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

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FORSAKE NOT THE GOSPEL

Ray Brown

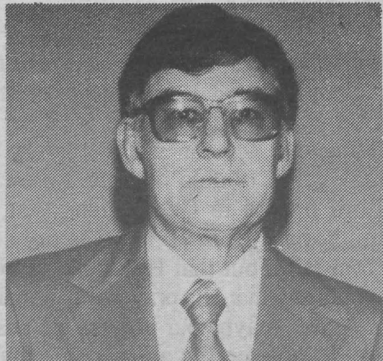
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"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please

men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Ga. 1:6-12).

Paul was making it very plain



to these believers that they had fallen from the steadiness of the gospel. They had forsaken the gospel of Jesus Christ. He said he didn't receive it from man, neither was he taught it by man. He received it by divine revelation from Jesus Christ; directly from the Lamb of glory. He said you have fallen from your steadfastness in Christ. You have left the basic foundation of your eternal welfare and eternal being. The foundation which had been laid by God. So Paul comes immediately to the body of the Epistle in Galatians 1:6. He begins with a reproof of their unsteadiness in the faith. He was troubled over their defection. They had defected from the gospel of Jesus Christ. They had defected from the faith. He said it filled him at once with the greatest sur-

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Fred Beard

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"Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the LORD hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted.

But Zion said, the LORD hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me.

Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee.

Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my



hand; thy walls are continually before me.

They children shall make haste; thy destroyers and

they that made thee waste shall go forth of thee" (Isa. 49:13-17).

How many times we, just like those of Zion, have all too often cried out: The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me? You listen to me and hear the lesson of time. Nothing, and I mean nothing, ever changes. The longer I live, the more I realize that.

Oh, yes, I know that we have things today that were not available in years long gone by. We have cars today that do everything but drive themselves, and the world is looking into that even today. We have planes that will take you across the country so fast that you actually catch up with the sun. We have things that make our lives more comfortable, much nicer, more enjoyable; at least that is what we think, and that is what we are told. But hear me, nothing has changed!

When the Lord walked upon the earth some two thousand years ago people traveled, and that wasn't anything new then. Six thousand years ago, when Cain was driven out from his family for killing his brother Abel, Cain traveled. He might have walked, he might have ridden a horse, he might have crawled for all I know; but I know for sure that he traveled. He went

(Continued on Page 11, Col. 3)

NO ORDINARY STUDIES IN ACTS FUNERAL

Fred Phelps

It was no ordinary funeral. It was Monday, July 24.

Certainly the little town of Sterling (pop. 2312) northwest of Wichita had never seen anything like it. Doug Sillin of Sillin Funeral Home in Lyons had to scurry to get four coaches to bear the bodies to the cemetery.

Three generations of a Kansas family filled the four coffins resting in Sterling's United Presbyterian Church. Laura Hurd, 34, her mother Eva Broomfield, 58, and Laura's children, Leslie, 10, and Daniel, 8, had a total of 9 bullet holes in them—including at least one in each head—when they were pulled from the Arkansas River in Rice County on Wednesday, July 19. The coffins would remain closed due to the head wounds. Services would begin at 2 p.m. Soon after 1 p.m. the large

(Continued on Page 10, Col. 4)

by Willard Willis

"And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation" (Acts 2:40). The act of testifying and exhorting go hand in hand. It was as Peter had said in Acts 21:22, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words." He had testified and here he exhorts them to hear or heed that which he had said. So is it in Acts 2:40. He continues to exhort or admonish them to hear and act upon that which he was saying. We, in fact, will find in verse forty-one that about three thousand regenerated people did hear and act, in that they went

forward and were baptized into the Lord's church. These were the ones who set out to save themselves from that "untoward generation;" that is, they, by being baptized into the Lord's church, would now have the gift or power and



influence of the Spirit so that they could escape from the influence and opinions of their generation. That generation, after all, according to Mark 8:38, was ashamed of our Lord. Our Lord, in Matthew 23:33, had called that generation a "generation of vipers."

The word "untoward" relates to that of being "perverse, or not easily guided or taught." This, however, would no longer be true to those who had the gift of the Spirit. The people of Israel, at that time, were under the influence of Satan by way of the Pharisees. The Spirit would break this influence and guide them from the lies

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MORMONISM: ITS ORIGIN, CHARACTERISTICS AND DOCTRINES

Part 1

by R. G. McNiece

The writer has lived in Salt Lake City, the official headquarters of Mormonism, for over thirty years, and he has improved the opportunity to secure a complete understanding of the system. In the great Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, during a whole generation, he has heard Mormonism expounded and defended, again and again, by its chief officials - by President Brigham Young, and President John Taylor, and their successors, Wilford Woodruff, Lorenzo Snow and Joseph F. Smith. In various Mormon meeting houses, also, from Idaho to Arizona, he has heard the system set forth by many of its chief apostles, bishops and elders.

Furthermore, the writer has diligently studied the chief official books of Mormonism, especially the "Book of Mormon," the "Doctrine and Covenants," the "Pearl of Great Price," and supplementing these, the Mormon Catechism, Elder Robert's "New Witness for God," Professor Talmadge's "Lectures on the Articles of Faith," the works of Apostle Orson Pratt, Lucy Smith's "History of the Prophet Joseph," and the autobiography of Joseph Smith. And besides he has read a great mass of pamphlets and articles by Mormon officials. The standpoint of the writer is that of friendly sympathy and goodwill toward the men and women among the common people in the Mormon ranks, whose sincerity he has no desire to call in question. But

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The Baptist Examiner Pulpit

A Sermon by Pastor Joseph M. Wilson

FISHERS OF MEN

"And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matt. 4:19). This is a very important message. It relates to a very important subject and responsibility. It may be as important a message as could be preached to our kind of churches. If the Lord would bless it, and we would properly respond to it in obedience; it might do more for our churches than anything else. Our churches are small. Many of them are getting smaller. Many of them are made up mostly of elderly people who will soon be gone. Obeying this message or one like it might be the salvation of many of our churches. I speak

of the deliverance from near death, the continuance, and the blessings of our churches. I preach this message to myself, for if no one else needs it, I surely do.

Let us expound the verse. To whom does this apply? It does not just apply to the two apostles to whom it was spoken, nor just to the twelve. It does not just apply to the preacher. It does not just apply to some of the church members, deacons, teachers, etc. This verse applies to every child of God. It sets forth that which is the responsibility of every believer. It gives a promise to every believer who will meet the condition given in the verse.

What is this verse talking

about? Surely, none will believe that it speaks of literal fishing. Surely, we will all agree that it speaks of soul winning. To my shame I admit that for some years I was embarrassed to use this term, and I almost never did. I have repented of that. I am no longer ashamed of using this term. It is a good term. It is a Biblical term. Those sovereign gracers who never use this term "soul winning" or try to empty it of its real meaning as many do, simply show their misunderstanding of the doctrines of grace and of this term. Soul winning. Soul winning. Soul winning. There, I've said it again and again. This verse

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SUBSCRIPTIONS
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SEND US
NAMES: WE
WILL SEND
THEM THE
TRUTH

Those who have eyes, and no eyes are those who walk by sight and not by faith.

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FISHERS

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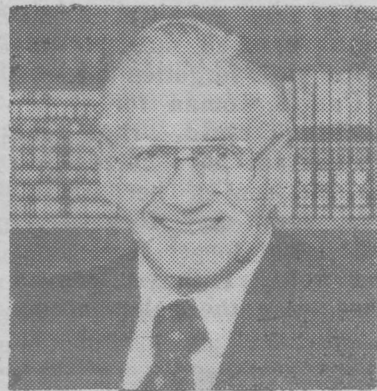
is talking about soul winning. This makes it a very important matter. What is more important than the salvation of the soul? What is more important than to be engaged in the work of winning souls to Christ? This verse speaks of a great responsibility. To fail to do what this verse says is a great sin.

Let me mention some frightening and condemnatory things from this verse. Does "fishers of men" mean to catch men? Does this mean that we will only fish and fish, and fish; but we may never catch a fish? I cannot believe that that is what it means. Does this verse teach that sincere followers will become successful fishermen? Read that again and ponder it seriously. It does seem that this is what the verse means, doesn't it? If this is true, what does this say about my church and my ministry? Oh, God help me to face this honestly and deal with it sincerely and prayerfully.

There is another verse along this line using a different figure. "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Psa.126:6). I would not think that any of us would consider this as directions for successful farming. What would "weepeth" have to do with this? Surely, this verse is speaking of winning souls to Christ. Does this verse teach that "going" and "sowing" and "weeping" will result in "bringing"? If it does not say this, if it does not say that doing these things will result in souls

being saved, I do not understand it. What does this verse say for my church and my ministry? Oh, God, help me to face this also and deal with it honestly.

Maybe there is some way we can get around what Matthew 4:19 seems to teach. It seems to teach that sincere followers will become successful fishermen - that they will win souls; but maybe we can get around this. Maybe we can use some sort of hermeneutical device that will get us out from under the terrible conviction brought upon us by this verse - deliver us from the responsibility and guilt that the seeming meaning places us



Joe Wilson

under. Maybe this verse applies only to the twelve. Maybe it does not apply to us at all. Maybe it does not mean what it seems to mean. Maybe it does not apply to all of us. Maybe it does not apply today. Maybe our belief in the sovereignty of God in salvation will help us get around what seems to be the meaning of this verse. You know, God is sovereign in salvation and saves whom He pleases. What does our being sincere followers have to do with souls being saved? We can't save souls. We know that. So let's not worry about what this verse seems to mean. Maybe the age and the place in which we live will save us from what seems to be the meaning of Matthew 4:19. After all, it is hard to get people in church, much less win them to Christ in this day. There is so much sin, and people are so unconcerned today. Surely, this is why we are not winning souls. It is not our fault if people just won't get saved. This verse must mean something other than what it seems to mean. Maybe we can get around this verse in one of these ways.

FROM THE EDITOR

Please read this editorial through before forming an opinion thereof. "Pray without ceasing" (1 Th.5:17)- Why? Why obey this Scripture? Why keep on praying about many of the things we pray about? It does not seem to do any good. Why keep it up? I know that these are daring, seemingly presumptuous, seemingly sinful, questions; at least when one first thinks about or reads them. But I daresay that these questions, maybe hardly formulated, maybe never spoken even silently; yet at least the beginning of such questions as these, I suspect, have been in all our hearts at times. I wonder if any of us would say that such questions have never even crossed our minds.

The matter of praying and praying and continuing to pray for things that never come is a sore problem with many, if not most, of God's children. What can we say about this matter?

We have several sick people at our church. I have visited most of them many times. I have prayed repeatedly that they might improve in health. In the main, these prayers have so far gone unanswered. At times they have been answered, but sometimes (dare I say it?) (Oh, I would be humble and reverent before my God) sometimes one wonders if they would not have gotten well anyway. Oh, it sounds awful, even dangerous to say such things, but maybe a little honesty about our prayer lives would do us good.

We have prayed so much for the Lord's blessings on our church. We have prayed again and again for increased attendance at our church. We keep on praying, but so far nothing like this has happened. We do, most of the time, have good services. We do have some blessings in our services. We do praise God for these things. But we have not seen anything like that for which we have been praying.

I know that the Arminian world accuses us Sovereign Gracers of not being interested in souls, but this just is not true. I know many sovereign grace pastors, and one of the griefs of their lives is that they are not seeing souls saved as they desire. We here have prayed and prayed and prayed that God would save souls through the ministry of our church. This may be the one prayer prayed more than any other here. Yet, we just almost never see this.

Now read the Scripture at the beginning of this editorial and the comments in that paragraph. Why keep on? We are not seeing anything? Why not just give up? I am sure that we all have at least been tempted with thoughts like these. Let me see if I can say a few things that will help in our church, help me, and help our readers.

I believe we should keep on praying. I believe we should even increase our praying. I believe this in spite of the questions I have asked so far. Prayer is good for us even if we never obtain anything in answer thereto. Can I come into the presence of God, bow my soul before Him, have communion with Him, confess my sins to Him, stay a while in His August presence; and it do me no good? Of course not. It must do good. It does do good.

It will do good. How often, apart from the question of receiving any answers to specific prayers, has my soul been blessed, warmed, lifted up, and encouraged by times of sweet fellowship in prayer with my Lord.

I think that sometimes we make our prayer sessions to revolve too much around asking for things. I believe there are many ingredients that enter into a proper session of prayer. Let me list some: worship and adoration, confession, thanksgiving, and communion. These are important parts of a proper session of prayer. Is it not true that all too often we neglect most of these things and spend nearly all of our time in asking for things. I fear that much of our prayer is a "gimme session" before the throne of grace. It may well be that the Lord is denying many of our petitions in order to teach us that there are other very important parts of a prayer session with God that we are leaving out.

It may be that if we would concentrate more on these other important parts of prayer, God would then begin to pay more attention to our petitions. At any rate, we would thereby profit greatly from each session of prayer regardless of answered or unanswered petitions.

Do we really want to get around what seems to be the meaning of this verse? If we want to, I suppose we can; but will God accept our mis-explanations? Would we not rather put forth the effort, and do what the verse teaches, and see what God will do? Would we not rather win souls than to find excuses for why we don't?

Now, let's go fishing. Sometimes you have to let every thing go, and just go fishing. I have often thought (Katie loves fishing so much) that I would like to have a good pond or lake in the back yard for Katie to fish in. But then, I thought she might just let everything else go and go fishing. Well, that is what we are going to have to do if we go fishing. Oh, we are too busy to fish for men. We hardly have a moment to spare. If we can pray a few minutes now and then, read a chapter or so of the Bible each week, be faithful to most of the church services; that is all we have time for - and it is hard to do that much. We surely do not have time to go out and fish for the souls of men. What does the preacher expect, anyhow? My friend, if we are to

be fishers of men, we are going to have to let some other things go and just go fishing.

We will have to go where the fish are. One can't catch fish in the bath tub. You can't catch fish in a wash tub in front of the TV set. The fish will not come to us; we must go to them. How often does a fish come up to a fisherman, begging to be caught? This is the trouble with most of us. We want to sit around the house, or be doing the things we are so wrapped up in, and if a fish will come along, we will try to catch it. We want to build a church building, have services, and if the fish will come in, we will try to catch them. My friend, the church building is not the fish pond; the fishing place is out yonder in the world of lost sinners. If we should win all who just happen to come into our services, we would not win many. The word "go" is maybe the most important word in "Let's go fishing." At least, it is the most neglected one. Soul winning in the Bible is never predicated upon sinners coming to the church, but upon the church

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Maybe our prayers are answered more than we realize. If I do not have a Scriptural basis to really pray in faith for something, believing that God will give it I add "if it be thy will" to my prayer. I suppose that, doing this, we can say that every such prayer is answered. (I know I may get in trouble with the following Gethsemane interpretation) Our Lord prayed in Gethsemane that, if it be the Father's will, the cup might pass from Him. It is my conviction that the cup did not pass from Him, but that He drank its bitter contents (John 18:11); but who would say that His prayer was not answered?

Again, maybe our prayers are answered more than we realize. Maybe we do not see the answer to our prayers. Maybe our prayers are answered relative to someone for which we are praying, and that one does not tell us thereof. Sometimes I have heard, a long time afterward, of a prayer I had prayed that had been answered shortly after praying it. I would suggest that, if you ask someone to pray for a certain matter, and that prayer is answered, you tell that one shortly thereafter that he or she might rejoice, and thus have his or her prayer life strengthened. We do fail in this matter.

Again, maybe our prayers are answered more than we realize. I have come to the place that, in visiting and praying for the sick; I, in part, pray that the Lord will make His presence known to and in the soul of the one for whom I am praying and help that one inwardly. That prayer may be answered, and I may not in this life know of it.

Again, maybe our prayers are answered more than we realize in that we are not as faithful watching for the answer as we were in the petition. Goodwin has a booklet on "The Return of Prayers." It is a great book on a greatly needed subject. The thought is that, after we have prayed, we should be watching for the answer to our prayer, and we should be as faithful in praising God for the answer as we were in making the petition. I think the latter part of the last statement is from his book, but anyway, it is a great truth. My friend, I believe that if we were as sincere and earnest in praise as we are in petition, we would have more answers to prayer.

Again, maybe we have more answers to prayer than we are aware of due to the fact that we do not keep as careful watch over our total spiritual lives as we should. We may receive an answer to prayer, and through our carelessness in our prayer life, not even realize it as such. We are not as specific and detailed in our petitions as we should be. We do not keep such in mind. Then, when the answer comes, we do not even recognize it as an answer to prayer. Let us keep closer tabs on our spiritual lives and experiences, and we shall likely become aware of more answers to prayer.

The fact that God has not yet answered our prayer is no indication that He is never going to do so. Prayers are often answered after multiplied times of asking, after long continued asking, and sometimes after the death of the petitioner.

Might I add that we should "Pray without ceasing" because God commands it. That is enough for the believer who sincerely desires to obey his Lord. I do not believe this is ever the case; but if a believer should never have a prayer answered, he should still be persevering in earnest and sincere prayer.

One more thing: If we would pray more for spiritual blessings, doubtless, we would have more answers to our prayers. Our prayers are too much for the material and physical. These are legitimate subjects and objects of prayer, and God often answers such. But let us be more interested in and more prayerful about the spiritual needs of ourselves and others, and we will likely have more answers to our prayers.

So my answers to the questions posed at the beginning of this editorial is: Yes, we should obey 1 Thessalonians 5:17. Yes, we should keep on praying. Prayer will bring us many things that we otherwise would not have received. Don't throw "predestination" at me. I believe it as much as you do. Do look at James 4:2, the last part. We believe all the Bible, don't we? Keep on praying; God will answer many of your prayers. Keep on praying; you will thereby receive many wonderful blessings in addition to the answers you receive. God bless you all.

"WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE CHURCH? THE DEVIL AT WORK"

CHAPTER II

John R. Gilpin

"And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive; I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death" (Revelation 2:8-11).

There are those who think that the seven churches of Asia mean the seven epochal periods of church history. Those who hold to this view, would state that we are now in the Laodicean, or the seventh period of church history. Personally, I do not believe this. It is entirely too fanciful and far-fetched for me to accept this interpretation. I think that at the time John was writing the book of Revelation, that these were seven characteristic churches. I am sure that there have been churches like each of these seven in every age down to the present time. I am furthermore positive that we have churches today just like these seven. There are churches today like Ephesus, who have lost their first love. There are churches today like Laodicea, that are lukewarm. There are churches like Thyatira which are run by the women. There are churches like Sardis that are dead. There are churches like Pergamos that are worldly. There are also churches like Smyrna and Philadelphia that are faithful and true to God's Word. I say then, beloved, that I do not believe that these churches represent various periods of church history - rather, they are just sample churches, characteristic of John's day, of our day, and will be characteristic of every day until Jesus comes.

I think Ephesus was mentioned first in view of the fact that it was Paul's home for three years. Furthermore, it was John's home town, and also, it was the largest church, and was entitled to first mention and prominence.

The church at Smyrna, in size, was perhaps next to Ephesus, and for this reason it was mentioned in second place. Now I want to talk to you about this, the second largest and the second mentioned of these seven churches - the church of Smyrna.

I. First we will notice the way Jesus revealed Himself to this church at Smyrna. Four words characterize His revelation of Himself - "first," "last," "dead," and "alive."

Here was a church that had suffered much persecution. They were, in John's day, having an exceedingly hard time. They had had, and were still experiencing much tribulation. Now Jesus reveals Himself to them in a way that should give them encouragement. He announces that He is the first and the last. That is to say He was here before the devil came, and that He will be here when the

devil is defeated.

Furthermore, He told them that He was the one who was dead, and is now alive. Many of His church were being martyred. They were passing through great tribulation. Therefore, He reminded these suffering, persecuted Christians who were losing their lives for His sake, that He was dead and now alive, and thus encouraged them by referring to the resurrection.



John R. Gilpin, Sr.

What an encouraging revelation of Jesus this was to Smyrna. He was here before the devil began, and He will be here when the devil is defeated; He was dead, and is alive, and therefore, all who die for Him shall likewise live.

Not only was this an encouraging revelation to Smyrna, but to all of us down to this present day. Today, I thank God that He was here before the devil began, and that He will be here when the devil is defeated. I thank God that through Jesus we have hope that though we die, we shall be made alive in the resurrection. Yes, the comforting revelation of Jesus at Smyrna is the same comforting, encouraging message which we need today. How it thrills our hearts in these days of apostasy to know that He is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and that He is to us exactly what He was to the church at Smyrna. When I fear my cause will fail, and that the things I stand for shall be defeated, and when I see the truth I have preached trampled beneath the feet of Satan-inspired and Satan-directed swine, I rejoice to know that Jesus is the first and the last, and that He is still alive, and that my hope is in Him who has fought the battle through the ages, and will still be here when the devil is through, and is still alive. Yes, it is encouraging, it is heartening, it is comforting, and it is stimulating to read of Jesus' revelation of Himself to Smyrna, and to us.

II. Yet, it is just as interesting to notice that for which Jesus commended this church at Smyrna. First of all, He commended them for their works, "I know thy works..." (Rev. 2:9).

Here was a church that was at work for the Lord Jesus. This is similar to that which He said about the church at Ephesus, which we studied last Sunday. Smyrna, like Ephesus, was commended because they were busy and working for the Master. A lot of folk falsely have in mind that since we believe in salvation by grace, that we do not expect Christians to produce any good works. If this be true of you, let me disabuse your mind this day, for while we believe in salvation by grace, we certainly believe that a man should prove his salvation by the works of his life. Notice this Scripture: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of

works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:8-10).

Here then was a church at Smyrna which was doing what they ought to do - they were working, and they were keeping at the task, and Jesus commended them because of their works. I wonder if He could commend you thus today.

There are lots of Baptist churches, and Baptist church members who could not get this commendation in view of the fact that they have no works worthy of the Master's praise. It will be wonderful to hear Him say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant" when one comes to the end of the way; but it is just as wonderful to know that a church, or preacher, or church member has the Master's commendation today.

In the second place, this church was commended for its tribulation. Jesus said: "I know thy works, and tribulation..." (Rev. 2:9).

This church was having a hard time - they were being persecuted. Yet, Jesus commended them for it. Polycarp, their pastor, had been burned at the stake. When they had him bound and were beginning to light the fagots about him, one who would roughly correspond to an attorney today, admonished him to renounce Christ and live. With a wonderfully dramatic flight of oratory, he said, "Eighty and six years have I served him, and He never wronged me; how then shall I blaspheme my King who saved me?" That which was true of their pastor, was also true of many of their members - they were going through all kinds of persecution, tribulation, and hardships for the cause of Christ. Jesus commended them because of it.

It reminds us of the early days of the church at Jerusalem, when, following the advice of Gamaliel, the hostile Jews gave the preacher a severe beating. "And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name" (Acts 5:41). Thus it was with the church at Smyrna. Even though suffering tribulation, it was with joy, and, therefore, Jesus commended them.

You will notice that Jesus also commended this church because of its poverty. He said: "I know thy works and tribulation, and poverty..." (Rev. 2:9).

Smyrna was very much unlike Laodicea, Laodicea was rich, but Smyrna was poor - not only poor, but actually poverty-stricken as to material goods. Yet, Jesus commended them for their poverty.

I often hear people say, "I would like to be a more liberal giver, and I would if I were financially able." Well, beloved, do you know that one of the Scriptural requirements for great giving is that of poverty? Paul tells us concerning the churches of Macedonia that they were great givers. He said there were three things which prompted their giving, namely, "...a great trial of affliction," the abundance of their joy," and their "deep poverty." These three Paul said abounded unto their liberality. The greatest givers of the world are not rich, but those who give out of their poverty. While Jesus condemned the church

at Laodicea since they were depending more upon their money than upon Him, He commended this church at Smyrna in view of their poverty which brought them to a complete dependence upon Him.

Likewise, this church at Smyrna was commended by Jesus because they were being slandered. Jesus said: "...I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews..." (Rev. 2:9).

Weymouth, in his modern interpretation of this Scripture, translates it this way, "I know the evil name given you by those who say they themselves are Jews." Here at Smyrna was a Jewish synagogue which was openly hostile to this weak, poverty-stricken Baptist church. These hostile Jews said that they themselves were the people of God, and they started and circulated slandering, villainous reports concerning this New Testament church in the city of Smyrna.

Even to this day their progeny has not ceased, for many times the truth is spoken against, and God's own are slandered just like this church at Smyrna. I always rejoice to hear of anyone being spoken against for the truth's sake. I am always glad when I hear that somebody has been condemning me for what I preach. In fact, beloved, it makes me feel mighty good to know that the devil thinks I am worth stirring up some of his offspring that they should slander and persecute me. In fact, it even means a reward for me. Listen to these words: "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for their's is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad: for great is your reward in heaven..." (Matt. 5:10-12).

Here is a reward I don't have to work for. We have dozens and even hundreds of folk every week who enjoy the messages that go forth from our church, and yet, we hear also occasionally from those who condemn us and speak spitefully about our ministry. I am sure that these also speak against our ministry to many others. Well, beloved, their persecutions and slanderings are just laying up a reward for me in heaven - a reward that I don't even work for.

Yes, Jesus commended this church at Smyrna because they were being slandered, and if I speak to a saint who has been slandered for the truth's sake, and who is hated, despised, and persecuted because of his stand for God's Word, then may that individual take courage in the light of Jesus' commendation of this church at Smyrna.

Above everything else, Jesus commended this church at Smyrna because of their suffering. He said: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer..." (Rev. 2:10).

This indicated that they were actually suffering for His sake, and He commended them for it. I came across a great Scripture in Paul's second letter to young Timothy when he said, "If we suffer, we shall also reign with him..." (II Tim. 2:12).

What a wonderful consolation to the saint of God who is suffering

for Jesus' sake. Here was a church that was actually suffering because of their stand for the truth, and since they were suffering, they had the Scriptural assurance that some day they would reign with Him.

Wonderful, then, is this commendation which Jesus gave to this church at Smyrna. He commended them for their works, their tribulation, and poverty, the fact that they were being slandered, and for their suffering for His sake. I wonder if He would commend you today for all, or any of these things. Happy is the church, the preacher, or the individual who has Jesus' commendation for anything, and especially was this church at Smyrna happy in that it had Jesus' commendation in these particulars.

III. Though Jesus commended this church in these five respects, He also gave it a little counsel. Listen: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10). Here, then, was a two-fold counsel in view of their past suffering, and their present difficulties, and especially the coming tribulation.

His first counsel was to "fear not." It is so easy for a person who has been slandered, and who is suffering, and who is given Divine assurance of coming tribulation - it is so easy for such a one to become frightened. None of us like church troubles. Most any of us would rather acquiesce to the enemy than to continue daily with sufferings, slander, and tribulation. Yet, to this church at Smyrna Christ gave no hope of an end to the trouble; instead, He gave them a picture of more trouble. Yet, He encouraged them in that He counselled these members of this church to put aside their fear, and to face the coming tribulation bravely.

His second counsel to this church was, "be faithful." He said, "...be thou faithful unto death..." You will notice He didn't say "be faithful until death," but "be faithful even if you have to die."

What a wonderful counsel is this for Smyrna, or for any church, "don't be afraid," and "be faithful". Surely the God who thus counselled Smyrna, would counsel each New Testament church, preacher, and church member today. We are to fear nothing, and we are to be faithful to Him in all things.

IV. Now having seen Jesus' revelation of Himself to this church, and having observed that for which they were commended, and also having studied the way in which He counselled them, let us notice His condemnation, or what He condemned them for.

I received a letter in which the writer declared that Jesus found fault with each of these seven churches. Not so, beloved, there was no condemnation for the church at Smyrna. Jesus never

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The Baptist Examiner Forum I

SUBMIT QUESTIONS ON ANY BIBLE SUBJECT
THE BAPTIST EXAMINER, P.O. BOX 60, ASHLAND, KENTUCKY 41105-0060

If a person has been excluded more than once, or for some very serious matter, should there ever be a probation period before receiving such into full membership?

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I am assuming that you are asking for a Scriptural answer and not one based on my personal feelings, what may seem to be the best solution, or what others have done in the past. If I may answer under this assumption I would sight three cases which serve, I trust, as a Biblical answer and the precedence by which we ought to behave ourselves in the house of God.

Case No. 1, Matthew 18:15-17.

"Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." This is the case of one brother offending another. It is a personal affair, which, as the Lord teaches, should be handled on a personal level. However, if the matter of offence cannot be reconciled privately then it is to be handled by the church body. Now this is simple enough, but I am afraid that many individuals and churches miss the five most important words in this text; five words which are at the hub of the matter of church discipline. These five words are, "thou hast gained thy brother." Of these five words the most important is "gained." Scriptural church discipline is not designed to get rid of undesirables, get even, vent anger, show authority, or to make the church a judge and jury; but to gain, or win back a brother or sister in Christ who is for whatever reason, wayward, or in sin, or has personally offended another brother to the extent of disrupting fellowship, which brings us to case number two.

Case No. 2, II Corinthians 2:6-8. "Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm

your love toward him." This is the case of one who has been under the discipline of the church and now desires to resume fellowship with God and the church. Commentaries tell us that this was the same man spoken of in I Corinthians 5 who had committed incest. While it is likely, we really have no hard evidence of this. But the point is, the person in II Corinthians 2:6-8 now desires restoration. Paul sights some reasons why he should be restored aside from the obvious fact that he has confessed and repented. 1. They had obeyed the Lord by turning the man to the chastening hand of God. The good news was; it worked. The man had come with a contrite heart desiring to start afresh and leave those sins behind. "Sufficient to such a man is this punishment..." 2. To avoid the possibility, and even the probability of this dear soul despairing of his own desire to return to the work and service of God. Too many times, I am afraid we tend to alienate ourselves from those whom we have exercised discipline toward and as a result they are "swallowed up with overmuch sorrow." The Amplified Bible says, "keep him from being overwhelmed by excessive sorrow and despair." But again, let us not miss the prominent message taught here by the Holy Spirit. Notice the key words, "forgive", "comfort", "love". Do you get the idea? We are again instructed to restore that wayward soul and win them back to the place of fellowship and blessings of Christ. We are first to forgive them. Ephesians 4:32 says, "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" If you have forgiven that person, and you must if that person confesses and repents, (how many times does Jesus say that we should forgive a repentant brother or sister in one day? Read Matthew 18:21,22) then the next step is to comfort that one. Let them know that you have forgiven them, (I speak to both individual and church collectively) and that you are desirous and willing to help them. If you are not willing, then you have not truly forgiven. Oh, how a soul needs comforting in his time of repentance! The prodigal son had been out in the world of sin, wallowing in its muck and mire, but now he was coming home. His father did not wait for the boy to come crawling in the front door, but ran to meet him, embraced him, put shoes on his feet, and a ring on his hand. What a lovely example for the people of God. Then we are instructed to confirm our love toward that person. You may love him or her, but have you confirmed that love? Confirm means to validate or prove by some action. You confirm your love by receiving that one into full

fellowship. You cannot offer your comfort from a distance, you must be willing to touch that person and allow that person to touch you. How wonderful to know that we have an High Priest who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. You cannot confirm your love to them if you esteem yourself better than they. This brings us to the last case.

Case No. 3, Galatians 6:1, Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." This case involves a man, or woman for that matter, who has yielded to the temptations of the flesh. It may have been the sin of adultery, or alcohol, or some sort of business, dishonesty. Perhaps it was some theological error; it really doesn't matter what. The person has for whatever reason fallen from the grace of God's fellowship and that of the church. What shall we do? Do we look at that person and say "if you were as spiritual as I am you wouldn't be in that fix?" Do we kick them while they are down? No, No, No! We restore such a one in the spirit of meekness. We forgive, comfort, and confirm our love to them. We show gentleness and kindness. We show compassion and caring. We esteem them better than ourselves. We must consider the very real possibility that one day we may be wearing their moccasins. No, I do not believe that probation is Scriptural. Remember that I said that we would consider the matter in light of Scripture and not personal feelings, what may seem to be the best solution, or what others may have done in the past. I hope that this answer has helped someone. May God bless.

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Matthew 18:21, 22: "Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven time?" Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven."

I will readily admit that this sounds like a good idea. The only problem I have with it, is that I do not believe it is Scriptural. The Bible never gives us this instruction by precept or by example. I might add that you run into a problem when you use the term "very serious matter." Any matter that brings about exclusion is a very serious matter. If this were a practice of the church, it should be done in every instance and not just

in "serious matters". It should be done for sowing discord as well as drunkenness. The next problem you run into is how long a period of probation are you going to have? What Scripture are you going to use to determine this period and the length thereof? The third thing I see wrong with this question is the usage of the term "full membership." I don't understand that term. Is there such a thing as partial membership in one of the Lord's Churches? Surely not! Beloved, we must conduct church discipline based upon God's Word and not upon what sounds good to us.

Our text tells us that we are to forgive our brother 490 times. I know this has reference to a brotherly offense and not a church offense, but I do not think God's principles for forgiveness change when it applies to the church. Until a brother has used up his 490 apologies, then I believe we have an obligation to receive him back into membership. I recognize that this may at times make the church look bad, but it also makes the church look bad to be unforgiving and to establish rules not taught in Scripture. The first thing that should be examined in this repeat offender is his salvation. I am certainly not implying that a person who committed the same sin twice is not saved. However, if this were a case of many times then this question should be asked. This person should be talked to about why they want to be a member of the church. If the reasons are not sufficient then they should not be received into the church, based on such poor reasons, not repented of sin. A case could be made for the church not accepting an apology, only if that apology were given in a light hearted and insincere manner. Otherwise, we must accept the apology and restore them to membership. No, I do not think it is right to have a probation period for membership in the Lord's Church. I cannot think of any circumstance where this would be right and acceptable. May God bless you all.

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"Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations" (Romans 14:1).

To be sure, many churches today are too lenient in the reception of members. Individual churches vary somewhat in the circumstances surrounding the reception of members. By that I mean, some churches may ask detailed questions of the person seeking membership, while others ask only for a declaration concerning the individual's salvation. As to the particular question being considered now, I would begin by saying that the church (pastor) should ask some detailed questions of a person who has had a problem, or problems such as exclusion, or a serious offense. I might say that any exclusion is serious although some tend to categorize reasons. If the person asking for membership has been excluded, or excluded more than once, there should be concern; but if the church doing the excluding

has done its job, the person asking for membership should be spiritually ready for membership. Part of exclusion is restoration, the seeking of the spiritual good of the excluded, and an active effort to that end. An excluded member of a proper church must be restored and things made right with the excluding church before membership can be sought, or given in another assembly who believes and practices church truth. All of that having been done, a restored member with whatever past, has the right to ask for membership in another proper church, if he, or she, does not desire to stay in the original church. The questioner asks, "should there ever be a probation period before receiving such into full fellowship?" I see no Scriptural example, or precedent for a probation period. How long would it be? Who and how would it have to satisfy? I would say that there should be no such discrimination. Also I am not quite sure what "full membership" means. In the assembly I serve, this method is used. A person asks for membership. Questions are asked as to salvation, church background, problems, etc. If the person comes by letter, and is a proper candidate, the church votes to receive the person into membership pending a letter of dismission and, or recommendation. If a person has had any of the problems mentioned in the past, it would be unfair and discriminating to make them undergo a probationary period. A church would be saying, "you are supposed to be repented, been reinstated, but we aren't satisfied with that." A member received is given membership and equal privileges until such time as they commit some offense, or otherwise bring themselves into the place of a member not in good standing. As always, however, a church has the right to, as most do, set their own practice as to this question as long as the practice does not go against Scripture, or violate Christian charity. "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:32).

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In answering this question I find instructions given to the church at Corinth, concerning a similar situation, to be the answer to this question. A member of the church had committed a very serious sin. "It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife." The apostle Paul wrote the church they were to withdraw from that one who had committed this sin, "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ. To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit

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The Baptist Examiner Forum II

SUBMIT QUESTIONS ON ANY BIBLE SUBJECT

THE BAPTIST EXAMINER, P.O. BOX 60, ASHLAND, KENTUCKY 41105-0060

Do you know the mother church that started the church you are a member of? How far back do you know this? How can one learn these things?

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Yes I do. I belong to, and am the pastor of the New Testament Baptist Church of Bristol, Tennessee. The New Testament Baptist Church of Bristol, Tennessee was organized December 10, 1961 by the authority of Valley Drive Baptist Church of Bristol, Tennessee. Mount View Baptist Church of Elizabethton, Tennessee was asked to assist in the organization. Brother Charles Souder, the pastor was asked to moderate the organization which was approved by Valley Drive Baptist Church.

How can you learn where your church started? Search the records of the church you are a member of and see what they believed when the church was started in order to see if it was started on the truth of Landmark Missionary Baptist Doctrine. It makes a difference who started the church and what they believed.

We have several so-called Baptist Churches here in Bristol area that started without any authority from a Scriptural church and do not believe Baptist Doctrine. We have one that started out as an Independent Presbyterian and was that for several years. The pastor died and a young Southern Baptist Minister was asked to fill in for a while. They liked him so well that they called him as pastor. He wanted them to become Baptist so they decided to change their sign out front to Missionary Baptist. They have grown to a large number with buses. Those poor people, deceived as they were, are working like bee's building a monster that will not be recognized by our Lord as a church, and they will lose their reward. Yes find out if your church is a true church; you might miss being in the Bride.

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The great commission is given in Matthew 28:18-20. This commission was given to the church that Jesus built while here on the earth in the days of His flesh. Any church started since that time by some man is not a true church.

Christ set up His church for the purpose of carrying on His work. His work is done by His churches.

How can this work be done any other way?

If the foregoing statements are true, how can a group of people meet together and announce to each that they are Christians and have been baptized by Baptist churches? They also state that they believe the truth about salvation and other things that Baptists teach. These people did know each other for the most part until they ran into each other and found out that they were Christians and started having services and then decided to organize themselves into a church. Where did they get their authority? Some say, from the Bible. Then why the church of Christ and for what purpose is church authority? If a church can set up without church authority, then we do not need church authority in this area. We can say there are two ways to set up churches, but the best way is by church authority. That is like saying that baptism by immersion is the best way to baptism.

The way to set up New Testament churches is under church authority of sound and true churches. This is not the best way, it is the only way.

The church of which I am pastor was set up under the authority of Ella Grove Baptist Church, near Glenville, GA. Ella Grove was organized in 1912. Ella Grove was set up by a church by the name of Beard's Creek. This church taught the truth at that time. Beard's Creek was constituted by a church that predates the Civil War. This church was burned and all her records during the war. This is as far as we can trace our history. We feel that this is sufficient.

The way for one to find out how his church came about is to ask questions and begin to search the records. Find out if the church that set your church up taught the truth and was a sound church.

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"Ans I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). The best place to trace the lineage of a church is from the beginning. When Christ spoke this verse, He made two promises: that He would build His church and that all the forces of the devil could not and would not prevail against it. In the record book of all record books, we have the recorded beginning of the first church. It is also recorded in the Scriptures all that is necessary to recognize a true church; what it preaches, teaches and ob-

serves. That Church is in existence today; preaching, teaching and observing that which has been passed down through the ages.

Starting from today and going back presents a problem, a problem that is amplified by the lack of records. We all should know our mother church. Many do not, and when we get to the grandmother or great-grandmother church, there are simply no sustainable records to identify who extended the arm for organization. This fact does not invalidate the organization, it simply shows that no record exists. There are some churches that are able to trace, by the records they have, their lineage as far as 300 years, maybe more. There is a point where the record stops. A few years ago, we attempted to trace our church history. We were able to find records as far back as the grandmother church. Beyond that point, there were no records to be found.

To trace a particular church back into the past, begin with your own church, then proceed to find the church from which your church was organized and the church that organized that church, etc. Absence of records means nothing more than that there are no records available, it does not mean that a church was unscripturally organized. In the chain that goes back to that first church, some fell by the wayside. Once established, a church will be a church until it ceases to exist or its candlestick is removed. This can be clearly seen since the church at Jerusalem is not now in existence. There are those that are her offspring that are still alive.

Above all else, remember the two promises and the principles that were used to establish that first church. They will hold true until Jesus comes for His church, and then all things will be known.

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Yes, I know the church that organized our church. How? From the records of the business meetings. The church clerk keeps the records. You should be able to refer to them and find out what church organized your church, and when, and who the charter members were. You could then possibly contact your mother church and request the same information from them. There are also local histories written that often name some of the older churches in the area. You could possibly trace your church to one of these. It just takes some time and research. Ask your Pastor for assistance in this.

WHAT'S WRONG

(Continued from Page 3)

censured them for anything which they were doing. This church at Smyrna was living right, and was preaching right, and because of this, they were having many persecutions.

Here then is a lesson for us: When one is doing the thing which pleases God, there is not going to be any condemnation from God. There will be no censure from Him. If you do not live purely, and if you preach unscripturally, and your church is unorthodox, then you can expect Jesus to condemn you - you can plan for His censure; but when there is right living, and right preaching, and scriptural practices in a church, that church, like Smyrna, can expect commendation without condemnation. It can expect no critical censure, nor condemnation; but, the wholehearted commendation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

V. Now, let us come back to our general theme - "What's Wrong With The Churches?" I said in the beginning of this series, that there was something wrong with each of these churches. What was wrong with this church at Smyrna? Since Jesus did not condemn them, it would appear that there was nothing wrong, but if you will read again, and read more closely, you can see that which was wrong - the devil was at work. Listen: "...behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison..."

They were commended as I have said, but not condemned. The wrong wasn't on the inside of the church, but on the outside. The devil was stirring up trouble, he was spreading slander, he was causing the saints to suffer, he was getting ready for wide-spread tribulation in the church. In other words, the chief trouble-maker in Smyrna was the devil. Though this church had Christ for its comforter, it had the devil for its trouble-maker. Though Christ was on the inside comforting and commending, the devil was on the outside persecuting, and causing tribulation.

Let me ask you a question: "Is the wrong in your church on the inside, or on the outside? Where is the devil at work in your church on the inside or on the outside?" Oh, that God might grant that the church of which I am pastor, and the church of which you are a member, might be free from the devil on the inside, and yet may be found on the outside.

I like to see a church which has the same wrong as the church at Smyrna - that is, I like to see a church that is being fought by the devil. I saw a picture several years ago of a cold, formal congregation in which the devil was pictured as occupying one of the pulpit chairs, sound asleep. I don't want that kind of a church, beloved, I want a church where the devil is not in the pulpit, nor in the choir, nor in the congregation; but I want a church where the devil is on the outside, fighting us, slandering us, persecuting us, causing us to suffer, and bringing much tribulation our way. Most churches have the devil on the inside. May God grant that it may be said of your church and mine that we have right living, and right preaching to such an extent that the wrong is not on the inside, but on the outside, and that wrong in that the devil is at work.

VI. Now briefly may we notice Jesus' promise to the overcomers of the church at Smyrna:

"...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death" (Rev. 2:10,11).

Here then was His promise - He offered a crown of life. It wasn't a crown of gold, nor a crown studded with diamonds; but a crown of life.

What an interesting study this is, for He declares that there was no danger of it being taken away, in that He said, "...he that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." How precious this was to Smyrna. The devil might kill their bodies, but these martyrs could not be hurt of the second death.

And what a precious promise this is to us in that we have a crown awaiting us - a crown of life, and there isn't any possibility of us losing it, for the second death holds no fear for us who have been born twice.

FISHERS

(Continued from Page 2)

going to the sinners. Yes, we must go where the fish are. And I don't mean just go to school, or go to work, or be around sinners, I mean go where the fish are, and go fishing.

Katie gave me this point (She is the fisherwoman in our family). A good fisherman does not want to stop for anything. If the fish are biting, or even if not, the fisherman just keeps on. He (or she) does not want to stop to eat, to go home, or for anything. He just wants to keep on fishing.

Katie gave me this point also. Be careful of whom you take with you when you go fishing. It is good to have a fishing companion. I do not believe the Bible teaches that we just must go two together, but I believe it is good to have someone with you at least some of the time. You don't take a loudmouth fishing with you. You don't take a person who is not interested in fishing with you. If you want to catch fish, you don't take the grandchildren with you (are you listening, Katie?) You would certainly not want to take an unsaved person with you as you fish for men. You would not want to take a saved (?) person with you who is not living right. People like this will not help win souls to Jesus Christ.

When you go fishing, use the right bait. I am not a fisherman, but I am told that you use different bait according to what you are fishing for. Be that as it may, to fish for men we must use the right bait. Don't use the bait of the five doctrines of grace when you go fishing for men. What if you convince them of all five points, but do not win them to Christ? Don't use "Baptist churches the only true churches" bait. This is true, but it is not what you use in fishing for souls. Don't bait your hook with anti-Christmas and anti-Easter bait. Don't use "baptism by immersion only" as bait when you fish for souls. There are those who

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FORUM I

(Continued from Page 4)

may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus---Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (I Cor. 5:4-13).

From Paul's second letter to the Corinthians we see that the church had acted upon the instructions given them and had withdrawn from this man. The man had repented of his sin. Now that he had repented how was the church to deal with him? Were they to put him on six months probation to see if his repentance was real? Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, wrote the church, "Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Therefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him" (II Cor. 2:6-8).

I believe this way is also the correct way for churches today to deal with those that must be disciplined. There is no command given in the Scripture where we are told to put one on probation. He is either in full fellowship or is out of fellowship with the church. In Romans 14:1 we read, "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations." To place one on probation would show doubts as to his repentance being genuine.

FISHERS

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go out fishing, but what are they fishing for? Often, it seems that they are fishing for a fight, and they usually get it. I believe in preaching the whole counsel of God, I surely do - those who know me, know this - but not preaching it to the lost sinner whom I desire to win to Christ.

What is the bait we should use? The good old gospel bait is what we must use. It is good for any sinner. All who have been saved have been caught by this same bait. No one is saved without the gospel. We are Missionary Baptists, not Hardshell heretics. Jesus Christ is God. He was born of a virgin. He lived a sinless life. He died on the cross. He rose from the dead. This is the gospel. This is what men must hear and believe in order to be saved.

We may bait our hook with something else, even Bible truths, men may swallow this down, but they will not be saved thereby. Men must believe the gospel in order to salvation. We must use the gospel in order to win souls. We must bait our hooks with good old gospel bait if we would be successful fishers of men.

We should enjoy fishing and really want to go. Every saved person should feel this way about fishing for men. If I do not, why? If you do not, why? If we do not enjoy this and desire greatly to do it, we should confess our sin to God and ask Him to make us fishers of men. If we don't enjoy the work and want to do it, we

will not be very successful and will probably not do much of it.

Katie gave me this point also. (Boy, she bragged on this sermon. I wonder why.) One of the most important things about fishing is patience. We must just stick with it. If the fish do not bite at one place, don't quit and go home, go to another place. Just keep at the fishing. I am sure that there will be some connection between how often, how long, and how many. Our failure in the first two "how's" explains our failure as to the last "how." My brother, my sister, let us go fishing. Let us go often. Let us stick at it. There are fish out there. Oh, there are very many fish out there. There is no scarcity of fish, but there sure is a great scarcity of fishermen. Does not our text guarantee success in fishing?

What is the condition my text gives as that of successful fishing? There is only one given. It is plain, clear, and simple. The text says, "Follow me." What does it mean to follow Christ. It means to live a Christ-like life. It means to be pure, clean, and holy. It means to confess and forsake sin. It means to have constant fellowship with Christ. It means to be much in prayer. One who is not much in prayer will not catch many fish. It means - oh, above all else, it means obedience. To follow Christ is to obey Him. There is no other way. Do what He tells you to do. Is this our problem? Are there things we are doing that He has told us to not do? Are we failing to do things that we know He has told us to do? And it is total, not partial obedience that He requires. I do not mean perfect obedience. I do not mean sinless perfection. But I do mean total commitment to the will of God for one's life. I mean sincere, total, uncompromising obedience. We must follow Christ if we would be fishers of men.

The promise is, "I will make you fishers of men." We know we cannot win souls of ourselves. We know that He must make us fishers of men if we ever become such. We realize our weakness and inability. But He has given us this promise. He will make us successful. He will give us the desire. He will give us the wisdom. He will give us the power. If we fail, it will not be because He failed to keep His promise; it will be because we failed to meet the condition.

Let's go fishing, oh my brother, my sister; let's go fishing. I tell you that this is what we should do. If we do not, we are sinful and disobedient. We must do this if we are to have the joy, peace, and blessings of knowing that we are obeying our Lord.

Let's go fishing. Might I add that we simply must do this. I mentioned at the beginning that most of our churches are small, many are getting smaller, and some seem close to dying out. Brothers and sisters, this is the only answer I know to our problem. God may do something else. He may just start sending the people in. He may do something that we just don't know what it will be. And He may let us just get smaller and smaller, and some of us just die out. Going fishing and catching fish - winning souls, that is - is the only answer I know. We must go fishing.

Fishermen enjoy catching fish. They like to brag about the fish they catch. Our son, Michael, has a mounted fish over his fireplace. He thinks it is beautiful. Oh, that you and I - that this church - may

soon be doing likewise. That we might soon be talking about the fish we have caught. What a joy this would be. May it soon be. What will you do about this message? What will I do about it? My friends, much may depend, very much, on what we do about this message. God bless you all. Here's to good fishing.

STUDIES

(Continued from Page 1)

of the Pharisees into all truth.

"Save yourselves," then, is not a reference to regeneration, but to doctrine and practice. It refers to who and what we will follow. It refers, as Peter said in Acts 2:38, to being "baptized...in the name of Jesus Christ," or being dedicated to Him -- to hear and obey His every word.

"Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:41). Those that "gladly received his word" relates to those who jumped at the opportunity. They were thoroughly convinced. They did not go forward while dragging their feet as they went; but they, in a sense of speaking, ran forward. They were not ashamed to own Him as their Savior and the Lord of their lives. They had asked in verse thirty-seven, "What shall we do?" Now, they were doing it. The word "added" in verse forty-one is not to be overlooked. This word, in fact, clearly shows that the church was already in existence, since about three thousand were added to it. One cannot add to that which does not exist.

"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). Those then who heard and acted upon that which they heard were not forgetful hearers. They were doers of the word. They became front-line soldiers who knew nothing of the word "retreat." Many, in fact, went so far as to die for the cause which was set before them. The latter part of the eleventh chapter of Hebrews is a record of how dedicated many of these people were to our Lord. They truly did continue "steadfastly," or moved forward even when under heavy fire from the enemy troops. The apostles doctrine, after all, was the Lord's doctrine. They were also steadfast in "fellowship, breaking of bread and in prayers." The word "fellowship" signifies that they were all of one mind. They, in a sense, walked shoulder to shoulder while in full agreement, or in one accord.

We, after reading of "fellowship," read of "breaking of bread." There, in other words, was no division as to that which they believed. They, because of the gift, or influence of God the Spirit, were of one mind and were able to break bread together while having all things in common. They were also steadfast in prayer which shows that they did not stop looking up and knowing that their Lord, even though absent in body, was present in Spirit. He was still their Head. They therefore would, by way of steadfast prayer, honor Him by praising Him with prayers and by seeking His guidance. He had said that He would never leave or forsake them and they, by way of their prayers, stated that they believed Him.

"And fear came upon ev-

ery soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles" (Acts 2:43). The word for "fear" signifies a state of awe. They were like soldiers in the heat of battle -- soldiers who are aware of the seriousness of it all. It was not a light-hearted game, but they were in dead earnest. There was no time for jokes because too much was at hand. Those things that had just happened added great weight to the "fear." The arrival of God the Spirit, after all, had been an earth-shaking event. The "many wonders and signs" which the apostles did, under the power of the Spirit on this occasion, added great weight to the occasion. All that was done, in fact, tended toward giving them all a running start in going into all the world to preach the gospel. They, during times of discouragement, would draw strength and courage from the day of Pentecost. We draw the same strength and courage from that great event. Ours, however, comes entirely by faith while theirs was tied to sight and faith in what they literally saw and heard. This fact reminds one of our Lord's words to Thomas in John 20:29 when He said, "...blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need (Acts 2:44,45). These Scriptures remind one of the action of soldiers on a battlefield. Those on a battlefield, as a rule, are concerned only about the enemy. Each soldier shares as the others have need, because their only concern is to beat the enemy. Peter, in a sense of speaking, was leading the Lord's soldiers into battle. The flag which he was waving said, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation," or from the influence of the Jewish leaders. Those who followed Peter were convinced of his mission to the extent that they sold their possessions and distributed them to their brothers and sisters. The only thing that mattered to them was the doing of the Lord's will. The kind of house they lived in or the kind of clothes they wore was secondary to the cause which was before them. We know from Acts 5:4 that the selling of their possessions was not a command from the Lord Jesus. It was a spontaneous act on their part. They were at perfect liberty to retain their own possessions which, of course, made their action all the greater. This action by the members of the church at Jerusalem was exercised "as every man had need." They, in other words, sold their possessions only as a need arose, or "as every man had need." It is likely that John retained his home (John 19:27), since the Lord's mother lived with him. The needs of his brethren were no greater than his own. God's plan for His church today is that her members give one-tenth of their income to His work. This is called the tithe. All we give above the tithe is termed an offering (tithes and offerings).

"And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart" (Acts 2:46). The parents of the about three thousand who were added to the church, no doubt, had always attended the customary temple prayer services at 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. These who had repented and believed and been baptized into the Lord's church probably had also been faithful in their attendance at the temple. Their presence at the temple, now, however, was much different than it had been. They, in fact, were now seeing Jesus Christ in the brazen altar, the laver, the golden altar, the curtains, etc. They now saw Jesus in the lamb that was slain there. They saw the blood of the Passover as His blood. The temple was the public worship place, and the approximately three thousand would use it wisely. They not only went to the temple but they went house to house for fellowship -- to talk about what the Lord Jesus had done for them. They were now convinced that the Messiah had come -- the Messiah whom they had heard about since they were children. They, no doubt, were very sorry that they had not recognized Jesus as the Messiah before He left. They, however, were very glad that God the Spirit had revealed Him to them.

We were informed that they went from house to house breaking bread. It is not likely that the entire three thousand did this together, but in separate parties. The separate parties, no doubt, broke off from the temple service and then went to various homes in the area. They, after all, had all things in common and were like a closely knit family with a lot to talk about. They, after all, according to Acts 2:41, had "gladly received His Word" and now they would gladly talk about it. The bread they broke was an act of fellowship toward each other rather than the taking of the Lord's Supper since the church was not meeting as one body, but only in groups. It is said that they ate their "meat with gladness and singleness of heart." They, in other words, had one single objective. That objective was to hear His word and act upon it. They had asked, "What must we do?" They had found the answer and now they were going forth while sowing precious seed. The "meat" they were eating relates to provisions of any kind rather than meat as we think of it.

We read in verse forty-one that they had received His word with gladness. Here in verse forty-six that gladness is still manifesting itself. Those who win great treasures are very happy at the moment of winning and as they observe their winnings. The approximately three thousand which are before us had been given a great treasure in the person of Jesus Christ, and they were still leaping for joy as they went from house to house. They, after all, had received eternal life through Jesus Christ their Lord.

"Praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). They, as they went from house to house, spoke to many in the various homes who had not believed. The unbeliever may have been a mother, father, son, or daughter, or even a cousin who was visiting there. Some of these were quickened by the Spirit and added to the church. They, after all, as they went from house to house, had "favor with all the people." The people, in other words, gave them a hearing ear and a receptive heart. All of this, of course, was the result of the presence and influence of God the Spirit. It is said that the "...Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47).

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INTERCOMMUNION: INCONSISTENT AND UNSCRIPTURAL - Part 3, Chapter 6

"The Inconsistencies and the Evils of Intercommunion Among Baptists"

by J. R. Graves

I will introduce this chapter with an unquestioned axiom: Truth is never inconsistent with itself.

When we examine the workings, and see the results of a given practice to be inconsistent and productive of evil, we may know that it is not of, but against the truth, as it is in Jesus; and if we are honest we will be willing to give up the practice, however consecrated as a denominational usage. Baptist churches, with all their rights, have no right to be inconsistent, nor to favor a practice unwarranted by the Word of God, and productive of evils. Under the inflexible law of usage, which compels the pastor to invite all members of sister churches present to the Lord's Supper, the following inconsistencies and evils, exceedingly prejudicial to our denominational influence and growth, are practiced and fostered.

The Inconsistencies of Intercommunion:

1. Baptist churches, that practice intercommunion, have practically no communion of their own. They have church members, church conferences, church discipline, but no church communion; and, therefore, no scripturally observed Lord's Supper. The communion of such churches is denominational, and not church communion.

2. Baptist churches that practice intercommunion have no guardianship over the Lord's Supper, which is divinely enjoined upon them to exercise. They have control of their own members to exclude them from the table if unworthy, but none whatever of others more unworthy who may come. Such churches can exclude heretics, drunkards, revelers, and "every one that walketh disorderly" from their membership, that they may not defile the feast; but they cannot protect the table from such, belonging to sister churches, so long as they do not limit it to their own membership.

3. There are Baptist churches that very properly exclude from their own membership all drunkards, theater-goers, dancers, horse-racers, and visitors of the race course, because they cannot fellowship such practices as godly walking or becoming a Christian, and, therefore, believe that they are commanded to purge the feast of all such characters as "leaven;" not to eat with them, and, yet, by the invitation to the members of all sister churches, they defile their table every time they spread it.

"Illustration: 1. The church at C excluded a member for 'general hard drinking and occasional drunkenness,' because it could not eat with such. He united with the church at W the next month, for he was wealthy and family influential; and on the next communion at C he accepted the urgent invitation of 'courtesy,' and sat down by the side of the brother who preferred the charge of drunkenness against him!

2. The church at M excluded two members on the charge of adultery, for marrying contrary to the law of Christ; the one having a living wife, and the other a living husband; they had both been legally divorced, not for the

one cause specified, but it was generally believed that they deserted their respective companions that they might obtain an excuse for marrying. Three months after they both united with a church ten miles distant, and now never fail to accept the affectionate invitations of the former church to commune with it!

4. There are multitudes—I rejoice to say nearly all our Southern churches outside the cities—who will not receive persons immersed by Catholics or Campbellites, Protestants or Mormons,



because they do not regard them as baptized at all; yet by their open denominational invitations they receive all such—and there are many of them in the churches-to their table, as duly qualified.

"Illustration: 1. The church at L refused to receive two Campbellites on their baptism. They offered themselves to the Sixth Street church, which received alien immersions, and whose pastor was an immersed Campbellite: were received, and they make it a point to accept the very pressing invitation of the church at L to commune with it!

2. The church at H has several members received on their Mormon immersions. Her sister church at P repudiates such immersions as null and void, yet these very members never fail to accept her liberal denominational invitation. From principle and solemn duty she forbids all such as her members, but from courtesy invites all such as foreigners to commune with her!

3. The church at A, La., excluded two brethren for unchristian conduct, which disqualified them to eat with it. They joined neighboring churches, and that church, every time it communes and gives the usual invitation, invites those very brethren back to the table from whence it had so recently expelled them!

Illustrations of the inconsistencies of this unscriptural practice could be multiplied, and many will suggest themselves to the reader. But any one of the above is quite enough for all who desire to be altogether right. The thoughtful reader knows that the Scriptures do not sustain a practice that is productive of such inconsistencies and destructive of church discipline.

The Evils of Intercommunion: Notwithstanding so many—the fast friends of intercommunion—profess to see no evils attending the practice, still there are both many and grave ones, which I can prove to those who grant that there are evils in open communion with other denominations. I propose to try the practice, in the first place, by the self-same arguments these brethren oppose to unrestricted

communion with other denominations: They will, perhaps, admit the force of their own arguments. Dr. Howell asserts, and he is endorsed by English Baptists, that open communion involves the entire subversion of the divine constitution of the churches. I assert that:

1. Intercommunion involves the entire subversion of the divine constitution of a church of Christ.

The practice is based upon one of two theories; 1. That the members of one church are entitled to all the privileges and rights of all other churches; or, 2. That a church may, if it sees fit, grant members of sister churches the right to commune with it—a right that Christ, for wise purposes, has withheld. The first of these theories entirely subverts the divine constitution of the churches, completely destroying, as it does, their independency, which is a fundamental principle, since no church would have the direction of its own government or discipline, or the control of its own ordinance [see last chapter]. The second theory would equally abrogate a fundamental principle of the constitution of a Christian church, which principle is that a scriptural church is an executive body only, and cannot change the least thing in the least respect.

Dr. Howell and Dr. Jeter also urge this argument against open communion, viz.:

2. That it subverts the discipline of Baptist churches.

I urge the self-same reason against intercommunion—it utterly subverts the discipline of the churches.

I will adopt the very language of Dr. Jeter in his "Tract" (P.51), using intercommunion in the place of open communion.

"This practice must proceed on one of two theories—either that every person [Baptist] is the sole judge of his qualifications for communion, or that all the members of the intercommunion churches are entitled to come to the Lord's table. The first of these theories entirely abrogates church authority and discipline. Suppose a church adopting it should be so inconsistent as to excommunicate a refractory member, of what avail would be its action? The excluded member differing from the church in judgment, and having the sole right to decide on his own qualifications for communing, would come to the Lord's table, and have a perfect right to come in defiance of the act of excommunication...If this theory is correct, church government is a farce and a folly... Suppose the other theory be adopted, and none but the members of evangelical [Baptist] churches be invited to the Supper, then what follows?...One church tolerates dancing among its members, and another does not. A member excluded from a given church for dancing may be consistently received into fellowship by a church tolerating the amusement. Now, could this member of a more lax church be received to the communion in the church from which he had been expelled, without enfeebling its authority and discipline? It would be placed in the attitude of admitting to its communion table members of other churches guilty of offenses for which it would excommunicate its own members. So long as

[Baptist] churches insist on different conditions of membership, they cannot practice open communion [intercommunion] without inconsistency, and a partial abandonment of discipline" (Tract, pp.51,52).

I submit this argumentation for the benefit of all those who can see that open communion with other denominations is destructive of church discipline, since precisely the same result follow; viz., those excluded from one Baptist church can unite with another, because our churches are independent, and can receive into, as well as exclude from their fellowship, whom they please, without consulting another church; and at the next communion season of the excluding church, come right back to the table from which, as leaven, he had been excluded! This is a matter of constant occurrence among us.

How a candid Baptist can resist, or why he should wish to resist this argument, I cannot understand.

If the argument is valid and of conclusive force against open communion, which all our writers and all Baptists for ages have declared it to be, why is it not equally valid and conclusive against intercommunion and must be so long as Baptist churches are independent organizations? This is a mountain evil, and its operations disastrous.

3. Intercommunion is productive of bitter strifes, discords, and alienations between Baptist churches.

It has ever been, and still is, continued at the expense of peace, good feeling, and fellowship of the churches. It has in every state of this Union, where the independency of the churches has been rigidly observed, alienated churches, distracted and divided the brethren, and seriously paralyzed the influence of the cause of Christ. During the past year alone, two churches in middle Tennessee, and two also in west Tennessee, with all the surrounding sister churches that could be drawn in to take sides, have been distracted and alienated, and forced into hostilities, because one church in each case, in the exercise of its scriptural independence, received into its fellowship a worthy brother, unjustly, in its opinion, excluded from the other. In each instance the excluding church is aggrieved, and protests at the act, since it compels it to observe its Supper as a church ordinance, or invite the excluded person back to its table, from which it had just expelled him as unworthy; and, rather than do this, the case is carried up to agitate and distract the association. The year before, the peace of three churches in Louisiana was destroyed, and the churches alienated for a like cause—one church having excluded two brethren, and these had joined two neighboring churches, and, with both of these, the excluding church was aggrieved, because, by their act, they enabled those excluded persons to return to its table. Was it not, in fact, intercommunion, and not independency, that produced these evils? For years past two churches in Talladega County, Alabama, have been alienated, and the association disturbed and divided for the same cause. In every case church independency is surrendered by the churches, and the association ac-

knowledge as having ecclesiastical jurisdiction over them, rather than to give up intercommunion, at best but an usage of the churches. Like difficulties are occurring all over the land, and have been ever since intercommunion, stealing in unawares, became the practice of the churches. Who will say it has not been, and is not productive of evils—when, in so many places, the cause has for years been measurably paralyzed by it?

4. To intercommunion may be traced a majority of all the councils called to settle difficulties between churches, and of all the disturbances in our district associations, during the last fifty years. The difficulties have in one form or another, grown out of this practice, and would not have been, had our churches observed only church communion.

The Concord and the Central Associations of Tennessee were shaken to their centers by the discussion of the question that springs from this practice, viz., the right of one church to receive to membership a member excluded from another, because it renders abortive the discipline of the excluding church, since it cannot invite the members of all sister churches to commune without often inviting her own excluded members. In the above cases the associations were called upon by the aggrieved churches to require the offending churches to exclude those members on pain of expulsion from membership in the association. The trouble between those churches in Alabama distracted the association for years, and disturbed the peace of its churches to the serious injury of Baptist influence and progress throughout the bounds of the body. Hundreds of brethren in that one association can testify that the evils growing out of intercommunion are not only many but grievous.

But these are not all or the worst evils of the practice.

5. Intercommunion is perceptibly influencing our churches to surrender their independency itself, in order to protect their communion tables.

This is a portentous evil which is seriously threatening a speedy change in the polity of Baptist churches. During and from the apostolic period, potent influences, both from within and without, have been antagonizing and seeking to contravene the fundamental principle of absolute church independency. Ministers, ambitious of power and authority, have, from the beginning, antagonized it from within, and will to the end of time. The influence of powerful centralized religious organizations from without operate upon our leaders to desire similar power; as the kingly forms of government of the nations did upon God's people of old, causing them to desire a king to lead them forth to battle.

Able advocates are now using the pulpit, press, and pen in the plausible advocacy of a modified independency, which they denominate the interdependency of the churches, which means that the churches must consent not

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INTERCOMMUNION

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only to be bound by the acts of ministerial councils and associations, thus making them virtually appellate courts, but also consent that the disciplinary decisions of one church, however unscriptural or unrighteous shall bind every other church. We are startled almost weekly of late at hearing southern editors and writers deprecating absolute church independency, and endorsing the specious pleas for interdependency, which, to the knowing ones, means nothing less than the total abrogation of local church independency, and the substitution of a centralized form of government, which floats in their conceptions as the denomination, controlled by conventions, associations, and councils, the last analysis of which is hierarchism.

A Baptist minister was appointed recently by the pastor's conference of Philadelphia to prepare and read an essay on "Denominational Centralization," which was adopted, I believe. He suggested the use of the word "unification," as less likely to arouse the watch-dogs of the churches. I will quote a paragraph from the essay, which now lies before me: "The tendency of our denominational thinking and working is towards centralization; or, if you will suffer me to substitute a word which is less liable to be perverted, less likely to arouse prejudice, and which also more completely expresses the meaning of current movements, I will say that the tendency of present thought and work is towards unification."

We are given to understand that these pleas for interdependence and unification mean nothing less than the utter subversion and abrogation of true church independency, and the substitution of a centralized denominationalism in its place, which is but another word for hierarchism--for the clergy invariably govern and control all centralized forms of ecclesiasticism. Now no more influential argument can be brought to bear upon the churches, one they can see and feel, than that by adopting the theory of church interdependency they can effectually guard their communion tables from the approach of their own excluded members!

Thus to support a manifestly unscriptural practice the divine constitution of the churches of Christ is coolly proposed to be abrogated! The sad fact is, that in many and large sections of our country, especially in the northern states, this interdependency is already so generally and so practically accepted by the churches that, Baptists excluded from one church, however unscriptural and unrighteously, no other church will restore him to his church rights until the excluding church restores and commends him, thus endorsing the theory that the acts of one church binds every other church. Who will deny that a practice, the support of which demands not only the violation of the appointments of Christ but the abrogation of the divine constitution of His churches, is not a fearful evil?

6. Intercommunion opens wide the door to all the ministerial tramps and impostors that pervade

the land.

They never fail to accept the invitations to commune, nor does the pastor fail to call upon them to administer one element, and thus introduce them into the fellowship of the church. It is needless to say that the church is disgraced in its own eyes and the eyes of the community when the exposure of these too numerous married impostors takes place. This is a crying evil.

7. It has encouraged tens of thousands of Baptists, on moving away from the churches to which they belong, to go without transferring their membership to a church where they were going, since they can have all church privileges--preaching and communion--without uniting with, and bearing church burdens. If Baptists could have no such privileges without membership, they would keep their membership with them, if, indeed, Christians and loving the church of their God; and if not it is more than well that they should not be members.

8. All the scandal heaped upon us as "close communion Baptists," with much of the prejudice produced in the public mind and fostered against us, has come from intercommunion. Had our churches, one and all, limited their communion, as they have their discipline, to their own members, we should no more have heard of "close communion Baptists" than we now do of "close membership Baptists," or "close discipline Baptists." We are suffering all this by our own inconsistency and departure from the primitive practice.

9. We annually lose thousands and tens of thousands of worthy persons who would have united with us, but for what they understand as our unwarranted close communion. Our practice can never be satisfactorily explained to them as consistent, so long as we practice a partial, and not a general, open communion. Our denominational growth is very materially retarded by our present inconsistent practice of intercommunion. If we practiced strict church communion, these, and all Christians, could understand the matter at once; and no one would presume to blame us for not inviting members of other denominations to our table, when we refuse, from principle, to invite members of other Baptist churches--our own brethren.

It is freely admitted by reliable brethren, who enjoy the widest outlook over the denomination in America, that for the last few decades of years the general drift has been, and now is, setting towards "open communion"--it is boasted of as a "broadening liberalism." There are numbers in all our churches--and the number is increasing, especially in our fashionable city and wealthy town churches--who are impatient of the present restrictions imposed upon the table; because, not being able to divide a principle, they cannot see the consistency of inviting members of sister churches, and rejecting those whom we admit to be evangelical churches, as though all evangelical churches are not sister; nor can they divine why Pedobaptist ministers are authorized to preach the gospel and to immerse; are invited to occupy our pulpits, and even to serve our churches as supply pastors for a season--all their ministrations recognized as valid, and yet they are debarred from our table. "They work for us, and we refuse to allow them to eat." The only ground

upon which we can successfully meet and counteract the liberalizing influences, which are imperceptibly bearing the Baptists of America into the slough of open communion, is strict local church communion, and the firm and energetic setting forth of our distinctive principles, as taught in God's Word.

Consistency: If each Baptist church had its own communion, with its own members, independent of all others, then each church could receive into membership, or exclude from membership, whoever it pleased, and no other church would have the shadow of a right to complain, or would be affected by it. On the one hand, the church excluding a person would have no power to prevent his uniting with another church that could fellowship him: and, on the other hand, the church receiving the excluded person would not, in so doing, restore him to the communion from which he had been cast out.

Conclusion: Now let the thoughtful, candid reader, in weighing all these specifications, especially consider the following before rendering his verdict:

1. If Christ originated His churches to be independent bodies, as all admit, would it not be reasonable to conclude that He appointed a symbolism, in some permanent and oft repeated ordinance, that would set this fact forth; that, so long as the churches rightly observed the ordinance, the centralization, interdependence, unification, or consolidation of His churches could never be effected? Have we not seen that the divine symbolism of the Supper does teach the absolute independency of the local churches, i.e., that each church is complete in itself--has sole control of its ordinance--is alone responsible for its right observance, and, since it symbolizes church relations, that none but its own members can unite in its joint participation? I can but think that to preserve His churches from centralizing tendencies and inevitable hierarchism, was one of the reasons why He guarded this ordinance with such fearful sanctions.

2. Is it not evident that the practice of intercommunion involves the implied right, on the part of the churches, to change Christ's appointments, thus assuming legislative powers, and even assuming the right to abrogate and abolish Christ's own appointments? For, if Christ did appoint the Supper to be observed by each church alone, and, as such, the eating of one loaf to symbolize that all the participants are fellow-members of the one and self-same church, then to extend this privilege to others than its members, is to contravene Christ's appointment and to make void one of His ordinances by its traditions.

3. Let the thoughtful reader mark this fact, that intercommunion must be abandoned if church discipline is to be sustained, or the independency of the churches given up and an interdependency adopted, practically at least, by which the acts of one church, however unrighteous, bind every other--thus precluding the possibility of an excluded person joining another church--and councils, associations, and conventions practically made courts of appeal, and the churches inevitably controlled by their decisions. But ministers control these bodies, ever have and every will, and hence intercommunion is the legislative parent of the hierarchy. If

any one of these inconsistencies or evils is admitted, then intercommunion is unscriptural.

Editor's note: We are reprinting this book by J.R. Graves because we believe it is a great book on an important subject by a very able writer. We are printing the book as it is. This does not mean that we agree with everything in it. In fact we strongly disagree with a few things therein. This article contains one such thing. Graves believes that, when a church excludes a member, it has no more say at all as to that member. He believes that another church can receive that excluded member, and that the excluding church has no right to be displeased with this action; or to take any action concerning such. This is certainly not the teaching of the Bible, and it is not the teaching and practice of the vast majority (so far as I know, all) of our kind of churches. We believe that to recognize, receive, or use in any way the excluded member of a sister church is, as Brother Hobbs so ably said in the TBE Forum of March 8, 1969, "the church that recognizes an excluded member in any way is deliberately 'slapping the church in the face' that excluded him." We all agree (in theory, though some who teach it do not practice it) that, when a member is Scripturally and properly excluded, no other church should recognize, receive, or use that member in any way. I might add that J.R. Graves membership in the Southern Baptist Convention detracts somewhat from his book. We believe that a church should be independent of Conventions and Associations of every kind. Please know that, though we consider this a great book on its subject, we do not stand behind everything in it. I suppose this must always be the case when a paper is running a book in its pages.

STUDIES

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should be saved." The salvation here is the same as that related to in Acts 2:40 where Peter admonished them to "save yourselves from this untoward generation," that is, the influence of the leaders or religious teachers in Israel. Jesus had called this group a generation of vipers -- poisonous vipers whose bite is deadly.

"Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour" (Acts 3:1). We read in Chapter 2:46 that the people daily resorted to the temple for devotion. Peter and John were members of this group which seems to say that their visiting the temple on a daily basis means that they were there at nine in the morning and three in the afternoon -- these being the hours of prayer. The fact that Peter and John went to the temple to pray raises a question relative to why they didn't forsake the assembly at the temple now that the Lord's church was here. We must keep in mind that the temple was where God had chosen to dwell among the people. It is true that there were a lot of heretics there, but it is also true that people like Zacharias, the dad of John the Baptist; Anna who had spent her widowed years in the temple; the lady who gave her last mite; and Simeon who blessed the young Jesus, were people of the temple.

We today are not to frequent the Jewish temples for worship, but the period in which Peter and John

lived was a time when there was a merging from one system to the other. Our Lord, in fact, was a constant visitor at the temple, even after He had organized His church.

The temple worship, after all, when observed correctly, pointed to the Lord Jesus. The sacrifices, the altars, the bread, the laver, etc., all were figures of Him. The Pharisees were blind leaders; they taught heresy. The Lord Jesus, on the other hand, when teaching in the temple, set the record straight. Now that Peter and John were visiting the temple, they too represented truth -- truth which God intended to convey through the temple worship. The Jewish day was from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m., which meant that the ninth hour would be nine hours from six in the morning, or 3 p.m. The sixth hour, of course, would be twelve noon.

"And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered the temple" (Acts 3:2). This lame man was well known to all the Jews who visited the temple. He, after all, was laid at the temple gate on a daily basis, or every day, so that all the people knew him well. They, no doubt, laid aside some money each week for him. Perhaps the children felt very good when they had given him a small offering. There were no hospitals for a person at that time in history, which meant that the poor were dependent on alms giving. Lazarus, you will recall, was laid at the gate of the rich man rather than at the gate of the temple. His friends, however, were also seeking alms for him. The fact that this lame man was known by all the Jews who frequented the temple meant that a miracle performed in his behalf would have a great effect upon the people. There, in fact, could be no doubt as to where he had been and where he had been elevated to. It is obvious that God had a plan for his crippled body. God, in fact, would be glorified by way of his healing. Let us also be assured that our labor or suffering for Him is not in vain. It is good that he was lame just as it was good that Daniel was put into the lion's den or that Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, died. The gate to the temple, where this lame man begged, was a place where all must pass. Multitudes, in fact, would walk by him each day. Some, no doubt, would give and not want the right hand to know what the left hand did. The Pharisees, on the other hand, were glad to drop their coins into his can so that all could see and hear how devout they were. They, of course, had their reward -- the reward being the applause of the people.

The gate where the lame man was laid each day was called "Beautiful." Josephus has advised that this gate was made of Corinthian brass, a most valuable metal. It had a magnificent appearance. It was here at this beautiful gate that the lame man would ask for alms. He, of course, was not aware when he got up on the particular day to which our text relates, that a poor man -- poorer than himself -- would give him the greatest gift of his life. He, in fact, would be healed.

"Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms. And (Continued on Page 9, Col. 1)

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Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. And he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them" (Acts 3:3-5).

The setting, then, is at the magnificent brass gate called Beautiful. Peter and John have just arrived on the scene. They had scheduled their day so that they would be there at the 3 p.m. hour of prayer. Jesus' mother was living with John at this time. She may have been at the temple too, but the record doesn't say.

Peter and John, after hearing the lame man ask for alms, fastened their eyes upon him. This action, of course, was not normal. God the Spirit, in fact, who was now on the scene, was working through them. Jesus, when He was here, had done similar things. He had healed the blind, lame, etc. Our Lord had gone back to heaven, and in His place had come God the Spirit. He, therefore, caused both Peter and John to fix their eyes upon the lame man and to say, "...Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6).

The Holy Spirit did not perform this miracle in His own name, but in the name, or under the authority of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. God the Spirit, after all, had not come to honor himself, but to honor God's Son. The Lord Jesus, when here in person, always performed miracles in His own name. The apostles, on the other hand, never attempted to perform any miracle in their own name, but only in the name of Jesus. The apostles, in referring to Jesus, referred to Him as "Jesus Christ of Nazareth." This name, after all, was the name by which He was commonly called. There was to be no doubt as to whom they had reference to.

Peter, on this particular day, was flat broke, as far as this world was concerned. He, in fact, said, "Silver and gold have I none." He, however, had God on his side; and if God was for him, who or what could be against him? Peter could not give him silver or gold, which his lame body could carry home; but he could enable him to walk, or even run, all the way home. It is likely that he did return home before those who laid him there were able to return for him. One can be sure that he did not wait around the temple until they returned for him, if indeed they were to return for him. Peter said to this lame man, "Rise up and walk." It was not a therapy program which Peter suggested, but only that he "rise up and walk." He did not ask him to attempt to rise up and walk but to do it. It is the same firm message to the sinner when he is advised to repent and believe the gospel. It is not to try to do it, but to do it. The man before us could not, in his own power, rise up and walk; and neither can the sinner repent and believe on his own. It is all through the power of God the Spirit. "And he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up; and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength." (Acts 3:7).

All the king's horses and all the king's men could not have put this man back together again. The United States, with all of her resources, could not have helped this man. The gift, then, that was given to him was truly great. God,

in fact, is greater than any problem that may confront us. We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. There are many of God's children who are still lame, or are suffering from other weighty problems. God has not chosen to heal them. Let each suffering child of God remember that He did not choose to heal Lazarus either. It, in fact, was best that Lazarus die and not live so that God would be glorified thereby. It was best that Job go through his many problems and that David fight Goliath. It would have been a shame if Lazarus had not died, or if Job had not had his weighty problems. We, when we arrive at the end of life's way, will know the why of it all. It will be then that we will understand. It is as stated in the following Scripture: "Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter" (John 13:7). The following Scripture says it all: "Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy" (James 5:11).

"And he leaping up stood, and walked, and entered with them into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God" (Acts 3:8). This man who had been lame is now stronger than many and perhaps stronger than most who walked on the temple grounds. He, in fact, did not simply stand up -- he leaped up. It is likely that the leaping caused his feet to leave the floor so that he was in mid-air for a moment. Gravity could no longer chain him to the earth's surface. He challenged gravity and overcame it in one single leap. He, in fact, leaped, stood, and walked. He, by God's mercy, could do it all. He was more than a conqueror through Him that loved him, and it is said that he gave God the praise. We who can leap, stand, and walk should also give God the praise. The fact that we were born with our ability makes such no less the gift of God. We, in fact, should do more praising God than he since we have had our gift longer.

MORMONISM

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since Mormonism keeps from 1,900 to 2,000 missionaries scattered up and down the country, propagating this most erroneous and harmful system, organizing Mormon meetings, and separating families, in the eastern, middle, southern and northwestern states, patriotic and Christian people everywhere need to have a clear idea of what Mormonism really is, and the shameful way in which it dishonors the Bible and the Christian religion, so that they can help to protect their own communities from the curse. And it is impossible to understand its character, without understanding its origin, so let us consider that first.

The Origin of the Mormon System

1. As an organization, it is only eighty-two years old, going back to April, 1830. About this time, or a few months before, the Book of Mormon was published and on April 6th, 1830, the Mormon church was organized with six members, in Fayette, Seneca County, New York.

Notwithstanding the long-continued effort to surround this origin with great mystery, and various spectacular fireworks from heaven, as manipulated by Joseph Smith, there is no mystery about it. The period of eighty-two years is not long enough to take us back to the region of mystery.

2. The two main sources of its origin: The first source is a group of three designing men, who put their profane wits together to palm off on various communities in New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio, this crude, bogus, man-made system under the garb of Christian phraseology, in order to deceive the unthinking.

People in general think of Joseph Smith as the one man above all others who originated the Mormon system. But the facts are solid against such a proposition. Smith was ignorant and illiterate, hardly able to read until after he was a grown man. He knew practically nothing about the Bible according to his mother's statement, and there is no substantial evidence in his life and conduct that he ever had any religion in his heart.

A religious man, however erratic he might be, who had been trained in the Bible and in theology, was needed to give the bogus system some kind of religious setting. The only man connected with the scheme from its very beginning, long before the public organization, who had any such qualifications, was Sidney Rigdon. About 1819, when 26 years of age, he was licensed to preach as a Baptist minister, and in 1832, became pastor of a small Baptist church in Pittsburgh.

He was an interesting speaker, but very erratic, and constantly presenting all sorts of wild and startling theories which unsettled the people. In 1824 he was deposed from the Baptist denomination because he was unwilling to work in harmony with its leaders. About two years later, he became a minister of the Campbellite denomination, and came under the powerful influence of that strong man, Alexander Campbell, who thoroughly indoctrinated him in all the doctrines and views peculiar at that time to the denomination. But Rigdon quarreled with Campbell, and argued if the latter could secure fame and authority for himself by organizing a new church, then he, Rigdon, could secure still greater fame and authority by giving to the world both a new revelation and a new religion, through the Book of Mormon.

The two unprincipled men who assisted Rigdon in working out this scheme were Parley P. Pratt, who afterwards became one of the twelve apostles, and Joseph Smith. Pratt furnished the mental and moral audacity necessary to propagate such a dishonest scheme, and Joseph Smith furnished the avaricious cunning, which enabled him to so commercialize the whole affair that the great bulk of the financial profit and of the ecclesiastical power fell into his hands. He occupied a subordinate place only until Rigdon could put the spurious Book of Mormon into its present shape. But just as soon as the church was organized, Joseph Smith seized the reins of power, rode rough-shod over everything and everybody that stood in his way, and did not lay down the power until his death in June, 1844.

The kind of man Pratt was is illustrated by the fact that he lost his life in 1857 near Fort Gibson,

Arkansas, at the muzzle of a shotgun in the hands of an enraged husband, whose wife Pratt had induced to desert her home and her children, and go with him to Utah as one of his plural wives.

These three unprincipled men were the fabricators of the Mormon system.

The Characteristics of Mormonism, Which Make it What it is 1. It is a strongly anti-American system. By that is meant that is flatly contradicts the fundamental principles of our free, representative government, by insisting that priesthood government in civil affairs is the only rightful government in this country, or any country. Apostle Orson Pratt, speaking for the Mormon church, thus lays down the law: "The kingdom of God (by which he means the Mormon priesthood) is an order of government established by Divine authority...All other governments are illegal and unauthorized... Any people attempting to govern themselves by laws of their own making, and by officers of their own appointment, are in direct rebellion against the kingdom of God" (Orson Pratt's Works, p.41).

Nothing is left undone to magnify the power and authority of the priesthood, and the people are instructed that to disobey the priesthood is the same as disobeying God. One of the official books of the church thus sets forth this extravagant and blasphemous claim: "Men who hold the priesthood possess Divine authority thus to act for God; and by possessing part of God's power, they are in reality part of God;... and those who reject it, reject God, even the power of God" (New Witness for God, p.187).

This tyrannical priesthood dictates and controls all the affairs of the people in the average Mormon community.

2. The Mormon system is thoroughly anti-Christian. While appropriating to itself Christian phraseology, and New Testament names and forms, it perverts or denies every fundamental doctrine of the Christian religion. It not only denies but ridicules the Christian doctrine of the spirituality of God, and teaches the people that He is a big man like Brigham Young. For Mormonism teaches that Adam is the god of this world. It denies that Christ's atonement has anything to do with our sins, but only with the sins of Adam. To get rid of our sins, we must work out our salvation through the teachings and forms, and ordinances of the Mormon church, with its multiplied baptisms for the dead.

3. Mormonism is a deliberate counterfeit of the Christian religion, intended to deceive the ignorant. It calls itself, "The Church of Jesus Christ," a name to which it can lay no claim. The term "church" is a Christian name and belongs alone to Christians--to those who are loyal to the Christian church, to Jesus Christ as the Divine and only Head of the church, and to the Bible as the supreme and only revelation from God.

(1) Mormonism tries to palm off on the world a counterfeit prophet in the person of Joseph Smith. He had all the marks of a counterfeit or false prophet, and not one of the marks of a true prophet. In prophetic times, what were the marks of a true prophet? In the first place, he was a man of pure and upright life; he was noted for spirituality of mind, so that he

could discern spiritual truth and teach it to others. He was loyal to God, everywhere and always, and he never made merchandise of his prophetic office. Joseph Smith was just the very opposite of this. Instead of living a pure and upright life, he was immoral and wicked, as we shall presently see. He had no spirituality whatever, and he constantly made merchandise of his pretended prophetic position, so that it secured for him houses and lands, and valuable corner-lots and lucrative offices, such as the office of mayor, municipal magistrate, municipal judge, lieutenant-general of the Nauvoo Legion, and the nomination to be president.

The Mormon people have allowed themselves to be grievously deceived by his autobiography, written in 1838. He tries to make out that when he was fifteen, he was a pious, praying youth, greatly concerned about religion, and especially troubled because there were so many religious sects, he could not tell which one to join.

Now let us see what Joseph Smith's neighbors have to say about his character. There is no lack of evidence. Joseph Smith's father and mother, with the other children, removed from Vermont to Palmyra, Ontario County, New York, in the summer of 1815. They were fortune tellers, dreamers, vision-seers. The father was a money-digger, and the son Joseph became famous all through that region as a money-digger. Young Joseph was about eleven years old at this time, having been born in Sharon, Vermont, December 23, 1805. After two or three years they moved about three miles south to Manchester, where they lived up to 1830. Take first the testimony of Pomeroy Tucker, editor of the "Wayne Sentinel," at Palmyra, on whose press the first edition of the Book of Mormon was printed. Says Mr. Tucker: "At this period (from 1820 to 1830) in the life and career of Joseph Smith, Jr., or 'Joe Smith,' as he was universally named, and the Smith family, they were popularly regarded as an illiterate, whisky drinking, irreligious race of people; the first named, the chief subject of this biography, being unanimously voted the laziest and most worthless of the generation...He could utter the most palpable exaggeration, or marvelous absurdity, with the utmost apparent gravity" (Origin, Rise and Progress of Mormonism, p.16).

In 1833 sixty-two residents of Palmyra made affidavit, over their own signatures, to the following statements:

"We, the undersigned, have been acquainted with the Smith family for a number of years while they resided near this place, and we have no hesitation in saying that we consider them destitute of that moral character which ought to entitle them to the confidence of any community...Joseph Smith, Sr., and his son Joseph, were, in particular, considered entirely destitute of moral character and addicted to vicious habits." There is much more evidence of a similar character.

(2) Mormonism tries to palm off on the world a counterfeit Bible, which it calls the "Book of Mormon" and sets forth as a reve-

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MORMONISM

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lation from God, putting it on the same level with our own Christian Bible, placing the two side by side in the Mormon pulpit. Now the Book of Mormon is simply a poor and weak imitation of our English Bible--a lifeless counterfeit. Where did the Book of Mormon come from?

Yet all that absurd, fictitious yarn of Joseph Smith, about an angel disclosing to him the box hidden in the hill of Cumorah, New York, on whose golden plates, in the reformed Egyptian language, was contained the material out of which he translated the Book of Mormon--let all that be cut out as having not a particle of foundation. There was no angel. The only plates Joseph Smith ever dug out of the hill of Cumorah, or any other hill, were put there by himself or by one of his agents. While the literature in regard to origin of the Book of Mormon is quite voluminous, the real facts about its origin can be stated in small compass. In 1808-09 Solomon Spaulding settled down as a citizen in the town of Conneaut, in northeastern Ohio. He was a man of education, having graduated from Dartmouth College in New Hampshire in 1785. He studied theology, and for a number of years was a minister of one of the Christian denominations in western New York. He had given up preaching, and had settled down in Conneaut as a business man, seeking to establish an iron foundry.

Being fond of Bible literature and religious romance and archaeology, he became interested in the many Indian mounds in that region, and especially in their builders. This led him to plan a religious romance, in which he brought a colony of the Lost Tribes from Jerusalem into this country, where they developed into two nations, the Nephites and the Lamanites, a purely imaginary people. The Book of Mormon, composed of fifteen different books, gives an account of their wanderings, hardships and battles. The records are alleged to have been written on plates of brass. These plates begin to jingle on the second page of the Book of Mormon, and they continue to jingle until they are finally sealed up and hidden away in the hill of Cumorah, near Palmyra, in 420 A.D.

Now there are ten intelligent witnesses, who stated over their affidavits in 1833, when the subject was fresh in mind, that about 1811-12, they heard Solomon Spaulding reading a religious story from the "Manuscript Found," trying to show that the American Indians are the descendants of the Lost Tribes. They remembered the quaint phraseology, and the queer names, Lehi, Nephi, Jarom, Moroni, and the rest. The expression, "and it came to pass," occurred so often, the boys nicknamed Spaulding, "Old Come-to-Pass." When the Book of Mormon was published these witnesses identified at once the queer names and phraseology. When Esquire Wright heard the Book of Mormon read in Conneaut he exclaimed, "Old Come-to-Pass" has come to life again." These witnesses were John Spaulding, brother of Solomon, and his wife; Martha Spaulding, Henry Lake, business

partner of Solomon Spaulding, John N. Miller, who worked for Spaulding, Aaron Wright, Oliver Smith and Naham Howard, three of Spaulding's neighbors, and Artemas Cunningham, of Geauga County, who visited Spaulding in October, 1811, to collect a debt. Spaulding showed him a story he was writing about the lost tribes. Mr. Cunningham spent half the night listening to the story. When the Book of Mormon appeared he recognized that in outline it was the same thing that Spaulding had read to him. The two other witnesses are the widow of Solomon Spaulding, and Mr. Joseph Miller, of Amity, Pa., where Spaulding died.

The evidence clearly shows that the Book of Mormon grew out of Spaulding's story but the defenders of Mormonism lose their mental balance whenever the subject is mentioned, and they treat it dishonestly. They say, "We have the Spaulding manuscript in the Oberlin College Library, brought back from Honolulu in 1884 by President Fairchild, and there is no connection between it and the Book of Mormon." Certainly not. No person well informed about the history of Mormonism ever claimed that there was any connection. But why say, "We have the Spaulding manuscript?" All that the facts warrant is, "there is a Spaulding manuscript in Oberlin," and the possession of that manuscript will afford no help to the defenders of Mormonism against the plagiarism of the book until they do one thing which they are unable to do; namely, establish a general negative, and show that this manuscript in Oberlin College Library is the only manuscript which Solomon Spaulding wrote. This cannot be done, for there is conclusive evidence that he wrote three or four manuscripts, and one of them was the "Manuscript Found," which he read to his neighbors, and which formed the basis of the Book of Mormon. So when the champions of Mormonism say: "The Book of Mormon could not have grown out of the Spaulding manuscript, for that manuscript is in Oberlin, and there is no connection between it and the Book of Mormon," they take a dishonest position by falsely assuming that this is the only manuscript Spaulding wrote, whereas there is positive evidence that he wrote several manuscripts. The fact, therefore, is established by abundant evidence that the Book of Mormon is a plagiarism from Spaulding's religious romance.

Just when Rigdon, Pratt and Smith first met and concocted the dishonest scheme of the buried plates is not altogether clear, probably about 1827. A strenuous attempt has been made to show that Rigdon and Pratt had no knowledge of the Book of Mormon until its publication, and they go through the wretched farce of pretending to be converted to Mormonism after the Book of Mormon had been published, which they say they knew nothing about before, although evidence shows that they both had been in the scheme to publish it since 1827. What a set of deceivers!

The one important fact is the plagiarism of the Book of Mormon from the Spaulding romance, entitled "Manuscript Found." It is not especially important to know who edited the Spaulding story, and developed it into the present Book of Mormon. But all the evidence points to Sidney Rigdon,

and it points to no one else. The evidence shows the following things: That a copy of the Spaulding manuscript was in the printing office of Patterson and Lambdin, in Pittsburgh, for a good while after 1814; that Rigdon and Lambdin were on intimate terms from 1818 to the death of Lambdin in August, 1825; that more than two years before the publication of the Book of Mormon, Rigdon had spoken to several of his friends about the coming publication of a book from golden plates, which would produce a great religious revolution. During these two years Rigdon was preaching wild and startling doctrines, afterwards found in the Book of Mormon.

Anyone familiar with the peculiar Campbellite doctrines of that time cannot read far into the Book of Mormon without discovering that the author had been a Campbellite.

His "speech betrayeth" him in the employment of phraseology to which he had become accustomed while associated with the brethren of that denomination. Furthermore, the book is full of Rigdon's own peculiar views. He deserves credit, however, for making the Book of Mormon condemn polygamy, and for condemning it himself, which brought him into sharp conflict with both Joseph Smith and his successor, Brigham Young.

(3) Mormonism imposes upon the people a counterfeit priesthood, which it calls the "Melchizedek and Aaronic priesthood," although there never was any Melchizedek order of priesthood. There was one man by that name, both a king and a priest, without predecessor or successor, and so chosen as a type of the priesthood of the Son of God. The Aaronic priesthood descended from father to son, in a marvelous way, for forty-five generations, until all priesthood was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Since the one perfect sacrifice of Himself made by our great High Priest, Jesus Christ, any person who pretends to be a priest and claims the right to stand between us and God, is what our Saviour calls "a thief and a robber."

What a bogus priesthood this pretended Mormon priesthood is! It has no more right to administer the Christian ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, than any other group of unprincipled men who repudiate Jesus Christ as the Divine Head of the church, and go through the blasphemous farce of electing themselves members of "the holy priesthood" and yet Mormons tremble at the dictates of this bogus priesthood, and fear to exercise the freedom of opinion which is their right. The 7th, 8th, 9th and 10th chapters of Hebrews give us Divine instruction as to the fact that all priesthood was forever fulfilled and came to an end in Jesus Christ.

4. Mormonism imposes upon the people a counterfeit group of apostles. It requires four things to make a true apostle:

(1) He must have been acquainted with Jesus Christ before His crucifixion. (2) He must have seen Christ after His resurrection from the dead. (3) He must have received his commission as an apostle directly from Christ, as Divine Head of the church.

(4) He must be able to work miracles to show that God sent him.

So that any group of men, now, who say they are apostles, are

simply willful deceivers, and the truth is not in them.

(to be continued in next issue)

(copied from March 1, 1980 issue TBE)

NO ORDINARY

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grieving families of Hurds and Broomfields had gathered for the funeral. The townspeople rallied in support, and the town's five churches had fixed meals for everybody. It was as though the wagons were circled against some dark and evil outside force that had invaded the little community, slaughtered four of their own, then disappeared. The killings were shrouded in mystery, with no apparent suspects.

Into this sorrowing assembly came a group of no-nonsense law officers. They had come to arrest Elbert Hurd Jr., 15, son of Laura, grandson of Eva, and brother to Leslie and Daniel. They plucked Elbert Jr. from the midst of the mourners and hauled him away in handcuffs, accused of the four murders. The lad, in jail, was not permitted to attend the funeral services. Thereupon, there was double sorrow in Sterling -- of the unfathomable sort.

"It was kind of a desperation thing," says Dennis Corbett, 39, pastor of Sterling's Assembly of God, the Hurds' church, who preached the funeral. He changed his sermon on the spot, taking his text from Hebrew 9:27, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." They sang *Amazing Grace*, *The Old Rugged Cross*, and Eva's favorite, *Nearer My God to Thee*. "After all," the pastor said, "funerals are for the living."

Pastor Corbett is ordinarily a gentle and forgiving man. He graduated from North Central Bible College at Minneapolis, which also numbers Jim and Tammy Bakker among its alums. He is tolerant toward Jim and Tammy, notwithstanding the shame they brought on his alma mater. But he thinks this Elbert Jr. thing is something else again. "Our prayer," Corbett says, "is that the truth will be revealed and all lies exposed."

When Elbert Sr. drove his family on July 19 to their rendezvous with tragedy on the Arkansas River, they sang hymns in the car all the way. Their favorite, he says, was a chorus sung to the theme music of the movie, *Chariots of Fire*: "Give glory to God, church; Give glory to God! Sing praise to His Name! Hallelujah!"

The Hurds were known as a God-fearing family. They moved back to Sterling 18 months ago from Sunshine Assembly of God in St. Peter, Minn. The pastor there, John McEachran, says they were sincere, loyal church people, driving 50 miles round trip to attend services. So, questions that haunt people around Sterling today go like this: "What happened out there on the Arkansas River?" "Why, in God's name, would Elbert Jr. do such a thing?" There are no ready answers.

Sterling Police Chief Ron Groth says: "Something Satanic is going on here." Rice County Sheriff Dale Higgins agrees. Corbett had exposure to Satanism around Broomfield, Colo., where he pastored before moving to Sterling, and he opines: "There's more of that kind of stuff going on than people think." Corbett says Satanists around Sterling call themselves "The Brotherhood of Pride."

Chief Groth says that Elbert Jr. and Corey Carlisle, the 15-year-old arrested with him in the murders, are reportedly members of the local cult of devil-worshippers. Members wear Zuni Indian rings. Elbert Jr. spent the night of the killings in nearby Alden with an ex-motorcycle-gang-member, a n'er-do-well prison parolee named Doug Thurman. Thurman says Elbert Jr. quoted from the Satanic Bible and admitted he used to worship the devil. Matt Hurd, Elbert Jr.'s 18-year-old brother who lives in another state, says he has heard Elbert Jr. refer to his involvement in Satan-worship.

Whether any of these rumblings about the devil and Elbert Jr. have any foundation in fact -- or, indeed, whether it matters -- may all come out in the legal wash. Both boys are now in the Rice County jail, awaiting a series of hearings that may begin August 21 before Magistrate Don Alvord. Bob Stephan is fuming that state law will not allow the boys to be tried as adults, 16 being the present minimum age for that. Even if found guilty, they go free at 21, willy nilly. Maybe our law should be changed.

Martin Luther once said, "Let a Christian know this, that he is sitting in the midst of devils, and that the devil is closer to him than his coat or shirt or even his very skin." But we may take heart, because John once said, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."

FORSAKE

(Continued from Page 1)

prise and sorrow. It is important what you hear and what you believe. It is important where you go to hear it and who you hear it from. Many people say one church is good as another, and one gospel is good as another. No, there is only one gospel. Notice what Paul told the church at Corinth, in 1 Corinthians 15:1. "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;" He said you stand in this gospel. The word of God is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

"By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain" (1 Cor. 15:2). Paul was telling the church here as well as the church at Galatia. He said you keep in memory what I preached unto you unless you believed it in vain.

"For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3-4).

So, Paul said "keep in memory what I said, the profession you made, and the stand you take. You took it by hearing the gospel of Jesus Christ." What Paul is talking about is not some fairy tale or something that man might say, or man's doctrine. But Paul said "you stand and keep this in memory. You stand and be girded in the gospel of Jesus Christ." It is very important.

"O FOOLISH Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes

FORSAKE

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Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?" (Gal. 3:1).

He said who has charmed you or bewitched you that you would leave this doctrine? He said he had evidently set Jesus Christ among them crucified. Any pastor or any preacher that is worth his salt will set forth Jesus Christ and Him crucified among the people He preaches to. I don't know any other way to get a hell-deserving sinner saved than to preach to him the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ.

Paul tells them again in Galatians 5:7-8. "Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you."

It did not come from the gospel. It did not come from me as the instrument and vessel in which God has used to preach the gospel to you. It isn't from God who has called you by His grace through the gospel of Jesus Christ. Who is it that is persuading you that you have to put yourself back under the yoke of the law? It is a good thing for a man to do the best he can to live and to keep the law. Jesus Christ is our law giver and law keeper. He has fulfilled and established the law and kept the law for us. But people are being persuaded. This persuasion cometh not of Him that calleth you. That is why I say we have to be careful. We have to be very careful because of the lambs. The ones that haven't been saved very long. They will be easily persuaded. Children are so easily persuaded because they are so tender and loving. They have a tendency to believe anybody. We have to teach and show them that they can't be persuaded by them that are outside of the doctrine of Jesus Christ.

So then Paul is really upset with them. He said I haven't failed, and I have preached the gospel to you. I preached it like it ought to be preached. I showed you Jesus Christ and Him crucified. Paul couldn't understand many things. He couldn't understand why a man couldn't be as strong in Christ as he was. Paul couldn't understand why a man couldn't suffer as much as he suffered, do without as much as he did without, and preach the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ even if it placed his own life in jeopardy. We need many apostle Pauls in the Lord's churches. Paul was really upset. He had already told them in Galatians 1:4. "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father."

He had already told them that Jesus Christ was the great substitute. Christ took their place, their sins, and identified Himself with them on the cross of Calvary. People, that should be enough right there. Jesus Christ was our substitute. He identified Himself with us and took all of our dirty sins upon Him. They were nailed to the cross, and God turned His back upon His lovely Son because of our filthy sins that were placed upon Him nearly two thousand years ago.

There are several things here the Apostle Paul is telling these believers. Their unsteadiness in their faith and being unsteady in the professions of faith that they had made in the Lord Jesus Christ. First of all they were removed

from Him that had called them. Not only from the apostle Paul, who had been God's instrument of preaching this glorious gospel to them, but from God Himself. They were guilty from what? From God Himself. By whose orders and directions the gospel was preached unto them. Of the great privileges of the gospel, and they were guilty of great abuse of God. That great gospel had been designed and ordered of God. God raised up the apostle Paul and used him as the instrument to take them the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ; to bring them into the great privileges of being sons and daughters of the most high God and the bestowing of all His mercy and grace upon them. What I am talking about here is that they were removed from Him, that is God, that called them by His grace. We have many people here not lost, but who are in a terrible condition, and they have become unsteady. They had departed from all of these great privileges of the gospel. So they were guilty of a great abuse of God. What were they guilty of? Of the love, mercy, and grace of God toward them. They had been called unto the grace of Christ; the most glorious, wonderful, outstanding discovery that this world has ever known. God has given them a divine revelation. God has opened His heart and they have looked into the very bosom of God. They had seen the wonderful love and grace of God extending down in the person of Jesus Christ.

Paul is writing to the church about this grace in II Corinthians 8:9. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."

You know the grace of God if you are a child of God; if you are a born again believer. If you have experienced the sovereign grace of Almighty God, then you know about it. You have never discovered anything until you discover the riches of God's grace; till you discover the poverty of your Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He hung naked on that cross. You are partakers of the greatest blessings and benefits that anyone could ever receive in this world and the world to come. It is wonderful to live in America, the land of the free and home of the brave. But this is nothing compared to the great blessings and benefits of the sovereign God of this universe that are bestowed upon us. We are so undeserving of them. He raised us out of a dung heap, cleaned us up, and put the joy of peace in our heart. He brought us into justification and reconciliation. Justification is one of those great blessings. You are a justified person, as if you had never sinned. Why? Because you are clothed in the righteous robe of Jesus Christ. What is that righteous robe? A robe of life. How did you receive it? Through Jesus Christ.

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Cor. 5:21).

The righteousness of God in Him imputed to us. The work of Calvary. The work of God. They had departed knowing that their standing before God was perfect. Even if they are out of the will of God, their standing with God never changes. Why? Because their standing was in Jesus Christ their substitute. It will never change. I'm not saying this gives us a li-

cense to sin. I am just saying that justification deals with our standing before God, it never changes; because if it did, Jesus Christ would have to change. The Bible says He is the same yesterday, today, and for ever.

"THEREFORE being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 5:1).

Many saints of God had come out from behind the hedge. God doesn't remove the hedge. He removed it one time to show us and gave us a lesson in the book of Job. God doesn't remove the hedge. You step out from behind the hedge. When you step out from behind the hedge then you are in a position to be hurt. They tried to mingle their opinions and ideas with the gospel of Christ. The apostle Paul resents these doctrines and he calls it another gospel. Why? Because it opens a different way of justification. It opens a way of so called justification that a man must mingle mixed grace with the works of the law to be justified. Not by grace alone but by grace and by works. That is what Paul is dealing with. It opens a different way of salvation that a man can be saved by works or by getting the law. It opens a way of salvation that a man can do the best he can and turn over a new leaf. We have that all around us everywhere.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9). No man was ever saved by works. Any kind of works or anything that you do to think that you merit eternal salvation is under the law. The law was a covenant of works. God said you do this and live; you do that and die.

Works opens a direct attack against the pure gospel of Jesus Christ. It gives a base of operation. It opens faith and works and not faith in Christ.

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:6-9).

HAND

(Continued from Page 1)

from one place to another. Nothing changes.

And people haven't changed either. There in the garden, when Adam took the fruit from the forbidden tree, and God asked him; "Who told you were naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?" What did Adam say? You know what he said; he said the very same thing that we say today, "My wife did it to me." And not only do we blame our shortcomings on someone else, but like Adam; we even blame God. "The woman that thou hast given me." She did it. Now you

look here God; it isn't my fault. I mean, after all, if you hadn't put that sin in the world and hadn't made it to be so enticing, I wouldn't have been tempted to partake of it. Now don't tell me you don't say such things as that. Have you ever said, why every one is doing it, so what is wrong with it? Then you are guilty of blaming God for whatever it is that you are talking about, because God has said that there is nothing in this world that He has not created or brought to pass; yes even the afflictions. Zion had been afflicted. Look at verse 13 "God has mercy upon his afflicted!" "But Zion said the LORD hath forsaken me, My Lord hath forgotten me."

People never change. You be honest; if not with others, at least with yourself. How many times you have said in your heart "Boy, God is not taking care of this the way I want it done." Or, "Why had God turned His back on me?" We question God, and when we do we are blaming God for our predicament. Yes, God brought it about, but don't be guilty of faulting God for your own doings. God may have very well brought about those afflictions to get your attention. Some of us have to be laid out flat upon our backs to ever get our eyes turned to the right direction. Look up to see where our blessings, and yes, our afflictions are coming from. Don't you realize that so many times it's only when things look dark and bleak in our lives that we, having nowhere else to go, to go God.

Oh yes! Even in our declaration; "My Lord hath forsaken me, God hath forgotten me." By these very words we are crying out to God. What we should be crying out is "My God forgive me."

My Lord Jesus hung upon the tree. He hung there for my sins. He hung there for your sins, and about the ninth hour, the word of God says, "He cried out with a loud voice, My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Now you listen to me; He had a right, He and He alone could cry out to God, "Why hast thou forsaken me?" Christ Jesus had done no wrong. God did not need to get His attention. God forsook Him because of you, because of your sins. Christ Jesus took the sins of the elect upon Himself; and for our sins was He beaten, for our transgressions was He smitten. You and I have no right to fault God for our problems; we have no righteousness of our own. Our righteousness is in Christ Jesus, and in Him alone can we trust.

You listen to me beloved; the next time you get to thinking things sure are not going the way you want them to go, or I sure wish God would send a blessing, or, why me Lord, why me?; you just remember that God paid the price for your salvation. God and God alone created you and gave you whatever you have and whatever you are and whatever you will be. If you have a problem, or many problems, take those problems to the Lord. Have a talk with the one, the only one that can turn those problems into blessings. For of a truth, every problem, when it is finished, is a blessing indeed. I am reminded of that which Job said after his trials and tribulations came upon him, and his wife would have him curse God and die; "What shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?"

Evil is brought upon us as a tool to strengthen us, to bring us down to our knees, and to lift our eyes up to God. Forgive me, Oh

Lord of Lords, guide me oh Lord of hosts, and direct my ways oh Holy Father that I might walk in thy ways and by thy side. I am in thy hand oh Lord; my walls are continually before you. Our text tells us that even when we stray, even when we try to walk our own ways; we are still in the hands of God. If we are His people, called by His name, we can not remove ourselves from His hands. We are graven there; etched as it were in granite for eternity; and our walls, that is our limitations, are continually before Him. We can only go so far, do so much. The word of God says nothing about a door. There is no way out of the Father's hand. And the shame of it all is, why do we ever stray or attempt to leave the hand of God. But we do. Every one of us are guilty.

Beloved if you truly be a child or God, God hath not forsaken you, nor has He forgotten you. The fault lies not with God, but with you. Yes, we are graven in the palms of the hands of God. We are afflicted, and we like sheep stray from the fold; but as Christ tells us in John 10:27-29, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life: and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." That's double security. Christ says in verse 30, "I and the Father are one."

Are you of His sheep? Do you hear His voice? Are you in the hand of God?

DAN PHILLIPS CLEARED

"A rape charge against (Dan Phillips)... was dismissed Wednesday in Bristol Virginia Circuit Court for lack of evidence..." Quote from the Bristol Herald Courier dated September 14, 1989.

Oh, what a time of shouting, praising God, rejoicing, and weeping with joy was had about 2:40 p.m. Wednesday, September 13th in the Bristol, Virginia Courthouse. I was there, joining with about fifty friends of Dan Phillips, who had come to testify in his behalf.

Dan Phillips is one of the finest men I know. He is a kind and good man who desires to help others. This led him to take a job with a Federal funded Rehabilitation program for the handicapped. He gave himself to this work, feeling that he was helping others. A young woman in the program accused Dan of rape earlier this year. We, who knew Dan, never doubted his innocence. Much prayer went up to God pleading that the truth would be established, and the verdict would be according to truth.

From the beginning of the trial, God's sovereignty was very evident. The Prosecution presented all it had which amounted to nothing. Dan's lawyer moved for dismissal. The case was dismissed for lack of evidence with no defense needed. Praise God! Praise God! Praise God!

CAN YOU IMAGINE THIS?

John the Baptist baptizing with a saucer or a pitcher of water? "And John also was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there...." (Jn.3:23).

THE INCOMPARABLE CHRIST

"But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5).

He came from the bosom of the Father to the bosom of man. He put on humanity that we might put on divinity. He became the Son of Man that we might become sons of God. He came from Heaven, where the rivers never freeze, winds never blow, frosts never chill the air, flowers never fade, and no one is ever sick. No undertakers and no graveyards are there, for no one ever dies -- no one is ever buried.

He was born contrary to natural laws, lived in poverty, was reared in obscurity. Only once did He cross the boundary of the land--in childhood. He had no wealth or influence, and no college education, yet the profoundest wisdom of men has never equalled His last discourses in John 13 to 17 and the Sermon on the Mount. "Never man spake like this Man."

His relatives were inconspicuous and unimportant. In infancy He startled a king. In boyhood He puzzled the doctors, even at twelve years of age, proving He was far in advance of the theologians, for He was taught of God. In manhood He ruled the elements so that He quieted the raging sea and defied the laws of gravitation by walking on the water. He healed the multitudes without medicine and made no charge for His services. He never wrote a book, yet not all the libraries of the country could hold the books that have been written about Him. He never wrote a song, yet He has furnished the theme of more songs than all songwriters combined.

He never founded a college, yet all the schools together cannot boast of as many students as He has. He never practiced medicine, and yet He healed more broken hearts than the doctors did broken

bodies.

He never marshalled an army, drafted a soldier, nor fired a gun, yet no leader ever made more volunteers, who have under His order made rebels stack arms or surrender without a shot being fired.

He is the Star of Astronomy, the Rock of Geology, the Lion and the Lamb of Zoology, the Harmonizer of all discords, and the Healer of all diseases. Great men have come and gone, yet He lives on. Herod could not kill Him, Satan could not seduce Him, Death could not destroy Him, the grave could not hold Him, and even demons obeyed Him. He fed the hungry multitudes with a boy's little lunch, broke up funerals, and gave back to life those that were dead.

He laid aside His purple robe for a peasant's gown. He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor. As to how poor, ask Mary, ask the Wise Men. He slept in another's manger; He cruised the lake in another's boat. He rode on a borrowed beast; He was buried in a rich man's tomb.

All failed, but He never.

He conquered death, rose on the third day as He said He would, ascended into Heaven, is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God, and will one day come in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory for His born-again, blood-bought ones, who will be forever with Him according to promise. After, He will judge the world in righteousness, when every knee shall bow to Him and every tongue shall confess Him as Lord--His friends gladly, but His enemies in great fear, seeking for a place to hide from His face (Rev. 6:15).

The ever Perfect One--He is the Chief among ten thousand, the only One Who can satisfy the soul and give everlasting life to those who have it not.

He is altogether lovely, and He is my Saviour.

--Author unknown

APPRECIATED LETTERS

Dear Brother Wilson:

I just wanted you to know that I'm still enjoying your sermons and the sermons of others; also the Baptist Examiner Forums. Use the enclosed offering where you think it is most needed.

Yours in Christ,
J. L. Sadler, Alford, Fla.

Dear Brother Wilson:

Enclosed is a money order for \$ for which I would like the following subscriptions renewed. What is left over, use where needed. TBE has been a real blessing to us for over 30 years. May God bless each one of you and supply your every need.

Lu Ella & John Wolfe,
Williamsport, Pa.

Brother Wilson:

A check is enclosed from the church for TBE. Thank God for it's stand for the Gospel truth. We still have no pastor. We have had many who were interested, but no grace believers. Please continue to pray for the church, we need a preacher of God's calling.

Providence Baptist Church,
Kountze, Tx.

Dear Brother Wilson:

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ! I am writing for a subscription of The Examiner to be sent to a friend. She had the opportunity of reading some of the Examiners while here in town and said that she really liked them and wanted a subscription. Enclosed is a check for her subscription. I also want to let you know that your study on Elijah has been a blessing to me as well. Keep up the good work!

Keith Webster, Louisville, Ky.

IMPRESSIONS

My first time at conference. One or two preachers made themselves look back. The rest of the preachers were great. I really enjoyed myself. The food was good and everyone was so nice.

Cecilia Chandler,
Winston-Salem, N.C.

This conference was a special blessing for me--listening thru the ears of new-comers. We miss many blessings by taking our truths and doctrines for granted! The fellowship was so appreciated plus the many efforts and labor of host church members and pastor. You'd never believe it, but her pastor is 62 years old and still going strong. Thanks so much for inviting such good preachers and for their subjects. It's so assuring to see the number of faithful saints that still long to gather to fellowship and be under the teaching of the truth. Thanks again.

Dorothy Foor, Gladwin, Mi.

I am glad to be here at the conference even if only for Sat. May 27th. I am enjoying the fellowship and preaching. I wish I could stay the whole weekend. There are so many brothers and sisters I have missed seeing due to their not being here. I pray God will mend this sweet fellowship to the edifying of His church. I miss you, brethren! I feel that God will reward all who humble themselves that they may once again fellowship together in the name of God. I pray so fervently for this as I love them all. Somehow I cannot draw the lines in this fellowship break. I love all involved. Please, in the name of our precious Lord Jesus Christ, mend the fellowship, because you will before Jesus comes because you absolutely will in heaven.

Kim Griffin, Columbus, Ohio

A "Mega-Vitamin" for the soul. Six months worth of fellowship, preaching and teaching condensed into three Spirit-filled days. What a blessing!

Elder James Crace,
Crescent Springs, Ky.



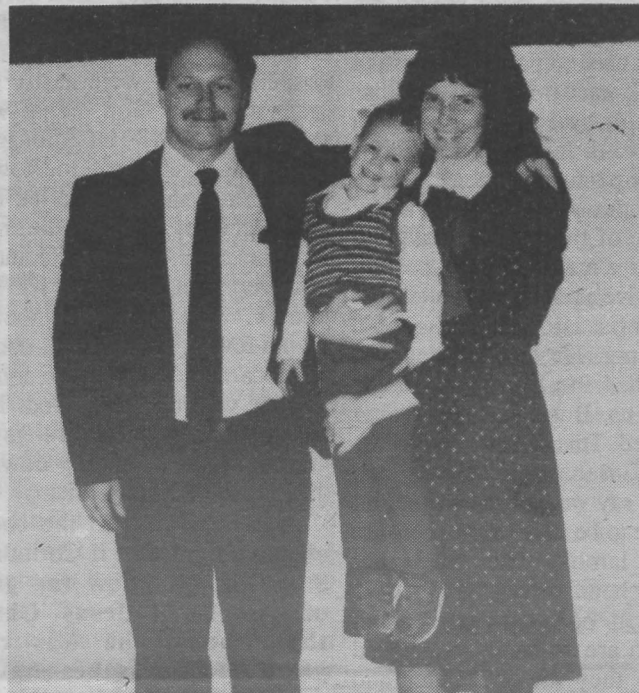
Elder Jim Walters of Mansfield, Ohio preaches to our conference.

When the fiery sleet of God's wrath descends, the ransomed sinner smiles because he has found a retreat, a sanctuary. The fury of the storm spent itself upon the great Substitute, Jesus Christ! He bore it all, and the sinner escapes. Oh, what a blessed truth! He who has never realized it for himself has never known the gospel. I care not how high your professions, nor how great your boastings, nor to what church you belong; if you have not come to rest in the substitutionary work of Jesus Christ, you do not know the first letter of the gospel alphabet.

--Charles Spurgeon



Some people from church pastored by Paul Tiber at our conference.



Andy and Carol started attending our conference while courting. Now look at them and Timothy.



In line at the feeding trough.



Some Hoosiers and a Buckeye relative at our conference.