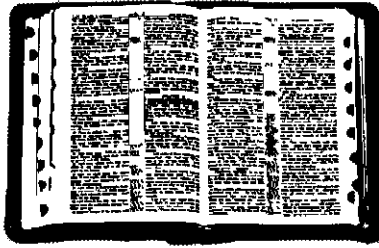


SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

"Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" — John 5:39.



"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" — Acts 17:11.

"DEVOTED TO THE SEARCH FOR DIVINE TRUTH"

VOLUME XXII

AUGUST, 1981

NUMBER 8

THINK ON
THESE THINGS

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PRAYING AND SINGING TO JESUS (2)

This is part two of a reply to an article by the same title as this one by brother Hoyt H. Houchen, which appeared in the February, 1981 issue of *Searching The Scriptures*. For a better understanding of this article I suggest that you read again part one which appeared in the last issue of this paper.

I consider brother Houchen an honorable man whom I love and respect. I am not making any personal attack upon him, and I trust all will understand this. I simply do not agree with his article on the matter of praying to Jesus in this present age. He believes Christians should pray and sing to Jesus as well as to the Father in Heaven. I do not believe that Christians may scripturally pray to Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ Indispensable To Prayer

I do not understand why one would want to pray to Jesus instead of the Father because not one word uttered to the Father is acceptable without Christ. He is in every prayer of any kind that is uttered to the Father. It is by virtue of his blood that we have opened unto us "a new and living way" that we may have boldness to enter into the holiest (Heb. 10:19, 20).

But now tell us, if we pray directly to Jesus, what part does the Father have in that prayer? and what part does the Holy Spirit have? Who is the mediator? the high priest and advocate through whom we go in prayer to Jesus Christ? This will not be an easy

question to answer while holding the "praying to Jesus" view.

The Blood of Jesus Christ

A blood sacrifice is required by God in order to be able to come unto Him. Every prayer uttered to the Father must recognize Christ and the work he did and continues to do to make prayer possible.

The Father recognizes Christ as God (Heb. 1:8). God sent His Son into the world "that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9). The blood of Christ accomplished all that God intended. By the blood of Christ we are justified (Rom. 5:9); redeemed: received the remission of sins (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; Rev. 5:9); obtained peace (Col. 1:20; Eph. 2:13, 14); sanctified (Heb. 10:10, 12, 13; 13:12); cleansed from sin (1 John 1:7); purchased us (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 1:19); reconciled us unto God (Rom. 5:10; Col. 1:21, 22; 2 Cor. 5:18, 19). All this is essential before we can pray unto God. To deny it is to deny the power of the blood of Christ. Christ died that he might offer his blood as high priest for our sins (Heb. 9:7, 12, 14), and appear in heaven in the presence of God for us (Heb. 9:24, 25).

Christ As High Priest

The function of an high priest: "For every high priest taken from among men is ordained FOR MEN in THINGS PERTAINING TO GOD, that he may offer gifts and sacrifices for sins" (Heb. 5:1).

God appointed the high priest, not man (Heb. 5:4-6). The priesthood being changed, "there is made of necessity a change also of the law" and Christ will continue as high priest because he "hath an unchangeable priesthood" (Heb. 7:12, 24). As high priest Christ makes intercession to God for us (Heb. 7:25). He has gone into heaven, "now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. 9:24).

With all this information before us regarding the necessity and function of an high priest, being "ordained FOR MEN in things pertaining to God," how can we pray to Jesus who IS the high priest? If there

must be a high priest (Jesus Christ) between men and the Father in heaven, why would there not be a necessity for an high priest between men and the Son Jesus Christ in heaven? Those advocating praying to Jesus have an impossible problem, seeing that in the priesthood of Christ He is a priest for ever, and has an unchangeable priesthood.

Christ As Mediator

A mediator is one who stands between two parties who are alienated and reconciles them. He must be able to relate to both parties. "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:18).

Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon says of **mediator**: "one who intervenes between two, either in order to make or restore peace and friendship, or to form a compact, or for ratifying a covenant; a medium of communication, arbitrator. . . i.e. every mediator, whoever acts as mediator, does not belong to one party but to two or more, Gal. iii.20." (p. 401).

The law of Moses was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator, that is, by Moses. "Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one" (Gal. 3:19, 20).

We know that a mediator presupposes at least two parties. He acts not as one of the parties, but between them to communicate or arbitrate the difficulty between them, God speaks to man through His Son Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:1, 2). Jesus says the words he speaks are from the Father (John 14:10). He further says that "whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak. (John 12:49, 50).

Now if God speaks today **ONLY** through His Son Jesus Christ, and by no other means, why should we think that we can speak to the Father without the mediator He selected?

Revelation is God **speaking** to man; prayer is man speaking to God. Prayer and revelation have a strong resemblance in their involvement of Christ between the Father and man. In both directions there must be a mediator, and Christ is that mediator, selected by God.

The matter of prayer and a mediator is very explicit in the New Testament. 1 Timothy 2:1-4 exhorts that supplication, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men. Verse 5: "For there is one God. . ." The **ONE GOD** of 1 Timothy 2:5 is the same **GOD** of Galatians 3:20.

"For there is **ONE GOD**, and **ONE MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND MEN**, the man **CHRIST JESUS**." As God speaks to men **THROUGH** this **MEDIATOR**, men have no recourse but to speak to the **ONE GOD THROUGH** this mediator, **CHRIST JESUS**, whom God has chosen.

The one and only mediator between God and men is the **MAN** Christ Jesus; "who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (vs.6). Christ is the

Searching The Scriptures

Volume 22

AUGUST, 1981

Number 8

Published Monthly at
BROOKS, KENTUCKY

Second Class Postage Paid at Brooks, Kentucky
and at an Additional Mailing Office
USPS 487 110

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Office of Publication
52 Yearling Drive
Brooks, Kentucky 40109
Phone (502) 957-2257

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only person of the Godhead to become man; he was God in the flesh (John 1:14). The only man ever to be deity was Jesus Christ. As both man and God he is the **ONLY** perfect mediator between God and men. No other person either of deity or humanity can fill the place of mediator between God and men.

Christ As Advocate

"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1). Here again we have Jesus Christ filling a role between the Father and men who have sinned. In this case he is advocate.

W. E. Vine's *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* says of *advocate*: ". . . It was used in a court of justice to denote a legal assistant, counsel for the defence, and advocate; then, generally, one who pleads another's cause, an intercessor, advocate, as in 1 John 2:1, of the Lord Jesus." (p. 208).

PROOF TEXTS EXAMINED

I would like to pay my respects to the proof texts offered as authority for praying to Jesus by brother Houchen. There are others I have read, but I do not believe they constitute prayers in the sense we use them under the New Testament dispensation today. It is necessary to understand what we mean by the term "prayer."

Young's Analytical Concordance lists eleven different words or combination of words in the New Testament that are translated "prayer" or "pray." The combination of all these terms may be defined as "the expressions of the heart addressed to a Supreme Being." Statements made to Christ while he was upon earth, or conversations between Christ and others after ascending to the Father, do not constitute prayers of the nature we are discussing. If so, we have a body of evidence from apostles, Jews, Gentiles, good men, evil men, demons, etc., which are recorded as having conversations with Christ. I know of no one who would classify all these as "prayers" to Jesus.

1. *John 20:28*: Thomas addressed Christ, "My Lord and my God." If this is an example of praying to Jesus, why is not the statement of Judas Iscariot a prayer? When he came with the mob to arrest him, he said to Jesus, "Hail, master" (Matt. 26:49). I do not believe either statements addressed to Christ were prayers. One was a statement of recognition and the other a statement of betrayal.

Peter told Christ to depart from him. Was that a prayer? "When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Luke 5:8). There were many, many statements like these by the apostles and others when Jesus was present and talked with them. That is not prayer. These were two-way conversations between Christ and those who talked with him.

2. *Acts 7:59*: This records the "prayer" of Stephen as he was being stoned to death by the Jews. He said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." There are special miraculous circumstances surrounding this scene that make it an unusual setting for the statement made by Stephen. If I were in the same situation as Stephen was and saw what he saw, I suppose I would speak to Jesus just as he did. But in the absence of this miraculous setting at any subsequent time, we have no evidence that this was ever repeated in history, especially in Biblical history.

Brother Houchen quotes from Albert Barnes on Acts 7:59: "And this shows that it **is right** to worship the Lord Jesus, and pray to him. For if Stephen was *inspired*, it settles the question. The example of an inspired man in such circumstances is a safe and correct example..."

First, inspiration did not govern the CONDUCT of the man. Peter was inspired, but Paul rebuked him to

the face because "he walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel" and "he was to be blamed" (Gal. 2:11, 14). Inspired men were only infallible when they spoke for the Lord.

Second, where is the evidence that Stephen was inspired? "Being full of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 6:5) does not mean that he was inspired. We are to be "filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18), but that does not mean that we are to be inspired.

Third, Stephen's "circumstances" were very unlike any since that time. This unusual setting cannot establish an example of praying to Jesus today.

The worship to Jesus is not the real question. The issue is PRAYING to Jesus without mediator, high priest or advocate. The Lord's supper is worship, but that does not mean that we worship the Father and the Holy Spirit by remembering them when we eat and drink the bread and the fruit of the vine on the Lord's day.

3. *Matthew 28:9*: "And they came and took hold of his feet, and worshipped him." "Praying and singing are acts of worship; therefore, we are authorized to pray and sing to Jesus." This is brother Houchen's argument. I cannot see the logic that taking hold of the feet of Jesus and worshipping him has anything to do with praying and singing to Jesus as "acts of worship." Are we to understand from "worshipping" Jesus that "praying and singing to Jesus" are always implied? This passage does not establish praying to Jesus by any stretch of the imagination.

In Matthew 15:25 the woman of Canaan came "and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me." Now since she worshipped him, she must have sung and prayed to Jesus. I don't believe it!

4. *2 Corinthians 12:8*: This verse has Christ in the 3rd person, not the person addressed. Paul had related to the Corinthians several things, among which was his "thorn in the flesh." He had besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from him. Since this was a matter of history, how much time elapsed between his request to the Lord, and Paul's statement that he would glory in his infirmities that the power of Christ may rest upon him we do not know. Paul's "prayer" to the "Lord" was answered directly in WORDS. If this is an example of praying to Jesus, it is also an example of Jesus replying directly to us in his own WORDS. That which proves too much, proves nothing!

Both Stephen and Paul "saw" Christ before they spoke to him. I think we had better wait until we "see him personally" before we begin to address him in prayer.

5. *Revelation 5:9, 11, 12*: This refers to singing praise to the Lamb in the heavenly scene by the four beasts and four and twenty elders and the angels. The New Testament teaches that we may sing and make melody in our hearts to the Lord, but it does not authorize

praying to Jesus. The Book of Revelation is a book of symbols and often statements and actions are depicted that are not literal and real actions that we should do today. This passage does not prove praying to Jesus.

6. *Revelation 22:20*: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." These are the words of the Holy Spirit, not the words of a man praying. This is hardly an example for us to pray to Jesus today.

7. *John 14:14*: This is said to be a command from Jesus to sing and pray to him. But verses 13 and 14 say to "ASK IN MY NAME." If the expression, "I will do it" means the prayer is to be addressed to Jesus, then explain verse 26 of the same chapter: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom THE FATHER WILL SEND IN MY NAME. . ." and *John 15:26*: "But when the Comforter is come, whom I WILL SEND UNTO YOU FROM THE FATHER..."

In *John 16:15* Jesus said: "All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you." He told of his leaving and their sorrow, and his return and their joy which no man could take from them. In verse 23 he said: "And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." I understand that the context of this statement concerns his going away and returning to them. But before they had "asked nothing in my name." Now they were to "ask the father in my name" and He would give it to them.

8. *Acts 2:21*: "Calling upon the name of the Lord" is here used to prove praying and singing to Jesus. This verse is from *Joel 2:32* and is found in *Romans 10:13-21*; *Acts 9:14*; *22:16*. The last passage could not mean prayer because Saul had been praying for three days. The expression means obedience to the gospel. So also do *1 Corinthians 1:2* and *2 Timothy 2:22*. I am surprised that these verses were used to prove praying to Jesus.

9. *Ephesians 5:19* and *Colossians 3:16*: These verses refer to singing to the Lord, but they offer no proof that we may pray to Jesus Christ. To the contrary, both passages teach that we are to pray to the Father by or in the name of Christ.

I pray to our Father in heaven, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that brethren will not press this issue to the dividing of brethren. Praying to Jesus needs far more study than is evidenced by those who are advocating the practice. The nature of deity and the nature of prayer require a sacrifice of blood for remission of sins, an high priest, a mediator and Jesus Christ is all of that. There is no question in anyone's mind that we all can pray to the Father in the name of Christ. But all these things are lacking when we try to pray to Jesus because there is no one to be mediator in the light of *1 Timothy 2:5, 6*. Think on these things!

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Editorial

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"WHERE DOES THE BIBLE SAY NOT TO?"

Is the silence of God permissive or prohibitive? When the word of God says nothing regarding a practice, are we authorized to act? Or does his silence mean that he does not want us to act? Are we to assume that God expressly stated all he wanted us to know so that we might do all he wanted done?

The Question Viewed Historically

It is my conviction from what I have read of the Reformation Movement that it foundered over this very issue. When Martin Luther revolted against the abuses of Roman Catholicism, the question arose as to just exactly what practices were to be retained in church organization, worship and doctrine. He took the position that whatever was not expressly forbidden was permitted in doctrine and practice. This was the basis for the continuation of infant baptism and church membership plus a host of other practices which Lutheranism holds in common with Catholicism.

The Swiss reformer, Ulrich Zwingli, while more concerned with politics and moral reform than Luther, yet enunciated an entirely different premise on which to build. He argued that we may retain in divine service only what is authorized. It is reported that when the two reformers met to discuss their respective views that Luther commented "you have a different spirit than we do." Indeed, these two views are poles apart. While we would not endorse all that Zwingli taught or permitted (for he was not faithful to his own preaching), we do believe that he was correct in his view of the basis of authority for religious practices.

In the nobly inspired efforts to restore pure, apostolic Christianity, these two opposite views were to play a great part. The plea to "speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where the Bible is silent" was powerful and struck the structure of denominationalism like a thunderbolt. The slogan gave popular expression to the injunction of Peter, "if any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Pet. 4:11). Infant baptism, relating experiences as evidence of pardon, the clergy system, synods, councils, presbyteries, and a host of other cherished practices fell before this two-edged sword.

The cry for greater organization than a local church through which to evangelize, edify or relieve the needy was to strain this principle to the breaking point with

many. Some insisted they still believed it was valid but placed an entirely different meaning on it. When the missionary society fever reached a national level and opposition was mounted, the promoters asked "where does the Bible say not to?" When instrumental music began to spread and the opposition asked where the oracles of God authorized it, they were confronted with what came to be regarded as the question to end all questions: "Where does the Bible say not to?" Choirs, fairs, ice cream socials, rummage sales, ad infinitum, all came to be defended by the one question "where does the Bible say not to?"

The Current Scene

The survivors of the wars over missionary societies, instrumental music and other relics of denominationalism have once more run aground over the issue of what constitutes scriptural authority. Sponsoring churches, church supported camps, schools, relief societies, kitchens, fellowship halls, "family life centers" (complete with gymnasiums), diet clubs, puppet shows, ad naseum, all are defended with the question "where does the Bible say not to?"

Which Approach Is Right?

Is the silence of God permissive or prohibitive? It does not take a Solomon to understand what the word of God teaches along this line. Even in the Old Testament God warned "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you" (Deut. 4:2). They were not to read between the lines (the silence of God) but to be content with what was stated on the line. John wrote "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God" (2 Jno. 9). Paul said that we are not to think above or beyond "that which is written" (1 Cor. 4:6). "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle" (2 Thes. 2:15).

Divine authority is expressed in one of three ways: (1) direct statement or command; (2) approved apostolic example; and (3) necessary conclusion. These three means of expressing what God appoints may be given in either general or specific terms. When God has left something general we dare not demand a specific. When he has specified we dare not generalize. In recent years a number of well known brethren have ruled out approved apostolic examples and necessary conclusions as valid means by which divine authority is expressed. The limiting of the Lord's Supper to the first day of the week (Acts 20:7) rests upon recognition of an approved apostolic example. The frequency of its observance on that day rests upon a necessary conclusion from the language of the passage. We do not bind a method of "going" to preach the gospel since the Lord gave the command in general terms. He said "go" without any specification as to how to go. He authorized us to "teach" without restricting us to one specific method of imparting instruction. He specified the elements to be used in the Lord's Supper, and by

example, the day on which it is to be done. He specified what is to be taught (the gospel) after we "go." He specified the act of baptism (burial) but not where the water is pooled (river, pond, lake, baptistery). He specified "singing" in praise. He specified what is to be sung (psalms, hymns and spiritual songs). He specified where the melody is to be made (in the heart).

He was specific as to the organization through which the work of the church is done. That is the local church with its bishops and deacons (Acts 14:23; Phil. 1:1). He taught by both direct statement and example that Christians are to assemble to accommodate a number of scriptural objectives, but did not specify the place where such gathering occurs. Aids and expedients must be just that—aids and expedients. They must not introduce a different act from that authorized. They simply assist in carrying out what God authorized.

The silence of God is not permissive—it is **prohibitive**. Consider the matter of the priesthood of Christ. Heb. 8:4 says "For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest." Why could Jesus not be a priest on earth? God had specified the tribe of Levi from which all priests, according to the law, were to come. "For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evidence that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood" (Heb. 7:13-14). Why could he not be a priest according to the law? Because the silence of God did not permit it. The silence of God prohibited it. The statement "of which tribe (Judah) Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood" forever settled the matter. Since God was silent concerning priests from the tribe of Judah, and since he had authorized only those of the tribe of Levi, it could then be argued that the silence of God prohibited priests of the tribe of Judah. An exception was not even made for the Son of God.

My friends, the question all of us should raise touching any practice under study is "What saith the scriptures?" We must assume that God knew what he wanted us to do and that he has expressed his will in understandable terms. Once we begin to trade on the silence of God in the scriptures we have opened a gate through which human wisdom may ultimately supplant the wisdom of the Almighty to our own everlasting ruin.

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GALATIANS 6:10 IN CONTEXT or Paul's Efforts To Persuade The Galatians

P. J. Casebolt
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Much has been written and spoken on this passage. The efforts of some brethren to wrest this passage will soon equal (if not already), similar efforts to distort Jas. 1:27. By the time some among us get through inserting everything into these two verses which the Holy Spirit saw fit to leave out, the verses are almost as long as the letters themselves! These frantic and unscholarly attempts to get the church into Gal. 6:10 and church-supported human institutions into Jas. 1:27 are reminiscent of efforts put forth by digressive brethren in the past to get Missionary Societies into the great commission, and instrumental music into passages authorizing us to sing. The sad thing is that some among us now are too young to remember the former efforts, or haven't taken the time to learn about them.

But, faithful and able men have also written and spoken effectively about these and other passages of Scripture in their proper context. This humble effort is not just to show v. 10 in its relation to other verses in Galatians 6, but the entire sixth chapter in its relation to the rest of the book. Though some of Paul's efforts to persuade the Galatian brethren may overlap, or be repeated more than once, I will attempt to list them by chapters for simplicity's sake.

Chapter One

Paul's first effort to persuade the Galatians was on the authenticity of his apostleship (v. 1). He emphasizes this again in the second chapter (vv. 1-9). This fact alone should have offset all the efforts of false teachers to "bewitch" the Galatians, but then there have always been those who were not satisfied with apostolic authority, and who will perish "in the gainsaying of Core (Korah)" (Jude 11).

Next, Paul expresses amazement ("I marvel", v. 6), to get the attention of these deluded brethren. Jesus "marveled" at the faith of one (Mt. 8:10), and the unbelief of others (Mk. 6:6). When those who know the word of the Lord become utterly amazed at our conduct, it is time to examine ourselves to see if we are still "in the faith" (2 Cor. 13:5).

Further, Paul tries to dissuade the Galatians from following their present course by emphasizing the danger of following men (1:7; 2:4, 5; 3:1; 4:17; 5:7-10, 12 and 6:12, 13). This sobering fact is followed by reminding them that the wrath of God ("let him be accursed", vv. 8, 9), will be executed upon those who teach or follow "another gospel", which is not really another gospel but rather a perversion of the true.

Chapter 2

Besides his apostleship which we have already included in Chapter 1, Paul resorts to describing an incident wherein Peter was not faithful to his apostleship, thereby condemning the very thing being practiced by the Galatians (2:11-21). Breaking this passage down, Paul shows that we are not justified by the law (v. 16), that we condemn ourselves by an effort to "build again the things which I destroyed," and that we "frustrate the grace of God" by trying to find righteousness in the law of Moses (v. 21).

Chapter 3

Paul continues his effort to persuade the Galatians by reminding them that they had benefited by receiving the Spirit (v. 2), and also because others had received the same Spirit "by the hearing of faith" (vv. 2-5). He also tries to prevent their journey into apostasy by showing them that any suffering which they had done for the gospel's sake would now be in vain (v. 4). In v. 10, Paul tries to impress the Galatian brethren further by calling their attention to the inconsistency of trying to follow the works of the law without accepting the curse of the law.

Then, the apostle endeavors to point out the identity of the true children of Abraham (vv. 8, 9; 14-29). If the fleshly Jew is to benefit from the promises made to Abraham, proper acceptance of the Gentiles as children of Abraham must be believed and practiced. By excluding the Gentiles, the Jews were excluding themselves from the inheritance promised to Abraham's seed.

Next, Paul attempts what is probably his most difficult task—that of persuading the Jews that God gave the law only as a temporary measure (vv. 19-25). The Jew, and those Gentiles influenced by them, would hardly accept the fact that they stood to gain more by the termination of the law, than they would by its continuance.

Chapter Four

Now, Paul begins contrasting the qualities of bondage and freedom to bring the Galatians to their senses. They are shown that it is better to be a son than a servant (vv. 1-7); to be children of the freewoman rather than children of the bondmaid (v. 22); to enjoy the freedom found in the "Jerusalem which is above", instead of being enslaved by the bondage "from the mount Sinai"; to be among those "born of the Spirit" instead of being "born after the flesh" (v. 29).

Paul also resorts to a personal matter which should arrest the attention of these Galatian brethren in particular. He reminds them of his labors among them, their love for him, and the possibility that all his efforts may be in vain (vv. 13-16, 19, 20). Surely, these sobering reminders ought to cause them to turn around, and come back to Christ.

Chapter Five

The subject of bondage and freedom is pursued into the fifth chapter, and we find some new arguments introduced as well. One cannot just accept a favorite practice or two from the law, and omit the rest (v. 3).

And, neither can we attempt to be justified by the law without falling from grace and making Christ "of no effect" (vv. 4-6).

Paul now concludes Chapter Five by trying to persuade these Galatian brethren that the only way to overcome the "lust of the flesh" (v. 16), is to "walk in the Spirit" (vv. 16-26). Those who practice the "works of the flesh" forfeit their inheritance in God's kingdom (v. 21), but if we escape the consequences of sin being "led of the Spirit" (v. 18), then we have also escaped from bondage under the law.

Chapter 6

Since others have very capably explored the contents of this chapter, and the proper place of v. 10 in its context, I will spare the reader on this point. However, in keeping with my original purpose, I wish to point out what I see as an harmonious relationship between Chapter Six as a whole, and Paul's previous efforts to convince the Galatians of their folly.

For instance, when Paul exhorts us to "bear . . . one another's burdens" (v. 2), he emphasizes that by so doing we "fulfill the law of Christ." Paul's entire effort in this letter has been to show the supremacy of the law of Christ over the law of Moses. He has used (by my count), some twenty different approaches to establish his case. In Chapter Six, Paul shows that by pursuing these various individual works (or not pursuing them, vv. 7-9), we fulfill the law of Christ. It would be impossible for Jew or Gentile to show the fulfillment of Christ's law in their lives by appealing to the works of the law (of Moses).

Not only do brethren wrest verse 10 from its context in Chapter 6 by trying to get church (collective) action out of it, but they compound their error by practically nullifying Paul's monumental effort to persuade the Galatian brethren that they should turn again to the law of Christ.

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A CHRISTIAN'S REVIEW
OF "CAMPBELLITE QUESTIONS
AND BAPTIST ANSWERS"
(NO. 13)
CONCLUSION

Eugene Britnell

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As we approach the end of this review, I wish to make some final observations, admonitions and appeals to the Baptists who read this both now and in years to come.

"Now It Is Different"

Many good Baptist people don't realize that they are in an institution which admits that it does not teach and practice that which was true in the days of the inspired apostles and early church when it was as the Lord ordered it. From page 22 of "The Standard Manual for Baptist Churches" by Edward T. Hiscox, D.D., I quote:

"It is most likely that in the Apostolic age when there was but 'one Lord, one faith, and one baptism,' and no differing denominations existed, the baptism of a convert by that very act constituted him a member of the church, and at once endowed him with all the rights and privileges of full membership. In that sense, 'baptism was the door into the church.' Now, it is different; and while the churches are desirous of receiving members, they are wary and cautious that they do not receive unworthy persons. The churches therefore have candidates come before them, make their statement, give their 'experience,' and then their reception is decided by a vote of the members. And while they cannot become members without baptism, yet it is the vote of the body which admits them into its fellowship on receiving baptism."

Yes, there was in the apostolic age "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism" and there was also "one body" which was the church (Eph. 1:22, 23; 4:4, 5). That being true, they are correct in concluding that "no differing denominations existed." But the Baptist Church is a denomination and admits it. It does not claim to be the one body, including all the saved of the earth today (Acts 2:47).

It is true that in the beginning baptism made one a member of the church and was "the door into the church." Baptism was into Christ (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27), and to be in Christ was to be in his body which was the church. Having admitted that which was true in the days of the apostles, they then say "Now, it is different." Who made it different? Answer: Baptists and others who are unwilling to believe and follow the teaching of the scriptures! They admit that the baptism which they practice, which is designed only to put one into the Baptist denomination—preceded by an "experience" and "vote of the members"—is different

from that which was practiced under the guidance of inspired men. My Baptist friend, how can you remain in a denomination which admits that it has changed the doctrine and practice taught in the will of Christ?

Pertinent Paragraphs on Campbell, Baptism, Etc.

"No intelligent Christian can object to the end which Mr. Campbell proposed to accomplish. The union of all true Christians on the Apostolic foundation, is an object most devoutly to be wished. All good men pray for it." (J. B. Jeter, *Campbellism Examined*, page 22).

"If either Thomas Campbell or his son, or both acting in concert, organized a church of the right kind of material, and on the right faith and foundation, then they acted in harmony with the word of God, and no man has the least right to open his mouth in opposition; for a church thus constituted would be none other than a church of Christ." (J. H. Milburn, *Origin of Campbellism*, page 10.) (Both Jeter and Milburn were Baptists.)

"One cannot follow Christ, or obey him without going down into the water of baptism. And the statement is here ventured that no service of a believer is acceptable to Christ until this first public declarative act is performed." (Dr. J. E. Cobb, *New Manual for Baptist Churches*, 1941, page 39.)

Referring to being baptized on account of the remission of sins, J. W. Wilmarth said: "This interpretation was doubtless suggested, and is now defended, on purely dogmatic grounds. It is feared that if we give to EIS its natural and obvious meaning, undue importance will be ascribed to baptism, the atonement will be undervalued, and the work of the Holy Spirit disparaged. Especially it is asserted that here is the vital issue between Baptists and Campbellites. We are gravely told that if we render EIS in Acts 2:38 IN ORDER TO, we give up the battle, and must forthwith become Campbellites; whereas if we translate it ON ACCOUNT OF, or IN TOKEN OF, it will yet be possible for us to remain Baptists.

"Such methods of interpretation are unworthy of Christian scholars . . . And as to Campbellism, that specter which haunts many good men and terrifies them into a good deal of bad interpretation, shall we gain any thing by maintaining a false translation and allowing the Campbellites to be champions of the true, with the world's scholarship on their side, as against us? . . . The truth will suffer nothing by giving EIS its true signification. When the Campbellites translate IN ORDER TO in Acts 2:38, they translate correctly. Is a translation false because the Campbellites endorse it?" (*Baptist Quarterly*, July 1877, pages 304-305).

"If you knew that you were going to the judgment tomorrow, and your salvation depended upon your being baptized as Christ was, and as he has commanded you to be, you would be at a moment's loss; you would, this day, be 'buried with him by baptism'; you would be 'planted in the likeness of his death'; and yet you will not obey. Are you not, then, rebels against Christ, and consequently exposed to his wrath? Do not fail to do it—do not refuse to do it—and still hope to be saved, for you have no right to hope for salvation. Your

flagrant and inexcusable neglect of divine law declares you the enemy of Christ . . . 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.'" (J. R. Graves, **Relations of Baptism and Salvation**, 1881, pages 54-56).

On Church Succession

Many Baptists feel that they must trace an unbroken line of Baptist churches back to the Lord and the apostles in order to prove that they are right. In contrast, we of the churches of Christ have been more interested in identity than succession. The Word of God is the seed of the kingdom (Luke 8:11). When planted in the hearts of honest men and women, it will always produce exactly what the Lord intended—Christians and churches of Christ. We then have to simply live and worship as He directs, and by so doing we can be right regardless of what people may or may not have done in the past.

On this point, consider the following quotations from prominent Baptist historians:

"If every church of Christ were today to become apostate, it would be possible and right for any true believers to organize tomorrow another church on the apostolic model of faith and practice, and that church would have the only apostolic succession worth having—a succession of faith in the Lord Christ and obedience to him." (Henry C. Vedder)

"Pure doctrine, as it is found uncorrupted in the word of God, is the only unbroken line of succession which can be traced in Christianity. God never confided his truth to the personal succession of any body of men; man was not to be trusted with the custody of the precious charge, but the King of the truth has always kept the keys of the truth in his own hand. The true church of Christ has ever been that which has stood upon his person and work," (Thomas Armitage)

More on Names

Since much of this review has concerned the name or names for the church and the individual followers of Christ, I desire to make some final observations designed to get my Baptist friends to see the truth about the name they wear.

Paul was accused of being "a ring leader of the sect of the Nazarenes" (Acts 24:5). It was prophesied that Jesus would be called a Nazarene (Matt. 2:23). He said on one occasion "I am Jesus of Nazareth" (Acts 22:8). He had to live in Nazareth to be called a Nazarene (Matt. 2:23). There is a denomination today called the Nazarene Church. They had misapplied the word. The fact that Jesus had to live in Nazareth in order to be called a Nazarene, and the fact that members of the Nazarene Church never did live in Nazareth does not seem to make any difference at all with them.

The Baptists make the same mistake. The son born of Zacharias and Elizabeth was named John (Luke 1:13). He was the first to administer baptism, and he baptized many people; therefore, he was called John the Baptist. When properly translated, it would be John the Immerser. In that true sense, one can no more be a Baptist today without baptizing people than one can be a Nazarene without living in Nazareth.

If the Nazarene Church and the many kinds of Baptist Churches would stop and inquire as to why Jesus was called a Nazarene, and why John was called the Baptist, they would surely see and understand the truth.

May we never forget that the Bible says: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12) That name, dear friend, is not the name of Paul, or Peter, or Martin Luther, or Alexander Campbell, or John the Baptist. It is the name of Christ (verse 10), the stone which was "disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious" (1 Peter 2:4).

In Conclusion

As I close this review, may I make this final appeal to all who read this, and especially my Baptist friends. As I said in the beginning of this study, I have many friends and relatives in the Baptist denomination. I verily believe that the false doctrines taught by Baptist creed and preachers have caused some of my loved ones to be lost. That concerns me very much, and moves me to make an effort to teach all others who will hear me. I believe that the Baptist denominations are wrong and unscriptural in origin, name, doctrine and practice. I do not believe that one can enter the Baptist fellowship by obeying the gospel of Christ, nor live acceptably before God by living according to the doctrines and commandments of the Baptist belief. I tell you this because I love the souls of men and women. May it not be said of you, as Paul had to say about some in Galatia, that I have "become your enemy, because I tell you the truth" (Gal. 4:16).

I realize that we are human beings with deep emotions and often prejudices, and it is difficult for us to give honest and dispassionate consideration to rebuke, correction, or anything with which we disagree. But I hope and pray that every Baptist who reads this will reflect soberly upon what has been said. Read the material again and check every reference in your Bible. Remember that truth is the only thing that will save us and make us free before God (John 8:31, 32), and that "each of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:12).

Any responsible and accountable individual living in this age and under the will of Christ can be saved by: (1) hearing the gospel (Mark 12:29; Rom. 10:15); (2) believing the gospel and in Jesus Christ (John 8:24; Heb. 11:6); (3) repenting of past sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30); (4) confessing Christ before men (Matt. 10:32; Acts 8:37); and (5) being baptized (immersed in water) for the remission of sins and into Christ (Acts 2:38; Gal. 3:27). When one thus obeys the gospel commands, he or she is then, and because of that, added by the Lord to the church, the body of saved people (Acts 2:47). Then as a child of God, a Christian, one should worship Him in spirit and truth (John 8:24) and "live soberly, righteously and Godly in this present world" (Titus 2:12). Only in this way may one have the assurance of the fullness of spiritual and temporal blessings in "the life that now is" and eternal life in

"that which is to come" (I Tim. 4:8) in the land that is fairer than day, or, as the old song says, "a land where we'll never grow old."

As you respect and obey God's will, in and through the Lord Jesus Christ, may He bless you richly and keep you safely both now and forever more. Amen.

THE SECRET THINGS

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Moses told the children of Israel: "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law" (Deut. 29:29). These words suggest something which I believe our generation needs very much to remember, just as Israel did. There must have been some tendency on the part of Israel to draw conclusions based upon God's silence, rather than on that which He had revealed, thus the warning that the secret things belong to God.

God still has secret things. There is no conflict with this idea and the completeness of His revelation to us. Peter wrote that "his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3). This was the very thing that Jesus promised His apostles when He said: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13). Even in the midst of the spiritual gifts which were given to many of the first century Christians for their growth and maturity while the written record was incomplete, Paul was writing that those gifts would cease when revelation was finished. "Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away" (1 Cor. 13:8-10). "Perfect" is from the Greek word "teleios" which means that which has "reached its end, finished, complete, perfect" (Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words). Now, about that statement about God still having secrets, things which He did not reveal to us: "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father" (Mark 13:32). So, in spite of revealing "all things that pertain to life and godliness", there are some things not revealed. It is foolish indeed to draw conclusions based upon those things which God has not revealed.

To know God's will we are absolutely dependent upon His revelation. Paul wrote: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath

prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. 2:9-11). Man is incapable of knowing the mind of God except through that which God has revealed. So, why then do we try at times to build our arguments upon things which God did not say?

Can we understand God's revealed will? Well, of course we can (1 Cor. 14:20; Eph. 3:3-4; 5:17). Paul told Timothy to "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). We obviously must use our ability to think and reason to learn God's will, and to apply it to our own lives. But we must resist every thought that we know things that God did not reveal. Isaiah wrote warning Israel: "Who hath directed the spirit of the Lord, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed to him the way of understanding?" (Isa. 40:13-14). God did not ask my advice about any thing that He did, so how can I presume to know that which He did not reveal.

The importance of sticking closely to God's revealed will is emphasized in an incident involving David. David had become concerned that he lived in a house of cedar, but the ark of God was kept in a tabernacle (2 Samuel 7:1-2). Nathan, God's prophet, apparently assumed that it would be all right for David to build God a house (7:3), but that night God spoke to Nathan and corrected him. First, God said that from the time He had brought Israel up out of Egypt He had not lived in a house. But the second point made by God is the one I want us to notice. God said: "In all the places wherein I have walked with all the children of Israel spake I a word with any of the tribes of Israel, whom I commanded to feed my people Israel, saying, Why build ye not me an house of cedar?" (2 Samuel 7:7). What was God saying? Apparently He was saying, "Did I ask you to build me a house?" The fact that God had not commanded it meant that David should not build it. God did say that later David's son would build Him a house, but not David.

It is dangerous ground to walk on when we presume upon something which God has not said. Many today have drawn some dangerous conclusions, based upon human wisdom, regarding the right of the guilty party to divorce and remarry. How can I or any other man flatly declare what is acceptable to God unless He has declared it? And yet this is being done constantly. When Jesus says: "And whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery" (Matt. 5:32; and similarly in Matt. 19:9), how can we presume to instruct God in those things not revealed. How can we presume that the put away person can remarry without displeasing God? It is a foolish action, because it fails to leave the secret things to God.


Even Jesus could not act upon the silence of God. Concerning His being our High Priest after the order of Melchizedek, and not Aaron or Levi we read: "For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood" (Heb. 7:13-14). Why couldn't Jesus be a priest while He was upon the earth? Because until His death the Old covenant was still in effect (Heb. 9:15-17), and under that covenant "Moses spake nothing" about anyone of Judah being a priest.

Brethren, God's revealed will is sufficient for "all things that pertain to life and godliness". If we cannot find within that which God has clearly revealed that which we want to believe and teach, then we had better change our beliefs and teachings. The secret things still belong to God, and the revealed word belongs to us.

SET FOR THE
DEFENSE OF
THE GOSPEL

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YOUTH CHOIRS

Gospel preachers through the years have read to people the passages in the Book that authorized the kind of music God wants His people to render unto Him. Eph. 5:19 has been read many, many times. This verse says, "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;" Another verse that has been read or quoted is Col. 3:16 which reads, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." These are but two of the several passages that could be given from the will of the Lord authorizing the music that is to be rendered unto His name.

As people begin to drift away from the respect for the Divine authority of God's word that they should have, one need not be surprised at anything that is introduced into the service of God. Candles, counting of beads, praying to Mary, the mourners bench, salvation by faith only are but a few of the practices not taught in the will of God.

I am of the conviction that many of my brethren do not really know why we do not use instrumental music in the worship unto God. It may be that they have never really stopped to examine the Bible and to see

for themselves what the New Testament teaches along this line. They know that we do not use it today. Many of them have never seen an instrument in the house when brethren meet to worship. It may be that even some preachers among churches of Christ could not give a good reason as to why the instrument is absent. In fact, it is altogether possible that even some preachers among churches of Christ will even engage in vain worship directed unto the Lord with denominational churches as they play upon such instruments. I do know of a preacher that attended the services of a denominational church and when I asked him if he sang with the instrument in that service he would not answer. All he would tell me was that he didn't do anything contrary to the word of God. If one thinks that instrumental music is authorized in the word of God, to sing with such would not, in his mind, be doing anything contrary to God's word. If the preacher did not sing with the instrument, I know of no reason why he would not want to just say that he didn't sing with the instrument unless it would be that he did not want to offend some member of a denominational church.

I am certain that if the elders of many churches of Christ were to announce to the congregation next Lord's Day that they had re-studied the word of God, that they had come to the conclusion that there was not anything wrong with having instrumental music in worship, there would be many that would not know any more than the elders and would not lift their voice in opposition to what the elders planned to do.

But the song service among churches of Christ can become unscriptural in more ways than by having instrumental music in the service. Gospel preachers have pointed out through the years that the word of God taught that the church was to sing. They used, and correctly so, such passages as Col. 3:16 and Eph. 5:19 to show that the church when she assembled was to sing. Further, gospel preachers have showed that it was an addition to the word of God for the church to have choruses and choirs to sing for the church. And they have condemned in no uncertain terms the denominational churches for having their choruses and choirs with their robes. Many churches of Christ have digressed so far as to become guilty of the very thing that the denominations have been condemned for having in the past.

One of the biggest churches in the state of Texas, the South Fifth and Highland church of Christ in Abilene, Texas, the church that is responsible for much of the division that exists in the church of Christ today, has a "youth chorus" which sings "for the church." One might not need to go all the way to Texas to find such. Could one look right around here and find a church of Christ that has a "choir?" (1) I have seen a choir practicing. (2) I have seen in the bulletin of a church that they have a "youth chorus" and that they have presented a program presented over the radio by a church choir. (3) The program was introduced and concluded by saying that it was the "church of Christ choir."

Now all of this is too much evidence to deny that some have a choir.

We can see the ground work that has been laid in the past for choirs. For years several of the colleges operated by the brethren have sent their chorus into different communities to present programs to the church of Christ and these choruses have used the meeting houses of the brethren. Nearly every orphan home in the brotherhood has started themselves a chorus and these choruses have traveled and put on programs, using the meeting houses of the brethren. Now with this ground work being done in the years past, why would one not think of each church having her own choir?

Someone might say, "Well, they do not present programs to the Sunday morning worship service, and they do not appear in robes, so therefore it is all right." No person to my knowledge has made this charge yet. I predict that the time will come when this charge can be made. However, I raise this question, What would be wrong with such if they did? If it is right for a church of Christ to have a choir, what would be wrong with it putting on robes and presenting a program on Sunday morning?

Remember brethren, the ground work is now being laid for this very thing. The choir will present programs for a while. Some person will suggest that we invite the choir over to present a program on Wednesday night or Thursday night at which time we usually have our mid-week Bible Study. This will get to be the accepted thing. Then watch it! The choir will start presenting programs before the services of a gospel meeting on a certain night, and then the first thing one knows it will be performing on Sunday night for one or two numbers. As time continues, the choir will sing all the songs on Sunday night, every now and then. Then the time will come that it will be done all the time on Sunday night. With its foot this far in the door, people will have lost all respect for Bible authority and someone will suggest that it sing on Sunday morning and thus the church of Christ will have a full fledged choir and then they will buy the robes for them to wear when they sing. It was slow, it was gradual; but remember brethren, that is the very way that digression and apostasy works.

Liberal brethren do not want the masses in churches of Christ to see the trail they are trying to lead them down. First the movement says church support of benevolent societies. Then they cry for the sponsoring church type of congregational cooperation. Those on the bandwagon shout for church support of colleges, then comes the youth camps, with ball diamonds, swimming pools, and what have you. Choirs follow and who knows what will be next? At this rapid rate the instrument can not be far off, and it may be nearer than any of us would think. In fact, some churches of Christ already have the instrument in their buildings for very special programs. You had better watch my brethren, the liberals have a train coming and you will either purchase your ticket and get on or be run over by the train. The choice is yours. Which will it be?

All of this brings rest to some. Those who are members of man made churches, will no longer be condemned for having a choir. You have been joined by some of my liberal brethren. The day will come when the choirs of churches of Christ and choirs of some of the denominational bodies will sing together in some kind of program on Easter or Christmas. The members of the denominational churches know this is so. Brethren, if you doubt it, just wait. You will see it.

UNMASKING MORMONISM (No. 3)

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THE PRIESTHOOD AND THE LORD'S CHURCH

In our two previous articles of this series, we have shown that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) projects an image of a Bible following, morally strict people who live happy, family-oriented lives. We exposed this image as a mask of hypocrisy, a facade to deceive and attract people to their organization. Mormons in Utah are not happier than people of other communities, and statistics of the social problems in Utah prove that Mormonism does not make morally superior people. Their religion is founded upon a rejection of the all-sufficiency of the Bible, as well as an irreverent and humanistic view of God. Jesus said of false prophets, "Ye shall know them by their fruits" (Matt. 7:16). The fruits of Mormonism expose an organization which is man-made, and which follows a doctrine of man. In this article, we will examine two areas of Mormon doctrine which are fundamental to their theology.

THE PRIESTHOOD

Mormonism was established with the teaching that God revived the Aaronic and Melchizedek priesthoods on earth, through Joseph Smith, the founder of the Mormon Church. Latter-day Saints "lay hands" on young boys, making them priests after Aaron (deacons). And young men can be made priests after Melchizedek (elders). A study of the Hebrew letter shows how far this is from the truth of God. Concerning the Aaronic priesthood, the Law of Moses required all priests to be born of the tribe of Levi (Heb. 7:11-14). Jesus, born of the tribe of Judah, could not have been an Aaronic priest. Certainly a 12 year old Gentile boy cannot hold the Levitical priesthood. Furthermore, Hebrews 7:11-12 teaches that the priesthood was changed with the abrogation of the Law of Moses. Since we know the Law of Moses is no longer in effect (Heb. 8:6-7), there can be no question that the Levitical priesthood has been forever abolished.

The Hebrew writer affirms that Jesus is the only

high priest after Melchizedek. This is not an earthly priesthood (Heb. 8:4). Jesus' priesthood is joined to the fact that He is the author of eternal salvation (Heb. 5:9-10). And whereas the old Levitical priesthood had many priests, all imperfect, who offered sacrifices for sins continually, Jesus was made a priest forever, was given an unchangeable priesthood, and offered one sacrifice (Himself) for all sins in all ages (Heb. 7:20-28). The Mormon Church belittles our great high priest by teaching that any man can hold the same position. Again, we see that the Mormon Church is not the organization which is pictured as the Bible believing, fundamentalist religion. Behind its mask is a sect which teaches for doctrine the commandments of men.

THE RESTORED CHURCH

The Mormon Church claims to be the restored church of Jesus Christ. However, very little of their theology is the same as Christ's gospel. Concerning the establishment of the Lord's church, Jesus said, "I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18). But the Book of Mormon teaches that the church of Christ existed a century before the birth of Jesus (Mosiah 18:17). The Book of Mormon has people living 73 years before Christ, who were called Christians. The Bible teaches that "disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11:26), around 44AD. The organization of the Mormon Church is completely foreign to the New Testament pattern. Latter-day Saints are led by a President, his two counselors, and twelve living apostles. Mormons look to their President as a prophet of God and the final authority in religious matters. This displays a lack of regard for the authority of God's inerrant and perfect law of liberty, the New Testament. These apostles never witnessed Christ's earthly ministry, a requisite of apostleship (Acts 1:21-23), and therefore are false apostles. Mormons are divided into regional Stakes and local Wards. Each Stake is overseen by a Stake President and two counselors, and each Ward is directed by one Bishop and two counselors, all chosen by the headquarters of the Mormon Church. This man-made form of organization has no scriptural basis. It is in direct contradiction to the autonomous and independent congregational organization authorized by the New Testament. The truth is that Mormonism has not restored anything. They have created another man-made religion.

The work of the Mormon Church appears at first to be mainly evangelistic. And the zeal of their missionaries cannot be denied. But beyond this mask, we find a multi-billion dollar business organization, with ownership in many major corporations in this country. Where is the scripture which authorizes the New Testament church to engage in secular business? The Mormon Church is also a social organization that provides recreation for their members and for the community. Their local Ward buildings are designed to function as a gymnasium, a theater, a restaurant and dance hall, as well as a place for worship. The work Mormons are commanded to do in researching genealogies and being baptized on behalf of the dead

was never the work of the New Testament church of Jesus Christ. Timothy was instructed to warn the Ephesians against giving heed to endless genealogies (1 Tim. 1:4). And the proxy baptisms of Mormonism are based on a misunderstanding of 1 Corinthians 15:29. Like the Roman Catholics, Mormons deny the fixed condition of the dead, believing that one who has died can still be saved by an act of one who is living. But the Bible teaches the fixed state of all dead (2 Cor. 10:5 and Lk. 16:26). And Romans 2:6 teaches that God, at Judgment Day, "will render to every man according to his deeds." The idea that one can be baptized in the place of someone else is not only unscriptural, but is also ridiculous.

These doctrines of the Mormon Church show that Mormonism is a religion which is based on ideas and teachings of men, rather than of God's Word. A more exhaustive study would reveal many other false doctrines in Mormon teaching, and much more could be written on the subjects discussed in this series of articles. But that which we have dealt with is enough to unmask Mormonism. The "Mr. Clean" image of their people is tainted with the ungodly and irreverent doctrines of the Mormon Church. The worthy zeal of many Mormons is spent in vain, being a zeal without knowledge. Behind the mask, an idolatrous and hypocritical religion shines forth, denying the truth of the inspired Word of God, and preying upon the emotionally depressed and the naive. My sincere prayer is that these fine people might see the error which they follow, and turn to God, obeying the true gospel of Jesus Christ; for Jesus said, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Matt. 15:13).

Johnie Edward's

GOSPEL MEETING SERMONS

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FOREWORD

I know of no greater need than sermon material for gospel meetings. I do not know of any man better qualified to publish this type of material than Johnie Edwards.

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Robert Jackson
Nashville, Tennessee

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GENTLENESS: ITS NATURE

Jesus Christ was gentle. His manner was mild, his conduct characterized by benignity and goodness. When Jesus came upon the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well, his treatment of her was considerate and fitting. When he encountered the horrors and despicable events of the last hours he spent on the earth, he was still kind, gentle, respectful. And while there never was in him a disposition of compromise or toleration of ungodliness or iniquity, still, even during occasions of heated controversy and duress, his gentleness and amiable inclinations show through in his character. He was indeed a gentle man.

There is a great need for gentleness in our world. It is not an easy habit to form, but it contributes greatly to any situation and flavors admirably every circumstance. A wise man will always have it. It is a characteristic born of a clear understanding of what is good, and a burning desire to steward carefully that over which God has given us charge. Its absence will result in coarse and brusque treatments, a lack of proper consideration of others, improper management of difficult situations, and promotes a general state of ill will in almost all relationships.

Gentleness in persons brings peace, unity, harmony to all their dealings. It is productive of a loving relationship between the parents and between the parents and their children. It promotes a state of kind-heartedness among siblings in a family. Gentleness is a great asset to a friendship, for it is ever patient, forgiving, fair. And the person who spreads gentleness at the bank teller's cage, the grocery checker's stand, the dry cleaner's desk does a great turn for people everywhere, distributing a mood that can be extended by others as it was generated in them. There never is a time or situation where gentleness is out of order.

Gentleness produces great good. Its fruit is seen in every area where its seeds are sown. It enhances relationships, promotes good will, advances kindness, and amplifies the love and goodness of God. Gentleness in a mother causes her to express great and abiding love. In a father it turns raw strength into controlled consideration. In a boss it will bring patience and in the hired help dedication. The teacher will learn by it and the student will teach it. And the sinner who sees it in the life of the Saviour is constrained to follow after him.

Gentleness is an attitude founded on love for good. It is a disposition not acquired by the pompous, the proud, the arrogant. The rowdy person will consider it to be a form of weakness and the person impressed with his own profundity will likely consider it shallow. The pious Pharisee who flaunts and displays his own righteousness will have little gentleness, for it will not allow him his self-satisfaction. But he who loves good, that one who desires that everyone, including his enemies, be blessed, will be gentle, considerate, compassionate, merciful. His love for God and his love for good will cause him to seek the best interests of all concerned.

Sometimes I find it necessary to stop for a few minutes and make an introspective examination. It is not always easy, but every time I honestly do it I am able to see almost immediate improvement in my life. One of the areas where I almost always find a deficiency is in gentleness. It needs to be made a habit, but it is an extremely hard habit to form. Self-sufficiency rises up against it; so does pride; so does self-righteousness. But I must press on. I must work at this great trait. It will do me good. It will not only make me a better person, but it will cause good in others. Gentleness glorifies God in our lives.

Gentleness is kin to humility; it is kin to meekness. It is kin to mercy; it is kin to grace. But most of all, it is kin to love, for love causes it and love results from it.

THE FATHER

Don Martin
2706 Epworth Lane
Owensboro, KY 42301



As a rule, when the parable recorded in Luke 15:11-32 is preached on the sermon deals with the younger son of the parable—the one whom we call the prodigal son. On a few occasions, the elder brother or older son is considered. In this article we shall briefly and inferentially consider the father of the parable. In the matter of typology, we realize that the younger son represents sinners (contextually, the erring child of God), and the elder son stands for the scribes and Pharisees. But how about the father of the parable—for whom does he stand? I submit, kind reader, that the father represents our heavenly Father. Just as we correctly deduce many lessons from the typology of the two sons we can also enjoy many truths from the representation of the father:

ALL IS WELL BETWEEN GOD AND HIS PEOPLE. In the father/son relationship of the parable there is an understood closeness and intimacy. There is emotion in the language, "A certain man had two sons," and "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I

have is thine," vss. 11, 31. The heavenly Father loves his children just as we physical fathers love our children, cf. Matt. 7:7-11. One forthcoming primary lesson which I believe is taught is the security of God's people. Just as we as physical parents would not arbitrarily and unjustly reject our children, neither will God reject his people. Observe that the younger son left his father's care and protection (vss. 12, 13). Alas, herein lies the spiritual problem: God's people forsake him (2 Chron. 15:2; cf. 1 Sam. 12:22, Josh. 1:5, John 10:27-29).

GOD DESIRES TO SHOWER HIS LOVE AND BLESSINGS UPON HIS PEOPLE. The father of the parable desired to bless his sons as is indicated in his statements (vss. 22, 23, 31). The God of heaven also desires to bless his people and all men. God has made provision for us "in Christ" that we can enjoy all spiritual endowments and salvation (Eph. 1:3; 2 Tim. 2:10). In Christ, we are complete or made full (Col. 2:10, ASV). God wants to bless us in this life and in the life to come (1 Pet. 3:12; Mk. 10:30; 2 Pet. 1:11). Of course, these rich blessings are conditional, as we have already intimated (2 Pet. 1:5-10; 2 Pet. 3:9).

THE FATHER GRANTED THE REQUEST OF HIS SON. The language, "And he divided unto them his living" (vs. 12), abounds with pathos and sorrow. It was a sorrowful occasion, no doubt, because the father, in his wisdom, certainly knew such was not the best for his immature, reckless young son. Yet, he granted the request. Friend, when we become obsessed with doing what we want to do regardless of our Father's will He will, if you please, grant our request though it is to our detriment (cf. 1 Sam. 8:5, 7, 19-22; Rom. 1:26, 28; Num. 22:12, 15-35; 2 Thes. 2:10-12).

THE FATHER DID NOT OVERPOWER OR DESTROY THE FREEDOM OF HIS SON'S CHOICE (vss. 12-19). Some are dangerously mistaken about how God works. Reflective of such misunderstanding is the language and rationale: "If God did not want me to marry this man (or woman), he would prevent the marriage," and "If God does not want me the way I am, he would change me." Beloved, our heavenly Father does not destroy our freedom of choice!

GOD HOLDS MAN RESPONSIBLE FOR HIS DECISIONS AND CONSEQUENT CONDUCT. The younger son, as we have seen, was obviously determined to have his way (vs. 12). In fact, the language of verse seventeen is illustrative of such a state of obsession, "And when he came to himself. . . ." Some have reasoned that since some are so clearly engulfed in sin surely God will not hold them responsible. Not so! The rebellious, obstinate son was, from beginning to end, amenable and accountable.

GOD DOES NOT FORCE MAN TO REPENT. Just as the father did not interfere with his son's freedom of choice, it is very pronounced that he did not seek to force or coerce him to repent. The son had to make up his own mind (vss. 17-21). Friend, the direct operation of the Holy Spirit (one of the foundation tenets of Calvinism) is irreconcilably opposed to this repre-

sentation of God. God desires the repentance of all men but man must come to God—God does not overpower man with some irresistible external force or coercion (2 Cor. 5:11,14-21).

THE FATHER EAGERLY RECEIVED HIS SON BACK (vss. 20-24, 32). My eyes become misty and a lump forms in my throat every time I read or deal with the return of the younger son and his father's warm reception. How moving and touching! Consider the eagerness and willingness of the father, "But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him," (vs. 20). Yes, indeed, there are many rich, opportune lessons from the representation of the father. Many of these lessons fly in the face of the teachings of denominationalism. To be sure, the wonderfulness and love of our heavenly Father is clearly accented.

A WORD WITH YOU: PHUSIS (NATURE)

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We discuss here one meaning of the above word as it is presented in the New Testament as a teaching, controlling part of man. When used thus it indicates inborn human decency.

Three Scriptures

In Romans 2:14-15 Paul speaks of a code of conduct which Gentiles had and (commendably) followed. They did "by nature the things of the law". This is the natural goodness, the finer instincts, which God built into all human beings.

In Romans 1:26-27 the writer discusses some people who "refused" (Verse 28) to follow the **native propriety**. We quote: "For this cause God gave them up unto vile passions: for their women changed the natural use into that which is against nature: and likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another, men with men working unseemliness, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was due."

The same inspired stenographer of God in 1 Cor. 11:14-15(a) asks a question which demands "Yes" as its answer: "Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him, but if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her?"

Definitions

Dr. Samuel G. Green defined the word PHUSIS in other passages as indicating **natural disposition, instinct, propensity, native qualities**, and the like. But, in 1 Cor. 11:14 he says that it means, "long-established custom". We fail to see why. How could he tell? Why single out only the one statement? What makes the meaning change only there?

But authorities such as Vine, Berry, and the Zondervan Analytical give no such arbitrary exception. They hold to "nature" throughout.

In defining PHUSIS Dr. J. H. Thayer cites that very verse. He concludes the "a" part of his definitions with these comments:

nature i.e. **natural sense**, native conviction or knowledge, as opposed to what is learned by instruction and accomplished by training, or prescribed by law: HE PHUSIS, "the nature -W," (i.e. the native sense of propriety) DIDASKEI TI, "teaches something - W", 1 Cor. 11:14; PHUSEI POIEIN TA TOU NOMOU, "to do by nature the things of the law - W", — guided by their natural sense of what is right and proper, Romans 2:14.

Natural

Romans 1:26 shows that before God "gave them up" the idolaters were not controlled by "passions of dishonor" (Margin of ASV and meaning of the Greek words). Their "females" (literal meaning) changed what was "natural". This word, PHUSIKOS, was a derived form of our subject word, PHUSIS. The longer word, an adjective, meant "instinctive" according to Dr. Strong, and "inborn" per Thayer. The Creator installed in men and women certain restraints and proprieties that they never should have stifled or rejected.

Use

The approved instinctive use of the female is contrasted with the perverted one which is not natural. The letters of the word for "use" (noun) resemble CHRESIS (pronounced "khray-sis"). The King James and American Standard Versions, approved by Berry, Hickie, and Green, translate it as "use". The New American Standard Bible renders it as "function". Aland says that it means "function (of sexual intercourse)". Thayer calls it, "the sexual use of a woman. Ro. 1:26 sq." And Strong states that it indicates: "employment, i.e. (specially) sexual intercourse (as an occupation of the body): — use."

A Man's Hair

Some are claiming that the "dishonor" in 1 Cor. 11:14 means, merely, that a man appears strange if his appearance is not in style (nature). But there the word for "dishonor" in 1 Cor. 11:14 means, merely, that a man appears strange if his appearance is not in style (nature). But there the word for "dishonor" is the very one used in Romans 1:26. From this we can be sure that the good Lord strongly disapproves of a man wearing a pony-tail, or long hair hanging down his back.

We should come to respect instinctive decency more. Our Master speaks highly of it in Romans 2:14. He disapproves of people violating it as described in Romans 1:26-27. And He endorses what it teaches in 1 Cor. 11:14-15.

Using Great Plainness
of Speech

J. T. Smith
3433 Studebaker Road
Long Beach, CA 90808



ELDERS — ONCE QUALIFIED, ALWAYS QUALIFIED?

All of us understand that God has given a number of qualifications for those who would desire the office of an elder (1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1). Among those qualifications given are instructions regarding the prospective elder's children. He is to be a man "having his children in subjection with all gravity" (1 Timothy 3:4) [I believe all will agree that this qualification would be applicable while his children are still at home]; and "having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly" (Titus 1:6).

I realize that the word "faithful" is believed by some to refer to their being "faithful to their parents." I do not agree with this conclusion because I do not know of a time in the New Testament when the word "faithful" or "believing" (American Standard Version) is used, unless there is something in the context that so establishes it as such, that it does not mean "faithful to God." I do not believe there is anything in the context of the above cited passages that so warrants.

Now the problem. Oft-times when men are appointed to the eldership, while their children are still at home and are Christians (and as far as anyone can determine are faithful to the Lord) the man having the other qualifications is appointed to the office of an elder. However, after the children are grown and out on their own, they become unfaithful to the Lord, and may even be accused of being riotous and unruly. The question then arises from a number of sources, sometimes from the man himself, is this man still qualified? Which brings me to my point of this article.

If the man's name should now (after his children are grown and unfaithful) be placed before the congregation, would he be considered qualified? If not, why should he still be considered qualified after his appointment under the same circumstances?

If there is something I have missed in the above argument, would someone please reply and show where I have missed the point. Remember, we are not talking about his "ruling them" since they are no longer under his roof and may even have families of their own. But since they are still his children and are unfaithful, would not he be lacking this qualification?

THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

"... They rehearsed all that God had done with them .."—Acts 14:27 *Send alt*

News Items to: Wilson Adams, 317 Trinkle Ave., N.E., Roanoke, VA 24012

LECTURESHIPS

AKRON, OH—The Thayer St. Lectures have been set for September 14-17. We invite each of you to arrange your schedule so that you can be with us during this series of lectures. Subjects and speakers are as follows:

Shadows of Christ in the Old Testament—Ken Williams

Communication—Don Bassett

In The World, Not Of The World—Dale Smelser

Influences—Dale Smelser

Places of the Bible: Babylon—Lewis Willis

Places of the Bible: Antioch—Bill Cunningham

Places of the Bible: Jerusalem—Wayne Walker

Singing (by the assembly)—Robert Welch

Choices—Richard Greeson

As in the past, we are urging our members to open their homes to out of town guests. If you plan to be with us overnight for what we expect to be an outstanding program, please notify us in advance so that we can make arrangements.

LUFKIN, TX—There will be a lectureship in Lufkin, TX the dates of August 20-22. The schedule is as follows:

The Last Days—Promise and Peril—R. J. Stevens

Thursday A.M.—**The Last Days**

Friday A.M.—**Days of Promise**

Saturday P.M.—**Days of Peril**

The Atonement and the Abundant Life—Dee Bowman

Thursday P.M.—**As To Salvation**

Friday P.M.—**As To Hearing**

Saturday P.M.—**As To Prosperity**

The Last Day—Rodney Miller

Thursday P.M.—**The Rapture**

Friday P.M.—**The Tribulation**

Saturday A.M.—**The Second Coming**

Morning lectures will be at 11:00 A.M. and the evening lectures will be at 7:30 and 8:30 P.M. The lectureship will take place at the Lufkin Civic Center. For travel information and housing accommodation contact Melvin Harrison at Rt. 5, Box 2180, Lufkin, TX 75901. Phone (713) 875-2485. For additional information call Timberland Drive church of Christ at (713) 634-7110. Or write P.O. Box 724, Lufkin, TX 75901.

NEW CONGREGATION

KAHOKA, MO—A new congregation was begun in Kahoka on March 29, 1981. On that day there were two baptized. Presently, we are renting the American Legion Building and we are the only faithful group in town. For more information please contact James Powell at P.O. Box 253, Kahoka, MO 63445. Or call (816) 727-2663.

W. P. RISENER, 618 Curtis St., Blackfoot, ID 83221. Brethren, there is a faithful church meeting in Blackfoot, ID at 370 N. Shillings Ave., with services on Sunday at 10:00 and 11:00 A.M. and 6:30 P.M. Brother Frank Thompson of Wendell, ID greatly assisted this church in coming out from under the influences of liberalism and standing for the truth. If you are in the area visit with us and we urgently request your prayers.

PREACHERS NEEDED

DONIPHAN, MO—The Southside church of Christ which has been in existence for the past three years is looking for a full-time preacher. We are a small congregation with attendance around 30, but we are strong and desirous of defending the truth. We are in the middle of a hot-bed of liberalism. We can provide \$500 per month support. We also have in this congregation four excellent song leaders and four excellent

Bible teachers. Contact: Rex Holland, P.O. Box 220, Doniphan, MO 63935.

WISCONSIN RAPIDS, WI—The church that meets in Wisconsin Rapids, WI is actively seeking a gospel preacher willing to come and work with us in spreading the Word in central Wisconsin. The congregation, which numbers 35 members, will be able to only partially support a man in this effort. Wisconsin Rapids is located on the Wisconsin River approximately 90 miles north of Madison, WI. For more information write Matt Hennecke, 3632 Simonis St., Stevens Point, WI 54481, (715) 345-0552. Or Garth Frost, Rt. 1, Rudolph, WI 54475, (715) 435-3347.

PURCELL, OK—The church that meets at 407 Jackson St., in Purcell is looking for a preacher starting September 1. Partial support will be needed. If interested contact: Charles Waldo, Rt. 1, Box 80A, Purcell, OK 73080, (405) 527-3538. Or Evertt Shackelford, Rt. 1, Box 546, Noble, OK 73068, (405) 872-3592.

JOHNSON CITY, TN—The Brookmead church in Johnson City is looking for a preacher to begin here July 1, 1982. We number about 100 and are fully self supporting. Anyone interested can contact Olie Williamson, P.O. Box 29, Greenville, TN or phone (615) 638-6172.

SALISBURY, NC—The church meeting at Stokes—ferry and Earnhart Streets in Salisbury, NC is looking for a preacher. Please contact James H. Hand, Rt. 5, Box 347, Salisbury, NC 28144.

BAY CITY, MI—This congregation, which is two years old, is in need of a full-time preacher. The church here numbers 11 adults with an average attendance of 20-25. Most of the people are young in the faith, yet they are full of potential. The congregation was started over differences that existed regarding institutionalism. They felt like they could no longer worship where they were and so a new congregation was formed determined to "contend for the faith." If you are interested in helping the work here please contact Glen Erickson, 5861 Eleven Mile Road, Freeland, MI 48623. Others who know about the work here are: Art Adams, 2797 Russell St., Portage, IN 46368 and Ben Puterbaugh, 208 N.E. 13th, Casey, IL 62420.

BARRY PENNINGTON, 25903 Hardin Store Rd., Pinehurst, TX 77362. The church here set records during the month of May. We conducted a gospel meeting with Jack Kirby of Las Cruces, NM. He did an excellent job and we baptized two young people. Within the past few weeks two additional families have identified with us. On Sunday, May 25, we set a new attendance record when 76 were present. Our contribution was over \$500. Please pray for the work to continue to prosper. At the present we are having two classes in the homes of members on Tuesday and Thursday nights. We are studying Acts on Tuesday nights and 2 Corinthians on Thursday nights.

JIM GABBARD, Second and B Streets, Brawley, CA 92227. I am well into my fourth year with the very fine church here in Brawley but by reason of the great distance from my children and grandchildren in KY I would like to move back within 500 to 600 miles of Bowling Green. The church here has done a marvelous work. We are now helping substantially with the support of eight preachers in addition to my support. The four fine elders and the entire church are working in harmony. I can bring a substantial part of my support

and could thus work with a church not able to fully support a man. Two references are Hoyt Houchen, 1297 Boston St., Aurora, CO 80010, and A. C. Grider, 2137 Penhall Dr., Huntsville, AL 35811. **E. PAUL PRICE**, 411 Pierce, Purcell, OK 73080. For four years I have lived and preached in Purcell, OK. During this time I have been aware of the need for a faithful church in Norman. Some two years ago I preached in a tent meeting there with an average attendance of 30 to 40 each night. The University of Oklahoma is at Norman. I will complete my work here at Purcell by the latter part of August. It has been a good work with several baptized. Attendance last week at Purcell was 48 for Sunday morning. Can you help me in the work at Norman? Please let me hear from you as soon as possible. Phone (405) 527-6615.

ALEX OGDEN, Rt. 2, Box 525, Rockwood, TN 37854. We would like to inform the readers of STS about the congregation in Rockwood. The Post Oak church has been meeting on Post Oak Rd. in Rockwood for 23 years. We are a small group of about 30 members. Up until this time the congregation has not had a full-time preacher. On May 1st I began working with them and we are looking forward to much spreading of truth in this area. Rockwood is located about 45 miles west of Knoxville just off I-40. We welcome any who should be traveling through the area. Please tell others about us. Directions: Take the Rockwood-Harriman exit and go south on Hwy. 27 to the first red light in Rockwood. Turn left at the light and at the second stop sign turn right. The building will be on the left approximately 1/2 mile. Services are on Sunday at 10:00 and 11:00 A.M. and 7:00 P.M. Wednesday Bible Study is at 7:30 p.m. For more information call me at (615) 354-4099 or (615) 354-4435.

HERB BRASWELL, Rt. 2, Box 358-D, Cedar Bluff, VA 24609. We are helping in the support of my son Reid Braswell who is preaching in Bogota, Columbia, South America. Reid is in need of additional

support as he is only receiving \$375 per month. Brethren, if you could help in any way contact Reid Braswell, P.O. Box 2489, Bogota, D.E., Columbia, South America. For a reference contact Royce Chandler, 3915 Franklin Rd., Nashville, TN 37204. At present my wife and I are looking to move. If we could be of service to you please contact me at the above address.

RALPH WALKER, 714 Beach St., Cleveland, MS 38732. After enjoying five years of fellowship in Cleveland, MS with the saints that meet here, my family will be moving to Concord, NC the middle part of August. With much sadness we take leave of the birth-place of both our daughters as well as some others who have matured along with us. We leave the church wholly unified and harmonious. The work of the kingdom in Cleveland has a bright future with over 65% of the people being under 30 years of age. The work is almost totally-self-supporting with 35-40 regular members. Cleveland has been a beautiful place for us to live. We anticipate good things in NC as we plan to take our place beside those Christians who are already laboring there in Concord and throughout the state. Pray for us.

AN ENCOURAGING MEETING

FROM THE PLAINFIELD CHURCH BULLETIN, Johnie Edwards reports—It was good to work again in a gospel meeting with the church in Pekin, IN. Bill Beasley is doing a good work there. During the meeting there were 13 baptisms and 1 restoration.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

| | |
|--|-----|
| BAPTISMS | 296 |
| RESTORATIONS | 107 |
| (Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor) | |

