; give, not as you have been prospered.
- C. God abhors hypocrisy; let us keep it out of the assembly (Mark 7:6).

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THE MOUNTAIN HOME CHURCH OF CHRIST

Bill Dillon

The Mountain Home Church of Christ (College and North Streets) is involved in supporting numerous world-wide mission efforts. Currently the church is involved in supporting evangelistic projects in South Africa, West Africa (Ghana), Germany, India, Italy and the Pacific Islands, along with several "one-time" offerings in special assistance. In addition, three families of the Mountain Home congregation work with the *Sojourners*, a group of dedicated, mature Christians who have retired from their jobs in the work place but still wish to be in service to their Lord. In 1991 over \$50,000 was given for the *One Nation Under God Campaign*. On the local level, the congregation conducts radio evangelism on a daily basis as well as newspaper advertising. An active benevolent program supplies clothing, food and financial assistance to those in need. In addition, an effective personal work and visitation program seeks to involve every member in service of furthering the cause of Christ. The Mountain Home congregation is ably and faithfully served by six elders and fifteen deacons. Average attendance is 650.

A recent new work the church has started is support of the *Gospel Gleaner*. The Mountain Home congregation is delighted to work in harmony with her sister congregation in Mabelvale, Arkansas, in this endeavor.

Like most churches, the Mountain Home congregation has had her share of hurts and heartaches, but also her successes and triumphs. Currently a spirit of good will and cooperation is evident as most brethren recognize the Lord has dealt bountifully with them. The future is bright and hopeful if all will continue to walk in God's way and seek His will.

May a spirit of praise, thanksgiving and humility fill the hearts of the Lord's people the world over and may our fervent prayer and noble deeds always be for the Kingdom's sure increase.

MOUNTAIN HOME ELDERS



Left to Right: Jack Jones, Lindel Anthony, Jimmy Horton, Robert Lawyer, Theo Rowe, T.J. Henderson

MOUNTAIN HOME DEACONS



Top Row (L-R): Charles Harris, Randy McNabb, Larry Rose, Don Lewis

Middle Row (L-R): Sheridan Kirksey, James Simmons, Roger Ducker, Marvin Hodges, Gilbert Curtis

Bottom Row (L-R): Dennis Tindall, Jim Estes, Jim Scott

Not Pictured: Bruce Caldwell, Jim Wingfield, Tim Martin

EVANGELISTIC ETCETERA

"Preach the Gospel To Every Creature

Mark 16:15



YOU TOO CAN BE A MISSIONARY

Dennis Tindall



For most of us the word "missionary" conjures up a picture of a well seasoned preacher gone to a foreign land with a file full of sermons to preach to a people who require an interpreter. While this "definition" is not necessarily

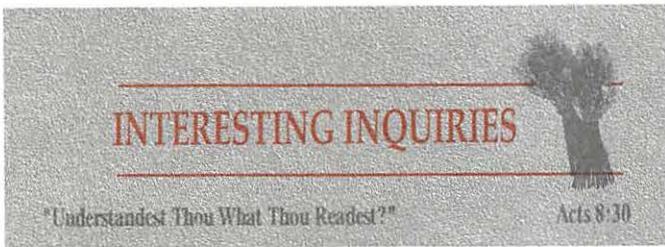
incorrect, it certainly does extremely limit those who could "qualify" to go, and with this "definition" in hand most of us would say we could never "qualify." I recently became a missionary who doesn't fit this described bill. I would like to share my experience with you, so that we can expand the "definition." So you who are reading this saying, "I can't be a missionary," look out because, "You too can be a missionary."

By way of introduction let me say that it would be an understatement to say that I am not a preacher. I am about the farthest thing you can get from a preacher. I am regularly employed as a physical therapist and athletic trainer, and I serve as a deacon for the College and North Street congregation in Mountain Home, Arkansas. For three weeks in July I was privileged to travel to Ghana, West Africa with four "real missionaries:" Ted Wheeler (Venice, Florida), Bob Bauer (Port Charlotte, Florida), John Polk II (Dover, Tennessee) and Bill Dillon (Mountain Home, Arkansas). Being the only novice of the group didn't seem to make any difference as I experienced the most productive soul winning

three weeks of my entire life. I was put to work right away helping to deliver medical supplies donated by Dr. Tim Paden (Mountain Home, Arkansas), teaching congregational Bible classes and even preaching to inmates on the inside of a Ghanaian prison. As a team we traveled to the northern region of Ghana and two new congregations were established in villages who had never before heard of Jesus. Of approximately 150 villagers who heard in one village, ninety seven were baptized. I have never seen a people so ready to accept the Lord. These people gave up part of their day of farming (where farming all day long just to scratch out an existence is required) and walked for three miles one way just to put on Jesus in baptism. Of those ninety seven, ninety five were present for the first Christian worship service held in that village on Sunday. In this area of strong Muslim backgrounds, when people heard that Christianity is the only religion wherein one can look back to a risen Savior to have forgiveness of their sin, they were ready to obtain that salvation that only Jesus can give. With literally thousands of villages like the two we preached in, Ghana is truly a field ripe unto harvest. I have never seen such a humble, thankful, hospitable people more ready to hear the truth with an open mind and accept God's gift of salvation.

For those of you still saying, "I could never do that I haven't been trained," let me tell you that I had no formal training to go. My preparation consisted only of preparing four different Bible lessons to share with those in Ghana. For those of you who are elders saying, "What could I accomplish?" being a missionary will give you a whole new set of criteria on which to assess the accomplishments of missionaries your congregation supports. Instead of judging a work by the number of baptisms, you will judge the work by how many have heard the word. For those of you who are deacons saying, "How could I help?" you can be a shining example of what deacons are to be, give practical teachings of how deacons are to be servants, and inspire the local men to set a goal of becoming qualified to be

(Continued on page 15)



WHAT ABOUT "NEAR DEATH EXPERIENCES"?

John T. Polk, II

QUESTION:

"Can somebody die and be brought back to life to tell about it?"

ANSWER:

Yes, and His Name is Jesus Christ, but when He came back to life, He specified the gospel that must be preached because He is the firstborn from the dead (Mark 16:15-16; Colossians 1:18-19). The Bible is *all* of God's Revealed Truth (2 Peter 1:15-2:3). *No one but Jesus Christ has been qualified by God through the death experience to reveal truth OR interpret the revealed truth!* All are false prophets who claim that they have been (1 John 4:1).

"Near Death Experiences" (NDE) is an expression coined in 1975 by Raymond Moody in *Life After Life* to describe testimonies of people who clinically die and return to their bodies again. Among the most popular such testimonies are *Embraced by the Light* by Betty J. Eadie (1992) and *Saved by the Light* by Dannon Brinkley (1994). Human testimonies of any kind cannot supplant the teaching of the Bible (Romans 3:4).

(1) The term is misleading, for these testimonies are not of people "near death" but "beyond death" who return. This is "resurrection" not "near death." The Bible says: We will all bodily die as often as Jesus died bodily on the cross (Hebrews 9:27-28 - "once"); all who die will be raised at one time (John 5:28-29 - both good

and evil); all who are raised will be judged (2 Corinthians 5:10). Since the Bible was completed, no one has been raised from the dead by the Power of God and the Devil no longer has "the power of death" (Hebrews 2:15; Matthew 10:28).

(2) Many NDEs include an "Out of Body Experience" (OBE) when the spirit sees its dead body from a detached perspective. Oddly, once detached in the testimonies, the spirit returns to the body and back into the spirit-world repeatedly and at will (*Embraced*, p. 129; *Saved*, p. 53-54). The Bible says: The body is dead when the spirit leaves (James 2:26); the spirit returns to God who gave it (Ecclesiastes 12:7); God "places" it where He would (Luke 23:43; 16:22-24). And it never returns to earth again!

(3) Most NDEs include (a) descriptions of scenes similar to the Book of Revelation; (b) re-statements of Bible Truths; (c) prophecies unfolding future world events; (d) "new" doctrines not found in the Bible. The Bible says: (a) Of the recorded cases of resurrection in the Bible, God thought it unimportant to record the conversations of any, except Jesus Christ (Luke 7:12-15; 8:51-56). There is nothing that can be added to Bible teaching about Heaven except confusion (Cf., 1 Corinthians 14:33). (b) No Bible truth needs spiritual interpretation in addition to the written word we now have (Ephesians 3:1-7). (c) No one knows the future except God (Proverbs 27:1). God condemned all who used ungodly means to seek knowledge contradicting that revealed in God's Word (Deuteronomy 18:9-14). (d) There is no doctrine of God not already found in the Bible, for the Scriptures are the confirmed, preached, believed, living and "the good word of God" (Hebrews 2:1-4; 4:1-3, 12; 6:5). God has not added any doctrine to what He gave in the New Testament of the first century.

There is no space to exhaustively refute NDEs, but this should show their danger: leading away from the certainty of God's Word into the uncertain mire of human testimony (Acts 2:40). - 125 The Trace, Dover, TN 37058

RESTORATION REACHBACKS

"Ask For The Old Paths"

Jeremiah 6:16

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE EDUCATED?

Frank Van Dyke

The word "educate" is from the Latin forms *Ex plus DUCO*, meaning to lead out. To educate a person, then, is to "lead out," develop, his potentialities and faculties. It means to bring out the best that is within him.

Education is not merely learning figures, grammar, facts of history, etc. The student, however, should not conclude from this that it is not important to do these things. Indeed, it is impossible to be educated without such; but these things should be thought of, not as an end, but only as tools to be used. Every person should take his tools along, so he should be sure to get these in the school room.

Becoming "educated" is really a lifetime process. Too many have thought that education is something one can get in a few years of academic training -- something one can carry away from a school all wrapped up like a bundle. Actually, this training just starts him on the road and enables him to continue his education for himself in the school of life.

There are three parts of man's nature to be "led out," or developed, if he is to be properly educated--the physical, the intellectual, the moral and spiritual. That the physical and intellectual powers are to be developed is understood by all, but the spiritual faculties are often neglected; in fact, the one great fault with modern education is that it has not given due attention (sometimes no attention at all) to this need. Right here is where

"our Christian schools" are unique--they emphasize the spiritual along with the physical and intellectual training; yea, they exalt the spiritual above the physical and intellectual needs.

What are the traits of an educated person?

1. He knows how to work. Education teaches us how to work, not how to get out of work. It has been said that an educated person "knows something about everything and everything about something." This is just a way of emphasizing the fact that the fellow, in addition to his general information and abilities, has specialized in some particular field. Of course, in the absolute sense, it is impossible for one to know "everything about something;" but this means he has learned to do a certain work and to do it well. The theoretical man knows why, the practical man knows how; the educated man knows both why and how--and is willing to do it!

2. The educated person knows how to behave. He evaluates himself as an integral part of a complex society, not as one individual to be served and satisfied at the expense of all others. Education causes him to project his interests beyond himself and to act for the good of the group instead of his own selfish interests. This means a recognition of the rights of others, kindness and consideration toward others. Thus one lives in accordance with the laws of society--those principles that have come to be recognized as best for humanity, whether written as formal laws upon statute books or incorporated in that code we call "ethics."

3. The educated person projects his interests beyond the present. He lives not only for the good of society at present, but considers its welfare in the future; he evaluates his deeds in view of their long range effects. And if good can come from his efforts, even though he knows that it can never be in his lifetime and he can never derive any personal benefit, this is still enough to spur him on to do his best. This is especially true

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BAPTISM

Guy F. Hester



One of the most controversial, confusing and misunderstood subjects in the Bible is Baptism. However, the Bible is not the reason for the controversy, confusion and misunderstanding. The Bible is not a book of confusion and misunderstanding (Psalm 119:130; Psalm 119:105; Ephesians 3:4; 1 Corinthians 14:33; Psalm 71:1). So when there is confusion and misunderstanding on any Bible subject, it is not the fault of God nor of the Bible. The fault lies altogether with those who twist or wrest and pervert the Holy Scriptures to their own destruction and to the destruction of those who are deceived by them (2 Peter 3:16; Galatians 1:6-9).

The Act of Baptism

One area of confusion concerning Baptism is the action of Baptism. Just what is the act that is performed when one is scripturally baptized? We must appeal to the Bible for the answer and then there can be no misunderstanding. Let us look first at the baptism of our Lord. Just what was the action in His baptism? "And Jesus when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:16-17). It is obvious

that He could not have gone up out of the water unless he had first gone down into the water. Would it not appear from this passage that He was immersed?

The conversion of the Ethiopian Eunuch is one of the plainest cases of conversion in the New Testament. We read about his baptism in Acts 8:36-39. The reader will note they came to the water, they went down into the water, and after the Eunuch was baptized, they came up out of the water. Who would argue that the Ethiopian Eunuch was not immersed.

John the Baptist baptized in "AEnon near Salim, because there was much water there" (John 3:23). Why would there have needed to be "much water" if immersion was not the act of baptism?

Next we look at a passage that explains beyond any doubt as to what the action of baptism is: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection" (Romans 6:3-5). Notice the terms "buried...by baptism" and "Planted...in the likeness of his death." We have the same language in Colossians 2:12. In baptism our bodies are "washed with pure water" (Hebrews 10:22).

Who Should Be Baptized?

Only those who have been taught the gospel are proper subjects for baptism. Jesus said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them" (Matthew 28:18-20). Teaching must precede baptism. This would exclude infants as proper subjects for baptism.

One must be a believer in order to be scripturally baptized (Mark 16:15-16). On the day of Pentecost when the church began, the ones that "gladly received the word" were the ones who were baptized (Acts 2:41). Of course these were

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THREE KINDS OF WORSHIP

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III. WORSHIP IN SPIRIT WITHOUT TRUTH.

- A. The law for worship is clearly stated (2 Corinthians 5:7; Hebrews 11:6). (Note: Unless there is some rule to determine when we are and when we are not worshipping by faith, it is utterly impossible to tell when we are; and, when we are not pleasing to God.)
1. The divine rule by which we determine when worship is by faith (Romans 10:17; John 17:17). Beyond is speculation and opinion.
 2. The divine rule by which we determine when our worship is vain (Matthew 15:9). Things morally right, and sincerely engaged in can be religiously wrong (Mark 7:1-7; 1 Corinthians 4:6; 2 Chronicles 30:5).
 3. The divine rule that enjoins the true, forbids the false (Deuteronomy 29:29; 1 Timothy 4:1,2; Revelation 22:18,19).
- B. Many people insist on things in Christian worship they cannot read one word about in the New Testament (Instruments, humming, incense, images).
- C. We should know the difference between things "holy" and things "profane" (Ezekiel 22:26; 44:23). Authorized and Unauthorized (Leviticus 10).

Someone has said the purpose of an assembly is to feed the lambs, not amuse the goats. See: Colossians 1:18. Are you a worshiper of God; if so, how do you do it? -922 Heritage Drive, Sylacauga, AL 35150

FORGIVE AND FORGET

Theo Rowe

When we forgive we do so for two reasons. First of all we are obeying God's command and secondly we forgive to be happy because we are the ones who gain the most from our forgiving actions. Many times, rather than truly forgiving we harbor grudges, bitterness, and self-pity until we have an appetite for little else. Our ability to handle these hostile feelings are our keys to good mental health.

Christ on the cross is the supreme example of forgiveness (Luke 23:34). There are many scriptures with commands to forgive our fellow man. "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matthew 5:39). "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another. If any man have a quarrel against any even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye" (Colossians 3:13). If we don't forgive others, neither will God forgive our wrongs (Matthew 6:15). The parable of the unmerciful servant in chapter 18 of Matthew teaches the necessity of forgiveness if we hope to be forgiven.

Even when our human nature stands as a roadblock in doing what our minds have been conditioned to do through his word, we need to call on God to please help us to forgive. Then we achieve real strength because we know that forgiveness does not come entirely through our own will or might, but through the mercy of God.

How can we tell if we have really forgiven? We may ask ourselves the following questions. (1) Do I secretly rejoice when I hear of some misfortune happening to my offender? (2) Do I purposefully avoid his presence? (3) Do I speak to him hesitatingly and only when I have to. (4) Do I vividly remember the wrong committed? (5) Do I ever sit in silence and think about the wrong done to me? (6) If a particular circumstance arose related to the offender demanding prayer, would I happily and anxiously go to God in his behalf? (7) Have I sought an opportunity to do him a

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BAPTISM

(Continued from page 12)

believers. Those who were baptized on Pentecost were told to repent (Acts 2:38).

Infants cannot meet the requirements of hearing and believing the gospel. Infants have no sins of which to repent. Therefore, baptism is not for babies. It was men and women who were baptized under the preaching of Philip (Acts 8:12).

The Purpose of Baptism

Why should all responsible individuals be baptized? We have already seen from Acts 2:38 that one of the primary purposes of baptism is "for the remission of sins." We cannot expect to have our sins forgiven unless we do the things that bring that forgiveness.

We are saved by baptism. One of the plainest passages in the Bible concerning the purpose of baptism is found in 1 Peter 3:21. One had better read and think carefully about this passage before declaring that baptism does not save.

It is necessary to be baptized because we become children of God by baptism, we come in to Christ by baptism and by baptism put on Christ (Galatians 3:26-27).

One may become a member of a man-made institution without being baptized, but the only way to become a part of the church that was built by Jesus (Matthew 16:18) is to be baptized and added to that church by the Lord (Acts 2:41, 47). From this article we have learned three important facts about baptism. (1) We have learned what the very act of baptism is - a burial. (2) We have learned who the proper subjects for baptism are - those who hear, believe and repent of sins. (3) We have learned that it is in scriptural baptism that our sins are forgiven, we come into Christ, put on Christ, are added to His church.

If you have not been scripturally baptized, then you should do so immediately. "And now why tarriest thou? arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord"

(Acts 22:16). -10914 Hwy 25 South, Fulton, MS 38343

EDITOR'S NOTE: Guy Hester, had heart surgery recently. For this reason he did not have an article in the *Gleaner* last quarter. We are glad to report that he is making fine progress.

"THEY DON'T LET US PRAY ANYMORE"

Daniel F. Cates

Earlier this morning a humorous, but telling, cartoon was passed my way. Pictured were a father and son. The father, who appeared stunned, was holding the boy's report card. The caption contained the words which were spoken by the son in explanation, "What do you expect? They don't let us pray anymore." While this cartoon is quite funny it is also quite distressing. It tells of the direction in which this country is headed. It tells of the lack of trust in God which is so common in this nation which has upon its very coinage the phrase "In God We Trust." This cartoon tells us that we are no longer as the Pledge of Allegiance says "One Nation Under God." This cartoon tells us the foundation upon which the forefathers of this country stood is being trampled upon and torn apart by the anti-American forces of Atheism and Humanism. This cartoon tells us that we had better pray longer and harder than we ever have before.

It is surely an eternal truth which is found in Proverbs 14:34, "Righteousness exalteth a nation: But sin is a reproach to any people." Let us forever proclaim that the Living God, the Great I Am, rules in the Kingdoms of men (Daniel 4:34-37). Let us all strive to be righteous men that our prayers might be heard and answered (James 5:16). As the world around us turns away from God let us rally the troops. Let us return to the trust which so identified our forefathers. -9300 Treasure Hill Rd. #1004, Little Rock, AR 72207

YOU TOO CAN BE A MISSIONARY

(Continued from page 9)

appointed as deacons. When you go, you may find as I did that you are the only example of a deacon that the congregation has ever seen. For those of you who are saying, "What could I do?", you must know that you would be a great encouragement spurring everyone on to continue sharing Jesus with others. The fact that you would travel so many miles just to visit them and see their work is a fuel for their fires that lasts for months at a time.

Finally, let me tell you that by being a missionary your life will be changed forever. Your faith in the Lord will grow exponentially; your zeal for sharing Jesus with others will be rekindled; you will be thankful for things you never imagined you could have taken for granted; and you will never again want to complain about things that you used to think were so important. If everyone would spend three weeks in a mission field the church would be so strong that buildings couldn't be expanded fast enough!

People have their money in hand ready to give it if you'll commit to going. So what are you waiting for? You too can be a missionary! -Rt. 1, Box 59, Mountain Home, AR 72651

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE EDUCATED?

(Continued from page 11)

when one is working for the spiritual welfare of people, or for the church of the Lord. If our efforts can in some way help the church, even though it be in the future, this is ample remuneration for our sacrifices--that is, so far as that remuneration comes while performing the work.

4. The educated person knows how to love. He loves his home, his fellows, his community, his vocation--but most of all he loves God. No man is really educated who does not give God the proper place--and that means the first place--in his life. Recently the superintendent of the Los Angeles, California, city schools addressed over six hundred members of the Albuquerque, New Mexico, high school

graduating class. He said: "The educated person will find his God." I do not know just what this man means by "finding God" and how he thinks God is to be found; but this is testimony from a great educator to the effect that education cannot overlook man's spiritual nature and needs. To find God, in the true sense, means to find Him as He is revealed in the Bible, and to obey His will as given therein. Indeed, the educated person comes to this conclusion of the whole matter: "Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man."

As alumni of F. H. C., a great school dedicated to helping young people be educated in this very way, we should be grateful for what the school has meant to us, and do all we can to guarantee for it a safe future, that even generations yet unborn may be benefited. If such a thought is not a challenge to us, then we have not yet become "educated!" -Freed-Hardeman Alumnograms, Volume 1, No. 6, August 1949

FORGIVE AND FORGET

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favor? If we can answer these questions correctly then we know how to truly forgive and forget. -P. O. Box 192, Mountain Home, AR 72653.

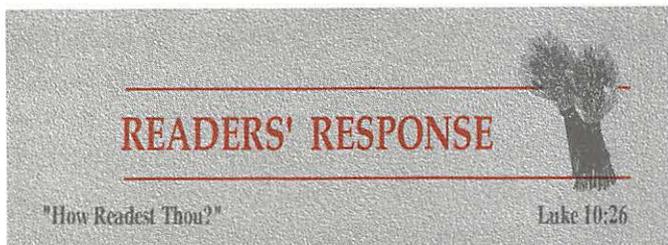
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MABELVALE, AR 72103

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday Morning Bible Class	9:30
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:00

Telephone (501) 455-2548

Dennis Gulledege, Evangelist



Dear Sirs:

I read about your new publication in *The Home Train*. Please put my name on your mailing list. I am sure that the *Gospel Gleaner* will be a great and very interesting publication. Benjamin Richardson, Wetumpka, AL EDITOR'S NOTE: *The Home Train* is a newsletter for homeschoolers among churches of Christ.

Dear Brethren:

I just wanted to drop you a line and tell you how much I appreciate the *Gospel Gleaner*. I have long regarded it as one of our finest papers and the changes Number 1 of Volume 11 brings to the paper indicate an even brighter future. Stephen Rook, Trenton, TN

Dear Brothers:

We enjoy your paper very much. We would like you to add our name to your mailing list. Leon Crisp, Gainesville, MO

Dear Brethren:

Recently one of the members here returned from a trip to Kentucky. While there she picked

up a copy of your publication. She gave me the copy to read. What I appreciated the most was that the stand for truth was clear and plain, but without rancor. I look forward to future issues. Buddy Martin, San Marcos, TX

Dear Brethren:

I'd like to request your paper, *Gospel Gleaner*. I became aware of the publication at the *Western Ohio Valley Firm Foundation Lectures*. Brian W. Jones, Springfield, OH

Dear Brethren:

I enjoyed your paper which was sent to Faulkner University. Please put the one sent here in care of my address. May God richly bless your efforts. Kenneth Randolph, Faulkner University, Montgomery, AL

Dear Brethren:

Your love for truth is evident from this wonderful journal. The new look is great. Continue to abide faithful. Tracy Dugger, Cloverdale, VA

Dear Brethren:

Recently, *Gospel Gleaner*, came into my possession. Anyone that promotes the Lord's church and urges faithfulness to the same is encouraging. Leonard LaCourse, Bens Run, WV

GOSPEL GLEANER
P. O. BOX 345
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Address Correction Requested