

Devoted To
Evangelism
And Missions

The Baptist Examiner

The Paper With A National Circulation

"Go Ye Into All
The World, And
Preach The Gospel."

"To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." (Isa. 8:20)

WHOLE NO. 115.

RUSSELL, KENTUCKY SATURDAY, MARCH 16, 1940.

VOL. 9 NO. 5.

GROWTH OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

L. D. Gibson Writes On Faith And Salvation



L. D. GIBSON
North Kenova, Ohio

Faith is not the final process of reasoning. Our understanding cannot compel faith. Faith is not a mental effort. It is not a mere assent of the mind. Therefore, it cannot be acquired in our institutions of learning. Faith is not native to the natural man, "for all men have not faith" (2 Thess. 3:2). Faith is not an act of the natural imagination.

Faith is a gift from God and deals with facts and realities that transform the whole inward being by means of the Lord's opening the eyes to the realities that transcend the world of sense and time. "For the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (Cor. 2:14).

Faith as a gift from God cannot be rivaled nor anticipated by nature. Man must be given spiritual vision before he can grasp real realities, and on the eve of this vision faith is

salvation in the germ.
salvation? It is not mere
life—ETERNAL LIFE.

partation of divine nature.

which the believer has is

same kind Christ possesses,

as the life that is in the

acorn is the same kind that is in

the oak.

(Continued on Page Six)

The Potter

ELIZABETH PRICE

I stood within the potter's place
And watched him working at his wheel;
He wrought with careful skill and grace,
The clay was molded to his will.
I saw the vessels he had made,
Some rough, some smooth, some large or small,
Of different shapes and size and shade,
Yet this same potter made them all.
He tried them in the furnace heat
To bring out quality and tone,
And when the process was complete
Each one with greater beauty shone.
The master potter—God above—
Has fashioned man by His own will;
We are refined by Truth and Love;
And bear our Maker's image still.
Each one must fill his rightful place,
Each has his own peculiar task;
We must reflect the potter's grace—
What greater blessing could we ask?

Meet Our Sunday Morning Announcer



WILLIAM MILLIGAN

We present at the left the face of our loyal Sunday morning radio announcer, William Milligan, the son of Mr. and Mrs. W. M. Milligan, of West Russell. All members of William's family are loyal and active members of the First Baptist Church, with the exception of a little sister, who, no doubt, will follow along in the footsteps of other members of the family in due time.

William was converted when about ten years old. And only recently he publicly rededicated his life to the service of God.

He graduated in 1938 from Russell High School and is now taking a post-graduate course in Ash-

(Continued on Page Six)

The First Baptist Pulpit

"Back To Bethel"

"And God said unto Jacob, Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there: and make there an altar unto God, that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother. Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went. And they gave unto Jacob all the strange gods which were in their hand, and all their earrings which were in their ears; and Jacob hid

(Continued from Page Three)

Under Leadership Of Pastor John R. Gilpin



PASTOR JOHN R. GILPIN

Brother Gilpin became pastor of the First Baptist Church of Russell in April, 1929. At that time the church had a membership of about 275. The present membership is about 550, or, in other words, the membership has approximately doubled since Brother Gilpin came. The Sunday school attendance has increased from about 175 to about 300 at present.

During the second year of Brother Gilpin's pastorate the auditorium was remodelled and redecorated, the glass-front baptistry was installed, and a three-story addition was erected in rear adjoining old building. At present the building provides 45 class rooms and four auditoriums of varying size. The main auditorium seats 600.

The debt of \$21,000.00, incurred in this improvement and expansion, was paid by voluntary gifts without resort to sales and unsystematic schemes for raising money.

Since Brother Gilpin came to the church collection plates have been abolished. A box has been provided for the reception of offerings, and no pledges are taken. Under this method of finance the total offerings have averaged \$10,000 a year for the past ten years. For the associational year, previous to the beginning of Brother Gilpin's pastorate the church reported \$747.00 given to missions.

(Continued on Page Six)

JOHN R. GILPIN Editor

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T. P. Simmons Acting Editor.

RADIO FUND

Amount previously reported \$26.50

Mrs. E. Caldwell 1.00

Anonymously 19.50

A Friend 5.00

James Thorn 1.00

Total \$53.00

DICKERSON FUND

Amount previously reported \$16.10

E. Caldwell 1.00

1924 Bible Class 5.00

Anonymously 1.00

Total \$26.10

ACTING EDITOR SOON TO BE OPEN FOR ENGAGEMENTS

By the time the readers receive this issue, Brother Gilpin is expected to be home again. With his return the Acting Editor (D. V.) will again be open for engagements for evangelistic meetings and for his lectures on "The Trail of Blood."

The lectures on "The Trail of Blood," using a large chart prepared by the late J. M. Carroll, of Texas, trace Baptist churches, through progenitors of various names, back to the Lord Jesus Christ. They also show the gradual development of Catholicism and the rise of Protestantism therefrom. One will learn more true church history from the lectures than he might learn in months or even years of reading.

All the outstanding distinctive doctrines of Baptists come in for treatment in the lectures. And the lectures show why Baptists are not Protestants; why it makes a difference what church one affiliates with; and why Baptists should not accept alien immersion.

The lectures are calculated to make Baptists and to make better Baptists, yet they are courteous, considerate, conservative, and constructive. They seek to instruct rather than insult; to teach rather than torment; to convince rather than coerce; and to benefit rather than demean.

Much exposition of Scripture is involved in the lectures, making them really only sermons on the history of truth and error, with a refutation of the latter.

They have been given in many sections (including nine states), and there is always a judicious effort to adapt them without compromise to the peculiar aspects and particular needs of each situation. The author seeks to follow the rule of Jesus (John 16:13) in imparting truth according

to the capacity of his hearers to receive it.

Written endorsements of the lectures have been received from N. A. Moore, head of Bible Department, Hardin-Simmons University, Abilene Texas; W. O. Reeves, Highlawn Baptist Church, Huntington, W. Va.; C. E. LaReau, president of Detroit Baptist Ministerial Conference; and Harvey F. Morrison, Tabernacle Baptist Church, Hazel Park, Mich.

The lectures can be given in three, four, or five services, according to the desire of pastor and church.

All the author asks by way of remuneration is a free will offering. Whatever the size of the offering, it is always accepted gratefully and without criticism or dissatisfaction.

Pastors and churches are invited to write for date. Address T. P. Simmons, 5265 Williams Ave, Ashland, Ky.

MANY THANKS FOR SPLENDID COOPERATION

As the Acting Editor gives the reins back into the hands of Editor Gilpin, it is his desire to express his sincere gratitude to the readers of The Examiner and to the members of the First Baptist Church for their wonderful cooperation, without which he could not have carried on the work. The response to our effort to secure one hundred subscriptions, new and renewal, has been such that the number has been exceeded. The members of the First Baptist Church have been loyal in every phase of the work. The way the church has cooperated with the Acting Editor is a tribute to the work of Pastor Gilpin. It shows that he has not built the work about himself. It is a bad sign when the pastor's leaving a field causes a breakdown in the work. Many thanks to all.

PURGATORY

"The merchandise of gold and silver...and slaves and souls of men."—Rev. 18:12, 13.

The Roman Church makes slaves of her people upon earth—and after death makes merchandise of their souls.

The strong public sentiment that is everywhere found against obtaining money under false pretenses should apply to the Roman Catholic priests who extort money from deceived relatives for masses which they pretend will better the condition of the dead. This is an imposition that should be earnestly condemned. The priest who tells a suffering husband or mother that his dead wife or her daughter is in a place called purgatory, and that his prayers, to be paid for with cash in hand, are necessary for the release of the soul of such a dead person from this man-made purgatory, is surely an imposter, and ought to be counted with those who obtain money under false pretenses. The Church that maintains this species of dishonesty should be held in disrepute by all honest people regardless of their religious differences.

There is no system of gambling, no species of fraud, more brazen

or barefaced than this priestly game of playing upon the love and tender memories of bereaved people to cheat them out of their oft-times hard-earned and scanty wages. Yet these nefarious operations are sanctioned by the Romish Church, and are practiced daily in every part of the world where this church exists; and the wounds of sorrowing and heart-broken relatives are made to bleed afresh by the constant demands of the Church for masses to "insure" rest for their beloved dead.

A Catholic has the fear of hell brought before him all his life by the priests, the terrors of which he is taught can only be avoided by good works and the payment of money; and after he dies his relatives are levied upon for years for funds to employ a priest who pretends to pray him out of purgatory. A dead Roman Catholic is never forgotten by the priest while his relatives have a penny that can be extorted from them. If they have no money, or will not pay for masses, the soul of the dead may, so far as the priests are concerned, suffer in purgatory, or be cast into hell forthwith.

How well the Savior's words in Matthew 23:14 describes the Roman Catholic priests, bishops and popes, "Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widow's houses, and for a pretense make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation." A woman in Mexico who had lost her only son, was held by a priest who was engaged to deliver his soul from purgatory. After the priest had obtained the money, he was asked whether the son was now in heaven, but he only said that he was some better off, and left the heart of the poor mother to her grief.

No species of swindling ever invented by villainous man can compare in cold-blooded atrocity and cruelty with this priestly scheme. The Catholic believer is followed by the priests through all his life, and after his death relatives are pursued for money to pay impostors for benefits they pretend to dispense, or withhold.

The priest, in order to get more money out of his deceived people, has two masses—high mass and low mass. The high mass costs from ten to one thousand dollars or more, according to the display of flowers, candles and the number of priests taking part, and it is sung in a loud tone of voice. The low mass costs about five dollars. Only six candles are used, and it is said in a low voice.

The essence of the low fraud is of course equal to the essence of the high. One is as good as the other, but the laity are made to believe that the high mass is far superior to the low, and in nine cases out of ten the poor as well as the rich will in some way gather money for a high mass, believing it will help the suffering soul through purgatory more quickly than a low mass. It is high money, high mass, low money, low mass, no money no mass.

Death does not end all with the Roman Catholic Church. A mem-

ber cannot avoid his church dues by dying. His estate or friends have to pay on and pay forever. Even the tax collector gives up a dead man, but the Romish Church never. It retains its grip on its followers long after their bodies are reduced to ashes. The priestly threat of sending the soul from purgatory into hell will bring the last dollar from the pocket of the sorrowing mother, whose only daughter sleeps in her dark and narrow cell. She scrapes together her scanty means, denies herself every comfort in order to purchase prayers for the supposed repose or promotion of the soul of her dead darling. And these sums stolen from the pockets of thousands of superstitious, religious slaves every day, and almost every hour, throughout the United States, are hoarded to enrich the Romish Church, and tell us with no uncertain sound that all true religious liberty shall cease as soon as this Church obtains a numerical majority of the voting population.

Purgatory is a downright, naked, barefaced falsehood; an invention of man inspired by Satan for the destruction of souls.

The Word of God states with all authority: We are "Not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold; but with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without spot." "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the Blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." As God who cannot lie, has said that the precious Blood of His crucified Son cleanseth from all sin, there can be no possible need of the fires of purgatory for those who sleep in Jesus; and as this same eternal God has also said, "The wicked shall be returned into Hell," that "Outer darkness," where "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth," and "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him," there can be no intermediate place of suffering from which the souls of the wicked and unbelieving dead may be liberated and lifted up to peace and heaven, by the payment of money to a pope, a cardinal, a bishop, a priest, or any other creature for the saying of masses or so-called prayers to this God who cannot lie.

Purgatory is one of the most gigantic and stupendous frauds and delusions of the ages.

An Austrian peasant, returned from a pilgrimage to Rome, his hat band struck full of holy souvenirs, splinters of holy bones, twigs of the burning bush, etc., was exhibiting them to the admiring and awestruck villagers, when a tourist standing near asked him if he brought home any relics of Truth. With mouth agape the astonished peasant said, "Why, no; I did not know there was such a saint—I never heard any one ask for him in Rome!"—A. G. M. U. Tract.

"BACK TO BETHEL"

(Continued from Page One)

them under the oak which was by Shechem. And they journeyed: and the terror of God was upon the cities that were about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob"—(Gen. 35:1-5).

In Albermarle and the surrounding counties of Virginia, several years ago, there were a number of farms thought worn out and useless. In an effort to reclaim this land, Government experts, in soil conservation suggested that it be sown with violets. Hundreds and hundreds of acres of land which were supposed to be worthless, were thus sown. A few years past by after this experiment was made and the government in making its report said, "The violets perfumed the air, enriched the owner, and recovered the land."

There is doubtlessly listening to this program tonight someone who once was of value to God, but that one today in the eyes of the world and in his own sight is valueless and his life is being wasted. Even though such a back-slider may be listening to this program, it is never too late to turn back to God. Farm land may never be too poor to recover. A soul may never be too far removed from God but what he may be reclaimed for God's service.

Such was true of Jacob, of whom we've read in our Scripture this evening. About thirty years before the time of our Scripture lesson, Jacob had fled from his home, going to Padan-Aram. In camping out at night he stopped one evening at Bethel. In the night, by vision, he saw a ladder set up between earth and Heaven and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the ladder. Believing that this was a vision from God and that God, Himself, was in that place, he made a covenant with God wherein he pledged himself unto the Lord. "If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I may come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God: and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee" (Gen. 28:20-22). The next morning, with a new stride in his walk and a new joy in his heart, he went on his way. For twenty years he lived with Laban, his uncle, forgetful of the covenant he had made and growing colder spiritually all the time. In a round-about manner, God saw that Jacob left his uncle, who had in the meantime become his father-in-law, and taking all of his possessions he journeyed homeward. On the way, he met his brother whom he had wronged by deceit and fraud twenty years before and when his brother frankly forgave him, he told him he would follow on after him on Mount Seir. In this he lied, for as soon as Esau's back was turned, Jacob turned about-face and journeyed to Succoth, exactly the opposite direction from Mount Seir. There Dinah, his only daughter, in experiencing the city and some of the city's ways fell into sin. Poor Dinah! Like a moth flying about a lamp, so Dinah came to her moral and spiritual destruction. Avenging the honor of their sister, Jacob's sons killed all the males of the city. Truly this entire chapter which tells of Dinah's harlotry and the acts of her brothers is Godless. Now Jacob's life was in positive danger, for the nations round about, threatened to rise against Jacob and slay him and his entire family. So troubled was he that said to his sons, "Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land, among the Canaanites and the Perizzites: and I being few in number, they shall gather themselves together against me, and slay me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house" (Gen. 34:30).

It was then that God called Jacob back to Bethel. In fact, there was no place else for him to go. He had no desire to meet his father-in-law Laban; he wished to avoid his brother, Esau; and he was anxious to get away from the men of Shechem. Whither should he go? Poor Jacob! Man's extremities are God's opportunities. When there was no place else for him to go, God called upon him to go back to Bethel—the place where he had first come to know the Lord.

I

There were some reasons why Jacob went back to Bethel. First, his neglect was becoming serious in his own life. He had been absent from God's house for approximately 30 years. He had lived in an easy-going distance from Bethel for ten years, yet had not gone there one single time. Jacob had for 30 years violated the Scripture, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together" (Heb. 10:25). All of this absence from God's house was having a serious influence upon his own life. There is no individual who can stay away from the house of the Lord and be as spiritually minded as those who attend regularly the services and mingle with God's people. Since Jacob had not only absented himself from the house of the Lord, but further had lived in fellowship with his heathen, idolatrous father-in-law, his neglect was even more serious than ordinarily it would have been.

As a second reason why God told him to go back to Bethel, his family relations were becoming serious. Could we expect anything else? Since his neglect had become serious in his own life,

surely we can expect nothing else in the life of his family. Dinah, his only daughter had become a harlot; his own sons were growing up with quarrelsome dispositions; and there was trouble between his two wives. The entire family was following the example of the father.

Years ago in Chicago, in the days of the open saloon, one Sunday morning a father and his son out for a walk, stopped into a saloon and stepping up to the bar the father asked for a glass of whiskey. The bar-tender looked over at the lad and said, "And what will you have, my little men". "Please sir, I think I'll have some of what daddy has", was his reply. Realizing that his example was being followed, the father paused with the glass half way to his lips as if paralyzed. Immediately, he walked with the glass in his hand, and poured the whiskey into the second best place he could find—a large copper spittoon. (The first best place, might I say, would have been to pour it into the depths of Hell). Remembering his boy was following his example, they drank a lemonade together. May you remember that your family is following you.

Further, God told Jacob to go back to Bethel because Jacob was really in positive. He realized that the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the other nations round-about were going to rise up to slay him. In all the thirty years of his back-sliding and his separation from God, this was the first time that Jacob's life had been actually in danger.

II

It is rather interesting to see what Jacob, the man who had made such bold promises to God at Bethel 30 years ago before, had to do in order to return to Bethel. "Then Jacob said unto his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments" (Gen. 35:2). Thus we see that there were idols—strange gods in Jacob's home. Where had these come from? When Jacob fled from Laban, his beloved wife Rachel had stolen the image which had belonged to her father. Doubtlessly she was the only one who used these at first, but in the ten years that followed their flight from Laban until they were commanded of God to go back to Bethel, the use of these idols spread throughout the entire household. Jacob cannot go back to Bethel—the place where he first knew the Lord, with idols and false gods in his possession, for all evidence of sin had to be put away to return to Bethel, and ultimately to return to God. How true this is of every back-slidden Christian who may be listening to my message tonight. If you would come back to God, back to the place where you walked hand in hand with the Lord, you must put all evidence of sin away. How truly Cowper expresses this in one of his Olney hymns!

"Oh! for a closer walk with God,
A calm and heavenly frame;
A light to shine upon the road
That leads me to the Lamb!
Where is that blessedness I knew
When first I saw the Lord?
Where is the soul-refreshing view
Of Jesus and His Word?
What peaceful hours I once enjoyed!
How sweet their memory still!
But they have left an aching void
The world can never fill.
Return, O holy dove, return
Sweet messenger of rest!
I hate the sins that made thee mourn
And drove thee from my breast.
The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be,
Help me to tear it down from thy throne,
And worship only thee.
So shall my walk be close with God,
Calm and serene my frame;
So purer light shall mark the road
That leads me to the Lamb!"

III

I've often wondered what Jacob recalled of his first visit to Bethel, after having wasted thirty years of service which might have been given to God. I am sure that he must have remembered the condition of his heart when first he came to know the Lord. He had deceived and tricked his father; he had cheated and lied to his brother; and his heart was in open rebellion to God. Yes, his heart was filled with sin and was as black as the ace of spades (I use this expression, for I realize that many of my audience are familiar with the color thereof).

Then too, Jacob must have recalled the vision he had of God. Though he had back-slidden for thirty years, surely he had not forgotten the vision which had come to him prior to his experience with

(Continued on Page Six)

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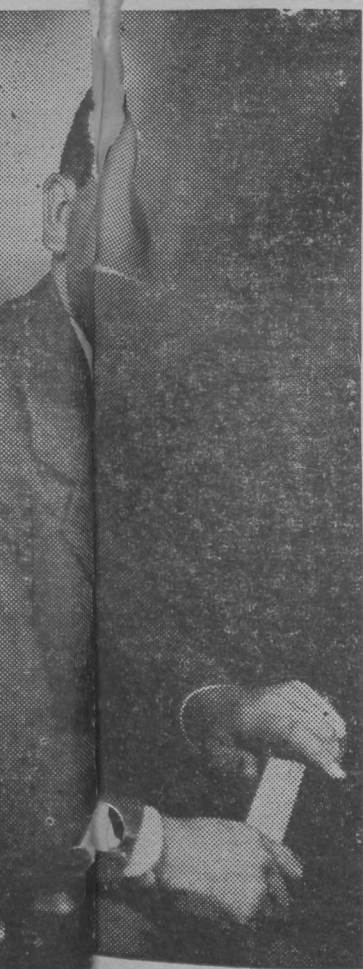
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"BACK TO BETHEL"

(Continued from Page Three)

God. Thirty years before he had doubtlessly thought of God as every unsaved man does, namely, that God was an angry tyrant ready to hurl him into Hell. However, God does not appear to him as a God of wrath but as a God of love, for had he not heard of God through the angels who had brought a message of peace to his troubled heart. Though he has wandered far in sin, surely he has never, and can never, forget the vision of God.

I am satisfied that Jacob remembered the vows that he had made. Do you not hear him as he promises and pledges himself: "Then shall the Lord be my God: and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee" (Gen. 28:21,22). "Then shall the Lord be my God". During the years God has not been his God. He has forgotten the house of God. There is no evidence that he remembered his promise to tithe. What pain it must have brought to his soul to come back to Bethel a second time; to remember that in that place he had pledged himself by certain vows to God but had failed completely in the keeping of them.

I wonder if perhaps I may be talking to some modern Jacob tonight who some years ago knew the Lord and walked in the light of His Book; who attended church services regularly; and who served God devotedly, but now coldly and indifferently, he absents himself from the house and the services of God. My dear brother, do you remember the condition of your heart when you first saw the Lord? Do you not remember the vision that came to you of God, and how you loved him because He had loved you? Do you not remember what you too vowed to Him, but which pledges you have failed to keep during the years? Oh, may I speak for God tonight and say to you, "Arise, go up to Bethel."

IV

We Americans are so industrialized and commercialized that we do not like to do anything without asking, "Does it pay?" Even in spiritual matters we apply the same dictum. So when we come to Jacob, we ask, "Did it pay him to go back to Bethel? Was there any compensation to going back?" Yes glorious compensation, for he received personal protection on the way from Shechem to Bethel. The nations that were rising up to kill Jacob did not pursue after him. "And they journeyed: and the terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob" (Gen. 35:5). Does not this remind us of Solomon's words? "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him" Prov. 16:7).

Then too, it paid Jacob to go back to Bethel for his return meant his renewal of the blessed experiences of the past. "And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padan-Aram, and blessed him" (Gen. 35:9). It was a blessed experience to Jacob before when God spoke to him and when he saw the angels ascending and descending upon the ladder. This blessed experience is now renewed for God appeared unto Jacob again, "And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came out of Padan-Aram and, blessed him" (Gen. 35:9).

At the Chicago Exposition several years ago, there was a freak who had no arms nor limbs, and yet who could write beautifully. He could put the stubs of his arms together with a pencil between them and produce the most beautiful writing that was possible to look upon. Great crowds gathered about him that he might write their names upon calling cards. Someone asked him if he didn't miss his arms and limbs terribly. His reply was that he did not miss them at all for he had never had them. So it is with one's experiences with God. If he has not known the Lord, he does not know what he has missed. However, for one to have actually known Him and to have been saved and to have had a blessed experience of fellowship with Him, he misses that experience when the fellowship is broken. For Jacob to go back to Bethel meant that he had a renewal of his blessed experience which he had had with God before.

It paid him likewise in that the promises which had been made to Abraham and Isaac were confirmed to him. "And God said unto him, I am God Almighty: so fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins; and the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac, to thee I will give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land" (Gen. 35:11, 12). Truly this should be compensation enough in that these great promises were re-confirmed to Jacob.

Yes, it paid Jacob to go back to Bethel for it meant preparation for sad dark hours that were coming. Just ahead of him was the death of Deborah, Rebekah's nurse. "But Deborah, Rebekah's nurse died, and she was buried beneath Bethel under an oak" (Gen. 35:8). Then came the death of his beloved Rachel—the wife he purchased with fourteen years of vigorous, laborious service. "And they journeyed from Bethel; and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath: and Rachel travailed, and she had hard labour. And

(Continued on Page Seven)

MEET OUR SUNDAY MORNING ANNOUNCER

(Continued from Page One)

land High School.

On Sunday morning William must deliver papers in Ashland, and sometimes other work keeps him out late on Saturday night, but, in spite of everything, he is always present at nine o'clock on Sunday morning to greet our radio audience and to introduce the program. Besides this, William is always ready to respond when called upon for any other service. Quite a few have complimented his radio work. And we congratulate him both on his voice and on his faithfulness.

One of William's greatest desires now is to find a good job. We predict that he will make good in any worthy undertaking he may enter.

L. D. GIBSON WRITES ON FAITH AND SALVATION

(Continued from Page One)

All men are endowed with natural life, but there is a door between the natural and the spiritual that cannot be opened from the manward side. Life in the believer is instantaneous and is the result of the impact of the Holy Spirit. One moment man is dead; the next moment he is alive.

Salvation is based on many great acts of redemption. And each one of these, rightly understood, has in it the nature of the whole work of redemption. The crucifixion, the resurrection, and the ascension look backward or forward to the other acts of redemption. But in a special sense this is true of the incarnation. The incarnation is the Bible test of truth and error. "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God. And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God" (1 John 4:2,3).

The incarnation demands the virgin birth of our Lord. And around this the battle, in all ages, between light and darkness has raged. Here is the boundary line between faith and infidelity. Deny the virgin birth, modify or explain it in the light of human reason, and the whole scheme of redemption fails; and neither atonement, nor intercession, nor judgment can retain one particle of virtue.

GROWTH OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

(Continued from Page One)

while during the last associational year the church gave \$2,365.00 to missions. Brother Gilpin's leadership and teaching have been used of God to bring about this growth, for which the church is humbly and deeply grateful to God.

Also under Brother Gilpin's leadership a school for preachers was established and conducted for six years. During these years a number of preachers received training from Brother Gilpin, and from Nelson Webb, W. T. Pelphrey, Ray-

mond Keith, Roy Hamilton, and the Acting Editor.

The church has C. W. Dickerson as its missionary to Brazil, other churches and various readers of this paper assisting with his support. The church also conducts two radio broadcasts on Sunday, at a cost of approximately one hundred dollars a month, this being shared by others also.

Brother Gilpin came to Russell as a young man of 24. He was born in Kentucky, attended school at Cumberland College, receiving his A. B. degree at Georgetown College. He also took some work at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

He is an able orator and evangelist. His preaching of the word from the pulpit and his leadership in general have been highly pleasing to his congregation. He is loved by both young and old. He has proved himself a faithful friend and an able spiritual leader. The members of the church thank God for sending him to them and pray that his health may so improve that he may remain with them indefinitely.

THE CHURCH OF GOD

Radio Sermon Preached by the Acting Editor on Sunday Morning, March 10th.

My subject this morning is "The Church of God", and my text consists of the following words from 1 Cor. 1:2 "The church of God which is at Corinth." The phrase "the church of God" occurs several other times in 1 Corinthians, and it occurs also in the following passages: Acts 20:28; 2 Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:13; 1 Tim. 3:5.

My reason, first of all, for speaking on this subject is to show the fallacy of those who affiliate with no denomination, and who, when asked what church they belong to, reply: "I belong to God's church." Such people are badly deceived about the exact nature of the church of God or "God's church, as they are pleased to call it.

Perhaps it is very appropriate that I speak upon this subject this morning, for, no doubt, my message will find at home most of the people that say they belong to "God's church" in distinction from anything represented under a denominational name. While others go to worship God and to join together in the extension of his kingdom, these professed mem-

(Continued on Page Seven)

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"BACK TO BETHEL"

(Continued from Page Six)

it came to pass, when she was in hard labour, that the midwife said unto her, Fear not; thou shalt have this son also. And it came to pass, as her soul was departing, (for she died) that she called his name Ben-oni: but his father called him Benjamin. And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem" (Gen. 35:16-19). Then the eldest son, Reuben, took his first step in immorality by committing adultery with Bilhah, who was his father's concubine. "And it came to pass, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah, his father's concubine: and Israel heard it" (Gen. 35:22). A little later Issac, Jacob's father, died, "And the days of Issac were an hundred and four-score years. And Issac gave up the ghost, and died, and was gathered unto his people, being old and full of days: and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him" (Gen. 35:28, 29). All these were sad dark hours in Jacob's life, but none of them could begin to compare with the worst which was yet before, Joseph's bloody coat. "And they took Joseph's coat and killed a kid of the goats, and dipped the coat in the blood; and they sent the coat of many colours, and they brought it to their father; and said, This have we found: know now whether it be thy son's coat or not. And he knew it and said, it is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces. And Jacob rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his loins, and mourned for his son many days. And all his sons and all his daughters rose up to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted; and he said, For I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning. Thus his father wept for him" (Gen. 37:31-35). As bad as these dark hours were in Jacob's life, there was a light that shown through each of them growing out of Jacob's second return to Bethel, renewing his experience and his consecration to God. Dark as they would have been much darker had he not been in fellowship with God. Sad as they were they would have been far more sad had it not been that Jacob had gone back to Bethel.

Doubtless there are many tonight listening to this message who, like Jacob, are wasting their lives. Perhaps the soul may be saved but they are out of fellowship with God. May God help you to go back to Bethel and renew your covenant vow with Him.

"He came to my desk with a quivering lip—

The lesson was done.

"Dear teacher, I want a new leaf; he said—

I have spoiled this one.

In place of the leaf so stained and blotted

I gave him a new one all unspotted.

And into his sad eyes smiled—

"Do better now, my child."

"I went to the Throne with a quivering soul—

The old year was done.

"Dear father, hast thou a new leaf for me?

I have spoiled this one.

He took the old leaf, stained and blotted,

And gave me a new one all unspotted,

And into my sad heart smiled—

Do better now, my child."

THE CHURCH OF GOD

(Continued from Page Six)

bers of "God's church" remain at home. They are not the people who are active in maintaining organized Christian influence and in supporting the preaching of the gospel. No; if it were left to them, the public worship of God would cease, the places of worship would close, and those in the darkness of heathenism would never hear the gospel. Thus their conduct itself shows that their claim is but a cloak for selfishness, their disregard of the word of God, their laziness, and their stinginess. Their idle profession affords them an easy way to escape work and responsibility.

To them a denomination, no matter what it may stand for, is a thing of evil, but they see no evil in their disobedience to the word of God.

Then my second reason for discussing this subject is that we may note the distinction between the true church of God and every human counterfeit. The first class I have referred to, those who say

they are members of "God's church" in distinction from anything represented by a denominational name, are not in the church of God. And at the same time there are multitudes who wear a denominational name that are also outside the church of God.

Now that both classes may realize their true status, I give the following Bible marks of the church of God.

First, the church of God is a local body of saved people. Such was the church at Corinth, which our text speaks of as "the church of God." Such was the church at Ephesus that Paul referred to as "the church of God" in Acts 20:28. Such was the church at Jerusalem, which is referred to in Gal. 1:13, where Paul says: "I persecuted the church of God." And again 1 Tim. 3:5 refers to the church at Ephesus as "the church of God."

The word for church in the original Greek of the New Testament means an assembly and no-

thing else. Throughout all the history of the Greek language it has never had any other meaning. Among the Greeks a common and instructive use of this word was in the case of its application to the citizens of a Greek city when gathered together for the transaction of business. We have such a use of the word in Acts 19:39, where the town clerk of Ephesus warned the mob that beset Paul and his companions that everything should be determined in, a "lawful assembly." The word for assembly here is the word translated church elsewhere.

The word was never applied to the Jews, except when they were assembled. We have such an application of the word to the Jews in Acts 7:38, where we have reference to "the church in the wilderness." As the Jews journeyed through the wilderness in a body, they constituted an assembly, or church, in the broad sense of that term, but, when they had reached the promised land, the Greek word for church or its Hebrew equivalent was never applied to them as they dwelt in their homes, but only when they gathered for their feasts.

There is no ground either in God's word or out of it for believing that the church of God is a universal thing, composed of all the saved on earth. Since all the saved on earth do not and cannot assemble now, they do not and cannot now constitute a church.

God never has had, he does not have now, and he never will have a church other than an assembly. When the saved are lifted off this earth at the return of Christ in the air for them, they will constitute the heavenly church, but they will be assembled.

The universal church theory is one of the most hurtful and destructive of all false teachings. It minimizes the true church of God. Those who adhere to this theory invariably think little of the local church, the only kind God owns. To them the local church occupies about the same relation to the so-called universal church that the side show occupies to the main circus—just a sort of makeshift affair for temporary entertainment.

Let me say to you, my friends,

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if you are not a member of a local church, it is certain that you are not in the church of God. Don't fool yourself any longer with the vain plea that you are a member of God's church when you are actually a member of nothing that resembles a church.

Do not understand me to say that all that is necessary for you to do in order to belong to the church of God is to affiliate with some denomination. You may affiliate with a denomination and still not be in the church of God, for I give you as my second mark of the church of God that it has Jesus Christ alone as its founder. Any church founded by any other person is not the church of God.

After Jesus founded his church, he said: "I will build my church and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it" (Matt 16:18 as it is in the Revised Version). By these words he meant that he would build his church perpetually by constantly adding to it such as should be saved, thus preserving it and keeping hades, the realm of the dead, from swallowing it up. This is a guarantee that the church would not die, but would live on this earth until Christ comes back and glorifies it and thus presents it to himself without spot or wrinkle. Hence there has been no place for the starting of a new kind of church by any man. The church Christ founded has been in the world, in keeping with his promise that it should not die, from the day he founded it until the present.

The church of God thus had no human founder, nor does it have origin this side of the earthly ministry of Christ. A type of church, therefore, that has not existed in every age of the Christian era, but that has its origin this side of the New Testament. (Continued on Page Eight)

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THE CHURCH OF GOD

(Continued from Page Seven)
ment, is not the church of God.

In the third place, I point out that the church of God conforms to the pattern of the New Testament. God gave Noah a pattern for the Ark and went so far as to specify the kind of wood it was to be made of. God gave Moses a pattern for the tabernacle, and "see, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed thee in the mount." Surely we are not to suppose that the God who gave a pattern for the ark and one for the tabernacle has left us without a pattern for the church, which is the body of Christ, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.

Christ did not found a number of antagonistic institutions. God is not the author of confusion. As we read the New Testament we find that all the churches mentioned there, so far as they are described in detail, are substantially the same. In these we have the divine pattern for the church of God.

Let us note, then, these characteristics as furnishing us God's pattern.

The first characteristic I point out is that New Testament churches were composed of people who had voluntarily professed faith in Christ as their savior. New Testament churches did not receive people simply because they wanted to be saved. They had to profess they were already saved before being admitted. There is never the slightest indication of the reception of any that did not profess faith.

That means that New Testament churches did not receive infants. Infant church membership is wholly foreign to the New Testament and is a violent departure from the divine pattern. Church membership cannot do infants any good. Rather it is likely to do great harm in persuading them that they are already saved when they reach the age of accountability.

But let me not fail to point out also that although members of New Testament churches professed to be saved, they did not profess to be sinless in their conduct. Not one such profession is found in the New Testament. On the other hand we find positive teaching to the contrary. The Corinthian Christians, for instance, are addressed in the first epistle, first chapter, and first verse as being sanctified, and yet in the third chapter Paul says they are carnal and walk as men. And we are told by John in his first epistle, the first chapter, and eighth and tenth verses that those who profess sinless perfection are deceived and have not the truth in them. John teaches that the saved will not and cannot live under the power of sin, cannot sin as the law of their lives, but John also teaches that the saved are not to suppose that they ever reach the point in his life where they are absolutely perfect and do not commit a sin.

The second characteristic of New Testament churches to claim our attention is that members were received through baptism, which is immersion in water. I need not argue the fact that New Testament baptism was immersion. This is admitted. The thing that needs emphasis here is that men have not the right to change what God has ordained.

In the third place we need to see that New Testament churches were democratic or congregational in government. New Testament churches were not ruled by the preachers, nor were they bossed by some outside authority. The churches ruled themselves. We have a number of excellent instances of democratic government in the churches in the New Testament. When the first deacons were to be chosen we are told in the sixth chapter of Acts that the Apostles committed the matter to the people. They called the whole multitude together and laid before them the need of deacons, and we are told that the saying "pleased the whole multitude, and they chose" the seven men that are named.

Then when need of discipline arose in the church at Corinth, Paul wrote to the church as a body about it, as we have it recorded in 1 Cor. 5. The man mentioned in this chapter was excluded. Then he repented and Paul writes of him again in 2 Cor. 2:6, urging the church to restore him to fellowship, saying: "Sufficient unto such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many." The Greek word here for many, means the greater part, or majority. Thus it is said that the exclusion of this man was inflicted by the majority. That is democracy. The action was not by a few officials, but by the majority action of the church.

This shows that membership in the church is subject to the will of the church. And in further harmony with this, Paul wrote to the church at Rome about their receiving the weak in the faith, saying: "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations". Rom. 14:1.) New Testament churches received members. And they did not receive them until they were convinced of the reality of their profession. For instance, in Acts 9:26 we are told that when Paul came to Jerusalem soon after his conversion, "he assayed to join himself to the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple." Then, after Barnabas recommended him, they admitted him to their fellowship.

Yes, New Testament believers joined churches. They did not consider themselves as having been taken into them in infancy nor as having been born into them by regeneration. They joined them. And it was by leading them to do this that God added to the church such as were saved.

The next characteristic of New Testament churches I call your attention to is that they practiced close communion. They demanded

faith and baptism as prerequisites of the Lord's supper, and that constitutes what is called close communion today. See the order in Acts 2:41, 42.

Paul wrote to the church at Corinth that it was impossible for them to eat the Lord's supper because of divisions that existed among them. Read 1 Cor. 11:19, 20 in the Revised Version.

Inasmuch as open communion involves divisions among those who propose to eat the Lord's supper, and inasmuch as it is impossible to eat it where divisions exist, it follows necessarily that the Lord's supper has never been observed by open communion. Therefore it is either close communion or no communion.

Jesus Christ himself instituted close communion. When he established the supper he had only the eleven apostles present, or in other words he had only his church present. His mother was not there. That man in whose house the supper was observed was not even invited. Others of his professed disciples in Jerusalem were not there. He gave it to the apostles only, for none others at that time were in the church. The apostles were the foundation, and it was needful to properly develop them before others were brought in.

Thus the Lord's supper was instituted, not as a mere Christian ordinance, nor even as a denominational ordinance, but as a local church ordinance to be partaken of by none except members of the church observing it. And Paul says that when the one body partakes of the one loaf they manifest their unity. See 1 Cor. 10:17. This is the closest of close communion. Let me repeat again that the Bible knows nothing of open communion and the Lord's supper has never been observed by open communion, for the presence of divisions make it impossible to eat the Lord's supper.

The next characteristic to engage our attention is that New Testament churches were taught the principle of a paid ministry. Because of the covetousness of the people and the charges of his enemies, Paul sometimes supported himself, but he accepted such support as the people offered voluntarily. And he was unsparing in faithfully teaching the churches to support the ministry.

In Cor. 1. 9, Paul uses seven mighty arguments to prove his right to a living from the preaching of the gospel. He argues from the example of other apostles, from the fact that one who plants

a vineyard eats of the fruit of it, from the fact that the one who feeds a flock partakes of the milk of the flock, from the command of Moses not to muzzle the ox that treads out the corn, from the fact that a sowing of spiritual things merits a harvest of carnal things, and from the fact the priests in the temple lived of the things of the temple. And Paul's great classic statement on this matter is: "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel" (1 Cor. 9:14).

The ministry deserves and demands all of one's time. No man can pursue it properly if he must devote the most of his time to secular work.

The last characteristic of New Testament churches that I bring to your attention is that they taught salvation by grace through faith. New Testament churches were clear in teaching that salvation is an absolute gift without works. They taught that salvation comes only to the man that will not work in order to obtain it. "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Rom. 4:5). "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Rom. 3:28).

And salvation by grace means eternal salvation, for salvation by grace makes salvation dependent upon God from beginning to end. There can be no mixture of works with grace. It is all of grace or it is none of grace. (Rom. 11:6). If you are not saved this morning, I urge you to receive Christ now as your savior.

"Lord, thy church is still thy dwelling,
Still is precious in thy sight;
Judah's temples far excelling,
Beaming with the gospel light.
"On the Rock of Ages founded,
Who can shake her sure repose;
With salvation's walls surrounded,
She can smile at all her foes."

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