

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).

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Bible Church Government

By R. J. ANDERSON
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There is a great amount of confusion on the subject. We might say there are only three forms of church government, namely: the Autocratic, Representative, and Democratic. The Autocratic is where few people in high position control the affairs of a group of churches. Occasionally someone in a local church, a pastor, a deacon, or someone else, gains such control of the church he becomes a real dictator of its affairs.

There is also the Representative form of church government where churches elect delegates to these delegates in turn set up boards, committees, etc., which act for the churches. Certainly they are supposed to operate according to recognized adopted by-laws, but they are usually in a position to interpret these by-laws in such a way as to give themselves much power over the churches they are supposed to represent. It is true that we sometimes find individual churches guilty of investing broad power in in-

dividuals, committee or officers within their own membership and these individuals or groups manage and control most of the activities of the church.

There is also the Democratic form of church government where the local church controls all of its own affairs without any interference from outside groups or individuals. Every individual member of the church has an equal voice in all the affairs of the church. We Baptists say a great deal about our independence and democracy, but in many instances that is far from true. It is surprising how many Baptist churches have presumed that they have the right to redelegate the authority God has delegated to local churches. Acting on that presumption they appoint boards, committees, etc., with broad powers both in churches and by messenger bodies.

We might add this statement, in some instances there might be a combination of several forms of government in a church or practiced by a group of churches in cooperative work. Some might call that a different form of government, but we consider it just a mixture of those already mentioned.

We use the term "Local Church," for convenience sake, but we want to make it clear that we are absolutely certain that there is not, never was, and never can be any other kind of a church.

There are also three departments of government. First, the Legislative or that department that makes the laws. Second, the Judicial, or the department that bears the case and sees that the law is rightly applied to the case at hand. Third, there is the Executive department which is to see that the sentences and verdicts of the law are enforced. Sometimes in dictator or autocratic forms of government, all three branches of government are controlled by one or at most a few individuals, who make the laws, judge every case, and proceed to enforce the sentence. It is a sad truth, but we must face the fact that even in church government (yes, in some churches that call themselves Baptist) there is too much dictatorship.

To stimulate thought let us ask a few simple questions. Did God establish many forms of church government? Would God establish conflicting forms of church government? Did

God fail to establish any form of church government? Would an all-wise God establish a church and give no idea how it was to be governed? Did God just leave it to human wisdom to set up any form of government that man saw fit to devise to govern the church which Christ purchased with His own blood? Isn't the One who founded the church, builds the church, adds to the church, loves the church, meets in every church meeting, walks among the churches and who will one day take the church to be with Him in glory, the proper one to make its governing laws? If God has told us how the church is to be governed, isn't it a dangerous thing for man to tamper with God's government?

Israel was not satisfied with the government God provided for them. They cried out for a king. God warned them they were making a mistake, but still they wanted another form of government, so God permitted them to have kings, but it certainly proved a fatal mistake on their part.

God may permit churches to go on for a long time even though they choose their own form of government rather than

following the government He gave them, but it certainly is a shameful and fatal error for them also. God demonstrated His wrath against those who were dissatisfied with His method of government and attempted to set up one of their own making in Number 16:1-35. It certainly takes a tremendous amount of presumption on the part of anyone to think he can improve on God's plan.

Many church by-laws prove the church is an outlaw to God's laws. In most instances these by-laws are written by some preacher, often so written as to place great power in his own hands and a trusting, unsuspecting church is inveigled into adopting them. We know that churches and individuals who refuse to submit to man-made rules and by-laws are termed outlaws by those who seem to think they have a right to do things contrary to God's laws. One should be happy to be considered an outlaw if it means you put God's law above man-made laws. Daniel and the three Hebrew children were that type of outlaws. Peter and John were that type of outlaws, Acts 4:18-

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Here Are Some Tips For Sermon Tasters When They Choose To Go To God's House

KENNETH J. FOREMAN
From "The Reaper"

There are various ways of listening to a sermon, not all of them good.

Don't be a criticizing listener. Don't listen with the English teacher's ear, alert to all the mistakes, errors of grammar, awkward gestures, slips of the tongue, poor illustrations, a clumsy tongue or errors of fact.

Don't be a heresy hound. The preacher is a very good person if you are a very good person and of the preacher and if he takes your suggestions seriously, then he will be grateful when you call his attention to his mistakes and unload them at the family dinner table.

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ALL FOR A PENNY
A lady was filling a mission-box for India when a child brought her a penny. With it she bought a tract to put in the box. The tract was at length given to a Burmese chief, and he told the story of his Saviour, and his own great happiness, to his friends. They also believed and cast away their idols. A church was built in that place, a

Don't be a sermon-fitter, looking the congregation over in your mind to see the person for whom it must have been meant. Maybe it was meant for you. A seller of hats may say when a new shipment comes in, "That would look darling on Mrs. X," but a listener to sermons has no business trying to match them with different people. If the sermon does not fit you, don't try to fit it to someone else.

Don't be a sermon-taster, a

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NO BIBLE

A noted psychologist says that when a girl arrives at college today, with her array of suitcases and trunks, they contain more clothing and paraphernalia than were needed by a family with ten children when they came over on the Mayflower.

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MUSED UNCLE MOSE

Hezekiah Jones been turned out uv de chu'ch an' confessed back so many times dat dey got de record mixed up, 'and' don' know whedder he in or out.

Real Assurance And Security Belong To The One Who Has Trusted Jesus Christ

ROY MASON, Tampa, Fla.

Preliminary. It is one thing to be saved, it is another thing to have assurance of salvation, and it is yet another thing to have FULL assurance of salvation. One needs to be saved, and then needs to be so settled on the question that they ARE saved that they will never doubt it.

THE ERRORS OF SOME
Some entirely wrong views

are held which either do one of two things: Cause the unsaved to THINK that they are saved when they are NOT, or else trouble and make miserable the SAVED, when they are really saved. Note some of the false notions:

The notion that if one is not afraid to die, they are all right. This is utterly delusive, for it means little or nothing as proving anything. Some people are not afraid to go up in an airplane, but that doesn't render the plane safe. Some haven't been afraid to try to cross the ocean in an airplane but made their grave in the water just the same.

The notion that because they "felt happy" they were assuredly saved at a certain time. Such may or may not be true. Feelings are not a true barometer of the truth. If so, why would not the Word of God tell us just how we must feel in order to be saved.

The notion held by some that

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EDDIE'S PRAYER

Little Eddie was almost finished with his night prayers. "Bless my mama, bless my papa, bless Aunt Kate, and please make St. Louis the capital of Missouri."

"Why darling," exclaimed his mother, "why did you say such a thing?"

"Because," answered Eddie, snuggling down under his blanket, "that's what I put on my examination paper."

-- The First Baptist Pulpit --

"THE HEARING EAR"

L. F. GILL
Mansfield, Louisiana

During this age there is a mixture of true and false. There are many "born again" Christians and there are also many who profess to be Christians but are not. Many of these professing Christians are honest, sincere, upright folks but lost because they have not been born again. Is there any way by which we can know the one from the other? Does God give any MARK by which we can tell the genuine saved one from the one who is only a professor?

To these questions we answer yes. God reveals in His Word a sure MARK by which His sheep can be known from others. WORKS are not the MARK

for salvation is by grace (Eph. 2:8-9) and entirely apart from works (Rom. 4:5; Titus 3:5-7).

Jesus said, "By their fruits ye shall know them." But FRUITS are not the MARK for Jesus spoke these words (Matt. 7:15-20) concerning false prophets and not concerning His sheep—rightly divide the Word.

The HEARING EAR is the God given MARK of a Christian or sheep. Men mark the ears of animals and God marks the EAR of all His sheep. Every Christian possesses the God given ABILITY and WILLINGNESS to hear and receive the Word of God which is the Word of TRUTH (Eph. 1:13).

THE HEARING EAR IS THE MARK OF A CHRISTIAN BECAUSE WE ARE SAVED ONLY

BY HEARING AND BELIEVING THE WORD OF GOD.

Sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth—"Thy Word is truth (Jno. 17:17)—must precede salvation.

"But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth (II Thes. 2:13). This verse is clear to the hearing ear. How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard." "So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God" (Rom. 10:14, 17). The "Word of truth" is the gospel of salvation which must be heard

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CHURCH GOVERNMENT

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20. Those who Diotrephes cast out of the church, III John 9 and 10, were that type of outlaws.

As we study the Scripture on this subject, we trust we shall clearly see what kind of government God gave to the churches, Autocratic, Representative or Democratic. We also expect to discover what phases of government God delegated to the church. We are sure God alone holds the legislative power in the church. He alone made and declared the laws under which the church is to operate. We believe the Scripture clearly teaches that He delegated the church the power and responsibility to carry on the judicial and executive branches of His government in relation to church life.

After Jesus Christ had founded the church He went back to Glory to be our great interceding High Priest, I John 2:1; Romans 8:34. But before going He told them He would send the Holy Spirit to be the Administrator of church affairs and He commanded them not to proceed in church work until the Holy Spirit actually took charge, Acts 1:4-5.

We would like to say much about the Holy Spirit and His ministry, but for the present purposes we must be content to state a few brief facts in regard to His position as Administrator of church affairs:

1. He gives power in testimony, Acts 1:8.
2. He gives boldness in testimony, Acts 4:31.
3. He selects missionaries, Acts 13:1-4.
4. He selects pastors, Acts 20:28.
5. He directs the affairs of churches, Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 36:6, 13 and 22.
6. The chief instrument through which He works is the Word of God, Ephesians 6:17; II Tim. 3:14-17.

It is interesting to note, in studying the administrative work of the Holy Spirit in directing church affairs, that He always directs in a way that honors Christ, His church, and the Word of God. Primarily we want to consider the part the church has in its own government. We agree that the Holy Spirit is the Administrator. We

also insist that the Bible is God's infallible revelation to His church on the plan of church government. The same as it is on all other subjects with which it deals.

If there be those who take issue with us on this subject, we would like for them to inform us where the following things can be found in the Scriptures:

1. Where can we find that the church has a Divine right to make its own laws or in other words to function in the legislative realm?

2. Where can we find any organization of any kind over and above a local church that has any Scriptural authority over the local churches or even any Scriptural authority for its existence?

3. Where in God's Word is there an endorsement of Autocratic or Representative form of church government, either by those in the membership or outside the membership of a local church?

We do not believe a verse of Scripture can be found to justify any one of these things, therefore, we believe they are not in accord with God's will. Let those, who insist they are right, defend them, but let them make sure that their defense is more than human arguments. We want Scriptural proof.

Let us consider now the positive side of this question. What does God's Word say about church government? First, let us note that the offices God has established in the church. There was the Apostolic office which ceased when the last Apostle had died. They had no successor, but we do have two offices that are to continue throughout the church age, therefore, the Scripture tells us the exact qualifications that are required of those who fill these offices, I Tim. 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9. If the Word of God recognizes more than the two offices, isn't it strikingly strange that the requirements for these two offices are so fully given, yet no where in the New Testament do we find any requirements given for any other office? The answer is simple. There are no other offices.

If there be a question as to the use of the words, bishop and elder, we will find they refer to

the same office, and the word overseer used in Acts 20:28, has the same meaning. You will notice Titus used the words interchangeably. No doubt, elder is the title of the one who fills the office, bishop or overseer, describing the work he does. This office is identical with what is commonly called pastor today. The other office mentioned is deacon.

God knew there would be a disposition on the part of some elders to become overlords, so He gave a warning against that in I Peter 5:1-4. If there be those who appeal to Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24 to prove that the church is to follow unquestionably what the elder says, we reply that verse 7 refers entirely to former leaders, who have already gone to their reward. We agree verses 17 and 24 referred to their present leaders. The only way they could have been obedient to both their past and present leaders could have been in complete agreement and that was for them to both have been guided by the same rule and no doubt they were all guided by God given instructions, namely: His Word.

But what does it mean to rule? We think Christ gave the clearest possible teaching on this subject in Mark 10:42,45. He certainly warned against rulers abusing their position. To rule means to see that the laws are enforced and the overseer, elder or bishop, which ever you want to call him, is simply to see that the church of God is governed by the laws God has given for it.

If a civil ruler tries to force people to do things contrary to the law, we all agree, he should be punished and dismissed from office. If one entrusted to rule among God's people as an elder, leads the church contrary to God's law and endeavors to bring rules and by-laws into the church of God, that either adds to or takes from Divine established laws, that man has made himself a subject for church discipline and the church should deal with him more severely than any other member of the church. Sometimes a deacon or a group of deacons want to be overlords in the church and sometimes the deacons and the pastor form themselves into a group and try to be overlords.

Many times they succeed, but the stern fact remains that God hates such conduct, III John 9:10 and Revelation 2:6.

Let us now turn to Matthew 16:18-19 and see church government in action. We see God gave the church great powers in the judicial and executive realm. It has absolute authority to receive and dismiss members. Some may differ with us on this being the right interpretation of these verses, but we believe that is their meaning, but we will find other verses that clearly give this power to the church as we continue our study.

Next, let us note Matthew 18:15-19. Here the church is dealing with trouble between its members. First, note the absence of a discipline committee. If God had wanted a discipline committee there would surely be one mentioned here. That is another man made office. It is to be told to the entire church and the action is final. If there was an institution over and above local churches, surely the one not satisfied with the church decision could appeal to the higher order, but no such appeal can be taken because there is no higher authority to carry out God's laws than a local church.

Let us note next that God placed the ordinances and mission of evangelizing the world in the church, Matthew 26:26-29; I Cor. 11:2-34; Matthew 28:19-20.

In Acts 1:15-20 we see the church conducting an election. Though all eleven apostles were there, they claimed no special privilege. Every one present had an equal chance to vote. There was not even a nominating committee.

Again in Acts 6:1-7 we see the election of what may have been the first church deacons. However, the Scriptures nowhere call them deacons, but the point we want to note is how they were selected. You will note the apostle only told them the qualifications these men should have. They claimed no special power to act for the church. They did not even so much as suggest anyone for the office. Verse 5 tells us the multitude did the choosing.

Acts 13:1-4 tells of the selection of the first missionaries. The Holy Spirit called them by having the church send them to the work. It is certainly worth nothing that the Holy Spirit used the church to work thru when He sent out missionaries. There is no board, no council, or group of self-appointed men or a group the church had re-delegated their God given authority to, who took over the missionary affair of the church. If the Holy Spirit worked thru the church, I am sure He was right. Therefore we are forced to the conclusion that the local church is the only institution in the world that has the right under God to send out missionaries.

Acts 14:23 does sound as though Paul and Barnabas might have selected elders for these new churches they had organized, but a careful study of the verse will show the very opposite to be true. The marginal note in Scofield Bible reads, "To designate by stretching out (or pointing with) the hand." Young's Concordance says, "To elect by stretching out the hand." So we find what was really done was to vote by a show of hands. Then those selected by the church were prayerfully set forth to the task by Paul and Barnabas. It is indeed a remarkable proof of

the fact that these men of God really believed in the independence and democracy of each individual church, for even after they had gone into these various places, led these people to the Lord and organized them into churches they still recognized these churches as being capable under the leadership of the Holy Spirit of selecting their own elders. Surely they were in a position to influence these churches into letting them select elders for them, if they had been so unfair as to want to control the affairs of these churches.

I Cor. 5:1-7 speaks of a man in the church at Corinth, who was living such a vile life he should be excluded from church membership. Paul had also organized this church and he tells them the wrong and danger of retaining such a member in their fellowship, yet he does not attempt to exercise authority over the church. He knows that the only way anyone can be Scripturally excluded from church membership is by a vote of the church. The church alone has the power and it also has the duty of purging out those who are a reproach to the cause of Christ.

Some think that II Cor. 2:5-8 might refer to the same character found in I Cor. 5:1-7, after the church had excluded him from its fellowship and he repented. We do not say it is the same man, but we do know it is someone who had been excluded and had repented. Again we see Paul only tells the church what God would have them to do. He does not attempt to override the church's authority. Verse 6 tells us this punishment was, "inflicted of many." The expression, "of many" means by the majority vote.

Need we give more examples to show that the Scriptural form of church government is democracy? Do not these Scriptures prove that these very missionaries, who organized the churches, recognized them as complete democracies with themselves and respecting the fact refrained from trying to run their affairs?

If God made each individual church the custodian of the ordinances and the commission to teach and evangelize, if God gave each church the power to receive and exclude members, the power to discipline members, the power to send out missionaries, the power to elect its own officers (both elders and deacons), free from outside interferences, He surely did not believe we need conventions, councils, conferences, and synods, etc., to direct the affairs of the churches. In as

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THE HEARING EAR

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and believed before salvation (Eph. 1:13).

The Word of God is the SEED (Luke 8:11) by which we are begotten. "Of his OWN WILL begat He us with the Word of truth" (James 1:18). "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by THE WORD OF GOD, which liveth and abideth forever (I Pete 1:23). The new birth is the result of the Holy Spirit. Without receiving the Word, there is no new birth. These Scriptures are conclusive. The hearing ear is essential to salvation for without it none would be saved. Those who do not have the hearing ear for God's Word are not saved. This

GIVE US THIS DAY



OUR DAILY BREAD

AUGUST 30, 1947



THE HEARING EAR

(Continued from page two)
God's MARK.

THE HEARING EAR IS THE MARK OF A CHRISTIAN BECAUSE IT IS THE SCRIPTURAL MARK OF SALVATION.

As you study God's Word you will find that the HEARING EAR is the one mark of salvation given. God tells us of folks who believed His Word and were saved. Remember, it is the WORD we believe to be saved. Then they that GLADLY RECEIVED HIS WORD were baptized" (Acts 2:41). The Christians at Ephesus heard the Word, BELIEVED it and were saved with the Holy Spirit (Eph. 1:13). Believing the Word was the evidence. The Corinthians hearing believed and were baptized" (Acts 18:8). In Acts 10:44 God did not say the Spirit came on all who were saved, but "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them WHICH HEARD THE WORD." The hearing ear was the EVIDENCE. Study Eph. 4:20-24. The hearing ear is the one evidence Paul named. If these saints had HEARD then they would put on the new man, etc.

People talk a lot about "experiences" but the experience of the early Christians was to hear and believe God's Word and KNOW salvation was his because he did believe the Word. The same is still true.

One will say, "Oh, I know I'm saved because I believe in Christ." Let us examine that statement. To believe in Christ is to believe He is the Christ of God's Word. Every verse in the Bible—every doctrine—every thing in the Bible relates to Christ (Note Jno. 5:39; Rom. 1:4). A man may believe in a Christ of his own fancy and not believe God's Word—and I mean ALL OF IT—for it all relates to Christ. Bible faith in Christ involves belief of the Word of God but he has no hearing ear. When he reads the Word—when it is clearly presented to him—he gladly receives it because it is the Word of God (I Thess. 2:13). When a man openly rejects the Word—any plain, clearly presented statement of God's Word he proves he does not have a HEARING EAR. Therefore he has no BIBLE EVIDENCE of salvation. With God's Word as my authority I question the professed salvation of any one who rejects even one sentence of God's Word

23).

God did raise up that Prophet—the Lord Jesus Christ. God plainly tells us that "EVERY SOUL"—that covers ALL—that will not hear Him in "All things whatsoever He saith" shall be destroyed.

Speaking of His SHEEP that Prophet said, "I give unto them eternal life; and they SHALL NEVER PERISH." I ask, what will become of the man who refuses to HEAR Christ and denies the eternal security of believers? That same Prophet said, "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you." Again I ask, what will happen to the one who denies God's election? No wonder Jesus said, "Take HEED therefore how ye HEAR."

Those who will not hear God's words will be judged by them. "And if any man hear My words, AND BELIEVE NOT, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth Me, and RECEIVETH NOT MY WORD, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, THE SAME SHALL JUDGE HIM IN THE LAST DAY" (Jno. 12:47-48).

One may boast of what he believes and does not believe. He may reject what his carnal mind (Rom. 8:7) does not like. But every word he rejects will meet him at the judgment. Let him reject Jn. 10:26-29, or Jn. 6:37-44, etc. But these very words will condemn him at the judgment. He will stand condemned because he refused to HEAR the words of truth from the lips of the living God—indeed a great sin. Those who do not have hearing ears will not believe it but God says the man who will not hear the Word will be destroyed. Men boast of what they believe but no man has any right to believe anything except what God has written. The man who does not believe what God has written will be judged by the words he rejects.

THE HEARING EAR IS THE MARK OF A CHRISTIAN BECAUSE IT IS THE GOD GIVEN MARK OF HIS SHEEP.

Our Lord plainly tells us that His SHEEP do HEAR. "But He that entereth in by the door is the Shepherd of the sheep. To Him the porter openeth; and the SHEEP HEAR HIS VOICE: and He calleth his OWN SHEEP by name, and leadeth them out. And when He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them, and the SHEEP FOLLOW HIM: FOR THEY KNOW HIS VOICE. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers." (Jno. 10:2-5).

Our Lord plainly tells us His SHEEP hear and know His voice. God's sheep have hearing ears for the Shepherd's voice—His Word. "But ye BELIEVE NOT, because ye are not of My sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep HEAR my voice, and I know them, and they follow me." In these words (Jno. 26-27) Jesus makes it very clear that all His SHEEP have hearing ears and the others do not. Remember, I am writing this for the benefit of those who have hearing ears. Those who do not have will not believe GOD'S WORD when I quote it to them. They are deaf when God speaks.

"HE THAT IS OF GOD HEARETH GOD'S WORDS: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are NOT OF GOD" (John 8:47).

These words of God are plain. This verse tells its own story. Those who are OF GOD gladly hear it and thank God they are of Him and can HEAR. Those who are not of God reject the verse, of course—no EAR. Reader, these verses will let you know whether you are saved or not. If you do not have a hearing ear for God's plain Word regardless of what it is, then you are not saved—those who are of God HEAR. But, without a hearing ear you won't believe the TRUTH any way.

Yes, the HEARING EAR is the MARK of God's SHEEP. They have hearing ears BEFORE and AFTER salvation. They must hear in order to be saved. The Word draws the sheep and drives the others away.

The hearing ear is a gift of God to His sheep. It is a certain fact all people do not possess the gift of a hearing ear. "Who hath EARS TO HEAR, let him hear" (Matt. 13:9, 43, Note Vs. 9-16). As Jesus spoke the words of God (Jno. 12:49-50) those who had hearing ears received His words and those who did not have ears to hear rejected them. The hearing ear being God's gift, then all praise to Him. "He that HATH AN EAR, let him HEAR what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22). The Holy Spirit does SPEAK but he speaks WORDS (Acts 8:29; 13:2). He may speak by the mouth of a man (Acts 1:16). But ALWAYS the Spirit speaks the WORDS OF GOD. Only the man with the hearing ear can hear what the Spirit saith. Now study I Cor. 2:13-14). One of the troubles in our churches of today is too many "members" who do not have ears to hear. They have no ear for His Word, they cannot hear what the Spirit says to the churches and cannot discern spiritual things.

Some one may object to all of this by saying, "Well, I believe all I understand but I do not understand it all." God did not tell you to understand His Word but to believe it. I do not UNDERSTAND Gen. 1:1 but I BELIEVE it with all my heart because GOD SAID IT. I do not understand how the sun stood still at Joshua's command (Jos. 10:12-13) but I do believe it just as God said it. I do not understand how the sun's heat will be increased until men are scorched (Rev. 16:8-9) but with all my heart I BELIEVE it because it is the WORD OF GOD—it is truth. Pray tell me where is the man who UNDERSTANDS John 3:16. It is one thing to have a hearing ear—to believe God's Word—and quite another to understand it. It is a certain fact that we never UNDERSTAND the Word till we first BELIEVE it. "By FAITH we understand" (Heb. 11:3). Not understanding the Word is no EXCUSE for not believing it. Only those with hearing ears will ever UNDERSTAND God's Word. The Holy Spirit is the Teacher (Jno. 14:26; 16:13) and only those who have EARS can HEAR what the Spirit says (Rev. 2:7). We must be a writer's EQUAL to understand all he writes. I would have to be the equal of God to understand all He has written. But by faith I can receive all of His Word—believe it because God has said it—though I do not understand it.

God's sheep may be ignorant of God's Word. They may not even know that God has said certain things. But when they

read His words or hear His words read or preached they gladly HEAR them for they have hearing ears. Their hearts are open and receptive to every sentence of God's Word. I know a pracher who through false teaching and ignorance of the Word rejected the eternal security of the believer in his early Christian life. But when he began studying the Bible and found this blessed truth in God's Word he gladly accepted it. He had a HEARING EAR for the Word of God. GOD has many ignorant sheep but they ALL have hearing ears for His Word.

May I give you my own experience? In my early Christian life—because I did not know the Word—I professed to be a Post Millennialist. Later when I began to study my Bible and found this precious truth of His Pre-Millennial coming so clearly revealed I cast aside all my former views and gladly received the truth of His Word. There was a time when I did not fully accept unconditional election because I had not studied the Word on this subject. When I did study God's Word and found this precious doctrine so CLEARLY revealed I gladly accepted it as the TRUTH of God. I frankly tell you that the sweetest assurance of salvation I have is the fact that I have a hearing ear for the precious Word of God—ALL of it.

God's sheep may be ignorant of His Word. They may need to study and be taught—God calls teachers to feed His sheep—but always remember that the SURE MARK of a sheep is a HEARING EAR. God's people not only love His Word and hear it gladly but they also KNOW the TRUTH when it is presented. All of this is the results of the divine enlightenment. These things do not come of flesh and blood (Matt. 16:16-17). All of God's people are TAUGHT of God. They are taught of God before salvation as well as after (Study John 6:45). God has so fixed it that all the praise is to Him.

Remember, the HEARING EAR is the SURE MARK of a Christian.

"He that is of God HEARETH God's words; ye therefore hear you have a personal companion—A Friend that sticketh closer than a brother. To those of us who are saved, we must become conscious of this truth or else we will give him the "cold shoulder." To those who cannot give a certain affirmative answer to the question "Are you saved?" this truth should show the need of a Companion Saviour.

This theme has been on my heart for a long time and was pressed upon my soul anew just a night ago while talking with a teacher. He had no idea whether he was saved or not. This condition to me most always verifies the fact that such a one is not saved. How could you eat a good meal and not know it? How could you step from "Darkness into God's marvelous light" and still wonder at it?

"We are of God: he that KNOWETH GOD HEARETH US; he that is NOT OF GOD heareth us not. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error (I Jno. 4:6).

Thank God for the SURE MARK—we can tell the one from the other.

THE HEARING EAR IS THE MARK OF A CHRISTIAN.

ALL FOR A PENNY

(Continued from page one)
missionary was sent there to minister, and fifteen hundred souls were converted from heathenism. All these wonderful changes resulted from that small piece of money.



CHURCH GOVERNMENT

(Continued from page two)
much as He made no mention of and no provision for any of these other organizations, we are convinced these organizations are not according to His will, therefore, we can not be a part of them or in any way encourage them conscientiously.

We believe it is a very serious offense to go contrary to the teachings of God's Word on any subject, and we further believe that there is much unscriptural teachings on this subject.

We are well aware of the fact that many will say the position taken on this subject is very narrow and bigoted. However, the only thing that concerns us is the Scriptural position. If our position is Scriptural, as we believe it is, then it is right regardless of what men's opinions might be. If our position is unscriptural, then it is wrong, and if all the world agreed with us that would not make it right.



YOU CAN KNOW THAT YOU ARE SAVED!

(Continued from page one)
because they are living pretty good they must be OK. Many are just literally "broken out" with goodness. (self-righteousness).

The notion of some that since they have been baptized and are in the church they must surely be saved. Their idea is that they have deposited their soul with the church and it is the church's business to keep it safe. That is particularly the idea that Catholics have.

The person who bases their hope of salvation upon any of the above things, is in a bad state.

WHERE IS TRUE ASSURANCE TO BE FOUND?

How can you know beyond a question that you are genuinely saved?

By knowing that you have truly repented of your sins and committed the keeping of your soul to Jesus Christ?

Not trusted Christ PLUS something else or anything else. Not merely believed about Christ, but ON Christ. Can you wake up at midnight and answer immediately if asked what you are depending upon for salvation?

By the living Word of God. Take the following—

I John 5:13 Revised Version. John 1:11, 12. John 3:36. John 5:24, Acts 10:43, Acts 13:38, 39 (Read also I John 5:10-12 Revised Version).

By the testimony of the new life implanted within us. If a man is physically alive he knows it. Try to convince him that he is dead and you won't succeed. New likes, new loves, new outlook, new interest in the things of God, and the people of God all bespeak the new life. (See I John 3:14).

By the witness of the spirit of God. Note Rom. 8:16. What is this witness spoken of? See Galatians 4:6. There is a natural impulse on the part of a

Christian to pray and to recognize God as Father.

Answered prayer... conscious communion with God... these are also added proofs of conversion.

PEOPLE WHO OUGHT TO DOUBT CONVERSION

Those who have no spiritual hunger. Folks who find religious services boring. Folks who go out of "duty." Folks who don't comprehend spiritual things.

Those who can move to a new community and can stay out of any church there for years—proving thereby that they have no heart interest in Christ's Cause.

Those who find themselves loving the world with an almost overmastering love. Where people just crave and crave the things of the flesh, it goes to show that they have only the nature of the flesh.

Those who never show any change in their manner of life. Just as critical, just as quarrelsome, just as mean, just as unrestrained as to temper. If they have been saved—what have they been saved FROM?



NO BIBLE

(Continued from page one)

We might add, "We wonder if a well-worn Bible can be found among the belongings of the average modern college girl."

It is a splendid thing to be well dressed when the occasion demands it, but let's not forget that spiritual raiment (righteousness) is more important than raiment for the body.

If the average girl would spend as much time on her spiritual needs—developing a beautiful character—as she does in her efforts to "look well," the moral laxity which prevails in too many colleges today would disappear.

We think it is a splendid thing for young men and women to appear well groomed. It is neither a sign of intelligence nor of spirituality to look as shoddy as an old 1911 Model T Ford.

Slovenliness is not spirituality.

Look your best! But put character with it or you'll be only "a well groomed scoundrel."

That goes for the men as well as for the women.—Bible News



SERMON TASTERS

(Continued from page one)

score-sheet listener, comparing one sermon with another, this minister with that, as if you were a judge in a sermon contest. Don't listen with the dilettante's mind, savoring chiefly the literary flavor of a sermon, rating sermons by their color and polish.

Remember that the object of a sermon is not to sharpen your critical faculties nor even your powers of literary appreciation. The aim is to leave you a better person, or at least set you on the road to becoming a better person. If you do not wish this, or insist that it is not possible, then of course no sermon is likely to do you any good at all. But if you do sincerely wish to be a better person, that is, if you wish to grow in the grace of God and in the knowledge and likeness of Jesus, then the sermon can help you if you help by listening.

Listen with a mind prepared

by prayer and expectation. If you have already been through a session of Bible study, if you have taken your part in the worship and the prayers, you will be the more ready for a sermon. Come with your mind "at leisure from itself."

Listen with a sympathetic mind. Realize what the minister is trying to do. If he has handicaps, don't laugh at him. Pray for him. Think for a moment of the sermon as he thinks of it; this may be the high point in his week's life and thought, and he hopes it will be yours.

Listen with a humble mind. You may be the preacher's superior in many ways, but in spiritual life, in insight into God's will for men, he may well be your superior. The aim of his sermon is not to shout at you from a lofty pedestal, but to speak in the Name of God. Recognize your human need of God, your need of His forgiveness and His power. When the searchlight is thrown on your soul, don't be like a mirror instantly reflecting it off toward someone else's eye. Let the light search your own heart.

Listen with an open mind. Don't insist that the preacher always agree with you, and remember, too, that there is no rule in the church compelling anyone to agree with the preacher. Still, it will be poor preaching which does not sometime blast the floor out from under your notion counter, crash into your prejudices, dare you to open your eyes. Don't stiffen up and resist new ideas. If all a sermon did were to pat you gently on your pet prejudices, it would not be much good to you. To disturb your complacency is one of the functions of a true sermon; but it will not do this if you slam your mind's door in the preacher's face.

One sure way of insuring that you will listen to a sermon is to help make it. If you are a faithful Bible student and a thoughtful Christian you will often suggest to the minister ideas or problems which you would like to hear him deal with in sermons. Indeed it is by contact with people as well as with the Word that the best sermons are born. When you listen to one of your seed-thoughts blossoming into a sermon you will have a thrill all your own.

Above all, listen with prayer. Begin the week before. It is well to pray for the minister at eleven o'clock Sunday morning; but he needs your prayers just as much on Monday when he begins his sermon for next week. Pray during the sermon, too—for him; for all who hear; for yourself.

No sermon does quite what its preacher hoped. But a sermon conceived in prayer and hope, heard in an atmosphere of prayer, meeting open, sympathetic, humble, cooperative minds, will be as seed sown on soil watered by the Spirit, springing up into life manifold.



CLEANSING POWER

While an ever-increasing number of people all over the world are joined in reading the Bible, someone is sure to ask: "Well, what good does it do?"

One answer might be that of an old Christian lady to a scoffer who twitted her about wasting her time reading "that old Book." She maintained staunchly that it made her a better woman.

"But do you remember what you read?" asked he.

"Not much of it," she answered calmly. "But come, let me show you something," she continued as she led him to a window. She pointed to the freshly washed clothes, waving clean and white in the sunshine. "Yesterday," said the old lady, "they were not white; they were all soiled. This morning they were washed. There is no water left in them, but they are clean and white."

The serious minded Bible reader will make an effort to remember what he reads. Sometimes it may be very little. But two things rarely fail to happen to him who reads: he cannot escape the application of the Word to himself; he sees more clearly his own sinfulness. On the other hand, he also, and just as surely, comes face to face with Him who came to "seek and to save that which was lost."

Where this happens the cleansing power of the Gospel is at work. By the grace of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, the reader shall in the eyes of God be "whiter than snow."—The Gideon.

WITHOUT CHRIST

Christ is the Way—Men without Him are more like Cain, wanderers, vagabonds.

He is the Truth—Men without Him walk in darkness and know not whither they go.

He is the Life—Men without Him are dead in trespasses and sin.

He is the Vine—Men who are not in Him are withered branches prepared for the fire.

He is the Rock—Men not built on Him are carried away by the flood of Judgment.

He is the Bread and Water of Life—Men without Him will hunger and thirst throughout all eternity.

He is the Alpha and Omega—Men without Him have neither beginning of good nor end of misery.

Oh, blessed Lord Jesus, how much better were it not to be born than to be without Thee; never to be born than to die without Thee and eternally to need Thee! —Copied.

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