

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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WAKE THE WORLD AND TELL THE PEOPLE

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Gambrills, MD 21054



TAKING IT BACK

Some time back I purchased a product from a local department store only to find out later that they had inadvertently given me their "top of the line" model rather than the cheaper one I had actually paid for. Now this thing was heavy, bulky and half put together before I recognized the mistake. There was no way I could disassemble the thing and get all of those pieces back in that little box that it came in (not and keep a respectable amount of sanity anyway). So there I sat. What would **you** do?

I refused to call them. I don't like calling department stores. They seem to delight in playing the "holding" and "passing" games as they pass the buck and transfer you to eighteen different departments before accidentally (?) cutting you off and handing you back your dial tone (**you've been there, right?**)

I wrote them instead — a nice letter, mind you, to explain the complexities of the problem. In a few days I received a most congenial call from the store manager who thanked me for my honesty while implying that most people are not truthful (**that's a bit discouraging!**) Anyway, I was to bring \$27.50 to the store on my next trip in and he would consider us square. That meant keeping the more expensive model at half the cost had I bought it in the first place. Fair enough.

Have you ever tried going to a department store and handing them \$27.50? It's not an easy thing to do. They didn't want it. In fact, in the confusion, the cashier gave "me" \$27.50! (This honesty thing can really get to you

sometimes). I persevered and squared the account and left the store with a dozen people thinking I was more than a little loony. Oh well. ...

Sometimes **people** can be like that department store. For example, you sin against someone and seek to rectify the relationship by asking for forgiveness and all you get is the old "**I'll forgive but not forget**" disposition of bitterness. The Bible says plainly to "**to forgive each other as God in Christ has forgiven you**" (Eph. 4:32). We need to understand that forgiveness is not an **elective** in Christian living but is, in fact, a **required course!**

"**But I just can't forgive...**" — then **you** had better not sin! Read and reread Matthew 18:21 -35 (the parable of the unmerciful servant). Note verse 34 — "**and his lord, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers...**" We usually read that and make reference to the coming day of Judgment but I would like to suggest for your consideration that the individual who refuses to forgive while harboring grudges and bitter feelings towards another will, indeed, be handed over to the torturers not only then but **NOW!** To see a life that should be devoted to God and good eaten away with the cancer of resentment and bitterness in the gall of hatred and envy is the most pitiable sight of all. An unforgiving spirit will do a number on you **NOW!** And do you know what is the truth? It's not worth the misery! You show me a contented person and I'll show you someone who knows the merits of mercy and the joy of forgiveness.

Can the mind ever forget? Technically the answer is no. But the mind can **OVERLOOK "Love does not take into account a wrong suffered"** (1 Cor. 13:5). "**I forget what lies behind ...**" (Phil. 3:13). Think of all the people Paul could have included on his "hate list." But he had no list. He refused to dwell on that. He intentionally disregarded all wrongs against him and refused to be embittered.

Do you know that some try to excuse their bitterness with — "**It's too late for me to change ... I've been injured and wronged more than you will ever know... It's too great to forget... Maybe Paul could but not me ...**" Do you know what that is? That is **ARROGANCE GONE TO SEED!** That person sees

himself/herself as the exception to the rule of forgiveness and is defiantly determined not to change because life has dealt them a bad deal. Let me ask you something—Do you perceive that you are the only one who has ever been hurt or short-changed or ripped off or wronged? You are no different and I'm not either. How badly do you want to go to heaven? Badly enough to forgive your brother? I hope so.

What you and I forgive is small compared to what God erases. How can we begin to compare the debt? The next time you are tempted to give one his "just due" just remember what God would give you if He gave you what you deserved. **"But ___ does not deserve my mercy ..."** If he deserved it, it wouldn't be mercy! **"Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy ..."**

While people may disappoint you in their application of Christianity regarding forgiveness, God doesn't work that way. In the first place, He doesn't make mistakes—**BUT WE DO.** We mess up. We give in to wrong. We sin. And, yet, through Jesus we can have forgiveness conditioned upon our confession and repentance: "If we confess **our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness**" (1 John 1:9). Now isn't that easy? Of course confession of sins implies **repentance** of sins. Obviously God will not forgive the sins of one intending to keep on sinning (Acts 8:22). There must be a change of heart and course of conduct.

If we would only take our troubles to God. He doesn't give you the run-around. He doesn't pass the buck. He simply forgives. And when God has forgiven we must learn to forgive ourselves. I heard of a man who said — **"I don't know what's wrong. I've prayed 100 times that God would forgive me and I still feel guilty."** Do you know what his problem was? He prayed for forgiveness 99 times too many. He should have prayed once for forgiveness and 99 times to thank the Lord that he had been forgiven.

We need to **WAKE THE WORLD AND TELL THE PEOPLE** that Christianity is the only way to live. It is the only lifestyle that merits recommendation. And why? Because only the Christian can have the forgiveness of sins. What greater blessing can there possibly be?

**"Bless the Lord, O my soul,
And forget none of His blessings;
Who pardons all your iniquities ..."**
Psalm 103:2-3

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EDITOR PREACHING IN ITALY

Connie and Bobby Adams left May 12 for a three week preaching trip in Italy. This will be Connie's third trip to that country. He and H. E. Phillips made a trip in 1977 and another in 1980. By the time you receive this issue of STS Connie and Bobby will already be back in the States and continuing their meeting work. Connie will have more to say about his work in Italy in the August or September issue. Since Connie will be out of the U.S. for a while I am editing this issue.

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Guest

Editorial

Donnie V. Rader

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CONVERTED, BUT NOT TO THE LORD

There is a noticeable difference in some who claim to be Christians. Some will say and do things that others will not. The conviction of some is quite different from others. The problem may be that they have not truly been converted. Oh, they have been converted, but not to the Lord. They are like Israel of old who returned, "but not to the most High" (Hosea 7:16). They have been converted to a preacher, a doctrine, religion or a local church rather than the Lord. If they were converted at some time, they have now changed their allegiance.

Don't misunderstand. One cannot be converted to Christ without doctrine and the church. The problem is when we are converted to anything other than Jesus Christ himself. Let us each examine ourselves to see if we are converted to the Lord or to someone or something else (2 Cor. 13:5).

To The Preacher

It is very easy for someone to be overly impressed with the preacher, his knowledge and abilities. Thus they become attached to the man rather than the Lord. The preacher becomes more important than the message. Nobody can preach like their man. A great danger develops in that they will accept anything that preacher says because of their respect for him. Though he may teach something that is clearly contradictory to a plain statement of the Lord, the tendency is to accept what the preacher says. Evidence of this problem is seen when the preacher moves. Those that are "converted" to him will leave or just plain quit.

There were some at Corinth that were attached to a particular man rather than Jesus Christ. They were saying, "I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ" (1 Cor. 1:12). Paul rebuked them for that and urged that no one follow him. Since Paul was not crucified for you nor were you baptized in the name of Paul there is no reason to be followers of Paul. He was also glad that he had baptized none but Crispus and Gaius lest anyone say he baptized in his own name (1 Cor. 1:14-15). He stated in the next chapter that the gospel that he and other faithful men of God preached was the wisdom of God and not the wisdom of men. He did not preach to them with "enticing words of man's wisdom" or with "excellency of speech," but merely preached "Christ and him crucified" that their faith "should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (1 Cor. 2:1-5). In chapter three he emphasizes

that preachers are mere "ministers by whom ye believed" (1 Cor. 3:5). Then in the fourth chapter he warns about thinking "of men above that which is written" (1 Cor. 4:6).

In the Old Testament there were many who turned from their idolatry out of respect for the reforms of the king, rather than a true conversion to Jehovah (Jer. 3:10). When men today go through the form of obedience and worship, out of respect and devotion to the preacher, they are not converted to the Lord.

To A Doctrine

Some are converted to a system of doctrine or a way of thinking, rather than to the Lord Jesus Christ. Don't misunderstand. I didn't say doctrine is not important. It is! You can't separate the Lord from his doctrine ("the man from the plan"). My concern is that, rather than being converted to the Lord and then accepting anything the Lord teaches, some are devoted to a way of thinking without real service to the Lord.

This has happened to some second and third generation Christians. They merely follow the family tradition and thinking. Real service and devotion to the Lord is taken for granted. About all they know about the truth is what one must do to be saved and that there are some teachings different from denominationalism and that's it! They may think that since Mom and Dad believe this system of teachings and were faithful Christians they will be too if they merely hold to the same basic belief. Again, there is not real conviction. Their faith is not their own, but has been inherited. When they leave home they may not even attend anymore.

The same is true of some who claim to be gospel preachers. They may be merely devoted to teaching a certain doctrine rather than serving Jesus Christ. They are set to defend "baptism" vs "faith only" or deny Catholicism and Calvinism and instruct people in the laws of God. Preaching becomes a profession or just a job rather than presenting a message with a heart of conviction. It is easy to forget to make application of the truths to yourself. Or maybe it's that some think they are above the law. I suppose that is one reason why we have had so many preachers in recent years to destroy their lives and influence with sin (to say nothing of their souls). They know what the Bible teaches and can capably tell others the message while they themselves are committing adultery, lying or living contrary to the message they preach. If they were truly converted to Christ they would not continue to practice sin (1 Jno. 3:6, 9; 5:18). They have failed to take heed to themselves as well as the doctrine as Paul instructed young Timothy (1 Tim. 4:16). Those sincerely serving the Lord are interested in saving themselves as well as those that hear. A man who is merely converted to a doctrine or a particular idea, rather than Christ, has no place in the pulpit. His "preaching" is doing more harm than good.

To The Church

Others are converted to a particular local congregation rather than to the Lord. Evidence of that could be seen when they move into another area. Rather than searching out and identifying with a faithful congregation, they may not attend anywhere. Others will attend

liberal churches. Evidence could also be seen when they are on vacation. Time is not taken to find places to worship while they travel.

For many their concept of the church is not that it is the body of Christ. They think of the church in social terms. To them it is nothing more than a civic club. It is an enjoyable and beneficial experience, but stops at that. They have not come to realize that the church is the people of God (Acts 2:47; 1 Tim. 3:15). Any local congregation is a group of God's people who have a purpose and function.

Some in Jeremiah's day trusted in the pretense of service unto Jehovah. They cried out "Temple of the Lord ... temple of the Lord... temple of the Lord..." (Jer. 7:4). They trusted in that and thought it was enough. Study that in context with the chapter and the rest of the book and you will see that they were not devoted at all. Today many cry out saying "I'm a member of the church of Christ... the church of Christ" thinking that is sufficient without true devotion to God. These may be converted, but not to the Lord.

To Jesus Christ

True conversion is to the Lord Jesus Christ. When one becomes fully persuaded that indeed Jesus is the Son of God, he submits his life in service and devotion. He becomes subject unto Christ in everything (Eph. 5:24). The apostle Paul is a classic example of conversion. The very one who was determined to destroy Christianity was convinced of the Deity of Christ and later said, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:20). Now that's true devotion!

The same apostle in writing to the Colossians spoke of this as a life "hid with Christ" (3:3). That is, a life so dedicated to the service of Christ and being Christ-like that it is as if we were wrapping Christ around us so that when looked upon only Christ could be seen.

When we are truly converted to the Lord we will take heed to the message spoken by faithful servants of God, not because of our devotion to the man, but because it is the message of Christ (1 Thess. 2:13). We will be set for the defense in truth, not because it happens to be opposed to some prominent belief, but because it is the gospel of Christ (Phil. 1:17). We will want to be an active part of a local congregation, not because of the social benefit, but because it pleases Jesus Christ. We will continue to serve the Lord, whether we be on vacation or move. This and more we will do if we first give ourselves to the Lord. (2 Cor. 8:5).

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CHRIST, THE SAVIOR OF THE BODY

"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body" (Eph. 5:23).

In this verse, and those which follow, the apostle uses the marriage relationship to emphasize the relationship between Christ and his spiritual body, the church (v. 32). When the inspired writer states that Christ "is the savior of the body," this declaration harmonizes with every other truth concerning Christ and his church.

To advocate salvation outside the church not only contradicts a plain declaration of the Holy Spirit, but such a position immediately comes into conflict with every other inspired statement concerning Christ, the church, and salvation.

The entire mystery of salvation hinges on, and is revealed through, Christ and his church (Eph. 3:6-11; 1 Tim. 3:15,16). To promise salvation outside the church is to frustrate the grace of God concerning our own salvation, and that of others as well.

Metaphors

First, in order to offset the confusing doctrines of pre-millennialists and others (including any brethren in these categories), let it be emphasized again that the spiritual body of Christ, the church, and the kingdom are one and the same thing.

Different metaphors are used to portray God's "called out" people. The church is compared to a kingdom (Heb. 12:23,28), a sheepfold (Jno. 10:16), a bride (Jno. 3:29,30; Rom. 7:4), a house (1 Tim. 3:15), and a body (Col. 1:18). There are other metaphors and parables pertaining to the church, but these are sufficient to show that what is essentially true of one is true of the other. An attempt to separate the church from the kingdom is an attempt to "put asunder" what God has "joined together."

"In The Place"

God reserves the right to determine where salvation or deliverance shall be (Ex. 3:5; 20:24). The Israelites were told that they could not offer "in every place that thou seest: but in the place which the Lord shall choose ..." (Deut. 12:13,14).

Let us notice some examples of God's prerogative to choose the place of salvation, or safety.

1. In The Ark—The place of deliverance for Noah and his family was in the ark (Gen. 7:7; 1 Pet. 3:20,21).

2. In The Houses — At the institution of the passover feast when God destroyed the firstborn of every creature, salvation was in the houses of the Israelites,

identified by the blood of the passover lamb (Ex. 12:22). Not one Israelite questioned God's arrangement. After God passed over Egypt, the Egyptians also knew where deliverance was to be found.

3. In The Cities Of Refuge — Under certain conditions, the six cities of refuge served as the place of salvation for those seeking safety within their gates (Num. 35:26-28).

4. In The House — When, by God's help Joshua and the Israelites conquered Jericho, there was only one place of safety for the inhabitants of that city — in the house of Rahab (Josh. 2:19).

5. In The Vine—In order to survive and bear fruit, the branch must abide in the vine (Jno. 15:1-6).

6. In The Ship — "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved" (Acts 27:31). Not one soul contested Paul's plan for salvation on this occasion, and all were saved. This same Paul tells us that salvation is in the church.

7. In The Church—As the author of eternal salvation (Heb. 5:9), Christ has determined that salvation is in the church. Further, it should be no surprise that Christ has promised to be the savior of his body, the church. From the beginning of the church, "... the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47).

8. In Heaven — The place of eternal salvation, after this life is over, will be in heaven (Jno. 14:1-6; Rev. 22:14).

At the end, Christ shall deliver up the church, the kingdom, to God (1 Cor. 15:24). The bride of Christ, the church, "that great city, the holy Jerusalem" (Rev. 21:9, 10), shall be delivered to dwell eternally in heaven.

Not "In The Place"

After John gives us a picture of those who dwell in the eternal city of God, he also gives a picture of those without (Rev. 22:14,15).

When God designated the acceptable place of service and worship in ancient times, he likewise stressed the futility (and danger), of attempting to serve him elsewhere (Deut. 12: 2, 3,13). Once God has revealed to us that salvation is in Christ's church, we need to reach the inescapable conclusion that there is no salvation outside that church.

That conclusion cannot be successfully avoided, contradicted, or assailed. To attempt such is to "fight against God." Let us notice where salvation is **not** to be found.

1. Salvation is not "in the world" — We are either in the world or in the church. There is no other spiritual location. "In the world" we are without God, without Christ, and without hope (Eph. 2:12), just as Gentiles were at one time "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel." To claim that salvation is outside the church is to claim salvation "in the world."

2. Not In The Home — While a godly family may be conducive to serving God, the home was not designed as the place of salvation. The home existed for centuries and dispensations before Christ built his church.

This is a truth which some brethren attempt to set before the world, while at the same time corrupting the spiritual purpose of the church by trying to involve it in

activities which belong in the realm of the home, e.g., recreation and entertainment.

The denominations of men have, for the most part, ceased to emphasize spiritual matters. To the extent that the Lord's church gets involved in purely social matters, to that extent we neutralize our claim that salvation is to be found only in the body of Christ.

3. Not In The Churches Of Men — Most denominations readily admit that salvation is not to be found within their borders.

Ironically, at the same time, some brethren are determined to promise salvation to those identified with human religious organizations. Many Baptists concede that "in the apostolic age ... the baptism of a convert by that very act constituted him a member of the church." But, they go on to say, "Now it is different..." (Standard Manual for Baptist Churches, Hiscox, p. 22).

The religious "plants" of men can lay no valid claim to salvation within their borders, and can only anticipate their own overthrow at the coming of the Lord (Ps. 127:1; Mt. 15:9-14).

The sectarian movements of our time have no more to offer than did the Pharisees and Sadducees of Jesus' time.

4. Not in Civil Government, Society, The Community —While civil government, like the home, is designed for a specific purpose, it was never intended to be a haven for the souls of men.

Sometimes at funerals the deceased is eulogized because he or she was a member of some civic or fraternal organization, a "good citizen," or a "staunch resident of the community." Such eulogies may well describe the social life of an individual, while having nothing whatever to do with salvation.

Indirect Evidence

Such passages as Acts 2:47 and Eph. 5:23 plainly declare that salvation is in the church. There are many other passages which imply the same thing. Given certain facts, certain conclusions are elementary and inescapable. Jesus often used this method of teaching (Mt. 12:26-29; Lk. 10:25-32).

1. The devil and the "gates of hades" exerted all their efforts to keep Jesus from building the church ((Mt. 16:18; Rev. 1:18; 12:1-17). If the "god of this world" (2 Cor. 4:4), and "spiritual wickedness in high places (Eph. 6:12), oppose the church with such zeal, it must be essential to salvation.

2. The blood of Christ purchased the church (Acts 20:28). Since the blood of Christ is essential to salvation (Rev. 1:5), so is the purchased possession.

3. "All spiritual blessings" are in Christ. Since Christ and the church are inseparable (Eph. 3:10,11), then one must be in the church in order to partake of those blessings.

4. Reconciliation — Both Jew and Gentile are reconciled unto God in the one body, the church (Eph. 2:15, 16). There is no reconciliation outside the church.

5. "The Habitation of God" — The church in this dispensation of time is the temple, the habitation of God, the acceptable place of service and worship (Eph. 2:20-22). We must be where God is.

This list could be lengthened considerably, but as we have already observed, the fact that salvation is in the church harmonizes with every other statement pertaining to Christ, the church, and salvation.

Conclusion

Every prophecy concerning the church, the kingdom, fortifies the conclusion that salvation would accompany the establishment of "the mountain of the Lord's house" (Dan. 2:44; Isa. 2:2,3). Salvation was "in Zion" for fleshly Israel (Isa. 46:13), and the same is true of spiritual Israel (Heb. 12:22-28).

God is able, through the "blood of the new testament" (Heb. 9:15-17), to include all in the church who need to be in it (Lk. 13:28; Heb. 12:22,23). In this dispensation of time, baptism is the door into the church (Jno. 3:5; 1 Cor. 12:13).

The fact that the devil and his ministers persistently claim that baptism and the church are not necessary to salvation should make the seeker of truth suspicious. Whatever the devil tries to discourage us from doing, we should do.

God planned and designed the church for our salvation; Christ built the church according to God's design; and, the Holy Spirit revealed the church as designed and built.

The least that you and I can do in view of these revealed truths is to believe, receive, and teach them. The most that we can do is to work out our salvation in the church and be saved eternally as part of the glorified body of Christ.

No, salvation is not outside the church, not somewhere "in the vicinity of the church, and not on some Mt. Nebo of desire or prospect on the part of some just close enough to look over into the church.

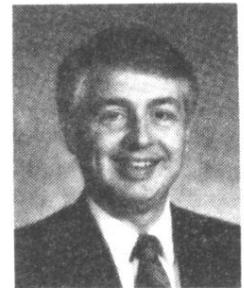
If we know and accept the difference in definition between the terms "in" and "out," we can find salvation. If we refuse to acknowledge that Christ placed salvation in his spiritual body, the church, then all of the rhetoric in all of the languages known to man would not convince us. It's that simple.

Jesus "gave himself for the church (Eph. 5:25). What will you give?"

DIVINE COMMUNIQUES

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DIVINE COMMUNIQUES

THE INSPIRATION OF THE SCRIPTURES

GOD'S MESSAGE: "These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Cor. 2:13).

GOD GAVE THE BIBLE TO US! The Bible is not the result of human reasoning. It is Divine in origin. Jehovah had several reasons for causing this Book to be written: a) to reveal Himself to man; b) to explain His plan for our salvation in His Son; and c) to make known His will for our lives.

God gave the Scriptures (the Bible) by "inspiration." Our purpose is to consider some basic truths about the inspiration of the Scriptures.

A. IT IS INSPIRED

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Several words used by Paul in this passage are very important to our study:

"All" (every) scripture is given by inspiration of God. The Scriptures are fully inspired ... that is, all Biblical statements are inspired including those dealing with scientific, historical, geographical, and chronological data. The inspiration of the Bible is "plenary" in scope or extent. "Plenary inspiration" is a technical phrase used to express the idea that God revealed every section, passage, and statement in the Bible (see Mark 7:8-13; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Rom. 15:4).

"Scripture." This word comes from the Greek word **graphe** which means, a "writing." Our word "graphics" comes from this Greek word. In the New Testament, the word is used 51 times to refer to the authoritative, written statements of God in the Bible (see 1 Tim 5:18 for example).

"Inspiration." Literally the original word meant "breathed by God." Inspiration is the extraordinary, supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit which He used when He guided the human authors to write the Bible. The Holy Spirit used their personalities and styles of writing in choosing the words for writing without error the exact revelation of God to man.

"Profitable." The Scriptures provide all things spiritually necessary to our salvation and all of it is good for

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us. God's word is stated clearly enough that with proper study we can understand it sufficiently to do what God wants us to do to be saved (Psa. 119:105,130; **Eph. 3:1-5**).

"Complete." The Scriptures make possible our being spiritually complete and whole. If something makes one complete or perfect, it must also be complete and perfect. If the Bible makes us "perfect," the Bible must be perfect itself.

B. THE WRITERS OF SCRIPTURE SPOKE AS THEY WERE MOVED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20-21). Peter's phrases are also important:

"Private interpretation." The writers of Scripture did not interpret their religious thoughts and then write them according to their own reasoning. They received prophecy from God.

"Not by the will of man." The men who penned Scripture did not write according to "devised fables" (vs. 16) or in keeping with their own wishes. The origin of Scripture is the divine Holy Spirit, not man.

"Spake from God"—What they said was divine, not human. The Divine source (the Holy Spirit) used human beings to write the words on paper, but the words are God's words.

"Moved by the Holy Spirit" The word "moved" is sometimes translated "borne" or "driven." Benjamin Warfield has said, "What is 'borne' is taken up by the 'bearer,' and conveyed by the 'bearer's' power, not its own, to the 'bearer's' goal, not its own. The men who spoke from God are here declared, therefore, to have been taken up by the Holy Spirit and brought by His power to the goal of His choosing. The things which they spoke under this operation of the Spirit were therefore His things, not theirs. And that is the reason which is assigned why 'the prophetic word' is so sure" (Warfield, "Inspiration," **International Standard Bible Encyclopedia**, III, p. 1475).

C. THE VERY WORDS WERE GIVEN BY GOD (1 Cor. 2:10-13)

"But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Cor. 2:10-13).

The word **"revealed"** means "brought to light," or "uncovered" God exposed His thinking to man by sending the Holy Spirit to communicate with the apostles and prophets.

Here is the important part to our study. Paul said that this communication was **"not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth."**

The Spirit provided not only the ideas but the expression of those ideas ... controlling both thoughts and words. Paul wrote down God's revelation in words taught by the power of the Spirit (vs. 1-4).

We sometimes use the phrase **"verbal inspiration."** That means that, "God so guided in the writing of the books of the Bible that the words are His words in the style of the writers. Verbal Inspiration is the opposite of Inspired Concepts" (H. S. Miller, **GENERAL BIBLICAL INTRODUCTION**, p. 24).

Never forget this one truth: **THE BIBLE IS GOD'S WORD IN GOD'S WORDS** (Matt. 4:4; 2 Sam. 23:2; 1 Thes. 2:13; John 3:34; 17:8). To the extent one allows for man's choosing the words of Scripture, he allows for error in the Biblical text because man is fallible in his choices.

James Orr has said, "Thought, of necessity, takes shape and is expressed in words. If there is inspiration at all, it must penetrate words as well as thought, must mold the expression and make the language employed the living medium of the idea to be conveyed" (Orr, **REVELATION AND INSPIRATION**, p. 209).

D. EVERY DETAIL IS PERFECT

Jesus said, *"Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled"* (Matthew 5:18). A "jot" was the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet (pronounced "yod" by the Jews). A "tittle" was a distinguishing extension of a letter, as the crossing of a "t". Every detail of what He originally said to the inspired writers, down to the smallest letter, is perfect and held sacred by God.

We, therefore, speak of the **"infallibility of scripture."** The Bible is without error. There is no deception or mistake in the facts it affirms. It is reliable in every way and certain in all details (Isa. 45:19; Prov. 30:5-6).

E. GOD HAS MADE IT BINDING AND AUTHORITY

Scripture cannot be **"broken"** (John 10:35; see also Isa. 6:9-10; Hos. 4:1-11). To try to "break" Scripture would be to attempt to rob it of binding authority by saying that it is not necessary to do what it says. (The men to which the word of God came were called "gods;" that is, they spoke with authority as God speaks with authority. That being true they could not say that Christ was blaspheming to call Himself the Son of God.)

The Word spoken by Christ will judge in the last day (John 12:48). We are, therefore, not free to decide for ourselves what we will believe and do. Neither are we free to interpret the Bible just any way we choose. We must seek to know what God wants us to do and then do that. Jesus said, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32).

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SOME PEOPLE ARE TRULY DIFFERENT

Plutarch, the ancient Greek historian and philosopher, relates a telling incident: "Alexander the Great, seeing Diogenes looking attentively at a parcel of human bones, asked the philosopher what he was looking for. Diogenes' reply: That which I cannot find — the difference between your father's bones and those of his slaves." No man would deny that Philip II of Macedonia, Alexander the Great's father, was different than his slaves. But neither could any man discover the truly significant differences by examining their physical remains. The only important thing that distinguishes one life from another is **spiritual**. Whatever other differences there may be, death levels out every last one of them.

Solomon came to the point where he understood this, after making a prodigious search for what it is in life that has any "profit" to it. He was in the unique position of having available to him every possible avenue of pleasure and accomplishment in this world. And having literally tried it all — sensual pleasure, wealth, science, the arts, philosophy and wisdom — this was his disappointing verdict: "I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and **there was no profit under the sun**" (Eccl. 2:11).

Why so? Simply because — no matter what the circumstances of a person's birth, no matter what his natural endowments, no matter what he enjoys in life, and no matter what he accomplishes — earth-bound advantages come to an end that is exactly the same for every man. Solomon led a worldly life that was far, far beyond that the common run of mankind will ever know. But even so, he was honest enough to say, "As it happeneth to the fool, so it happeneth even to me" (2:15). A man may think he has found something "under the sun" that gives him a significant advantage, one that is his to keep — but he will learn the truth that death equalizes **every** difference except one.

We can even go one step further. If a man never pays attention to the difference that spiritual concerns make, then he may as well have been a beast. At death, the lowliest creature in the animal kingdom will have as much to show for his effort as the human being who has only distinguished himself in worldly ways. "That which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing

befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast: for all is vanity" (3:19).

At the end of Ecclesiastes, Solomon pointed to the thing that truly makes one human life different from another. His words are, of course, familiar to many who have not even read the Book of Ecclesiastes: "Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (12:13,14). One's spiritual relationship to his Creator determines whether life contains any "profit" at all. This is the factor that counts. Everything else is secondary.

Now, it might be taken for granted that the Christian understands this and builds his life accordingly. We might assume that the disciple grasps the significance of having been "buried with him by baptism into death" that he might "walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4). But Paul, writing to saints, had to put it in the form of a question: "Know ye not ...?" We might be confident that members of the Lord's body, because they are different from other human beings, are consistently spiritual-minded. But Paul had to put this point in the form of a command: "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12:2).

The truth is, we sometimes do slip back into the old, worldly way of thinking about "profit" in life. We strenuously spend the bulk of our time pursuing objects that, relatively speaking, ought not to be any more than "dung" (Phil. 3:8) to us now. Our values and priorities, as our children and our friends know them, are little different than those of the poor soul who is still caught up in the race for "under the sun" advantages. The things that interest us and excite us most are often the things that are purely temporal. We live and work and play as if there were no radical difference that elevates us above the fool, or even the beast. Many of us are in desperate need of the Lord's forgiveness for failing to be much different inwardly from those who think worldly distinctions are what it is all about.

But I am thankful for having known some individuals in life—brothers and sisters in Christ — who **are** truly different from other human beings. They see with clear-sighted wisdom and love for the Lord what it is in life that matters. They are men and women whose outward lives are in most cases not extraordinary. They know that "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called" (1 Cor. 1:26). Nevertheless, they are **truly** in a category apart from all other human beings. They are different because they have actually been "born" a second time. They have genuinely put on the "new man." And they rejoice in knowing that, whatever else life may hold, "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17). They have found the single advantage in life that is a man's to keep. The only one.

**"INDIVIDUALLY-SUPPORTED
INSTITUTIONALISM"**
(A Response To Weldon Warnock)

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE: This article is a response to Weldon Warnock's article in the Feb., 1988 issue of this paper. Please read his article again. I greatly appreciate the opportunity for this exchange and Weldon's willingness to reply.

My motive in responding to Weldon is in the interest of truth with malice toward none. To my knowledge Weldon is a well-meaning man. I do not suspicion him to be wrong in his motives or intentions. I believe he loves the truth as I do. The extreme importance of this study is seen in the fact that the differences to be discussed concern some of the most basic concepts of Bible teaching with very important Bible doctrines at issue. Weldon teaches a **limited application** as to whom or to what **work** the uniqueness and all sufficiency of the local church applies. The result being, that he affirms the right of **individually** - supported organizations (missionary societies) which faithful brethren have rightly opposed for so long. Please read closely and carefully this entire exchange.

(1) **Weldon misunderstands how FULLY (as TO WHOM or TO WHAT WORK) the uniqueness and all-sufficiency of the local church APPLIES.** He said, The local church, designed by God and completely and sufficiently equipped to execute **its mission** in the world, is the only authorized organizational arrangement to carry out **the work of the church**" (Emp. mine - W. R.). Weldon correctly states the uniqueness and all-sufficiency of the local church of Christ when he says it is "sufficiently equipped" for "its" religious "mission" and is therefore the only authorized organizational arrangement ..." "designed by God." **But** notice that he **limits** the **application** of the local church being the only authorized organizational arrangement designed by God to the carrying out of "**the work of the [local - See his verses. W. R.] church.**" He does not make the same application in regard to **the WORK OF** (assigned to) **INDIVIDUALS.** He therefore incorrectly reasons that **individual** saints **may** join themselves together in **religious human organizations** like Charles Holt's Truth and Freedom Ministry, Inc. when doing **the religious work** God assigned to **individuals.** Holt's organization is a **missionary society** though, even though Weldon incorrectly calls it a "service organization" (meaning a **business** organization-See point #3.). Weldon, the unique and all-sufficient nature of the local church **applies** to **everyone's** religious work- both to local churches **and** individual saints. Therefore neither local churches nor individual saints may form or support religious organizations **other than** the local church of

Christ. Anyway, work assigned to us **as individuals** cannot be fulfilled by an **organization.** Thus we come to another mistake made by Weldon.

(2) **Weldon misunderstands the difference between INDIVIDUAL and ORGANIZATIONAL action.** He said, "Christians may join themselves together (or function) **individually** in **SERVICE organizations ...**" (Emp. mine - W. R.). His claim is that individual duty can be fulfilled in or by an organization. He therefore incorrectly reasons that when individuals function in religious work by forming, and functioning through, an organization such as Holt's missionary society, then they are still only functioning as **individuals** and concludes that, "This in no way intrudes upon or usurps the local church's mission." Of course his reasoning here is based on his erroneous limitation of the local church, by applying it to be the only authorized organizational arrangement designed by God **only** in the case of carrying out **the work of the local church** (see point #1). But Weldon is wrong on these matters also. The difference in individual and organizational action was clearly distinguished in past institutionalism battles. **Individual** duties cannot be discharged in **organizational** (collective) action. And vice versa. For **individual action** is directed or overseen by one's **own individual oversight.** **Organizational** (collective) **action** has all individuals in the organization relinquishing individual oversight to (submitting to) the common oversight of the organization. We cannot therefore act as individuals when serving in an organizational capacity. Neither can we act as an organization when serving in an individual capacity. They are not the same. **Franklin Puckett, in "The Arlington Meeting," pages 156-157:** "Since all action in the kingdom is either distributive or collective, and since neither the individual Christian nor the church universal can function collectively, and since the only units of activity in the kingdom are the individual and the local congregation, it follows that all collective or group action belongs to the local congregation." **James Cope, in his booklet, "Where Is The Scripture?," p. 59:** "Everybody should know that the only 'organization' or 'arrangement' of Christians to which the Lord had addressed commands [gave authority - W. R.] for collective or joint activity is what is generally referred to as a 'local church'."

(3) **Weldon misunderstands the difference between a BUSINESS (service) organization and a MISSIONARY SOCIETY.** He correctly identifies and states that service (business) organizations "**charge** for **SERVICES RENDERED** to cover the costs, and even to make a profit." (Emp. mine - W. R.) The **business** (service) realm is authorized (II Thess. 3:10; Eph. 4:28). And "electric and gas companies, lumber yards, mercantile stores and printing companies" are examples of business organizations. But Weldon also listed Searching the Scriptures, Guardian of Truth Foundation, Christianity Magazine and Truth and Freedom Ministry, Inc. as **all** being lawful businesses (service organizations), which is not true. To my knowledge, out of these four, only Searching the Scriptures and Christianity

does function as a lawful business which publishes religious materials by charging a purchase price "to cover the costs and make a profit." But it also functions in a **second role** as a **missionary society**. In which role, it **solicits, collects,** and becomes the **overseer** of monies contributed by **individuals** to enable G.O.T. Foundation to then **oversee and distribute** at its own **will** "Bible teaching." Truth and Freedom Ministries, Inc. functions solely this way. It is this missionary society arrangement which Weldon endorses that violates the Scriptures. Weldon is simply affirming in 1988 what J. B. Briney, Christian church preacher, did back in 1908 in his debate with W. W. Otey. In that debate, Briney affirmed the individually-supported missionary society (pages 165-167), as Weldon does now, besides the church-supported ones (pages 167-169). Briney said the **societies** sent the **Bible teacher** in fulfilling a "mission" (p. 166), and called the organizations "missionary societies;" whereas Weldon says G.O.T. Foundation and Truth and Freedom Ministries, Inc. send the "Bible teaching" in fulfilling a "service" and calls these organizations "service organizations." I fail to see a difference. But isn't "service" what all the unlawful organizations of the past and present claim as justification for their existence? Of course, their "service" is **not** a business function. Instead, it is religious work accomplished through donations to a human collecting and overseeing agency, **whatever its name**. "Good works" and "services" have never been proof for **unlawful organizations**. And nothing can substitute for Bible authority (Mt. 7:22,23). This is Weldon's problem. He offered us not one verse in proof of his society arrangement. There is none.

(4) **Weldon misunderstands the difference between BUYING A SERVICE and GIVING A DONATION.** He claims a "brother or sister may send a check [donate money - W.R.]" to a publishing company of religious materials without the nature of the organization being changed in that role. We have already shown that this is false. This arrangement constitutes a missionary society. For in **this role**, the company becomes the overseeing agency of the donations, and the religious teaching accomplished thereby becomes its own. On the other hand, individuals may **purchase** religious materials for themselves or others and publishing companies may print these for sale. This is simply **lawful business action** with the individual being in control of the use of his money and in control of the teaching materials purchased thereby.

(5) **Weldon misunderstands the difference between DONATING MONEY and DONATING ARTICLES.** He said, "I do not see any difference between sending [donating - W. R.] my money and sending [donating - W.R.] my articles,... My time and energy are as much a contribution (probably more so) than my money." Is it true that donating a religious article (teaching) to a publishing company of religious materials is equal to donating money to the same company? Let's see. Does anyone deny my right to speak to a Baptist lectureship as long as I teach the truth they need? If it was a Baptist magazine, could I not in parallel

send my teaching just like I could send myself to their lectureship? Now, could I in either case just send them the **money** that was of equal value to my time and energy spent in producing the teaching? The answer in this case is "No!". Why? Because my teaching is **my** words constituting **work of my labor** and **oversight**. I would not in this case be donating anything for the Baptists to oversee. I would just be fulfilling my role as a **teacher** using available opportunities to teach people. But money has to be overseen and converted by someone in order to be of use. In donating money in such cases, I would be relinquishing my oversight of it for another to oversee. We have no Bible authority for such actions.

(6) **Weldon misunderstands the difference between a PREACHER RECEIVING SUPPORT and a PREACHER ACTING AS A COLLECTING and OVERSEEING BOARD of individuals' monies for religious work.** He said a "preacher may be publishing a paper to teach the word of God among the multitudes and use ... individual support to help pay for printing and postage." I am amazed at Weldon's misunderstanding of basic Bible teaching. For even though preachers may be financially supported, nowhere does the Bible authorize a preacher to act as a one-man missionary society, which in this case he would be. (See the Willis-Inman Debate, p. 95.)

Much more needs saying but our space is up for this article. Brethren, Weldon et al. have drifted far from the Truth on these matters. We cannot with a wave of the hand dismiss them as unimportant. We know better. Let corrections about these matters be made. And let all of us promise to be zealous and jealous for God, the Truth, and the local church of Christ!

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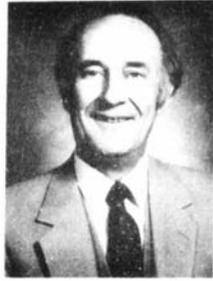
WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

Send all questions to:

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THE CHURCH, THE INDIVIDUAL, AND RELIGIOUS JOURNALS

Brother Ramsey thinks I misunderstand a lot of things. He begins every subdivision with, "Weldon misunderstands." We will allow the readers to judge who misunderstands.

Definitions

In the very outset certain words need to be defined. We will use *Black's Law Dictionary*, 5th edition.

1. Society. "An association or company of persons (generally unincorporated) united together by mutual consent in order to deliberate, determine, and act jointly for some common purpose."

2. Corporation. "An artificial person or legal entity created by or under the authority of the laws of a state or nation, composed, in some instances, of a SINGLE PERSON (emphasis mine, WEW) and his successor, being the incumbents of a particular office, but ordinarily consisting of an association of numerous individuals. ... Private corporations are those founded by and composed of private individuals for private purposes."

3. Organization. "Organization includes a corporation, government or governmental subdivision or agency, business trust, estate, trust, partnership or association, two or more persons having a joint interest, or any other legal or commercial entity."

4. Incorporate. "To create a corporation."

From the above definitions we can readily see that the words "society," "corporation," or "organization" may be applied to the religious journals that brother Ramsey would endorse. For example, brother Robert Craig wrote in *Bible Banner*, July 30, 1974 about the nature of the journal: "It is simply a medium through which Kent Ellis and/or I can make known what we personally believe the Bible teaches. WE HAVE ALSO INVITED OTHERS to submit articles...." (*The Willis-Jenkins Debate*, p. 293). Sounds like a society to me, Willie! Here was a human society or organization, by our definitions teaching the Scriptures. Did brethren Ellis and Craig sin, Willie? Was their paper competing with the church or supplanting it?

The Missionary Society and Religious Publications

When I spoke of a missionary society in the Feb., 1988 issue of *Searching the Scriptures* I was referring to one that takes over a part of the local church's work, to whom the church sends funds, and to whom it surrenders part of its autonomy; an organization that has as motive and

purpose to control the churches and to act as a coordinating agency for local congregations. If Charles Holt's Truth and Freedom Ministry is doing this, then I have no quarrel with brother Ramsey about Charles Holt's organization. We will shake hands on that.

On the other hand, I see nothing wrong, in principle, for individuals to send money to a journal (whether incorporated or not) to pay for the cost of sending the paper to interested brethren that want it. What is the difference between sending names and paying for the subscriptions (as many of us do) and in sending the money without the names to pay for those who request it? Seems to me there is about as much difference as there is between Tweedledum and Tweedledee.

Willie misrepresents Guardian of Truth Foundation. He charges that the Foundation solicits money from individuals for the printing of religious material in order to distribute it at will. WHERE DID YOU LEARN THIS, WILLIE? The Foundation did ask some interested people if they would like to give toward the printing of *The Gospel Plan of Salvation* by T. W. Brents, which GOT is now SELLING, and other bookstores, such as Religious Supply. This is the best Willie has on GOT. For this he opposes it and classifies it as a missionary society.

But let's suppose that GOT decided to give away 100 books of *The Gospel Plan of Salvation* by Brents. So what? It seems unreasonable to me that it is virtuous for a company to sell the word of God, but sinful to give it away. Willie has no trouble SELLING the word — just do not give it away. I suppose he would allow religious material that will not sell to be burned or buried in a garbage dump, but sinful to give it to some honest and sincere brethren.

If GOT is doing the work of the church in printing a book for sale with the help of some private donations, may a local church do what the GOT is doing? If not, why not? If a church began doing what GOT is doing, Willie would be one of the first ones to voice his objection.

Answering Ramsey's Assumptions

Now then, let's get down to the particulars of brother Ramsey's article. We will cover his response in the sequence he gave it.

1. Willie's first point ASSUMES I don't understand the all-sufficiency of the church. He thinks if individuals work through human organizations or collectivities in teaching the Bible, the all-sufficiency of the church is compromised. He says, "Therefore neither local churches nor individual saints may form or support religious organizations *other than* the local church of Christ. Anyway, work assigned to us *as individuals* cannot be fulfilled by an *organization*." But I have already shown that religious journals are organizations, yet, Willie endorses many of them. Thou that teachest another, teachest not thyself? Too, the home is an institution and it is to teach the Bible (Eph. 6:4; 2 Tim. 1:5; Deut. 6:7).

Yes, the church is totally sufficient to do what God assigned to it, whether it be evangelism, edifying its members, benevolent work or worship, but that does not mean that ALL teaching of the Bible is to be done

exclusively by a local church, or benevolent work, or even worship. If so, then all religious papers must come to a halt, as well as Bible departments of schools, home training of children, and worship conducted in group settings, such as singings outside the church assembly. Methinks that Willie also limits the scope of the local church. Too, how about a home (institution) for widows, some of whom are widows in deed? Does it limit the church?

Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke traveled together (Acts 16, group action). What if they would have pooled their money with Silas for travel expenses, and some optional decisions were made by group consensus? Would they have sinned, Willie?

2. **Willie ASSUMES that I misunderstand the difference between individual and organizational action.** He affirms, "Individual duties cannot be discharged in **organizational** (collective) actions." He quotes brethren Frank Puckett and James Cope to try to prop up his case.

Frank Puckett said in the same speech to which Willie refers, "Distributive is defined grammatically as 'separation among or into individuals or individual groups'. ... Distributive action is performed by separate individuals or separate **GROUPS** (emphasis mine, WEW) of individuals" (p. 156). So, brother Puckett taught that individual action could be "group action." It would have been nice if Willie had put Puckett's statement he quotes in context. By the way, brother Puckett taught Bible at Florida College for a couple years or so.

You need to read brother Cope's tract to which Willie refers. He was answering Batsell Baxter who was trying to justify putting the college in the church's budget. Brother Baxter was defining the church to mean just anything he wanted it to mean. Brother Cope replied in that context. I also refer you to brother Cope's response to Ralph Williams (*Truth Magazine*, Sept. 16, 1971). Brother Williams tried to parallel Florida College to a society. Brother Cope clearly and explicitly showed the dissimilarity. Some brethren are rather loose with their use of the phrase, "missionary society."

The Willis-Jenkins Debate in Pasadena, Texas in Sept., 1974 was a collectivity, and organizational arrangement of individuals. No local church had anything to do with it. Cecil Willis sent 200 dollars to Dr. Curtis Torno and that money was pooled with 200 more dollars for rental of the high school auditorium. Group decisions were made and money was pooled. From our definitions, it sounds like a society or organization to me! Why has not Willie, and those of his persuasion, "jumped on that with both feet?" Why is he zeroing in on GOT for receiving some money from individuals to help print a book to sell, but is as "silent as a tomb" about that individual collectivity in Texas?

In that debate brethren were arranging and forming a collectivity to argue that it is sinful for individuals to function religiously through a collectivity, other than the local church. That is about like a mini-debate I had with a woman in a lectureship assembly (I was on a panel) wherein she vehemently contended it is wrong for a woman to speak in the assembly. I recommend the

Willis-Jenkins Debate for your perusal. I concur wholeheartedly with brother Willis.

3. **Willie ASSUMES I don't know the difference between a business organization and a missionary society.** I have already covered much of this section in preceding remarks. However, I wonder if Willie understands what a missionary society is? It would be interesting for him to properly and accurately define a missionary society that included GOT, perhaps Florida College, Holt's organization, but excluded the religious papers that he endorses.

Willie's endeavor to tie me to J.B. Briney is in vain. Wonder why he tried to connect me with Briney, unless it was to discredit my position by association? I do not remember (and Willie does not either) making the arguments that Briney made. He had better take another peek at what I wrote and what Briney said.

Briney spoke of a school, a religious journal and brethren building and operating a railroad for profit in order to have funds to advance the kingdom. He incorrectly reasoned that if individuals may operate a Bible school, publish a religious journal and own a railroad, then churches may have their missionary societies through which to work. What individuals may or may not do proves nothing as to what churches may do or not do.

Is a school wrong that has a Bible department? Of course not? A school can get out of line, but that is not the issue. May brethren collectively publish a paper, as Briney said, "upon business principles?" Such is being done with Willie's endorsement. Looks like Willie has some things in common with Briney. What about a railroad? Well, let's say the railroad prints religious books and SELLS them for a profit? Is it doing the work of the church?

The proposition that Briney was affirming in the debate with Otey was dealing with churches using such organizations as the Illinois Missionary Society and the Foreign Christian Missionary Society. Do not try to yoke me to Briney, Willie. Brother Otey had the truth in that debate.

4. **Willie ASSUMES I don't know the difference between buying a service and giving a donation.** He only surmises this. The problem with Willie is that he thinks sending a donation to GOT to print a book to sell, or I suppose to help blacktop the parking lot, makes it a missionary society, doing the work of the church. Actually, Willie needs to chastise some of the brethren that are in the same camp he is in. One of them has received funds from individuals to print his own religious material to sell (Reliable testimony is in my files). It is all right for them to do what they claim we sin in doing. Consistency, thou art a jewel!

5. **Willie ASSUMES I don't know the difference between donating money and donating an article.** He introduces a Baptist magazine, insisting there is a difference between sending articles and donating money because he may send an article over which he has control, but not money over which he has no control. Well, what about sending money if the Baptist paper consented to publish all articles in an issue by gospel

preachers on "What Must I Do to Be Saved?" and the money was going totally for the printing and mailing of the articles to 25,000 Baptists? This will never happen, but neither will an article by brother Ramsey appear in a Baptist paper if he writes the truth. Wonder if Willie would send an article to a Baptist paper praising the Baptists? Of course not, and neither would we send a donation to help them promote error.

Brother Ramsey thinks if he sends an article to a Baptist paper (and other papers) that he has complete control over it, hence, acceptable. But he overlooks the "big blue pen" of the editor. He also spoke of a Baptist lectureship on which he could speak if invited. Would he speak at a Baptist church lectureship on "The Scientific Accuracy of the Bible?" What if it were a debate in Pasadena, Texas by members of the church, with the pooling of money? Were those brethren sinning when they donated their money?

6. **Willie ASSUMES I don't know the difference between a preacher receiving support and a preacher acting as a collecting and overseeing board of individuals' monies for religious work.** Again, it is a case of Willie seeing a missionary society nearly everywhere he looks. He has "society-itis." How in the world a brother or two sending to a preacher a few dollars to help defray the printing cost of a little paper constitutes a missionary society, rivaling the church, is beyond me. Brethren may help the preacher print his paper, fold it, address it, mail it, and even write some articles for it, but they cannot pay the postage at the post office. So, it is the money with Willie and not the collectivity of time, work and energy. Strange logic!

Willie asked us to see the *Willis-Inman Debate*, p. 95. There, brother Willis said, "if you were to send it (money churches send to Herald of Truth, WEW) to a preacher and make him the agency through whom 2000 churches were going to act, then you would have a one-man missionary society." What does this (CHURCHES sending money to a man) have to do with two or three brethren helping a preacher publish a little paper? Such convoluted reasoning as reflected by brother Ramsey does not even permit a brother buying a preacher a typewriter on which to type his articles. I suppose he could put a sticker on the typewriter, labeled "salary."

In conclusion, let us understand that the Lord has given individuals responsibilities, and those may be fulfilled by just one person, or sometimes in group action, providing the work of the local church is not encroached upon. Too, Christians may operate businesses.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: For those who wish to study this question at greater length, we suggest the WILLIS-JENKINS DEBATE which is still in print and available from the book store. Also, there was an exchange of three articles on the subject between Darwin Chandler and Marshall E. Patton in SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES in August, September and October, 1975, Bound Volume 15-16. CWA)

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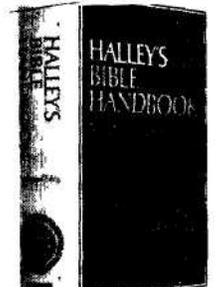
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THINGS THAT LAST

James E. Cooper
512 Hayden School Road
Elizabethtown, KY 42701

Sometimes it seems that we live in a throw-away society; yet, things that endure still command our attention and appreciation. Most of us try to obtain the most enduring items we can afford when it comes to major purchases like housing, automobiles and furniture. We take pride in enduring institutions. I once heard the president of a college say he wanted to build an institution that would "last a thousand years."

However, such material possessions and earthly institutions will one day come to an end. Jesus spoke of the "end of this world" (Matt. 13:40), and John said, "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof..." (1 Jno. 2:17). Peter writes of the day of the Lord, "in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Pet. 3:10). Those who think only of things material will never lay hold on things that are really enduring. Consider the following things that will last.

1. **THE WORD OF GOD.** Although men have mistakenly called it a "dead letter," the Word of God is "living and active" (Heb. 4:12). Jesus said, "heaven and earth shall pass away, but My Word shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35). Peter speaks of the "word of God which liveth and abideth for ever," and then quotes Isa. 40:6,8, which contrasts the passing nature of "all flesh" with the enduring nature of the Word of God (1 Pet. 1:23-25).

Jesus said, "He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (Jno. 12:48). His Word will still endure when the world is on fire. For this reason many scholars believe that "the books" to be opened on the last day are the books of the Bible, the revealed Word of God: "...and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works" (Rev. 20:12).

2. **THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.** The church exists because it was purchased "before the worlds" (1 Cor. 2:7; Rom. 16:25-26; Eph. 1:10; Eph. 3:9-11). Daniel prophesied that the kingdom would "stand forever" (Dan. 2:44-45). Jesus identified the kingdom of Daniel's prophecy with the kingdom of Christ, the church (cf. Mk. 1:15; Matt. 16:19; Eph. 5:5; Jno. 18:36). Further evidence of the identity of the church and the kingdom is seen in Col. 1:18, where Paul observes that we Christians have been "delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of His dear Son" (v. 13). Yet that body over which Christ rules as head is called "the church" (v. 18). No mistake about it; they are the same, and Jesus

said, "the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18).

The writer of Hebrews says, "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (12:28). The only institution that will survive this world is the church of Christ. *ARE YOU A MEMBER OF IT?*

3. **THE OBEDIENT CHRISTIAN.** While the world and all that is in it will "pass away," John says "he that doeth the will of God abideth forever" (1 Jno. 2:17). Jesus said only "he that doeth the will of My Father in heaven shall enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 7:21). This includes being "born of the water and of the Spirit" (Jno. 3:5), as well as "always abounding in the work of the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58).

Like Abraham, we look for "a city which hath foundation, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10). We sing:

"Time is filled with swift transition,
 Naught of earth unmoved can stand.
 Build your hopes on things eternal
 Hold to God's unchanging hand!"



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Please Renew Promptly

THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

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

Send all News Items to: Connie W. Adams, P.O. Box 69, Brooks, KY 40109

DONNIE V. RADER, 4724 E. Manslick Rd., Louisville, KY 40219 — The work here at Manslick Road for 1988 looks real good. We just finished a meeting (March 6-11) with Dee Bowman. The kind of preaching he did would make any church stronger. It was filled with scripture and forcefully presented. We had numbers close to 300 the last two nights. Non-members were present nearly every night and heard the kind of message they needed to hear. We trust that other efforts in the Lord's work will go well for this year.

WAYNE GOFORTH, 25th and Hawaii, Alamogordo, NM 88310 — I have lost \$300 of support this month, coupled with the \$1251 had been unable to raise, brings it to \$425 per month short. There are only three self-supporting works in the whole state. Texas is hit by the oil crunch. This is a good work. This is the only sound work in a 70 mile radius. There are 75,000 people in a 30 mile area. We get over 100 calls per newspaper ad for our Dial-A-Mesaage phone and the local TV station has given me free air time. I would be glad to furnish references.

KEITH WARD, Rt. 3, Box 1559, Lake Butler, FL 32054 — For the past three and a half years I have supported myself while preaching by appointment and serving as a deacon at Northeast in Gainesville, FL. I am interested in returning to full time work. My articles exposing the misuse of scripture by Science-Foreknew-the Bible type lectures are still available. They will be sent free upon request for a self addressed stamped envelope. I am available for occasional week-end meetings.

PAUL BROCK, Box 3555, DeLand, FL 32723 — After 6 1/2 years with the North Blvd. church in DeLand, it is our purpose to retire from local work. Though small, DeLand is a fine congregation standing solidly for the truth. The Lord willing, we will move back to Ridge Manor, FL by May 1st. This is where our house is located. The address there will be 5416 Tall Pines Dr., Ridge Manor, FL 33525. It is our prayer to continue to preach as brethren may see fit to use me. in meetings, week-end series and as needed on the Lord's day.

KEITH E. CLAYTON, 7 Buttolph Drive, Middlebury, VT 05753 — R. David Brewer and his family have agreed to move to Vermont to help evangelize the Rutland, VT area. Dave left a good position with Exxon 10 years ago to devote his life to preaching the gospel. The Tomlinson Run Road church, where he currently labors, will be having some fellowship with him after he moves (I think \$400 a month). Dave still needs more support so he can move to Vermont. There is no sound church there currently. Dave's address is Rt. 2, Box 117, Georgetown, PA 15043. His phone: (412) 573-4862.

LARRY R. DEVORE, P.O. Box 313, Medina, OH 44258 — We are having good interest and attendance at Medina. Since my last report, one young lady has been baptized, and two have confessed sins. The ladies began having a Bible class on Monday evenings at the home of one of the members. We have several who are taking our Bible Correspondence Course.

DON POTTS, 417 East Groesbeck Ave., Lufkin, TX 75901 — I am now in my seventh year with the good church at Fourth and Groesbeck. Such men as Roy Cogdill, Cled Wallace, Luther Blackmon, Robert Farish, Hoyt Houchen, Jim Everett, J. B. Jordan, Kent Ellis, Clyde Strickland and Don Martin have laboured here as local preachers. Out of this church has come at least three other churches in the

city: Timberland Drive, Central and Union Road.

Those familiar with the work will be happy to know that it is now to be a part of a merger to take place March 6, 1988. In 1980 a number of brethren started a work in the Hudson community, west of Lufkin. These brethren asked Dean Bullock to work with them and he has for the past few years. Because a number have moved and the work has been slow in growth it was necessary to think of a merger with another congregation. These brethren will become a part of the Fourth and Groesbeck church on March 6, 1988. Dean Bullock will be working with us and continue his meeting work. When he is at home the two of us will share the pulpit. If you visit the area, stop and worship with us.

CARL McMURRAY, 826 Arlene Ave., Papillion, NE 68046 — We have been in the Omaha area for about 10 months. The La Vista congregation has about 60-65 in attendance and the brethren seem sincerely interested in accomplishing the Lord's work. My work with another preacher, Mike Divis, has proven to be encouraging and valuable.

Since April 1987 we have had 28 responses, 14 of which were baptisms. In spite of about 10 members moving from the area and one being marked as unfaithful, we have seen an increase in both attendance and contribution. Both Mike and I are holding home Bible studies almost daily. We are excited about a mass mail-out for a correspondence course as well as non-members asking for studies and visiting our services. I believe we broke a record last Lord's day when 81 were present. Many of these were non-members. If you visit the Omaha area or know of someone here, or even stationed at Offut Air Force Base, that we could contact, please give us a call or drop us a note.

Lord willing, I will be with the Jordan Park church in Huntsville, AL, April 3-8, in Alexandria, IN, April 10-15, and with the church in Pittsfield, ME, June 19-24.

TOM MOODY, 4001 Taylor Blvd., Louisville, KY 40215 — In 5 1/2 weeks in India, brother Gerry Sandusky and I preached or taught publicly about 45 times each. Our conservative estimate is that we preached to 2000 different people and over 1000 different adults who are not Christians (most of them Hindu). Eighty-one were baptized. At least two congregations were established. About 20 in one congregation took a stand for the truth. 10,000 copies each of four different tracts were printed in the Telegu Language and about 325 Bibles were purchased to be distributed. Several dozen tapes of sermons and the Bible classes and dozens of English tracts and outlines were left with the brethren.

The tracts, Bibles and benevolence rendered to a number of people was made possible by the generous gifts of 30 or more individuals. Our necessary expenses were paid in their entirety by the congregations with which we work. We are so grateful to the Christians at South End (Louisville) and at Madison (Indiana) for their love of the Gospel and sacrificial spirit which made this work possible. —From the **South End Expounder**

MICHAEL GARRISON, P.O. Box 1261, Franklin, NC 28734 — Report of preaching trip to Australia: I arrived at the Birssband airport on Feb. 27 and was met by my pen-pal of over 12 years, David Bennett and his wife and their four children. It was so good to have Christians awaiting me and to welcome me to Australia. This was our first meeting.

I was asked to preach with the church in Bundaberg on Wednesday night. Afterward, they agreed to have me preach in what they call a "mission" (we call them gospel-meetings) on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. All went well in this meeting with a few visitors present on Friday and Sunday. I was well received and enjoyed my work with this congregation. I was also asked to preach the next Wednesday night and Sunday morning.

On March 13th, after the AM worship, my host, David Bennett and I left to drive three and a half hours or so to meet with the church in Rockhampton. It was arranged that I speak with the church in Gympie on Wednesday on my way back to Brisbane. I was well received here. I was taken to Ipswich by brother Bennett on Friday, March 18th. David and I said our farewells here as he needed to go back to Bundaberg to return to work. I preached at Ipswich on Sunday night (March 20) and Tuesday night. They are but a few in number here and were glad to have a visiting preacher come by and encourage them in the faith. On Wednesday the 23rd, I preached with the Rockdale church. There is much to do in the gospel in Australia. I arrived at the San Francisco airport on March 28th. I thank the individuals who helped me in a financial way to ease the burden. I borrowed money from my life insurance policy to finance my trip and the help received was much appreciated.

FROM FOREIGN FIELDS

EDMUNDO M. CIPRIANO, 220 Int. 14 Dayao St., Bulut, Tondo, Manila, Philippines 1012 — Last July (1987), while brother Diosado P. Menor had his eye surgery and recuperating he planted a new congregation at 13th Ave. Cubao, Quezon City, Philippines. I moved to Manila last August and was requested to stay and edify the new church. This congregation has no less than 20 adult members. While the church is still very infant, the members are zealous to search the scriptures. We lack Bible lessons materials and other Bible study aids.

RECENT DEATH

FORREST HURST passed away on March 2. Brother Hurst was a member of the Oak Grove church in Louisville and had been the preacher there as well as a number of other churches in Indiana, Ohio, and Kentucky. Perhaps the words "zeal" and "conviction" best sum up the life of Forrest Hurst as many of us knew him. Brother Hurst never left doubt as to his stand on important issues. He practiced his faith with manifest joy and enthusiasm. This was most evident by his and sister Hurst's frequent attendance at Gospel meetings. Our sympathy and prayers go with his widow, sister Laura Hurst and son, Boyd. —Adapted from the **South End Expounder**

CHURCH IN NEW BUILDING

JAMES L. ZACHARY, 3474 Winchester Rd., Memphis, TN 38118—The Winchester Rd. Church of Christ has met at its present location, 3474 Winchester Rd. for the past thirty years. We will soon be moving to our new building located at 6590 Statline Road near the "Hunter's Run" subdivision. From I-240 take the Poplar exit east to Ridgeway. Follow Ridgeway (which becomes Hickory Hill) to the intersection of Winchester Rd. Take Winchester Road East to Germantown Extended. Take Germantown Ext. to Stateline Rd. turn right (west) and the new building is located less than 1 mile down on the north side of the road. For further information contact James L. Zachary (901) 794-5258.

A NEW SUBSCRIPTION QUARTERLY

W. Bruce Tooley and Eddie R. Littrell, publishers of "Know The Truth," began publication of **EDIFICATION QUARTERLY** in April. This will be the concerted effort of a great variety of writers of differing ages, experiences, and abilities. The topics of consideration will be intended to foster strength and courage. This will be available for \$3.00 per year (4 issues). To subscribe, write to **EDIFICATION QUARTERLY**, P.O. Box 776, Red Bay, AL 35582-0776.

PREACHERS AVAILABLE

CARTHEL THOMAS, 5327 S. Tryon St., Charlotte, NC 28217 — Carthel Thomas has completed his work at Florida College and at the University of South Florida in Tampa, FL. During the time he was here in college he attended Fletcher Ave. Church of Christ and did

some preaching here. He has filled preaching appointments over the past three years at several places in the central Florida area. He is a very devout young man with a determination to proclaim the gospel of Christ. He is a serious student of the Bible. I commend him to any church who is looking for a faithful young preacher. He may be reached at the above address. For further information you may contact me: H. E. Phillips, P.O. Box 1631, Lutz, FL 33549, phone: (813) 949-3257.

BEN RODRIGUEZ, 1420 West Main St., Lewisville, TX 75067 — I know of a mature, experienced preacher looking for a work in the Tennessee — Kentucky area, or some where in the South East. If interested, please contact me at the above address or call (214) 221-7744.

PREACHERS NEEDED

DUNDEE, FLORIDA — The Dundee Church of Christ is in need of a full time preacher. We have 25 regular members, and in the winter months we have around 40. We can supply about \$1,000 of the support needed and will help to get the rest. We are located in central FL on highway 27,8 miles from Winter Haven. We prefer a man 35 or older with children. Anyone interested can contact us at P.O. Box 1156, Dundee, FL 33838 or call (813) 439-3254.

FAIRBANKS, ALASKA — I have acquired what the doctors call "End-stage Kidney Failure" and have been advised to leave Fairbanks. So I am moving back to East Texas to begin work with my home congregation. I will begin work in Groveton no later than September 1st.

The church in Fairbanks is in dire need of someone to come here. Most of the money needed to support a man is arranged, but would need to raise a little more. We want to secure someone as soon as possible. If you are interested in the work here, call me or write immediately. — Cecil Willis, 3010 David Road, Apt. B-37, Fairbanks, Alaska 99709.

LECTURES

VIVION ROAD LECTURES, KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI — The Vivion Rd. Church of Christ, 2026 N.E. Vivion Road, Kansas City, MO 64118, will have its fourth annual lectureship on June 20-23, 1988. The speakers will be Homer Hailey, Robert Harkrider and Randy Harshbarger. The theme will be "Premises For Godly Living." For more information write to the church at P. O. Box 28478, Kansas City, MO 64118 or call (816) 452-3684.

BROADVIEW HEIGHTS BIBLE STUDIES, OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA — The Broadview Heights Church of Christ, N.W. 38th and St. Clair, Oklahoma City, OK 73157, will have an intensive series of Bible studies on July 10-15, 1988. The speakers will be Dee Bowman, Leon Goff and Homer Hailey. R. J. Stevens will lead congregational singing. The theme will be "The Gospel — The Revelation of Jesus Christ" (a study of Galatians). There will be panel discussion every night. For more information write to the church at P.O. Box 12654, Oklahoma City, OK 73157.

DEBATE

JACK HOLT of Standley, LA will debate **F. I. STANLEY** of Sunray, TX on the June 27, 28, 30 and July 1, 1988 at the building owned by the Bossier Church of Christ (2917 Foster Street, Bossier City, LA). Brother Stanley will affirm that a person divorced because he was guilty of fornication may marry another while his former wife is still living, while brother Holt will affirm that such an one may only remain unmarried or be reconciled to his former mate. The Bossier church has endorsed Holt's proposition. Olan Hicks will moderate for Stanley. Elmer Moore will moderate for Holt. For more information call Jack Holt at (318) 697-2847 or write him at Rt. 1, Box 409, Logansport, LA 71049.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

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