



Gospel Gleaner

Volume 8

Number 1

"YOUR SIN WILL FIND YOU OUT"

Russell M. Kline

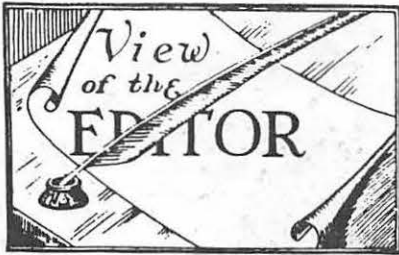
In Numbers 32:20-23, the scripture states: *"And Moses said unto them, If ye will do this thing, if ye will go armed before the Lord to war, and will go all of you armed over Jordan before the Lord, until he hath driven out his enemies from before him, and the land be subdued before the Lord: then afterward ye shall return, and be guiltless before the Lord, and before Israel; and this land shall be your possession before the Lord. But if ye will not do so, behold, ye have sinned against the Lord: and be sure your sin will find you out."* This passage was meant to be a warning to Israel against disobeying the Lord's instruction. It was a warning to which Israel paid little heed, in its history. In fact, Israel sinned against God so often and for such a long time, that He finally had to punish Israel by taking away her independence and making her a nation of slaves for 70 years.

But, in the process of posting this warning to His people, God gave us some interesting information about the nature of sin. First of all, we learn that sin is failure to obey the Lord's instruction. A good passage to read along with this one is 1 John 3:4, which states *"Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."* In God's word, we read of a "law" or "doctrine" or "commandments" that He expects all people to keep (1 John 3:4; 2 John 14:15; Acts 17:30). We sin against God when we go beyond the limits of God's law. The Greek term used in 1 John 3:4 literally means "to miss

the mark." When we sin, we disappoint God because we have failed to follow the example He sets for us continually (1 Peter 2:21; Matthew 5:48). But God does not want us to fail, so He gives us warning of the wages of sin (Romans 6:23). This is what He did for Israel and why He had to punish Israel when she persisted in sin.

Secondly, we learn about sin is that our sins will *"find us out."* Sometimes, sin has lasting effects on those who commit it. Those who abuse alcohol, tobacco or other drugs may expect to be stricken with ill health and early death because of their sin (1 Corinthians 6:12; Ephesians 5:18; Romans 12:1). Sometimes, innocent people suffer because of the sins of others. There are so many cases across America of children who suffer because one or both parents are gamblers (1 Timothy 5:8). Think of all the people who are suffering right now because of the sins of one man in Milwaukee! Still, not everyone who is a sinner will suffer in this life for his sins (Matthew 5:45b). But, just because God does not settle all of His business in this life does not mean that we will not have to answer for our unforgiven sins! *"He hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness"* (Acts 17:31). When that day comes, every sin, even "secret" sins, for which we have been forgiven will be brought before us (Ecclesiastes 12:14). Whether in this life or the next, you can *"be sure your sin will find you out."*

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WHAT TO DO?

Bill Dillon

Souls are everywhere; in your neighborhood and mine; across the ocean and across the street. But these are lost souls. What can we do?



Wake Up

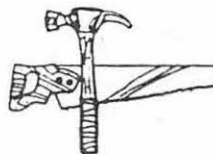


We can wake up. "That now it is high time to awake out of sleep" (Romans 13:11). Effectual doors of opportunity are everywhere to be found. Paul found doors opened to him at Ephesus (1 Corinthians 16:8,9). Do we understand that, "He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again...we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Are we alert to occasions to pass out a tract, send cards or letters, make visits and telephone calls, conduct Bible studies and encourage others to obey the gospel? When was the last time you brought a family member or friend to the worship assembly? The task of every Christian is the winning of souls to Christ (John 15:8; Proverbs 11:30). Will you wake up and put your hand to the plow of soul winning? Of course, we prefer to approach our prospects with compassion and concern rather than with condemnation and criticism.

How much good can one individual accomplish? In John 1 a beautiful example is given of Andrew leading another to the Messiah. From the very minute Andrew began following Christ, he had a desire to introduce others to the Saviour. Andrew's first convert was a man who eventually became one of the most influential men in the history of Christianity--his own brother Simon Peter! (John 1:40-42; Acts 2). We should make it a point of personal duty to reach out to others with the gospel. One writer stated it this way, "The possession of the good news of the gospel involves the obligation to share it."

Build Up



The ultimate purpose of being a child of God is to glorify the Lord and build up the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-13). But there can be no building up of the body of Christ without the individual members growing up! Petty trifles like bruised egos, personal differences and malice must be cast aside as unworthy of the Christian. In Ephesians 4:15 Paul tells us that we should be "speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things." It is not a sin to be spiritually immature but staying that way is! Paul stated, "When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a

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child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things" (1 Corinthians 13:11). Let Christians "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18).

Preach Up



Waking up and building up will accomplish nothing unless the right material is used in the construction. There is only one instrument that can produce faith and strengthen souls--the Word of God. *"The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith which we preach."* (Romans 10:8). We are absolutely assured that the seed (word) sown will bear fruit in God's time. *"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and prosper in the thing where to I sent it."* (Isaiah 55:11).

We can pride ourselves in our modern improvements in communication and transportation but such things as radios, TV's, jets and automobiles only serve to remind us of how meager our efforts at evangelism have been. A. T. Pierson eloquently analyzed the situation: "Upon the primitive evangelism of the early church, God set His seal confirming it with signs following and adding to the church daily so that the most rapid and far-reaching results ever known to history were achieved within one generation. With none of our modern facilities of transit and publication...the gospel flew from lip to lip until it touched the bounds of the Roman Empire. Within one century such one-by-one evangelism shook paganism to its center and the priest of false faith saw with dismay their idol shrines forsaken."

Beloved, let us give our all in sowing the seed of the kingdom that no man can ever say, "You never mentioned Him to me!"

Pray Up



All efforts without the precaution of prayer are doomed to disappointment and disaster. However, it may be that prayer ranks high on the "endangered species"

list in religion. Sadly, many have lost the practice of frequent communion with the Heavenly Father. Does anyone ask today, "Lord teach us to pray?" How can any Christian be too busy not to use one of the mightiest weapons God has given to man? If we need a renewed concern over the lost; a holy boldness in preaching and practicing the gospel; fresh courage and a more accurate perception of the world around us--then above all things we must be a people given to regular, daily unhurried secret prayer. Consider these passages: 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Ephesians 6:18; Luke 18:1.

In one of the Lord's might parables, the nobleman said to his ten servants *"occupy till I come"* (Luke 19:13). The word occupy carries the idea of "keep busy." What greater activities could the Lord's people engage in than seeking the lost. Let no one say, "I have nothing to do!" Everyone has more than what they can do. †

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PLAN OF SALVATION

HEAR the gospel of Christ

Romans 10:13-17

BELIEVE in Christ

Mark 16:15-16

REPENT of past sins

Acts 2:36-47

CONFESS faith in Christ

Romans 10:9-10

BE BAPTIZED into Christ

Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21

LIVE FAITHFULLY

Romans 12:1-2

"YOUR SIN WILL FIND . . ."

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However, your sins don't have to "find you out." If you are not a Christian, your sins will be "washed away," if you will obey the gospel (Romans 10:17; Hebrews 11:6; Luke 13:3; Acts 8:37; 22:16). If you are an unfaithful Christian, your sins may be forgiven, if you will repent and ask your Father (1 John 1:9). Whatever you may need to do to make your heart right with God, do it quickly (James 4:14b)! †

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THE PRODIGAL SON



Guy F. Hester

In Luke 15:11-32 we have recorded the story of The Prodigal Son. This is the last of three parables that Jesus gives in this chapter concerning that which was lost. In verses 4-7, we have the parable of the lost sheep. In verses 8-10, we have the parable of the lost coin. And in 11-32, the parable of the lost boy. Each of these parables gives us a picture of a different type of lost person. The sheep just wandered away from the shepherd and was lost because of his own carelessness. He had no intention of getting lost, but he was lost just the same. Many Christians just wander off into sin and are lost. They have no intention of being lost. They just momentarily take their eyes off of Jesus, the good Shepherd, and focus for a moment on their worldly surroundings, and before they know it, they are lost from Christ and the church in a world of sin and destruction. The problem is, too many times we are not leaving the ninety and nine. Paul said, *"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted"* (Galatians 6:1). Just as in the parable of the lost sheep when it was found; when we have restored an erring brother *"...joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance"* (Luke 15:7). Two lessons should be learned: (1) We as sheep (Christians) should keep our eyes on the Shepherd (Jesus). (2) When one does wander astray through his carelessness, we should immediately go after him until we find him and restore him to the fold.

Next, in verses 8-10, we have the parable of the lost coin. While in some ways it is like the parable of the lost sheep, yet it is different. The sheep was not lost by a deliberate choice to go

astray, nor was it lost because of the carelessness of another. Now the point of difference in the parable of the lost coin is that it became lost through the carelessness of another. We need to be aware of the fact that others can be lost by OUR carelessness. Many parents are losing their children through their own carelessness (Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4). It is so sad to see children lost to their families and the Lord by the carelessness of their parents. But what is sadder still is that some of these same parents are not diligently trying to find them and bring them back.

Many elders are losing members of the flock that has been entrusted to their care and keeping. To the elders, Peter said, *"Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof"* (1 Peter 5:2). Notice that the elders are to be the **OVERSEERS OF THE FLOCK!** How many elders really oversee the flock? Do sheep (members) often go astray because the elders are careless? How many services does a member have to miss before he is missed by the elders? When a member is A. W. O. L. (absent without leave) do the elders set about immediately to find that one and know what the problem is? Elders need to take heed lest through their own carelessness members of the flock entrusted to their oversight be lost (Acts 20:28, 29).

Members of the church, through the carelessness of their example, may cause one to be lost. Others are watching to see if we practice what we profess. We should heed the admonition of Paul to Timothy, *"But be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity"* (1 Timothy 4:12). If one has been lost due to our carelessness, let us light our candle, sweep and seek diligently until we find that one and bring him back. *"Likewise I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth"* (Luke 15:10).

Now to the subject of this article: **THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON.** This story could just as well be called **THE PARABLE OF THE LOVING AND FORGIVING FATHER, OR THE PARABLE OF THE UNLOVING AND UNFORGIVING BROTHER.** We could approach our study under any of these headings and learn some great and important lessons. However, if we consider, as in the other two parables, that which is lost and why it is lost, then I believe **THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON** to be the

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THE PRODIGAL SON . . .

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more fitting title.

The boy of this parable was not lost due to his own carelessness as was the sheep of the first parable. Nor was he lost due to the carelessness of another as the coin in the second parable. This boy **DELIBERATELY** went astray. Today, when a member of the church decides that he is going back into the world, deliberately turning his back on his Father's house and all the provisions that he has for us in the church, there is nothing that anyone can do to stop him, not the elders, not the members, not even his own family. This individual is guilty of **WILFUL SIN** (Hebrews 10:26). He knows what Christianity has to offer. He knows what is right and wrong. The trouble is, he doesn't care what is right and wrong any more.

When the younger son of the parable decided to leave his father's house and waste his substance in riotous living, there was no need for his father to try to stop him because his mind was made up to do evil. When we make up our minds to do evil our heavenly Father has already done all that he can do in sacrificing his Son for us (Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:26-29). All the power and sacrifice of heaven has gone into saving us from sin and making us members of God's house and when we deliberately say to our Father, "I'm going to leave your house (the church) and go back to the world." Our Father will let us go and do what we are determined to do. It will grieve him who loved us so much "that he gave his only begotten Son." He will long for our return but he will not force us to stay with him. Sometimes we have to wake up in the "hog pen" before we come to our senses and realize just what we have given up.

The world has its attractions and at best we are tempted. But Christians are warned not to love the world nor form friendships with the world (1 John 2:15-17; James 4:4).

The father of the prodigal son did not stop loving him but he let him go. Just so, when we determine that we are going to do wrong, our heavenly Father does not stop loving us but he lets us go, even to hell if we do not "come to ourselves" and go back in penitence to the Father's house.

How much lower could this boy sink! Nothing could have been more degrading to a Jew than to take a job feeding swine. But now he is so hungry that he is about to eat with them. Then he remembers his father's house and that even the

hired servants have plenty to eat. After he had come to himself he said, "*I will arise and go to my father, and I will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants*" (Verses 18, 19). This shows us what true repentance is.

When his father saw him coming a great way off he "*had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him.*" He put a robe on his back, a ring on his hand shoes on his feet and called for the fatted calf to be killed and for all to rejoice, thus showing the anxiousness and willingness of our heavenly Father to receive us back when we truly repent.

Space will not allow us to discuss the Unloving and Unforgiving Brother. Suffice it to say that his attitude is typical of some in the church who have difficulty in forgiving others. Instead of welcoming a wayward brother back into the Father's house, they want to make a "half brother" of him. Make him continue to pay for his sins. If the Father forgives, then we have no choice but to forgive.

REMEMBER; (1) This boy deliberately left his father's house and wasted his substance in riotous living. Sometimes members of the church deliberately go away from the church. (2) When he made up his mind that he would not stay at home, his father let him go. Our heavenly Father will let us go if we decide that we will no longer stay with him. (3) In a far country he sank as low as he could go. When we go back to the world we sink as low as one can go in the muck and mire of sin. (4) The prodigal son "*came to himself.*" Erring children of God need to come to themselves and realize their lost condition. (5) He repented. He turned from the filth of the hog pen back to his father. Erring children of God need to repent. Turn from the filth and mire of sin to the heavenly Father. (6) He confessed his sin. He said, "*I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight.*" He did not say, as I have heard some brethren, "If I have sinned." He knew that he had sinned and so do we. (7) His father forgave him and restored him as the son and wanted all to forgive and accept him. When a wayward child of God repents and confesses his sins our heavenly Father forgives and restores him to his family, the church and he wants us to do likewise. †

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HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM

Dave Smith

It seems that every time a discussion of the Holy Spirit takes place, considerable confusion arises. In particular, the baptism with the Holy Spirit has been the cause of much difficulty and misunderstanding in both the denominational world and in the Lord's church. Questions, such as those that follow, cause little difficulty if we will just consult the scriptures for our answers.

The first question for our consideration is "What is the Holy Spirit baptism and who administers it?" To answer this, we must look to the two instances where it takes place, Acts 2 and Acts 10. In each account we find that the source for this baptism is from above. Acts 2 tells of the Spirit *"coming from heaven"* and *"sitting upon each one of them"* (apostles), while Acts 10 speaks of the Spirit *"falling on them."*

Some wonder how this can be considered a "baptism", but this is easily answered if we understand that the Greek word for baptism, "baptizo," not only means to immerse but also to overwhelm. Both the apostles and those of the house of Cornelius were overwhelmed by the Spirit on their separate occasions.

Concerning who is to administer the baptism with the Holy Spirit, we need to look to the words of John the Baptist in the third chapter of Matthew (verse 11): *"I indeed baptize you in water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire."* We quickly understand that this is in reference to Jesus. There is no other mentioned in the scriptures that can administer Holy Spirit baptism, only Christ.

A second question of importance and interest is "Can Holy Spirit baptism save us?" If we will once again look to the examples of Holy Spirit baptism in Acts 2 and 10, it is readily apparent that Holy Spirit baptism does not save. The Spirit fell on the apostles in Acts 2, men who had already been followers of Christ for three years. In Acts 10, even after the Holy Spirit had fallen upon Cornelius and his house, they were commanded to be baptized (with water).

Finally for our consideration, one might ask "If Holy Spirit baptism isn't for our salvation, what

is its purpose?" As we consult the book of Acts once again, we see that in chapter 2 the baptism of the Holy Spirit gave the apostles guidance from above in the revealing of Christ's will. In chapter 10, the purpose was to bring the Jews to the understanding that now the Gentiles also were granted by God *"repentance unto life"* (Acts 11:18).

Assumptions abound that Holy Spirit baptism still takes place today, yet if we look once again to the scriptures we find that Paul tells the Ephesian brethren of but *"one baptism"* (Ephesians 4:5). The logical conclusion is that Paul was speaking of the only baptism which man could administer, that being water baptism. What happened to the Holy Spirit baptism? Its purpose was fulfilled on Pentecost and at the house of Cornelius and is no longer needed.

Understanding Holy Spirit baptism is not as difficult as it might seem. All it takes is a willingness to leave behind any preconceived ideas we might have, and diligently and carefully study the scriptures for the answers.

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A Warm Welcome Awaits You . . .



HEATH CHURCH OF CHRIST SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

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

Blest Be the Tie That Binds

Larry Montgomery

The words to the song are familiar to you. You have sung them many times...perhaps so many times that careful thought gives way to mere recitation. Please read the words of the song again...thoughtfully:

Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.

Before our Father's throne
We pour our ardent prayers;
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
Our comforts and our cares.

We share our mutual woes,
Our mutual burdens bear;
And often for each other flows
The sympathizing tear.

When we asunder part,
It gives us inward pain;
But we shall still be joined in heart,
And hope to meet again.

As familiar as the song is you may not know that its writer, John Fawcett, wrote the song around mid-night before preaching a sermon the next morning taken from Luke 12:15 "*...a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.*" What a fitting lesson for our day offered in this song, its title, and the Biblical text which was in the author's mind back in 1782! Truly, there is nothing more important in this life than fellowship with God, His son Jesus, and brothers and sisters of like precious faith (1 John 1:3). It is in this relationship where we find all spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3) and particularly the hope of a heavenly home. Yet, our society threatens that blessed relationship by blinding us

to the "Blest tie that binds."

We are tempted by materialism to make money our God and to evaluate a man's worth by the value of his possessions. When this happens "the tie that binds" is no longer mutual love for Christ and adherence to the one faith. Instead, our common bond becomes the part of town we live in, the make of car we drive, the schools our children attend, or our membership in clubs. Christianity can never flourish when it takes "back seat" to such materialistic identities. God has plainly declared, "*Ye cannot serve God and mammon*" (Matthew 6:24). In Christ material concerns come after a man's love for God and his brother (Matthew 6:33). "*All are one in Christ...neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, neither male nor female*" (Galatians 3:28) and the above passages warrant our adding neither rich nor poor. We must not allow economic standing to hinder our fellowship with God, Christ and one another.

The blest tie that binds Christians is too precious to be sacrificed to the god mammon or any other idol. The blest binding tie offers every child of God: (1) Fellowship with God through Christ which means "*we have an advocate with the Father*" (1 John 2:1), "*we can go boldly to his throne of grace*" (Hebrews 4:16), and we have access to all spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3). (2) Fellowship with one another which means "*we can bear one another's burdens*" (Galatians 6:2), we may share each others joys and sorrows (Romans 12:15), and we may exhort one another in the most important issue of life (Hebrews 10:24-25).



him through faithful obedience today (Mark 16:16).

If you are in Christ (Galatians 3:26-27) then cherish and nurture the "blest tie that binds." If you are not in Christ then seek

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Pen Points

TRUTH OR TRADITION?



Dennis Gullledge

Tradition has the primary meaning of handing over to another; delivery, or transfer. This delivery includes the oral transmission of information or instruction, passed down from one generation to another. Webster says it is, "an inherited, established, or customary pattern of thought, action, or behavior (as a religious practice or a social custom)."

The word "tradition," as it is used in the Bible carries with it the above meaning. It denotes the teachings of the Rabbis and their interpretations of the Law of Moses as handed down by them. For example, after the giving of the Law of Moses on Mount Sinai the Jewish Rabbis deduced from the general principles of the Law what they considered to be their proper application. As the years passed, other astute scholars felt that the interpretations of the earlier Rabbis needed additional enlightenment. On down the line others assumed the same liberty of explaining the explanations of the explanation. And so, by the time Christ came on the scene there was a stupendous mass of traditional material to which the Jews were answerable, much of it regarded with equal or greater authority than the Old Testament Scriptures themselves. This interpretative material is known as the Targums of the Old Testament Scriptures. The Chaldean Targum on the book of Ruth has Naomi telling Ruth, "We are commanded to keep 613 precepts." F. F. Bruce, in a comment on this says, "The Rabbis calculated that the Law consisted of 613 precepts; 365 being negative (one for every day in the year), and 248 being positive (one for every part of the body)" (The Books And The Parchments, p. 142). Is it any wonder, then, that Jesus said to the Pharisees that they made void the commandment of God by their traditions? (Mark

7:6-9).

A tradition is not wrong just because it is a tradition. A tradition is wrong when, and if, it is exalted to equal God's way. We are strongly controlled by some traditions that are not wrong in themselves. For example, as pertaining to our order of worship in churches of Christ, brethren, in places, are accustomed to a certain pattern of doing things. If you disturb that pattern you will certainly disturb some people. But, the Bible does not give any command from God as to the order of our worship services. We have commands from God as to what we are to engage in (prayer, singing, Lord's Supper, giving), but, no word as to the arrangement in which these things are to be engaged in. There are some among us who clamor for a change in these traditions. But, for some their clamor doesn't stop there.

There is another line of thought in which we need to pursue this matter of tradition. I notice, of late, that the words "tradition" and "traditional" are commonly used by the liberals among us to place a long-held belief or doctrine in an unfavorable light. For example, an elder in the Lord's church has within recent years, written a book in which he challenges "the traditional view of hell," and sets out to defend annihilationism; the very doctrine espoused by Jehovah's Witnesses. Never mind the fact that this view has been answered in debate for many years, and proven false and untenable, but the day has now dawned among churches of Christ, when false teachers among us can take advantage of an untaught generation and advocate any denominational dogma they please, and find it well accepted by many.

It seems that some of the "scholars" in our schools and the preachers in our prestigious pulpits are stepping out to challenge what they label as "traditional views" on subjects ranging from eternal punishment of the wicked to marriage, divorce and re-marriage, to instrumental music in the worship, to women serving as deacons, to...you name it! The voices of concern in the current liberal movement are calling for us to give up our hidebound traditions in these, and other areas.

Now, I am certainly not averse to re-studying a belief or an opinion but what if a so-called "traditional view" happens to be the correct view. If a belief is labeled as a tradition, should that prejudice the case of our minds? No doubt some would like to have it so. Perhaps that is why the word "tradition" is bandied about the way it is

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TRUTH OR TRADITION . . .

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these days. It is now a scared word. The liberals throw it around and attach it to whatever they want, and in their minds it has the effect of the scarlet letter.

Please consider the following oft repeated claim: "The Bible does not say that instrumental music in Christian worship is wrong. It is only church of Christ tradition that says so." What's so wrong with that statement? First, it fails to acknowledge the silence of the Scriptures in determining what God approves or disapproves in Christian worship. A person will do one of two things with silence of the Scriptures: One, he will view it as allowing him to do anything that is not expressly condemned, as Martin Luther did, and the Christian church still does, or, two, he will view it as limiting his actions to only that which the New Testament authorizes, either by express command, approved example, or necessary inference. Any person holding the first point of view will fail to see how a thing may be wrong even if there is no express condemnation in Scripture.

Second, it fails to recognize the law of exclusion in Biblical hermeneutics. That is, where the Bible includes a thing in keeping with God's will, it necessarily excludes anything that would incorporate something of another "kind" into the worship. For example, the Bible does not say we can't use Coca Cola and cornbread on the Lord's table. Why don't we do it? The reason is that the Bible includes what is to be on the Lord's table (unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine), [1

Corinthians 11:23-29, Cf., Matthew 26:17-29] and that excludes anything else of another kind. Very simple. Yet, some will insist that we use songbooks in our singing to which "our tradition" finds no objection. The reason is elementary: with song books you still sing as God commanded, and nothing else. With instrumental accompaniment you interject another "kind" of music (mechanical) into the worship aside from the only kind for which we have Scriptural authorization (vocal).

Third, it carelessly gives consent to the worn out expression "church of Christ tradition," and confuses a matter of truth with custom. We need to be very careful of what we stick that "T" word label on.

Tradition is not necessarily bad. That which is handed down may be bad, and contrary to God's will, or it may be good, and worthy of perpetuation. A tradition as such may be neither good nor bad, such as the "two songs and a prayer" custom. But, if we "*transgress the commandment of God*" by our traditions then, it deserves an immediate rejection without a moment's deliberation (Cf., Matthew 15:3; Mark 7:8). However, the eternal truth of God is that which the apostles received of God, and through inspired writings have handed down to us. Paul said, "*Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which you have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle*" (2 Thessalonians 2:15). It's an easy thing to scoff at truth and call it tradition.

10822 Mabelvale West Road
Mabelvale, AR 72103

BAPTISM PICTURES VICTORY

E. M. Borden

The death of Christ was for the remission of sins. That is, he died that we might be saved. He tasted death for all, but salvation is conditional. Paul said: "*Without shedding of blood is no remission*" (Hebrews 9:22). It was a sad day for the friends of Jesus when Joseph of Arimathea took the body of Jesus and buried it. The devil rejoiced at the open sepulchre. The enemies of Jesus hoped that the career of the man of Galilee had ended forever, but their hopes were shattered when Jesus arose from the dead on the third day. He struggled with the power of darkness, but the victory was

gained. His death and burial would have been worthless if he had not been raised from the dead. He remained in the tomb on the Sabbath day, but on the first day of the week he arose. What a wonderful victory! When we are baptized for the remission of sins we picture that victory. We are planted together in the likeness of his death or burial, and we are raised in the likeness of his resurrection. We walk in a new life after our burial and resurrection. That is one reason for saying that salvation is after baptism. †



GOD'S PROMISES

C. E. W. Dorris

The gospel of Christ is full of promises. They are seen on almost every page of the book. Some of them relate to time; some are only to be enjoyed in eternity. Some find their fulfillment at once, while others are slowly and gradually developed to us. But, notwithstanding this variety among them, they all agree in their character of fixedness and certainty.

What God has promised we may be sure he will fulfill. Though the period of their complete fulfillment may be commensurate with eternity itself, still we may rest our souls in satisfaction upon the promises of God. Another peculiarity of these promises is, that they are graciously interspersed among the commands of the gospel. We have not a long array of duties, unrelieved by any privileges and enjoyments, presented to our view in the Scriptures. On the contrary, each duty performed brings with it its appropriate reward, and we go from strength to strength in Zion. Like travelers in a desert country, we bear the heat and burden of the day's duties and then, at eventide, we repose us upon the satisfying promises of God. Though the way may be a weary one, though the duties may multiply upon us, at every turn in life, still we need not despair. God's promises are sufficient for us, and his gracious presence will be ever with us.

The promises of God may be divided into two classes. The first class consists of those which are enjoyed fully in this life. The second embraces such as are partially enjoyed here, and fully realized only when we shall have done with this earth, and entered upon another state of being. Indeed they can hardly be said to be fulfilled completely even then; for their constant fulfillment—their everlasting fixedness will constitute the bliss

of heaven. We enter upon the realization of them when we begin the Christian life. The end of these promises, and the joys they shadow forth, we shall never experience, any more than we shall see and experience the end of eternity. There will be no ending to either.

The Christian occupies an interesting relation to each of these classes. He is, in fact, the only one who has any part or lot in the matter. The promises of God are vouchsafed to such as are willing to accept them on the terms set forth in the gospel, and to such only. The wicked man who continues in his wickedness cannot claim a single promise in the whole scheme of reconciliation by our Lord. He has the promise of "seedtime and harvest," as well as others. The rain that "cometh upon the just and the unjust," will be sent to him as to all other men. But his soul will not be pardoned, and reconciled to God, unless he is willing to forsake his sins, and learn to do well. If, however, the unrighteous man is willing to forsake his wicked thoughts, and to obey from the heart the form of doctrine delivered to him in the New Testament, he may, at once, assume this new and interesting relationship. The Christian man enters at once, and by the same process, into the enjoyment of the first class of promises, and into heirship of the second class. In fact those of the first class cease to be of the nature of promises to him. They become facts as soon as he comes to be a Christian. Of this class are the promises of pardon, reconciliation, adoption and the like. These are facts in the history of every Christian. He is placed in a position to enjoy all the blessings flowing from the fulfillment of these promises in this life. At the same time, he becomes heir to those other promises, some of which are to be enjoyed here, as he passes on in his experiences in the Christian life, while others are reserved for him when he enters the blissful abode of the righteous in heaven. Wherever he is, therefore, he is always surrounded by the promises of God. His presence and assistance in the hours of trial and temptation. His aid and comfort in the final struggle with death, and his gracious bestowal of the gift of eternal life are among these promises. Then it behooves all Christians to hold fast to these "exceeding great and precious promises." †

GOSPEL ADVOCATE
January 17, 1952

JEFF DILLON: SOLDIER OF THE CROSS



On November 8, 1991, Jeffery Scott Dillon was freed forever from the three-year ravages of cancer and its treatments. He was born February 22, 1975 to Bill and Kaye Dillon, in Trenton, Tennessee. Funeral services were conducted in LaFayette, Georgia by this writer and M. W. Kiser, and in Trenton, Tennessee by Max Miller. Interment was in Dyer, Tennessee.

Jeff drew his last breath while at home. It was his desire not to die in the environment of a hospital. His last words were, "I'm going to lie down now." He seemed to be aware of death's approach although his family continued to hope for a postponement of his demise.

While Jeff is remembered through misty eyes, yet, he died in faith and hope of the gospel. As a youngster, he was selected to fight a man's struggle.

As his youthful body became weaker, his trust in God became noticeably stronger. He finished his course with valor, distinctive courage and thoughts of concern for the well-being of his father, mother and remaining brother, after his passing. The Lord is proud of those who fight sorrow bravely. It has been said, "All battles of bravery are not fought on battlefields in foreign lands. Many are fought in hospital rooms such as those in St. Jude. All brave soldiers do not wear visor caps or helmets. Some wear baseball caps and bandannas." Jeff was a true soldier of the cross.

Jeff had a zest for life and winning personality reserved for great leaders. Many from area churches came to the funeral home to tell of their sorrow and the church's loss. Truly, for Jeff to live was Christ, and to die was gain (Philippians 1:21). His family will miss him with deep and piercing sorrow that is beyond ability to describe. Jeff was preceded in death by his brother Joey. While tears flow hot from within grieving souls, yet, they are by no means empty tears (1 Thessalonians 4:13).

We are mindful of how final death is and how fragile life can be. Let every young person remember that no one is guaranteed a tomorrow and should prepare themselves to be accountable to the Great God who has made us all. †

*John T. Polk II
Decherd, TN*

FAITH IS THE VICTORY

Encamped along the hills of light,
Ye Christian soldiers, rise,
And press the battle ere the night
Shall veil the glowing skies.
Against the foe in vales below
Let all our strength be hurled;
Faith is the victory, we know,
That overcomes the world.

His banner over us is love,
Our sword the Word of God;
We tread the road the saints above

With shouts of triumph trod.
By faith, they like a whirlwind's
breath,
Swept on o'er every field;
The faith by which they conquered
Death
Is still our shining shield.

On every hand the foe we find
Drawn up in dread array;
Let tents of ease be left behind,
And-onward to the fray.

Salvation's helmet on each head,
With truth all girt about,
The earth shall tremble 'neath our
tread,
And echo with our shout.

Faith is the victory!
Faith is the victory!
Oh, glorious victory,
That overcomes the world. †



Dear brethren:

I recently was introduced to the GOSPEL GLEANER by one of your subscribers, Roland Jones, of Evansville, IN. I enjoy the messages very much and appreciate your stand for the Truth. Please add me to your mailing list and also if you will a dear friend of mine whom I taught the Gospel.

Thanks,
Neil Kempf
Evansville, IN

Dear brethren:

A fellow sister in Christ introduced me to your newsletter called the GOSPEL GLEANER. I enjoyed reading the articles and ask that you please place me on your 1992 mailing list. I know your newsletter will aid me in my Christian development.

Christian love,
Mrs. Melahi McBride
New Orleans, LA

GOSPEL GLEANER:

Will you please put me on your mailing list? I understand it is a good paper. If there is a charge please let me know. I really enjoy true to the Book papers.

Wayne Crawley
Morrison, TN

GOSPEL GLEANER
10025 Woodville Road
Kevil, Kentucky 42053

Forwarding & Address Correction Requested

Dear brother Whittemore:

Thank you for continuing to send the GOSPEL GLEANER. I greatly appreciate the fine articles that are in every issue. This letter is to inform you of our change of address. The new address is under my name on this letterhead.

May God continue to bless you, brother Dillon, and the elders of the church at Kevil as you serve in his cause.

In Christ,
John Henson
McMinnville, TN

Dear brethren:

Please add these names to your mailing list. Your paper is very good and is true to the word of God. In a time when many are departing from the truth, it is good to read sound words written by sound brethren. I will continue to pray for your success in teaching God's Word.

In His Service,
David F. Dial
Milan, TN

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Gospel Gleaner

Volume 8

Number 2

WHAT DO YOU SEE?

Bill Brandstatter

Many people perceive events in different ways. Some are opposed to the Middle East war. Others are in favor of it. Four eyewitnesses to an automobile accident may have different ways of looking at the same accident. The gospel accounts were written by four eyewitnesses; Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Each stated the events of the life of Christ in a different manner.

Mary stood outside the sepulchre weeping when someone addressed her. What did she see? She thought the man was the gardener when it was really Christ (John 20:15). When Lot looked at Sodom he saw its well watered plains (Genesis 13:10). No doubt he considered this a good place for his cattle. What he didn't see was a wicked and exceedingly sinful city (Genesis 13:13).

Nehemiah viewed the dilapidated walls of Jerusalem. What did he see? He saw the need for the city to be rebuilt (Nehemiah 4:17). When Jesus saw the woman caught in adultery, what did He see? Others saw the sinfulness of the woman; Jesus saw the opportunity to teach others (John 8:1-9). Jesus spoke in parables because people in His day were seeing but not perceiving (Matthew 13:14b). What do you see when you look at certain situations?

What do you see when you look at the world? Do you see a place to be avoided at all costs (1 John 2:15-17; James 4:4)? Do you see a place badly in need of the glorious gospel of Christ (Mark

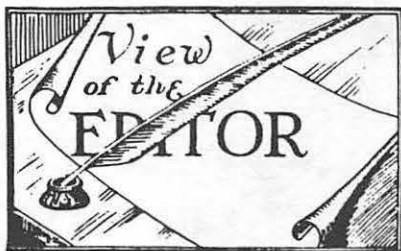
16:15...“into all the world”)? Or is your view of the world centered around looking for ways to fulfill your carnal appetites (2 Peter 1:14)?

What do you see when you look at your family? Do you see merely a group of people who rely on you for the necessities of life (1 Timothy 5:8)? Or do you see an institution ordained by God with certain spiritual obligations attached (Deuteronomy 6:5-7; Ephesians 6:4)?

What do you see when you look at a brother and sister in Christ? Do you see someone who is a nuisance or a troublemaker, a person whom you dislike (Matthew 5:21-27)? Or do you see a person with whom you have a special relationship as children of God (Galatians 3:26)? Do you realize you are joint-heirs with Christ and a person of the riches of the Father (Romans 8:17)? Do you see a person with whom you are to have a special relationship (Romans 12:10; Galatians 6:1, 2; Matthew 18:15)?

Some situations are clearly seen. Others are not clear because of the darkness that surrounds them. A person who hates his brother is in darkness (1 John 2:9). The Christian's life can be rich and fulfilling. The relationships one to another can be beautiful; it just depends on what you see. †

206 North Hancock
Ironton, MO



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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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THE PATTERN FOR THE CHURCH

Bill Dillon

Was there a pattern for the first century church? If so, is this the pattern for the church today?

Some brethren today would have us believe that there is no set pattern or model of the church that should be imitated. If there is no set pattern or guide for the church today to follow, then one can easily see where this road will lead. If no pattern to follow, then man can make up his own. If no pattern, a man can build a church according to his own whims and fancies. The divided state of the religious world at present shows where a "foot-loose and fancy free" theology has taken mankind.

God is a God of patterns. The world of nature and the universe shows how well and how carefully God plans and builds (Psalm 19:1, 2; Hebrews 3:4). Whenever God has given man something worthwhile to do, a pattern to follow was also given. God called Noah to build the ark by which life would be preserved on the earth. Genesis 6:22 reads, "Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he." Noah was obedient and successful because he followed the pattern.

On Mount Sinai, God gave Moses the pattern to follow in the construction of the Tabernacle, a type of the church. Exodus 25-27 details the pattern Moses was to follow. In Exodus 25:9 God said: "According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it." God required His pattern to be followed faithfully. The question is, "If God was so particular and meticulous in regard to the ark and the tabernacle, isn't it reasonable to believe He is even more careful in laying down a pattern for His church?" Neither the ark nor tabernacle were purchased with the blood of His only begotten Son; but the church was (Acts 20:28).

There is therefore a pattern for the church of Christ today. The New Testament is that pattern. A careful study of the picture of the church is revealed in such New Testament writings as the Acts of the Apostles and the epistles of Paul shows clearly the church of the Lord as the Lord would have it:

1. The means of entrance into the early church was faith in God, repentance of sins, confession of the Sonship of Christ and immersion for the remission of sins (Hebrews 11:6; Acts 17:30, 31; Acts 8:37-39).

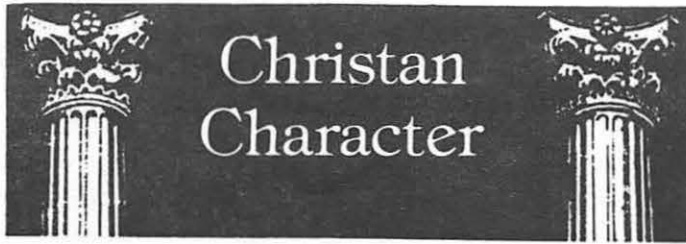
2. The basis of continued fellowship with God was orderliness (1 Corinthians 14:40) and reverence. All Christians met together on the first day of the week to break bread (Acts 20:7). The disciples continued steadfastly in unity and duty (Acts 2:42-46; 4:32, 33).

Does Jesus Christ change? (Hebrews 13:8; James 1:17). Does the gospel change? (Matthew 24:35). Does the Word change? Man, with his unauthorized liberties and religious ventures has produced no improvements in the divine pattern. To the contrary, he has done much harm in multiplying confusion in regard to the nature and devices; the



Bill Dillon

(Continued on page 4)



Christian Character

"REMEMBER NOW THY CREATOR . . ."



Ronnie Whittemore changes in their lives. Some are graduating from high school and preparing for college; others are securing employment and moving away from home; still others are making their wedding plans and will begin a new home. Such changes imply new responsibilities and important decisions.

College-bound students must choose a major or area of study upon which his or her career will be based. Many students will be living at home while attending college while others will be moving into dormitories on the college campus. Newlyweds must find living quarters and make adjustments, now that they have chosen life-long mates. But regardless of the many social, educational and emotional changes that must take place, young people must also make decisions and adjustments concerning their spiritual lives. Jesus emphasized the priority of such changes when He said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). Young people, are you remembering God in your decisions?

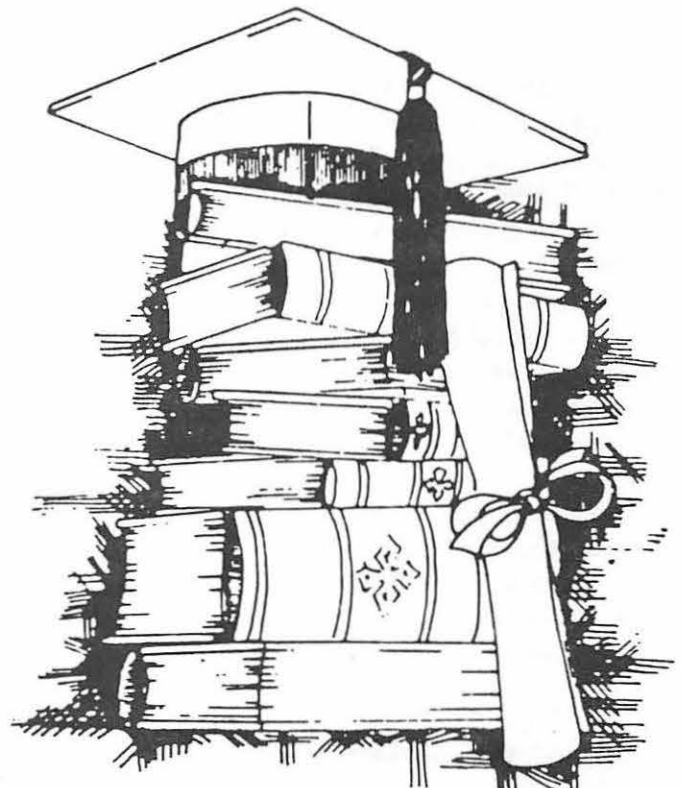
OBSTACLES IN THE PATH OF YOUTH

There are many obstacles in the path of youth today. Satan influences young people to make wrong decisions. He bombards them with

attitudes and beliefs that will undermine their faith in God. Atheism and agnosticism are common beliefs among many college professors who have a great influence upon the lives of the youth. The "new morality" known as "situation ethics" seeks to move young people away from the principles of the Bible. Humanism is the philosophy that "man is the center of the universe" and everything revolves around him; therefore, the youth are encouraged to measure everything by what makes *them* happy. A permissive society whispers the words, "If it feels good, do it," in the ears of young people. Modernism in the world and liberalism in the church are beckoning the youth to lose their respect for God and the Bible. And the temptation will be strong for the young people to lose interest in the Lord and His work while they are making adjustments to new lives away from their parents.

REASONS FOR REMEMBERING GOD

There are many reasons why young people should remember God in their youth. **First, it is commanded by God.** The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in



(Continued on page 4)

"REMEMBER NOW THY . . ."

(Continued from page 3)

purity" (1 Timothy 4:12). All of the commandments of God are important. Every Christian has the obligation of living a faithful life unto the Lord so that he and others may be saved. **Second, youth may be all the life that one has.** God has not indicated the life spans of men and women. Statistics give an average life span of about 75 years. But that is a statistic, not a guarantee! Although the old *must* die, the young *do* die! "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). Young people: How many of your classmates did not graduate with you because of death? **Third, your friends need you as an example.** Someone has well said, "You may be the only Bible that your friends are reading." Paul wrote, "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men" (2 Corinthians 3:2). Now that the lives of young people are changing, so will opportunities to do good. Whether college or an occupation, there will be a new group of acquaintances that can be influenced and taught to know the Lord and obey His gospel. For these reasons, young people should remember God.

THE DANGERS OF FORGETTING GOD

During these times of personal changes, it is only natural that young people have a drive and desire for independence. That is to be expected. After all, this is what parents have been expecting and wanting for their children. They have been training their children for nearly twenty years. Yes, parents want their children to be independent and make good decisions. But young people, there are dangers as well as adventures and opportunities. **First, there is the danger of sin.** The temptation to sin against God is always a threat to people, regardless of age. Satan wants to steal the hearts of young people from God. Satan desires their devotions and loyalty and he will use people and things (1 John 2:15-17) to accomplish his evil work. **Second, there is the danger of procrastination.** With these new and exciting changes, there will also be much work. Your time will be busy with classes schedules, jobs and recreation. Remember to allow time for God and His kingdom. If you move away from home, be sure to worship and work at a faithful church

where you will receive a good spiritual education. **Third, there is danger of eternal destruction.** If one forgets God, he will perish. "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning" (2 Peter 2:20). How sad it would be to be lost eternally because you forgot God during an important change in your life!

Young people: As you end one phase of your lives and begin another, **REMEMBER GOD.** If you are not a Christian, what a perfect time it would be to obey the gospel so that your new social life will begin with a new spiritual life (Romans 6:4). If you are a Christian, be faithful unto God even in the face of adversity. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" †

PLAN OF SALVATION

HEAR the gospel of Christ

Romans 10:13-17

BELIEVE in Christ

Mark 16:15-16

REPENT of past sins

Acts 2:36-47

CONFESS faith in Christ

Romans 10:9-10

BE BAPTIZED into Christ

Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21

LIVE FAITHFULLY

Romans 12:1-2

THE PATTERN FOR THE CHURCH

(Continued from page 2)

early church succeeded admirable in its evangelistic enterprises. This is not to say the modern church cannot avail itself of every means within the will of God, to carry out and complete its mission.

There is a divine pattern for the Lord's church. Man must follow the divine model as revealed in the New Testament of Jesus Christ. All that man ever does that is worthwhile, he does by conforming to a pattern. Whether it is building a house, utilizing blueprints or baking a cake, follow a recipe; man must follow a pattern. The New Testament is God's pattern for the church. †



BIBLE TRAINING SCHOOL IN KIEV, UKRAINE

News Release
March 9, 1992
Atlanta, GA

The Centre church of Christ in Kiev, Ukraine, will begin a Bible training school, September 1, 1992. The Centre congregation was, by the grace of God, begun with the baptism of 48 Ukrainians on September 1, 1991, through the teaching efforts of Ernest Burnette and Jim Waldron. Both men are from the Atlanta area. To date, 102 have obeyed the gospel and, though some have fallen away, the attendance each Lord's day is around 100. The church meets in the "House of

the Teacher" in the Centre of Kiev. Burnette is presently preaching for the church.

The Bible training school will be a three year, full time school to train men to be elders, deacons, ministers of the Word and evangelists. Women will also be trained to be teachers of women and children, as well as homemakers. It is anticipated that help for funds, boarding and lodging will be available for Christian men and women who attend. Jim and Laura Waldron will go to Kiev in August to begin the school. Faithful brethren from the U. S. who go to Kiev on a short term basis will be used as instructors. Waldron's work is sponsored by the Avondale church of Christ in Atlanta.

Congregations in the States who have Christian contacts in the former Soviet Union are urged to write them about this new school as some may desire to attend. Inquiries may be addressed to Waldron or the elders, in care of the Avondale church of Christ, 4017 Memorial Drive, Decatur, Georgia 30032. The phone number is (404) 299-1475. From inside the Ukraine, letters should be addressed to Ernest Burnette; Rusanovskaya Naber 10; Apt. 116; Kiev, 252147; Ukraine. The number there is (044) 555-6061. †

DEDICATED TO NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY

HEATH CHURCH OF CHRIST SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

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

RADIO PROGRAM WDXR-AM (1450) Are You Listening?

Tune in to the "International Gospel Hour" Every Sunday Morning at 8:30.

LAFAYETTE CHURCH OF CHRIST SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday Morning Bible Class	10:00
Sunday Morning Worship	11:00
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:30

RADIO PROGRAMS WQCH-AM (1590)

The Gospel Through the Media
Sunday Morning: Words of Life 8:05
Weekday Mornings: Bible Answer 6:55

GIVE UP!

David Stevenson

“And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give it to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.” (Matthew 19:16-22).

Here we find a man who had kept the commands of God (vs. 17-20). This one was seeking for eternal life and asked what he needed to do in order to gain that precious gift (vs. 20). Jesus told him what he needed to do when he said, “go and sell,” “give to the poor,” and then “come and follow me” (vs. 21). Then we see that this man could not “give up” his possessions in order to gain eternal life. He was not willing to “give up” that one thing in order to follow Jesus (vs. 22). This man had a greater love for that one thing (his possessions) than he did for Jesus and the eternal salvation for which he was seeking. What a sad, sad story this is. To see this man pass up this great blessing of eternal salvation all because he was not willing to give up one thing and follow Jesus.

However, if one looks around them they can see this in people today. They are not willing to “give up” something in order to gain the eternal reward of heaven. Even some Christians are not willing to conform to the Word of God. Indeed what a sad, sad story we have today when people will not “give up” something and gain salvation. Peter was one who pointed out that Christians are a “peculiar people” (1 Peter 2:9). This shows us that Christians are to “give up” some things in order to make them different from those of the world. Paul told Titus that this is the reason Jesus died; He died to make us separate from the world

(Titus 2:13, 14). It is true, that Christians are “in the world” but it is also true that Christians are not to follow the things of this world (1 John 2:15-17). Thus, we conclude that God wants us to “give up” certain things in order to be pleasing in His sight.

It is a fact that many people will be offended by some of the teachings in the Bible because changes must be made in order to make one a “peculiar person,” (one that is different from those of the world). One, however, must make these changes if he wants to have eternal life. This is repentance and is needed in order for one to be saved. Jesus said, “...except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13: 3, 5.). There are those who will not make the changes necessary and by doing such will not gain eternal salvation. This was the problem of the rich man in Matthew 19.

Then there are those who when they are offended by God’s Word, because they are told to “give up” something, will begin making “excuses” in order to keep from changing their lives. The story comes to mind of the great supper in Luke 14:16-24. Those who were invited to the feast began to make excuses as to why they would not come and follow Jesus. Unfortunately, these three excuses which they used are also used by many today. The first excuse that was offered was that he had “bought a piece of ground” (vs. 18-property). The second excuse was that he had “bought five yoke of oxen” (vs. 19-possession). The final excuse was that he had “married a wife” and therefore could not come (vs. 20-family/home). Many times a person’s property, possessions, and family is used for an “excuse” not to follow and obey Jesus. Those “excuses” that were offered in Luke 14 were not acceptable (vs. 21-24) and the same type of “excuses” are not acceptable to the Saviour today either.

Then there are those who when they are offended by God’s Word, because they are told to “give up” something, will turn their backs on God and find an “easier gospel” that is more pleasing to their ears. Paul was the one, however, that told Timothy that he was to preach the Gospel of Christ in a way that he would reprove, rebuke and exhort

(Continued on page 9)

KEEPING OUR SPIRITUAL EQUILIBRIUM

R. W. Gray

Editor's Note: Brother Gray's article is much needed. Right thinking brethren everywhere will agree that a "suspicious minds" mentality will only bring harm to the cause of Christ. Let us contend without being contentious.

Paul reminds us, "For God has not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Timothy 1:7). Soundness of mind, as here used, implies discipline or self control. Our minds must be fixed on our goal, not wavering, not vacillating, not running off into extremes (James 1:6; Ephesians 4:14).

Jesus likened the generation of His day to children who could not be content with the response of their playmates, then observed, "For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, he hath a devil. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say Behold a man gluttonous..." (Matthew 11:16-19).

A tendency to extremes has characterized man from the very dawn of time. It is often correctly observed that "extremes beget extremes." Our brotherhood has demonstrated this inclination over the years, and if not very careful will allow the crisis we now face on so many fronts to push us into radical attitudes and positions.

None who are sober minded will minimize the devastating effects of the proposed new hermeneutic upon the noble aim to restore New Testament Christianity in our time. This "every man for himself," or "whatever the Word of God says to you" approach, renders null and void any semblance of a return to the ancient order. This folly must not pass. We cannot afford to ignore it or pretend it does not exist. Sound doctrine must be defended and maintained as pertains to the church; its doctrine, its worship, its organization, and its work (Jude 3; 2 John 9-10; Titus 1:9).

But we must be careful that this modernistic attitude toward Scripture and religious life not create a spirit of suspicion and mistrust that will drive a wedge between those of like precious faith. It is in this climate that we are

prone to bite and devour one another, forgetting our pledge that allows liberty in areas of opinion, and failing to practice charity in all things (cf. Philippians 2:1-3).

It is more difficult to follow a moderate course, it seems, when we witness the excesses of so many in our great brotherhood. Brethren of equal sincerity and love for truth have long differed on the "how" of the indwelling Spirit in the heart, body, and life of Christians. For many years, liberty has been granted those who are of a different persuasion in this matter. Now is not the time to press such controversial matters to a hurtful extreme, pitting brother against brother when both know that the Spirit indwells us. They differ only in the manner of that indwelling. We need not shoot our own troops when the enemy has us surrounded.

Another extreme that has developed is the matter of suspecting everyone who does not share at once in "my view" of the soundness, or lack of it, in a brother, a school, or a lectureship program. "Guilt by association," though sometime a valid means of evaluation, is often carried to a harmful and unfair extreme. One may be in the company of those considered suspect for the purpose of admonishing them to faithfulness. He may appear on a program with known defectors in innocence of their guilt, or he may know something of their decision to correct their error that we know not of. In any case, all should be given the benefit of the doubt as far as charity can be stretched, and not the other way around (1 Corinthians 13:1-7). Let us not practice the trigger happy policy of shooting first and asking questions later. This attitude is casting conservative religion in an unfavorable light, and is used by liberals to further their cause.

A mind set toward suspicion of all who do not share my view at every turn is manifested in some of our annual lectureships. The list of those "trustworthy" grows smaller with the passing of each year. While it is right, of course, to use only sound men in such programs, it is easy to develop the complex suffered by the ancient prophet when

(Continued on page 11)



TEACHING THE TEACHERS

2 Timothy 2:2

Introduction:



M. W. Kiser

1. Some see the theme of Second Timothy to be "preparation for the ministry."
2. In chapter two, Paul paints seven pictures of the preacher and teacher; that of a steward, soldier, athlete, farmer, workman, vessel, and servant.

3. Our text comes from that portion which speaks of the teacher being a steward.
 - a. Now a steward is a person who has been put in charge of taking care of the property and affairs of another.
 - b. We who teach are stewards of the gospel of Christ.
4. Three things stand out:

I. THE *PURITY* OF THE MESSAGE.

- A. There are three distinct points that we see emphasized about the message:
 1. It was apostolic in its origin ("heard of me").
 2. It was universal in its nature ("among many witnesses").
 3. It was unchangeable in its content ("the same").
- B. The very fact it is called "sound words" (1:13) means there are some things which are not "sound" (Galatians 1:6-10; 2 Timothy 4:1-4).
 1. Are there many ways to heaven? Some say yes! But...
 2. Do all ways lead to heaven? Same folks say no! Now...

3. How do you decide which ways do and which ways do not? Universalism!!!
- C. The gospel of Christ is pure and complete; we, therefore, need to stay with it and it alone (John 16:7-13; Jude 3; Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:16-17).

II. THE *PERSUASION* OF THE MESSENGER.

- A. There are three distinct points that we see emphasized about the messenger.
 1. He must look upon the message as a sacred trust--"commit" (1:14).
 2. He must be devoted to its purity--"faithful" (2 Tim. 2:15).
 3. He must be able to communicate it (James 3:1).
- B. Not all have proven themselves good stewards of the Word of God.
 1. The contrast between those of Asia and Onesiphorus (1:15-18).
 2. Education or enthusiasm is not the standard of faithfulness!
 3. We are now "marking and avoiding" the wrong people! (Romans 16:17).
- C. It took men of conviction to spread the message in the first century and it will take the same kind of men to spread it today (1 Timothy 4:16).

III. THE *PERPETUITY* OF THE MISSION.

- A. This is the only "apostolic succession" taught in the Bible.
 1. A faithful proclamation of the apostles' doctrine without alteration.
 2. This is how it came to us...this is how it is to reach others!
 3. The plan of Matthew 28:18-20 is: Go, teach, baptize, teach.
- B. There are now clearly two ways that we can fail in this mission.

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GIVE UP

(Continued from page 6)

by the preaching of God's Holy Word (2 Timothy 4:2-4).

Then there are those who are instructed by God's Word to make changes in their life, will do as the Word of God instructs them to do and will "give up" those things! This is indeed the right type of attitude one should have toward the instructions of God. Moses is a good example of one who knew that the riches of heaven were far better than the pleasures of sin, which are only for a short period of time (Hebrews 11:24-28). Also, we should point out that true repentance, as defined by the Bible, means a change of life and in the things we do. In repentance we are to change from living in sin and from following the things of this world. By changing these things we will follow Jesus and His teachings in the New Testament.

Think about this for a moment. Jesus indeed knew it was best for us to "give up" some things in order to follow Him and gain eternal life by doing so. He knew it was best for us to change and live righteously than even to gain the whole world. Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he should gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works" (Matthew 16:24-27).

Now the question is presented to you. Are you willing to "give up" some things that are in your life that are contrary to the gospel of Christ? Are you willing to make needed changes in your life for the eternal salvation of your soul? Or, are you like the rich man in Matthew 19 and become upset because you are told to "give up" things and change your way of life? In order to be a child of God now and in eternity we must "give up" things that are contrary to God's Word in order to be pleasing to Him. It is that simple. Don't become guilty of hardening your heart that you will not change. Don't run or hide or make "excuses" to keep from changing your ways. But do what God wants you to do! (2 Peter 3:9-12). Make these changes in your life. "Give up" those things that are not pleasing in God's sight. In the end you will

be glad you did. Jesus said, "...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Revelation 2:10). †

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TEACHING THE TEACHERS

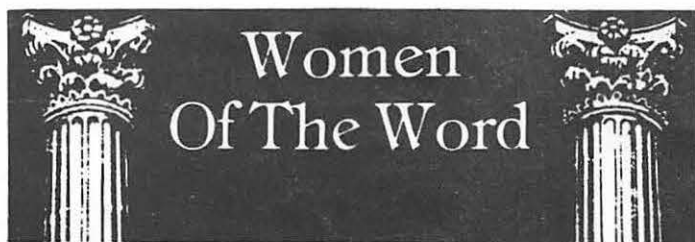
(Continued from page 8)

1. Apostasy, a desertion of truth (Hebrews 2:1-4).
1. Indifference, just let the job go undone! (Hebrews 5:11-12).
2. Either way, the end result is going to be the same.
- C. The idea is "commit to faithful," "commit to faithful," commit to faithful."
1. Paul received it and gave it to Timothy who was to pass it on...and on.
2. Don't drop the torch! Preacher, elder, Bible school teacher, deacon!
3. The Kentucky story: organ, then open membership, and now a mission field!
4. If these matters are left up to your attitude and actions, will there be a church of Christ in this community fifty years from today?

Conclusion:

1. Now, teachers, let us learn these basic things about what is required of us. We need to have:
 - a. A personal devotion to the gospel.
 - b. An elevated view of the gospel.
 - c. And a burning desire to perpetuate the gospel.
2. May our Father grant us that we too might grow and abound in this grace.
3. Are you faithful? What have you done with the abilities God has given to you? Are you using them in the kingdom for the glory of God and to win souls for eternity? Think about Matthew 25:14-30. †

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SYNOPSIS OF THE BOOK: "WOMEN OF THE WORD"



Dennis Gullledge
in history.

Editor's Note: Brother Gullledge has done the brotherhood of Christ a great service in writing "Women of the Word." All women should read it. All men need to read it. The book will enhance and enlighten everyone's understanding about the valuable contributions of the "fair sex" to the cause of God

The Bible is rich in biographies and biographies are rich in valuable instruction. There are approximately three thousand men and women mentioned within its pages. Some of these persons are nameless (as far as Biblical record is concerned), some are mentioned only briefly and some have considerable information given about them. It is in the area of biography that the Bible rises to heights of unequalled greatness.

The inspired writers describe, in character, every type of person who lives today and have ever lived. They do so with amazing impartiality, concealing no imperfection and exaggerating no virtue of their subjects. The men and women of the Bible pass before us neither as dim abstractions nor as cold officials but, as ordinary persons like ourselves, whose lives are recorded in the Heavenly Record in order to furnish us with motives, encouragements and cautions as we walk before God. The Bible was not written for angels, but for people and it will be seen that the lives of those individuals recorded within its pages have much in common with people today.

An area of study which certainly deserves more attention than it has received is that of the women of the Bible. It seems that the women of the Word have been overlooked in the study,

preaching and teaching of many of us. So keenly has this neglect been felt by some that when the editors of Christian History magazine devoted an entire issue to women in the early church, they said, "We wouldn't have special issues on men's participation in history; everyone knows men participated in history. Well, everyone knows women did, too—they just never have talked about it much. So, now, we're talking about it" (Volume VII, No. 1, Issue 17, p. 4). Well, perhaps we have talked more about women's participation in Biblical history than those of a feminist mentality would like to admit. Over the years some excellent works have come forth on women of the Bible: Great Women Of The Bible, by Clarence Edward Macartney (1942); Feminine Faces, by Clovis G. Chappel (1942); All The Women Of The Bible, by Edith Deen (1955); Women Of The Bible, by Frances Vander Velde (1957); Daughters Of Eve, by Lottie Beth Hobbs (1963) and The Women Of The Bible, by Herbert Lockyer (1967). Each of these books have provided valuable information for the development of these studies on Bible women. Sources too numerous to mention have added to my hitherto unexplored depth of understanding of those Scriptures relating to women of the Bible.

Women have certainly had their brush with history and men have taken notice. The fourth century scholar, Jerome (347-420 A.D.), is famous for his work in translating the Septuagint into Latin. His work is known as the Latin Vulgate. A fact that is not widely known is that Jerome dedicated his versions of Job, Isaiah, to books of Samuel, the books of Kings, Esther, the minor prophets, Galatians, Titus and Philemon to Paula and her daughter, Eustochium. Paula assisted Jerome in his work of translation with her knowledge of the Greek language. When Jerome was criticized for dedicating parts of his translation to women, he responded by saying,

These people do not know that while Barak trembled, Deborah saved Israel; that Esther delivered from supreme peril the children of God...Is it not to women that our Lord appeared after his resurrection? Yes, and the men would then blush for not having sought what women had found. (Christian History, p. 19).

(Continued on page 11)

SYNOPSIS OF THE BOOK
(Continued from page 10)

It will be the purpose of this volume to present an accurate portrayal of select women of the Bible. We will be cautious and step very lightly in the area of speculation relative to what the Bible does not tell us about them. The biographies included in this volume were randomly selected for study over a five year period. The title of this book, Women Of The Word, indicates that the subjects of these studies are not only presented within the Bible (the Word of God), but that they being dead yet speak as living examples of the presence of the Word of God in their lives, or the lack thereof. The Bible is a living book that deals with life as it is. It deals with people. We can find provision for our lives in the Bible.

The particular value of character studies is that we are permitted to scrutinize real human character at its best, its worst or at any point in between. We may or may not like what we see, depending on how close a resemblance the person, in all his faults or virtues, bears to ourselves. We may look at the subjects of these lessons and aspire to be like them as they became more of what God would have them to be, or learn from their shortcomings so that their pitfalls be not ours. Two things have not changed with time: human character and the need for people to conform to God's Word.

This book contains material that has been tested in several fields of endeavor over a period of several years. These lessons originated in a quarterly journal called Gospel Gleaner, edited by Bill Dillon and Ronnie Whittemore, under the semi-regular column entitled, "Women Of The Word." Each lesson has been presented to audiences in sermon form. They have also been tested in the classroom.

This book has thirteen chapters in order to make it adaptable to quarterly classroom work, along with recommended daily Bible readings, questions for discussion and outstanding facts for research, which will add immeasurably to the student's appreciation and understanding of the cultural background of these women of the Bible. This work is now submitted to the present test of this volume, the perpetual test of the lasting effect that the power, beauty and grace of women of the Bible have to mold our lives for good and the prayerful test that the kindly providence of our gracious and loving God will use what is written on

these pages for the good of his Kingdom from henceforth. †

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KEEPING OUR SPIRITUAL
(Continued from page 7)

he lamented, "I have been very jealous for the Lord...because the children of Israel have forsaken the covenant...and I, even I only, am left..." (1 Kings 19:14). We should remember that many have not as yet bowed the knee to Baal.

Radical reactionism, as it has been aptly described by one brother, can become as destructive in the fruit borne as is the radical left. We must cease the practice of binding where God has not bound. We must avoid the destructive castigation of all who may differ with us in areas of interpretation relative to difficult and controversial matters. May God help us to keep our spiritual equilibrium, falling neither to the right nor to the left (Joshua 1:6-8). †

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"JESUS AND THE CROSS"

Jesus bled and died on the cross for the sins of all mankind.

He left a loving mother and all his friends and his disciples behind.

Jesus went to the cross and bled and died for you and me and all others;

Had it been one of us think what it would have done to our mothers.

He went to the cross so meek and humble and so brave.

They took him down from the cross and buried him in a borrowed grave.

When Jesus was going from place to place, he always looked ahead.

And when it was time to sleep and rest, he had no home and place to lay his head.

Jesus shed his blood and died on the cross because it was his Father's will.

He bled and died instead of us all and he paid the big bill.

He bled and died on the cross in hope that no one would be lost.

It was a dearly and costly price and Jesus went and paid the cost.

He bled and died on the cross so that we all might live;

After he gave his life and so much for us, what are we willing to give?

Jesus had to walk to Golgotha and they got Simon to help carry the load.

People stood and jeered and mocked him as he walked the dusty road.

When we look up toward heaven and see the moon and all the stars,

It reminds us of Jesus and the beatings and suffering and all the scars.

We like to think about Jesus and the suffering and how he took our place;

And we should look forward to the time we can meet him face to face.

Suppose Jesus came to visit each of us and to spend the night;

I guess we would all feel uneasy if our hearts, lives and souls weren't right.

We like to think about him as we read and study through the Bible pages.

There is a spiritual treat in the Bible for everyone of all ages.

We like to think about and thank him for the good deeds he does every day.

If we will all love and trust him, he will lead us all the way.

Jesus always knows our thoughts and needs and can supply our daily bread.

He knows and sees everything and even knows the number of hairs on our heads.

We sometimes sing the song that says the Lord Jesus paid it all;

He will hear and supply our wants and needs if we will only call.

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Gospel Gleaner

Volume 8

Number 3

EVIL MEN LOVE DARKNESS

W. L. Totty

In the long ago, our Lord said: *"And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God"* (John 3:19-21).

From time immemorial we have always recognized this principle. We are afraid to walk into a darkened area for fear of what evil lurks there. Thieves and robbers operate in the dark, for the most part, though now they are becoming more brazen in their evil deeds. But in the daylight hours, they are not so apt to practice their nefarious works, lest they be apprehended and punished.

But Jesus came bringing light into the world to condemn sin. Even so, we, as followers of God, must come to the light with all our deeds in order to show that they are wrought in God.

Of course, the Lord realized that not everyone who claimed to be religious would *"walk in the light as he is in the light"* (1 John 1:7). He warned that there would be some

false teachers who would *"come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravaging wolves"* (Matthew 7:15). They come under cover of darkness, outwardly making a pretense of being something they are not.

We cannot trust every teacher in the church of the Lord, because he just might be a wolf in sheep's clothing. We must measure him by the light of God's word to see whether or not his doctrine will stand, for the apostle Paul warned that *"grievous wolves would enter in among you, not sparing the flock"* (Acts 20:29).

Christians are to *"have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret"* (Ephesians 5:11-12). Righteousness has no fellowship with unrighteousness; light has no communion with darkness, said the apostle Paul to the Corinthians (2 Corinthians 6:14).

Yet some people in the church are prone to complain and criticize when one's evil deeds are made manifest. They think one is being too harsh when one calls names and, according

(Continued on back page)



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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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THE IMPORTANCE OF THE WORD IN PREACHING

Bill Dillon

Much misunderstanding exists today in regard to preaching. It is fervent and solemn conviction of some that the conversion of a sinner is somewhat like the evolutionist's "big-bang theory" of the origin of the universe. This means the Holy Spirit directly and suddenly one day descends upon the sinner and overwhelms the disobedient hearer with a conviction of his sinfulness and his desperate need of God. This sensational feeling can be accomplished without the agency of the Word of God presenting the basis and need for conviction and conversion.

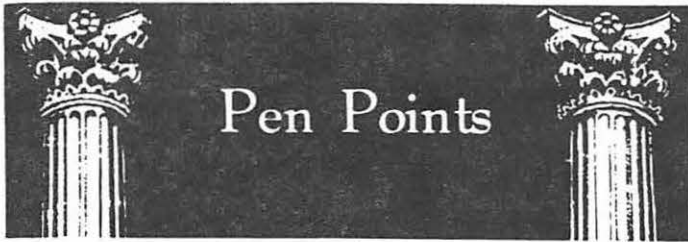
A careful scrutiny of the Scriptures however reveals to us that the Word of God is always used in the conversion and sanctification of sinners:



- ❶ In John 17:20 careful notation reveals the Lord praying for His disciples who were to use the Word to teach and persuade others. Jesus said, "Neither pray I for these along, but for them also which shall believe on me **THROUGH THEIR WORD.**" (In quotations all emphasis mine, BD).
- ❷ In Acts 4:4 we read, "Howbeit many of them which heard the word believed..." People were saved in this instance as a result of hearing the Word. The regenerating work of the Holy Spirit was not carried on independently of the Word of God. The reader should take careful note that in all instances, the language of scripture is never loose, needless or superfluous. The Word of God is not only powerful, it is purposeful.
- ❸ In Acts 10:36-37 we again take notice that "The word which God sent unto the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ...**THAT WORD**... which was published throughout all Judea." Likewise Acts 13 finds Paul reasoning to the Jews of Antioch in Pisidia. Acts 13:44 says clearly "the next sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the Word of God."

According to the Bible, God's Word is to be held aloft to reason and convince men even to the point that men

(Continued on page 9)



UNIVERSALISM

Ronnie Whittemore



The apostle Paul wrote that God wants all *"Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth"* (1 Timothy 2:4). Paul, himself, expressed a great desire that Israel might be saved (Romans 10:1). In the previous chapter, Paul

was willing to be *"...accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh"* (Romans 9:3). However, there is a difference between God's willingness to save, Paul's desire for the lost to be saved and the actual salvation of the lost. Salvation does not depend upon God's willingness to save--alone. If that were so then everyone would be saved. Salvation does not depend upon the desires of apostles and preachers of the gospel--only. If that were so, then everyone would be saved. Yet, does it not seem arrogant, indeed, when people develop the attitude that they and all others are saved based solely upon their own wishes and desires? If the mere attitude of the apostles, evangelists and God, Himself, cannot grant an individual salvation, then "what is man" that he thinks that his attitude is enough to lead him to the pearly gates? Hundreds of years ago, God stated through His prophet, *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts"* (Isaiah 55:8-9).

The plea of churches of Christ is that

men and women return to the Bible and seek their salvation from the inspired instructions that God has given. *"According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue"* (2 Peter 1:3). The power of salvation rests with God. *"John 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name"* (John 1:12). However, the Lord grants salvation through the gospel. *"Romans 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek"* (Romans 1:16). Therefore, man also has a part in his salvation (Philippians 2:12). If one ignores these verses and facts, then he deceived himself and lacks the proper understanding of God's truth.

Why Universalism Is So Popular

(1) *Universalism is based upon the emotions and sentiments of men and women.* How many times have you heard someone say something to this effect? "It is not what you know and understand in the Bible, but what you feel in your heart." This attitude denies any necessity of understanding God's Word for salvation despite the emphasis of God in His Word that truth must be known and obeyed (John 8:31-32; Ephesians 3:4; 5:17; Hebrews 5:8-9; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). From a "human standpoint," it is much easier (lazier) to "feel good" in one's "heart" than to surrender his stubborn will to God. Jesus said, *"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me"* (Matthew 16:24).

(2) *Universalism is also grounded in self-deception.* God knew that the rebellious hearts of people would lead to belief in lies (2 Thessalonians 2:11). Perhaps motivated by the traditional teachings and influence of grandparents, parents and friends, many

(Continued on page 4)

UNIVERSALISM . . .

(Continued from page 3)

people believe that "all men will be saved" because that is what their religious "mentors" taught and believed. How sad it is that we live in a society that prides itself in independence and "free thinking," yet when it comes to the Bible, people allow themselves to follow religions and philosophies which they know have flaws!

(3) *Universalism is nearly everyone's friend.* It is the most accommodative philosophy for religious and even non-religious people. If one is too lazy to study the Bible and learn the truth, then believe in universalism. If one is steeped in his family's religion and he is unwilling to think for himself, then believe in universalism. If one does not want to give up his "pet" sins (because repentance demands that one does), then believe in universalism. If one does not want to offend his friends and family with the gospel of Christ, then believe in universalism. Yes, universalism has something to offer to every religious and non-religious person--a false sense of security in sin!

Why Universalism Will Not Save!

(1) *God has not chosen to save man in that way.* Since God is the party offended by the sins of men, then God is the one who sets the terms for man's forgiveness. God saves men through the teaching and obeying of the gospel of Jesus Christ. One cannot believe in any other Savior than Jesus (Acts 4:12). Man cannot be saved by any redemptive plan other than the one set forth by Jesus in the New Testament (John 12:48). Salvation is based upon faith (John 8:24; Hebrews 11:6), repentance (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30), confession of Jesus' name (Matthew 10:32; Romans 10:9-10), baptism "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38) and a faithful Christian life (1 Corinthians 15:58; 1 John 1:7; Revelation 2:10).

(2) *God's sense of justice and mercy cannot be met by universalism.* The

philosophy of universalism is ALL mercy and no justice on the part of God. If one accepts the teachings of universalism, then he denies God's system of punishment which essentially also denies the power and even possibility of sin. If there is no sin, then there is no need for God, Christ, the church or salvation. The Bible would be vain and Jesus' death upon the cross would be for nought. However, man did sin and does sin and he must pay the price for his sins (God's justice). However, God's grace is such that God is willing to accept the sacrifice of Jesus as the price of our sins. That is God's abundant mercy. Yet, God requires of men and women that they obey His Word in order to obtain that pardon, just as the Israelites were required to look upon the brazen serpent to be healed from their poisonous bites in the wilderness (Numbers 21; John 3:14-16).

Universalism is a dangerous and deceptive doctrine because it tugs at the heart strings of people. The religion of Christ includes the emotions of man (Acts 8:39), but it does not exclude the intellect, will and conscience (Hebrews 4:12). One would do well to read, study and obey the Word of Truth and not the fables of men. †

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GUYANA REPORT

Guy F. Hester



[The purpose of the Vreed-en-Hoop School of the Bible is two-fold: (1) All Christians are invited to enroll in the school so that they might gain greater Bible knowledge and (2) all men of the church are encouraged to enroll in the school so that they might prepare themselves to be preachers and other leaders in

the church. This article is a summary of last two trips which were made in the Spring and Summer of 1992].

Spring Trip

On the Spring trip of 1992 to Guyana, my son, Ferrell, went with me. We worked the first week in the village of Crain where we have several members who have no means of transportation. We did our teaching and preaching under a house that is built on stilts, the home of brother Adams and his family, where 20 to 30 people would gather, about half of whom were not members of the church, for the purpose of studying the Bible. The second week we were in Vreed-en-Hoop where the facilities were better and where the majority of our students live. On Sundays, in addition to preaching and teaching at Vreed-en-Hoop, we went in the afternoon to Windsor-Forest, where a small church meets in a house and preached for them.

Although we always wish we could do more, our trip was very successful. The church and school were strengthened. We laid out a challenging program of work for the students.

We hope to have our first graduation sometime in 1993.

Summer Trip

On July 30, I left the Memphis International Airport on my 22nd missionary journey to Guyana, South America. On this trip I was accompanied by Jay and Jalema Tidwell of Enterprise, Mississippi (my son-in-law and daughter). Jay had been on a mission trip with me previously to Guyana, but his was a first visit for Jalema. We made the entire trip in one day and arrived at the Bhola home in Vreed-en-Hoop at approximately midnight.

Due to the fact that brother Bhola has rented the building that we have been using as a church building, school and living quarters to the Guyana Electric Company and the new building for the church was still incomplete, we had to stay with the Bhola family. Eleven of us were crowded into one small house. Jay and Jalema got a bed with a mosquito net. I got a "pallet" on the floor with no mosquito net. However, we made it without too much difficulty.

We got right into our work the next morning, contacting members and students and trying to set up some sort of a schedule. Our school classes and evangelistic services were interrupted almost every night by "blackouts." But in spite of this, we were able to do some good teaching and strengthen our students and teach many who are not Christians. Jalema taught a large class of children every day and gave personal consultation to the ladies, especially the young mothers. She perhaps did more lasting good than anyone else ever has with these women and their children. Jay taught classes daily and did an excellent job. I preached, taught classes, counseled and conducted personal Bible studies.

Future Plans

Brother Bhola seems to be doing a good job under difficult circumstances. His car was,

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"ONE IN CHRIST JESUS"

Larry E. Montgomery

To become one with another is a marvelous relationship in the human experience. The marriage relationship serves as the most common example of human companionship. *"And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him....Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh"* (Genesis 2:18, 24). From the beginning God has known that his crown of creation needed companionship. Man and woman are thus suited companions for each other and the marriage institution provides for that basic need that man might not be alone. Beyond this, however, man is a social creature able to have friendship with his fellowman. Nowhere is this friendship or fellowship more perfect than in the church, the body of Christ (Colossians 1:18; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27). The basis for this supreme fellowship is seen in Paul's words, *"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus"* (Galatians 3:26-28). Let us explore some of the implications of this union of fellowship in Christ.

First, the unity in Christ (and thus our fellowship with Him and one another) must be based on the divine standard of faith. This standard is the objective body of doctrine revealed through the scriptures. In Ephesians 4:5 Paul declares that there is *"one faith"* just as there is one God, one Lord, and one body (church). That faith is obtained through hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17) not the teachings or doctrines of men (Matthew 15:9). The faith (body of doctrine) is fixed and complete (Galatians 1:6-11) so that once espoused we must contend for it (Jude 3). The faith is our guide in "all things that pertain to

life and godliness" and the common bond of our fellowship (2 Peter 1:1-4).

Second, entrance into the body (the church) of Christ is by baptism (Galatians 3:27). A careful study of the book of Acts will show that in every place where the gospel was preached and man responded faithfully the immediate consummation of the obedient faith was baptism. Though man often declares baptism has nothing to do with salvation, Christ says otherwise--*"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned"* (Mark 16:16). Furthermore, the word of God teaches as we have seen that baptism is the point wherein one enters the place of fellowship with Christ and all others who have by the same means entered his body (the church).

Third, the oneness in Christ--fellowship with the Father, the Son and one another--provides the most complete communion that can be enjoyed by a group of people this side of eternity. See the picture of that fellowship as it began in the first century (Acts 2:41-47). In Christ's church there is a sharing of joys and sorrows (Romans 12:15), there is a bearing of one another's burdens (Galatians 6:2), and there is a mutual exhortation to good works (Ephesians 4:11-16). Again, there is no other source of such fellowship this side of eternity.

Finally, we note that there are many counterfeits of the true fellowship in Christ. There are many religious bodies that strive to provide the fellowship of our third point above without accepting the basis of the first and second points above. Such "churches," dear friend, are only offering a cheap imitation of the genuine fellowship that is in Christ. These counterfeits of Christ's church built upon an uncertified gospel (Galatians 1:9-11) may offer a social environment that enables a lot of people to feel good but their end is destruction (Proverbs 14:12).

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THE LIBERTY OF THE GOSPEL

Ernest Underwood

James declared, "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (James 1:25). Among the many lessons which can be gleaned from this passage and its context, one stands out very clearly. We learn that the gospel is a law, a perfect law, and a law of liberty.

The gospel of Christ is that law of which God spake through the prophet Jeremiah when he said, "I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Jeremiah 31:33). It is that which was spoken by the apostle Paul as he discussed our means of justification. He argued, "Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith" (Romans 3:27). They argue foolishly who argue that we are under no law at all today.

Not only is the gospel, the law of faith, it is a perfect law. It is sufficient within itself to accomplish its purpose. It is the power, the only power, which God uses to make men right with Himself (Romans 1:16). It completely furnishes a man unto every good work, whether that work be in matters of doctrine, of reproof, of correction, or in instruction in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16-17). The denominational creeds and dogmas concocted in the recesses of men's minds not only cannot save or instruct in righteousness, they are barriers to man's salvation. According to Jesus, those who worship according to men's doctrines do so vainly, and become blind leaders of the blind (Matthew 15:8-14).

In our text James states that this is the perfect law of liberty. Liberty! What a cherished privilege. History is replete with accounts of battles and wars which have been fought that liberty might be gained. In our own country a lady stands in New York Harbor with the torch of liberty held high. how many

of us have placed our fingers in the crack of the Liberty Bell? One of enslaved man's most cherished dreams is liberty.

The liberty which the perfect law provides is far greater than that which is received when some tyrant is deposed. The gospel liberates from sin. Through long millennia the world of mankind has groaned under the weight and sorrow of sin. When the Son of God was raised from the dead, then ascended on high, the glorious message that "whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21) was proclaimed. For the first time in the history of mankind salvation (liberty) was offered in fact and in act.

The gospel liberates us from the curse and penalty of sin. In Galatians chapter three Paul shows that before the gospel, man was under the curse of sin. The Law of Moses showed man the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Sin condemns and kills the soul. "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). Obedience to the gospel liberates us from that power of darkness and sin, and translates into the glorious kingdom of God's dear Son (Colossians 1:13). "Repent and be baptized...for the remission of sins," Peter commanded in Acts. 2:38. We are told that on that day of Pentecost those who gladly received his word were baptized, and they were added by the Lord to the church on a daily basis. Truly the gospel liberates us from the curse and penalty of sin.

The gospel liberates us from bondage and elevates us to sonship. After stating that "God hath blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3), Paul then lists some of those blessings. He shows that we have been chosen in Christ, we have redemption through His blood, we are made a heritage, and we have

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THE LIBERTY OF THE GOSPEL . . .

(Continued from page 7)

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Lastly, the gospel liberates us from the dread of death, and the eternal hell. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:55-57).

Even though our mortal frames must one day face physical death, we can pillow our heads in that death with the calm assurance that our Lord has also traveled this road and overcame him that had the power of death, that is, the devil (Hebrews 2:14). Because God's promises are sure and true (2 Peter 3:9), we can know that after a faithful life before Him, when we pass from this life, on the morning of the resurrection we will hear, "Well done!" And this because we have obeyed the gospel, that perfect law of liberty. Have you obeyed, or are you still in bondage? †

"ONE IN CHRIST JESUS . . ."

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Does the church you are affiliated with reject the "*one faith delivered to the saints*," and/or reject baptism as essential to salvation and the entrance into Christ? If so why accept a counterfeit when you can have the real thing? Salvation and true unity/fellowship of believers is in Christ. †

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Vienna, IL 62995*

GUYANA REPORT . . .

(Continued from page 5)

out of commission which made it most difficult to work as we would have liked. Our school is in real trouble because of both financial and transportation problems. It is hard to say at this point what its future may be. I have hopes of bringing two of our best students, Earl Bhola and Dharamdat (Ricky) Bhanedatt, to the states that they might be able to study and prepare themselves to return to Guyana and do the work that we have been trying to do. Brother Cecil May has offered them free tuition at Magnolia Bible College if we can raise the money for their personal support. We would need to raise approximately \$2000.00 per month for them to be able to do this. Let's pray that this may become a reality.

My thanks to everyone for your support. Continue to pray for us. †

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE WORD . . . *(Continued from page 2)*

(sinners) shall be judged in kind, if they reject it (John 12:48; Proverbs 13:13). All true converts in the Christian religion will be consciously moved and persuaded by the written word.

- ④ If any doubt would remain of the significance of God's Word in preaching surely Romans 10:13-17 would sweep it away. We are compelled to quote at length:

"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and **HOW SHALL THEY BELIEVE IN HIM OF WHOM THEY HAVE NOT HEARD? AND HOW SHALL THEY HEAR WITHOUT A PREACHER?** And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things...**SO THEN FAITH COMETH BY HEARING, AND HEARING BY THE WORD OF GOD.**"

Can anyone deny, on the basis of this passage alone, the necessity of the preached word in the saving of souls? The work of the wonderful Holy Spirit of God is not carried on independently of the warnings, promises, and arguments of the Word of God. No wonder such Bible verses as Isaiah 1:18; 1 Thess. 5:21; John 5:39 and Hebrews 4:12 are found as constant reminders that the Word of the Lord and the mind of man should never be strangers to each other. Space does not allow for the discussions of other verses in the divine record that show the truth of this article. For the reader's benefit the following are listed for personal examination: 1 Cor. 1:21; 2:4-5; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23; 1 Thess. 2:13.

No sinner is converted by a "big-bang" experience brought about by the direct action of the Holy Spirit apart from the instrumentality of God's Word (Ephesians 6:17).

There shall never be a replacement for

the persuasion and proclamation of heaven's will for men lost in sin and for saints struggling for heaven. The preacher must, with the Word, lay his finger on sin and its cure. And, of course, he must do this in compassion and kindness, reflecting from his own heart and life, the very heart of God.

May God's blessings always rest on this holy and divine Word and those who preach it.

*P. O. Box 506
LaFayette, GA 30728*

LAFAYETTE CHURCH OF CHRIST SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday Morning Bible Class	10:00
Sunday Morning Worship	11:00
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:30

RADIO PROGRAMS WQCH-AM (1590)

The Gospel Through the Media
Sunday Morning: Words of Life 8:05
Weekday Mornings: Bible Answer 6:55

The Scriptural Plan Of Salvation

MAN MUST OBEY:

"He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:9).

MAN MUST BELIEVE:

"But without faith it is impossible to please him" (Hebrews 11:6).

MAN MUST REPENT:

"But now commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30).

MAN MUST CONFESS:

"For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10).

MAN MUST BE BAPTIZED:

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16).

HAVE YOU OBEYED THE GOSPEL?



POWER NEEDED IN CHRISTIAN LIVING

(Ephesians 6:10)

M. W. Kiser

Introduction:

1. Men of the world are interested in various kinds of power:
 - a. Money.
 - b. Politics.
 - c. Prestige.
2. One of our problems lies with the fact that we are more interested in getting rich and living a long time than getting right and living forever!
3. Power must mean more than vitamins and electricity.
4. Christians need the follower power:



I. We Need Prayer Power With God.

- A. We should have assurance that prayer can accomplish great things because:
 1. Jesus promised us that it would (Matthew 7:7-11; James 5:16).
 2. God delights in answering our prayers (Hebrews 11:6).
 3. Our Lord's very example in prayer (Hebrews 5:7).
- B. But we must pray the Bible way.
 1. Continually (1 Thess. 5:17; Colossians 4:2).
 2. About all things

(Philippians 4:6).

3. Earnestly and sincerely (James 5:16; Luke 22:44; Colossians 4:12).

C. Have you been getting nowhere in prayer?

1. Do you think it a pointless chore or a joyful privilege?
2. Believe the Bible and pray the Bible way!

II. We Need Soul Winning Power With Men.

A. Why has God ordained that we should be involved in preaching and teaching?

1. It is not to help the unemployment rate or just to keep people busy.
2. It is in order that men might be reached for Him (Acts 2:40).
3. Our failures should break our hearts, not call forth excuses.

B. Here are some things that will give us greater power in soul saving.

1. A true sense that we are rescuing the lost (Jude 23).
2. Being fully prepared to do the world (1 Peter 3:15; 2 Timothy 2:15).
3. Personal concern over those who need to be saved (Psalm 126:5-6).
4. Fear of losing for not using (Matthew 25:24-30; John 15:2-6).

C. When do we need to demonstrate this power?

1. Not just during some special evangelistic program; or one day a week.
2. But, continually (2 Cor. 5:11; Matthew 28:20; Titus 2:11-12).

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III. We Need Overcoming Power With Self.

- A. We need to overcome sin and its mark upon our lives.
 - 1. Impatience over people, problems and perplexities.
 - 2. Selfishness that limits our concern for other people.
 - 3. Thoughtlessness that causes us to walk over other's feelings.
 - 4. Timidity that makes us spineless in voicing our convictions.
 - 5. Rebellion that limits the gracious hand of God.
- B. The power to overcome is two-fold in its expression.
 - 1. The resisting of that which is evil (Galatians 5:19-21).
 - 2. The doing of that which is good (Galatians 5:22-23).
 - 3. The "Parable of the Unclean Spirits" returning (Matthew 12:43-45).
- C. God will help us with this fight. He will provide the weapons, we must conduct the war (James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:9; Ephesians 6:11-12; 1 John 5:4).
 - 1. If we fail, we are to blame (Romans 8:33-39; Hebrews 10:23-27).
 - 2. If we are lost, we are to blame (Titus 2:14; Ephesians 2:8-9).

Conclusion:

- 1. Brethren, let us seek this power as earnestly as worldly men seek after worldly power.
 - a. Let us do what it takes to obtain it.
 - b. Let us be persistent till we obtain it.
 - c. Let us be cautious lest we be

thrown at a loss in trying to obtain it.

- d. And, when we get it, let us prize it above everything else.
- 2. If you are not a Christian, you might be impressed about these points and find them so worthwhile; but, there is a power you need first in your life. (See Romans 1:16; Mark 16:16).
- 3. If you have wandered from the Lord, it could be because of the lack of this power in your life. †

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The Bible



Approximately forty men wrote in giving us the Bible. This was over a period of fifteen hundred (1500) years; yet when compiled, their writings make a harmonious book. A marvel indeed!

The Bible is the inspired word. It was written by inspiration of God. This has never been successfully refuted and never will be.

The fruit produced by the Bible is always good. It makes men what they ought to be. It always makes better men of those who follow it. We never go wrong by strictly walking as it directs. The Bible is our guide through life. The Gospel is God's Power to save our souls.

Atheists, skeptics and others have tried in vain to destroy the Bible. It continues to stand. It shall stand!

Find the truth for your life by carefully studying the Bible. The truth will make you free.

EVIL MEN LOVE DARKNESS . . .
(Continued from front page)

to the command of God, points out the error of another. However, Jesus, our Guide and Master, whom we are commanded to follow (Matthew 4:19; 16:24; Luke 9:59), was not hesitant about scathingly rebuking those who were walking in darkness of sin. Read the 23rd chapter of Matthew and especially pay attention to verses 25-30. There he told the scribes and Pharisees they were "hypocrites," like "whited sepulchres." A tomb may be whitewashed and garnished on the outside to make it appear bright, cheerful and attractive, but what could be darker than a tomb on the inside? Oh yes, those scribes and Pharisees would have made out like they would not have killed the prophets in the days of their fathers, but they were the very ones who would have done so.

A man who will not come to the light with his deeds is of the devil, just as those Pharisees and scribes were, of whom Jesus spoke. If one hides behind another and secretly prods another to accomplish evil that he wants to see done, he is none other than a hypocrite. Or when one anonymously seeks to do evil to another, he is a child of Satan, no matter how pious he pretends to be. He is merely manifesting his cowardice. He won't come to the light, lest his deeds be reproved.

There is nothing more obnoxious than to

hear someone say, "Someone told me so and so about someone else," but then refuses to tell where the rumor started. If a man cannot or will not give the source of his information, don't believe it. All such is better left unsaid if one refuses to identify the source.

In teaching a lesson on the impossibility of serving both God and Satan, Jesus said in the sermon on the mount, "*The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness...*" (Matthew 6:22-23).

In the day of judgment, all the evil thoughts of the heart and deeds of man will come to light (1 Corinthians 4:5), and we will be judged accordingly. Then, oh what a weeping and wailing when such an one realizes his fate!

But if one is wise enough to trust in God, one need not fear the onslaughts of those who walk in darkness of sin. Solomon, who was wiser than all men, stated: "*When wisdom entereth into thine heart, and knowledge is pleasant unto thy soul; Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee: To deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh froward things; Who leave the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness*" (Proverbs 2:9-13).

Let us be up and doing the will of the Lord openly, showing ourselves to the "*light of the world.*" †

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Gospel Gleaner

Volume 8

Number 4

ARE WE SET FOR ANOTHER DIVISION?

Dennis Gulledge



In the years immediately following the Civil War in this country, there was talk of division threatening the Lord's church. Some concluded that division was inevitable. They saw congregations dividing left and right over the organ question. Some contended that it was impossible for the true people of God to divide, and that if there were those who sought to make the church another denomination, well they never were converted to the truth anyway. David Lipscomb believed that if division did come that it would not be the worst thing that could happen. In 1883 he wrote, "If a separation will, and ought to come, it may be asked, how will it be brought about? All the true disciple has to do, is to firmly stand for the truth, and to be true to it. God in His providence will then bring it." And by 1883 some declared that division was already present. Some were, by that time seeing, that there were two distinct parties in the church:

one calling for "the ancient order of things," and the other, "the new order of things." Such was the situation over a century ago.

Liberal Journalism

The cause of liberalism in the church was spread through the power of journalism, at least in large measure. J. S. Lamar expressed the viewpoint that such stalwart journals as, *The Gospel Advocate*, and, *The American Christian Review* were edited by men of "unlovely and earth-born spirits" who were cold and legalistic. Therefore, the movement of brethren away from the truth of God was vitalized by the power of the printed page in the same that such papers as "Image," and "Wineskins" serve the liberal agenda today.

The parallels between what was happening in the Lord's church 100 years ago, and what is happening now are striking and almost eerie. Alan Highers said in the October 1992 issue of *The Spiritual Sword*, "We live in a time of ferment and change. There are

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Special Missionary Reports From Russia In This Issue--See pages 6-7!



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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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TIME

Bill Dillon

The hourglass of another year has been emptied of its sand. It is good to sift through our reflections and write of time past, time present and time future.

Time Past

Time past holds the memories of many mistakes, various disappointments, embarrassing failures and numerous tragedies. Since the past cannot be reclaimed or recycled it is best, by far, to remember the errors and mistakes of days gone by to learn from them. Without learning from our past errors, we will surely repeat them. Let the past be our educator not our embalmer. L. Thomas Holdcraft said, "The past is a guidepost, not a hitching post."



Time Present

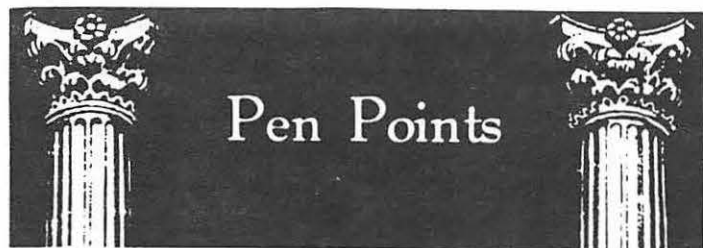
The present moment is the only moment we have; the past is gone and the future is yet to be. As we contemplate the great brotherhood of Christ, there are many things that need changing.

Unstudied Bibles need to be opened and read with interest (Acts 17:11); unspoken prayers need to be uttered in earnest (1 Thessalonians 5:17); and unalloyed devotion in every saint's heart needs to be engendered (Romans 12).

The present hour reveals a brotherhood bleeding from many self-inflicted wounds. The evil spirit of compromise has made inroads in various places. It is as if some have forgotten what the church of the Lord really is. All efforts to be denominationalize the body of Christ are worthy only of our disdain, not our delight. We should oppose every effort in every place which seeks to depart from the truth of the gospel. We must give "not an hour" (Galatians 2:5) to any and all doctrinal departures from God's truth.

But it must also be recognized that heresy of spirit and attitude is just as harmful to the cause of Christ as heresy of belief. The Lord's people must learn the valuable strategy of change by compassion, as well as change by confrontation. Jesus sometimes confronted (Matthew 23) but at other times He obtained remarkable change in the human heart by showing compassion on the sinner (John 8:1-11). To be confrontational when we should be

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Pen Points

THE DISTINCTIVENESS OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Ronnie Whittemore



As one looks around him, he is made aware of the vast number of religious beliefs, not only in this country, but in the entire world. As one drives over the many roads, he sights various church buildings with various names. This variety of names testifies to

the division of the religious world. Jesus did not want division, but unity (John 17:20-21). Paul commanded unity. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Corinthians 1:10). But according to some sources there are more than 300 religious denominations in the United States. Is this why Jesus died? Did Jesus suffer upon the cross so that man could choose any course of life, any "church" of his choice, and live any way that he wants? Such conduct makes a mockery of Jesus' death and purpose!

It is significant that Jesus promised to build but one church or spiritual body. "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18). In the first century, Paul, Peter, James, John, Philip, and Stephen were all members of the same church--the one which Jesus purchased with His blood (Acts 20:28).

Proof of this is seen in 1 Corinthians 1:11-18 when Paul condemned efforts to follow men instead of Christ. The church of the Lord was distinctive in the first century and is distinctive today. But the church of Christ is distinctive because it follows the Bible only as its guide. As a result the church's organization, doctrine, worship and life is unique in the midst of religious confusion.

Just what makes the church of Christ distinctive from the religious denominations and institutions of the world?

Its Attitude Toward the Scriptures

Unlike Roman Catholicism, the church of Christ places no significance in oral tradition or doctrines of men. Jesus said, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:8-9). Paul warned, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Colossians 2:8). Jesus directs His disciples through His Word, not through a pope or human agency. The voice from Heaven declared from the Mountain of Transfiguration, "...This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Matthew 17:5). The apostle Peter spoke about the power and authority of Jesus, saying, "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people" (Acts 3:22-23).

The attitude of the church toward Scriptures is summed in a familiar phrase that was adopted as part of the restoration movement. "We speak where the Bible speaks,

(Continued on page 4)

THE DISTINCTIVENESS OF . . .

(Continued from page 3)

and remain silent where the Bible is silent. We call Bible things by Bible names and do Bible things in Bible ways." This slogan is supported by the principle in 1 Peter 4:11: "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God..." Members of the church of Christ must be known as Bible-bound people. "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20:32). There is no need for creed books, conventions or council meetings. The Scriptures teach that God has "given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue" (2 Peter 1:3). Whenever some new theory of men rises, one can conclude: "If it is true, it is not new; if new it is not true."

Because of Its Emphasis

The emphasis of the church of Christ is spiritual, not social or political. The New Testament clearly states that the kingdom of Jesus is not a mixture of church and state. Jesus told Pilate: "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence" (John 18:36). When tempted or tested by His adversaries concerning His spiritual and political loyalty, Jesus answered, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21).

Many religious movements are providing entertainment for their members instead of the message of salvation. God does not dwell in temples made with hands (Acts. 17:24). If all churches would begin preaching pure New Testament Christianity and leave the restaurant business to those who are licensed to provide such, there would be a noticeable difference in the religious world. Concerning those congregations among us which have

shifted their emphasis from the spiritual to the physical (and specifically the social), it is time that you STOPPED following the denominational trail of socialism and REPENT because you are losing (and some have lost) their distinctiveness.

The church of Christ also stresses the RESTORATION and not the REFORMATION. There is a BIG difference between these two movements. Martin Luther was an opponent of error in his day, but he approached the problem from a faulty viewpoint. He wanted to reform Catholicism. Members of the church of Christ are interested in restoring New Testament Christianity. Luther went back only to Catholicism. Christians go beyond Rome to Jerusalem (A.D. 33 and Acts 2). In Acts 2, obedient believers were neither Catholic, Protestant nor Jew, just Christians. Members of the church of Christ have no interest in Wesley, Calvin, Luther or Alexander Campbell, but only in the gospel of Christ. We reject denominational ties and are assured that "the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Therefore, we eliminate the errors of the reformation and all other movements that stand in opposition to God and deny Him His glory.

In Its Purpose

The reason for the church's existence is to glorify God. "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" (Ephesians 3:21). Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16). The church of Christ must follow a divine pattern (Hebrews 8:5). We seek a "thus saith the Lord" for doctrine and practice. Christians must have authority from God for the things which they believe, teach and practice. Unless one's faith comes from the Word of God, he is following the precepts of men instead of the commandments of God.

The church of Christ also brings glory to God by the teaching of the gospel. "Therefore
(Concluded on page 9)



SALVATION AND THE ELEPHANT

Guy F. Hester



A man who owned an elephant was talking to four blind men. In their conversation, the blind men said that they would like to see the elephant. The owner led them one at a time to the elephant and allowed them to feel the elephant. The first felt of

the elephant's side and said, "An elephant looks like a big wall." The second man felt of a leg and said, "An elephant looks like a tree." The third man felt an ear and said, "An elephant is like a large leaf." The fourth man felt his tail and said, "An elephant is like a rope."

Just as it is a mistake to try to see an accurate picture of an elephant by looking at just one part, one cannot get a true concept of salvation without considering all the parts of salvation as they are given in the Bible.

Take for example the salvation of Noah. The Bible says that he was saved by faith, by preparing an ark and also that he was saved by water (Hebrews 11:7; 1 Peter 3:20). While it is clear that each of these were essential to his salvation, it is equally clear that he was saved by a combination to the things mentioned and not by any one of them alone.

To further illustrate, suppose you see a man drowning in the river. You grab a rope and throw it to him. The man takes hold of the rope and you pull him safely to shore. Did

you save him? Was he saved by the rope? Did he save himself by taking hold of the rope? It is easy to see that the answer to each of the above questions is yes. But let us rephrase the questions. Was he saved by you alone? No. Was he saved by the rope alone? No. Was he saved by his own work (taking hold of the rope) alone? No. All will agree that he was saved by a combination of these things. Just so, in the salvation of the soul there are a combination of things by which the Bible says that we are saved. Too many people have "touched the elephant in just one spot" when it comes to their souls's salvation.

Saved by the Gospel

"The gospel...is the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16). The Corinthians were saved by the gospel (1 Corinthians 15:1-2). But the gospel alone without faith and obedience will not save.

Saved by Faith

It is not possible to please God without faith (Hebrews 11:6). Numerous are the passages which teach salvation is by faith. But to say that one is saved by faith only is to "touch the elephant in one spot" and ignore all the other things by which the Bible says that we are saved. James declared, "*Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only*" (James 2:24).

Saved by Grace

"*For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men*" (Titus 2:11). But the same inspired man told the Ephesians that they were saved by grace **through faith** (Ephesians 2:8). Grace is appropriated through obedient faith.

Saved by Baptism

The apostle Peter wrote, "*...Even baptism doth also now save us*" (1 Peter 3:21).

(Continued on page 11)

" TWO WEEKS IN MOSCOW "

Richard Hinkle

It was my privilege to spend two weeks in Moscow with nineteen people connected with Freed-Hardeman University. Our group consisted of teachers, student preachers at Freed-Hardeman and several ministers from Kentucky and Tennessee. Our dual aim was to take the Gospel to as many people as possible in our limited time and give aid to a nearby orphanage. Through the generosity of Christians, mostly in Tennessee, we delivered nineteen tons of canned vegetables, dried foods and used clothing to an orphanage for children with disabilities. We also delivered about fifteen crates (2' x 2' x 3') containing medical supplies for a maternity hospital.

Upon arriving in Moscow, two of our group, Danny Cleaver of Hopkinsville, KY and Don Wright of Lenoir City, Tennessee, flew north to Archangel where they preached and taught for the next two weeks. They met with much success and baptized about thirty new converts. They now have a group of seventy-one Christians meeting in Archangel.

Our group at the Moscow School of Business Management gave about 100 hours of lecture on the New Testament and a few hours

on Business Management and Child Behavior. Our speakers felt that their time was not fully utilized due to our hosts having other guests and due to "*Russia Confusion*". Hopefully, our



Richard Hinkle is giving away Russian Bibles in the subway in Moscow.

hosts will use more of our time on the next trip in March, 1993. Our Moscow group did not baptize anyone, although, there were some serious one-on-one studies and some converts are expected next year.

A lot of teaching must be done with the Russian students to get them to see the need of obeying the Gospel. Whereas our children are exposed to the Church three times a week since birth, these mid-teenagers know **nothing** about Christianity. Sundays mean nothing to them except a free day from school or work.

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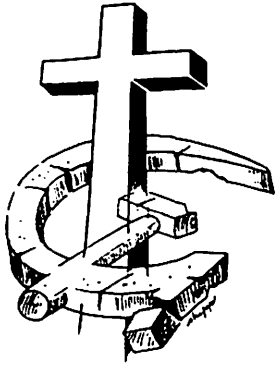


After receiving a copy of the Bible, this old gentleman immediately sat down and began to read it.

Editors' note: Brother Richard Hinkle is a faithful member of the Heath church and an amateur photographer. The photos in this section are samples of his handiwork. We appreciate his efforts in Russia and pray for his safety and success in the coming year.

PECHORA, RUSSIA

Ronnie Whittemore



Ernest and Shirley Underwood moved to Pechora, Russia last October to work with a newly established church. They were on a team of workers who went into this area last June. This fine Christian couple have committed to at

least five years in Russia. The Underwoods' son, Mike and his wife, Janine, and their children have also moved to Russia and plan to work in the area of Sosnogorsk and Ukhta.

The church at Maysville in Gurley, Alabama, with whom brother Ernest Underwood labored before his move, financially supports the Underwoods in their mission effort. The church has received two or three letters from the Underwoods stating that they arrived safely and are searching for housing and an interpreter. The following is a brief report derived from their letters:

Brother Underwoods writes, "I have preached and taught classes the last two Sundays. The attendance is somewhere between 50 to 65. The people (some of them) whom we baptized are beginning to come back

since our arrival. They were just left alone and did not really know what to do. Hopefully, we will be able to get all of them back and involved in active service. It will take patience and we will do the best we know how...The local newspaper *Lenin* is to begin publishing my articles soon. I think I could get it done free, but since the Russian Orthodox priest is always begging for free things, and since they have nothing but contempt for him, I told them that I would rather pay for having mine published...We have had a few baptisms lately, and are expecting about four more before too long. We are taking it much slower in our studies--more detailed--than in June."

In the postscript of his latest correspondence, brother Underwood writes, "Just had a visitor who has invited me to 'speak about Christ and the Bible' to a language group of more than 100 on December 15th. How's that for a really good Christmas present? Can't think of a greater opportunity for one day."

Let us remember the Underwoods and the people of Russia in our prayers. May the Lord grant us innumerable opportunities and may we have the courage and generosity to fulfill each one. †



Readers

Since the doors of opportunity have opened in Russia, we know that our readership is interested in various works there. Please look for future "Reports from Russia" in the "Evangelistic Etcetera" column of upcoming issues of the GOSPEL GLEANER.

ARE WE SET FOR . . .

(Continued from front page)

momentous upheavals taking place in the questions on the validity of baptism, the role of women in the church, changing attitudes toward the Bible, the new hermeneutic, etc.

It Is Happening All Over Again

Earl West listed three causes of division which split the Lord's church almost a century ago. The interesting thing about it is that religious world...The widespread diffusion of these difficulties has occurred, even in the church, due to (1) the general tenor of the age in which we live, (2) the currents of contemporary religious thought, (3) the influence of denominational seminaries and theological schools, and (4) the presence of some among us who are seeking a 'renewal' and 'restructure' of the church" (page 1). There are brethren today who are cast in the same mold as some of the late 1800's, who not only were intent on establishing a new order of things in the church, but, were also determined, if possible, to crush down the ancient order of things. The winds of "change" and "renewal" are blowing and gaining strength everyday; the horizon is darkening by the hour, and in some places danger is eminent as funnel clouds begin to form. It appears the churches of Christ are facing a division equivalent to the one that occurred a century ago.

"What Goes Around, Comes Around"

In the late nineteenth century there was division in the church long before differing segments were formally and officially recognized. The spirit of division had long been brewing before 1906 when the Bureau of the United States Religious Census listed churches of Christ and Christian Churches as two distinct and separate religious bodies. The actual split had been fomenting for forty years

before it became a reality. Opposing forces had been gaining strength in both liberal and conservative camps. Battle were fought and division ensued.

It is interesting to notice what the causes of division were a century ago and compare it with what is happening in the church today. The similarities are amazing! Whoever coined the phrase, "What goes around, comes around," in all likelihood did not have issues of Biblical doctrine in mind, but the application is the same nevertheless. Those same issues that have already been around have once again come around with renewed intensity, with other vital issues following in their wake.

Any student of the history of the American Restoration Movement has more than just a passing acquaintance with the name Earl Irvin West. Brother West's phenomenal contributions in the study of Restoration history have marked him as one of the greatest scholars in this field either living or dead. his four monumental volumes of Search for the Ancient Order, are must reading for even the casual student of Restoration history. Therefore, brother West's observations as to the causes of divisions within the church in the late 1800's are worthy of very serious consideration. His conclusions are documented with the writings of the day and they are preceded by ample time to ensure that they are neither premature nor hasty. His assessments are all the more fascinating when we realize that the causes of division that he discusses in volume two, pages 226-243 of Search for the Ancient Order, are precisely the same causes (general speaking) that are threatening division among churches of Christ today? (1) The growing use of instrumental music in worship, (2) the trend toward denominationalism and (3) the silence of the Scriptures.

A few years ago we thought that these issues had long ago run their course and done their damage. Not so. They have come around again. And along with them are other issues of an equally divisive nature, i.e., grace only,
(Continued on page 11)

THE DISTINCTIVENESS OF . . .

(Concluded from page 4)

they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). Paul encouraged Timothy, writing, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee" (1 Timothy 4:16). The gospel is God's power unto salvation (Romans 1:16) and it is the power which God has given to men that they may become His children (John 1:12).

The church of Christ also glorifies the name of the Lord by being benevolent to others. "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Galatians 6:10). James wrote, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).

As a result of following God and glorifying His name, God will fulfill His promise of eternal life and the glorious crown of life (2 Timothy 4:7-8). Yes, the church of Christ is distinctive in: (1) its attitude toward the Scriptures, (2) its emphasis on the spiritual, and (3) its purpose of bringing honor and glory to Jehovah God. Friend, if you are not a Christian, that is, not a member of the church of Christ, the blood-bought institution of Jesus, will you not obey the gospel today and be His "peculiar" treasure? †

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Gurley, AL 35748

TIME . . .

(Continued from page 2)

compassionate carries with it all the appeal of the baleful odors of a paper mill. Truly, God's people must be "*wise as serpents and harmless as doves*" (Matthew 10:16). Let us be at war with error, but, in brotherly affection, let us seek to correct others to the saving of our own souls as well as theirs.

Time Future

The future is molded by our past actions and present reactions to events. The future will be what we wish it to be. Adoniram Judson stated "The future is as bright as the promises of God." The best way to face the future is with God. God's word is still true (Psalm 119:160); God's power is still great (1 John 4:4); God's grace is still amazing (2 Corinthians 12:9); God's promises are still firm (2 Peter 3:9).

God's exceeding great and precious promises will be sufficient joy for any sorrow; sufficient peace for any turmoil; sufficient assurance for any trial; sufficient grace for any pain; sufficient strength for any situation; sufficient comfort for any circumstance and sufficient help for any crisis.

May God's people look back to the past and learn; look around in the present and listen; and look ahead to the future and live. †

P. O. Box 506
LaFayette, GA 30728

Dear Readers: Our apologies are extended to you for the late arrival of the last two issues of the GOSPEL GLEANER. Due to my move to the Maysville church in Gurley, Alabama, many obstacles had to be hurdled and as a result the typesetting and printing were delayed. Hopefully, the paper will be back on schedule with the next issue. I am thankful that the good brethren at Heath have seen fit to retain the services of brother Dillon and me as editors of the GOSPEL GLEANER. We appreciate their confidence in us and look forward to continuing our work with them in this capacity. We commend the Heath church for their faithful service to the Lord and His Cause. ✉ *Ronnie Whittemore*

" TWO WEEKS IN MOSCOW " . . .

(Continued from page 6)

Possibly their only knowledge of a church is of the old Greek Orthodox Cathedrals with gold domes scattered over the city. These buildings are not used for worship. They are only museums and works of art.



At the Children's Home, the children are eating soup made from sugar beets, called borsch.

The need for the truth in Russia is great, as this nation has been denied the Bible for more than one generation. Before that,

there was false teaching to mislead the people.



David Hinkle gives a Russian language Bible to a soldier.

Our group did not feel that their time was wasted because the seed of the Gospel was sown. The group does plan to return and work again with these young people. We taught them and left literature for them to read. †

LAFAYETTE CHURCH OF CHRIST SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday Morning Bible Class	10:00
Sunday Morning Worship	11:00
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00
Wednesday Evening Bible Study	7:30

RADIO PROGRAMS WQCH-AM (1590)

The Gospel Through the Media

Sunday Morning: Words of Life	8:05
Weekday Mornings: Bible Answer	6:55

The Scriptural Plan Of Salvation

MAN MUST OBEY:

"He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:9).

MAN MUST BELIEVE:

"But without faith it is impossible to please him" (Hebrews 11:6).

MAN MUST REPENT:

"But now commandeth all men everywhere to repent" (Acts 17:30).

MAN MUST CONFESS:

"For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10).

MAN MUST BE BAPTIZED:

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16).

ARE WE SET FOR . . . (Concluded from page 8)

these very same causes are having yet another divisive impact upon the church today. It is as if we have seen it all before. The three causes are:

1. *The growing use of instrumental music.* In speaking of the instrument of music among churches of Christ, brother West noted, "The story of its introduction in most cases is a story of division, law suits and bitterness" (p. 226). The issue of the instrument of music in worship has been beaten down in debates over the years, and every argument in its defense effectively answer by Hardeman, Warlick, Highers and others, and yet there are still some brethren with the audacity to come forward and insist that it is just a matter of opinion. In particular Larry James and Bill Swetmon took this untenable position at the 1991 Preachers' and Church Workers' Forum at Freed-Hardeman University. They most certainly are not alone in their beliefs. A significant segment of the brotherhood seems to be behind them.

2. *The trend toward denominationalism.* There is a strong desire among liberal thinkers to make the Lord's church just like the denominations so that there is not a dime's worth of difference between us. They view the church as just another denomination and want us to take our place in the religious world as one among many, and engage in fellowship and joint activity with one and all. They reserve their harshest criticisms for their brethren, and concentrate all the writing and speaking on what they perceive as being wrong with the churches of Christ and how they think we ought to change. Mike Cope has recently said, that, instead of "firing upon the denominations...The new hermeneutic includes an appreciation for what God is doing among other groups of believers" (*Wineskins*, August 1992, p. 6). One has to wonder whom he thinks these "other groups of believers" are.

3. *The silence of the Scriptures.* Brother West writes: "Thomas Campbell's reason for rejecting infant baptism was that

the Scriptures were silent on this point. Lacking apostolic authority, the brethren refused to practice it. After the Civil War, this way of measuring religious practices was entirely abandoned by many of the more progressive fringe" (p. 240). As it is today! The slogan that we are "silent where the Bible is silent" is now under ridicule. David Lipscomb summed up the problem for his day, and ours, when he said: "We seek for things authorized, they for things not prohibited. Our rule is safe--theirs is loose and latitudinarian. Ours confines us to God's appointments. Theirs opens the worship service of God to whatever will please men." †

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SALVATION AND THE ELEPHANT . . . (Continued from page 5)

It is the act of baptism that brings us into Christ. "*For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ*" (Galatians 3:27). There is only one baptism (Ephesians 4:4). But baptism apart from the grace of God, faith in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, repentance and confession will not save. Christ is the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him (Hebrews 5:8-9).

Saved by Faithfulness

One may be scripturally baptized into Christ and receive the forgiveness of his sins and yet be lost because of unfaithfulness. Jesus promised, "*...Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life*" (Revelation 2:10).

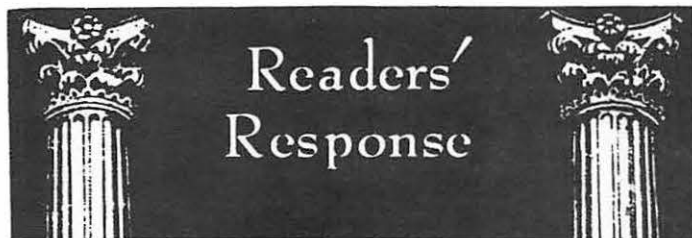
Let us carefully consider each part of God's plan for saving man and be careful that we ignore no single part. By doing this, we work out our own salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12). If we will do our part, we can be sure that God will do His. †

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Brethren:

Recently a preacher friend of mine gave me a copy of GOSPEL GLEANER and I was pleasantly pleased. I appreciate the articles that were in this issue. May I be added to your mailing list? Keep up the good work for His Cause. Thank you for your help!

In Christ,
Jim Hogan
Bryant, AL

To the editor:

I am writing this letter to let you know that I have moved from my old address to a new one... Please send all future issues to me at my new home and pray for me, as I begin a new work with the Chandlersville Church of Christ.

Also, I would like to extend my appreciation to you and your staff for producing a fine publication from which the brotherhood has benefitted greatly. Take care of yourself and keep up the good work.

In His Service,
Russel M. Kline
Chandlersville, OH

Dear brethren:

It was a pleasure to be able to read a copy of the GOSPEL GLEANER. I am always encouraged by publications that present the pure gospel. I am the minister for a small congregation that stands for the truth in South Carolina. Papers such as yours are an encouragement to a young preacher.

Please include my name to your mailing list. It will be appreciated if you would. Best wishes with your publication.

In Christian love,
Paul Powers
Irmo, SC

To whom it may concern:

I am requesting your quarterly newsletter for our family. Our address is as follows...

Sincerely,
Jina Daniel
Garland, TX

Dear brethren:

We appreciate your faithful service in the Lord's kingdom and the fine work you do through the GOSPEL GLEANER. Enclosed is a small contribution of \$10.00 for this work. Please note our change of address.

May God continue to bless you in your work.

In Christ,
Jeff & Angela Bates
Mendenhall, MS