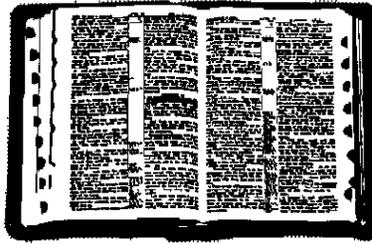


# SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

"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"

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## EXPOSITION: TEXT and CONTEXT

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### BAPTISM --- WHO, HOW, WHY

One of the most controversial subjects is baptism. Why there should be different views on a topic that is so plainly taught in the Bible has always been puzzling to me. There are three aspects of baptism that we will discuss in this article. (1) Who may be baptized, (2) How to be baptized, and (3) Why be baptized.

#### Who May Be Baptized?

1. **The taught may be baptized.** "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 28:19).

2. **Believers may be baptized.** Jesus said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:16).

3. **Penitent believers may be baptized.** The apostle Peter said: "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).

4. **Men and women may be baptized.** "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women" (Acts 8:12).

**CONCLUSION:** Only those old enough to be taught, to believe and to repent are to be baptized. There is no place for infant baptism in God's plan. Babies cannot be taught, neither can they believe or repent. Thus, they are not subjects of baptism. Baptism must be preceded by teaching, faith and repen-

tance, or it is null and void. Baptism by itself will save nobody. Those who sprinkle (they call this baptism) babies have a gross misconception of Bible baptism, as well as the spiritual state of the babies. Children are without sin (Matt. 18:3; 19:14). Baptism is for alien sinners (Acts 2:38). Therefore, babies are not to be baptized.

Furthermore, alien sinners should be baptized and not saved people. Notice in the above texts that salvation is AFTER baptism and not before it. Paul wrote that newness of life comes after baptism. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4). Those who advocate baptism for the saved circumvent what the Bible teaches.

#### How To Be Baptized

1. **Baptism is a burial.** "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death. . . ." (Rom. 6:4). "Buried with him in baptism" (Col. 2:12).

2. **Baptism is a going down into the water.** "And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him" (Acts 8:38).

3. **Baptism requires much water.** "And John was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there, and they came, and were baptized" (John 3:23).

4. **Baptism is immersion.** The reputable Greek scholar, W. E. Vine, said of baptism that it is "consisting of the processes of immersion, submersion and emergence" (Vol. 1, p. 96). Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon states, "immersion, submersion" (p. 94).

**CONCLUSION:** Sprinkling and pouring will not fit the action of baptism. In fact, in the Bible sense, sprinkling and pouring are not baptism at all. They are human substitutes without one iota of divine authority.

James Gibbons, a Cardinal in the Catholic Church, wrote: "For several centuries after the establishment of Christianity, baptism was usually conferred by immersion, but since the twelfth century the practice of baptizing by infusion (pouring, wew) has prevailed in

the Catholic Church, as this manner is attended by less inconvenience than baptism by immersion" (*Faith of our Fathers*, p. 266). Here we see why sprinkling and pouring became substitutes for baptism—simply a matter of convenience. Remember, Jesus said, "immersion."

### Why Be Baptized

1. **One should be baptized to be saved.** "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. . ." (Mark 16:16). "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us...." (1 Pet. 3:21).

2. **For remission of sins.** "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...." (Acts 2:38).

3. **To wash away sins.** Ananias told Saul of Tarsus: "And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).

4. **To get into Christ.** "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27). "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death" (Rom. 6:3)?

5. **To reach the blood of Christ.** Read Rom. 6:3 again in the above paragraph and notice that Paul said we were "baptized into his (Christ, wew) death." Jesus shed His blood in His death. We are baptized into the benefits of His blood and thereby cleansed from our sins by His blood in the act of baptism.

6. **To get into the one body.** "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free..." (1 Cor. 12:13). Regardless who we are, all of us come into the one body, the church, by the same process—baptism.

7. **To be born again.** "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). In the spiritual birth the Spirit begets us through the seed (Luke 8:11), the Word of God (1 Pet. 1:23) and the birth is consummated in baptism.

8. **It is commanded.** When Peter was at the house of Cornelius, the divine record states: "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10:48).

**CONCLUSION:** The inevitable conclusion, in view of the foregoing Scriptures, is that baptism stands between the alien sinner and his salvation. Hence, baptism is most essential and necessary. We had just as well omit faith or repentance as to leave out baptism. The same Lord who said that we must believe, also said that we must be baptized in order to be saved. Woe unto the man that changes it! Those who reject it have "rejected the counsel of God" (Luke 7:30).

I trust you will honestly and sincerely consider these Scriptures and observations on baptism. May you have the courage and faith to do what the Lord demands. Let's forget what men teach and go back to the Bible for the basis of our beliefs and actions.

*Please Renew Promptly*

## Searching The Scriptures

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# Editorial

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## THE CHANGING OF THE GUARD

Last month we carried an announcement of the selection of Bob F. Owen as the new President of Florida College upon the retirement of James R. Cope in July, 1982. At this juncture in the history of Florida College, I wish to make some observations which will be of interest to many of our readers.

### The Role of Florida College

The ideal on which the school was founded and has survived is a simple one. Those responsible for its existence believe that the parental duty to bring up children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4) includes providing for the education of our young. Much of what is offered on the college and university level today is saturated with humanism. Faith destroying philosophies and attendant moral permissiveness often confront young Christians in their educational pursuits. It has been the goal of those who operate Florida College to provide quality education in a moral setting where the leaven of godliness may spread unhindered from both teacher and student. The editor and his wife both benefited greatly from the opportunity provided by this institution. Both of our sons received similar benefit. Through the years we have encouraged many young people to take advantage of what the school has to offer and we have seen many positive results.

Florida College is a human institution. It is not the church. It neither solicits nor accepts funds from churches. It is not perfect. It has freckles and sometimes warts appear. It has friends and it has enemies. Some of its friends are naive as to its faults. Some of its enemies are overly critical. While the editor is an alumnus and has served for a number of years on the school's National Council, he has tried to be a friend with enough objectivity to speak his mind to the administration, board and staff. This has been done on many occasions.

I do not believe that Florida College is the only alternative in educating young people. There are many sound, productive Christians today who received their college training elsewhere while retaining their convictions and character. Some have been able to attend school near excellent congregations which have provided wonderful services to such students in Bible teaching. The 12th St. church in Bowling Green (and other area congregations) have been a great blessing to students at Western Kentucky State University.

Mound and Starr in Nacogdoches, Texas has done fine work with students of Stephen F. Austin State University. The College View church in Florence, Alabama has rendered similar service to students at the University of North Alabama at Florence. Some students are situated so they can live at home and attend schools in their own city, as do a number in Louisville. As parents, my wife and I looked upon Florida College as a bridge between leaving home and further education for our sons beyond what Florida College offered. It gave them independence from home but in a setting where similar standards prevailed. While we recognize weaknesses and flaws in a human enterprise, it is our persuasion that the ideal is worthy of preservation,

### James R. Cope

The editor was a student at Florida College the year James R. Cope came to serve as President. He brought with him some brilliant young teachers who were soon to leave the mark of their influence upon students. Brother Cope himself was a fearless, articulate teacher. In my judgment, the teaching of the school was weakened when administrative duties took him out of the classroom. He began his tenure with several old buildings in poor repair. A number of the teachers lived under similar (if not worse) conditions to the students. From a meager beginning, the school has increased in enrollment, new facilities have been added and the financial condition of the school greatly improved.

In the late 50's storm clouds burst over the school and a determined effort was made to wrench it away from the hands of men who stood in opposition to the liberal tendencies manifesting themselves throughout the nation. Loss of students and revenue threatened to close the doors. But men and women of conviction who could not be bought won the hearts of grateful patrons who tightened their belts and saw it through. It is the belief of the editor that had it not been for the courage and reputation of James R. Cope, the school would have folded. His staff shared in the sacrifices of those lean years.

The stature and influence of James R. Cope has left its mark on Florida College. For 33 years he has been its most visible symbol of strength, courage, devotion to principle, and unwavering loyalty to the Lord in personal life and teaching. While some have joked about his tenderheartedness and quaint stories and expressions, it has been these very qualities which have bridged the gap between academic aloofness and the genuine warmth of real folks. The most unlearned parent has felt comfortable with "Jim" Cope. He has personally gone to bat to help find ways for students to pay their bills and remain in school. Through the years, in his role as a gospel preacher, brethren have not had to wonder where he stood. He was the first editor of the PRECEPTOR and all who read that knew what he believed touching issues of great moment to Christians. He wrote tracts and booklets which cut across the grain of popular opinion. In the "open forums" of an earlier time, he stood his ground and

spoke his piece without any thought or fear of the consequences. For these, and numerous other reasons, many of us have felt that the school was in safe hands.

We are confident that we speak the sentiments of thousands in expressing to James R. Cope our sincere thanks for his countless contributions to the enrichment of the lives of so many of us. As his life and work take on new dimensions, we wish for him and his beautiful wife, Georgia Dean, health, long life and fruitful service as we all move nearer the inevitable hour.

### **Bob F. Owen**

Now comes the changing of the guard. Bob F. Owen came to Florida College as a student the same year James R. Cope came to be President. Though of a little younger generation, he has been a witness to the struggles through which the school has passed. And not only a witness, but a participant. Soon after completing his own college work, he joined the staff of the school where he has remained an integral part of the day-in and day-out operation of the school for nearly three decades. He and his wife, Janelle, met while students at Florida College. My wife and I double-dated with Bob and Janelle on numerous occasions. We have been good friends through the years.

Brother Owen has asked the present staff to continue under his presidency. That he knows as much about the inner workings of the school as it is possible for one to know, is beyond question. There is a natural tendency to take a "wait and see" attitude when such a change in leadership is affected. While rooted in the ideals on which the school began, well versed on its daily functions, yet every man has his own personality, his own style and deserves space to work within that context. No man should ever be expected to fit the same mold as those who have gone before. Bob F. Owen is not James R. Cope, nor should he be expected to be. We are sure that we join other friends of the school in wishing for him a successful and fruitful tenure of service as President of Florida College.

### **Looking Ahead**

We do not know what the future holds for this institution. That it presently fills a need we confidently believe. Some have complained that some things are changing at Florida College. Perhaps so. But we are convinced that many of the perceived changes are but reflections of changing times and standards among patrons of the school. The school is sometimes caught in the crossfire of idealism on which it was founded and which is so strongly cherished by older patrons and the loosening attitudes and moderating influences of a younger clientele. Some students and parents seem to choke on rules and restraints which they have never applied at home. The moral permissiveness of the age has infiltrated the lives of more Christians than some wish to admit. This is reflected in the speech, dress and standards of acceptable conduct within a student body.

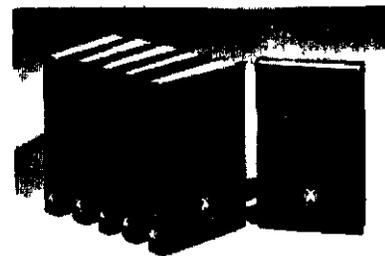
The second generation is always crucial in any enterprise. Schools are no exception. Maintaining a

balance between changes which are innocent and which improve, and holding the line where principles of right are concerned are not always easy. No school is ever safer than the quality and character of those who make up its board. When a board takes into its number men of uncertain sound and conviction, their attitudes will filter down through the personnel they employ. We take this public means of urging the Board of Directors of Florida College to continually exercise care as to the standards they set for those who shall occupy that board, as well as those who administer and teach in the college. Should money and influence be the dominant criteria? Is a prospective board member known to be sound in the faith? Or does he ventilate doctrinally loose attitudes? Is he a trouble-maker and sower of discord? Is he a business "hot dog" rather than a man of mature and stable judgment? Is he a "wheeler-dealer" who uses his money as a club to get his way? These are considerations of great moment. The future of Florida College is ultimately bound up in them. The school has suffered at times from lack of care in choosing board members. A number of the present board members are personal friends of the editor and I am convinced will appreciate what is said here. I speak as a friend who wants to see the school succeed and persevere to serve another generation of parents and youth.

Thanks to James R. Cope for a job well done. Our prayers and good wishes are with Bob F. Owen as he assumes his new responsibilities. "I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth" (3 John 2).

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THE  
LITTLE ROCK TRIAL

*Eugene Britnell*

P.O. Box 5624  
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In March of 1981, the Arkansas Legislature passed a bill and Governor White signed it into law (known as Act 590) authorizing the teaching of what they called "creation science" whenever the theories of materialistic evolution are taught in the public schools. Almost immediately, the American Civil Liberties Union filed a lawsuit challenging the constitutionality of the legislation. In December, 1981, a trial was conducted in Little Rock before Federal District Judge William R. Overton. In January of 1982, the judge ruled in behalf of the plaintiffs and declared the law unconstitutional.

Due to the widespread publicity and interest in the trial and the subject discussed, and since I was in the courtroom when the trial began and heard much of it, the editor of this paper has requested that I present this account of the trial as I saw it. We hope that this will be of interest to our readers, who, in most cases, received distorted reports by the news media. Due to the local interest and promises we made to radio listeners, we are presenting much of this material in our church paper. Brother Adams understands that this is a unique situation, and that it is both difficult and useless to try to write different accounts of the same event.

### The Judge

Let it be understood that I have deep respect for our laws and judicial system, and I have no desire to speak disrespectfully of Judge Overton, but I must make some observations about his role in the trial. Mr. Overton is a Methodist. One of the first witnesses called by the ACLU was the Methodist Bishop of Arkansas. I thought then and still think that the judge would have been more than a normal person not to have been unduly influenced by such testimony. The judge questioned and argued with some of the state's witnesses. This and other factors caused us to feel that the judge was not completely unbiased during the trial. It wasn't too difficult to predict the outcome.

### The Attorney General

Although I have some problems with some of the attitudes and actions of State Attorney General Steve Clark, perhaps he did as well as one could expect. I think that he should have used some experienced counsel which was available to him, and pressed some

points more than he did and challenged more of the arguments of the opposition.

As I see it, his major problem was being in the awkward position of trying to defend creation without acknowledging a creator. This is not only inconsistent, but impossible. His effort was to avoid any reference to God. The ACLU recognized this problem, and made every effort to make it a religious issue. Someone suggested that they gave Mr. Clark an anvil and told him to swim with it. And that's not easy to do!

### The American Civil Liberties Union

The ACLU was founded in 1920 by Elizabeth Flynn, William Foster, Louis Budenz and Roger N. Baldwin—all loyal members of the Communist Party. When Baldwin died not long ago, he was hailed as "a life-long champion of individual freedom." He said many times that he was for socialism, disarmament, social ownership of property, and that "Communism is the goal."

The ACLU expends much of its time and money in defending murderers, homosexuals, drug peddlers, flag-burners, draft-dodgers, Nazism, pornography, and criminals of all kinds. They are against anybody and anything that is for God, Christianity, pure morality and true Americanism. The ACLU is the legal arm of the humanist movement in America. It is apparent that they are more interested in promoting atheism, humanism and communism in this country than they are in what children are taught about creation in the schools. They seek every opportunity to take advantage of social problems and emotional issues.

When you see the ACLU defending some person or movement, you may reasonably conclude that the person or movement is unscriptural, unethical or un-American. Righteous people should oppose the ACLU whenever and wherever possible! During the Little Rock trial, someone suggested that A-C-L-U should stand for Anti-Christian Lunacy Union.

The challenge of Act 590 in Arkansas is a perfect example of the arrogant hypocrisy of an organization that claims to fight for civil liberties while at the same time actively repressing views contrary to its own preconceived notions. While piously proclaiming that it is the guardian of religious liberty, the ACLU seeks to force all the people of the United States to accept atheistic, evolutionary humanism as their court-decreed state religion!

### The ACLU Witnesses

The attorneys, witnesses and supporters for the plaintiffs enjoyed the publicity and rejoiced in their feeling of victory. They used about 20 lawyers, including some highly adept volunteers from a New York law firm.

Among their witnesses were several members of the "clergy" and they were happy about that. There were priests, rabbis, and Bishop Kenneth Hicks of the Methodist Church. As I listened to his testimony and realized that he was standing with the atheists, agnostics and humanists, it was hard for me to realize

that he even claimed to believe the Bible. The truth is, he does not believe all of it. He doesn't even understand the meaning of "buried" in the Bible (see Rom. 6:3; Col. 2:12). And where in the Bible would he find authority for a state bishop over many churches? He was followed by a witness who said she was an atheist, and frankly, I appreciated her honesty more than I did the bishop's hypocrisy.

### **The State's Witnesses**

We agree with a statement in *Discover* magazine of February, 1982, which said: "The defenders of creationism were their own worst enemies." The state senator who introduced Act 590 stated on the witness stand that God called him to do so. I didn't believe it, and doubt if anyone in the courtroom believed it, including the judge. I wondered then why God didn't also speak to the judge and tell him how to rule on the case.

Then there was the witness (a preacher) who was made to testify that he believed in UFOs and that they were the work of Satan. How he knew that I don't know. And what did UFOs have to do with the issue under consideration? Nothing! But the ACLU people introduced and dwelt on such to make the creationists look ridiculous—and they succeeded.

All of this reminded me of what I have known for years, and that is: if truth is defended and error refuted on any subject it will be left to true Christians—members of the body of Christ who believe all of the Bible, know what it teaches and how to apply it—to do so! The church was the only organization to challenge the evolutionists (mentioning Dr. Carl Sagan and Dr. Stephen Jay Gould by name) to debate the subject.

### **First Amendment Dualism**

As a writer for the Los Angeles Times observed in a syndicated article, there are two major points in the First Amendment, the Establishment clause and the Free Exercise clause. He quoted a California law professor as saying, "There is an inherent tension of conflict between these two provisions. The court's pattern has been to perceive the cases as falling either under one clause or the other and then either totally ignoring the other clause or disposing of it in a very summary and often dissatisfying way."

The First Amendment reads: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. . . ." If creation is taught in a public school, does that mean that Congress has established a religion? No, of course not! The Amendment was so worded as to prohibit the Congress from establishing a state religion or respecting one denomination over and above all others. We are for that.

Have we reached the point that God cannot be mentioned in the classroom (unless one is cursing), and there can be no reference to the Bible? If so, then children cannot be taught the Mayflower Compact, the Declaration of Independence, or the Gettysburg

Address. In those famous works, God is mentioned, and even as Creator. Why is it legal to teach children about God from such sources and illegal to teach them the same thing from Genesis?

Our Congress opens with prayer to God. So does the Supreme Court. Our coins and currency bear the inscription "In God We Trust." When the Federal Court opened in Little Rock on Dec. 7, 1981 to try the creation bill, a Federal Marshall declared: "God save the United States and this honorable court." In many ways, this nation has acknowledged God.

### **Which Way Are We Headed?**

Are we going to turn this great nation into an atheistic society? Are we going to allow a radical and unbelieving minority to rule and declare what our children are taught?

An Associated Press/NBC News Poll in November, 1981, revealed that 76% of the people believed that creation should be taught when evolution is taught in the public schools.

An editorial in the Wall Street Journal in January of this year made some interesting observations. Having expressed disapproval of the Arkansas legislation, they said:

"But having said that, we cannot find much sympathy either for those forces who run to the law courts at every slightest hint that a teacher might want to use the words God or church. We suspect that efforts to break down societal mores and standards of conduct that have a religious base are more than a little bit responsible for the fundamentalist backlash. We would be doing the Arkansas legislators a disservice if we did not acknowledge that if caught between the relativists and the fundamentalists, we ourselves might often be tempted to side with the fundamentalists, at least those who are concerned, as we are, about a decline in the moral order. While the principle of church-state separation is useful in preserving a liberal and pluralistic society, we are not sure the courts have considered what it might be like if they insist on divorcing government entirely from spiritual thought. . . we hope the forces who have won this narrow battle in court won't labor too long with' the notion that they have scored some major victory against religious belief."

Amen! It is certainly true that there is some connection between philosophy and conduct. Many of us can remember when children could read the Bible and pray in the public schools. Did that result in a union of church and state? Was it a violation of the Constitution? Of course not! In those days there was very little violence, rebellion and immorality in the schools, and we didn't know what dope was. Now that prayer, the Bible, and the teaching of creation have been removed from our schools, look at conditions. Look at the crime, vandalism, violence (even murder), illegitimacy, drug addition, etc. Were conditions better then, or are they better now? We all know the answer.

## How Must We Interpret the Bible?

During the trial, we heard much from the ACLU lawyers and witnesses about the Bible "as literally interpreted." Certainly there is figurative language in the Bible, but that is not true of the creation account. If the Bible doesn't mean what it says, does it say what it means? If not, how are we to know what it means or whether it means anything? We understand that the evolutionist—atheistic or theistic—cannot allow the Bible to mean what it says, but we believe that it does. And remember also that the Lord and the inspired apostles endorsed the creation account as recorded in Genesis (see Matthew 19:4-6). Were they ignorant or deceived about the creation? Certainly not!

Kelly Seagraves of Creation-Science Research Center, who thinks the Arkansas trial was a victory for creation, made the following statement: "If Creation cannot be taught because it is held by religious people and is based on a literal view of the Bible, then Evolution will also be banned, because all those who testified in the trial for the ACLU stated evolution was consistent with their faith, thus making evolution an essential element of their personal religious faith which is based on a non-literal interpretation of the Bible."

Both creation and evolution are systems of faith, and neither can be established scientifically. One is the religion of Christianity and the other the religion of humanism. Why should one religion be taught in the public schools and the other denied?

## Why Are We So Concerned?

Why are Christians so concerned about children being taught the inspired account of divine creation? Simply because it is impossible to separate our concepts of our origin from our concepts of our nature, duty and destiny. The scriptures, common sense and human behavior throughout recorded history all confirm this to be true. The apostle Paul knew this, and as he addressed the philosophers and scientists from Mars' hill in Athens, he emphasized these facts.

1. Origin. He said, "God that made the world and all things therein. . ." (Acts 17:24). That confirms our origin.

2. Nature. "And hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth. . ." "For as much then as we are the offspring of God. . ." (verses 26, 29). God has made all men (not men and animals) of one blood, and people are the off-spring of God. Did He ever say that to or about a monkey?

3. Duty. "That they should seek the Lord. . ." "we ought not to think that the Godhead is like..." (verses 27, 29). To say that I "ought" is to say that I owe. If there are things which I "should" and "ought" to do, then I have a duty to perform.

4. Destiny. "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained. . ." (verse 31). Man, not animals, has an appointment with God at the judgment, and an eternal destiny awaiting him.

## Using the SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

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## THAT'S THE WHOLE POINT

Alistair Cooke, urbane host of "Masterpiece Theater" recently dropped a quotation that is worthy of some thought. He said, "Somebody once said to Hugh Weldon, who was the managing director of all BBC television then, 'But how can you do it that way? Don't you risk failure?' And Weldon said, 'of course, the whole point of television is not to avoid failure at all costs, but to give triumph a chance.'"

That line is too noble to be applied to television. It's true of all life. If we don't risk failure, triumph will never have a chance.

Many folks never become Christians because they fear failure. "But I don't believe I can live it," we're often told. Here's someone who understands what God's conditions are and what wonderful blessings the faithful are heirs of, but he cops out because of the possibility of failing to continue faithful. One thing for sure, To never begin is to guarantee failure. One does not refuse to start a trip until he is guaranteed of arriving safely at his destination. If he did, he would never arrive at all. Let us encourage people to give triumph a chance.

Then consider the use of our talents. The "one-talent man" of our Lord's parable (Matt. 25) was determined to avoid failure at all costs. As a result, he never gave triumph a chance. If we fear failure to the point that we refuse to try our hand at teaching a class, or preaching a sermon, or leading a song, or a prayer, we are bound to fail. Triumph doesn't have a chance.

The same is true of striving to win souls. Oft times members of Christ's body do not share the good news because they fear rejection. Triumph doesn't get a chance. The gospel goes unmentioned to neighbors, friends, relatives, and co-workers because of the possibility of failure. Our attitude should be like Paul's "... or **do I seek to please men] for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ**" (Gal. 1:10).

The whole point of life is not to avoid failure at all costs, but to give triumph a chance.

## AN INTERESTING DEDUCTION

It's been probably ten years since W.L. Wharton mentioned something to me about enjoying Mark Twain's "The Innocents Abroad." I purchased a paperback edition shortly thereafter. The 75 cents price-mark confirms that it was bought some years ago. I only recently read it. The "innocents" were Twain

and his fellow passengers who embarked on a trip to Europe and the "Holy Land" on June 1, 1867, only two years after the end of the Civil War.

As anyone familiar with Mark Twain might suspect, he had no sympathy for the sacred cows of tourism in these antique lands. Still, we do not sense the utter skepticism and out and out blasphemy in this work that we find in much of his later writings.

I found some of his remarks concerning Rome and the Vatican of special interest:

"No prayer is offered to the Saviour, who seems to be of little importance anywhere in Rome; but an inscription says, 'Blessed Peter, give life to Pope Leo and victory to King Charles.' It does not say, 'Intercede for us, through the Saviour, with the Father, for this boon', but, 'Blessed Peter give it us.'

"In all seriousness, without meaning to be frivolous, without meaning to be irreverent and more than all, without meaning to be blasphemous, I state as my simple deduction from the things I have seen and the things I have heard that the Holy Personages rank thus in Rome:

"First: 'The Mother of God', otherwise the Virgin Mary.

"Second: The Deity.

"Third: Peter.

"Fourth: Some twelve or fifteen canonized popes and martyrs.

"Fifth: Jesus Christ the Saviour (but always as an infant in arms).

"I may be wrong in this—my judgment errs often, just as is the case with other men's—but it is my judgment, be it good or bad."

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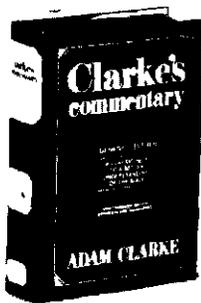
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### NEHEMIAH: LET US RISE UP AND RESTORE THE PLACE OF HISTORY IN SPIRITUAL REVIVAL

In our last article we looked at the need for Spiritual Revival. We are living in a day when the church is plagued by five great ills. First of several, as we noted last month, was the zero growth rate. In far too many congregations, we are not baptizing enough people to replace the ones that are dying and those who fall by the wayside. Second, the church faces the problem of fragmentation into sectarian parties that insist that they are the only ones with the key to truth. Third, is the monster of materialism that tells us that the prestige of our jobs, or the money from our jobs, is more important than the Lord's work. Materialism tells us that football, camping and hunting are more important than the Lord's work, or more important than being present to teach a Bible class, which we cannot do when we are regularly out of town. Materialism is not what we possess, but simply our attitude toward what is important. Fourth, a great need of the church is for stability in the homes of Christians. How many preachers are now divorcing; how many Bible class teachers are lost to the Lord because they have become guilty of adultery and have destroyed their marriages? The Devil does not have to make atheists out of us; he can simply destroy our marriages and render us ineffective in the Master's cause. The fifth great ill of the Church today is the lack of an inner fellowship with the Lord. We worship the institution of the church, instead of the Savior of the church, Jesus Christ. We spend no time with Him in prayer and meditation and our concept of "faithfulness" is how many times a week one comes to the building.

Now with such great needs before us, we can easily see that our need for spiritual revival is not just imagined but very real, so real that we stand at the crossroads of our place in the kingdom of God. Just as the Lord took the kingdom away from the Jews and gave it to the Gentiles, He may ever so easily take it from us and give it to a more dedicated people. The question before us in this article is: what does Nehemiah teach us about this process of implementing spiritual revival? The thrust of Nehemiah 9 is to demonstrate the place of history in spiritual revival.

### **The Place of History in Revival**

We have seen that the leaders of Israel were serious about teaching the people. In Chapter 8 the people gathered together and read and studied the word of God for hours on end. When the law was read, it produced conviction in the hearts of the people of God and the people forsook their sin by repentance. The institution of the day of atonement and the Feast of Tabernacles sought to bring the people back to their God on their knees in agony for their sins and in gratitude for His goodness. But yet, as wonderful as this was, it still was not enough. The people needed to feel the obligation of a covenant between them and their God. We all know what it means when a start is made toward renewal but if it falls short, the heart is calloused and may never be touched again. So Ezra and the Levites did not want to see this spiritual fever slip away into the failures of the past. Therefore, it was time to invoke history as an object in spiritual renewal. Nehemiah 9 is a recounting of history of the Israelites and will provide a fitting prelude to the signing of the covenant in Chapter 10. Chapter 9 can be divided into three sections: Verses 1-4 PREPARATION OF THE PEOPLE; Verses 5-31 PRAYER FOR THE PEOPLE; and Verses 32-38 PROMISE FOR THE PEOPLE. The main section is the middle section of Verses 5-31, which is a prayer for the people and which recounts the history of God dealing with Israel. It covers the redemptive scheme of God for His people from Adam to the Babylonian captivity.

This history is divided into four sub-divisions: (1) Adam to Abraham, 5-8. (2) Egyptian captivity to the Red Sea deliverance, 9-15. (3) The wilderness wanderings to the occupation of the Promised Land, 16-25. (4) Finally, from the Judges to the Babylonian Captivity, 26-31.

As the Israelites came together for this solemn assembly they did so with fasting, a symbol of their devotion, and with sackcloth as a symbol of their inner humility. Then for one-fourth of the day, that is for three hours, they stood as the word was expounded. Then for another fourth of the day, three hours, they spent in worship and confession. What group of God's people do you know that would be willing to spend six hours on any given Sunday to worship God and confess their sins to Him? We are all well aware of the "clock-eyed" brethren that cannot sit for three minutes past what they consider "overtime", without a smoke or with jockeying in line with the Denominational crowds at the cafeteria for lunch. All of this six-hour activity was simply PREPARATION for the prayer which the Levites were to lead.

This prayer was to point toward God's faithfulness in each of the divisions: Adam to Abraham; Captivity to the Red Sea; Wanderings to the Occupation of The Land; and the Judges to Babylonian Captivity. In each case God was faithful and delivered what He promised to man when man was humble, submissive and obedient. Yet, in each case when Israel rebelled in the lust of her heart she was abused by her enemies. Over

and over the point is made in the prayer that if you will obey, God will bless; and to make this abstract principle concrete, the Levites pointed to historical examples that all the people knew were true. Reject God and He will reject you from His favor. Turn to God and He will turn to you with His favor. All of this was in preparation for the signing of the Covenant which would be placed before them. This prayer is to take the religious zeal and turn it into firm commitment to the one whose favor they seek.

### **Our Use of History in Revival**

Barber quotes Patrick Henry as saying, "I have no light to illumine the pathway of the future save that which falls over my shoulder from the past." So, there are several great lessons that can be learned from history that will aid us in our push for spiritual revival.

First, the church has never been persecuted to death. Please take the time to read this lengthy quotation from Alexander Campbell in his opening address with Robert Owen, the infidel, concerning the ability of the Christians to withstand persecution. This is the greatest, most moving speech that I have ever read, and it ought to speak volumes to us today.

"You must not think, my friends, that Christianity has come down to our times without a struggle; nay, indeed, it took the nation at first by the irresistible force of its evidence. It was opposed by consolidated ranks of well-disciplined foes. Learned, cunning, bold, and powerful were its enemies. But experience taught them it was not only foolish, but hurtful to kick against the goads.

Never was there such a moral phenomenon exhibited upon this earth as the first establishment and progress of Christianity. The instruments by which it was established, the opposition with which it was met, and the success which attended its career, were all of the most extraordinary character. The era of Christianity itself presents a very sublime spectacle: the whole world reposing in security under the protecting wings of the most august of all the Caesars; peace, universal peace, with her healthful arms encircling all the nations composing the great empire which was itself the consummation of all the empires of the ancient world. Polytheism, with her myriads of temples and her myriads and myriads of priests, triumphantly seated in the affections of a superstitious people, and swaying a magic scepter from the Tiber to the ends of the earth. Legislators, magistrates, philosophers, orators, and poets, all combined to plead her cause, and to protect her from insult and injury. Rivers of sacrificial blood, crimsoned all the rites of pagan worship; and clouds of incense arose

from every city, town, and hamlet, in honor of the gods of Roman superstition. Just in this singular and unrivaled crisis, when the Jew's religion, though corrupted by tradition and distracted by faction, was venerated for its antiquity, and admired for its divinity; when idolatry was at its zenith in the pagan world, the Star of Bethlehem appears. The marvelous scene opens in a stable. What a fearful odds! What a strange contrast! Idolatry on the throne, and the founder of a new religion and a new empire lying in a manger!

After thirty years of obscurity we find him surrounded with what the wise, the wealthy, and the proud would call a contemptible group; telling them that one of them, an uncouth and untutored fisherman, too, had discovered a truth which would new-modify the whole world. In the midst of them he uttered the most incredible oracle ever heard. I am about, says he, to found a new empire on the acknowledgment of a single truth, a truth, too, which one of you has discovered, and all the powers and malice of worlds seen and unseen shall never prevail against it. This is our helmet, breastplate, and shield, in this controversy. What a scene presents itself here? A pusillanimous, wavering, ignorant, and timid dozen of individuals, without a penny apiece, assured that to them it pleased the Ruler of the Universe to give the empire of the world; that to each of them would be given a throne from which would be promulgated laws never to be repealed while the sun and moon endure.

Such were the army of the faith. They begin their career. Under the jealous and invidious eyes of a haughty Sanhedrin at home, and under the strict cognizance of a Roman emperor abroad, with a watchful procurator stationed over them. They commenced their operations. One while charged with idolatry; at another with treason. Reviled and persecuted until their chief is rewarded with a cross, and themselves with threats and imprisonment. A throne in a future world animated them, and a crown of glory after martyrdom stimulated them. On they march from conquest to conquest, till not only a multitude of the Jewish priests and people, but Caesar's household in imperial Rome, became obedient to the faith. Such was the commencement."

As you can see, the church never has been put out of business by persecution. Not history alone, but also the Book of Acts gives us that truth. But, on the other hand, the church often faces extermination during time

of plenty and prosperity. Rev, 3:17: "You say I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,". It was in the era of prosperity that Laodicea was about to be cast out of the Lord's mouth. Israel, in its day of plenty, forsook the Lord, and never seemed to have time to remember. It was not until adversity came that they could turn back to the Lord. So our greatest enemy is not famine, but the feast of prosperity and plenty. As Campbell said, the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the church.

Secondly, we can learn from history that God is actively in the affairs of man for the benefit of His people. The Revelation of Jesus Christ to John was to inform him that those who sought to destroy Christians would themselves be destroyed. We clearly understand that Christ is the head of the church because many scriptures tell us that He has all power and authority. We are told that He is the head of the body and that forcefully indicates that He is the Head of the church. But, for a moment, look at Ephesians 1:22, "head over all things TO the church" is the reading in most versions. But checking in the NIV, we find, "appointed him to be head over everything FOR the church. . ." Notice the difference between "TO the church" and "FOR the church." We know that both statements are true no matter how the verse is translated. Yet, the NIV rendering gives the impression that the world is ruled by Him as the Head of the church FOR the benefit of its existence. History tells us that God ruled in the Old Testament in behalf of His saints and He now rules in Christ for or in behalf of His saints. No matter our faithfulness or unfaithfulness God's Plan will be worked because He is ruling and active in the affairs of man for His cause.

Learning and appreciating His action in the world for His cause, we ought to be diligent in prayer and communion with Him concerning the growth and development of His kingdom. God is not like the deist who winds up the clock never to touch it again! He acts, works, and participates in the world of His saints for the redemption of mankind. This is why we must develop a living, communing relationship with our God on a daily basis if we are to be effective in His world. It is by prayer and His will that the kingdom grows, not by my cleverness in answering argument. Not by oratory, not by my tireless door knocking, and not by the sweat of my brow. When we do the work we are too much like Nebuchadnezzar of Daniel's day,—"is this not Babylon which I have built?" Brethren, we stand in His strength and His power. He rules the world for the benefit of the salvation by the gospel plan. There is no other purpose to man's existence in His mind. He is long-suffering and willing that none should be lost but all should come to repentance.

In conclusion, spiritual renewal is built on a sense of HISTORY OF WHAT GOD HAS DONE, and we can gauge WHAT HE WILL DO IN THE FUTURE by that Divine record. In the near future we will study more about our need for spiritual renewal.

SET FOR THE  
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*T. G. O'Neal*

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## THE STANDARD OF SOUNDNESS

What is the standard by which one is determined to be sound and what is the basis upon which a church may be said to be sound? Upon what basis can we say that one is faithful or that a church is a faithful church?

**Soundness, either in a person or in a church, is not determined by what the majority of people are doing.** The masses of people are traveling down the broad way that leads unto eternal destruction. Jesus said so in Mt. 7:13-14. A church or a person may be in the limelight of the world and having the world praising them for their religious activity, but such does not constitute soundness and faithfulness.

**Soundness, either in a person or in a church, is not determined by what the "brotherhood" thinks.** By the term "brotherhood" I mean what the brethren in general think. The brethren may give some congregation or preacher the name of being sound, and at the same time the preacher or the congregation may be weak and sickly as it is possible to get and still remain alive.

**Soundness, either in a person or in a church, is not determined by what project we support.** Brethren and churches today have all kinds of projects that they have invented to take up their time in service to God. The one I may support or the church supports does not determine soundness. We need to learn not to support projects and get back to supporting the work of the Lord.

**Soundness, either in a person or in a church, is not determined by the preacher the church has or by the preacher one likes to hear.** A church can have a preacher who will preach the truth, but the church will not subscribe to the truth he preaches. A person may have a favorite preacher he likes to listen to, and that preacher may preach the truth, but the person will not accept the truth when it is preached. A person can pat the preacher on the back after the services, but that doesn't mean he is sound.

**Soundness, either in a person or in a church, is not determined by either their approval or disapproval of any particular radio program.** One could approve a certain radio program or TV program and not be sound in the faith. The approval or disapproval of any TV or radio program is not the basis upon which soundness is

had. A church could disapprove of some radio program and still be sound in the faith. Or a church could approve of a radio program and be unsound in the faith.

**Soundness, either in a person or in a church, is not determined by either their subscribing or not subscribing to any religious journal.** Too often, and one time is one time too often, brethren will attempt to determine faithfulness or soundness of a preacher or of a church by whether they subscribe to a particular paper or not. If you do not subscribe you can be faithful to the Lord, and if you do subscribe you can still be unfaithful to the Lord. When subscribing to any religious journal is the basis upon which to determine soundness and faithfulness, a standard has been set that the Lord does not recognize.

When the standard of faithfulness is determined by subscribing to a religious journal, a pressure campaign is being used to force people into going along with a particular program or else being labeled by official pronouncement as being unfaithful and unsound.

There is one good reason why all of the "standards" I have mentioned do not determine faithfulness to the Lord—none of them is found in the New Testament. If these do not constitute the standard, then what does constitute the standard for faithfulness and soundness to the Lord?

The Apostle Paul said, the standard of faithfulness was that which was according "to sound doctrine; According to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust" (1 Tim. 1:10-11). Paul left Timothy at Ephesus that he might "charge some that they teach no other doctrine" (1 Tim. 1:3). Further Paul told Timothy in 2 Tim. 1:13 to "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." Again, Paul told him in 2 Tim. 4:2-4, to "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the *truth*, and shall be turned unto fables."

Paul wrote Titus to "... speak thou the things which become **sound doctrine**" (Titus 2:1). And of certain ones Titus was told to "... rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith" (Titus 1:13). Paul told Titus that one of the qualifications of elders was to be "that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers" (Titus 1:9). Titus was to teach young men to use "sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you" (Titus 2:8).

Paul, in writing to the Corinthians said, in 2 Cor. 13:5, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; ..." How shall we make an examination of our lives as to whether we are in the faith? Or, if you want to apply the question to a congregation, by what standard will a congregation measure itself to see if it is faithful unto the Lord? Will the standard be whether we subscribe

to some religious journal, or whether we endorse a particular radio program, or whether we have the right preacher, or by the projects or institutions we support, or by what the brotherhood thinks of us, or by what the majority of people are doing?

I want to say something that needs to be said very badly and we need to learn it: **no man has any SCRIPTURAL right to set up a standard by which either individuals or congregations will be judged as to their faithfulness and unfaithfulness!** Sometimes men get puffed up with their own self esteem and think that whatever standard they set up, the Lord just automatically will recognize and if men do not bow to the man-made standard that the Lord will reject all who do not subscribe to man's standard.

The standard for truth and error, right and wrong, faithfulness and unfaithfulness, sin and righteousness has been determined a long time ago and the standard is permanent. David said in Psalms 119:89, "Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven," We do not determine the standard here, it already has been settled by Jehovah God in heaven.

Sometimes when a person does not go along with what someone thinks, an official pronouncement is given that a certain person is unsound. If everyone else does not accept the official pronouncement, then whoever does not is immediately marked as being unsound. The same thing is true concerning congregations. If a congregation does not bow down to some official degree, then it will be declared to be unsound, and with no more authority than the will of man.

The standard of soundness is set forth in the SCRIPTURES. The inspired writer said it was "sound doctrine", "sound words", "sound speech", "truth", and the "gospel" that was the standard for determining if either a person or a congregation is sound in the faith. When one makes a condition of soundness more than the inspired writer, he has added to the word of God. This no man can do without bringing down the curse of Almighty God (Gal. 1:8-9).

The 5th Avenue church of Christ with which I labor publishes a bulletin which we mail to people who are willing to receive it. If, after they read it, they want to pass it along to a friend, that is fine with us. Its purpose is teaching. Therefore, there are those that receive our church bulletin that we know do not agree with what we say in it. But that is all right. After studying and considering the evidence we have to present over a period of time in the light of New Testament teaching, they may come to us and say that they see what we have been saying is the truth. If so, we are glad. If they do not see the things we present as being taught in the Scriptures, then we do not want them to accept them. We have had those that did not agree with what we were teaching in the bulletin when they first began to receive it, but as they studied and read it in the light of what the Bible taught, we have had many from far and near to express their appreciation for the paper either orally or in letters to us.

Now what would you think if I were to declare that

all the faithful Christians were receiving this bulletin? You would think that I was determining who is faithful to the Lord and who is unfaithful to the Lord. You would probably ask yourself the question, "Does he think that he is the one that determines who is sound and faithful and who is unsound and unfaithful just by saying so?" Would the fact that I said so, make it so?

People should not be deceived by the standards of men and think that because they measure up to the human standards that the Lord recognizes such. I remember that the Lord wrote a letter to some who said they were "rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing". This was their estimate of themselves, but the Lord said, "knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked": (Rev. 3:17). This was unto the church in Laodicea. The church of the Lord at Sardis had "a name that thou livest" (Rev. 3:1). If anyone had questioned the church in Sardis, she could and would have said we have the name of living. The name men had given this church was not the name the Lord had given her. The Lord's estimate of her was, you are "dead" (Rev. 3:1).

May we always learn and know that the standard for soundness is determined by the Lord Jesus Christ as we measure up to the divine standard—the gospel of Christ or sound doctrine and not the standards set by men themselves. When men set their own standards of soundness, it is an admission that they do not want to measure up to the high standard set by the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus, they will lower the standard of soundness to one that meets their approval and measurement.

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## UNCTION FROM THE HOLY ONE

**QUESTION:** What is the "unction from the Holy One" in 1 John 2:20? Is this "unction" the same as "the anointing" in verse 27? Is this "unction" and/or "anointing" received by Christians today? If so, do we not have guidance from within in addition to the word? John said concerning "the anointing" (and because of it), "ye need not that any man teach you" (v. 27).—L.S.

**ANSWER:** The words "unction" and "anointing" (KJV) are from the same Greek word "Chrisma," and, therefore, are the same in meaning. It is consistently translated "anointing" in the ASV. The word is used metaphorically in these verses. The allusion is to the anointing of kings and priests in the O.T. when oil and aromatic herbs were used in such appointments (Cf. Ex. 28:41; 29:7; 40:15; 1 Sam. 10:1; 16:13). W. E. Vine says that it is used "by metonymy, of the Holy Spirit, 1 John 2:20, 27 twice" (W. E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary Of New Testament Words*, p. 59).

There are two possible views concerning the verses in question both of which harmonize with truth.

Number One: Those under consideration in verses 20 and 27 had received an anointing from the Holy One (Christ), and, as a result, John says, "ye know all things" (v. 20); "ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him" (v. 27). These had received the Holy Spirit (by metonymy) from Christ under whose guidance they were able to discern truth and error—even false teachers, called the antichrist (v. 22). These false teachers, formerly of them (v. 19), were trying to seduce the faithful and thereby occasion their apostasy. No wonder John said, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1).

In the absence of the New Testament, there were those among the early saints possessing spiritual gifts by which they were able to discern spirits, know truth, and reveal it. These gifts varied and were bestowed through the laying on of the apostles hands, but were not always given to all Christians (1 Cor. 12:1-11; Acts 6:5-8; 8:14-20; 1:5,6; Rom. 1:11).

From this view point some difficulty exists in this chapter (1 John 2) in determining just when John addresses saints in general and those possessing spiritual

gifts in particular. Such must be determined in the light of all else revealed and the immediate context. From such source we do know that while not all saints possessed such gifts some did and were in the midst of nearly, if not all, congregations. The early Christians were dependent upon such for divine guidance. The inspired word resided in them and they spoke and wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

Number Two: The phrase "in you" (v. 27) is plural (Gr., en humin), and is often translated "among you." Thayer says, "esp. with dat. plur. of persons, as en hemin, en humin, among us, among you, en allelois, among yourselves, one with another" (p. 210). Consider the following examples:

Lk. 1:1, "which are most surely believed among us" (en hemin).

John 1:14, "The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (en hemin).

1 Cor. 3:18, "If any man among you" (en humin) "seemeth to be wise in this world."

1 Cor. 5:1, "...that there is fornication among you" (en humin).

According to this view, John says that the "unction" or "anointing" received from the Holy One is among you. John wanted his "Little children" to know that they had an "unction" or an "anointing" which abided in their midst in the persons who were recipients of spiritual gifts. From them they were to learn the truth on all issues. John said that this "anointing teacheth you of all things." They needed no further instruction from any other source. Such instruction involved the curse of heaven (Gal. 1:8,9).

Both of these views harmonize with truth which in this instance is:

1. The words "unction" and "anointing" are used figuratively, meaning power within those endowed with spiritual gifts.
2. This "anointing" was present among the early saints.
3. The early saints were to rely on such for divine guidance.

Since miracles have ceased and the gifts of the Spirit no longer exist (Cf. 1 Cor. 13:8-13), we have none among us who have been "anointed." We do have, however, the results of that "anointing," namely, the inspired word—"the perfect law of liberty" (Jas. 1:25). We have no need for further teaching from any other source, either from within or without. This word is inspired, perfect, complete, all-sufficient, and final! (Jas. 1:25; 2 Tim. 3:16,17; Jude 3).

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### HOW ELUSIVE IS TRUTH?

Pontius Pilate will not be the first or last to try to evade the impact of truth. When our Lord said, "He had come to bear witness of truth," Pilate evaded the affirmation by saying, "What is truth?" This implies at least two things: first, truth is so elusive one cannot find it and second, if he finds it, he cannot understand it. This seems to be the easy way out for many in the world.

Back in the early fifties, the late and beloved W. Curtis Porter engaged a Mr. Billy Sunday Meyers in a debate on the scripturalness of the Church. On page 26, Porter pressed Meyers for an answer to this question, "Is it possible for any man to take the Bible as his only creed?" Reluctantly, Myers answered, "No, not in a concrete sense, because a man's creed is his personal interpretation of the Bible and not the Bible itself." Brother Porter replied on page 41 with these words: "There, you have it. My friend does not even claim to take the Bible for his creed. He says it is impossible for him to do it. That will explain, I suppose, some of the things he teaches. To Moses, God said, 'Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it.' Deut. 4:2. But Myers says it could not be done—Moses would have to add his personal interpretations. Isaiah said: 'To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.' Isa. 8:20. But my friend says it can't be done—they would have to speak 'according to their personal interpretations' of the word. Paul said, 'preach the word.' 2 Tim. 4:2. But my opponent says that such is impossible—that a man must preach his 'personal interpretations' of the word instead of the word itself. And Peter declared: 'If any speak let him speak as the oracles of God.' 1 Pet. 4:11. But Mr. Myers declares it is utterly impossible to do so—that no man can speak anything but his 'personal interpretation' of God's oracles."

After Porter had all but annihilated Mr. Myers on this question, he comes back on page 53, with this question, "Will God accept one's personal interpretation in preference to another's?" Meyers had to come up with some kind of an answer and here it is, "Yes, because some interpretations allow sin in the life, a thing which God cannot tolerate." Porter then pointed out that Myers was meeting himself coming

back because if he couldn't understand the Bible he couldn't know what SIN was in the first place.

I print this brief exchange to prove that many preachers do not really believe the Bible. About the only thing they believe is "their own interpretations of the Bible." They are of the school of thought, that the TRUTH is so evasive and relative that no one can really master it.

The Lord said, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (Jno. 8:32). But I am told that I cannot know the truth because it is relative. I am told that I cannot know the truth because it is illusive. I am told that I cannot know the truth, only my personal interpretation of the truth. So what shall I do? I cannot be free from sin and servitude until I know what I cannot know! What a shame.

The truth about the matter is that one can know the truth and be made free. Notice the Lord did not say one had to know ALL the truth to be saved, but he must know the truth. In Heb. 5:12, Paul says, "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat." The writer tells us that babes drink milk and others eat meat. But both milk and meat are truth. One isn't required to drink milk and consume all the meat at the same time. Since milk deals with first principles, it means one must know ALL the truth on the PLAN OF SALVATION or he cannot be saved. However, this is a far cry from saying he must know ALL truth. Since our salvation from sin is predicated on faith, repentance, confession and baptism, it is axiomatic that we must know ALL the truth on the plan or we cannot be saved. One cannot leave off anything God has commanded and be saved. One doesn't have to have the acumen of Solomon to see the difference in knowing ALL the truth on a specific subject and knowing ALL the truth on everything!

When Paul said, "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part" (1 Cor. 13:9). Just what did he mean? Obviously the pronoun "we" has as its antecedent the apostles and inspired writers. This means that no ONE apostle had a complete revelation. Therefore, the apostles most of whom will make it to heaven did not know ALL truth. This proves that one can make it to heaven without knowing ALL truth but it does not authorize error. Although Paul said he "knew in part" he blasted the Judaizing teachers for bringing in false doctrine (see Gal. 5). When one takes the writings of Peter, Paul, James, John and others, he has a complete revelation of God's will. However, no ONE writer gave us a complete revelation. When Paul told the Galatian brethren that some had fallen from grace (Gal. 5:4) how did he know this? The answer is that he knew the TRUTH on this subject and when they deviated from that truth, they had fallen from grace.

I do not fall out with the Calvinist when he says, "No man knows it all." Neither do I become disturbed when he tells me that I am ignorant on many things in the Bible. This, I humbly confess. But when he tells me that God will overlook my ignorance on "right and

wrong", "black and white" or "sin and salvation," I come out fighting! Some things in which I may be ignorant have absolutely nothing to do with my salvation. For example, I may be ignorant of "the location and size of heaven," but what difference does it make? I may be ignorant of "Paul's thorn in the flesh," but what difference does it make? I may be ignorant of "the details of judgment day," but what difference does it make? On the other hand, the Bible says if I am ignorant of the plan of salvation, I cannot be saved (Rom. 1:16). If I am ignorant of how God wants to be worshipped, I cannot be saved (see Matt. 15:9). If I am ignorant of the laws concerning adultery, lying, stealing the Bible says I cannot go to heaven (see Gal. 5). If my attitude toward my brother is not right and I call him a fool, the Bible says I am in danger of hell fire (Matt. 5:22).

So kind friend, don't be deceived by Calvinist doctrine. I plead guilty to ignorance and I admit I do not know it all but ONE thing I do know and that is I MUST know the difference in RIGHT and WRONG, BLACK and WHITE, SIN AND SALVATION OR heaven cannot be my home. When a man tells me that God will overlook matters of RIGHT and WRONG, he is whistling in the graveyard.

In summary kind friend, remember this, when God wrote the Bible, he made some things simple. He wrote it so you may know the difference in "RIGHT and WRONG". Other things do not really matter. The entire Christian system is predicated on one's knowledge of the truth. For example, if one cannot know the truth, how could one know and rebuke the false teachers? Yet, Paul warned the elders at Ephesus about grievous wolves who would enter in among them (Acts 20:29). If one cannot know the truth, he could not differentiate between a wolf and a sheep. Actually, the wolf could ostentatiously say he was a sheep. Then with a great deal of audacity, he could claim that it was all a matter of interpretation. Friend, when Paul told Timothy to "preach the word" and that some would "turn their ears from the truth" if one can't know the truth, how could he preach it and how would he know when one turns his ears from it?

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## Using Great Plainness of Speech

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## "ACCEPT JESUS CHRIST AS YOUR PERSONAL SAVIOUR"

I want to discuss with you the expression that is stated in the title of this article, for I hear it everywhere almost every day. "Accept Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour, and let him come into your heart, and you will be saved." I have also read many, many articles and tracts which conclude with the same sort of statement. "Jesus will save you if you will let him by accepting him as your personal Saviour." However, when you turn to the book of The Acts of the Apostles in the New Testament, as we have done in some of our recent articles, and read what is said about the different cases of conversion, it seems incredible, in view of the above statement, what one finds in the Scriptures. Notice the list as we observe how God actually saved these people.

1. The Pentecostians—Acts 2:14-41. . . heard, believed, repented and were baptized.
2. The Samaritans—Acts 8:5-13. . . heard, believed, confessed, and were baptized.
3. The Eunuch—Acts 8:35-39. . . heard, believed, confessed, and was baptized.
4. Cornelius—Acts 10:34-38. . . heard, believed, and was baptized.
5. Lydia—Acts 16:13-15. . . heard, believed, and was baptized.
6. The Jailor—Acts 16:30-34. . . heard, believed, repented, and was baptized.
7. Saul (who later became the apostle Paul)—Acts 9:17-18; 22:16. . . heard, believed, confessed, and was baptized.

There they are, multitudes of Bible examples who have been saved. And yet, **not one single example** of those who were saved being told to "accept Jesus Christ as their own personal saviour. On the contrary,, in every example of conversion we have in the New Testament after the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, people saved the Bible way were told to hear, believe, repent, confess and be baptized!

### Not In Scriptures At All

Another interesting thing is that though many people (many preachers included) in the world today quote the title of this article to people telling them what to do to be saved, **the statement is nowhere found in the Scriptures.** If so, WHERE?

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# THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

Send all News Items to; Wilson Adams, 6334 Auburn Ave., Riverdale, MD 20737

### NEWS EDITOR HAS NEW ADDRESS

**WILSON ADAMS**, 6334 Auburn Ave., Riverdale, MD 20737. After three and a half years with the Georgia Avenue church in Roanoke, VA, my family and I have accepted the invitation to move and begin work with the Wildercroft church of Christ in Riverdale, MD, a suburb of our nation's capitol. Our work will begin there on April the 18th. The Wildercroft congregation has three fine elders, a good program of work, and a bright outlook for the future. We invite any of the readers of STS to stop and worship with us when visiting Washington or passing through the area. For times of services, please see the ad in the back of the paper. The building is located near the Beltway Exit of Hwy. 450 (Annapolis Road). NOTE: FROM NOW ON ALL NEWS ITEMS FOR THIS PAPER SHOULD BE SENT TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS. Also, all those who put out church bulletins please make a note of the change.

### FIELD REPORTS

**JAMES A. BRUCE**, 430 St. Marys Place, O'Fallon, MO 63366. After three years with the good church in St. Peters, MO, we plan to relocate as of July 15th of this year. I have preached twelve years full time and twelve years part time. We enjoy personal work and have realized good growth in all areas while working with the brethren here. The church is at peace and is willing to provide references to those who may be interested. Please contact me at the above address or phone (314) 272-8002 nights, or 278-2666 during the day.

**ROBERT DOZIER**, P.O. Box 4127, Grand Junction, CO 81502. I would like the readers of STS to know that the Valley church of Christ is now meeting at 136 N. 5th St. in Grand Junction. The church formerly met at 760 Winters Street. The church then merged with the Mesa Ave. church of Christ after joint study between the two groups brought unity upon the belief that the New Testament does authorize Bible classes (Mesa Ave. formerly opposed such). However, the members of the Valley church were not able to remain at Mesa Ave. due to an unwillingness to study in an effort to resolve other serious differences that existed among them, primarily concerning marriage, divorce, and remarriage.

I have been working with the Valley church since August 14, 1981. We met in a home of one of the members from August until January and have been meeting in the local 100F Hall since January. Phil Thompson is now working with the Mesa Ave. church. Phil and I have spent several weeks studying together on the marriage question but have not come to an agreement. Phil believes that the teaching of Jesus (Mt. 5:32; 19:9; Mk. 10:11-12; Lk. 16:18) applies only to Christians. He agrees with the basic position of

James Bales as set forth in his book, *Not Under Bondage*. Others at Mesa Ave. hold various unscriptural positions regarding marriage, divorce and remarriage. I believe that the teaching of Jesus applies to all and that fornication is the only scriptural grounds for divorce. The Valley church of Christ is united upon the New Testament teaching on marriage, divorce and remarriage.

This is not written with a spirit of animosity or with ill intent, but with a desire to inform those concerned with the cause of Christ in this area as to the present situation and to let brethren who may travel in this area know where we are meeting to worship. Anyone wishing to contact us may write the church at the above address or call me at (303) 245-5079.

**KEN GREEN**, 2212 Jordan Lane S.W., Huntsville, AL 35805. The Jordan Park church in Huntsville, AL lost its building to an arsonist's fire last July. Fortunately, for me, the annex on the rear of the building which housed the church office and most of my books and materials, was saved from the fire. An attaché case with all my preaching outlines and records of past meetings was stolen. (Someone said, "It must have been somebody who'd heard you preach.") Our address plates were destroyed. For this reason we have not mailed a bulletin since the fire. With the steep increase in postal rates, it's doubtful that we will resume a church bulletin. The Jordan Park church is now meeting in the Security Federal Savings and Loan building at 300 Clinton Ave. West in downtown Huntsville. We have classroom facilities at this location and have been having near capacity crowds of 200 and over. We hope to be in our new building sometime this summer. On Feb. 16, we began a call-in telecast on CA-TV 9.

The "What is Written" program airs from 8 to 9 p.m. on Tuesdays. This cable company has over 30,000 home subscribers, about two-thirds of the homes of Huntsville. Response has been overwhelming with calls on the line constantly. We believe that much fruit will result through this medium.

**JOHN F. HUGHBANKS**, 2932 Carter Ave., Ashland, KY 41101. Since moving here in the middle of October, the church has progressed spiritually and numerically. We baptized one precious soul so far this year. Two people have been restored to God, and two families have placed membership with us. The church is self-supporting in all ways. Our attendance averages 30 to 35 on the Lord's Day. The church is at peace and we look forward to much success in the vineyard of the Lord in the coming years. If any of the readers of STS know of any contacts in this area, please send us their names. Ashland has a population of 27,000 people. I would estimate that within a fifteen mile radius of Ashland (including Huntington, WV) the population would be in excess of 150,000. So

there is much work to be done. If you are in this area, stop and worship with us. We assemble at 2950 Carter Ave. with services on Sunday at 10 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. Our mid-week service on Wednesday is at 7:30 p.m. My phone number is (606) 325-3565.

#### WORK IN GERMANY

**DANIEL HUBER**, Box 253, 602nd ASOC, APO NY 09107. In September 1981, the churches in Phorzheim and Heilbronn, W. Germany, decided it would be best to unite and form a single, but larger, congregation. We are meeting in Heilbronn, and at the present time, have twelve members and several children. The work of preaching and teaching is divided among the five men. We are fortunate to have so many willing to put forth the effort necessary so that no one or two persons are burdened with all the work. We also have two Bible classes for the children taught by several of the women. We have very few expenses at this time, so we do have a limited amount of financial support available to any preacher of the pure gospel of Christ that is in need. If you have such a need, or know of someone that needs financial support, please let us know. Please send references and any information regarding your work. For more information about us contact: Heilbronn Area—Tom Foster, HHC 101st Ord. Bn.,

APO NY 09176.

Karlsruhe Area—Ron Miller, 69th PSC, APO NY 09164.  
Stuttgart Area—Dan Huber, Box 253, 602nd ASOC, APO NY 09107.

#### INFORMATION ON CHURCHES NEAR THE WORLD'S FAIR

**ALEX OGDEN**, Rt. 4, Box 249, Rockwood, TN 37854. May 1 through October 31 of this year is the World's Fair in Knoxville, TN. It is estimated that 11 million people will attend the Fair during this period of time. Many of you that are members of the Lord's church will be among that number. However, some may not be aware of the different congregations within the Knoxville area. Thus, I would like to take this opportunity to inform you of those faithful congregations within a feasible driving distance of the Fair site.

West Knoxville church of Christ  
9048 Middlebrook Pike  
Knoxville, TN 37923

Services: Sun. 9:00,10:00, 6:00 Wed. 7:30  
Phones: 690-8410 or 693-8939  
Approximately 25 minutes.

Chapman Hwy. church of Christ Corner  
Chapman Hwy. and John Sevier  
Knoxville, TN 37920

Services: Sun. 10:00,10:55; 7:30; Wed. 7:30  
Phones: 577-8781 or 546-6523 Approximately  
25 minutes.

Smokey Mountain church of Christ  
717Cates Street

Maryville, TN 37801  
Services: Sun. 9:30,10:30,6:30, Wed. 7:30  
Phones: 984-1730 or 984-1523  
Approximately 30 minutes.

Loudon church of Christ  
707 Ward Ave.

Loudon, TN 37774  
Services: Sun. 10:00,11:00, 6:00, Wed. 7:00  
Phone: 458-5043  
Approximately 45 minutes.

Oak Ridge church of Christ  
225 N. Purdue Ave.

(P.O. Box 331)  
Oak Ridge, TN 37830  
Services: Sun. 9:00,10:00, 7:00; Wed. 7:00  
Approximately 30 minutes.

Post Oak church of Christ

Post Oak Road

(Rt. 2, Box 525)

Rockwood, TN 37854

Services: Sun. 10:00, 11:00, 7:00; Wed. 7:30

Phones: 354-4435 or 354-4099

Approximately 1 hour.

We will be looking forward to meeting several of you during the summer months.

#### NEW CONGREGATION

**CLARKSBURG, WV**—There is now a faithful church meeting in Clarksburg, WV. We are currently 14 people strong including children. We met in our homes for several weeks but are now meeting in the conference room at the Town House West Motor Lodge, located one mile west of Clarksburg on Rt. 50. Due to scheduling problems where we are renting, we can only meet there once a week on Lord's Day morning at 10:00. The nearest scriptural congregation to Clarksburg is either Morgantown or Middlebourne, both several miles away. We ask the prayers of our many brethren in our efforts here in this area. For more information about our work, contact: David Cochran at (304) 782-2132 or Ronald Logan at 842-6134. Or write us at 13 Meadowcrest Lane, Bridgeport, WV 26330.

#### DEBATES

**HOGLAND-JACKSON DEBATE:** The elders of the Van Dorn St. church in Grenada, MS have asked Ward Hogland to meet Bill Jackson in a two night debate on June 25th and 26th of this year. Brethren from the Elliott church challenged the Van Dorn brethren with reference to the proposition below. The Elliot brethren selected Bill Jackson of Austin, TX to represent them in the discussion. On the first night Ward Hogland will affirm, "The Scriptures teach that a congregation, from its treasury, may not provide benevolent aid to sinners and to those who are safe." Bill Jackson will deny. The second night Bill Jackson will affirm, "The scriptures teach that a congregation, from its treasury, may provide benevolent aid to sinners and to those who are safe." Ward Hogland will deny. The debate will be held in the City Auditorium in Grenada, MS each evening at 7:00. Grenada is about 100 miles south of Memphis, TN and 100 miles north of Jackson, MS on I-55. For more information contact Bill James at 175 Van Dorn St., Grenada, MS 38901.

**SMITH-BALLARD DEBATE**—J. T. Smith has been contacted by the brethren in Grants Pass, OR to meet Bro. Voyd N. Ballard on the subject of how many drinking vessels may be used in the distribution of the fruit of the vine in the Lord's Supper, and whether or not the church may have an arrangement of Bible Classes in which both men and women may do the teaching. The debate will be conducted in Grants Pass, OR on May 17,18,19, 20. For more information write or call: George Garrison at 2602 Hamilton Lane, Grants Pass, OR 97526. Or phone (503) 479-8077.

#### PREACHERS NEEDED

**BELFAST, VA**—The Belfast church of Christ, located in the southwestern part of Virginia, is in need of a full time preacher. The congregation has an average attendance of 30 to 35. We are able to provide \$400 a month support. Other support would need to be raised from outside sources. If interested contact Dover Stacey, Jr., at Rt. 2, Box 358-C, Cedar Bluff, VA 24609. Or call (703) 963-9431, 964-5139, or 964-2744.

**SHEBOYGAN FALLS, WI**—The church here needs a mature, full time preacher for a challenging work. Middle-aged preferred. Contact Mabrey Tayse at Rt. 1, Brigewood Rd., Sheboygan Falls, WI 53085.

#### IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	273.
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