

The Faith Under Fire

By JAMES D. BALES

God Be Thou Merciful
To Me A Sinner. Luke 18: 13.

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DEDICATION
TO
DR. WILLIAM M. GREEN

One of God's Noblemen
who combines scholarship
and humility.

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Introduction

There may be some momentary pleasure in living in a dream world in which there is no confusion and conflict, but the real world is quite different. The warfare between good and evil, and between truth and error, is a never-ending conflict, and thus the faith is always under fire. It may be fired on by its open enemies, or subtly undermined by hidden foes, or misrepresented by the lives of its adherents, or wrongly defended by its friends. It is attacked by those who are conscious that they are attacking the faith set forth in the New Testament, but on the other hand it may be attacked by some who in their ignorance think that they are defending the faith. Because the conflict is constant, the Christian's life is the life of the soldier who fights the good fight of faith. (1 Tim. 6: 12) One must try to be like Paul and be set for the defense of the gospel (Phil. 1: 7, 16).

Although it attacks some fallacies also, one of the most recent attacks on the faith is found in *Voices of Concern*. It contains chapters by individuals ranging from those who have repudiated the Bible to those who claim to be members of the New Testament church. This book could be divided into three general areas. First, it contains samples of various errors and sinful attitudes and actions of some brethren. These things need to be dealt with in the light of the Bible, and unnumbered Christians have opposed these errors. Second, it contains various denominational errors which have been preached for centuries. Third, it contains modernism. We agree that fallacies should be under fire, but modernism destroys the foundation of faith. If the foundation be destroyed, there is no standard of truth in the light of which to expose and oppose the fallacies. With reference to both the denominational errors, and the modernism, the book simply makes a new trial of old errors.

OUR SINS AND SHORTCOMINGS

We need to learn from the criticisms of others. Even when these criticisms are not justified, or are not justified on the scale on which they are made, we can learn how such critics view us. This gives us an opportunity to try to clear up misconceptions. We can also learn from valid criticisms. Our critics may call attention to sins which we have overlooked and which others are hesitant to point out to us. Although Communist leaders do not permit their basic philosophy and fundamental decisions to be criticized, yet they emphasize the necessity of criticism and self-criticism by their followers in order to learn from their mistakes and to learn better how to apply the directives which have been given to them. Thus Lenin wrote that: "A political party's attitude towards its own mistakes is one of the most important and surest ways of judging how earnest the party is and how it fulfils in practice its obligations towards its class and the working people. "¹ In our steadfast determination to do the will of God, to bring souls to Christ, to help others grow in grace and in knowledge, and to grow ourselves,

we must be willing to learn from criticism. If we refuse to listen to, and so far as possible to learn from, criticism, we are not being honest and we are stunting our own growth. If Communists are willing to learn from at least some criticism, how much more so ought children of God.

This book is written in the conviction that we are to sanctify in our "hearts Christ as Lord: being ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear: having a good conscience; that, wherein ye are spoken against, they may be put to shame who revile your good manner of life in Christ. " (1 Pet. 3: 15-16). We are aware that some of the charges contained in *Voices* are true concerning some people, and that at least one or more charges are true of all of us at one time or another. Thus we shall not defend that which we believe to be an error in teaching, attitude, or action.

Although it is easier to quote it than to capture it in our lives, the author hopes that at least at times he manifests an awareness that Paul said: "And the Lord's servant must not strive, but be gentle towards all, apt to teach, forbearing, in meekness correcting them that oppose themselves; if peradventure God may give them repentance unto the knowledge of the truth, and they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him unto his will. " (2 Tim. 2: 24-26). This is not to suggest that we consider all of the writers in *Voices* as being in the same condition. For example, as far as we know, some continue to hold to belief in the inspiration of the Scriptures. We do not know all of the beliefs of all of the individuals in this book; in fact, we do not know all of the beliefs of any one of them. We do not attribute to all of them the same beliefs just because they are in the same book. But it is quite clear that some of them deny the Lord who bought them.

On the other hand, we have also tried to be aware of the fact that we are to "war the good warfare" (1 Tim. 1: 18), that there are some "whose mouths must be stopped" by the word of truth (Titus 1: 11), and some who should be reproved sharply "that they may be sound in the faith" (Titus 1: 13). There are factious men who need finally to be refused (Titus 3: 10). We are "to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints. " (Jude 3).

When to be gentle and when to be severe is not always easy to determine. We doubt that any one has been so wise that he has never been mistaken as to when severity was called for and when gentleness was in order. And yet, we know that the blessings on the mount and the woes on the Pharisees were both spoken from Christ's heart of love. He sets the standard that is always above us and which keeps us humble and always beckons us upward.

MODERNISM

Since the word "modernism" is used in *The Faith Under Fire*, it is

INTRODUCTION

important that we give some definitions of it. The term has sometimes been used so loosely that it has been applied to everything from a drinking fountain in the meeting house to the repudiation of the Bible. As used by this author it has reference to those who reject in varying degrees the inspiration of the Scriptures in order to harmonize them with some aspect of what is assumed to be modern thought. A Catholic author indicated that modernism rejected the infallible Scriptures and accepted "some indefinite, undefinable inner experience, " and thus viewed the Bible as secondary. The Bible shows how God acted in others, or rather how they thought God acted in them, but the Bible is not the standard for us.²

Another defined it as: "Broadly, one who makes the methods and results of modern thought and life the norms for judging the claims of religious tradition. Specifically, a modernist insists on applying the contemporary historio-critical method without favor to the sources, distinguishes the abiding experiences of religion reproducible today from the changing categories of Scripture and creed, and accepts the deliverances of tradition to the degree they are reconcilable with evolution, immanence, democracy and similar prevailing thought-forms of the modern world."³

THE TENT OF FAITH

The Jacket of *Voices* states that its purpose is to lengthen the ropes, and strengthen the stakes, of the tent of faith so that all God's children might dwell in it. Just where would the Episcopal priest drive down the stakes? His church contains the atheist Dr. Thomas J. Altizer who affirms that God is dead, and Bishop Pike who opposes many Biblical doctrines. How can the tent of faith include one who still has an aversion to traditional theism?⁴ *Voices* contains such conflicting voices of confusion and apostasy that it would make the tent a tower of Babel; and, in fact, some of them would destroy God's tabernacle. Some of the voices have not found any place where they can be consistent and drive down the stakes of the tent of faith and say that beyond this one cannot be included in the tent of faith.

UNITY IN DIVERSITY?

The editor of *Voices* said that: "The book obviously means to urge no one way of religious expression, but to plead from such evidence as is here the need for *unity in diversity*.

"This kind of unity would have kept most of the people who left. "⁵ There is certainly a Biblical unity in spite of diversity. Christians are at different stages of growth and development. There are those who are babes in Christ, who feed on the milk of the word, but they have not grown so that they eat and assimilate the meat (1 Cor. 3: 1-4). There are those who have not grown, and thus, although by reason of time they ought to be teachers of the Word, they have need for someone to teach them anew. (Heb. 5: 11-14) Romans 14 shows that there is a

diversity which is due to Christians being at different stages of knowledge of God's will. And thus, while having one mind as our ideal (1 Cor. 1: 10-12), we can fellowship other Christians without any of us having attained perfection. And yet, the Bible also shows that there are limits to "unity in diversity. " To accept the diversity which is found in *Voices* would mean that we must abandon the Bible as our standard.

The Editor stated that: "Thousands are restless and dissatisfied with the aridity of exclusivism and authoritarianism. Bright young minds are refusing to be put off with answers that have no more to commend them than the hoary beard of antiquity. "⁶ Our spirit of exclusivism ought to be as broad and as narrow as that taught in the Bible (Matt. 7: 13-14). The authoritarianism should be not that of traditions of men, but of the authority of Jesus Christ (John 12: 48; Lk. 6: 46). We should study to try to give reliable answers which have credentials other than mere age. There are, it is true, those who have reacted against unscriptural attitudes and unscriptural narrowness on the part of some. We ought to be restless when people try to confine us within the traditions of men; but the restlessness of many in *Voices* is due to their refusal to be satisfied with the fences which the Lord has built. They do not wish to be confined by the Word of God. We need to try to create an atmosphere based on both the breadth and the narrowness of the Scriptures. We ought to be narrow in our convictions so as to stay within the narrow way yet we should be broad in our compassion and love; for this, too, is a part of the narrow way. But to broaden our teaching so that it embraces one voice's aversion to the theism in which he was reared, for example, is to abandon God's truth for man's futile speculations. The church is not ours to broaden or to narrow according to our ideas; instead the church has been created by God, and we need to study God's word to know its nature and its boundaries. We did not write the Bible, and we do not have the right or the power to change what it teaches. We do have the responsibility of studying, living, and sharing the Word of God.

The editor expressed the hope that *Voices* would help create the feeling on the part of a father, whether a minister of the gospel or not, that "he may well be delighted if his child leaves the home church so long as her motive is a passionate desire to find for herself the highest and holiest way of worship.... "⁷ As far as this author can tell, the editor does not bring this to the test of the New Testament revelation. What could he say if one thought that Buddhism was a higher and holier way? What could be said to those who maintained that the evolutionary development of religion has been such that the worship of Bacchus is now the highest and the holiest? If there is no standard of authority, who is to say that these things are not higher and holier than Christ and His way, for those who prefer them?

It is recognized, with sorrow, that some very capable people have severed relationships with us, and that we have found it necessary to

sever relationships with them. Why this has taken place would have to be determined by a study of each case. It is our hope that this book will alert others to some of the fallacies and attitudes on our part which may have contributed to their departures, and that it may be helpful to at least some so that we may better contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints. (Jude 3).

DIVERSITY OF CONCERN

About what are some of the voices concerned in *Voices of Concern*? There are those who are concerned about Phariseeism, and so are we. However, although not all of the voices are modernists, none of them, so far as the author detected, expressed any concern over modernism. There was one voice who was concerned that we do not have men who are directly inspired by the Spirit and that we do not have miracle workers among us today. One voice seems concerned because we believe in the traditional theism and accept the supernatural revelation in the Bible. He thinks that we should accept his humanism.

At least one or more of the voices left the impression on this author that there must be something wrong with a church which will not let modernists be its leaders. Such voices as these, if they had lived in the first century, would have been just as critical of the church then as they are now. All of them seemed concerned to point out some of our sins and shortcomings, and they need pointing out. However, the same charges were repeated so often that one was tempted at times to be weary in well doing instead of plowing through the book to the very end. The author hopes that the voices will reciprocate and plow through his book which, he is confident, will at times become wearisome to them!

THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS

The editor wrote that: "It is not only unimportant to us that we do not agree with each other in every detail; it is, rather,, a matter for rejoicing that in these pages men who accept Jesus as Lord may speak their minds without restrictions. We consider the variety itself a significant part of the lesson this book would teach. Free minds cannot be predicted. The Spirit of God really does move at liberty like the invisible air, and it impels men in various ways. "⁸

In the first place, to accept Jesus as Lord means that we must endeavor to be in submission to His will; both in things which seem small or which seem great (Matt. 7: 21-23; Lk. 6: 46). Second, how can the editor think that the voice who has an aversion to the theism in which he was reared accepts Jesus as Lord? How can some of the writers accept Jesus as Lord, when they repudiate some things which are clearly taught in the Bible? Third, minds which free themselves from the authority of Christ and His word cannot be predicted. There is no telling what straw they will grasp, or what bubble they will try to catch, or what truth they will repudiate. Fourth, unless one accepts the Bible, he cannot know whether there is any Spirit of God. And if one accepts

the Bible, he is not free to view just anything and everything as a movement of the Spirit of God. How does the editor know when and how the Spirit moves men? We cannot know anything about the mind of God except as God has revealed it through His Holy Spirit through the inspired men of the first century (1 Cor. 2: 10-16). No one of us can teach by inspiration, although we have the inspired word to teach. Since we have no inspired men today, we must listen to what the Spirit says through the written word. The Spirit can and does speak through the written word (Rev. 2: 1, 7). Fifth, how would the editor test teaching and action to know whether or not the person is moved by the Spirit? Without the authority of the Bible, how does he know what the Lordship of Jesus Christ means? Will he deny the inspiration of the Bible, while affirming the inspiration of some modernists?

All of us need a closer walk with God, but none of us have to leave Christ's church in order to walk in closer communion with God. Although others may encourage us or discourage us, as the case may be, in the final analysis the only one which stands between each one of us and a closer walk with God is ourselves. James warns, invites and challenges each of us to a humble walk with God (Jas. 4: 4-10).

THE FAITH WHICH IS UNDER FIRE

Although the faith has impacts on economics, society, culture, in fact, on the totality of life, it is more than any of these things. To put it briefly, Christianity is the revealed religion which God has given to man for this last dispensation of man's existence on earth. Christianity is revelation, redemption, regeneration, the redeemed or reformed life, and the revealed rest. It is not the product of man's uninspired search after God, but is the revelation of God's search after man through Jesus Christ. Although it involves morality, it is not just a moral system but is redemption in and through Jesus Christ. Christ is Savior as well as the greatest teacher and example of morality. Becoming a Christian is not just a matter of straightening up one's life, but also of being born again. Those who are born again are obligated to live the new life in Christ, and thus Christianity does involve morality. It places man under the highest moral demands. Christianity does not involve man in his earth-life only, but embraces the eternal view. Thus Christianity involves the revealed rest for the redeemed and the condemnation of the wicked. In *Voices* these five Rs of Christianity are attacked directly or indirectly and consciously or unconsciously by one or more of the voices. It was the author's intention to notice almost everything in *Voices*, and he originally wrote a manuscript of over 550 pages. The economics of publication necessitated cutting the book down to a manuscript of 300 typewritten pages. Thus a lot of material was omitted. He hopes to deal with some of the subjects, such as the holy kiss, in another book on *Puzzling Passages*. In *Preaching on Social Issues* he plans to consider some of the charges brought against some preachers and preaching. Brief reviews of most of the specific chapters were written for a journal.

The authors were given an opportunity to reply in the same issue of the journal to my reviews. The basic misconceptions underlying the charges that some of us are reactionaries, "ultra-right, " etc. have been dealt with in my *Americanism Under Fire*.

In order to make this book as impersonal as possible, we have not referred by name in the text itself to the individuals whom we have quoted, or who have advocated a particular position. Instead, we have referred to them as voices, or a voice, critics, etc. In footnote references we have identified the individuals and the pages in *Voices of Concern* where the positions are found.

Since there was so much territory to cover, the author has often numbered his replies so as to make them as clear and as concise as possible.

INTRODUCTION FOOTNOTES

1 *World Marxist Review*, October, 1966, 45.

2 V. Ferm, *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 498.

3 *Ibid.*, 499.

4 Hardeman, 93, 99.

5 Meyers, 5.

6 *Ibid.*, 3.

7 *Ibid.*, 4.

8 *Ibid.*, 5.

What Is the Bible?

Although there were numerous warnings against, and charges of, Phariseeism, there were no warnings against modernism so far as the author could tell. But Jesus warned against the leaven both of the Sadducees and of the Pharisees. The Sadducees would correspond at least in certain things with modernists of today. Why were there no warnings against modernism? The voices which are not modernists may not have thought about it, and the voices which are modernists obviously would not warn us against that which they believe and into which they would lead us.¹

INSPIRATION OF THE BIBLE

Many of the voices are involved in a gross inconsistency when they accept Jesus and the Bible as authoritative in some things and not in others. If we accept Jesus' teaching concerning God and the grace of God, on the same grounds we should accept His teaching concerning the inspiration of the Old Testament and the inspiration of those whom He endowed with the Spirit and sent out to teach the gospel. To be consistent they must either renounce the Lordship of Jesus, or they must accept His word. If they claim that He is the truth, they must not try to convict Him of error with reference to His attitude toward the inspiration of the Old Testament. If they accept Him as being without sin, they cannot say that He knew better than to teach that the Old Testament was inspired, but that He accommodated Himself to the false views of His day concerning inspiration. They must choose between being disciples of Christ, and learning from Him, or arrogating to themselves the authority to contradict Jesus and to teach Him more perfectly matters in which He differs from them. In such a case they are trying to make Him their disciple.

While accepting modernism which undermines the inspiration of the Bible in various ways,² one wrote: "It is hard to suppose that we can be genuine disciples of Him who is the Truth at the same time that we defensively protect ourselves from what are claimed to be new discoveries of fact."³ Christians should be receptive to facts, although some people confuse the facts and the interpretations which someone may have given these facts in order to make them fit his particular biases. Modernism, however, sooner or later tries to convict Jesus of dishonesty or of ignorance concerning the nature of the Old Testament and the nature of the word, the New Testament, into which the apostles and Prophets of Christ were guided.

What does the Bible claim concerning inspiration? God has spoken both in times past and through His Son, and those sent by Him. in this the last days dispensation (Heb. 1: 1-2; 2: 3-4). God taught Moses what to say (Ex. 4: 12), "the mouth of the Lord" spoke through Isaiah (Isa. 1: 20), and the Spirit of the Lord spoke by David and His word was in

David's tongue (2 Sam. 23: 1-2). Peter affirmed that the Old Testament prophets were carried, or moved, or borne, by the Holy Spirit (2 Pet. 1: 10-21; 1 Pet. 1: 10-21), and Paul spoke of the sacred or holy scriptures which were inspired of God (2 Tim. 3: 15-17). For the most intensive study, known to the author, of the various words which indicate the inspiration of the word of God see Benjamin B. Warfield, *Inspiration and Authority of the Bible*, Philadelphia: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1948.

What did Jesus say about the written word? (a) Some deny that Moses wrote of Christ, but Jesus said that "he wrote of me" (John 5: 46-47). (b) Jesus quoted the Old Testament and said that it was God's voice to them (Matt. 22: 31-32). (c) Moses wrote the word of God (Matt. 15: 4-6; Mk. 7: 8, 10). (d) Jonah was hosted by a great sea monster (Matt. 12: 39-40). (e) Scripture holds good, Jesus said. It cannot be broken, and yet so many today set out to break it while claiming to be Christ's disciples (John 10: 33-36). (f) Jesus maintained that the scriptures "bear witness of me", and that He fulfilled the things written concerning Him in the law, the prophets, and the psalms (John 5: 39; Lk. 24: 25-27, 44-47).

Jesus gave the apostles the word of truth which He received from the Father (John 12: 48-50; 17: 8, 14). This is the word of truth through which we believe and which sanctifies us (John 17: 20-21, 17). It was brought to their remembrance by the Spirit, whom Jesus sent, and the Spirit guided them into all the truth (John 16: 7; Acts 1: 8; John 14: 26; 16: 1-14). The Spirit spoke through them (Matt. 10: 19-20, 27). The Gospel was preached through men by the Holy Spirit and thus they spoke "not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth; combining spiritual things with spiritual words." (1 Cor. 2: 13; 1 Pet. 1: 12). One rejected Christ if He rejected them (John 13: 20). Paul was taught by revelation (Gal. 1: 11-12), and thus he wrote scripture and his word was authoritative (2 Pet. 3: 15-16; 1 Thess. 4: 8, 15; 2 Thess. 2: 14-15; 3: 12, 14; 1 Cor. 14: 37).

If Jesus did not know what God's word was in the past, and if He did not know that the ones whom He sent did not speak and write by the Spirit, then He is too ignorant for us to listen to on matters concerning faith and practice. If someone says that He did not know what God's word was in the past, but does know what the word of God is for today, they are inconsistent in accepting part of His teaching on His authority and rejecting that part of His teaching which pertains to the inspiration of the Old Testament.

If Jesus is the way, the truth and the life, how can we believe that He had a false position concerning the Old Testament? Can one believe that He is the Truth, and yet say that He was wrong concerning the nature of the Old Testament? If He was wrong concerning God's word in the past, how do we know that He is right concerning God's word in the present?

We are not disciples of Christ, but have tried to make Him our dis-

ciple, if we claim that we know better than He the nature of the Old Testament. There are some, however, who imply that He was dishonest. They say that He knew better, but just conformed to their prejudices; and He did this on the fundamental matter of what is the word of God. What shall we say to this? First, it is just as consistent to say that all of His word is but His conformity to the prejudices of His day, as to say that His word concerning the Old Testament is such a conformity. How does one know that Jesus' teachings about God's love and grace are not accommodations of Jesus to the false ideas of His day? Second, there is no proof that Jesus thus accommodated himself to the false ideas of His times. This theory of accommodation is one that some people got up to try to justify their failure to accept Jesus' word even after they have claimed that He is the Truth, and that they are His disciples. Third, Jesus condemned the traditions of the Pharisees, and there is no indication that He avoided unpleasant truths in order to please them or to reach them. Shall we say that in such a vital matter as the inspiration of the Old Testament, He stooped so low as to leave the impression that they were right in accepting its inspiration when He did not believe it? Christ condemned the Jews of His generation for many things; but never once did He hint that they had too high a regard for the inspiration of the Old Testament. He often condemned their traditions, but he never suggested that faith in the inspiration of the Old Testament was a tradition of men. Fourth, as S. S. Schmucker pointed out, and we draw on him for the rest of the points, the language Jesus used with reference to the Old Testament when speaking to the people as a whole, is "precisely the same language" which "is used by Jesus respecting the Old Testament when conversing with His apostles (Matt. 26: 24, 31; Luke 22: 37; 24: 44-47), and even in His prayers to His heavenly Father (e. g. John 17: 22)". Fifth, "The moral character of Jesus and His apostles, renders such a supposition inadmissible. " Sixth, "The supposition, that Jesus and His apostles propagated falsehoods under the garb of truth, is overturned by the fact that miracles evinced their authority as teachers". Seventh, "No sure criterion can be given which shall enable us to distinguish between those of their declarations which they believed themselves, and those in which they accommodated themselves to the erroneous notions of the Jews.... The theory of accommodation involves the whole of revelation in uncertainty. " Eighth, wherein Jewish opinion was right, Jesus agreed with it. He accepted truth even when held by hypocrites (Matt. 23: 1-4). Ninth, "The necessity for such accommodation on the part of Jesus and His apostles cannot be proved. "4

Can one be a disciple of the Lord and presume to teach Jesus? Can one hold Jesus as the Truth, and yet convict Him of teaching falsehood? Christ has stood the test of centuries. Thus when there seems to be a conflict between Christ and some "fact" someone has brought forth today, we have either misunderstood what Christ taught, or we have

misunderstood the "fact". But if Christ actually teaches something, we must hold to it regardless of how many people say that the facts prove otherwise. It is possible to reject Him, and to refuse to be His disciple; but how can we be His disciple and still think that we can instruct Him more perfectly in various matters?

THE COMPLETE AND FINAL REVELATION There are some who assume that we must go beyond the New Testament just as Christ went beyond the Old Testament. However, they overlook two things. First, Christ, His apostles, and His prophets, were inspired. We are not. Second, the Old Testament revelation was pre-paratory to the New Covenant revelation, but the New Testament revelation does not point to another dispensation to take its place on earth, but rather looks forward to its consummation in eternity. (Acts 2: 34-35; 1 Cor. 15: 24-28). As we have shown in the chapter on miracles, many scriptures show that the Old Testament revelation was incomplete and was to give place to the New Testament. However, the New Testament teaches that it is the final dispensation.

The revelation of God through Christ is the final revelation and the complete revelation because it is all the truth. How do we know that it is all the truth? First, at the last passover supper Jesus was eating with and talking to His apostles (John 13: 1-2; Matt. 26: 20-25; John 17: 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 20). He promised them that the Holy, Spirit would come and guide them into all the truth. "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all the truth: for he shall not speak from himself; but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak: and he shall declare unto you the things that are to come." (John 16: 12-13). Later on there were others who received the Holy Spirit and spoke by inspiration. (Eph. 2: 20; 1 Cor. 14: 37; Gal. 1: 11-12; 1 Cor. 12). Since Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life, we know that He spoke the truth. His promise did not fail. Therefore, by the time the last apostle died all the truth had been delivered. And the only word which we have from the inspired apostles and prophets is found in the Bible. To deny that they were guided into all the truth is to say that Jesus taught falsehood, and was wrong in promising them that they would be guided into all the truth.

Second, the apostle Peter said: "Seeing that his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue; whereby he hath granted unto us his precious and exceeding great promises; that through these ye may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world by lust." (2 Pet. 1: 3-4). Peter had preached to them the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever. (1 Pet. 1: 25). There is, therefore, no truth which pertains to life and godliness which is not found in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Third, the apostle Paul spoke of Christ "in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden. " (Col. 2: 3). We have not mined all of these treasures but they are there.

Fourth, Jude exhorted brethren "to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints. " (Jude 3). This is the "all truth" which was delivered through Christ and the inspired men in the first century (Heb. 1: 1-2; 2: 3-4).

WHAT THIS DOES NOT MEAN

This does not mean that any one of us has learned all of the truth, for we have not. The Bible is the mighty ocean on whose shores the child can wade but whose mighty depth no man can completely fathom. It is the school of truth from which we never graduate.

It does not mean that we have understood all of the applications of the principles which we do know. For example, we shall learn more about what it means to live by the golden rule.

It does not mean that we have perfectly lived up to what we do know.

It does not mean that no one else has any moral or spiritual truth. Jesus did not teach that no moral or spiritual truth was known before His day. In fact, the golden rule summed up the law and the prophets. The apostle Paul showed that pagans could know that the eternal God exists, and that they could learn it without the Bible from the world round about them (Rom. 1: 18-23). In the beliefs of the animists, even those who have not heard of the Bible, there is the belief that the Creator exists; although they usually do not worship Him for they think that he is too remote, or that He is not against them, and they need to worship the spirits who are against them so as to keep them from harming them. Some pagans realized that they were the offspring of God (Acts 17: 28-29). Pagans also, even though they became confused as to many moral principles, yet had a sense of duty and some knowledge of duty. (Rom. 2: 14-15). However, the truths which pagans have seen will be truths which are contained in the Bible, and thus the Bible has all the truth although there are truths which some hold who do not have the Bible.

It does not mean that some unbeliever may not call our attention to some truth which we have overlooked, or stress some truth which we have neglected. Of course, we do not have to accept his infidelity in order to accept the truth which he has seen. Jesus showed that truth should be accepted even when taught by hypocrites; and so did Paul (Matt. 23: 1-4; Phil. 1: 15-18). All things belong to us, and although we do not see them all at any one moment, yet when we see them we can possess them without having to leave Christ. "Wherefore let no one glory in man. For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's. " (1 Cor. 3: 21-23).

THE FAITH UNDER FIRE

ARE YOU SURE?

There are those, however, who may ask: How can we be sure that all religious and moral truth is found in the Bible? First, it is the word of God, and Jesus said that all the truth would be revealed to certain inspired men. All those things which make it reasonable for us to believe the Bible is the word of God, underscore the claim of Jesus concerning all the truth. Outside of the Bible we cannot find any word of the apostles and prophets whom Christ inspired through the Spirit.

Second, the student can conduct his own investigation. Let him try to find a moral and religious truth which is not taught in the Bible by precept—an express statement, by principle, or by some example. If he thinks that he has found such a truth, let him: (a) Show us that it is not in the Bible, (b) Give us some evidence to prove that it is a religious and moral truth.

Third, one of the things which will help convince you, that all the truth is found in the Bible, is that the Bible is inexhaustible. What man has written man can fathom. We can plumb it to its depth. We can master it and move on to something else. The Bible, however, is inexhaustible. We never plumb its depth. Does not this indicate that it is a product of the Infinite Mind? One may study it for decades and continue to learn more. We graduate from our first grade reader, from our college textbooks, from books which once were hard for us, but we never graduate from the Bible; although some cease to study it.

We are not suggesting that it answers all the questions which we might like to have answered; although it has answers which we have not yet seen. We are not suggesting that men will like all of its answers or find them easy. But we are affirming that it is the full revelation of God to man on earth.

THE PRACTICAL LESSONS

Although we may study many people's writings, we must bring all to the test of the word of God. We must not think that the way to progress is to go beyond the word; instead we are to study and to grow in and by the word. Why did Paul tell them that all the treasures of knowledge and wisdom were in Christ? "This I say, that no one may delude you with persuasiveness of speech. For though I am absent in the flesh, yet I am with you in the Spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. As therefore ye received Christ Jesus the Lord so walk in him, rooted and builded up in him, and established in your faith, even as ye were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. " (Col. 2: 4-7). He is the complete revelation of God to us, and we find our completeness in Him (Col. 2: 9-10).

Those who would lead us into something else are stating or implying that completeness is not found in Christ, and that there are treasures of knowledge and wisdom which are found outside Christ and not in Christ. Paul warned of three such appeals. First, there are those who would lead us back under the law. Although the law pointed to Christ,

and He fulfilled the law and the prophets (Matt. 5: 17-18), we are to abide in Christ and not be led back under the law. It was the shadow of the reality which pertains to Christ (Col. 2: 14-17). Second, you should not let any one make "spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. " (Col. 2: 8). Third, you should not let anyone with his pretended revelations, and his traditions of men, lead you from Christ (Col. 2: 18-23).

One can spend a lifetime proving that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in Christ and that progress comes through growth in Him.

BIBLE UNDERMINED

Some of the voices cry out against the Bible as the word of God, and view it as an evolutionary product. Going back to the Bible is condemned because it "is the effort to catch an historical process at one moment of its evolution and to fossilize it at that point for eternal duplication. "⁵ We should not look back to or live by a "document of 2,000 years. "⁶ However, since the Bible is the word of God we have not outgrown it; for we live under the same rule of Christ which was proclaimed on the first Pentecost after Christ's resurrection (Acts 2: 30-36; 1 Cor. 15: 24-28). We must look back to the faith once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3), that we may be able to have the standard by which to look inward and measure our lives; that we may know to look up to Jesus (Col. 3: 1-4; Heb. 12: 1-3); that we shall look to the fields white unto harvest; that we may see Him who is invisible and endure; and that we may look forward to His second coming and to being with Him eternally.

Of course, if the Bible is not the word of God, we need not look back to it nor is there any reason to look anywhere else for a word from God. If God has not spoken in Christ, God has not spoken at all. And if God has not spoken at all, all religion—including that of the most up-to-date modernists—is so much vain thought and talk.

It is maintained that Paul "did not self-consciously write Scripture. "⁷ Paul wrote Scripture even if he did not do it self-consciously! But he did it self-consciously. First, he affirmed that the gospel which he preached was not only "not after man"; neither was he taught it by man, but it came to him "through revelation of Jesus Christ. " (Gal. 1: 11-15). The gospel which Paul wrote was not different from the one which he spoke, so what he wrote was revealed as surely as what he spoke. Second, Paul affirmed that what he wrote was authoritative, was the commandment of God (1 Cor. 14: 37). Third, Paul affirmed that his spoken word and his written word were binding. Men were not only called through the gospel Paul preached (2 Thess. 2: 14), but he also concluded: "So then, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye were taught, whether by word, or by epistle of ours. " (2 Thess. 2: 15). And if any man obeyeth not our word by this epistle, note that man,

that ye have no company with him, to the end that he may be ashamed. " (2 Thess. 3: 14). Fourth, Peter testified that Paul wrote "according to the wisdom given to him, " and his epistles were classified with "the other scriptures. " (2 Pet. 3: 15, 16). No wonder Paul said: "And when this epistle hath been read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye also read the epistle from Laodicea. " (Col. 4: 16). Again he said to the Thessalonians: "I adjure you by the Lord that this epistle be read unto all the brethren. " (1 Thess. 5: 27).

It is asserted that we have only fragments of the Scriptures, and that the rest has been lost. We do not have all of Paul's letters. It is impossible to put together a "coherent picture of the early church from these miscellaneous fragments, " in fact, it would be "like following a truck loaded with a pre-fab hoping that we can rebuild the house from the few pieces that chance to drop off. " ⁸ If the Bible is this fragmentary, on what grounds does this voice think that there is enough there to know the nature of the true spirit of religion? And yet, he wrote as if there was sufficient revealed therein to know this.

BIBLE INCOMPLETE

Concerning this charge of the fragmentary nature of the Bible, we call attention to the following. First, we do not have to have every time a truth was spoken or written by an inspired man in order to have the sum total of the truth which he taught. Not every speech, conversation, or sermon of the inspired men are recorded. It was unnecessary to record every word uttered and every miracle performed by Jesus (John 20: 30-31; 21: 25). We can have all the truth taught by the apostles and prophets without having a record of every occasion on which they taught. With rare exceptions, truths are always found in more than one place in the New Testament. Second, no proof is given to show that any truth taught by the apostles and prophets has been lost. Third, if there were books missing from the Old Testament it would not affect our faith and practice since we are under the New Covenant. We are not saying that the Old Testament has no value to us, for it has several values; but we are saying that it would not be necessary for us to have a complete Old Testament in order to have all the truth into which the apostles were guided. Fourth, as a general rule God's people have been zealous to preserve the inspired records. Fifth, inspired books were duplicated, sometimes in translations, and would be found in more than one place. A copy could be destroyed in one city and be preserved in another. Sixth, in the Old Testament a short letter, or any other piece of writing, could be called a book. The bill of divorcement in Deut. 24: 1 is a book of divorcement. (Matt. 19: 7; Mk. 10: 4). The brief account of Jesus' genealogy is the book of the generation of Jesus. (Matt. 1: 1). Thus some so-called lost book of the Old Testament may be incorporated into present books. Seventh, a so-called lost book may be in the Bible under another name. The Book of the Covenant in Ex. 24: 7 is not something

different from what God revealed to Moses, and which he rehearsed, wrote, and read to the people. (Ex. 24: 1-2, 3, 4, 7). Eighth, secular records as well as sacred records were kept by the Jews, and it was not necessary that these be preserved (1 Kings 14: 19-29). Ninth, there are cases where books were cited in the Bible without their having been inspired (Acts 17: 28; Titus 1: 12). The Old Testament, however, is cited in the New Testament as the word of God. Tenth, there is no proof that an inspired book has been lost from the Old Testament. Jesus accused the Jews of many things, including making void God's word through their traditions (Matt. 15: 8). However, He never charged them with having been so careless that they had permanently lost some inspired books. Instead of making such an accusation, He accepted the Old Testament as God's word. He viewed it, as they did, as being divided into the law and the prophets, and also the psalms (Matt. 5: 17, 18; 7: 12; Lk. 24: 27-44; John 5: 46-47). We have the Old Testament which Jesus had. All but seven of the Old Testament books are quoted in the New Testament and the rest of them are embraced in the law, the prophets, and the psalms (Lk. 24: 44). Eleventh, Matt. 2: 23 does not refer to any specific prophecy, and it does not give a quotation from a prophet. It affirms that the prophets, more than one, had testified that He would be called a Nazarene. What was it, that more than one prophet spoke of, which is fulfilled in Christ being called a Nazarene? It is that He was despised and rejected of men, an object of contempt and reproach. Even mild Nathanael asked whether any good thing could come out of Nazareth (John 1: 46), and Nazarene seems to have been a term of contempt (Acts 24: 5; 28: 22). Twelfth, Jude 14 does not say that there was a book of Enoch which has been lost, but it does tell us a prophecy which he made. The Holy Spirit who guided Enoch could also have told Jude about this prophecy; and a true recollection of the gift of this prophecy could have been preserved in Jewish tradition. The Spirit informed Paul of the name of the Egyptian magicians, although they are not named in the Old Testament (2 Tim: 3: 8).

Concerning the New Testament we observe: First, we do not have to have recorded every time a truth was written in order to have every truth which was taught. Second, we do not have to have all of their speeches, nor all of their writings, in order to have all of the truths taught by the New Testament apostles and prophets. Third, what proof can anyone give that any truth taught by them has been lost? Fourth, what about an epistle to the Laodiceans? (Col. 4: 16). (a) History knows of no genuine epistle of Paul to the Laodiceans. (b) If there was a special epistle to them, why were the Laodicean brethren saluted in the epistle to the Colossians (Col. 4: 15), instead of in an epistle to the Laodiceans? Even if they were visiting in Colosse, the epistle from Laodicea was circulating and they could have been greeted in it. (c) Paul did not say the epistle *to* the Laodiceans, but "read the epistle *from* Laodicea." (Col. 4: 16). (d) Since the epistle was circulating, for it had

been to Laodicea before it got to Colosse, it is likely that copies would have been made which would help insure against its being lost, (e) Epistles did circulate, for not only was one to come from Laodicea, but the one sent to Colosse was to "be read also in the church of the Laodiceans." (Col. 4: 16). As T. K. Abbott in the *International Critical Commentary*, said: "Again, we know of three epistles sent at this time to Asia Minor, namely, those to the Ephesians, to the Colossians, and to Philemon. It is best not to assume a fourth unless we are compelled to do so, which it will be seen we are not...." Abbott thought that it was the epistle to the Ephesians, "which we know to have been written about the same time as the Epistle to the Colossians, and conveyed by the same messenger, and which, in quite distinct grounds, is, with high probability, regarded as a circular letter (see Introduction)." (f) Since the private letter, as it were, to Philemon, an individual, was not lost, it would be strange if an epistle of Paul which was circulated among the churches dropped out of sight so completely that the early church knew nothing of an epistle to the Laodiceans; although someone finally did forge what they called an epistle to the Laodiceans. Fifth, Jude three has reference not to another epistle but to the one which he was writing them. Sixth, Ephesians 3: 3 does not refer to another epistle, but to the few words which Paul had written about this earlier in this epistle. (Eph. 1: 9-10). Seventh, as far as the author knows the apostolic fathers, writers whose lives overlapped that of apostles of Christ, do not quote as inspired any epistle or book of the New Testament church we do not have. Eighth, if any New Testament reference indicates an epistle which we do not have it is 1 Cor. 5: 9. Patrick, Lowth, et. al. in *A Critical Commentary and Paraphrase of the Old and New Testaments* maintain that the reference is to the epistle which Paul is then writing—1 Corinthians. If it is an epistle which we do not have, it dealt with the matter of fornication, and so does 1 Corinthians. There is no indication in 1 Cor. 5: 9, or elsewhere in the New Testament, or outside of the New Testament, that any truth taught by the apostles and prophets has been lost. And this is what critics of the Bible must prove in order to prove that the Bible is not the full revelation of God to man.

UNCERTAIN TEXT

One voice not only denied that the Bible is the final authority, but he made it appear that the Bible is so uncertain that we cannot trust it in any one verse. "There has been so many glosses, additions, and editorial changes in the process of time that we have no way of knowing exactly what the original text was. From what we have, we get glimpses—little more."⁹ This critic is not saying that there are some textual problems. He is asserting that we get little more than glimpses of the original text and that the changes have been so great and so numerous that we are left in a sea of uncertainty. Why did this very critic quote or refer to several passages of Scripture as if we could rely on them? He spent a good deal of time condemning, and saying that the Bible

condemns the priestly religion and praising, the prophetic religion—as he and certain others have labeled certain things. If the text is as uncertain as he says it is, he could not know what the priestly religion was, or what the prophetic religion was. or whether one was really preferable to the other; and if one was preferred by God to another, he could not be sure which one God endorsed. How could he know when the text is so uncertain? If the text is so uncertain, how can he tell which is the so-called "letter" and what is the so-called "spirit" of the text?

It is realized that there are some textual problems, but they must be put in their proper perspective. First, the differences in the text of various manuscripts, as J. W. McGarvey pointed out, "consist mainly in differences of Greek orthography; in the form of words not affecting the essential meaning; in the insertion or omission of words not essential to the sense; in the use of one synonym for another; and in the transposition of words whose order in the sentence is immaterial. It is obvious that such variations, however numerous, leave the text uncorrupted as regards its thoughts. An essay might be written in English with almost every word misspelled and every sentence ungrammatical, which would still express its meaning as clearly as the most accurate and elegant composition. The writings of 'Josh Billings' are as clear as those of Addison. "¹⁰ Second, as C. R. Gregory pointed out: "Hort's final judgment is that the field covered by substantial variations 'can hardly form more than a thousandth part of the entire text. ' In order to gain an idea of what that means we can be very plain. A Greek New Testament lying at my side contains five hundred sixty pages not as large as my hand, and there are a couple of lines of various readings on most of the pages. A thousandth part of that would then after all be in the neighborhood of a half a page or fifteen or sixteen of these small lines. Really that is not very much. "¹¹

John A. Scott, then Professor of Greek in Northwestern University, said: "Sir Frederic Kenyon in editing these papyri wrote: 'The first and most important truth to draw from these papyri is that they confirm the essential purity of the existing Gospel text—no important or fundamental variations, no important omissions, no additions, nothing but unimportant changes in the order of words, or in the form of words. In the assurance of the essential accuracy of our existing text these papyri make an epoch. ' Professor Sanders, after comparing these papyri and all the other kindred fragments of the New Testament, closed his recent study with these words: 'The discovery of the original text of the Gospels lies in the future, but that text, when discovered, will neither shock nor astonish us. It will be a mean between extremes, it will be like neither the King James nor the Revised Version, but will lie between. '

Just last year another small piece of papyrus was discovered. The forms of the letters show that it is at least one hundred years older than

the Chester Beatty Papyri. Experts assign it to the first quarter of the second century. This little fragment contains five verses of Saint John, a Gospel that was generally assigned by advanced critics to a late date. Here we have reached almost to the time of John himself. So far as I know, not a single discovery has ever confirmed the conclusions of destructive criticism either in classical or Biblical literature. "¹²

Frederick C. Grant said that "it will be obvious to the careful reader that still in 1946, as in 1881 and 1901, no doctrine of the Christian faith has been affected by the revision, for the simple reason that, out of the thousands of variant readings in the manuscripts, none has turned up thus far that requires a revision of Christian doctrine. "¹³

The reader may find of interest a brief treatise of F. F. Bruce on *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?*¹⁴

INSPIRATION OF MODERNISTS

For decades I have noticed that there are modernists who will deny the inspiration of the Bible, and then affirm their own inspiration. If their inspiration is no more reliable than they make out the Bible to be, there is no reason that we should pay any attention to them. Although his modernism is not as clearly stated in his chapter as in other sources, the voice which edited the book, as well as wrote a chapter, is a modernist in his attitude toward the inspiration of the Bible. He could not accept the inspiration of the Bible and think that one who has aversion to the Biblical theism in which he was reared is still in the faith. Yet this voice affirmed that there are inspired men today. ¹⁵

Since he undoubtedly thinks that he has the Spirit, and has a more spiritual view of religion than do we, we want to know what are some of his inspired writings or spoken words. If he will state some of these, we think it can be shown that they are either in the Bible, or discernible by human reason, or condemned by the Bible or condemned by human reason. If he is afraid to subject his own inspiration to the test, perhaps he will tell us what are some of the inspired passages in *Voices* or elsewhere.

Another voice discredits verbal inspiration, and our using it to give "divine authority to the doctrinal position which we carefully extracted from (or read into) the Bible. "¹⁶ He stated that his acceptance of the Bible as literature made him realize the importance of history. "I came to see that the Bible really bears witness to God's activity in history, and that if we are to know Him we must become sensitive to what He is teaching us in the historical arena. I learned to love history and realized that historical questions must be answered by historical methods rather than by revelation. "¹⁷ Without being sure of all that is meant by this statement, we observe: First, the Bible is the greatest literature in the world, but it is also inspired literature. Second, the Bible does contain history or events, but it also contains the divine disclosure of the meaning of the events. None of us can know the meaning of these events—such as the death of Christ on the cross—apart from the divine revela-

tion. Third, there are historical questions in connection with the Bible and we use historical methods in dealing with them. On the other hand, there are questions which cannot be dealt with just by the historical method. Fourth, the Bible cannot be the witness to God's activity in history unless the writers were inspired so that they could tell us what was God's activity, and what He meant by it. Fifth, we understand this voice to mean that we can read history outside of the Bible so as to know what God is teaching us. This is not true. We may see things which we are taught in the Bible confirmed in historical events outside of the Scriptures, such as righteousness exalts a nation and sin is a reproach to any people, but without the divine revelation history would be to us only one unmeaningful event after another. Sixth, will this voice tell us what God is teaching in the arena of history now, and will he tell us by his own inspired interpretation of events; or will he interpret the events in the light of the inspired revelation in the Bible? Does he know God through history apart from the Bible? How does he know what God is teaching in the historical arena? Is he inspired? If so, where are some of his inspired interpretations — whether oral or written?

WITHOUT A STANDARD

If the Bible is not the authoritative revelation of God to man, man is without a revelation of God's will. If He has not spoken through Christ and in the Bible, there is no inspired revelation from Him at all. If there is no authoritative standard, one would have as much right to call Hitler a Christian as to call Paul one. In the light of what standard can one condemn Phariseeism, if the Bible is not the word of God? Can the modernists who wrote certain chapters in *Voices* give us any reason for believing that the Pharisees were not acceptable to God but that Jesus Christ was? Do the modernists reject Phariseeism because they personally do not like it? But what does this prove? The Pharisees liked it, and it is every man to his own taste. What right have those who claim to be followers of the "prophetic religion" to censure those who are followers of the "priestly religion"? How do they know that it is better to be a "spiritual" Christian than a legalistic Pharisee? Who can say that the "spirit" is better than the "letter," or that either is of any value?

Furthermore, what right have they to maintain, as likely some of them do, that the Biblical revelation of moral principles in Jesus Christ is authoritative? Why should we accept the teaching of Christ concerning morality, and reject Him on other matters? The advanced modernism of today repudiates the moral teaching of the Bible. They are consistent in doing this, for if the Bible is simply a record of the evolutionary religious and moral development of man in his uninspired search after God and meaning in life, we have already evolved beyond it and need not concern ourselves with its antiquated moral customs; for morals, in such a case, are but customs of men.

We are told more than once that our message is irrelevant, but, if the Bible is not the word of God, life itself is irrelevant. Without any certain standard there is no way of knowing whether anything is important. Without the Bible, one cannot know for sure whether they are men created in the image of God or merely made-over monkeys.

MORALITY UNDERMINED

It is often assumed that modernism undermines faith in the historical accuracy of the Bible, but that it leaves the moral teaching untouched. Although it is true that there are modernists who continue to hold to the moral teachings, they are inconsistent and their teaching ultimately undermines Biblical morality. Our generation has seen modernistic bishops who repudiate the miracles and the morals; and *Voices* furnishes us with more than one case where modernism undermined, in at least certain matters, the integrity of the modernist. For a time some of them sailed under false colors. *Every modernist among us, who is hiding his true colors until he can influence as many people as possible to his way of thinking, is grossly dishonest.* He may dress well, his manners may be polished, his approach may be disarming, his psychology superb, and his vocabulary terrific; but he is a hypocrite. We are not speaking of an individual who is wrestling with problems; but of one who has undergone a fundamental change of faith and yet feigns Biblical faith in order to continue among us—for whatever purpose he may have in mind.

Some seem to think that it is unchristian to show from a man's own record that he has been dishonest. They take a far dimmer view of the one who exposes dishonesty, regardless of how good his attitude may be, than they take of dishonesty itself. Since we believe it is our duty to illustrate that modernism helps undermine morality, it may be well first to show that this voice asserts that many preachers today are dishonest. He charged: "Our pulpits are filled with men who do not believe what they preach and who dare not preach what they believe."¹⁸

This voice tells us that by 1947 he was in fundamental disagreement with us. If I understand him correctly, he started in Lipscomb the fall of 1941.¹⁹ Within six years he came "to the position which I have found convincing now for nearly twenty years."²⁰ He was faced with the decision as to whether he should leave the church or "somehow find a way to work on within it."²¹ His decision led him to deceive some of us for years.

What were some of the positions to which he came? Were they basic matters? His attitude toward the inspiration of the Bible changed. He now believes that "next to our position on baptism, " our view on the Bible "is the biggest barrier to the spiritual growth among us."²² The dishonesty, which his modernism enabled him to practice for years among us, was certainly not an indication that his view of the Bible made a spiritual person out of him. Who was most helpful to him in revising his view of the Bible? Fosdick, in one of his books. In this book Fosdick rejected the Biblical teaching concerning miracles, creation,

demons, apocalyptic hopes, eternal hell, and certain Old Testament teaching concerning Jehovah. Fosdick seemed to think that because Jesus fulfilled and set aside the Old Covenant, we can set aside the New and develop a "newer" Covenant. Fosdick makes the Bible fit an evolutionary framework so that it is what man has wrought in his own experiences, rather than what God revealed through inspired men who confirmed their message with miracles.

For years this voice solicited support from congregations and individuals whom he knew would not support him and his work if they had known of his real beliefs. I first visited Japan in 1955. Questions about his views came up but the impression which he left on many was that he was not basically different from the rest of us in his beliefs. One of the brethren, who worked with him at Ibaraki, later told me that when he asked him why he wasn't frank with the brethren, the gist of his reply was: "What, and be crucified?" In other words, if he was honest with brethren, he knew they would not support him. This, obviously, is not crucifixion. What we have just said should not arouse suspicion concerning anyone at Ibaraki. I wish the work there well. For example, one of God's noblemen, Dr. William M. Green, plans to begin work with them, the Lord willing, in the summer of 1967.

We are not implying that Christians are always honest; but in failing to be honest they are failing to live up to the moral teaching of the Bible. The modernist, however, is being consistent if he repudiates Jesus as the authority on morality. So why should he feel bound by Christ's teaching on morality? Whether this voice rejects Jesus as the authority on morality, the author does not know. He may be inconsistent and accept Him as the authority on this but not on the inspiration of the word of God.

BIBLE WORSHIPPERS

Have we made an idol out of the Bible? "I fear that the Church of Christ tends to worship the book, rather than the Savior; to become bibliolaters, rather than adorers of Christ. "²³ In a presumptuous interpretation of his experiences amongst us, and of his own attitude before he learned better, one claimed that "we virtually worshipped the Bible", but failed to get its message. While we claimed that it was all inspired we used "perhaps ten percent of the Bible and conveniently let the rest go. " Except for our position on baptism, "our view of the Bible is the biggest barrier to spiritual growth among us. "²⁴ Another thought that in our effort to adhere strictly to the Bible we have "tended toward bibliolatriy. "²⁵ Concerning these charges we observe: First, we do not worship the Bible instead of God. However, because we worship God we are concerned for His word. Is not respect for a man's word tied in with respect for a man? If you have no confidence in his word, can you have a great deal of confidence in the man? Can we love God and be indifferent to His word? We should love His word, for it is His word. Did David make an idol out of God's word, and become a bibliolater

because he said: (a) "But thy law do I love" (Psa. 119: 113). (b) "Oh how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day. " (Psa. 119: 97). (c) "Therefore I love thy testimonies. " (119: 119). (d) "Therefore I love thy commandments above gold, yea, above fine gold. " (119: 127). (e) "I beheld the treacherous, and was grieved, because they observed not thy word. Consider how I love thy precepts: quicken me, O Jehovah, according to thy loving kindness. " (119: 158-159). (f) "My soul hath observed thy testimonies; and I love them exceedingly. " (119: 167). If more of us loved the word of God more than we do we would spend more time studying it, meditating on it, and walking by it. However, if the word is as fragmentary, and as uncertain, as one of the voices asserted,²⁶ there would not be much reason to love it or to study it.

We should love the word, for the written word is the voice of God Himself (Matt. 22: 30-31). We should love to hear the voice of the Spirit. (Heb. 10: 15; Rev. 2: 1, 7, etc.). Surely those who claim to have a "spiritual" view of Christianity, and who claim to give more attention to the Spirit than some of the rest of us do, should love to hear the voice of the Spirit as He speaks through His written word.

Second, do we use about ten percent of the Bible and ignore the rest? (a) There are doubtless some who are not using that much of it. (b) If modernism is right in its view of the Bible, and if it is an evolutionary product of man's uninspired search after God, it would not make any difference whether one used any of the Bible. Why should we "moderns" go back to that ancient, fallible book? Why are not our ideas better than those in the Bible? (c) There are Christians who neglect the study of the Old Testament. Although we are under the New Covenant, the Old Testament has many values to us. (1) It furnishes important historical background to the New Testament. (2) It prophesied, promised, and foreshadowed the New; thus Christ fulfilled the law and the prophets (Matt. 5: 17-18). When we study this we are impressed with the marvelous unity of the Bible. (3) We need the Old Testament to furnish some of the credentials of Christ as we see Him fulfilling various prophecies. (4) The Old Testament reveals many things about God, about man and his nature, about the nature of sin, about the nature of obedience, and about the nature of faith (Rom. 15: 4; 1 Cor. 10: 1-12; Heb. 11). However, we also recognize that the revelation which God began to make of Himself in the Old Testament has flowered forth in its fulness in Jesus Christ; so that he that hath seen the Son hath seen the Father (John 14: 8-9). Furthermore, God speaks to us today through His Son (Heb. 1: 1-2; 2: 3-4). Does this voice think we are under the Old Testament?

Third, how can it be that our attitude toward the Bible is the next to the biggest barrier to "spiritual growth among us"?²⁷ Do we have too high a regard for the written word, when we agree with Jesus that God's written word is God's voice to us when we read it? (Matt. 22: 30-31). Are we undermining spiritual growth because we insist that we

ought to listen to what the Spirit saith to the churches? (Rev. 2: 1, 17). Are we shrinking spiritually because we acknowledge that Paul wrote commandments of the Lord? (I Cor. 14: 37). Are we starving spiritually if we desire the sincere milk of the word, and try to grow so that we can take the strong meat? (I Cor. 3: 1-3; 1 Pet. 2: 2).

This very critic's attitude toward the Scripture would destroy our spiritual growth, for it in reality denies that God has placed in Christ all of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and that growth is to be found through growing in Christ and not through going beyond the revelation of God found in Christ. (Col. 2: 4-10). This voice accepted the evolutionary and modernistic view of the Bible of Harry Emerson Fosdick and other modernists.²⁸ Fosdick agrees with the Sadducees, and not with Paul, that there are no angels; and he seems to make us divine in the same sense that Jesus is divine.²⁹ This critic seems to have the idea that in some way the Bible testifies to God's activity in history and he seems to imply that we can read history with at least some degree of inspiration and see God's activity in history. He wrote: "If we are to know Him we must become sensitive to what He is teaching us in the historical arena. I learned to love history and realized that historical questions must be answered by historical methods rather than by revelation."³⁰ Instead of singing, "Oh, how love I thy law, " he should sing "Oh, how I love history, which I can interpret so as to see what God is teaching us, and thus I can come to know God. " There is not one truth which he can show us that "history teaches" that we cannot find in the Bible. And if the Bible is not true, this critic does not have any reason to argue that God is revealed in any part of history.

History is not the source of our salvation. We find in history the revelation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. We judge history by it, not it by history. We take seriously not merely the history with reference to the church but with reference to the Old Testament and the preparation for the gospel. We take seriously history after the days of the apostles because it is the arena in which we see what men did with the faith once for all delivered to the saints. (Jude 3) However, our interest in history is not just interest in history as such, or as if history is the authority. Our interest basically is in the word of God as the seed of the kingdom. This needs to be planted in the hearts of men and women each generation and thus it manifests itself in history. If we took history seriously, apart from divine revelation, we might conclude that history is just one confusing event after another, or that it is the record of man's foibles and vain aspirations, or that it is full of sound and fury signifying nothing. In the light of divine revelation we can see that history does not terminate with the death of an individual, or with the death of our Planet, but should be viewed in the light of eternity.

We must make up our minds about history as to whether or not it is the source of divine revelation or simply of the arena in which the divine revelation was made and in which we see the trials, triumphs

and tribulations of the kingdom of God. To make up one's mind about history is nothing more nor less than to make up one's mind about life. But we are here and now making history and we view history from the perspective of our basic world view.

This same critic came to view "the Restoration Movement as a *historical movement* and to evaluate it from the historical point of view. "³¹ A movement takes place in history but, if evaluated just from the historical point of view, one would discredit the New Testament church whose establishment was proclaimed by the inspired apostles on the first Pentecost after Christ's resurrection. What does he mean to evaluate it from the historical point of view? Does he mean to evaluate it from the insights that he gets by a study of history? Instead of evaluating the Restoration Movement from the historical point of view, we should evaluate it from the Biblical point of view. History is not the standard of divine judgment but the Biblical revelation is the standard. The church should be judged by the New Testament standard and not from the historical point of view. Jesus judged the historical movement of Phariseism and Judaism of his day by the light of divine truth and not by the so-called historical point of view. (Matt. 15: 8-9; Mk. 7: 1-12). Judging them by the divine standard, John called upon them to repent because the ax was at the root of the tree. (Matt. 3: 10). This is something which should give all of us food for thought.

BLUEPRINT OR NOPRINT

It is urged that we err in thinking that the Bible is any kind of blueprint, and thus we are wrong in contending that anything definite about church organization, worship, and such like are revealed in the Bible. ³² "The Bible was never intended as a detailed blueprint of faith and practice. When everything is forbidden that is not commanded, and everything commanded that is not forbidden, believers are no longer free sons but slaves of tyranny. "³³ This criticism overlooks such things as the following:

First, if the Bible contains any authoritative instruction it is to that extent a blueprint. One of the critics appeals several times to the Bible to prove that the "prophetic religion" which follows the "spirit" is approved of God and that the "priestly religion" which follows the "letter" is not. To this extent, then, the Bible is a blueprint for us to follow. Another critic indicated that to some extent it was a blueprint for he not only said that it was not a "*detailed* blueprint, " but he did affirm that it is "the normative witness for our faith and practice. "³⁴ Normative has reference to a standard, and the normative witness for our faith and practice establishes the pattern or standard in the light of which we are to measure our faith and practice. Thus the disagreement with us is not over whether the Bible is a blueprint, but as to how detailed is the blueprint. A blueprint contains regulations, guidelines, plans of procedure, and such like. If the Bible contains one regulation or authoritative instruction concerning morality, for example, it is to

that extent a blueprint. To reject the Bible as being any sort of blueprint is to reject the Bible by making it the norm for nothing.

Second, since such critics state or imply that the Bible is to some extent a blueprint, one could say that they have made Christians slaves, not sons, by saying that there is something which they must do.

Third, as a matter of fact not only is a son under authority but Christians are also slaves of God. Christ has placed us under authority. We are not free to lay just any foundation, and we cannot contend that just any material built thereon will stand the test of God's judgment (1 Cor. 3: 10-15). God speaks to us through His Son whose word constitutes the standard by which men shall be judged (Matt. 17: 5; Heb. 1: 1-2; 2: 3-4; John 12: 48). Under the Old Testament men were expected to do what God told them to do (Gen. 6: 22; Ex. 25: 40; 1 Chron. 28: 7, 11-13, 19). Moses had to build according to the pattern which God revealed (Heb. 8: 5). Did this mean that they were slaves of tyranny? Shall we be careless with His word, and less determined to do His will than were God's people in the Old Testament? No, for the Bible shows that since they were held accountable under the Old Covenant, how much more so are we under the New (Heb. 2: 1-3). Jesus warned against the example of those who under the Old Testament made void the word of God through their traditions (Matt. 15: 8-9). Certain things are bound (Matt. 16: 19). Those who are converted to Christ are to be taught to observe all things whatsoever He has commanded (Matt. 28: 20). The disciples in Jerusalem continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2: 42), and none of them accused the apostles of trying to lay down a harsh blueprint which made people slaves of tyranny instead of sons of God. Paul told Timothy that "the things which thou hast heard from me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. " (2 Tim. 2: 2). What if men say that there is no standard, that each man must find his own way of expressing his faith? Paul warned against deceivers and gave Timothy the blueprint which would act as the safeguard—the teaching of God whether delivered to him orally through Paul or through the sacred writings. "But abide thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a babe thou hast known the sacred writings which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. Every scripture in-spired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work. ". (2 Tim. 3: 14-17). The Old Testament Scriptures are profitable to us, but we have also the New Testament Scriptures as the final authority for God speaks to us today through His Son. Peter certainly sounded blueprintish when he said that men were to speak as the oracles of God (1 Pet. 4: 11). Without discussing here how detailed is the blueprint, we know Paul did indicate that the blueprint concerning worship in the assembly did not permit

the addition of a meal to the Lord's supper (1 Cor. 11: 20-34). It was enough of a blueprint that the women were not to make speeches or ask questions in the assembly (1 Cor. 14: 34-35, compare 14: 26, 28, 33). If anyone thought that he was so spiritual that he could ignore Paul in these matters, Paul said: "If any man thinketh himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him take knowledge of the things which I write unto you, that they are the commandment of the Lord. " (1 Cor. 14: 37).

Regardless of how detailed the blueprint may be, we should not be any less careful to observe Christ's commandments than people were to observe the Old Testament law. In fact, we have the higher revelation and thus we have the greater responsibility. "Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? (Heb. 2: 1-3). "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For it they escaped not when they refused him that warned them on earth, much more shall not we escape who turn away from him that warneth from heaven. " (Hebrews 12: 25). One of the voices which spoke out against a "detailed blueprint" did say that Christ exalted "His word above tradition. "³⁵ This is true, and we ought to do the same; instead of making void His word through traditions (compare Matt. 15: 8-9; Mk. 7: 12). However, without a blueprint we cannot know what His word is and thus we could not distinguish between it and the traditions of men. We are not made slaves of tyranny by exalting His word above human traditions.

Fourth, where did this voice get the idea that we believe "everything is forbidden that is not commanded, and everything commanded that is not forbidden. "³⁶ We are to be regulated by Biblical precepts (or detailed commandments), by examples, and by principles. Much of our life is regulated by principles. There are areas in which Christ has left us free, and we are free, but free only within the boundaries which the Bible has set for this freedom. Surely this voice must admit that there are areas in which there are express commandments which forbid us to do certain things, and there are areas in which there are express commands which authorize us to do certain things. Some would say that even this makes us a slave of tyranny. But, of course, such an attitude would show that we have not submitted our wills to the will of God. Sometimes a commandment leaves us free within certain areas. We are told to preach the gospel and to go into all of the world to do it. We are not left free as to whether we are to go and to preach, but we are left free as to how we shall go, and to what specific places we shall go—since it is obvious that each individual cannot go every place. There are things which are forbidden because they are not commanded, and there are things which are authorized although they are not specifically commanded. This may sound like a contradiction, but within its proper

context it is not a contradiction, (a) When God specified something in a commandment, the only thing authorized by that command was what God had specified. If something else was authorized, it was authorized by another command, (b) On the other hand, when God gave a general command which included a wide territory, but did not exclude anything in that territory, then everything in that general area was included in the general command. For example, if God had said take priests from the people of God, it would have been right to take priests from any of the tribes of Israel. If God had said for them to take priests from any of the tribes, except Benjamin, any tribe not expressly excluded would have been included in the general command. What did God say? He said to take them from the tribe of Levi. He was specific as to tribe, and thus any tribe not expressly included was excluded. As Hebrews said: "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law. For he of whom these things are said becometh to another tribe, from which no man hath given attendance at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord hath sprung out of Judah; as to which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priests. " (Heb. 7: 12-14).

The idea that the Bible is not a blueprint, in other words that it is not the authoritative standard of our faith, would tend to discourage Bible study. For if it is not authoritative what difference does it make what it teaches? If it is not a blueprint, and blueprints may differ as to how detailed they are, why should one apply himself with careful study to find out exactly what the Bible teaches on any matter? For what difference would it make after an individual has found out what it teaches?

INTERPRETATION OF THE BIBLE

Are we in error in maintaining that to handle aright the word of God one must recognize that portions of the Bible were written to another people in another dispensation?³⁷ We observe, first of all, that this is rather a strange objection to come from a modernist who rejects portions of the Bible as uninspired.³⁸ Several voices repudiate in varying degrees the inspiration of the Bible, and at least one rejected it completely. Another maintained that to go back to the Bible is to fossilize at a temporary point in a changing historical and evolutionary process.³⁹

Second, every one of the voices maintains that certain scriptures do not apply to us, but to another dispensation. Thus they do not offer animal sacrifices or go to Jerusalem for certain religious festivals.

Third, it is one thing to deny that the Bible is the word of God, and it is another thing to affirm that we are under the Old Testament. It was to the fathers in times past, but God speaks to us through His Son and those sent by Him, whose work was underwritten by miraculous manifestations of the Spirit. (Acts 2: 16-17, 34-35; 1 Cor. 15: 24-28; Heb. 1: 1-2; 2: 3-4). The Old Testament was the period of promise, prophecy, and preparation for the New Covenant. Christ fulfilled the law and the Prophets (Matt. 5: 17-18; Lk. 24: 44-47).

Fourth, this does not mean that there is nothing that we can learn from the Old Testament. We have already mentioned several of its values.

WHO IS THE INTERPRETER?

One voice charged that we believe that God has made us the official interpreters of the Bible.⁴⁰ This was the first time this author recalls having heard anyone say that anyone in the church believed any such thing. First, God has not appointed an official interpreter. Second, each individual must use his own mind in understanding the Bible. Even if there were an official interpreter, we would still have to use our own minds to understand his interpretations of the Bible. Third, unless each of us has an infallible mind in our understanding of the Bible, we can and do make mistakes. This means that we have no infallible guarantee against misunderstanding the Bible. Therefore, we must be honest and studious. We must be willing to have others examine and criticize that which we believe. We must accept correction from the word of God. This is why public and private discussions can be of help to us if we search the Scriptures daily whether these things be so (Acts 17: 11-12). Fourth, those who are convinced that the Bible is the word of God, and that men shall be judged by Christ and His word (John 12: 48-50; Acts 17: 30-31), ought to be motivated to honest study of the word. However, those who think that the Bible is an evolutionary product of man's religious development, and those who think that there is little need to be concerned with what they call the "letter, " will hardly be impressed, when they are consistent, with the importance of a close study of the word. Fifth, this is not the place, and neither do we have the time, to enter into a discussion of principles of Bible study. However, it may be well to call attention to a statement of Moses Stuart. "The principles of interpretation, as to their substantial and essential elements, are no invention of man, no product of his effort and learned skill; nay, they can scarcely be said with truth to have been discovered by him. They are coeval with our nature. Ever since man was created and endowed with the powers of speech, and made a *communicative*, social being, he has had occasion to practice upon the principles of interpretation, and has actually done so. From the first moment that one human being addressed another by the use of language down to the present hour, the essential laws of interpretation became, and have continued to be, a practical matter. The person addressed has always been an *interpreter* in every instance where he has heard and understood what was addressed to him. All the human race, therefore, are, and ever have been, interpreters. It is a law of their rational, intelligent, communicative nature. Just as truly as one human being was formed so as to address another in language, just so truly that other was formed to interpret and understand what is said.

" 'I venture to advance a step farther and to aver that all men are, and ever have been, in reality, good and true interpreters of each

other's language. Has any part of our race, in full possession of the human faculties, ever failed to understand what others said to them, and to understand it truly? or to make themselves understood by others, when they have in their communications kept within the circle of their own knowledge? Surely none. Interpretation, then, in its basis or fundamental principles, is a native art, if I may so speak. It is coeval with the power of uttering words. It is, of course, a universal art; it is common to all nations, barbarous as well as civilized. One cannot commit a more palpable error in relation to this subject than to suppose that the art of interpretation is. . . in itself wholly dependent on acquired skill for the discovery and development of its principles. Acquired skill has indeed helped to an orderly exhibition and arrangement of its principles; but this is all. The materials were all in existence before skill attempted to develop them. . . An interpreter, well skilled in his art, will glory in it, that it is an art which has its foundation in the laws of our intellectual and rational nature, and is coeval and connate with this nature'. "⁴¹

Stuart is not saying that no one has ever misunderstood anyone, but that all men are interpreters and that in countless cases they have rightly understood one another. We can make mistakes, and we can fail to adequately convey to another what we have on our mind; but we are all interpreters, and we can through study become even better interpreters.

This same voice said that he finally became puzzled why God should grant the proper interpretation to a few of us and deny it to millions of others who are honest and intelligent. ⁴² He seems to think that he has now been granted what is basically the proper view of the Bible, of its doctrine in general and of the extent of fellowship. Why was it granted to him and not to most of the rest of us? As a matter of fact, God has not specially granted an understanding to any of us in that we are specially selected favorites over someone else. God through His word speaks to the world and it is just as much anyone else's obligation to listen to and to obey Him as it is our obligation. Understanding is granted to us provided we furnish the good and honest soil for the word of truth, and search diligently the Scriptures whether what we have been taught is the truth of God (Matt. 13: 11-15; Acts 17: 11-12). In many cases many people agree on what the Bible teaches, but the point of disagreement is whether one needs to do what it teaches.

One voice maintained that the church "should be willing to let consensus of rational opinion of all Christian scholars of whatever church and age be the decisive factor in matters of interpreting the Bible. "⁴³ Who has the time to study this many scholars? Or is there an individual or a group who are to tell us what this is? And who is to decide who are the scholars? and which are the *rational* opinions of those who are scholars: and how is it possible to get a consensus of *all* these scholars? As a matter of fact, many of the positions which are held by churches

of Christ are positions which many scholars from many different denominations say are Biblical positions. And yet, we accept these positions not because they see them, but for at least some of the same good reasons that they see these positions are Biblical. Then, too, there are many scholars today who discredit the Bible, and who thus think that it does not really make any difference what the Bible teaches. They may know what it teaches but think that something else is just as good. Does this voice think that we should accept the position of various modernists concerning the nature of the Bible itself? Of course, one could not accept the position of all of them for all of them do not take the same position. Furthermore, he charges that we "repudiate the conclusions of the best scholarship in the world. "" And yet, he had said earlier that the Bible "is a trustworthy account of the Incarnation of the Living Word and of man's encounter with God. It is the normative witness for our faith and practice. "45 Surely he must realize, although he seems to have forgotten at the time he made these statements, that at least some of what he likely views as the "best scholarship in the world" rejects both the trustworthiness of the Bible and its position as the norm or standard for our faith and practice.

THE LORD OF THE BIBLE

One voice stated that Christ is the "Lord of the Bible. He is greater than the Bible and the Bible must fit Him, not He the Bible. I believe that the Bible is a trustworthy account of the Incarnation of the Living Word, and of man's encounter with God. It is the normative witness for our faith and practice. But great as the Bible is, it is not big enough to exhaust the meaning of Christ for Christian faith. Once we learn of Him through the Bible, we will continue to seek Him 'beyond the sacred page. ' "46 What shall we say to this?

First, Christ is the Lord of the Bible. The Old Testament was the preparation for Him, and the New Testament is the revelation of the Son of God manifested in the flesh. He is Lord of His word because it is *His* word. The word is the expression of Him who is our Lord, and it is a contradiction to acknowledge Him as Lord and refuse to do the things which He has commanded (Lk. 6: 46). We are to be judged by Christ (Acts 17: 31), and Christ said that if we reject Him and His word we shall be judged by His word (John 12: 48). This word is the word of the Father (John 12: 49-50), which He gave to the apostles (John 17: 8). It is the word of truth (John 17: 17) through which we believe (17: 20).

Second, I am not sure just what he means by saying that the Bible does not "exhaust the meaning of Christ for Christian faith", or what he means by seeking Him, in the words of a song, "beyond the sacred page. " The Bible does exhaust the revelation of Christ's will to man, for it is the full and final revelation of God to man in this dispensation; which dispensation ends with the end of time and the judgment, (Acts 2: 34-35; 1 Cor. 15: 24-28; Rev. 20: 11-14). "All truth" was revealed to the apostles, or Jesus' promise failed (Matt. 26. 20-25; John 13: 1-2; 14: 26;

16: 12-13). The faith has once for all been delivered to the saints (Jude 3). And this critic himself stated that the Bible "is the normative witness for our faith and practice."⁴⁷

Third, our love is not for an impersonal book but for the personal Christ. However, since the book is the word of God, we love Christ's word. We, with the attitude David had, can sing of our love for the word of God. (Psa. 119: 97-104).

Fourth, we are not saved by a personless word but by the person Jesus Christ. However, His words tell us of the Savior and what we must do to be saved (Acts 11: 14).

Fifth, the Bible does not exhaust the meaning of Christ for us in that we pray to God and to Christ (Matt. 6: 9; Acts 7: 59). We are instructed by the word to do this, but we do not pray to the word; although we should pray as the word directs.

Sixth, the Bible does not exhaust the meaning of Christ's truth for us in that we are also not merely to commit it to memory, and store it up in our hearts, but we are also to follow it in our lives. The truth when applied becomes more meaningful to us than the truth in the Bible on the shelf, or simply committed to memory. In fact, saving knowledge of the word of God is not merely an intellectual grasp of God's word but also the application of it to life. Thus John said: "And hereby we know that we know him if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoso keepeth his word, in him verily hath the love of God been perfected. Hereby we know that we are in him: he that saith he abideth in him ought himself also to walk even as he walked. " (1 John 2: 3-6). Furthermore, any truth is more meaningful to us when practiced than when merely memorized. By living it we know truth in our own personal experience.

Seventh, the Bible does not exhaust the meaning of Christ for our faith for He will come again and receive us unto Himself in eternal glory where we shall personally be with Him. In some sense Christ is now with us; but He is not here in person. The Lord's supper is a communion with Him (1 Cor. 10: 16), and yet the Lord's supper indicates that He is not here with us personally; for we observe the supper "till he come. " (1 Cor. 11: 26). We seek Christ beyond the sacred page in the Lord's supper in what we discern the Lord's body, for so the word has instructed us (1 Cor. 11: 24-29).

Eighth, it is important to recognize that Christ is not only the Lord of the Bible but that the Bible is *the word of the Lord*. As the word of the Lord it is authoritative because the Lord speaks with authority. Through it the Lord speaks to us.

Ninth, Christ is not only the Lord of the Bible, but He is the Lord who is revealed in the Bible. If the Bible is not trustworthy, its revelation of the Lord is not trustworthy, and we have no assurance that we have a trustworthy Lord. We cannot magnify the Lord by minimizing

His word. On the other hand, we must not forget that the word is significant because it is His word.

Tenth, Christ is our Lord as well as the Lord of the Bible (Acts 2: 36). We must acknowledge this not merely in words but also by our lives of obedience (Lk. 6: 46). As Lord, His word is final with us even though it may be contradicted by any number of voices, including that of the most eminent modernists which the world has ever heard.

DIALOGUE IN THE DARK

Without the Bible as the final revelation of God's will, the dialogue which is going on in the religious world is dialoguing in the dark. As Emile Cailliet put it: "The new professionalism helping, the current Protestant emphasis is no longer on the Bible but rather on 'the Church,' and thus unconsciously on the organizational Church of Vested Interests, a great confederacy drawn up on the model of this world's 'mergers,' complete with big boards, committees, and subcommittees. Such a church is no longer responsive to the intimations of the Head. As one wades through the multiplicity of books promoting the modern version of ecumenism, he cannot help being impressed by the dearth of basic biblical references to that which really constitutes the Church.

"Just as the rediscovery of the Bible was contemporary with a mighty deliverance from the Roman yoke, a progressive discarding of the biblical approach is becoming under our very eyes a prelude to a Protestant Canossa. As if it were not crystal-clear that the price to pay for union with Rome can only be unconditional surrender, however camouflaged! This is the way Pope Paul VI put the matter in his address at the opening of the third session of the Second Vatican Council:

We shall therefore strive, in loyalty to the unity of Christ's church, to understand better and to welcome all that is genuine and *admissible* in the different Christian denominations that are distinct from us. . . .

We are told that Protestant observers were not surprised by this reassertion of papal supremacy but that they found in the Pope's support for the collegial authority of the bishops an improved basis for dialogue with Catholicism. And so we may look forward to a fresh proliferation of new books. Their authors, needless to insist, are likely to steer at a safe distance from the reminder that only the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments constitute the divine rule of Christian faith and practice.⁴⁸

This does not mean that Christ is not central in our faith, for without Him there is no Savior. But if we cannot trust His word, there is no ground on which we can trust Him. And He is the one through whom God speaks to us today. (Heb. 1: 1-2; 2: 3-4). The Old Testament revelation promised, prophesied, typified, and otherwise prepared for Christ and His rule. Christ fulfilled the law and the prophets (Matt. 5: 17-18). And we today are under His reign. Without the Bible as His authoritative word, we have no certain word from our King and Savior; and, in

fact, we have no grounds for belief that we have Him as our King and Savior.

CHAPTER I FOOTNOTES

- 1For some examples of modernism see Etter, 108, and Fox's reference to the influence of Fosdick's book which is filled with modernism, 18-19. See Fosdick's *The Modern Use of the Bible*, New York: The MacMillan Co., 1925, 5, 6, 89-90, 94, 129, 125, 155, 157, 162, 164, 165, 167, 104. Although not an intensive study, John Bloore's *Alternative Views of the Bible*, MacMillan Co., 1925, does show that Fosdick's view of the Bible is contrary to the teaching of the Bible itself.
- 2Franklin, 177, 185-186.
- 3Ibid., 185.
- 4Biblical *Theology*, 1826, 228-230.
- 5Sanders, 39.
- 6Ibid., 45.
- 7Ibid., 39.
- 8Ibid., 39.
- 9Ibid., 39-40.
- 10*Evidences of Christianity*, Vol. I, 13-14.
- 11C. R. Gregory, *Canon and Text of the New Testament*, 528. 12John A. Scott, *We Would Know Jesus*, N. Y.: The Abingdon Press, 1936. 13Frederick C. Grant, "The Greek Text of the New Testament," in Luther A. Weigle, *An Introduction to the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament*, p. 42. 14F. F. Bruce, *The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable?*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans. 15Meyers, *Restoration Review*, Jan. 1967, 20. 16Fox, 19.
- 17Ibid., 19.
- 18Ibid., 31. He repeated this charge in the *Restoration Review*, Feb. 1967.
- 19Ibid., 14, 15. 20Ibid., 17. 21Ibid., 24. 22Ibid., 19. 23Warren, 198.
- 24Sanders, 19. 25Parks, 74. 26Sanders, 39-40. 27Fox, 19. 28Ibid., 19.
- 29*Modern Use of the Bible*, 270-271.
- 30Fox, 19. 31Fox, 19.
- 32Sanders, 39-40, 43; Graham, 132; compare 133.
- 33Graham, 132. 34Ibid., 132. 35Graham, 135.
- 36Ibid., 132. 37Etter, 105. 38Ibid., 108. 39Sanders, 39. 40Meyers, *Restoration Review*, Jan. 1967, 19.
- Quoted in Milton S. Terry, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1964, 173-174. 42Meyers, 257-258. 43Graham, 141.
- 44Ibid. 142. 45Ibid., 132. 46Ibid., 132. 47Ibid., 132. 48Emile Cailliet, *Christianity Today*, Dec. 4, 1964, 219-220.

What Is the Wisdom of the World?

The apostle Paul warned against the wisdom of the world whereby man knows not God. Certain of the voices failed to heed Paul's warning and have succumbed, some more thoroughly than others, to the wisdom of the world. What is this wisdom of the world? Before considering what it is, let us notice some things that it is not.

There may be a few who think that Paul's condemnation of the wisdom of the world means that reason is not to be used in any way in relationship to Christianity. In the very nature of the case we must use our minds in religion. The credentials of Christ are directed to the mind, and on the basis of these credentials men are told to know assuredly that God has made Jesus both Lord and Christ; (Acts 2: 36). The mind must be used in studying the Bible to find out what God has said, and the mind is involved in applying its great principles. It often takes a good deal of thought to apply, for example, the golden rule. It is not easy to know how to do benevolent work effectively. Furthermore, we are told to love God with all of our mind also (Matt. 22: 37). In doing this our goal should be to bring "every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ" (2 Cor. 10: 5). We are not free minds which are unattached and left to drift aimlessly through space, but through Christ our minds are free from bondage to materialism and to that which is seen. Our minds are free to contemplate the treasures of wisdom and knowledge in Christ, and to learn and to accept truth in any realm.

CLOSED MINDS?

It is not a mark of the wisdom of this world, nor does one have to leave the church, to have a mind which is open to all the truth. Yet we are accused of having closed minds with reference to religious learning, of presenting "one viewpoint and one only," and it is implied that we "burn books."¹ What shall we say to these things? First, there may be books which individuals should voluntarily burn (Acts 19: 17-20). The most valuable service some books could render would be to furnish men with a bit of heat while being consumed in flames. Second, undoubtedly there are those who have closed minds, but this does not bind me and I do not have to leave the church in order to cultivate the mind which is free to search for, to accept, and to act upon truth. Third, there are open minds which are open at both ends and have a draft blowing through the middle. The open mind which we should have is the honest, studious mind which wants the good and which is honest enough to accept truth even when it costs. Fourth, a part of the process of education is to close the mind in certain senses. We do not want babies to grow up with an open mind as to where they will carry out certain natural functions. Who wants an accountant who has an open mind toward the multiplication tables; or a bank teller who has an open mind as to whom the money belongs; or a doctor, who treats our wife, to have

an open mind on adultery; or a teacher who has an open mind on whether or not it makes any difference what God has said; or a student who has an open mind on spelling; or a preacher who is unconcerned about truth; etc. ? We need to have the mind open to truth and closed to error. Of course, we shall examine many things which will turn out to be error rather than truth. Fifth, Christians are not the only ones who stand in danger of having a closed mind. In *Why Scientists Accept Evolution*, Dr. Robert T. Clark and this author have shown from their own writings that Darwin and others so tightly closed their minds to the very possibility of divine creation that they destroyed the mind whenever it pointed them to God, A. D. Ritchie wrote that: "It would be an interesting task to examine carefully any ordinary text-book of Physics or Chemistry and try to unearth all the myths to be found embedded there—the experiments that nobody has done or could do, the sophistries that support theories and the sheer dogmatic assertion unsupported by even a pretence of evidence. There is much there as fantastic as primitive folklore, though not so picturesque."² As Philip H. Abelson, the Editor of *Science*, in an editorial on April 24, 1964, said: "One of the most astonishing characteristics of scientists is that some of them are plain old-fashioned bigots. Their zeal has a fanatical, egocentric quality characterized by disdain and intolerance for anyone or any value not associated with a special area of intellectual activity." Although I have read hundreds of books by unbelievers, which were designed in one way or another to undermine faith in the Bible, very few unbelievers known to me have seemingly read even one book on why believe the Bible. There are countless modernists who have closed their minds as to the possibility of the Scriptures being inspired. The wisdom of the world has closed its mind to the possibility of divine revelation. These closed minds do not justify anyone in having a closed mind, but the problem of the closed mind is far wider than the church.

Sixth, as for the presentation of both sides, we should try to be fair in our presentation and examination of the position of another. However, it is obvious that it is not necessary, and neither is there sufficient time, to spend as much time presenting an atheist's position, or that of a Buddhist, as they would spend presenting it. We should be fair with their arguments and evaluate their best arguments as well as their worst. It is important for teachers to keep in mind that the student, or the audience of a preacher, may be facing some of these problems for the first time which we first dealt with decades ago. This means that we must not take for granted that they see the fallacies involved in a particular error, or the strong points of truth which oppose that error. However, it does not mean that in teaching we must go through the entire process which led us to the position which we now hold before them for their consideration. Life is too short. If Edison had tried to show how he arrived at the right solution by going through the 10,000 wrong answers that he got, and how he got them, while solving the

problem, both he and his students would run out of time and no time would be left for additional experiments. And yet Edison could show them the basic principles which were involved, and how to test his experiments themselves in order to see that his conclusions are valid. We should try to help the student see what we see for the same good reasons that we see it. We must remember that he may be as confused now on this matter as we were decades ago. We should not leave the impression that everything is easy to solve and that we have the answer for everything. We should not teach him to accept it just because we say so, but we should try to help him understand why we say so; and the principles which will be helpful to him in his further study. We realize, of course, that some individuals say that a teacher should not take a position in the classroom, but this tremendous position which they take is not valid, as we hope to show in a manuscript on which¹ we are now working.

Seventh, concerning this matter of both sides, in today's world we do not have to worry about whether various and conflicting viewpoints, including the rattlesnake's side, so to speak, will be presented. They assault our mind by every conceivable means of communication. And no one has the authority to stop an individual from reading, listening, and living by his convictions. Of course, they do not have the right to bind us to back them in preaching those things in which we do not believe. The real problem today is whether we shall be busy enough, and informed enough, to be sure that the will of God is heard amidst this medley of voices of concern, of unconcern, of confusion, of apostasy, of seduction, of animality, and such like. It is true that some have dismissed the positions of others too lightly, and have failed to grapple with the problems with which these people were grappling, or for which they were contending. We cannot fairly evaluate the position of another unless we understand it. To understand is not the same as to approve, but we must seek to understand in order to accept any truth which they may have, in order to expose their error, and in order to know how best to approach them.

Eighth, historically, and in our day, as a people many of us have been willing to let our positions be subjected to public scrutiny. Thus debates have been conducted from time to time among ourselves and with others. Of course, one can be dishonest in a debate, just as he can in a conversation, a book, sermon, or anything else; but the other person is there and he has an opportunity to expose our fallacies even though he may not be in a position to examine our motives. Of course, not every occasion is an occasion for a public debate, and one must use his mind in order to decide what will be the best thing to do under a given set of circumstances.

Ninth, unbelief often binds the mind because all forms of naturalism, when consistently followed, view the mind as under the control of the forces of nature. If the mind is determined by physical conditions, and

is itself an expression of physical conditions, it is not free. Then, too, unbelief keeps the mind from thinking as it ought on the deeper problems of life, while the faith frees the mind to think upon such profound questions as who am I, what is my duty, and what is my destiny. The faith not only frees us to think on these things, but through Christ the basic answers are brought to us as we mine the teaching of Christ in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2: 3-9).

CLOSED BECAUSE FULL?

If one thinks that he has all truth he does not see any need to learn more for there is nothing more for him to learn. He has closed his mind because he thinks that he is filled with all the truth, and only with truth. It is charged that our "constant assumption was that we already 'had the truth, ' " and thus did not need to listen and to learn from others.¹ No one has all the truth in the sense that he knows it all. No one has perfectly practiced all that he does know. Our attitude should be that I am not right and you are not right within ourselves but that the word of God is right and we are right in so far as we accept and practice it.

Every Christian whom I have ever met has shown willingness to learn, at least to some extent, from others; for all of us have read and profited by materials which were authored by those who were not members of the church. Jesus shows us that we should be willing to learn truth from anyone who calls it to our attention. During His personal ministry the law of Moses was in force, and He told His disciples to listen to the Pharisees who were in Moses' seat (Matt. 23: 1-3). Of course, this did not mean that they were to hearken to the Pharisees when they made void God's word through their traditions (Mk. 7: 1-13), but they were to listen to them when in Moses' seat they expounded the law of Moses. Although Jesus indicted the Pharisees for their hypocrisy and other sins, truth is binding and should be accepted even when we are taught it by Pharisees. If a Communist calls our attention to a truth, we should accept it. If he points out an inconsistency, an error, or a sin in our lives we should acknowledge it and bring our lives into harmony with that which is right. Sometimes our enemies may call attention to things in our lives which our friends have hesitated to tell us. All truth belongs to us even though we do not see all of it. (Compare 1 Cor. 3: 21-23). Whenever more truth is called to our attention, we should possess it, and we do not have to leave Christ's church in order to do so.

Christians have all the truth which pertains to life and godliness in that they have the faith once for all delivered to the saints in the Bible, which is the only word of God we have (John 16: 12-14; 2 Pet. 1: 2-4; Jude 3). No one knows it all, for otherwise there would be no room for growth in knowledge; but there is room for growth in grace and in knowledge on the part of all of us (2 Pet. 1: 5-11; 3: 18). The Bible is the mighty universe on whose edge the child can stand, but whose heights no man has and no man can completely fathom. This is one of the proofs

of its divine origin. What the mind of man has conceived and written the mind of man can fathom, can master, and can move on to something else. But the Bible no man has completely mastered, although some have ceased studying it and some have studied it through minds filled with misconceptions. We cannot completely fathom it, we cannot exhaust it, we cannot graduate from it, for it is the product of the Infinite Mind. Paul stated that in Christ "are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden. " He said this in order "that no one may delude you with persuasiveness of speech. " (Col. 2: 3-4). Our response to this truth should be to grow in Christ and to guard against those things which would lead us from Christ. Thus Paul said: First, "As therefore ye received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and builded up in him, and established in your faith, even as ye were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. " Second, "Take heed lest there shall be any one that maketh spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ: for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and in him ye are made full, who is the head of all principality and power. " (Col. 2: 6-10). Paul mentioned three things which can be sources from which come challenges to our faith. (1) The philosophy of men (Col. 2: 8). (2) Going back to the law through misunderstanding its nature, its functions, and its duration (Col. 2: 11-17). (3) Pretended revelations and the voluntary humility of man based on man's will and traditions (Col. 2: 18-23). Christ is sufficient, for He is the complete revelation of God to man, and in Him we find our completeness. (Col. 2: 9-10). Progress is to be made in Christ, and not by going outside of Christ (Col. 2: 6-7).

THE WISDOM OF THE WORLD

One voice's studies in philosophy led to the destruction of the foundations of his faith. ⁴ His desire to save people "diminished in direct proportion to my immersion in the delightful studies of political science, literature, and philosophy. " ⁵ He thought that the impact of philosophy on him could illustrate why " 'our' preachers" frequently warned against "becoming immersed in philosophy. " ⁶ He tells us that when he returned to Florida Christian College in 1955 his "Ph. D. in philosophy had made me suspect at FCC. " ⁷ It is our judgment that it was not the Ph. D. which made him suspect, but what he said and did. There are some people who may suspect someone with a formal education, but it is more likely that something other than his degree made him suspect, as his own conduct finally demonstrated. It is dangerous to immerse oneself in any subject if one does not continue to immerse himself in the teaching of the Bible, and to live by its principles. Preoccupation with a subject which is all right within itself can lead to apostasy if the individual allows it to dominate his life. He may even become unconscious of the birds which sing, the flowers which bloom, and the friends who help bless life. The spiritual man can die through a lack of nourishment, as well as through other means. If one thing is allowed to fill the content

of consciousness, other things are crowded out. Christianity can be crowded out, as our Lord shows in the parable of the sower (Lk. 8: 7, 14).

This voice has accepted the wisdom of the world. This wisdom is not wisdom as manifested in the ordinary affairs of life, but involves the decision of man to understand God—if there is a God, man, life, duty, and destiny through human reason unaided and unenlightened by divine revelation. (1 Cor. 1: 18; 2: 16). He is the man who claims to live the life of reason in harmony with nature.⁶ He believes that the natural is all that man can know. He is the natural man (1 Cor. 2: 14) who thinks that there is no way to establish a divine revelation.

This voice furnishes us with another sad illustration of the fact that "the world through its wisdom knew not God." (1 Cor. 1: 21). As W. M. Grant pointed out: "As a matter of historical fact, reason, apart from a special revelation, has never been able to attain any practical knowledge of God, nor has it been able 'to show to the soul a fountain of cleansing, healing, and life.' These things are 'beyond the limits of man's intellectual tether' (1. Cor. 2: 14)."⁹ Although from nature man can learn of God's existence (Rom. 1: 18-20), he needs the divine revelation to know God's will for man.

PHILOSOPHY'S SECRETS?

This voice maintains "that philosophy yields up its secrets only to men with time and will to contemplate."¹⁰ The Bible yields its secrets to those who study, contemplate, live by its principles, and who renounce the supreme arrogance of the wisdom of the world; which intellectual pride thinks that man's intellect apart from divine revelation is able to answer all questions which need to be answered, or which can be answered. We wonder what the secrets are which philosophy has revealed to this voice? What reasons does he have for believing that these are true? What are his criteria? What motivation is there for living by these truths? What truth does he find in philosophy which cannot be found in the Bible?

THE WORLD'S SELF-DEFEATING WISDOM

Reality is so constructed that when man denies God, he denies his own rationality and humanity. First, some affirm that man is but matter in motion. They then glorify the mind of man, and view themselves as rational beings who are too intellectual to believe in God. And yet, if atheism is true what can they mean by rationality? All of man's thoughts are but matter in motion which has been put in motion by other motions of matter. Thinking is but a vibration in the brain which is due to material mechanisms. To say "I think" is to describe a physical sensation; just as when one says: "I itch". Since this physical vibration is not the result of the forces of nature thinking their way through to conclusions — conclusions based on evidence and sound reasoning, it follows that the thoughts cannot be rational insights into reality. They are simply physical sensations physically produced. While denying God,

and glorifying the mind, they accept materialism which denies their own rationality.

Second, some who deny God affirm that man ought to search for truth. Where do they get the idea that one "ought" to do anything? Why is man obligated to search for truth? If materialism is true, there can be no assurance that there is any truth. Thus there can be no assurance that atheism is true. Some of these same individuals are relativists who state that there is no truth. If this is the case, what makes them think their philosophy is true? Furthermore, it would be irrational to search for truth if there is no truth. Their philosophy is an affirmation of error and a system of foolishness. It denies the possibility of their claiming that their philosophy is true.

Third, some argue that man must be intellectually honest, and that faith in God and the Bible keeps men from being honest. And yet, if there is no moral law—and some of these are moral relativists, what does one mean by honesty? Why is one obligated to be honest? "Honesty" would be an empty and misleading word.

Fourth, some affirm that all is relative and, therefore, we ought to be tolerant of one another. Why are we obligated? Why is tolerance preferable to intolerance?

Fifth, some make guttural sounds which say that even if there is no God to serve, we can serve humanity. (1) Christians serve God, among other ways, through serving humanity. (2) The humanitarian impulse of the atheist is not drawn from his atheism but from an entirely different philosophy of life. His atheism does not originate nor sustain humanitarianism; but it will destroy it when one lives down to atheism. (3) Why are we obligated to serve humanity? (4) Who is this humanity? If man is but matter in motion, and a short-lived animal, why should anyone be mindful of man?

CRITERIA OF THE SUPERNATURAL

As far as the author can discern from his chapter, this voice says that his faith was slain by a point pressed by his opponent in a debate on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. "Literate and skilled, this professor led me into an examination of the very concept of evidence for 'supernatural' events. My brethren wrote high praise of my efforts, but Sara and I questioned the basic presuppositions of my arguments.

"Having no definite criteria for determining the supernaturalness of historical events, how could I be so sure that a given event was supernatural? I wondered, and I wonder, despite the arguments of A. E. Taylor, C. S. Lewis, *et alia*. "¹¹

What shall we say to this? First, is this a sound argument, or is it just how this voice happened to vibrate as a result of motions made by another vibrating lump of matter—the professor? If it be said this voice is not a materialist, and he does not expressly state his philosophical position, we point out that he rejects the theism in which he was reared, and if there is no criteria to establish a supernatural event there is no

criteria to establish the reality of the supernatural realm. If the natural realm only exists, materialism is the truth about life regardless of what protective coloration a naturalist may use to hide from himself and from others his materialism. If it be said that this voice may be agnostic, we ask by what definite criteria does he establish his agnosticism? Does his agnosticism include being agnostic about the lack of a definite criterion for a supernatural event? If he rejects materialism, what definite criteria does he have which show that such naturalism is not the truth about life?

Second, if the voice states that he is not a materialist, what definite criteria are there for determining the reliability of his testimony? How would he prove that he is whatever he is?

Third, what proof does he have, what definite criteria, to establish the reality of any historical event?

Fourth, what definite criteria does he use to prove the naturalness of any historical events? How can he be sure that a given event was natural? After he has stated his criteria, someone can always state that he was not there, so how does he know that a supernatural force was not at work. And even if he witnessed the event himself how does he know that its cause was not supernatural? Although the author does not know just what he would say, I assume that he would ultimately conclude that he proves the naturalness of the event by showing that it can be explained in terms of present day processes, which we call natural.

If, on the other hand, an event clearly cannot be explained in terms of present day, natural processes, we are justified in concluding that the explanation is not natural, but supernatural. One would be justified in accepting such an explanation, especially when the event is not only inexplicable in terms of natural forces; but is also in opposition to what we know about natural forces. The universe, Christ, and the Bible, cannot be adequately explained in terms of present day, natural processes. Men who die, and are buried as was Jesus, do not come forth from the tomb. Natural processes result in the disintegration, not the resurrection, of the body. Christ was not held by the power of death; therefore, something above and beyond the natural was at work. His resurrection is not explicable in terms of the natural.

It may be replied that it would take supernatural testimony to establish the reality of a supernatural event. This is not so. What the apostles testified to was not some theory of the physical changes in the body of Christ. They did not have to explain how God could do it. What they testified to was as simple, basically, as my testifying that I saw a friend several days ago, and that I saw him again today. They testified that they had been with Him and knew Him; that He had been put to death and buried; and that a few days later they saw Him, walked with Him, talked with Him, ate with Him, and recognized the impact of that familiar and beloved personality. They had scientific evidence that He

was alive. This was the evidence that came through the seeing of the eye, the hearing of the ear, the touch of the hand, and the impact of personality on personality.

In evaluating their testimony, there are three questions which we ask: First, were they in a position to know the truth concerning the matter about which they testified? Second, were they honest enough to tell the truth. Third, are the documents reliable? They meet these tests with flying colors; and the documents which enshrine their testimony meet the test that such documents must meet.

We shall take at least some of the very ways in which one seeks to discredit their testimony to the resurrection of Christ, and discredit his own testimony when he says that he does not believe in Christ's resurrection. We shall take at least some of the ways in which he discredits the documents, and show that we have no positive grounds for believing that this voice wrote the chapter which is attributed to him in the *Voices of Concern*. However, we do not have to do these things in order to show that we have sufficient reasons to believe in the testimony of those who saw the resurrected Christ.

WHENCE THE HUMANISM?

This voice spoke of humanism which was "flowing from sources deep within me...." ¹² He hopes that good people will get together and solve the pressing problems of man through the exercise of moral force, etc. ¹³ What does he mean by sources deep within him? Within the confines of his presuppositions, what can justify him in saying that there are depths in him or in anyone else? What criteria does he have to prove that such exists? So far as naturalism is concerned, all that flows within him are gastric juices, blood, and various other manifestations of living matter.

What is true humanism, and what criteria does he use to establish it in contrast with false humanism? In other words, what is man? Communists maintain that Marxism-Leninism is true humanism. What criteria does this voice have to prove that they are wrong? If he cannot prove they are wrong, is there any objection which one ought to raise to their theory and practice? Without God, man is just an animal and humanism is a form of animalism.

What does he mean by "good people," ¹⁴ and what criteria does he use to prove that they are good people? What is his standard of good? Where did he get it? What criteria establish it? Is it upheld by, or undermined by, his basic philosophy of naturalism? If he is not a naturalist, why does he repudiate the supernatural? How does he know that Stalin was not a good man, and that Mao and his likes are not good people? How does he know Hitler was not a good man?

This voice's humanitarian impulses came from his Biblical roots which he now severs in theory. His humanitarianism is an effort to live by the sap of the tree of faith from which he has severed himself. It did not originate with his present world view, and it cannot be sustained

by this world view. He speaks of an "obligation to society,"¹⁵ but whence this obligation? In the light of what criteria does he establish the obligation? What criteria can he use to establish the reality of a moral realm, moral law, and the reality of duty? What natural standard can prove that there is any difference between quantity and quality? Man is as much a part of the natural world as a bug or a bugle, or an atom and an ant. In consistent naturalism, they differ only in material arrangement. He also speaks of "doing the Lord's work" in helping people.¹⁸ There is no Lord, so how can their work be the Lord's work? What are his criteria? He speaks of "experiencing a fulfillment of the old idealisms,"¹⁹ but he does not show how he sustains them on the basis of his new faith.

How does he prove these things? He says that he no longer has a felt need to do so, but that they will ultimately be proved. "I no longer feel the need to prove the Tightness of these actions. Time, experience, and the judgment of God and men will do that."¹⁸ In effect he is saying that he does not have to prove it because he knows it is true, and the future will prove it. Is not this a naive way out for a philosopher who speaks of the necessity of study to learn the secrets of philosophy, and for one who has indicated that we need some criteria in order to accept the supernaturalness of an event? What would he think if we told the critics of the Bible that there is no need to answer them since time, experience, the judgment of God and the judgment of man prove that we are right and they are wrong? They might rightly inquire as to why we think that time, experience, and the judgments of God and man appointed us their spokesman. For a man who has repudiated any criteria for establishing the supernaturalness of an event, how can he think that he can establish criteria for the existence of the supernatural? What criteria will be used to prove that God's judgment approves his actions? If it is a supernatural judgment, how will he prove it? If he can not, how will he prove it is of God? How can he reject criteria for supernatural events in the past, but have criteria which show: First, that there will be a judgment of God on man's action in the future. Second, that men can know that it is a judgment of God approving or disapproving certain actions. On what philosophy has he fed, that he should have an aversion to the theism in which he was reared, and deny that there are any criteria to establish a supernatural revelation, and yet affirm that a future judgment of God will vindicate his course of conduct? Has philosophy, after he has long meditated on it, yielded to him the secret that he has become qualified to deliver the verdict, without proof, that time, experience, God and man will show that he is right in these matters?

In other words, he is as obligated to furnish evidence of the reality of the judgment of God, and the criteria by which he determines it, as we are of the supernatural origin of the Bible. How would he know that it was a judgment of God, and on whose side the judgment was made?

What criteria, if he is going to do more than merely assert, does he have to prove that these things will be thus proved? If one has no criteria to prove this, what is wrong with asserting that the opposite of his idealism is true? How does he know that it will not ultimately be proved that he was wrong not only in what he thought were right actions but in thinking that any actions are right? Certainly one who makes such an unfounded assertion about the future has no right to be critical of anyone who makes assertions about the past even if these were absolutely impossible of proof.

How can time prove that he is right? If time in all the history of man has not proved these principles are right, what reason is there to assume that time will prove them right in the future? But if it has proved that he is right, then there should be some criteria in the light of which he proves that time has already established the correctness of his course. Time within itself cannot prove that he is right or wrong. Events take place in time but time does not evaluate them, and if it did evaluate them it has no voice whereby to declare to us its evaluations.

How can experience prove his position? Whose experience? Ecclesiastes shows that, when viewed naturally, all is vanity; regardless of whether one seeks for meaning in wisdom, in mighty works, or in pleasure. It all comes to the same thing—death. If death ends all, the experience of every human being so far has proved, and all experiences in the future will prove, that the ultimate outcome will not be changed regardless of whether one lived like Jesus and died an early death by crucifixion, or lived like Stalin and died in one's old age after having killed millions and feasted sumptuously.

And how will the judgment of men prove the Tightness of his course? What men? There are millions of men who repudiate his course, and who is he to say that the future judgment of men will sustain his course? Furthermore, is right to be settled by popular vote? If so, why should the philosopher bother about philosophizing? Why assert that "philosophy yields up its secrets only to men with time and will to contemplate."¹⁹ Instead of being a philosopher, be a poll taker so that one can know what the judgment of man sustains. Why wrestle with philosophy when its secrets can be outvoted by the non-philosophers?

Without the light of divine revelation we can have no assurance that this is anything but the "murmur of gnats in the gleam of a million million suns." If God has not spoken, who are we to care about the guttural sounds made by an animal known as man. This voice has laid the ax to the root of the tree not only of Biblical supernaturalism, but also of morality and humanity. He may continue to live by the morality of a faith which he now denies, but those reared on his present faith will repudiate also the morality which ultimately is rooted in a supernatural world view.

EVOLUTIONISM

Evolutionism is one of the widespread manifestations today of the

conviction that human reason, without recourse to divine revelation, and natural laws are sufficient to explain everything. Although there are different kinds of evolutionists, evolution is based on the assumption that all can be explained naturally. Several of the voices were disturbed or unsettled by evolution. This reminds us that we must realize that people are in contact today with all sorts of ideas—good, bad, and indifferent. Young people, for example, are reading widely. Christians need to seriously ask themselves whether we are meeting our responsibility in writing and otherwise making available to them material which will help them with their problems. We should become acquainted with pertinent materials and try to help them. Obviously, not everyone can become acquainted with the literature in every field, but there should be some who do, in one field or another, and who can direct others to meaningful material. We must get to the place where we are willing to support individuals, at least for special periods of time, so they can devote full time to writing helpful works. Especially do we need a large number of paperbacks, priced reasonably for mass distribution, which deal with many of these subjects. The author hopes, the Lord willing, to have a part in producing more works of this kind; in some cases in cooperation with others. This was the underlying attitude, for example, in the production by Dr. Robert T. Clark, a scientist, and myself of *Why Scientists Accept Evolution*. It dealt with the basic bias of Darwin and others which led them to reject the Bible and to accept naturalistic evolution.

Since evolution seems to have been a factor in unsettling several of the voices, we shall here make some brief comments on it.

Charles Darwin was converted to the idea that all must be explained naturally; and, of course, as this belief grew upon him, his disbelief in the Bible grew. Since Darwin had decided that all must be explained naturally, the very truth of evolution itself was taken for granted. The only question was, since evolution must have taken place, what laws in nature are sufficient to account for life's origin and manifold forms? So deep-seated was Darwin's bias against God that, although he never became an atheist but was an agnostic, when reason led Darwin to God he savagely turned on reason and discredited reason. As he said in his autobiography written in 1876: "Another source of conviction in the existence of God, connected with the reason, and not with the feelings, impresses me as having much more weight. This follows from the extreme difficulty or rather impossibility of conceiving this immense and wonderful universe, including man with his capacity of looking far backwards and far into futurity, as the result of blind chance or necessity. When thus reflected I feel compelled to look to a First Cause having an intelligent mind in some degree analogous to that of man; and I deserve to be called a Theist. This conclusion was strong in my mind about the time, as far as I can remember, when I wrote the 'Origin of Species', and it is since that time that it has very gradually,

with many fluctuations, become weaker. But then arises the doubt, can the mind of man, which has, as I fully believe, been developed from a mind as low as that possessed by the lowest animals, be trusted when it draws such grand conclusions?"²⁰

Again he wrote: "Nevertheless you have expressed my inward conviction, though far more vividly and clearly than I could have done, that the Universe is not the result of chance. But then with me the horrid doubt always arises whether the convictions of man's mind, which has been developed from the mind of the lower animals, are of any value or at all trustworthy. Would anyone trust in the convictions of a monkey's mind, if there are any convictions in such a mind?"²¹

Reason led Darwin to God so Darwin killed reason! He trusted his mind when reasoning about evolution, but not when reasoning about God! Why should we trust anything in his writings if the human mind cannot be trusted? How could Darwin say that he fully believed in evolution when his position concerning the origin of mind made it impossible for him, when consistent, to fully believe in anything? How could Darwin continue to cling to evolution, which led him to discredit the mind, and to do so on supposedly scientific grounds? If the mind cannot be trusted at all, science is impossible. Although Darwin admitted that one could still believe in God, even if evolution were true, yet in his own life and the life of countless others faith in evolution has been the means of leading them from God. Although they may not become atheists, they usually put God so far away from man and the universe that He has not spoken and will not interfere with man in any way, including bringing man into judgment.

Darwin's wife told her daughter, concerning the *Descent of Man*, that: "I think it will be very interesting, but that I shall dislike it very much as again putting God further off."²²

Thomas Henry Huxley, who helped fight many battles for Darwin, admitted that the hypothesis of evolution was simply the outcome of applying the hypothesis that all must be explained naturally. He began to be converted to this idea when he was around twelve years of age. This led him to abandon the Bible as the word of God, and finally to accept evolution; because there was nothing else for a man to do once he had rejected the idea of creation by God.

There are numerous other illustrations of the fact that evolution was accepted because men wanted to get away from the idea of the God who creates. As Henry Fairfield Osborn, an evolutionist, put it: "In truth, from the period of the earliest stages of Greek thought man has been eager to discover some natural cause of evolution, and to abandon the idea of supernatural intervention in the order of nature."²³

Evolution is a faith which they accept even though they do not have adequate evidence for this faith. As A. L. Kroeber, at the Darwin Centennial, said: "Overwhelmingly, biologists had been accepting evolution because there was nothing else for them to do; but they had not proved

it to their own satisfaction. "²⁴ He thought that the situation had improved today. Charles Darwin himself admitted that when one descended to details, and scientists must descend to details, evolution could not be proved."²⁵

William L. Straus, Jr., said: "I wish to emphasize that I am under no illusion that the theory of human ancestry which I favor at the present time, can in any way be regarded as proven. It is at best merely a working hypothesis whose final evaluation must be left to the future."²⁶

The hypothesis of evolution is so far from being scientifically proven that a widely used text book in biology said: "The piecing together of the evolution story is comparable to the reconstruction of an atom-bombed metropolitan telephone exchange by a child who has only seen a few telephone receivers. We know something about living plants and animals, and we have some fossil remnants to go on. Extensive study of the evidence available plus ingenious hypothesis, most of which cannot be adequately tested, have given us a sort of trial schedule of the possible directions of evolution of living organisms."²⁷

However, so deep-seated is the bias in favor of evolution that Professor Paul Shorey, stated: "An ambitious young professor may safely assail Christianity or the Constitution of the United States or George Washington or female chastity or marriage or private property.... But he must not apologize for Bryan... It is not done."²⁸ One does not have to accept every interpretation of the Bible made by Bryan in order to realize that thorough-going evolution contradicts the Bible.

FURTHER ADMISSIONS

Essential to the scientific establishment of the hypothesis of evolution is the proof that life originated from matter by natural processes. However if man creates life, it will not prove that non-intelligent matter kept moving until it created life. Scientists generally admit that they have not proved the origin of the living from the non-living and by the non-living. Carl Sagan, in a fairly recent publication, said that the origin of life from non-life has not been proved.²⁹ As William S. Beck wrote: "First of all, it is generally agreed that the events we are talking about took place between one and two billion years ago: Among other things, this means 1) that we do not know for certain what the earth was like at that time, 2) that we are constructing hypotheses that cannot be directly verified, 3) that their chief claim to truth must rest on their reasonableness, and 4) there is a great difference between stating what might have happened and what did happen."³⁰ He was not affirming creation by God, but he was stating that the origin of life had not been scientifically proved; and, in fact, he indicated that we could never prove it scientifically.

How can evolution be as firmly proved as the rotundity of the earth, as some claim, when this first basic step (which involves many steps in itself) cannot be scientifically established?

Dr. G. A. Kerkut, who as far as I know is an evolutionist, has shown

in his book, *Implications of Evolution*, that evolution has not been proved. John Tyler Bonner, in a review of the book wrote: "This is a book with a disturbing message; it points to some unseemly cracks in the foundations. One is disturbed because what is said gives us the uneasy feeling that we knew it for a long time deep down but were never willing to admit this even to ourselves. It is another one of those cold and uncompromising situations where the naked truth and human nature travel in different directions." ³¹

At another time he wrote, after mentioning that the origin of life was more difficult to imagine than to imagine that many forms of life developed from the first cell, that: "The study of early evolution really amounts to educated guesswork." ³² Harold F. Blum spoke of speculations concerning the origin of life and stated that there was no information that can be regarded as in any way exact. ³³ Verne Grant wrote that: "Consequently we must proceed by inferences from indirect evidence and be content with uncertain approximations in our attempts to reconstruct the earliest chapters in the history of life." ³⁴

Once they assume the origin of life, there are many gaps which they cannot bridge. As G. Ledyard Stebbins wrote concerning insects and higher plants: "profound gaps exist between many orders, suborders, and classes. Furthermore, no transitional forms are known between any of the major phyla of animals or plants." ³⁵

Grant wrote: "A series of fossils taken out of successive geological strata may reveal what we interpret to be an evolutionary trend, but since many gaps exist in the geological record we cannot be sure that the different kinds of fossils were ever connected genealogically." ³⁶

W. E. Le Gros Clark wrote: "So far as the evolution of the Primates is concerned, it is still necessary to rely to a large extent on hypotheses based on an inadequate fossil record, particularly in the discussions on the origin and differentiation of some of the earlier representatives of the order." ³⁷

G. G. Simpson wrote: "From about 1875 through the 1920's, the origin of the vertebrates was one of the active subjects of evolutionary biology. Then discussion died down from lack of fuel. All the available evidence seemed to be in, and all together was insufficient to warrant much more than a verdict of 'not proved.' Hardly any new evidence is at hand today, and yet there is room for a reconsideration of probabilities with more perspective than was available when discussion was at its height. As Berrill emphasizes, any hypothesis of vertebrate origin is still speculative, but his exercise in speculative logic, tied to a wealth of detailed observations of indirectly pertinent facts, is well worthwhile. " "Berrill's last sentence is, 'Proof may be for ever unobtainable, and it may not matter, for here is such stuff as dreams are made on.' *Perhaps* this is the last word on the chordate ancestry of the vertebrates. As for the ancestry of the chordates, all is left in darkness without even the dream of 60 years ago." ³⁸

HOW PROVE?

It is obvious—although it did not seem to be obvious to some scientists who signed such an affirmation of faith—that it would be impossible to prove evolution as clearly as it can be proved that the earth is round. Whose camera could have recorded it? How, then, do they attempt to prove it? There are several ways. First, they endeavor to prove it from the fossil record. But what proof can they furnish us from the fossil record? We have already noticed some admissions concerning the inadequacy of the fossil record. Also pertinent is the fact that no proof comparable to that of the rotundity of the earth can be furnished. Not only are there gaps in the fossil record, but they cannot prove that one fossil descended from another. In an ancient human graveyard who could prove what skeleton was the father or the mother of what skeleton? No scientist witnessed one kind of fossil being born of another kind of fossil.

Second, they try to furnish us with proof from the living world found in nature. E. B. Ford, Director of the Genetic Laboratories at Oxford University, wrote: "In general, the amount of observation or experiment so far carried out upon evolution in wild populations or, indeed, upon ecological genetics as a whole is surprisingly small."³⁹ Elsewhere he wrote: "The most striking instance of evolution ever actually witnessed is that of 'industrial melanism,' in which blackish forms of more than sixty species of moths have been, or are, spreading in the industrial areas of Britain and elsewhere."⁴⁰ In speaking about adaptive changes and natural selection, G. Ledyard Stebbins wrote: "The best, analyzed example of this type is the change in color which has taken place in certain populations of moths in the industrial regions of Europe during the past hundred years. This phenomenon, an increase in frequency of dark colored mutants, is known as industrial melanism."⁴¹

If this is the most striking example of evolution actually witnessed in nature, how extremely poor is the evidence; and how impossible it is for this evidence to prove evolution. In this case they start with living moths and they end with living moths. This has no remote relationship to starting with non-life and ending with man. While it is true that certain things may enable one color of moths, under certain conditions, to survive better than another color, this does not prove evolution.

Third, can they furnish us with proof from experimentation in the laboratory? They can point, for example, to what has been done to the fruit-fly (and it is "sad" indeed a fruit-fly might say, what some of them have done to the fruit-fly), but it still does not prove evolution. They start with life, they find variations, but they still end up with fruit-flies.

No wonder Verne Grant wrote: "It is true that the evolutionary changes which have been directly observed are very minor compared with some of the transformations required by the evolution hypothesis."⁴²

Neither the fossil record, the living record in nature, nor experimen-

tation in the laboratory, have proved evolution—evolutionists being our witnesses.

The statement, made by the scientists, does not affirm that evolution is simply one of the possible explanations. What scientists believe that the rotundity of the earth is just one hypothesis among many plausible hypotheses? What scientists have the least genuine doubt of the rotundity of the earth?

Why is it that some scientists, who demand scientific proof in various other- areas, are determined at all costs to hold to the hypothesis of evolution as being scientifically proved? They know full well, if they are acquainted with the evidence and the meaning of "scientifically proved", that evolution has not been scientifically established.

INFLUENCE OF EVOLUTION

Originating in man's effort to get away from the God who created man and who has spoken to man in the Bible, it is obvious that the influence of evolution would be to undermine faith in the Bible. There are, of course, some individuals who think that evolution has been scientifically established and that therefore they must try to harmonize the Bible with evolution. They hold to evolution and still want to hold to the Bible. However, any hypothesis of evolution which maintains that all can be explained in terms of the workings of present-day processes must come into conflict with the Bible whether they realize this or not. As a result of the influence of the hypothesis of evolution, as well as some other influences, a great deal of the religious world has reconstructed the Bible so as to conform to evolution. Thus there are those who maintain that there was no first human pair, that there was no real fall of man, that God did not miraculously intervene in human history as recorded in the Bible, and that Jesus Christ is the product of an evolutionary development. If an individual maintains that God did intervene as the Bible says, and that Jesus Christ is God's Son, they have admitted divine intervention in redemption, so why should they rule out divine intervention in creation?

The hypothesis of evolution has had an adverse impact upon morality. If all must be explained in harmony with natural laws, there is no moral realm different from the natural realm. After evolutionists get through explaining the origin of the conscience and moral sensitivity of man, they have in reality explained away morality. To maintain that animals do certain things, and therefore we see in them the beginning of the development of moral conscience, does not prove that I am obligated to do anything. To jump from a description of something that has happened, to the conclusion that we are obligated to do this or that is to draw a conclusion that is not justified by their starting point. If men are but highly evolved animals, what right does anyone have to say that one ought to do or ought not to do a certain thing? In fact, to say that one "ought to do something" is no more to speak morally than to say that someone itches. In both cases you are describing a physical

sensation. To say that a certain course of conduct would lead to social progress—however progress may be defined—is not the same thing as saying that I am obligated to follow that course of conduct. Every evolutionist must abandon evolution in order to stand for the reality and the binding nature of morality. William F. Quillian, Jr., in *The Moral Theory of Evolutionary Naturalism*, has shown the inability of the evolutionist to establish morality on a consistent naturalistic evolutionary world view.⁴¹

Darwin viewed morality, religion, and everything else as traceable to something in animals. As he told a cousin: "I look upon all human feeling as traceable to some germ in the animals."⁴⁴

Darwin's antagonism to religion increased as the years went on so that he was more antagonistic to religion after many religious leaders had accepted him than he was before.⁴⁵

Communists pay high tribute to Darwin. In fact Karl Marx wanted to dedicate to Darwin the English translation of Marx's book on *Capital*. Darwin refused because he thought it would give pain to some in his family.⁴⁶ Karl Marx on December 19, 1860 wrote to Engels that Darwin's book "is the book which contains the basis in natural history for our view."⁴⁷ On January 16, 1861 he said: "Darwin's book is very important and serves me as a basis in natural science for the class struggle in history."⁴⁸

If man is but an evolved animal, there is no moral ground on which you can condemn the Communists for wanting to establish animal farms, as it were. If morality is simply the evolved customs of man, the Communists have as much right as anybody else to evolve their own moral customs, and there is no moral law in the light of which we can say that they are wrong and we are right. If the survival of the fittest is the way of progress, then those who survive are the fittest by mere virtue of the fact that they survive. In other words, might makes right.

These, then, are some of the consequences that logically flow from naturalistic evolution. There are those, of course, who try to explain naturally the origin and manifold forms of life while maintaining that God is and that man is more than animal and more than matter. If this is true, then God has supernaturally intervened in some way to make man more than matter. Once we grant this supernatural intervention we have destroyed the naturalistic hypothesis of evolution. If we are going to say that God supernaturally intervened in some way in the creation of man, why not accept the Biblical account of the supernatural intervention?

The manifestations of the wisdom of the world which we have discussed should warn us lest we, too, fall into the intellectual arrogance which refuses to acknowledge the inadequacy of reason to answer the basic problems of life. What is man, what is our duty, what is our destiny, and what is the will of God for man? These fundamental questions cannot be answered apart from divine revelation, and the mind

which refuses to admit the need for divine revelation, and the evidence for divine revelation, will never answer these questions with any measure of assurance. Rejecting divine revelation he is left only with human speculations.

HELPING THOSE WITH DIFFICULTIES

If an individual is experiencing difficulties concerning his faith because of the problems raised by life, by reading, or otherwise, it does not mean that he wants to, adopt the wisdom of the world and to abandon the wisdom of God. We should use our minds to help those who are struggling with problems, including the problems of belief and of unbelief. One voice tells us that when he was being unsettled in his religious positions, he found no one in the church who was willing, "or perhaps with the religious perspective, " to help him. Some were kind, but "nearly all seemed to have some fear of me and of the situation I was in. " Jesus, he said, "showed no fear of the troubled nor any reluctance to go near those in crisis. "⁴⁸ First, if this was the case, it is most unfortunate. Such people need our help. Second, sometimes the attitude of the one in crisis keeps some from trying to help, or from continuing to help.

This voice stated that he was shocked by the attitude of some who thought that the Bible should be taken at "face value without any questions or theories about underlying reasons. " He thought that we should ask questions and seek underlying reasons. He stated that he was cut down with the statement that the secret things belong to God, but the things that are revealed belong to us. (Deut. 29: 29) He maintained that this teacher indicated that it is rebellious and sinful to ask questions, to have a curious mind, and "to seek more adequate understandings. "⁹⁰ We do not know whether he rightly interpreted the teacher's statement or just what was the full context of the discussion. Taking it simply as it made its impact on him, we would suggest several things. First, the Bible does not condemn the inquiring mind. In fact, the very qualities of mind which are essential to the reception of truth in any area are set forth in the Bible as the essential qualities for the reception of the Word of God. These are such as: (a) humility; which involves teachableness (Matt. 18: 1-4). (b) Love for the truth; which involves willingness to hear; the refusal to be shackled by passions and prejudices; the willingness to test all things and to hold fast to that which is good (John 18: 37, 8: 32; Rom. 10: 17, I Thess. 5: 21, II Thess. 2: 10-12; II Tim. 4: 3-4, I John 4: 1, Rev. 2: 2). (c) One must have the good and honest heart (Lk. 8: 15).

The Bible condemns the credulous attitude which accepts that which is in line with its prejudices; even though the evidence may not sustain the position. Thus, Jesus said: "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. " (John 5: 43). Jesus came in His Father's name. He came with the credentials from God to show that He was sent of God. The Jews

rejected Him in spite of his credentials, because what He was and proclaimed were contrary to what they wanted. On the other hand, individuals who came in their own name, with only those credentials which a man could muster, would be accepted if they told the people what they wanted to hear. This is the attitude of credulity.

Second, when one is confronted with questions and problems, he should not try to suppress them and deny that he is faced with them. If he does this, he is not dealing honestly with his problems and doubts.. He may continue this process of suppression until he is uneasy concerning his faith, because he has so many unanswered questions in his mind. Then he may suddenly decide to be honest and he may bring out all his problems at once. Since he has not been investigating and solving the problems, he is not prepared with any solutions. The sudden facing of an accumulation of the problems may floor him. We dealt with this briefly in 1948 in our book on *Roots of Unbelief*.

Third, one can overload the weak faith of another by dealing with his problems in the wrong way. If an individual believes the Bible, and has good reasons for his faith, but finds certain things in the Bible hard to follow, he may be properly met with the statement: Believe it and act upon it because it is in the Bible. However, if the individual has a problem which is undermining his faith in the Bible, it is not sufficient to tell him to believe it because it is in the Bible. The authority of the Bible is the very question which is bothering him. Therefore, someone should help him with reasons for faith and then show him that one should accept it because the Bible is authoritative. This includes a discussion of the credentials of the Bible which establish its authoritative nature. In some cases, one may show on other grounds also the problem can be solved.

Fourth, those who believe the Bible should be willing to stop where God stopped revealing. Man cannot penetrate into what God has not seen fit to reveal about Himself and His Mind. These are the secret things of God. What God has revealed, however, we are to study, to apply, and to teach. The curiosity which is condemned is that idle curiosity which only wants to hear or tell some new or mysterious thing; but is not concerned about the bearing of truth on life. There are some who are unconcerned with what God has revealed, but greatly concerned with what has not been revealed. They by-pass their duty and spend their time in idle speculation.

When dealing with those who have problems, we should not pounce on them as a Jaybird on a June bug, but should receive them in good will and try to help them with all of the logic and information which we have. Let us solemnly recall that the way in which we treat them may help cause them to stumble, or it may help save them. This is not to say that we shall be able to help everyone, but let us do our best.

ACCEPT TRUTH FROM ANY SOURCE One voice
was much impressed with the fact that he learned some

things from those who were not members of the church, which he had not learned from members of the church.⁵¹ First, being a member of the church does not mean that one has become a master of the Bible. Second, doubtless he could have learned many of these things from his own study of the Bible itself. Third, there were members of the church who could have taught him at least many of the truths which some others taught him. Fourth, there are subjects which most brethren have barely studied, but which someone else has made his life's work. We can and should learn from them. Fifth, we do not have to leave Christ's church to learn and to accept any truth which God has revealed. Learning additional truth should not make us a member of something else; it should only make us better informed Christians. Sixth, our attitude should be that all truth belongs to us, regardless of who calls it to our attention. (1 Cor. 3: 21-23). If an atheistic psychologist calls a truth to our attention, this truth is ours and we should possess it. It is not a part of his atheism, and we do not have to take any of his wrong views in order to accept any right ones which he holds.

CHAPTER II FOOTNOTES

- 1Darnell, 216-218.
- 2*Scientific Method*, p. 158. Quoted by C. E. Raven, *Religion and the Future*, 1943, Vol. I, 88. 3Darnell, 218.
- 4Hardeman, 89, 93, 99.
- 5Hardeman, 90.
- 6Hardeman, 90.
- 7Hardeman, 93.
- 8Compare Robert M. Grant, "The Wisdom of the Corinthians," in Sherman E. Johnson, *The Joy of Study*, 51-52.
- 9James Hastings, Editor, *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church*, II, 683.
- 10Hardeman, 91.
- 11Hardeman, 89.
- 12Hardeman, 88.
- 13Hardeman, 99-100.
- 14Hardeman, 100.
- 15Hardeman, 94.
- 16Hardeman, 95-96.
- 17Hardeman, 96.
- 18Hardeman, 96.
- 19Hardeman, 91.
- 20Francis Darwin, Editor, *The Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*, New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1898, Vol. 1, 282.
- 21*Ibid.*, Vol. 1, 285.
- 22As quoted in Gertrude Himmelfarb, *Darwin and the Darwinian Revolution*, Lon-don: Chatto & Windus, 1959, 316.
- 23Henry Fairfield Osborn, *The Origin and Evolution of Life*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1918, ix-x.
- 24Sol Tax, Editor, *Evolution of Man*, 2.
- 25*The Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*, Vol. II, 210.
- 26*The Quarterly Review of Biology*, September 1949, 220.
- 27Relis B. Brown, *Biology*, Second Edition, Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1961, 531.
- 28*Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 142, Oct. 1928, 478.
- 29See his presentation in Sidney W. Fox, Editor, *The Origins of Prebiological Sys-tems*, N. Y.: Academic Press, 1965, 208-218.
- 30*Modern Science and the Nature of Life*, New York: Doubleday Anchor Book, Natural History Library Edition, 1961, 260.
- 31"Perspectives," *American Scientist*, June 1961, 240.
- 32*The Ideas of Biology*, N. Y.: Harper and Row, 1962, 18.
- 33*Times' Arrow and Evolution*, 175.
- 34*The Origin of Adaptations*, N. Y.: Columbia U. Press, 1963, 75.
- 35*Processes of Organic Evolution*, Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966, 144.
- 36*The Origin of Adaptations*, 36.
- 37*The Antecedents of Man*, N. Y.: Harper Torchbooks, 1963, 3.
- 38A review, of N. J. Berrill, *The Origin of Vertebrates*, by G. G. Simpson in *Science*, Dec. 9, 1955, 1144.
- 39"Evolution in Progress," Sol Tax, Editor, *The Evolution of Life*, 181.
- 40*Nature*, Dec. 14, 1957, 1316, British Publication.
- 41*Processes of Organic Evolution*, Prentice-Hall, 62.
- 42*The Origin of Adaptations*, 36.
- 43William F. Quillian, Jr., *The Moral Theory of Evolutionary Naturalism*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1945.
- 44Himmelfarb, op. cit., 317.
- 45*Ibid.*, 319.
- 46*Ibid.*, 316.
- 47Marx and Engels, *Selected Correspondence*, 1846-1895, New York: International Publishers, 1936, 126. Translated by Dona Torr.
- 48*Ibid.*, 125.
- 49*Voices of Concern*, 190.
- 50*Ibid.* 190.

What Is the Church?

The Bible is the word of God, and the New Testament church is Christ's body; therefore it is very important for us to study and to accept what the Bible teaches concerning the church. The only authoritative word concerning the church is the word of God. We do not have the authority to override what it teaches and to substitute our own ideas or the traditions of other men. On the other hand, if the Bible is not the word of God, it is a matter of indifference to us as to what it teaches about the church. Those who are curious about the roots of an ancient movement, could learn about it from the Bible, but it would be irrelevant in so far as our beliefs and practices are concerned.

THE WORD "CHURCH" DEFINED

Although in the New Testament the word church was used to refer to Israel in the wilderness (Acts 7: 38, 44), and to a mob (Acts 19: 32, 39, 41), it usually refers to the people of God under the New Covenant who have been redeemed from sin and thus separated from the world by the blood of Jesus Christ. (Acts 20: 28). In his discussion of the word "church," William Barclay said: "To Greek and Roman alike the word was familiar in the sense of a convened assembly. So, then, when we look at it against this background, as Deissmann puts it, the Church was God's assembly, God's muster, and the convener is God. " "In the Hebrew sense it, therefore, means God's people called together by God, in order to listen to or to act for God. In a certain sense the word 'congregation' loses a certain amount of the essential meaning. A 'congregation' is a company of people 'who have come together'; a *qahal* or an *ekklesia* is a body of people 'who have been called together'. The two original words, Hebrew and Greek, put all the emphasis on the action of God. "F. J. A. Hort rightly points out that originally the word does not mean, as is so often stated, a body of people who have been 'picked out' from the world. It has not in it that exclusive sense. It means a body of people who have been 'summoned out' of their homes to come and meet with God; and both in its original Greek and Hebrew usages, that sense was not exclusive but inclusive. The summons was not to any selected few; it was a summons from the State to every man to come and to shoulder his responsibilities; it was a summons from God to every man to come and to listen to and to act on the word of God.

"In essence, therefore, the Church, the *ekklesia*, is a body of people, not so much assembling because they have chosen to come together but assembling because God has called them to himself; not so much assembling to share their own thoughts and opinions, but assembling to listen to the voice of God. "¹

Alan Richardson observed that the word "church" is used with reference to the "community which had been gathered at Jerusalem by

the preaching of the apostles (Acts 5: 11; 8: 1, 3). This community consisted of those who, with the apostles, had accepted the belief that Jesus was the Messiah, had been baptized and had received the forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2: 37-41). "² Those who were listening to the preaching on Pentecost were being called of God through the gospel; for the promise was to as many as the Lord our God shall call, and He calls men through the gospel (Acts 2: 39; 2 Thess. 2: 14). H. Richard Niebuhr wrote that: "In the sub-apostolic period the church was thought of primarily as a chosen people of God, a new race elected to take the place of the previously chosen, now rejected, Israel; it was on the one hand the special recipient of divine favors, on the other hand the special instrument of the divine will. Membership in the community was the result of regeneration rather than of natural birth; the law of the people was the new law revealed by Jesus Christ; it was not a geographically localized society but scattered throughout the world."³

THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH

The word "church" is used sometimes to refer to the people of God as a whole without regard to geographical locality. When Jesus promised to build His church on the rock, He did not have reference simply to one congregation but to the universal church. (Matt. 16: 18). The church was established once for all in that the foundation was laid once for all. Although it was established at a definite time, in that His reign at God's right hand was first proclaimed to man on Pentecost and there in Jerusalem the first group of people surrendered to His Lordship and partook of salvation through His blood (Acts 2: 34-42), it was not just one congregation which He established but the church itself. The kingdom of God and the church both refer to the same reign of Christ, and it was after His ascension that He sat at the right hand of God and was made head over the church (Eph. 1: 19-23). This reign started once for all; it does not start anew each generation. The reign that was proclaimed on Pentecost is to last until the end of time when the last enemy, death, is conquered. (Acts 2: 34-35; 1 Cor. 15: 24-28; Rev. 20: 9-14). The last days dispensation began once for all. (Heb. 1: 1-2; 2: 3-4; Acts 2: 16-17) The foundation on which the church is built, the truth that Jesus is the Christ, was set forth on that Pentecost. (Matt. 16: 1-18; Acts 2: 36). Those who obeyed the gospel then were built on that foundation; and so are we, for Christ is still building His church on that same foundation. To use the illustration found in Eph. 2: 20-22 we are built as a living temple on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Jesus Christ as the chief corner stone. This temple is a growing temple, and each time a person is converted another living stone is built into this spiritual house (1 Peter 2: 5, 9). Although we today are not members of the same congregation which assembled in Jerusalem, we are members of the same church, and are built on the same foundation on which they were built.

The church is the body of Christ (Eph. 1: 22-23); the growing temple (Eph. 2: 20-22); and the household of God (2: 19). The church is the one body, the one new man, in whom Jew and Gentile are one. (Eph. 2: 11-12, 13-18) Yet, there were no Gentiles as such in the church in Jerusalem. Jew and Gentile were not one in that congregation, and it was not until later that the relationship of the Gentile to the law and to the gospel was made crystal clear. And yet, they are one in the body of Christ. So the reference to the body of Christ referred not to any one congregation but to the universal church. Furthermore, the church itself, and not just one congregation, is the unfoldment of the purpose of God. (Eph. 3: 10). The apostles and prophets, etc., were set in the church, but not just in one congregation (1 Cor. 12: 28. See also Eph. 3: 21; 5: 32; Heb. 12: 23 for some additional uses of the term church to refer to the universal body of Christ.)

Although when one becomes a Christian he may be recognized as a member of a congregation also, one does not have to be a member of a congregation in a given locality in order to be a member of the church which is Christ's body. The eunuch was baptized into Christ, into His body which is the church, although there was no congregation there. (Acts 8: 36-39) When he got back home he was still a member of Christ's body even though there was no congregation of the Lord's people there. If baptism must be into a congregation, it would have been impossible for the eunuch to have been baptized. Furthermore, in the case of Cornelius there was no congregation which met in his home community. He was not baptized into the congregation of the Jewish brethren who came with Peter, although he became one with them in Christ. We are not baptized into a congregation. If we were, we would have to be baptized into a congregation each time we changed localities. We are baptized into the church which is the universal body of Christ. Being in Christ, we should work with other Christians, and be members of the church in a given locality, but our baptism is into Christ.

The church includes, therefore, individuals who for a time at least may not be identified with a congregation. The eunuch was a member of Christ's church although he was not identified with a congregation when he became a Christian; and how soon he was able to meet with a group of Christ's disciples we do not know. Because not every member of the church is identified with a congregation means that there is no congregational roll, or the rolls of all congregations today, which includes all of God's people. Thus this author believes that some are thoughtless, and that some may be presumptuous, when they say that there are no Christians in a given city or in a given country. How do we know? There may be those who have been baptized by a Philip as he traveled. There are others who may have been converted in other countries, and then moved to the country or city of which we speak. There are others who may have learned the gospel and what they must do to be saved by reading the Bible, and who have done it, They do not

have to hear of you, or of me, in order to hear the gospel and to come into Christ!

There are people of God who have wandered and through carelessness, or for one reason or another, have become involved in Babylon. This is true whether Babylon refers to one apostate church, or to religious confusion in general. They are God's people even though in Babylon. What should they do? "Come forth, my people, out of her, that ye have no fellowship with her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues: for her sins have reached even unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities. " (Rev. 18: 4-5) How many of God's people are in Babylon? Neither the author nor any other human being knows. We do know that we should urge people to come out of Babylon.

ALL THE SAVED

When one speaks of the church in the universal sense, he is speaking of all of the saved people. However, it is impossible for one to visualize all of the saved people for the simple reason that he could not possibly know all of them, and some of them whom he knows, who profess to be Christians, may not actually be Christians. Since no man knows the number of the saved, no man can think of all of them when he speaks of the church of Christ in a universal sense. And yet, when speaking of the church of Christ in this universal sense one should have in mind that it includes all of the saved.

When he speaks of the church in a given country, he may be thinking of the total number of saved people in that country, and yet he would be unable to visualize in a concrete way, with names and faces, all of the saved people in that country. He might know of a few of them, and like the prophet Elijah he may think that he and a few others are the only ones there. "Or know ye not what the scripture saith of Elijah? how he pleadeth with God against Israel: Lord, they have killed thy prophets, they have digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have left for myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to Baal. " (Rom. 11: 2-4). It would be even more impossible for any man to take an accurate census of the Lord's church than it was for Elijah to have an accurate account of the faithful in his day.

When an individual speaks of the church in a given city, he may not be thinking of everyone in the city who is a Christian, for he may not know all of them. If he goes into the city to seek out brethren he usually would first of all look for a worshipping assembly, a congregation. He could speak of them as being the church, or the church which meets at a given locality, without implying that every Christian in the city assembled with them. He could speak of that church without sectarianizing the word church, although he does not know that that congregation is identical with the entire church in that community. It might, or might not be, but he can still speak of it as the church without using the word church in a sectarian sense.

CHURCH SIZE?

A few moments of thought on the nature of the church should convince us that we should not endeavor to pinpoint the number of the saved. ⁴ Jesus teaches that one must be born of water and the Spirit in order to enter the kingdom (John 3: 3-5). When men obey the gospel the Lord adds them to the number of the saved. On the first Pentecost after Christ's resurrection, there were people who were pricked in their hearts and who wanted to know what to do. (Acts 2: 37) Do about what? They had reference to their sinful condition, and whether there was anything they could do about it. We know this is what they had reference to, for they were now convinced that they had crucified this Jesus whom God had made both Lord and Christ; and that He was reigning at God's right hand, and would reign until all of His enemies were conquered (Acts 2: 34-35). They realized that they were a part of His enemies, and they were deeply concerned about their condition. That they were concerned about their sinful condition is also evident in the fact that Peter, in answering their question, told them what to do about their sins. "And Peter said unto them, Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. " (Acts 2: 38). Peter was deeply concerned that they do exactly this, for "with many other words he testified, and exhorted them, saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation. They then that received his word were baptized: and there were added *unto them* in that day about three thousand souls. " (Acts 2: 40-41). "Unto them" is not in the original Greek, but was added by the translators to help make the thought clearer. However, it does not necessarily make the thought clearer. It is enough to say that they were added. But the question arises: Added to what? Does the context make it clear? What did these people do? They did what they were told to do. What were they told to do? They were told to repent and be baptized for the remission of their sins. Did they do it? Those who received Peter's word were baptized. What happened as a result of their obedience to Christ? They received the remission of sins and the gift of the Spirit (Acts 2: 38). Of what, then, were they a part? They were a part of the saved, for their sins had been forgiven (Mk. 16: 15-16; Acts 2: 38; 22: 16). They were added to the body of Christ, for the baptism of the believing penitent is into Christ (Gal. 3: 26-27). Thus they were a part of the saved, for Christ is the Saviour of the body (Eph. 5: 23). We can know this also from the fact that in Acts 2: 47 we are told: "And the Lord added to them day by day those that were saved. " For "to them" the margin also has "together". They were added together in Christ; they were added to the saved. For "those that were saved" the margin also has "were being saved". On coming into Christ they were saved, for remission of sins was promised to them if they were baptized into Him. (Acts 2: 38; Gal. 3: 26-27) Thus Christians are the saved. Although we are saved from our past sins, in another sense

we are in the process of being saved. For we are living the Christian life in hope of the eternal salvation, the eternal reward, which will be revealed at the last time (1 Pet. 1: 3-9). It is clear, however, that we are added to Christ's body, that we are added together as saved people, and thus that we are added to those who are already in Christ.

It will be observed that the "Lord added" (Acts 2: 47). This did not mean that the people did not have anything to do. When they asked what to do (Acts 2: 37), Peter did not tell them that there was nothing that they could do. He not only told them what to do (Acts 2: 38), but he exhorted them to do it. (Acts 2: 41). The ones who did it were the ones who were added (Acts 2: 41). Thus their own obedience was involved, but the church is the Lord's body, and the Lord Himself adds those who meet His conditions. Men do not add others to the church, although like Peter they must teach others what to do to be saved, and exhort them to do it. Furthermore, we assist them in being baptized into Christ; for Peter, for example, commanded the household of Cornelius to be baptized. (Acts 10: 48) However, it is the Lord who does the adding.

We cannot know the number of the saved because we do not know how many have been baptized into Christ. We do not even know how many have outwardly submitted to baptism; and much less do we know how many of those whom we know about have submitted from the heart. If one does not obey from the heart (Rom. 6: 17-18, 3-5), he is not baptized into Christ and, regardless of what we may have thought, the Lord did not add this insincere person to the church.

Since we do not know the number of the saved, it is not fitting, when we go into a new city or a new country, to assert that this is the first time the gospel has been preached there. How do we know? How do we know that there are no Christians in that place? Sometimes we have found very shortly that some people are there who have simply taken the word of God and followed it. We may learn of those who have moved to this place after having come into Christ elsewhere. There may be "eunuchs" who were baptized while traveling, and then Went to their home city or country. Thus we repeat what we said earlier, it is either carelessness in our thinking, or presumption in our attitude, which leads any of us to assert in our ignorance that when we go to a certain country or city this is the first time that the gospel has been preached there; and that until we got there there were no Christians there. It may be the first time that a congregation from America sent a man to that field, and in some cases this may not even be so. But how could we possibly know that no Christians are there?

In determining the nature and extent of the church we are not left to our feelings and desires in the matter. If it were a matter of human will, it would be defined according to the determination of each individual. However, Christians are under the authority of Jesus Christ and not in authority. The church is not their creation, nor did they purchase

it with their blood. The only things that we can know about the church are those things which have been revealed by God through the Old Testament prophets and the New Testament apostles and prophets (Rom. 3: 21-22; Eph. 3: 5). It is not a matter of whether we want to be broad or to be narrow. It is solely a question of what God has revealed. At a given time one's concept of the church may be too broad or it may be too narrow, and the only way that one can determine what his concept should be is to study what God has revealed.

The author is convinced that the line was drawn by Jesus Himself when He said that one must be born of water and the Spirit in order to enter the kingdom of heaven (John 3: 3-5). There are doubtless many people who are near the kingdom but who have not yet completed the new birth. If I were in authority I would have the right to erase the line, which our Lord drew at the new birth, and say that individuals who have not been born of water and the Spirit are already in the kingdom. However, it is not my kingdom, I am not the authority in it, and for me to erase the line which Jesus drew would not mean that it had been erased. If He, who drew the line, wants to declare exceptions to His own line this is His business and within His power. However, the last word which we have from Him is that men must be born again in order to enter the kingdom. And this is the word which we must preach.

Let us leave with the Lord, as in fact we must leave with the Lord, the exact number of the saved, and let us do all we can to live and to teach the gospel that the number may be increased. The saved are in the universal body of Christ, but no man knows who all of them are; but we can and should know what we must do to lead others to Christ, and we should also do it.

When we understand the church is composed of those who have been redeemed from sin by the blood of Jesus, we realize how mistaken a voice was in maintaining that in a real sense he was a "Christian from the day of my birth. " One must be a disciple, or learner, of Christ before he can come into Christ, but one continues to learn after he is in Christ (Matt. 28: 19-20). "... the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch. " (Acts 11: 26). But no one who was not a disciple was ever called a Christian in the New Testament. This same voice asserted that he was in the church long before he was baptized.⁵ He was an innocent child when he was born and for years thereafter, and as such was in the safekeeping of God; but he was not a member of the New Testament church, nor did he need to be as an innocent child. Not everyone who believes has sufficient faith, or understanding, to come into Christ; but all who are in Christ are believers. This voice was not a believer from his birth. Then, too, the church is composed of redeemed sinners, and he was not a sinner from the day of his birth; and thus could not have been a redeemed sinner.

We conclude that the universal body of Christ includes all Christians

who have lived and died in the Lord (Rom. 14: 7-9; Rev. 6: 9). And there are some who think, since it is through the blood of Jesus that the faithful under the patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations are saved, that the redeemed of all ages are now in' Christ (Heb. 9: 15; 11: 40; Eph. 1: 10-12).

CHURCHES OF THE GENTILES

The word church may also be used of God's people of a specific racial background regardless of the different localities in which these individuals and congregations may be found. Thus Paul spoke of "all the churches of the Gentiles. " (Rom. 16: 4).

CHURCH IN A GENERAL LOCALITY

The word church may refer to the people of God in a given locality. It may be of the churches in a general area, or in one locality. Thus Paul wrote to "the *churches* of Galatia", and spoke of "the churches of Judaea which were in Christ" (Gal. 1: 2, 22). And Luke wrote: "So *the church* throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria had peace, being edified; and, walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, was multiplied. " (Acts 9: 31).

CHURCH IN A SPECIFIC LOCALITY

Paul mentioned the church which was in Aquila's house (1 Cor. 16: 19; Rom. 16: 5); he wrote to the church of God in Corinth (1 Cor. 1: 2) and he spoke of the "church of the Laodiceans". (Col. 4: 16), Concerning the church in Corinth, M. C. Kurfees wrote: "It would be difficult to exaggerate the vital bearing and importance of the two facts with which our recent article on this theme closed. Let us refresh our minds with a substantial restatement of them. (1) The term 'church, ' as used in the religious sense in the New Testament, means Christians or the children of God under the leadership of Christ. (2) As thus used in that volume, it always, without exception, includes all Christians or children of God in the locality or territory to which it is applied. The reader may safely rest on these two facts, for there is not a solitary exception to either one of them in all the word of God.

"But we of today are in the midst of denominationalism, which means that the people of God in this period of their history are unfortunately divided into clashing and conflicting parties precisely as they were divided in the city of Corinth in Paul's day, only the divisions of modern times are on a much larger scale, with the chances for confusion in the use of Biblical language greatly increased. Without stopping here to discuss in detail the steps which, according to the New Testament, are essential to entrance into the church, we may observe that, while many persons in at least some of the denominations have not complied with all the terms of admission and hence are not in the church, nevertheless, many others in the different denominations have complied with them and are, therefore, in spite of their erroneous practices otherwise, in, and are a part of, the church. The members

constituting the different divisions or parties in the church at Corinth were, nevertheless, all in the church in spite of their erroneous teachings and practices, and in writing to them Paul addressed them all as 'the church of God which is at Corinth.' (1 Cor. 1: 2; 2 Cor. 1: 1) Among them there were Paulites, Cephasites, Apollosites, and those who were simply Christians, or who held to the name of Christ alone; yet Paul recognizes them all as being in, and a part of, the church of God at that place. "Moreover, let it be distinctly observed just here that even those among them who rejected the names of Paul, Cephas, and Apollos, and consistently held to the name of Christ alone, he did not address as 'the Church of God which is at Corinth,' for the simple reason that they were not *'the Church,'* but only a part of the church. The fact that they were not involved in error as were the others did not make them exclusively the church. The others, who were egregiously involved in error on some things and were sinning in being broken up into conflicting parties and divisions, were, nevertheless, in spite of their erroneous practices, a part of the church of God at Corinth; and hence, all of them of all the parties were addressed by the apostle as 'the church of God which is at Corinth.'

"In precisely the same way today, when persons do what God has commanded them to do for that purpose, they enter into, and become a part of, his church, and their unfortunate denominational entanglement in error on other points in no wise affects this fact. This does not mean, nor does it imply, that persons among them who have not done what God has commanded for that purpose, but have merely complied with a substitute for it, are also in the church. No one can properly claim that persons are in the church of God unless they have complied with the terms which God himself has stipulated for that purpose, and not merely a substitute for them. But when they have complied with the identical terms stipulated by God for the purpose, they enter into, and become a part of, his church in spite of the fact that they may be involved in error and make mistakes on other points; and hence, in any attempt to consider or speak of the church of God in such a situation and environment, we are compelled, if we would speak as the Bible speaks, to recognize these facts in our speech. To refuse to recognize persons as being in the church of God, when they have complied with God's own terms of admission, merely because they make mistakes on other points, would make it proper to deny that any of us, who make mistakes in any way whatever, are in his church. "⁶

This is not to suggest that we can fellowship everyone who is in the universal body of Christ, for there are grounds for the breaking of fellowship. Then, too, those who have affiliated with denominational bodies have separated themselves from us by joining these denominations and by not worshipping after the New Testament order. Then, too, even concerning the people whom we fellowship, we oppose errors which we believe that they hold; as well as being willing to be instructed by them wherein they think that we are wrong.

Kurfees also argued that: "It would be all right, of course, to call any congregation or body of Christians in such a community a church of God or a church of Christ, for that would be nothing more than calling them what they are; but to speak of such a portion of the Christians of a community at large as 'the church of God' or 'the church of Christ' of the said community, thus excluding from the term a part of God's children, would, as we have seen, be diametrically contrary to the New Testament. Moreover, it would be all right to call such a congregation or body of Christians worshipping at a particular place in such a community 'the church of God' or 'the church of Christ' *at that particular place*, for that again would be nothing more than calling it what it is. Such a use of the term 'church' is correct, because it includes all the Christians or children of God in the particular locality or territory to which it is applied."⁷

However, we think he has overstated the matter in the first part of the paragraph, and that it would be scriptural to call such a group of Christians the church of Christ and not just a church of Christ. In every generation there have been those who have been careless about identifying themselves with a congregation, or who have forsaken the assembly. There were undoubtedly those in Laodicea who were not present in the assembly when the epistle was read to the church; but it would not be the fault of Paul or of the church. Although there may be more Christians in a locality than have identified themselves with a congregation in that locality, it is still scriptural to refer to the congregation as the church in that locality. Furthermore, the apostle Paul spoke of a limited number of congregations as "the churches of Christ" (Rom. 16: 16). The churches of Christ saluted the church in Rome, so "the churches of Christ" did not include every church for the church in Rome was not saluting itself.

THE CHURCH AS AN ASSEMBLY FOR WORSHIP The word "church" is used to refer to an assembly of God's people for worship. Paul spoke of when they came "together in the church" (1 Cor. 11: 17-18), and when "ye assemble yourselves together." (11: 20). They were having a feast along with the Lord's supper, and their conduct was making it impossible for them to observe the Lord's supper (1 Cor. 11: 20). And what they were doing in the assembly was a despising of "the church of God." (11: 22). Paul spoke of certain things as "in the church" (14: 19), when "the whole church be assembled together" (14: 23), "when ye come together" (14: 26), of keeping "silence in the church" (14: 28, 30), and "as in all the churches of the saints, let the women keep silence in the churches" (14: 33-34). Certain things were not to be done "in the church" that could be done in the home and elsewhere (11: 18, 20, 22, 33, 34; 14: 28, 33, 34, 35).

It is proper, therefore, to speak of the church going to church! It is proper to speak of God's people going to the assembly. Furthermore, there may be those who fail to assemble, and of whom the brethren

may not know. They are not identified with the church as a body of people who assemble regularly to worship God. They are members of the church in that they have been baptized into Christ, but they have forsaken the assembly. They may be known to some of the brethren, or they may not. However, their forsaking of the assembly does not mean that it is unscriptural for us to speak of those who do assemble as the church. There may be more members of the church in the community than assemble with the brethren, but those who assemble are the church which assembles in that locality. They, we might say, are the assembling church, while the others are those who have forsaken the assembly.

Then, too, there are those who either withdraw from us (Compare 3 John 9-10), or force us to separate from them because they bind on us acts of worship in which we cannot in good conscience participate. Although they have introduced into the assembly those things which they should not have introduced, they are still members of the church. How much error the Lord will overlook and still save a person is the Lord's decision, and not ours. But this does not give us any reason to justify what they have done or to participate in it.

If a church as a worshipping assembly, as a congregational unit, introduces into the worship something which by its very nature binds me if I worship with them, I must separate myself from that worshipping assembly. I cannot identify myself with them as a worshipping congregation; and when it is appropriate to do so, I may give my reasons for refusing to be bound by that which they have introduced.

In such a situation there are at least four things, however, which this author endeavors to keep in mind. First, my calling in life is 'not to concentrate my teaching ministry on their innovation so that I constantly dwell on its unscriptural nature. There are many other things to do, and although teaching concerning the innovation should be done from time to time, yet proving that their worship has this unscriptural aspect in it is not the message which is my central theme. Second, we are both still a part of the universal church, the body of Christ. We are not a part of the same congregation, we do not constitute the same worshipping assembly, but we are still both a part of the church. It is my conviction that they are in error in the matter which has made it impossible for me to conscientiously worship with them, and be identified with their congregation. However, this error does not "unbaptize them" and put them out of the kingdom of God. Third, although causing division is a very serious matter, their judgment we must leave to the Lord. As with individuals, so with congregations, to their own Lord they stand or fall. How much error one can have and still go to heaven is the Lord's business and not mine. Fourth, although separated from them in certain matters, I should not be separated from them in love, but should have good will toward all.

One may speak of the church, therefore, as a worshipping assembly and as a congregation. Thus one may speak of himself as belonging to

one congregation and not to another. He is thus identified with one church and not another. He is under one eldership and not under the eldership of another congregation. He is identified with one worshipping assembly. In the case of the assemblies which have bound things which he cannot conscientiously accept, he is not identified with these congregations or assemblies, even though they are still members of the kingdom.

CHURCH ATTENDANCE

One voice came to doubt that "going regularly to Church of Christ services would automatically bring one near to God." ⁸ On this we remark as follows: First, this is true. There is nothing automatic about the Christian's life. Going through the form of prayer, of Bible study, of church meetings, will not automatically bring one nearer God. Second, some preaching may have unconsciously encouraged the idea that the main thing about Christianity is to be sure and be in the assembly on the first day of the week, regardless of whether the rest of the week is a blank in. so far as the duties and privileges of the Christian are concerned. We are not to forsake "our own assembling together, as the custom of some is" (Heb. 10: 25); although to miss a service sometimes is not to forsake the practice of assembling. We should assemble, and brethren should be exhorted to assemble. However, if our main stress is the idea of attending the service, or services, on Sunday, we have helped create the confused attitude that Christianity is more or less summed up in attending such meetings. Our stress should be on living the Christian life daily, on the every day walk with God, and thus on the practice of the principles which enable us to grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord. Attending the assembly is but one phase of our life. If we are living the life of faith we shall not neglect the privilege and the duty of assembling with the brethren. If Christians are convinced that their basic responsibilities are to live the Christian life and to lead others to Christ, if we realize we are to serve God and humanity, the problem of attending the services of the church has been solved. In a forthcoming book on *Evangelism: Every Member and Every Day*, it is stressed that if every Christian realized his responsibility to be a soul-winner, we have started on the way toward solving many of the problems in the church. Third, as this voice suggested, most of us need to give more thought to making the services more meaningful. It is my conviction that the basic way to do this is to start with a closer walk with God during the week. If we have been living with God, we shall be near Him in the assembly. But if we have not been walking in the light, we shall not be brought into a nearness to God just because we darken the door of a meeting house at an announced hour.

THE CHURCH AS GOD'S MANIFOLD WISDOM The author thinks that the word "church" is also used in another sense in the New Testament, although this sense implies and embraces the church as God's people. The word "church" is used to refer to the

embodiment of God's purpose and plan for the redemption of man. It embraces God's scheme of redemption. It is the church as the embodiment of the wisdom of God. Through the church as the unfoldment of God's wisdom, even angels can understand what they did not understand before. Paul said "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, was this grace given, to preach unto the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; and to make all men see what is the dispensation of the mystery which for ages *hath been hid in God* who created all things; to the intent that *now* unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord: in whom we have boldness and access in confidence through our faith in him. " (Eph. 3: 8-12, compare 1 Pet. 1: 10-12). As Bloomfield suggested, the founding, the propagating and governing of the church is the revelation of God's wisdom in redemption. Justin A. Smith suggested that the church is "alike the subject and the scene" of the "work of redemption".

In this passage the apostle is not speaking of the church as composed of people as a called out body, or as an assembly for worship. He is not speaking of the people as such, although their presence is implied. It is not through the church just as a body of people, or as an assembly gathered for worship, that the heavenly beings see the manifold wisdom of God. It is the church as the unfoldment of God's scheme of redemption, of the church as His plan of salvation, of the church as the manifestation of His hidden purpose, that the manifold wisdom of God is made known to heavenly and earthly beings. It is the church as the embodiment of God's eternal purpose (Eph. 1: 8-10), as the outworking of His plan of redemption for man. Although the church is to preach this gospel, and Paul preached this gospel (Eph. 3: 6-9), it is not to preaching to heavenly beings that reference was made when Paul said: "to the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God. " (Eph. 3: 10). The church does not preach to the heavenly beings (Eph. 3: 10; 1: 20), so it is not through the church's preaching of the gospel to heavenly beings that the principalities and powers in the heavenly places learn of the manifold wisdom of God. It is through the church as the unfoldment and embodiment of God's eternal scheme of redemption that all, including heavenly beings, can see the manifold wisdom of God. The church is this manifold wisdom of God embodied. Its very existence demonstrates and makes known the wonderful wisdom of God which contrived the way of salvation for sinful man.

In this sense the church is perfect, for it is the perfect embodiment and unfoldment of God's manifold wisdom. It is perfect as the scheme of redemption, and it involves all that God has revealed concerning its nature, its duties, its doctrine, and its destiny. This is the "mystery of his will" which had "been hid in God" (Eph. 1:9; 3: 9-10). Something

about it had been revealed in the Old Testament (Rom. 3: 21; 16: 25-26), and the angels desired to look into it. (1 Pet. 1: 10-12). How much more so did they desire to look into the fullness of the revelation of God's purpose which "now is manifested" through "the unsearchable riches of Christ" which Paul preached (Rom. 16: 26; Eph. 3: 8). Now all can know of God's purpose to sum up all things in Christ. (Eph. 1: 10).

A CHURCH CAN BECOME CORRUPT

A church does not forever belong to Christ because it has once belonged to Christ. The time can come when He will spew a church out of His mouth if it does not repent (Rev. 3: 14-16). However, the Lord is far more longsuffering than we are with others. On the other hand, some of us may continue to tolerate things long after the Lord has ceased to tolerate them. We need to study the word continually in order to have the longsuffering which the Lord authorizes, and to try to draw the line of fellowship where the Lord draws it. Here, as in other matters, we shall not do a perfect job; but we should keep trying to do better.

The church in Corinth is a case which proves that the Lord is longsuffering, and that a church may be corrupt in many things and still be a church. The apostle addressed them as "the church of God which is at Corinth, " even though they had the following things wrong with them (1 Cor. 1: 2-9). (1) Factions (1 Cor. 1: 10-13; 11: 18-22, 33-34). (2) The divisions were manifestations of their infancy and carnality. (1 Cor. 3: 1-3; 4: 6-14, 18-19). (3) Fornication (1 Cor. 5: 1-2). (4) Lawsuits (1 Cor. 6: 1-8). (5) Knowledge was not being used in love (1 Cor. 8). (6) Superstitions with reference to idols. It was needful to exhort them to "flee from idolatry. " (1 Cor. 8: 10-13; 10: 14). (7) Women were conducting themselves unseemly in the assembly. Paul pointed out that it was wrong to pray and to prophesy in improper attire (1 Cor. 11: 2-16), and later he showed them that the women were not to be singled out in the public service by making speeches, or even by asking questions in the assembly (1 Cor. 14: 26-36). (8) They had a meal in connection with the Lord's supper, and they were even unloving in connection with it (1 Cor. 11: 18-22). (9) They were misusing spiritual gifts and confusion reigned at times in the assembly (1 Cor. 14: 9, 19, 26-34). (10) Some were saying that there was no resurrection of the dead (1 Cor. 15: 12).

The church was still the Lord's church in spite of its corruptions. The Lord would not bear with them forever if they did not try to improve, but He was bearing with them at least for a time. They responded, in some measure at least, to Paul's instruction, rebuke, and exhortation.

The church in Thyatira had some commendable things (Rev. 2: 19), but they also tolerated a false prophetess and her idolatry (Rev. 2: 20). She had time to repent but did not do so, and the Lord punished her and her children (Rev. 2: 21-23). Not everyone went along with her or received her judgment (Rev. 2: 24-25).

A church may not receive certain brethren whom they should re-

ceive, and they may tolerate a dictator, and yet still be a church (3 John 9-10). They were still a church of the Lord even though they had allowed someone to make the lines of fellowship much narrower than they ought to have been.

The case in 3 John also proves that one can be cast "out of the church, " in the sense of a congregation and assembly (3 John 10). and yet not be cast out of the universal body of Christ.

There are corruptions in a congregation which do not bind others, and which they can oppose. However, if something is introduced which binds me if I continue with that assembly, they have preferred that thing to my fellowship and have excluded me. They are still a church of God but they are not one with which I can worship without doing something against my conscience.

Having discussed what the church is, let us ask: Is it possible for us to be members of the same church today, and of that church only? Can we today use the word "church" to refer to that to which it referred in the first century?

CHAPTER III FOOTNOTES

1*New Testament Words*, London: SCM Press Ltd., 1964, 69-70.

2*A Theological Word Book of the Bible*, New York: The Macmillan Co., 1956, 47.

3Vergilius Ferm, Editor, *An Encyclopedia of Religion*, New York: The Philosophical Library, 1945, 169.

4Parks, 71.

5Fox, 10.

6M. C. Kurfees, "Bible Things by Bible Names Further Considered, " *Gospel Advocate*, May 3, 1956, 414-415.

7"Bible Things by Bible Names--Designations of the Church, " *Gospel Advocate*, May 17, 1956, 462.

8O'Dowd, 147.

Can We Be Members of the New Testament Church Today?

The restoration movement is sometimes spoken of as a movement designed to restore the New Testament church. This is an accurate statement if viewed from the standpoint of certain usages of the word church in the New Testament, but it is inaccurate if one has reference to another use of the term church. The term church is used in some cases to refer to the universal body of Christ which was established on the first Pentecost after Christ's resurrection. In this sense the church was established once for all. Thus one of the voices is right in maintaining that the church never ceased to exist.¹ The reign of Christ, which began on the first Pentecost after Christ's resurrection, continues until all enemies are conquered. The last enemy is death. It will be conquered at the end of time (Acts 2: 34-35; 1 Cor. 15: 24-28; Rev. 20: 9-14). This reign has not ceased. It was not destroyed by the apostasy. Therefore, it is impossible to restore the universal body of Christ. To restore it would be to imply that it had ceased to exist, and that it needed to be brought back to earth. But His reign has not ceased, and it does not need to be started anew on this earth. To speak of the restoration of the church in this sense is to speak unscripturally.

The church can exist without existing in an organized form. In other words, when one obeys the gospel he is added to the church whether there is a local congregation there or not. The eunuch did not have to report to a local congregation in order to become a member of the body of Christ. He became a member of the body of Christ when he was baptized into Christ. (Acts 8: 37-39). Thus we are convinced that there have always been Christians, though we may not know their names and addresses.

If we knew enough about history, it could be that we could locate congregations which were as loyal to the Lord as were some of the seven church of Asia with whom the Lord was bearing; how long He would bear with some is another matter. For in some cases He indicated that His forbearance was running out. (Rev. 2: 5, 16; 3: 16).

Furthermore, one cannot accurately speak of restoring the church in the sense of restoring to the earth the preaching of the gospel. Although some have perverted the gospel, the gospel itself has never been taken from the earth. It has always been here in the word of God. Often men may have failed to heed its preaching, but whenever men read God's word, God and His prophets spoke to them. (Matt. 22: 31; Lk. 16: 29-31; Acts 13: 27). As surely as those who had the writings of Moses and the prophets had them, and should have listened to them, just so surely we have the apostles and prophets of the New Testament and should listen

to them as they preach the gospel. Just as surely as Moses was preached when His word was read (Acts 15: 21), just so surely Christ is preached when His word is read. And His word has been heard in this way down through the centuries. We cannot restore the gospel to this earth, for it has existed on this earth since it first began to be preached.

However, we can start preaching it again in places where it has not been preached for a long time; or in places where it has never been preached. We can restore the New Testament church in the sense of planting congregations in places where they once existed, but now have long since gone into apostasy. There may be members of the church in such areas without the church existing in a congregational form. There may be some worshipping assemblies in various localities which need to eliminate certain innovations from their worship services. We can speak of the restoration of the simplicity and purity of New Testament worship services even though there are congregations in those communities; but congregations which are doing some things in their services they ought not to do.

What we are engaged in, to put it another way, is not a restoration of the church but an enlargement in given localities of the borders of the kingdom of God. Apostasy did something to the church but it did not destroy it. The church, to be destroyed, would have to be destroyed from the foundation up. But who has the power to destroy the foundation which is Christ Himself? Or, to put it in the way Paul described it to the Ephesians, who can destroy the foundation of the Apostles and the prophets with Christ Jesus the chief corner stone? It is on this foundation that we are built as a growing temple (Eph. 2: 20-22-). When a person is converted he is added as a living stone in this spiritual house, this growing temple, of the Lord (Eph. 2: 20-22; 1 Pet. 2: 5, 9). What did the apostasy do? It did not destroy the foundation, or those who were already built on it and who remained faithful unto death. It did, however, slow up the building of the temple because the apostasy slowed up the preaching of the gospel and the converting of people to Christ. However, at any time that anyone obeyed the gospel the Lord added him to the church. Thus at any time or place that individuals turn to the New Testament gospel, and obey it, they are built into this temple. In this sense of the word church we could not possibly restore the church. All that we can do is to help build the temple of God by converting people to Christ. Instead of restoring the church we are enlarging the borders of the everlasting kingdom which cannot be destroyed by the enemies of Christ. We are not restorers of this temple of the Lord, but bricklayers who lay another brick every time we convert someone to Christ. However, we are but workers for the actual bricklayer. We teach people the gospel, and when they obey the gospel Christ adds them to His church. He is the builder and bricklayer who thus builds His church.

Instead of restoring the kingdom, we plant the seed of the kingdom

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so that men may come into that kingdom over which Christ has reigned since His ascension and coronation (Heb. 1: 3, 13; Acts 2: 34-36). We are planters, not restorers.

We can, however, establish the church in that we can be used of God to establish congregations in given localities.

BACKWARD LOOK?

It is asserted that instead of being up-to-date we have our "eyes on the past, " and are "more concerned with 'old paths, ' than in directing people to paths they can follow successfully in our modern age. " Some are accused of not having "advanced far from the primitive tribal faith in the witch doctor. " ² Because we seek "to live by a document of two thousands years ago, " we are "primarily retrospective" and live with ancient issues, old questions, and in the "backwater of life" out of touch with "the contemporary urgencies. " ³

What should our look be? It should not be a look in one direction but in many directions. We should have the backward look, the upward look, the inward look, the outward look, and the forward look.

First, we should have the backward look. In dealing with the Jews under the Old Covenant, Jesus constantly appealed to the past to condemn the present byways into which the people were wandering. As long as they were under the Old Testament, the revelation of God in the Old Testament was to guide them. No matter how long that dispensation lasted, they needed to look back to the revelation made in the past. Their inspired prophets not only revealed things by inspiration, but by inspiration of the same Spirit they called on people to walk in the law which had been delivered by Moses (Malachi 4: 4). Too many times they refused to walk in the old paths. (Jer. 6: 19). When the Sadducees asked Jesus a question, He showed that their misconception about the future life was due to their ignorance of the power of God and the Scriptures. In proving that their view of the nature of man was wrong, He appealed to something which had been revealed and written many centuries before. Furthermore, He said that through this written word God was speaking to them. When they read it they were listening to God's voice (Matt. 22: 29, 31-32). Although some of them may have thought that their traditions were more modern than the word delivered through Moses, and therefore more suited to the contemporary urgencies than were books hundreds of years old, Jesus said that they made void the word of God in order to keep their traditions. And as an example, He quoted one of the laws of Moses (Mk. 7: 1-12). And Abraham said that those who were under the law should listen to the inspired voices from the past. These voices were in their writings; for this was the way in which they had Moses and the prophets, and it was to their word that they should have listened (Lk. 16: 29-31).

We are under the same reign of Christ which began on the first Pentecost after Christ's resurrection (Acts 2: 16-17; Heb. 1: 1-2; Acts 2:34-36; 1 Cor. 15:24-28). All the truth was revealed in the first century, and

we should look back to, accept, live by, and contend for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints (June 3). We must look to the past in order that we may know the straight and narrow way which leadeth unto life eternal.

Second, we must have the upward look to Jesus Christ who is the author and finisher of our faith (Heb. 12: 2). "If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated on the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth. For ye died, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also with him be manifested in glory. " (Col. 3: 1-4). Seeing Him who is invisible will help us to endure as we look beyond the moment and beyond the material (Heb. 11: 27).

Third, we must have the inward look wherein we look to ourselves, and prove ourselves, whether we are in the faith. "... looking carefully lest there be any man that falleth short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby the many be defiled. " (Heb. 12: 15). "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. " (1 Cor. 10: 12). When we restore those who have fallen we must, among other things, look to ourselves lest we also be tempted (Gal. 6: 1). John said: "Look to yourselves, that ye lose not the things which we have wrought, but that ye receive a full reward. " (2 John 8).

Fourth, we must have the outward look, (a) We must look circum-spectly lest we walk in the wrong paths. "Look therefore carefully how ye walk, not as unwise, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. " (Eph. 5: 15, 16). (b) We must have the outward look to the field white unto harvest (Compare John 4: 35).

Fifth, we must have the forward look to the future coming of Christ and our eternal reward. We can make difficult choices today if we, like Moses, look "unto the recompense of reward. " (Heb. 11: 26). We realize that the eternal salvation shall be revealed in the last time (1 Pet. 1: 5), when the Lord Jesus Christ brings rest to the saints and tribulation to the wicked (2 Thess. 1: 3-12). "For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. " (Phi. 3: 20). "... so Christ also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, shall appear a second time, apart from sin, to them that wait for him, unto salvation. " (Heb. 9: 28). "But, according to his promise, we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for these things, give diligence that ye may be found in peace, without spot and blameless in his sight. " (2 Pet. 3: 13-14).

Without the backward look to the faith once for all delivered to the saints, we cannot have the proper position from which to take the other

looks. But when we take the backward look to the word of God, it teaches us to take all of the other looks that are involved in living for Christ in this present world. Let us contend earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints, and instead of being led away, let us build up ourselves on our "most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, " and keep ourselves "in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. " (Jude 1: 20-21). In doing this, we shall not have to look for the fearful expectation of judgment (Heb. 10: 27), but for the new heavens and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. (2 Pet. 3: 12-14).

RESTORATION SLOGAN

Preachers "solemnly intone such incrustated platitudes of the party as, We speak where the Bible speaks and keep silent where it is silent, " but in reality we do neither. ⁴ And even if we did, it is asserted that the principle is not valid because God still speaks, and the New Testament church looked forward whereas we look backward. ⁵ In the first place, let us freely grant that none of us have done a perfect job in this matter. As a matter of fact, for decades the author, not to mention others, has emphasized that the "we" ought to be taken out of the slogan. ⁶ It is far better, for several reasons, to say "speak where the Bible speaks, be silent where the Bible is silent. " (a) With the "we" in the slogan, it smacks of a proud boast. The other statement is more in line with the spirit of humility and with reality, (b) By taking the "we" out, the slogan is presented as a challenge and as a Biblical principle. It cannot be construed as a brag that we have obtained perfection in our teaching. It recommends a Biblical principle, instead of ourselves, (c) When stated as a challenge and an obligation it will make a deeper impression on us. It continually reminds us that we still have progress to make; instead of lulling us into a false sense of security that we have already arrived in knowledge and teaching, (d) We have not always spoken where the Bible speaks nor been silent where the Bible is silent; as is evident from differences among us, and from the fact that all of us have made some changes on at least some matters, (e) When it is stated as an obligation it places the responsibility not only on us but also on those to whom we preach. It is just as obligatory for them, as for us, to speak as do the oracles of God. (f) The latter statement of it invites the examination of the proper subject. It is true that we should examine ourselves by the light of the Bible, and invite others to do likewise, in order that we may defend truth, and in order that we may be more perfectly instructed in the way of the Lord. But when we say "we" those who hear us are likely to examine us, and us only. This examination may be made not to learn truth but to see if they can trip us up on some point. But when we say that men should speak as the oracles of God, the challenge and the obligation is for them to examine themselves also in the light of the Bible.

Second, to freely admit our imperfection is not to admit that the

principle is wrong. The apostle Peter instructs men to speak as the oracles of God. (1 Pet. 4: 11) This same principle is implied in the fact that men are to observe all that Jesus commanded (Matt. 28: 20), that the church should continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2: 42), and that all the truth is contained in the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints (John 16: 12-14; Jude 3); therefore, we should search for all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge in Jesus Christ (Col. 2: 2-6, 9-10). Thus we look back to the faith in order that we may have the right standpoint from which to take the inward look, the outward look, the upward look, and the forward look. Since there are no inspired men today, since all the truth was revealed in the first century, God speaks to us today through the inspired oracles in the Bible. It is important to speak as His oracles in order that we shall be teaching His will rather than the will of man. And when we find that we have not spoken as we ought on certain matters, we should change our teaching and bring it into harmony with God's will. Although we may know many things, there is always room for us to learn more.

Third, speaking as the oracles of God includes not merely its express precepts but also its great principles. It does not mean, however, that we cannot condemn certain things which are not mentioned by name in the Bible. Some have assumed that you are not speaking as the oracles of God if you mention that some things, which are not mentioned in it by name, are wrong, and some things are right. In other words, there are things which may be approved by principles which are found in the Bible, and there are many things which may be disapproved by certain principles.

Fourth, in some cases the silence of the Scriptures authorizes an act and in some cases it forbids an act. What is the harmony of this seemingly contradictory statement? When the Bible gives a general principle or command covering a general area, everything in that general area is authorized unless a specific thing is expressly excluded. On the other hand when the Bible is specific concerning a matter, the command authorizes only that particular thing and nothing more. It does not authorize whatever is not specifically included. For example, God was specific as to the wood out of which the ark was to be made, and Noah followed His specifications in this and other matters (Gen. 6: 13-22; 7: 5). Moses was instructed, concerning the tabernacle, to "make all things according to the pattern that was showed thee in the mount. " (Heb. 8: 5). Strange fire was not to be offered on the altar (Lev. 10: 1-3), and priests were to be taken only from the specified tribe (Heb. 7: 13-14).

It is important to remember that the slogan of the restoration movement was put forth in contrast to a reformation movement. It emphasized, to those who were trying to reform denominational churches, that the real goal should be to abandon denominationalism, and other departures from the word of God. and to become members of the New Testament church. Instead of trying to reform churches established by

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men, we should go back to the fountain of truth in the Bible and drink from its waters. Instead of trying to reform a human organization, the restoration movement emphasized the obligation of being members of Christ's church and of His church only.

Speaking as the oracles of God is the only approach that can be made if we are to avoid making void God's word through the traditions of men. We must not leave the impression that the voice of man is just as good and just as authoritative as the voice of God in His oracles.

RESTORE EXTERNALS ONLY?

It is argued that we today are concerned to restore merely external marks as the means of identifying the true church, but that it is an inward matter since men are not transformed by outward marks. ' However, to be New Testament Christians today we must recognize that we should not merely have the form but also the power of godliness, and that the form will not substitute for the spirit. To this charge of externalism only, we point out: First, does this voice deny that there are any external marks of the church? If he does, he cannot even test it by one's manner of life; for the manner of life is manifested in outward marks. Second, we recognize that the outward must be the expression of the inward. But this does not mean that we should repudiate baptism as a burial and resurrection, or eliminate the physical elements of the Lord's Supper. One is not observing the Lord's Supper if he does not do it from the heart and one is not being baptized into Christ if it is not done from the heart. But doing it from the heart does not lead one to deny or to neglect that which is done from the heart. Third, the same "voice" maintained that the true marks are the presence of the Spirit of Christ and the fruits of the Spirit. But the fruit is manifested in the external qualities. We would not make a separation between the inward and the outward. It is possible that one could outwardly seemingly exhibit the fruit of the spirit, for a period of time, and yet it be a false front. But this is far from denying that the fruit of the Spirit has definite outward manifestations. Fourth, we agree that unless there is a personal encounter with God in Christ the outward marks mean nothing. But if one claims, on the basis of an assumed personal encounter, that he can ignore all outward marks he has arrogated to himself the position of supreme authority and has denied the authority of the scriptures of God. Thus what started out as a supposed emphasis on internal spiritual development ends up in the height of spiritual arrogance and anarchy which is rooted in human pride. The author and many others have long emphasized that if one has external marks, but does not have the internal attitudes, then these external marks do not make one a Christian. Further, we must not fail to emphasize the distinguishing characteristic to which the Lord calls special attention; the love of disciple for disciple. (John 13: 34-: 35). This, of course, is a standard that we often fear to face, but we must both face and grow in this love.

THE FAITH UNDER FIRE
RESTORATION UNDESIRABLE'

One voice thought it was both futile and undesirable to restore the New Testament church "Why should the church of the twentieth century want to be like the one of the first⁹ That church became what it was in order to meet its needs and exigencies, to attempt to follow its exact form today is to deny the urgency we ought to feel for meeting the needs of exigencies of our own day " We need its spirit but to try to live by its word, the Scriptures, or letter as he calls it, 'is lethal indeed.'⁸

Our first observation is that one cannot know anything about the spirit of the early church except as it is conveyed in the "letter, in the written word

Second, if the written word is as unreliable and uncertain as this voice says it is, ⁹ we cannot have any definite idea as to what was the spirit of the first century church

Third, why should the church today want to be like the first century church in its spirit? Why restore its spirit, which he says we can see at work in the first century ¹⁰ Why is not its spirit just as irrelevant to our needs and exigencies as any other part of the New Testament? For he charged that the concept of restoration is futile, undesirable lethal, and leads to fossilization. "Restorationism is the effort to catch a historical process at one moment of its evolution to fossilize it at that point for eternal duplication"¹¹ Why not assert that our spirit has evolved far beyond the spirit of Christ of the first century, and that to go back to His spirit is to get only an embalmed spirit? We have developed beyond, and outgrown, its 'letter' and its 'spirit' which are now but fossilized relics from an irrevocable and antiquated past. On this voices logic, not only would New Testament Christianity be an evolutionary product beyond which we have evolved, but also the Christ of the first century was the product of an evolutionary development and we have out-evolved Him also

Fourth, we should not merely want to be like the church of the first century, but we should want to be members of the same church of which people were members in the first century. —the church which is the universal body of Christ. Why should anyone today want to accept the same Lord whom they accepted in the first century? The same gospel or grace of God? The same great spiritual and moral principles? The same will of God? Why? Because Christ is the Savior and His will is for us also. We cannot reject the church which is Christ's body and the will of the Head of the church for the church without also rejecting the Lordship of Jesus. Why call Him Lord and do not the things which He saith? (Lk 6: 46).

The entire matter boils down to whether God has spoken; whether His word is authoritative and whether we live under the same dispensation under which they lived in the first century. God's word is authoritative and thus if we reject Christ and His word we shall be judged by

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that word in the last day (John 12 48) That which is to be the standard of judgment in the last day, should be the standard by which we should live today We shall be judged by the same word by which the people of the first century will be judged God has given us full assurance, that He will judge the world by Christ, in that He raised Christ from the dead (Acts 17 30-32)

This particular voice operates on the assumption that the word of God is like the flesh of man and that it withereth, therefore, the word of the first century is a withered word, a fossilized word, which we should not feel bound to follow today Peter assures us, however, that the word which he preached is not transient and that it abideth forever We are begotten by this word, just as they were, and should follow it today (1 Pet. 1:22-25) We need to plant this same word today in good and honest hearts (Lk 8 11-15), and it will bring forth after its own kind, just as it did in the first century

We should want to be of the same church which was established in the first century, because we are under the same dispensation, the same rule of Christ, under which they lived God speaks to us today through His Son whose word was confirmed by them that heard Him, and we, too, should continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine which is the faith once for all delivered to the saints (Heb. 1:1-2, Acts 2:16-17, Heb 2:1-4, Acts 2 42, Jude 3) The reign of Christ which was proclaimed on Pentecost lasts until the end of time (Acts 2:34-35, 1 Cor. 15:24-28, Rev. 20:11-15)

Fifth, how are we to determine what are our real needs and exigencies, and in the light of what principles they should be met, unless we rely on the authoritative word of God⁹ We must go to the past, to the faith once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3), in order to learn the living word which endures Without this word we might conclude that our primary need is for bread, and that man should live by bread alone (Contrast Matt 4 4) Without this word, we might conclude that we Should not seek first the kingdom of heaven (Contrast Matt 6 33) Without this word, we might think that our needs and exigencies are concerned with the present life and that there is no life to come But through that word we learn that Christ has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel (2 Tim. 1: 10)

RESTORE WHICH CHURCH?

A voice asserted that "To talk about 'restoring' the early church requires that we designate *which* early church—for example, the one of Corinthians, or the one of the pastoral letters "¹² This assertion involves a total misconception of what is meant by the restoration movement This voice thinks that we ought to restore the prophetic faith and that we today ought to have the spirit of early Christianity ¹³ He should be asked Which spirit? The spirit of Diotrephes? (3 John 9), the spirit of the immoral Corinthian (1 Cor 5 1), etc ⁵ These types of spirit were in the church in the first century If he states that this is not the spirit

which we must restore, he is admitting that there is a standard in the light of which we are to make evaluations. This voice, to put this same point another way, thinks that we ought to be Christians. We could ask: Should we be Christians like Diotrephes? Again, he would appeal to some standard to say this is not the kind of Christian we ought to be, and thus Diotrephes was falling below what Christians ought to be.

It should be obvious to one who has studied the Bible very much, that when we talk about being Christians today we are not talking about being like some particular Christian in his shortcomings in the first century; but of living our lives by the faith in, love for, and loyalty to Christ and His word. When we plant New Testament congregations today, we do not try to duplicate the various congregations in the first century in the sense of being like their defects and shortcomings. But we should want to be like them in that we belong to the same Lord, have submitted to His will, and are members of the same church or body of Christ. Although we should continue in the apostles' doctrine, as did the church in Jerusalem (Acts 2: 42), this does not mean that we try to be like them in neglecting certain widows as they did for a time. However, we should be like them in trying to deal with a problem when it comes to our attention (Acts 6).

Should we want to be just like the Corinthian church? Certainly not. We are to follow Paul as he followed Christ (1 Cor. 4: 16-17; 11: 1). We should follow their example only as they obeyed Christ. We should not copy their imperfections but we should try to be the church which Paul presented to them, and to others, in the Corinthian epistle as well as elsewhere. We should strive to be without division; without immorality; without jealousy; without lawsuits; etc.; and to follow the more excellent way of love. We should try to be the same kind of church that they should have striven to be, i. e. the church as revealed in the will of God. We should not seek the low level of spiritual growth that some congregations and individuals were on, but should live by the word of truth by which they should have lived.

RESTORATION CONTRADICTION?

It is said that we contradict ourselves since we claim to have restored the church, and at the same time propose to restore it.¹⁴ Because one has gone back to what the Bible teaches on entrance into the church, how we should approach God in worship, and in other matters, it does not mean that he has arrived at perfect knowledge and perfect practice. There is always room for growth. The Christians in Corinth were members of God's church; and yet they needed to realize more fully its nature, and to more completely embody in their faith and practice the Lord's teaching concerning the church and their walk and worship as members of His body.

Furthermore, one can establish New Testament congregations in a community and urge other people to return to the old paths. One should

be identified with Christ's church while urging others to be likewise identified.

RESTORE OURSELVES?

It is maintained that " 'Restorationism' ceases to be a movement when it separates itself from the institutions and the society it seeks to restore. The vacuum created by the exclusivism of the Churches of Christ leaves nothing to be restored but themselves. "¹⁵ This statement is not clear to this author, for we are not seeking to restore various institutions of society. We are seeking to plant the seed of the kingdom, to lead people to Christ, to establish New Testament churches, and to encourage people to be like Christ. In doing this, we necessarily separate ourselves from institutions which are contrary to these things. When we obey the gospel, we are in a real sense separated from the world, but not from society for we are to be the light of the world and the salt of the earth. We are not of the world, yet we embrace the world in our love, and it is the sphere of our labors to bring men to Christ.

RESTORATION VERSUS CHANGE?

One critic charged that the church opposes changes. He said he did not mean that the eternal verities are in a state of constant flux "but it does suggest that these lasting values must constantly be reoriented in a changing world, just as Jesus did for the religion in His day. "¹⁶

In the first place, there is change which is based on principles and this is change for the better. Our change should be through growth in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. In Christ are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge and we are to grow through being rooted in Christ. As Paul told the Colossians: "For I would have you know how greatly I strive for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh; that their hearts may be comforted, they being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, that they may know the mystery of God, even Christ, in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden. This I say, that no one may delude you with persuasiveness of speech. For though I am absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ. As therefore ye received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and builded up in him, and established in your faith, even as ye were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. Take heed lest there shall be any one that maketh spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ: for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and in him ye are made full, who is the head of all principality and power" (Col. 2: 1-10).

Second, should we change religion for our day just as Jesus did in His day? Jesus fulfilled the law and the prophets (Matt. 5: 17-18). He brought in a new covenant or new reign; He was sent of God to make possible the new covenant; and He sent his apostles and prophets to

proclaim this new covenant. This is the final, everlasting covenant. There is no other covenant to succeed it on this earth. Does this voice think he is inspired as was Jesus? Does he think that the way was prepared for him by prophecy and by John the Baptist so that he and others might bring in a change similar to that which was brought by Jesus? Who will be the mediator of this changed religion?

Third, if eternal verities are not in a state of constant flux, why do we need to have such a change as took place in the days of Jesus? What we need are the changes produced by the faith once for all delivered to the saints.

Fourth, as G. C. Brewer pointed out, we may orient or re-orient ourselves with reference to facts and to the truth, but we certainly do not need to re-orient the eternal verities or eternal truths. Instead we should "buy the truth and sell it not. " (Prov. 23: 23).

UNCHRISTIANIZE OTHERS?

We are sometimes told that in maintaining we ought to be Christians only, we are automatically unchristianizing others. As we have already pointed out, we cannot of our own authority lay down the conditions of entrance into Christ's church, and thus we cannot Christianize or unchristianize anyone. Is another person stripped of his Christianity because you claim to be a Christian? Furthermore, we claim no patent on the Bible. Others have the same right and obligation that we have to study and to practice what it teaches and we urge them to do this.

DENOMINATIONALISM INEVITABLE?

There are those who maintain that it is impossible to be just a Christian today. One cannot be simply a member of Christ's church, he must be a member of some denomination. One voice put it this way: "The word refers primarily to that which has been named. Since the Church of Christ has clearly given itself a name (printed on deeds and insurance policies, painted on churches, chiseled in limestone over college entrance-ways), it is a denominated thing—it is a denomination. To be quite honest with this word would be a first step toward correcting that religious arrogance which cripples so many of our people. "¹⁷ If an individual simply speaks of the church, it would be concluded that he belongs to the "church" church. There is no way to keep individuals, who have a sectarian outlook, from viewing the use of Biblical terms as sectarian. If one means by expression "church of Christ" what the New Testament means, he is not using the term in a denominational sense nor is he making the church a denomination.

When speaking of denominationalism, it should be quite obvious that we are not discussing whether something can be designated, or named. To be called a Christian does not mean that one has become denominational; although he is denominated by the name Christian. Historically considered, and as currently used, denominationalism implies that somehow with the approval of God the church of the Lord is

divided into different and differing religious bodies with many different doctrines, organizations, conditions of entrance, ways of worship and such like.

Because it is not easy to be just a Christian, it does not mean that it is either impossible or unscriptural to be just a Christian. It is not easy to live the Christian life, but this does not mean that one is not Christian just because he is called a Christian.

Furthermore, it is impossible to get those who have a sectarian concept of Christianity to view you in other than denominational terms even though you are a member of Christ's church and His church only.

It may be argued that since division has come it is impossible today to be just a member of Christ's church. It was possible in the first century before denominationalism arose, but now that it has arisen everyone must be denominational. But how is it that someone else's denominationalism makes a denominationalist out of me? If someone else is not a Christian, does this mean that I cannot be a Christian? They may make it harder, but not impossible, for me to be a Christian. What did it take to make people members of Christ's church in the first century? If one does what they did, in submission to the same Lord, the Lord adds him to the same church. And if the individual is content to stay where the Lord places him, he will not join a denominational body. It is impossible to be anything other than just a Christian if one follows just the word of God and abides in Christ into whom he was baptized.

Division was arising in Corinth. The fact, however, that some were of Paul did not make others of Peter or of Apollos. The Cephasites did not force others to become Paulites. Those who refused to be of Paul, Apollos or Cephas were simply of Christ. Some have said that they were the worst group of all, but no proof is offered for such a charge. Of whom should they have been? Of Christ; for Christ is not divided, and thus they should not be divided and be of Paul. They should be of Christ for He was crucified for them, and into His name they were baptized. Those who were of Christ were of the one of whom they should have been, and of whom all should be. The Paulites might say that they, too, belonged to Christ. And they did, for they had been baptized into Christ. But they were wrong in starting to build a party around Paul in the body of Christ. They should have been of Christ, and Christ only, and not of Paul. In no other way can the Lord's prayer for unity be answered (John 17: 20-21).

SECTARIAN TO BE SEPARATED?

It is argued that the very claim to be non-sectarian "is in itself sectarian" for you thus distinguish yourselves from those who are sectarian.¹⁸ Sect comes from a word which meant "following" or "faction". "In religion the term has indicated such a group or following *within* an organized religion (e. g., Pharisees, Sadducees, etc., in Judaism). In Catholic usage, essentially synonymous with heresy, i. e. a religious body which has set itself up independently of the divinely established Church.

For the several established churches of Protestantism, any nonconformist or dissenting group. Used roughly by other Protestant churches with reference to smaller, more recently organized Christian bodies.... The term has now received fairly sharp sociological definition... So denned, a sect is a schismatic group springing from, and developing in opposition to, an organized church and becoming independent of it.¹⁹

How reasonable is it to assert that if one maintains that he is not something, his very claim is proof that he is that which he denies? If one maintains that he is not a Christian, does that prove he is a Christian? If one maintains that he is a sectarian, does that prove he is not a sectarian? If one claims that he is not a Pharisee, does that make him a Pharisee? If one claims that he is a Pharisee, does that mean he is not a Pharisee? Do any of the voices deny that they are Pharisees? Do any of them claim that they are Pharisees? When this voice asserts that we are sectarians, does it prove that we are not sectarians? It is just as reasonable to assert that a person is always the opposite of what others accuse him, as to indicate that a person is the opposite of what he claims to be. In both cases, it takes more than the claim, but the presence of the claim is not equal to the proof that one is that which he denies himself to be.

The apostle Paul condemned the very roots of sectarianism, such as an unscriptural attachment to men (1 Cor. 1: 10-13). In opposing sectarianism, and in maintaining that there is but one body (Eph. 4: 4), did Paul become a sectarian? In teaching people to be baptized into Christ (Rom. 6: 2-5; Gal. 3: 20-27), was Paul sectarian? One voice indicated that to require baptism is a form of creedalistic sectarianism.²⁰ In other words, it is sectarian to follow the Bible!

In the first century those who were members of just the one body were not sectarians. Even though there were Jews who viewed them as a sect, which was everywhere spoken against, their misunderstanding did not make it a sect (Acts 28: 22). What they viewed as a sect was God's church. If one obeys the same Lord in the same way that they did in the first century, it will bring one into the body of Christ, and not into a sect.

SECTARIANISM SCRIPTURAL?

There are some who charge that the church is a sect, but that sectarianism is scriptural. Their criticism of us is not that we are a sect, but that we are so blind or perverse that we will not admit that we are a sect. It is urged that Paul, while a member of the church, belonged to a sect for he said: "I am a Pharisee." (Acts 23: 6). But what did Paul mean? Did he mean that he was a self-righteous Pharisee whom Jesus condemned? (Matt. 23; Lk. 18: 9-14). Obviously not. Therefore, it is clear that there is some limitation to Paul's use of the term. The context shows that Paul meant that in contrast with the Sadducees he stood with the Pharisees in the beliefs concerning angels, spirits, and the resurrection. "But when Paul perceived that the one part were Sad-

ducees and the other Pharisees, he cried out in the council, Brethren, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees: touching the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question. And when he had so said, there arose a dissension between the Pharisees and Sadducees; and the assembly was divided. For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit; but the Pharisees confess both. And there arose a great clamor: and some of the scribes of the Pharisees' part stood up, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: and what if a spirit hath spoken to him, or an angel?" (Acts 23: 6-9). Paul was a Pharisee in this sense, but not that he belonged to them as a sectarian group who made void God's word through traditions (Mk. 7: 1-12); who said and did not (Matt. 23: 1-4); and who possessed the qualities on which Jesus pronounced the seven "woes".

The apostle Paul could not have condemned division in the church in Corinth (1 Cor. 1: 10-13) and then have sanctioned the building of a sect in the church of the Lord. Thus he was not teaching that there is a sect in the church entitled the "Pharisees" and that he, Paul, while a member of that church built up that sect.

The same voice thought that we should call ourselves "simple Campbellites, " recognize ourselves as a sect, and realize that we "are neither the beginning nor the end of Christ's Church. "²¹ To this we say: First, sectarianism is wrong. The apostle Paul rebuked the very beginnings of one of the sources of sectarianism when he censured the Corinthian Christians for their division (1 Cor. 1: 10-13). How much more is the open division of today rebuked? This division was rebuked in three questions, (a) Is Christ divided? The obvious answer is: "No, Christ is not divided. " Paul said: "I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all. " (Eph. 4: 1-(i). Since Christ is not divided, they should not be divided; but should be of Christ, (b) Was Paul crucified for you? If Paul had been crucified for us it would have been right, it would have been necessary, for us to be of Paul; for in such a case he would have purchased us with his own blood. But Paul was not crucified for us, therefore we should not be of Paul. We should be of Christ, for He died for us and purchased us with His own blood (Acts 20: 28). (c) Were we baptized into the name of Paul? If we were, we would belong to him, for one enters into the possession of the one into whose name he is baptized. But we were not baptized into Paul's name, but into Christ's name, therefore, we should be of Christ. If we could be of any human being we could be of such a wonderful Christian as the great apostle Paul. If we cannot be of him, and we cannot with the Lord's approval, how can we be of any unin-

spired man? Since one cannot be of Paul, there is no possible ground on which one could justify being of Campbell.

Second, we cannot be of Campbell because he did not establish a denominational body. He expressly disclaimed having established a denomination. To the Editors of the Commercial Bulletin he wrote: " 'You have done me, gentlemen, too much honor in saying that I am the 'founder' of the denomination, quite numerous and respectable in many portions of the West, technically known as 'Christians, ' but more commonly as 'Campbellites. ' "

" 'I have always repudiated all *human heads* and *human names* for the people of the Lord, and shall feel very thankful if you will correct the erroneous impression which your article may have made in thus representing me as the founder of a religious denomination. ' "22

Third, if Alexander Campbell had founded a denomination, I certainly am not a member of it. What terms of admission did he by his human authority lay down? I have never complied with human conditions of admission into any religious body. Having obeyed the same Lord in the same way that the people did in the first century, when they came into Christ, this made me a member of the same body of Christ of which they were members. No one can show anything that I did. in coming into Christ which was on Campbell's authority instead of on the authority of Jesus Christ. Following Christ and His word can no more make one a Campbellite today than it could make one in the first century.

Fourth, if it be stated that I believe some of the same things that Campbell believed, it does not prove that I am a Campbellite. To believe what the inspired apostle Paul believed does not make one a Paulite. If Campbell and I agree on what the Bible teaches on certain matters, it does not make one the disciple of the other. There is nothing which I believe or practice which I do on the authority of Alexander Campbell.

Fifth, Alexander Campbell did establish congregations through the planting of the word of God into good and honest hearts which responded in obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ. Since a congregation did not become a Paulite congregation because it was established by the inspired apostle Paul, how can Campbell's preaching of the word, and the establishment of congregations, make them Campbellite congregations? If one of the voices led someone to Christ, would that mean that the individual whom he taught had become his "ite"?

Sixth, of "Campbellite, " W. E. Garrison wrote: "A term sometimes applied to Disciples of Christ a) whimsically, by themselves: but ignorantly, by the non-church public: c) viciously, as well as ignorantly, by the less enlightened members of the less enlightened sects. "23

Sixth, a congregation, or a group of congregations, in a given country or age does not constitute the beginning or the end of Christ's church. The church begun on the first Pentecost after Christ's resurrection and will continue on earth until the end of time when Christ comes to

receive the church unto Himself in eternal glory. Since any individual or group of individuals have the same right and duty, as any other individual or group of individuals, to hear and obey the gospel, they come into Christ's church when they obey the gospel. They do not have to clear this with you, or with me, or with any human authority.

SECTARIANISM WRONG⁹

Some will denounce us as a sect and indicate that sectarianism is wrong. They then acknowledge that they have left us and become identified with another sect, as they would put it. They may feel that they are with a sect which is not as narrow minded as we are, but they still view themselves as belonging to a sect. If sectarianism is wrong, and we are to be criticized for being sectarian, then why did they join a sectarian organization? If one proves by the Bible that lying is wrong, and then proves that you are a liar, does it make an honest man out of both of you if you prove that he is a liar also? No! It means that there are two dishonest men who need to do right. One does not prove that I am wrong in being against sectarianism, if he can prove that I am a sectarian. I may be inconsistent, or even hypocritical, but my attitude and conduct do not make it right for one to be sectarian.

As G. C. Brewer asked concerning two of the voices who published their indictment of us years ago: "Did they attack the plea for un-denominational Christianity? Did they show that it is impossible today for people to become and be simple Christians—nothing more and nothing less? Did they even attempt to show that men may not now become and be just such as Paul was? Did they argue that faith in Christ followed by a faithful obedience to his word will *not now save a soul*? Did they try to convince us that we are wrong in following the teaching of the New Testament and in doing that which—and only that which the New Testament churches practiced?

"These are the principles from which they had departed and which they now assumed themselves able to overthrow!

"Did they do it?

"No, they did not! They evaded the issue. They treated the *church of Christ* as a sect and then found fault with that sect—not for being a sect, of course, but for being too narrow a sect to accommodate" them.²⁴

None of us have to go into a denominational church in order to accept any truth which we do not now see. Acceptance of additional truths will not make us anything other than better informed Christians.

The attitude expressed by some of the voices, in their words and actions, is that since some have a sectarian concept of the church, they are justified in joining a sectarian church. Since some are of Paul, they think that it is right for them, as it were, to be of Apollos. And yet, this illustrates what they have done. They have complained that the entire church is a sect, they have denounced it as a sect, and then they have joined a sect. If it is all right to be a sect, why denounce the church as a sect, and why leave it to become identified with another

sect? If one did so, it would be on some ground other than that he was against sectarianism! For his words and deeds show that he is not against sectarianism, but that he is only against the church of Christ as a sect.

The apostle John stated that Diotrephes would not receive him and certain brethren, nor would he let the church in that place receive them. Those who did receive them were cast out of the church (3 John 9-10). Did John tell these brethren that they should become so disturbed, so bitter, and so reactionary that they should say: "If this is the church of Christ, I want to have nothing to do with it. I shall not have anything to do with this congregation, but I shall go out and join a religious body which is not mentioned in the Bible." Did they say that whatever the church teaches must be false because they have allowed a dictator to intimidate them, and their concept of fellowship is much too narrow? Did they say that these people have become a sect so I am justified in joining a sect?

It is obvious that they did nothing of the sort. John stated that if he came, "I will bring to remembrance his works which he doeth, prating against us with wicked words" (3 John 10). John could do this by apostolic authority. We, of course, as fellow Christians can rebuke one who has become a dictator. However, this would not mean that we would be able to take a church from under his influence. We could teach as we had opportunity, but there would be nothing else we could do; except to pray for them and to set the right example.

Thus although there are some who may force us out of the fellowship of a given congregation, or number of congregations, no one can force us out of Christ's body. As G. C. Brewer observed: "Since there is no authority in the Lord's church to which anyone is compelled to submit except the authority of Christ himself, all this talk about being fettered and restricted and suppressed is just *vain talk!*"²⁵ No one has a copyright on the church so as to prohibit them from establishing a congregation which they think will more fully demonstrate the will of Christ on the congregational and individual levels.

One voice indicated that since the church contains all Christians, and since some Christians are in denominations, he had not left the church because he joined a denomination. G. C. Brewer commented: "... our brother thought he would put us in a dilemma. We must either deny that there are any Christians in the denominations (which would be a pronounced departure from the restoration premise and a radical denial of the restoration contention) or we must concede that he may be a Christian in a denomination. Thus he assumes and wants us to concede that the restoration principle would justify him in joining a denomination. Anyone who *knows* the restoration principle will see the fallacy here. That principle implies that denominationalism—sectism—is *wrong and sinful*. It conceded that Christians were in Babylon because they knew no better; they had not been called out and knew not how

to serve the Lord as simple Christians. Certainly this excuse cannot be offered in behalf of Brother.... The call of the restoration is and always has been, 'Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord. ' Since Brother... has reversed the order and *gone in among them*, how can he say he has not betrayed the cause?"²⁶

Brewer went on to point out that through unbelief one could cease to be an obedient child of God in the household of faith, and could be disinherited by the Lord (Gal. 6: 10; Gal. 3:26; Heb. 3:12, 18; 4: 1; 10: 39).

THE MOST DENOMINATIONAL?

It is maintained that we are the "most denominational of all denominations. "²⁷ We contradict our message of unity by practicing division more "than any church with which we are familiar. "²⁸

It is not realized by some that many denominations are far more divided than we are. Within the Roman Catholic Church there is tremendous division. There are some whose view of God is quite different from the God who has revealed Himself in Scripture. Within Roman Catholicism, as within much of Protestantism, there are those who repudiate the inspiration of the Bible in any Biblical meaning of inspiration. Within Catholicism, worship services may be so vastly different that one would think he was in an entirely different denomination. We do not say these things in order to prove that all divisions among us are scriptural. However, it is important for people to realize that we are far more united than some realize, and than even some members of the church may realize. Then, too, one will not- escape the problem of division because he leaves Christ's church and joins a denomination.

G. C. Brewer observed years ago that if we had the organization, the mechanics, and the power of a denomination some of these voices would have been deprived of their license to preach, if not excommunicated, years ago!²⁹

We realize that some among us are sectarian, and that perhaps no one of us has at all times been free from all sectarianism. There are some who are too narrow in their views and who cause division, and there are others who are too broad in their views and who cause division.

We should not cease to preach unity. If one studies the Bible closely his understanding and teaching of the word will always fall below the standard which is revealed in God's word. This does not mean we should trim down the standard so that it comes closer to our practice, but that we should constantly try to bring our practice more and more in conformity to the standard. Consciousness of the gap between our preaching and our practice will also help keep us from being self-righteous and complacent.

Division amongst us, one voice said, is also due to the church's militancy. "Its militant state of mind allows little room for love or accommodation and none for unity in diversity. " We have made, it is said, peace with "the secular economic world, " and since there are few

confrontations "with its denominational rivals, " we expend our energies in fighting one another.³⁰ First, it is sad but true that there are those who seem to get a carnal thrill out of fighting and when no one else will fight them, or even when others will, they start a war with brethren.

Second, this is due to a lack of love. Paul warned against religious cannibalism wherein individuals devoured one another. (Gal. 5: 13-15).

Third, pride and various other kinds of lust, which dominate one's life in the absence of love, generate wars amongst us. (Jas. 4: 1-10).

Fourth, however, the Bible does teach that we should have a militant spirit. There are enemies to be opposed; within each of us, in the church, and world—in the sense of that which is hostile to God. And thus James said: "Whosoever therefore would be a friend of the world maketh himself an enemy of God. " (Jas. 4: 4). We are to fight the good fight of faith (1 Tim. 6: 12); to use the armor of God and the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6: 10-20); to attack the strongholds of evil (2 Cor. 10: 4-5); and to conduct ourselves as good soldiers of Christ (2 Tim. 2: 3-4). The problem is, and a real problem it is, that we must conduct our warfare in love. We must oppose the sin and love the sinner as we endeavor to rescue him from sin. We must keep in mind that "we do not war according to the flesh, " and that the "weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh" (2 Cor. 10: 3-4). Although it is difficult to remember this, and although some may think that we are not warring in love when in reality we are, this does not justify us in resigning from the army, and entering into peaceful coexistence with those things which war against God and His word.

Fifth, if some of us were expending more energy on fighting the evil within our own lives, and in trying to help other Christians, and in enlarging the borders of the kingdom, we would have far less time and inclination for internal hostilities.

Sixth, there are times when we must oppose certain things in the church; as Paul clearly did in writing to the church in Corinth. We must recognize that from among our own selves will men arise speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after themselves (Acts 20: 30). There are those whose mouths must be stopped in so far as we can through teaching and withdrawal of fellowship. (Titus 1: 9-11).

NO LIMIT TO FELLOWSHIP?

There are some who accuse us of sectarianism because we believe that there is a limit to fellowship. However, some of them accuse us of being too narrow in our fellowship in some things and too broad in others. They maintain that some of us fellowship the immoral, the Pharisees, and others, while excluding some good people. And there are certainly cases where such charges are justified. However, these charges themselves indicate that they recognize there is a limit to fellowship.

At least one of the voices seems to think that "unity in diversity" and thus fellowship, can cover the voice which rejects traditional theism;³¹ and the traditional theism in which this particular voice was

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reared is God as revealed in Christ.³² But how can one deny the Lord who bought him, and repudiate the only gospel, and still be in subjection to the Lordship of Jesus? (Gal. 1: 6-9).

There are some who rebuke almost all withdrawal of fellowship by quoting the following:

"He drew a circle and left me out, Heretic,
rebel, and thing to flout. But love and I had
the wit to win, We drew a circle and took
him in. " G. C. Brewer replied to this by
saying:

"We draw no circles or religious rings To
exclude men and *include* things, But
earnestly try with hearts that are pure To
make our calling and election sure, By
doing the things our Lord commands And
leave circle-drawing to other hands. "³³

As long as a person has a denominational concept of the church, whether he is a professing Christian or not, there is no way to keep him from using Biblical designations in a denominational sense. If we identify ourselves as members of the church of Christ, he will think of a "church of Christ" denomination. If we use every designation given in the Bible, he will think of it as that multiple-named denomination. If we say: Guess Who Meets Here?, he will think of it as the Guess Who denomination. If we say that the church meets here, he will think of it as the Church Denomination.

There are Christians who are such spiritual infants in knowledge that they have to some extent a denominational concept of the church; but neither I nor anyone else has to be bound by their misunderstanding. There may be some whose understanding is so limited that they think of the term church mostly in the sense of a congregation and some of a worshipping assembly. Their view is right as far as it goes, but they also need to understand the other uses of the word church in the Bible.

If I understood certain of the voices, it is evident that they had a denominational concept of the church. As they learned somewhat better, instead of taking what the Bible teaches as authoritative in this matter, they went to the other extreme of embracing denominationalism. When one realizes that his concept of the church has been wrong, or has been inadequate, it does not make sense, and it is certainly not scriptural, for him to conclude that what he should do is consciously embrace denominationalism. One does not cease to be a sectarian because he accepts a broader denominational view instead of a narrower denominational view. But regardless of what others do, if we come into Christ, and are content to be just in His body, we are not denominational. We are members in the twentieth century of the church which was established in the first century.

CHAPTER IV FOOTNOTES

- 1Graham, 135-136.
- 2Etter, 108.
- 3Sanders, 45, Compare Floyd, 162.
- 4Floyd, 162; Etter, 104; Reedy, 241.
- 5Floyd, 162.
- 6See for example my article "Take the 'We' Out of the Slogan?" *Gospel Advocate*, July 24, 1947, 542.
- 7Graham, 136-137.
- 8Sanders, 40.
- 9Sanders, 39-40.
- 10Sanders, 40.
- 11Sanders, 39.
- 12*Ibid.*, 39. 13*Ibid.*, 37, 38. 14Graham, 138. 15*Ibid.*, 137.
- 16Etter, 109.
- 17Meyers, *Restoration Review*, Jan. 1967, 18.
- 18Sanders, 44.
- 19V. Ferm, Editor, *An Encyclopedia of Religion*, 699.
- 20Sanders, 44. 21Hibbett, 53.
- 22Robert Richardson, *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell*, Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Co., 1897, Vol. I, 441.
- 23Vergilius Ferm, Editor, *An Encyclopedia of Religion*, New York: The Philosophical Library, 1945, 116. 24Brewer, p. 64. Compare Voices, 129130. 25*As Touching*, 66. 26*As Touching*, 28. The Lord's word calls them out but they have not yet understood the Bible concerning these matters.
- 27Etter, 106. 28Etter, 106107. 29*As Touching*, 91. 30Parks, 74. 31Hardeman, 93, 99.
- 32Meyers, *Restoration Review*, Jan. 1967, 19.
- 33*As Touching*, 50.

CHAPTER V

What Is Phariseeism?

Phariseeism, legalism, self-righteousness, and the priestly religion¹ are different ways of affirming that a person is seeking justification through merit based on the keeping of a code of conduct. These terms are usually used to designate an earned salvation rather than salvation based on God's grace. One voice charged that we are basing our hope of salvation on "our Tightness and everybody else's wrongness. Of others like us Jesus once said, 'They trusted in themselves that they were righteous and set all others at naught. ' (Luke 18: 9). "² As we discuss Phariseeism it is important to remember that not all Pharisees were like those mentioned in Matt. 23 (John 3: 1-12; 7: 47-52; 19: 39). Paul had been a Pharisee, and he still stood with them on certain matters against the Sadducees (Acts 23: 6).

PHARISEEISM A REAL DANGER

Jesus warned against the leaven, or teaching, of the Pharisees (Matt. 16: 6, 12). He pronounced a series of woes on them (Matt. 23). Yet, their religion cost them something, they claimed to be God's children and they viewed themselves as the most religious people of their day. It is possible to make a new trial of old errors; what has happened to men in the past can happen to us, and thus we need to take seriously Jesus' warning. More than one person has warned Christians that they need to guard against Phariseeism. A decade and a half ago W. W. Otey, an old soldier of the cross, wrote: "We have been so deeply interested in maintaining the form of the New Testament model, that we often approach the state of the form without the spirit. As the body without the spirit is dead, so is the divine form without zeal, meekness, purity in righteous living, also dead. " "It is possible that this may be the greatest danger to a church..."³

SADDUCEEISM A DANGER

Jesus also warned against the leaven of the Sadducees (Matt. 16: 6, 12). He did not warn against a non-existent danger, and yet *Voices* which often spoke of Phariseeism did not warn, so far as the author recalls, against Sadduceeism. Modernism, in the author's judgment, is a form of Sadduceeism, and some of the voices in fleeing Phariseeism, or what they viewed as Phariseeism, took refuge in Sadduceeism. As John Poorter pointed out, the road to modernism is often "marked by a feigned horror of what is called Pharisaism. " They lapse "into a broad humanitarianism which is absorbed in works. " They stigmatize "all unyielding convictions as Pharisaic rigidity. " They finally exchange the "Bible for the false freedom of tolerating anything. "⁴ Anything, except what they call legalism!

TRUTH IS TRUTH

There are some who feel that if they can label someone a Pharisee they are automatically excused from believing or going those things

which are taught by the "Pharisees". The "Pharisees" contend for the one true church; therefore, there is no New Testament church for which one should contend. ' "Pharisees" emphasize certain things in the Bible; therefore, in order to avoid Phariseeism, we are justified in ignoring, or even in opposing, these things. However, when truth is taught by a real Pharisee it should be obeyed, for truth is truth regardless of the one who calls it to our attention. Thus Jesus said, concerning the Pharisees when they expounded the law of Moses, but not when they taught their traditions which made void the law (Mk. 7: 1-12), that: "The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat: all things therefore whatsoever they bid you, these do and observe; but do not ye after their works; for they say, and do not. " (Matt. 23: 2-3). What if some, who profess that they are not sectarians but simply members of Christ's church, are the most sectarian of the sectarians? One charged that "the Church of Christ preaches undenominational Christianity, but in reality is the most denominational of all denominations. "⁵ What if this be true? Is it not right to preach undenominational Christianity? Is it right for others to preach and to practice denominationalism because there are Pharisees who preach undenominational Christianity while practicing denominationalism? One is still obligated by what the Bible teaches concerning the church even if a Pharisee calls it to one's attention. Christ does not cease to be Christ, nor are we justified in following a false Christ, just because there are hypocrites who preach Christ. We ought to rejoice that undenominational Christianity and Christ are preached, while regretting that there are those who say and do not. "Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: the one do it of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel; but the other proclaim Christ of faction, not sincerely, thinking to raise up affliction for me in my bonds. What then? only that in every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and therein I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice. " (Phil. 1: 15-18).

When a Pharisee teaches truth one should stand, as it were, with the Pharisee on these matters and in opposition to error on these matters. Thus Paul stood with the Pharisees in the conflict between the Pharisees and the Sadducees concerning angels, spirits, and resurrection. And since he had personally been of the sect of the Pharisees in times past, he identified himself with them *in these matters*. (Acts 23: 6). Are there not some who would repudiate a truth if they realized that the Pharisees held to that truth? This is not the attitude of one who is of the truth, who loves the truth, and who wants to follow Him who is the way, the truth, and the life.

FIRMNESS OF CONVICTION

Firmness of conviction is not Phariseeism. It is possible for an individual to be firm in his error and to be extremely positive in his self-righteousness. However, this does not mean that weakness of faith is

to be equated with piety and firmness of conviction with Phariseeism. The apostle Paul was not being a Pharisee when he said: "I know him whom I have believed, and I am persuaded that he is able to guard that which I have committed unto him against that day. " (2 Tim. 1: 12). One is not self-righteous when he affirms with conviction that we have been saved by grace through faith which is trust in and submits to the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are those who seem to think that a person is a proud Pharisee if he affirms with conviction his faith in Christ, and claims to have seen at least certain of the truths taught in Christ's word. Conviction to them is equated with self-righteousness. They seem to think it is a mark of humility to be uncertain about everything. They thank God that they are the uncertain, the humble, and set at naught those proud people who think that they can be certain about anything. They not only decry the keeping of the commandments of God, but they also say that it is impossible to be certain about any of the commandments of God. There are others whose relativism is an effort to justify their confusion, and to make a virtue out of their uncertainty. As G. C. Berkouwer said: "We live in a time when even theology is exploding with new and revolutionary problems. There is a danger that the serious student will be so impressed by all the problems in theology that he will circle all certainties by a ring of questions. When this happens, an inverse Pharisaism sets in. The doubting student says: I thank thee, Lord, that I am not as certain as those naive people. Let Luther say it again: *Spiritus Sactus non est scepticus*. Indeed, the Spirit is not a skeptic. "⁶

The teaching of the Spirit will unsettle false positions and false attitudes, but it unsettles them by means of truth and not by means of relativism. We are told by the Spirit to prove all things and to hold fast that which is good (1 Thess. 5: 21). And in doing this it is amazing how often we learn that people are divided not over what the Bible means, but over whether or not it is important for us to remain with what it teaches. Our certainty does not mean that we never have any problems. We do not say: Thank God that I am not as other men; for I do not have any uncertainties, questions, or problems. But it is not Pharisaism to build on the rock of His word (Matt. 7: 24-28); to have the certainty that comes from the study of the Word (Lk. 1: 1-4); to have the understanding that comes through reading the Scriptures (Eph. 3: 4); and to have the witness of the Spirit that we are children of God. ⁷ (Rom. 8: 16)

RULE KEEPING?

There are those who discredit a carefulness to do just what God has commanded by calling it Phariseeism. The Pharisees were rule keepers, and we are imitating them if we are very concerned to seek for "Thus saith the Lord" in example, specific precept or principle. If this is Phariseeism, it is wrong to do just what God commanded. To avoid Phariseeism one must neglect God's will and follow his own will or the traditions of other men. But Jesus condemned making void the word of

God in order that one might keep the commandments of men (Matt. 15: 8-9; Mk. 7: 1-12). Therefore, there is something wrong with this definition of Phariseeism.

Some, however, point to the following "woe". "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye tithe mint and anise and cummin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law, justice, and mercy, and faith: but these ye ought to have done, and not to have left the other undone. " (Matt. 23: 23) He did not condemn their carefulness in tithing even small garden plants. They ought to have done this, Jesus said. However, He did condemn their leaving undone the weightier matters of the law. There were weightier matters, and one could not compensate for the failure to do these things by pointing to his carefulness in smaller matters. The Pharisees were not really careful to do what God said.

Furthermore, instead of being careful to do what God had said, they had added to the will of God the traditions of men. They were careful to keep these even when it involved a violation of the law of God (Mk. 7: 1-12). There were rules of God, and the Pharisees should have kept them. But they kept some of the smaller matters, and left undone the weightier rules or principles. They ought to have kept both; thus it is obvious that rule-keeping is not in itself Phariseeism, for they did not keep God's rules except when they saw fit.

Some of the "voices" which warned against a written code, against legalism, against rule-keeping, did not seem to be against rule-keeping if it were based on the traditions of men. For they went into denominations which bind many traditions of men. When a former Roman Catholic priest recently went into the Anglo-Catholic Church he was asked, among other things: "Do you believe the Anglican church to be a branch of the one true, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church? Do you wish to be received into this church and submit to its doctrine and authority?"⁸

Furthermore, some who cry out against rule-keeping are trying to free us from our attachment to the Bible, and the rules which God has given, but only to soften us up so that we shall be receptive to being bound by the rules of men; or at least fellowshiping those who bind such. Some who decry the carefulness to keep God's commandments want to bind on us human traditions. They object to being bound by what God has revealed; but they substitute for His will the will of man. They free us from the Word in order to bind us with man's legislations. They do not want to keep us free from the multiplicity of regulations and rules which are based on the traditions of men. They do not want to keep us free in the simplicity that is in Christ; for example, in public worship. They condemn a carefulness to do what God has said in these matters, so that they can soften us up and bind us with the will of man. It is not that they are seeking less rules and regulations. It is that they want to be free from what God has bound, so that they may bind on themselves and others innumerable regulations. In this way, for exam-

ple, the traditions of men build up until one is bound by the multiplicity of human regulations which are found in the Roman Catholic Church. Those Protestant Churches, which have turned their backs on the sufficiency of the Scripture, are more and more copying Rome and binding innumerable rules and regulations of men. And they are doing this at the very time that some in Rome are trying to break with at least some of their traditions.

One must exercise care lest he try to prove he is not a Pharisee by freeing himself from any or all of the rules and principles of God. If one does this he is endeavoring to justify himself; for he¹ is relying not upon what God has said, and upon His revealed mercy, but upon his own inclinations and opinions.

IS PROSELYTING PHARISEEISM?

We are charged with compassing "land and sea in quest of proselytes on the basis that" we have "a more certain pattern for reaching heaven. Jesus told the proselytes of His day that their converts became twofold more the children of hell; we may well ask ourselves if we are not helping history to repeat itself at this point. "⁹ To this we would say: First, the Old Covenant did not have a great commission, and they were not under obligation to preach Judaism to the entire world. The New Covenant does have a great commission, and we are under obligation to preach the gospel to the whole world. We have not been nearly as zealous about this as we should be. Second, if it is wrong to make converts, it is wrong to teach; for if one teaches he may influence someone to accept what he has to say. Are the "voices of concern" unconcerned as to whether or not they convert people to their viewpoint; or whether they instruct them, according to their way of thinking, more perfectly in the way of the Lord? It is not wrong to instruct more perfectly in the way of the Lord, with reference to baptism for example, those who already believe in Christ. In fact, it is right to do so (Acts 18: 24-26). It is not wrong to instruct, and to baptize, those who have received a wrong baptism. It is right to do so, for the apostle Paul did it (Acts 19: 1-5). Third, under the Old Covenant it was not wrong to proselyte people to the Jewish faith. Even in Abraham's day it was not wrong to take in outsiders; in fact, his slaves and their offspring were to be circumcized (Gen. 17: 12-1, '). The trouble with the Pharisees was not that they made proselytes, but that the Pharisees were children of hell, and made their proselytes twofold more children of hell than they themselves were (Matt. 23: 15).

We ought to compass land and sea to bring people to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and to instruct more perfectly in the way of the Lord those who already believe in Him. And this includes baptizing into Christ those who have not yet been baptized into Christ.

We are also represented as being cruel in believing that "*proselyting is a divine duty at whatever cost the spirit of the convert.*"¹⁰ It is true that there have been those who have had the wrong spirit, and who

have tried to put cruel pressure on individuals in order to make them accept some truth which they had not hitherto seen. However, it cannot be wrong to instruct people more perfectly in the way of the Lord, with reference to baptism, for example (Acts 18: 24-26; 19: 1-5). It cannot be wrong to instruct Christians as to how they ought to conduct themselves in their daily walk as well as in their approach to God in worship; for Paul did this with reference to the church in Corinth (1 Cor. 11; 14; etc.). In some cases it may cost the individual a good deal to accept the additional truth or truths; just as it may cost one a good deal to leave modernism, for example, for the faith once for all delivered to the saints. It may cost a pagan much heartache to break with the religion of his ancestors. We must ask, however, whether or not we are to endeavor to share truth with others even though it may cost them to accept it. We know that we should do so, and do it in the spirit of love. But we must not hound people in order to get them to learn better. Peter emphasized that wives were not to try to nag, so to speak, their husbands into the kingdom (1 Pet. 3: 1-4).

It is argued that making proselytes is robbery. "But if it was wrong for Roman Christians to rob pagan temples, what about Churches of Christ robbing other Christian Churches? (Rom. 2: 22b). "¹¹ What is the connection between instructing others more perfectly in the way of the Lord, and robbing temples? The context of Romans 2: 22 shows that Paul is rebuking Jews for doing the very thing which they condemned, and verse 22 indicates that while they professed to abhor idols they robbed temples and carried off idols to serve them. But whatever may be the meaning, they were violating the law against idolatry in whatever they did. What law of God are we violating, how are we being inconsistent with the Biblical principles which we profess, when we emphasize that all those who believe ought to be concerned about the Lord's prayer for unity? (John 17: 20-21) This means that they ought to do what they can to answer this prayer. We ought to be one in Christ and denominationalism ought to cease to exist. It may be freely granted that none of us has done a perfect job along this line, but this in no way excuses the open religious division which has existed in the world for centuries and which exists today. Even if I were not a member of the New Testament church, anyone who takes seriously the Lord's prayer for unity, and tries to answer it on the basis of the word of God, must abandon denominationalism and be simply a member of Christ's church. And yet, to urge that individuals do this is equated with "robbing other Christian Churches. " Does not each of us yearn for the time when there will be no denominationalism but when all shall be one in Christ? If not, how can we profess an informed loyalty to Him who prayed for the unity of believers that the world might believe that God sent Him? And yet, if we work for this goal there are those who accuse us of being robbers. As a matter of fact, the author is not asking people to come to him but to come to Christ, and for us to meet in Christ. And whether or not I do as I ought to do in

this matter, other believers in Christ are just as obligated to answer the Lord's prayer for unity as I am. This issue, as we have brought out in a recent booklet, is not what do you think of me as a professing Christian, but "What Think Ye of Christ's Church?"

We ought to try to answer the Lord's prayer for unity, and in doing this it will often involve, as we have mentioned before, instructing people more perfectly in the way of the Lord with reference to baptism (Acts 18: 24-26; 19: 1-9). If some in Paul's day had manifested the attitude which we are discussing, they would have rebuked Paul for baptizing in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ those who had previously received John's baptism. They would have told Paul that he was robbing another "Christian Church, " and contradicting his own teaching in Rom. 2: 22!

The same critic views churches of Christ as a denomination.¹² Seemingly he does not think that we ought to be denominational—for if he does, then how concerned can he be about the Lord's prayer for unity? But if his charges are right, what he views as the "church of Christ" denomination ought to cease to exist. In fact, he thinks that we are thoroughly wrong, for he said "that I had come to be in complete disagreement- with the aim, views, message, method, and attitudes which characterize the Churches of Christ. I had concluded that in all these areas the 'position' of the Churches of Christ was incorrect theologically, philosophically, and psychologically, or, to be quite practical, unscriptural, irrational, and unhealthy. "¹³ Surely such a church ought not to be merely "robbed, " but it ought to be "done to death" by the sword of the Spirit. Surely he thinks that all who would be scriptural, rational, and healthy ought to leave the churches of Christ! But by his own definition, would not this critic be guilty of that of which he accuses others—of robbing "other Christian Churches"?

UNDER NO LAW?

Is it Phariseeism to maintain that the Christian is under law in some sense? If law in no sense applies to a Christian, we are faced with the following conclusions. First, there is not anything that a Christian should do and there is not anything that a Christian should refrain from doing. Sin is transgression of law. "Every one that doeth sin doeth also lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness. " (1 John 3: 4). If there is no law, there is no transgression of law, and thus there is no sin. Anything which it is possible for a Christian to do, is right for him to do. It is not wrong for him to bear false witness, or to steal, or to commit adultery, for there is no law, which is applicable to the Christian, which says that thou shalt not bear false witness, thou shalt not steal, and thou shalt not commit adultery. There is no good deed that he is to do, for there is no law which tells him that he must live a good life. There is no Micah to tell him that the Lord requires of him that he do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with his God. There is no law which says that he must accept what one of the critics called prophetic religion. " Second, this means that a Christian is free, with the approval of God,

to be a Pharisee. There is no law against a Christian being a Pharisee. If there is no law against being a Pharisee, no other Christian, who chooses to be something else, can affirm that it is wrong to be a Pharisee. They cannot teach against Phariseeism, and say that Phariseeism is wrong and that men should turn from it. To say that Phariseeism is wrong is to say that there is a standard in the light of which the Christian should live and that this standard condemns Phariseeism.

And yet, some of the individuals who maintain that a Christian is under law in no sense, will often shout against Phariseeism and say that it is wrong. They have a creed against Phariseeism: "Thou shalt not be a Pharisee; for this is the worst thing that can happen to a man. "

They have a law against legalism.

They have the creed that one should not have a creed. They even think it, speak it, repeat it, and write it down and publish it.

If there is one law—the law against Phariseeism—which the Christian is under, two things suggest themselves. First, they must repudiate the position that the Christian is under law in no sense. They must give up their basic objection to certain other laws of Christ; that is, they cannot automatically rule out all law. Second, they should then study to see whether or not there are other laws under which a Christian is obligated to live.

GRACE, NOT LAW

Did not Paul say that the Christian is not under law but under grace? Yes, but Paul did not teach that law in no sense applies to the Christian. He wrote that "sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under law, but under grace. " (Rom. 6: 14) However, if he meant that law in no sense applied to the Christian he meant that a Christian could not do any wrong, for sin is transgression of law. (1 John 3: 4) But in this very context Paul taught that they should not sin. The very next verse said: "What then? shall we sin, because we are not under law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye present yourselves as servants unto obedience, his servants ye are whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Rom. 6: 15-16) Paul did not say in verse fourteen that they *could* not sin, and then say in verse fifteen that they *should* not sin. Furthermore, in this very context he emphasized the necessity of obedience from the heart to the form of doctrine in order to be made free from sin, and the necessity of yielding our body members as instruments of righteousness unto God. (Rom. 6: 4, 12-23) If we serve sin. we shall reap sin's wages; and "the wages of sin is death. " (Rom. 6: 23)

What, then, did Paul mean? If sin has dominion over one it is one's master; it reigns and brings death to him. (Rom. 5: 21; 6: 23). If we were under law in the sense that we had to earn or to merit our salvation, our case would be hopeless. For once a person sinned, sin would be his master and reign over him unto death; for the Bible says that the soul that sinneth shall die. Forever and a day, when measured by the stand-

ard of perfect obedience, we are found to have fallen short. To be justified by the law one had to do all that the law said and one had to do it all of the time; but no man has done this, so to be under law in this sense puts one under the curse of the law. (Gal. 3: 10) When we view ourselves in the light of the standard of perfect obedience, we realize that we have not done all the law says nor have we done it all of the time. Therefore, we are aware that we have sinned. The law which makes us conscious of sin cannot be that which forgives us and says to us that we are now without sin. "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it speaketh to them that are under the law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may be brought under the judgment of God: because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for through the law *cometh* the knowledge of sin. But now apart from the law a righteousness of God hath been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; " (Rom. 3: 19-21)

What hope is there for us? The grace of God makes possible our forgiveness, and brings us out from under the dominion or rule of sin; therefore sin need not rule over us unto death. Thus Paul wrote: "But now apart from the law a righteousness of God hath been manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ unto all them that believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned, and fall short of the glory of God; being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God set forth *to be* a propitiation, through faith, in his blood, to show his righteousness because of the passing over of the sins done aforetime, in the forbearance of God; for the showing, *I say*, of his righteousness at this present season: that he might himself be just, and the justifier of him that hath faith in Jesus. Where then is the glorying? It is excluded. By what manner of law? of works? Nay: but by a law of faith. We reckon therefore that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law. " (Rom. 3: 21-28)

What does Paul mean by works or deeds of the law? Is he speaking of the works of faith? Is he speaking of the obedience of faith which he mentioned in Rom. 1: 5 and 1G: 2G? Does Paul refer to the works of faith when he speaks of the deeds of the law, and does he contrast the works of faith with the law of faith itself? Or does the law of faith include works of faith which, however, are not deeds of the law? How does Paul characterize the works of the law? First, they are works of which we could boast if we performed them. "Where then is the glorying? It is excluded. By what manner of law? of works? Nay.... " (Rom. 3: 27) The law of works does not exclude, but rather includes, boasting or glorying. The law of faith, however, excludes boasting. (Rom. 3: 27) Second, the law of works includes the idea of an earned reward. "Now to him that worketh, the reward is not reckoned as of grace, but as of debt. " (Rom. 4:4) Is it not clear that by the law of works, or works of

the law, the apostle has reference to works of merit whereby one would earn salvation? If one earned salvation, he would do all the law required and do it all of the time. He could then boast of what he had done. He had lived the perfect life and was declared just on the basis of his own merit. Furthermore, he would receive the reward as wages due for work done, and not as a matter of grace. But none of us has earned our salvation. If we had to do so, we would be enslaved to sin and forced to accept its wages.

The works of faith, however, are not works of merit. They are performed by one who has sinned, and thus who can never earn his salvation. They are not merely rooted in faith but they are related to the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. Our faith is not faith in faith, but faith in the Lamb of God who died for our sins. Our faith is not in repentance, but repentance is the change of mind which leads us to turn, to submit to Christ, and to walk with Him. Baptism is not reliance on baptism, but on Christ; not only because He commanded it, but also because it is baptism into Christ's death. We are buried with Him by baptism unto death, and raised to walk in newness of life. (Rom. 6: 2-5) The new life is lived by faith, but it is not a meritorious life, and it is one which needs continual cleansing by the blood of Jesus,

ALL THINGS LAWFUL?

There are some who ask: Did not Paul say that all things are lawful? Yes, but what did he mean? "All things are lawful; but not all things are expedient. All things are lawful; but not all things edify. " (1 Cor. 10: 23) The Corinthian letter makes it clear that "all things" is not without limitation. Paul rebuked many sins in the Corinthian church. He did not say that the only thing that was wrong with adultery, or hate, was that they were not expedient. Paul does not teach lawlessness in 1 Cor. 10: 23. He is saying that within the realm of those things which are lawful for us to do, are some things which we do not have to do, and which we should not do if it hurts the soul of another. In other words we have many privileges, but we should not always exercise our rights. Our duties we must perform, but there are things which are lawful for us but which we refrain from doing because it is not expedient to do them. All lawful things may not, under all circumstances, edify others. There is a law which says that we should act in love to edify, not to destroy, others. (1 Cor. 10: 28-11: 1) Furthermore, in this very context Paul emphasized that we are not "without law to God, but under law to Christ. " (1 Cor. 9: 21) He also showed that it was unlawful to partake of the table of demons (1 Cor. 10: 21), and it was not lawful to lead a brother to perish (1 Cor. 8: 9-13). Within the realm of what was lawful Paul utilized his privileges, or refused to use them, according to whether or not it would help him to win others. He was free from bondage to men, but he subjected himself to their prejudices wherein it was possible, and wherein it helped win them to Christ. (1 Cor. 9: 19-22) He did this for the sake of the gospel. "And I do all things for the

gospel's sake, that I may be a joint partaker thereof. " (1 Cor. 9: 23) Paul did not teach that he had freedom to repudiate the gospel, to corrupt it, in order to win others; for it was with the gospel and to the gospel and the Christ that he wanted to win people.

The individuals who say that we are not under law, but should not do that which will lead another to stumble, have implied that there are at least two others laws. First, a Christian ought to, he is obligated to, do that which will edify and not destroy a brother. Second, that it is possible for a brother to be destroyed through worshipping idols. (1 Cor. 8; 10) Thus there is a law against idolatry.

These individuals will also generally agree that a person ought not to do that which he is convinced is wrong, for Paul said that to do this is to sin. (Rom. 14: 23) And thus they have pointed to another law, i. e. that the Christian should not do that which he is convinced is wrong. It is sinful for him to do this. But sin is transgression of law (1 John 3: 3); thus there is a law against Christians doing what they believe is wrong.

LAW IS IN SOUND DOCTRINE

The law is not made for the righteous man in the sense that its coercive and vindictive authority is for those who live in violation of it. But this does not mean that there are no "thou shalt not's; " for the apostle Paul enumerated many sins, and then took in the rest of the sins by saying "if there be any other thing *contrary to the sound doctrine*: according to the gospel of the glory of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust. " (1 Tim. 1: 8-11) Lawlessness is contrary to the sound doctrine. As Charles Phillips pointed out in some comments on 1 Tim. 6: 3-5, "The legalist is accused of being a troublemaker by his strict adherence to the doctrine Let us see from this scripture just who the troublemakers are: "

"1. 'Teacheth a different doctrine. ' 2. 'Consenteth not. . . to the doctrine which is according to godliness. ' 3. 'Consenteth not to sound words. ' Who is the troublemaker? Surely not the legalist, for this is a picture of the *anti-legalist*. True, the so-called legalist may be entirely wrong in his legalizing, but let's give him a chance with the open Bible to prove or disprove his point. In this way everyone will profit by the study. "

There are some, he suggested, who call another a legalist "as an escape when unable to meet his scriptural arguments. "

"Some people would rather be wrong than legally right if it meant changing their minds on a cherished thought, regardless of how sound the reasoning. "

"We dare not continue if found legally wrong. How are we to determine if our teachings are based upon opinion and which are based upon doctrine? We must, with an open mind, turn to our completely accepted basis of authority, the Bible, and with a detailed legalistic (if

you please) analysis of the Holy Writ determine what is, and what is not there. "¹⁵

The Bible is crystal clear that law in some sense does apply to the Christian. We are to do the will of God in order to enter the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. 7: 21-23) If a Christian has nothing to do with the law of God, it means that he has nothing to do with the will of God. And if he has nothing to do with the will of God, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.

Christ is our Lord. (Acts 2: 36) This means that we should submit to Him. And He said: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6: 46) He authorizes us to be joined to Him, and to bring forth fruit, but He does not authorize us to be joined to the old law, or to any law of merit. (Rom. 7: 1-7)

Christ is the prophet like unto Moses, and if we do not hearken unto Him it will be required of us. (Acts 3: 22-23) Thus we are not to refuse Him that speaketh from heaven. (Heb. 12: 25)

We are under the royal law of love, or the perfect law of liberty. (Rom. 13: 8-10; Jas. 1: 25; 2: 8-9) We are not "without law to God, but under law to Christ. " (1 Cor. 9: 21) We have not been authorized by the Lord to be illegalists. Although "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8: 2), I am not free from the will of God. I am free to walk after the Spirit, but not after the flesh (Rom. 8: 4) "So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh: for if ye live after the flesh, ye must die; but if by the Spirit ye put to death the deeds of the body, ye shall live. " (Rom. 8: 12-13) There are some who assume that they are being spiritual in decrying the idea of commandments being binding" on Christians. However, by inspiration of the Spirit the apostle Paul wrote: "*If any man thinketh himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him take knowl-edge of the things which I write unto you, that they are the command-ment of the Lord. "* (1 Cor. 14: 37) There are commandments of God. We are to observe them (Matt. 28: 20), and it is not a mark of spirituality to be indifferent to them. The Holy Spirit testifies to us that God does have His law for us today. "*And the Holy Spirit also beareth witness to us; for after he hath said, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my laws on their heart, and upon their mind also will I write them. "* (Heb. 10: 15-16) Do God and the Holy Spirit make Pharisees out of the New Covenant people by writing God's law on their mind and putting them on their heart? If it is really in our hearts, can we be indifferent to the law of God? Certainly not. Indeed, we labor that we may be accepted of God and enter into His rest. (2 Cor. 5: 9, Heb. 4: 11)

Loving God is not unrelated to the commandments of God, for love leads to the keeping of His commandments. (John 14: 15; 1 John 5: 2-3) Love motivates us to labor unceasingly, while realizing that we do not

merit salvation. And the saving knowledge of God involves doing the commandments of God. (1 John 2: 3-4) Let us now study what Phariseeism is.

HYPOCRISY

Phariseeism involves hypocrisy. Jesus said: "Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy. " (Lk. 12: 1) An individual is not a Pharisee just because he has been hypocritical at some time or another. Peter was being hypocritical in withdrawing from the Gentiles, and "the rest of the Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that even Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation. " (Gal. 2: 11, 12, 13) Dissimulation involves pretense or hypocrisy. Love is to be without hypocrisy or dissimulation (Rom. 12: 9), and yet at times Christians weaken and play the part of the hypocrite. Like Peter, they need to repent; but they have not become Pharisee just because they have at times been hypocritical. Paul rebuked Peter because he stood con-demned, but he did not suggest that Peter had become a Pharisee. Phariseeism is hypocrisy which is so deeply rooted in one's life that he has suppressed his recognition of his hypocrisy. He is the hypocrite who

over a period of time has not only persisted in his hypocrisy, but has so rationalized that he has convinced himself that he is sincere. Although they had the spirit of their fathers who killed the prophets, yet they affirmed that their spirit was such that they would have received the prophets. (Matt. 23: 29-34) Hypocrisy had become a way of life with them, so that while claiming to be religious they were capable of doing the terrible things which Jesus described in Matthew 23.

Hypocrisy in little things can grow until it becomes our way of life, and we even hide from ourselves our hypocrisy. The hypocritical Pharisee does not view himself as a hypocritical Pharisee. How can we be sure that we are not Pharisees who have suppressed our recognition of our own hypocrisy? It is only through integrity, study of the word, and study of our own lives in the light of the word, that we can learn our true conditions.

When we realize that God looks on the heart, that we cannot deceive Him, and that He will bring the hidden things to light, these considerations will motivate us to flee hypocrisy. After Jesus said that they were to beware of the leaven, the hypocrisy, of the Pharisees. He said: "But there is nothing covered up, that shall not be revealed; and hid. that shall not be known. Wherefore whatsoever ye have said in the darkness shall be heard in the light; and what ye have spoken in the ear in the inner chambers shall be proclaimed upon the housetops. " (Lk. 12: 2-3)

MAKING VOID GOD'S WORD

Although all of us at one time or another, and in one way or another, have transgressed the word of God because of the wrong teaching which we have received, this is quite different from the Pharisees who were making no real effort to correct their traditions by the word of God.

Jesus made it clear that the Pharisees were not trying to walk strictly by the word of God. When the Pharisees pointed to the fact that the disciples of Christ transgressed the traditions of men, Christ showed that the Pharisees were making void God's word that they might cling to their traditions. (Matt. 15: 1-9)

And yet, There are those who accuse one of Phariseeism if he holds to the word of God and opposes the traditions of men; while they at the same time will more or less sanction those who make void various aspects of God's word through the traditions of men.

PARTIAL OBEDIENCE

In one sense all of us render a partial obedience. No individual has done all that the law requires, nor has done it all of the time. (Gal. 3: 10) This is the reason why, if we must be justified by the law of merit wherein one earned his salvation, all of us are under the curse of the law. The partial obedience, however which characterized the Pharisees was that they had substituted a partial obedience in some small things for the life of obedience. They did not have the attitude of obedience to God in *things both great and small*. (Matt. 23: 23-24)

We cannot make up for our habitual disobedience to the weightier matters by being very careful in certain matters which, although they cost us something, do not cost the abandonment of our lives to God and submissiveness to Him in things great and small. One cannot compensate for his lack of love by arguing long and loud that God's people ought to be designated as they are designated in the Bible. One cannot substitute *arguments* that faith must work, for a faith which actually works. One cannot make up for a failure to walk with God during the week by being extra careful never to miss a service on Sunday. Correctness of understanding on how to do something is not a substitute for doing it. We are not encouraging laxness concerning what the Bible teaches on things great or small, but we are warning against the human tendency to get around the great duties of Christianity while being very strict in *arguing*

for what the Bible teaches without giving much thought to *practicing* what it teaches. What good does it do an individual himself, regardless of how much his correct teaching may help others, if he argues for right ways of caring for orphans but never gets around to having any part in caring for orphans?

OUTWARD COMPLIANCE

Although there were many things, and especially the weightier matters, to which the Pharisees were not even giving an outward compliance, they had substituted outward compliance for obedience from the heart. In many cases the only outward compliance was by words. They could speak of the duties of religion, and bind burdens, without doing anything about carrying these burdens themselves (Matt. 23: 4).

We should by our words declare our faith in Christ, but our words should be true indications of the condition of our hearts. We should be

speaking words out of the abundance of our hearts. *We have not really obeyed a commandment of the Lord if we have not obeyed it from the heart.* Outward compliance, and compliance in word, should be inseparably connected with the sincere heart, and should be expressions of our faithful submission to God. The condition of heart of the Pharisees, however, was quite different from their external show (Matt. 23: 25-28).

WORKS DONE TO BE SEEN OF MEN

It is right for us to do good works that men may see them and glorify God (Matt. 5: 16). However, it is a vastly different thing for one in pride to do these works that men may see and glorify him. It is one thing to err sometimes, and it is another thing to do all of one's works to be seen of men (Matt. 23: 5-12). The reward that such people are seeking is the praise of men, and, when men see and praise them, they have received their full reward and should expect nothing from God (Matt. 6: 1-3, 5, 16)"

SELF-RIGHTEOUS

At the heart of Phariseism is self-righteousness (Lk. 18: 9-14). The Pharisees acknowledged that God made known His law to man, and yet they tended to become self-sufficient in knowledge because they thought they they could decide which of the commandments of God should be kept, and which they had the right to over-ride with their traditions. They became self-sufficient in righteousness, because they thought that they were able of themselves, once God had revealed the law, to do whatever was required for one to be declared righteous. They thought that they were righteous on the basis of, on the ground of, what they had done. This is trust in self rather than in God and His mercy for salvation. It is the idea that in some way one can stand before God on the basis of merit. One has an earned righteousness. This attitude may manifest itself in various ways. First, one thinks that he can earn salvation if he believes that he can get to heaven without the gospel of Christ and on the basis of his own moral goodness. Such individuals think that they are too good to go to hell, and good enough of themselves and by themselves to go to heaven. They think that by their goodness they can make up for their sins. Cornelius was a good man, but he had to hear words whereby he was to be saved. (Acts 11: 14) Those who think that they can get to heaven on their own moral goodness overlook the fact that in failing to submit to God, in failing to love God with all of their being, they are in violation of the first and greatest commandment. Furthermore, God has said that they need the blood of Jesus, and they would make God out a liar by implying that they are good enough of themselves and do not need the blood of Jesus.

Second, one is seeking an earned righteousness if he thinks that the things which he does in faith in obeying the gospel earn or merit his salvation. What he does cannot, within itself, compensate for the sins of the past, or of the present, or those which he may commit in the future. All have sinned and fallen short (Rom. 3: 23). Although he may not have

violated every specific law of God, yet he has violated God's law (Jas. 2: 10-13). If we had to do all the law of God and do it all of the time, we would be under the curse, for no one of us has rendered perfect obedience in all things at all times (Gal. 3: 10). Unless God has mercy - there is no hope for any of us. No matter how much we do we are still unprofitable servants (Compare Lk. 17: 10), who have not lived perfect lives and who have not merited salvation, thus we cannot boast of what we have done (Rom. 3: 27-28), nor can we receive the reward as wages due for work done (Rom. 4: 4). Obedience to the gospel involves the renunciation of merit, or of trusting in ourselves that we are righteous. Faith is not faith in faith or faith in self. Repentance is not a meritorious attitude of mind nor do its fruits earn forgiveness. Confession is not the confession of self as Savior. Baptism is not an effort to earn forgiveness, for what could such a simple act earn? Faith is faith in the Lamb of God slain for our sins. Repentance results in turning to Him for mercy. Confession is acknowledgement of His Lordship and of the necessity of finding salvation in Him. Baptism renounces human wisdom and trust in self, and acknowledges the necessity of His blood; for we are baptized into His death, burial and resurrection. The new life, to which we are raised, is not one which we live without sin (1 John 1: 8-10), but is one in which we need the continual cleansing of the blood of Christ (1 John 1: 7). We are constantly needing our Advocate with the Father; the Counsel for the defense who pleads our cause on the basis of His blood and our acceptance of Him and His cleansing blood (1 John 2: 1-2). Although there are conditions which are to be met, these very conditions indicate that we cannot trust in ourselves, and that we need the blood of Jesus.

It is clear that one cannot earn his salvation. On the other hand, it should be even clearer that one does not earn his salvation by disobedience to God. We are not saved on the basis of our lack of obedience; but in spite of our sins we can be saved through the grace of God. The acknowledgement that we are sinners, that we transgress, earns us nothing. And yet there are individuals who may be sliding into the position that they can do as they please, and that God will save them because they proclaim that they cannot earn their salvation. They may even reproach and set at naught those who are careful to try to do God's will. They may thank God that they are the wise ones who know that they cannot do anything, and that they are not like those "Pharisees" who think that there is something which they must do.

Because some individuals have separated doctrine from life in that they have said and done not; or because they have done a few things ritualistically, but have not lived good lives; there are some who also separated doctrine from life by assuming that it does not make any difference what you believe just so long as you live a good moral life which is filled with good works. The Biblical teaching, of course, is that doctrine and deed, creed and conduct, religion and life are not to be

separated. Biblical doctrine includes the moral life and the life of good works.

In a very strongly worded attack on what he viewed as Phariseeism, legalism, or the priestly religion, one voice interpreted certain passages in such a manner as to put one on the highway of Phariseeism. These passages were interpreted in such a way as to indicate that it makes no difference as to your orthodoxy of belief and religious rites; the only thing that counted is whether you live a good life.¹⁶ But if the only thing which counts is whether you live a good life, salvation has been placed on the basis of merit. And thus an individual could boast of what he has earned and could trust in himself that he is righteous, and that he is saved, on the basis of what he has done—even though this includes humility as a part of his life of merit. Micah was cited. But Micah did not teach that sacrifices were of no value, for these had been instituted by God and pointed to the Lamb of God. Nor was Micah saying that if you do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly before God, you need not be concerned about sacrifices for sin because you will make it to heaven by virtue of your good life. No one has done a perfect job of doing justice, loving mercy, and walking in humility. And if it were not for the sacrifice of Christ, and Christ our high priest, we could have no hope. Salvation is no more earned by the good deeds we do than by any ritual to which we conform. But those who trust God for salvation will submit, whether in moral duties or in other beliefs and rituals, to what God has ordained. We shall not be so proud as to scorn the "priestly" aspects of religion, and thank God that we are of the "prophetic" religion and walk humbly before Him instead of depending on the sacrifice for sin! Depending on the sacrifice for sin is a basic manifestation of our humility, and the ground of our salvation is His sacrifice for our sins.

The self-righteous measure themselves by themselves, or by some standard to which they know that they will measure up. There may be others who do this, at least at times, but the Pharisees have made it a habit. Concerning the church one charged that: "They measure themselves by themselves. Their attitude is, 'If you doubt whether we are right, just ask us.'"¹⁷ First, it is obvious that because some may do this, it does not bind me nor mean that I must go into other errors in order to avoid this error. Second, the apostle Paul said: "For we are not bold to number or compare ourselves with certain of them that commend themselves: but they themselves, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves with themselves, are without understanding." (2 Cor. 10: 12) Third, it could be suggested that the above critic has told us that he is right without our having asked him! We have his word for it that our "aim, views, message, method, and attitudes" are "unscriptural, irrational, and unhealthy."¹⁸ He has made it clear, without our asking him, that we are all wrong and that he is right in occupying positions in opposition to us. Fourth, the attitude of

most of the members of the church with whom I have been in touch, is that we must evaluate our positions in the light of the Bible. We are not right in and of ourselves, and neither are others. We are right in so far as we are following God's word out of a good and honest heart. And although there are too many and even a very few would be too many, who do not search the Scriptures to find their doctrine, yet we do not have to endorse their attitude; nor do we have to be anything other than Christians in order to measure ourselves by the word of God. In fact, if we measure ourselves by His word, we shall be content to be just Christians.

Another has suggested that although as individuals we admit that we are imperfect, we believe that, as a group we are without doctrinal error.¹⁹ Although I have been a Christian for forty years, this is the first time that I have heard anyone state this position. Since we are not perfect as individuals, it is obvious that we do not make a perfect group. And there have been too many contentions among brethren for anyone to think or to imply that as a group we are perfect.

SETTING OTHERS AT NAUGHT

It is a common human tendency to think that there must be something wrong with a person just because he is different in some way from us. We may even tend to look down on them because they are different. We may be inclined to disparage them in those things wherein they have not achieved what we have achieved, or what we think that we have achieved. This tendency combined with pride has matured in Phariseeism so that one not only trusts in himself that he is righteous but he also sets others at naught. (Lk. 18: 9-14) Some may be so proud that they are not Pharisees, and may think that they are saved just because they have sense enough, and "goodness" enough, and "hu-mility" enough, not to be Pharisees! They may set others at naught as Pharisees because they differ with them in some matters; or because they may not have grown as much in their grasp of the gospel. They may thank God that they are not as those who think that there are some rules to keep! They may congratulate themselves that they are not "legalists" who think that there is something that one must do.

Phariseeism does exist, and there are Pharisees. But it may be far more subtle than some have thought. The examination of our lives in the light of God's word can reveal to us whether or not we are Pharisees. But let us not forget that pride is subtle and that we need to be on our guard lest we fall into its net. When we realize what it means to be saved by the mercy of God, when we acknowledge that we do not merit salvation, we shall not even be proud of what intellectuals we are for having understood this; instead, we shall walk humbly before our God. And even as we endeavor to help others, we shall look also to ourselves lest we be tempted (Gal. 6: 1). Recognizing that we are sinners saved by grace, we shall not look down in contempt on the unsaved sinners. Instead, we shall view them with compassion. Thus we cer-

tainly agree with those who maintain that we should not speak in terms of contempt of other people just because they differ with us.²⁰ It is not always easy to refrain from this, and one is not a Pharisee because he does it sometimes; but Phariseeism does involve maturing in contempt for others, and setting them at naught.

Phariseeism is pride which has matured and has become the way of life for an individual. Although it may acknowledge God, it ultimately makes self the supreme object of trust and service. It is a declaration of independence from God as the ultimate ground of our salvation and as the supreme object of our trust and service. Self-trusting results in a sense of self-sufficiency in knowledge, in wisdom, and in righteousness. Self-service involves self-will, self-seeking, and the discounting of others. Involved in much of sin is the choice of self as the supreme object of trust and service, and thus it is a problem with which we are all faced. However, Phariseeism is not a failing from time to time, but it takes the qualities, which we have discussed as being involved in Phariseeism, and makes them into a way of life. Man seems to have the tendency to want to seek independence, in one way or another, from God, and if we do not recognize this and bring our lives into subjection to God, we shall continue on the road which leads to 'Phariseeism.

The basic safeguard against Phariseeism, and the basic cure for it, is the recognition of our dependency on God. The first Beatitude is in contrast with trusting in one's self that he is righteous. Blessed, said Jesus, are the poor in spirit. (Matt. 5: 3) The spiritually poor have the quality of humility. They realize that they have no righteousness of their own with which to stand before God. They recognize that they are not rich within themselves. They know that if they are to be saved they must depend on the grace of God. In humility they lay hold on grace in the way God has ordained, yet they recognize that they cannot merit salvation. Their humility does not earn them the reward of everlasting life, although poverty of spirit is essential in order to see God. The attitude of the humble is: "God, be thou merciful to me a sinner. " (Compare Lk. 18: 13)

One of the approaches which some make to Phariseeism is to label it as the priestly religion in contrast with the prophetic religion. While keeping in mind what Phariseeism is, let us examine this approach to the matter.

PROPHETS VERSUS PRIESTS?

One voice spoke as if there is an inevitable conflict between the priest and the prophet.²¹ Two things make it clear that such is not the case. First, God ordained the priest as surely as He did the prophet. Moses was a great prophet of God (Deut. 18: 15-18), but Aaron was a great priest of God. They both received their office from God (Exodus 28: 1; Heb. 5: 1-4). Second, Christ is our high priest under the New Covenant. (Heb. 5: 5-6; 8: 1-3) Christ is also the great prophet like unto Moses. (Acts 3: 22-23; Heb. 1:1-2) When the prophets prophesied falsely,

instead of according to God's will, they were to be rejected. But this was not an argument against a true prophet. When the priests performed falsely, when the people thought that sacrifices could substitute for a life of faith, such priests and offerings were rejected; but this was not an argument against the true priest, his proper functions and the sacrifices.

WHAT IF MICAH DID ATTACK THE PRIESTLY RELIGION? Did Micah attack the priestly system? "Micah, the revolutionary prophet, attacked the priests head-on when he asked religion's basic question: 'With what shall I come before the Lord?'"²² If this critic's view of the Bible is right, what difference does it make if Micah attacked the priestly religion? If the Bible is no more authoritative than this critic's modernism would make it, one has as much reason to say that the priests whom Micah attacked were right and Micah was wrong. On what grounds does this voice accept the so-called prophetic religion over the so-called priestly religion? He condemns what he calls fundamentalism, which includes a firm faith in the inspiration of the word of God. Surely he is not going to go back to the Old Testament, or to the New, and take a fundamentalist position that Micah spoke by inspiration of the Lord! Then, too, this would make him guilty of restoration-ism, of looking back to eternal truth, and fossilizing at that past moment of the evolutionary development of religion; and this is the type of thing which he says that we do, and which he condemns.²³ If God has not authoritatively spoken on the subject in His inspired word, all is a matter of taste and feeling. This critic may feel that the priestly religion is wrong, and another may prefer the priestly religion, and there is no way for one to be right and another to be wrong. Some people like strawberries and some people like spinach; but what right does one have to question the taste of another; since there is no authoritative standard of taste.

DID MICAH ATTACK THE PRIESTLY SYSTEM?

Micah was dealing with people who were debasing the holy temple of the Lord, who were abiding in idolatry and other transgressions, and who were following false prophets. Micah condemned false prophets. (Micah 1: 1-2: 11) "If a man walking in a spirit of falsehood do lie, saying, I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink; he shall even be the prophet of this people. " (Micah 2: 11; 3: 5, 11). Why not argue that Micah attacked the prophetic religion because he attacked false prophets! However, instead of attacking true prophets, Micah stated that he was a true prophet. "But as for me, I am full of power by the Spirit of Jehovah, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin. " (Micah 3: 8) Attacking a false view and use of prophets is no more an attack on the true prophets, than an attack on false priests and a false conception of their function is an attack on the proper functioning of the priesthood. Furthermore,

Micah has as much to say about false prophets (Micah 2: 6, 11; 3: 5, 11), as about false priests and sacrifices (Micah 3: 11; 6: 6-7).

The people were not only following false prophets, but their rulers hated the good and loved the evil (Micah 3: 1-2). Inspired by the Spirit of God, Micah denounced the sinners and false prophets (Micah 3: 5-8). Judges, prophets, and priests who walked in iniquity were all wrong even though they claimed that God was in their midst to bless them (Micah 3: 9-12).

To a corrupt people who had even involved themselves in idolatry (Micah 1: 5-7), and who were assuming that their life of rebellion, even though persisted in, could be atoned for by some offerings in the temple, Micah emphasized that this could not bring them into fellowship with God. The continual life of injustice, immorality, and of pride could not be atoned for by sacrifices in the temple (Micah 6: 6-8). This is a far cry from denouncing the sacrifices, which God Himself had ordained, when they were offered by sincere trusting hearts. But sacrifices are no substitute for the moral and spiritual qualities of life. On the other hand, one could not say that he repudiated the sacrifices because he lived such a good life that he had no need for forgiveness of sins. If one could stand before God just on the basis of doing justly, loving kindness, and walking humbly with God, it would mean that he had earned his salvation. And this would be legalism wherein one merited his salvation and could boast in self-righteousness of what he had done. And yet, this is denounced, and rightly so, as Phariseeism.

With the rejection of the priestly system and the sacrifices, and the emphasis on good works in social issues, one could conclude that this voice is the voice of a legalist who thinks that one is saved on the basis of his good works without any sacrifice for sins. If there were no sacrificial system, and priestly system, under the Old Testament there could be no offering for sins. But the high priest, for example, did this on the great day of atonement. (Heb. 5: 3; 8: 3; 10: 1-4) Although it is true that the blood- of bulls and goats could not do the job of really cleansing the conscience of sins, yet it was essential for the people under the Old Testament system; and it looked forward to and typified the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world. If there were no sacrificial system under the Old Testament, and no Lamb of God under the New, what hope would there be for man—for us? For all men have sinned with reference to the duties which they ought to have done. None of us have loved mercy, done justice, and walked humbly before God in all things and at all times. Therefore, if we must be saved by good works apart from the sacrifice for sins, we are all under the curse without any hope (Gal. 3: 10). This voice, if he drew the logical conclusion from his own arguments about priestly religion and sacrifices, would place salvation on the basis of our good works, and thus become a legalist.

ORTHODOX DOCTRINE?

It is maintained by a critic that Micah 6: 6-7 is "a clear taunting of

the priests and their system of external works and doctrinal orthodoxy. ²⁴ They were no more orthodox in doctrine than were those in Jesus' day who made void God's word through their traditions (Matt. 15: 6-9; Mk. 7: 1-12). Idolatry was rampant amongst the people (Micah 1: 5-7), injustice prevailed, and the priests taught for hire (Micah 3: 1-11). Sacrifices could not avail for a people who persisted in the worship of idols (Micah 6: 16), and walked in the ways of wickedness. Furthermore, doctrinal orthodoxy in the Biblical sense must include one's manner of life. One was not teaching the sound doctrine in the Old Testament if he maintained that the only thing that counted was sacrifices, regardless of one's life and idolatry.

JEREMIAH 7

It is urged that prophetic religion shows that salvation is not through a "plan" but through a relationship which involves love and not the meeting of requirements; although love will work hard. ²⁵ It is true that we do not earn our salvation, but the way of salvation is not "planless", for it is the unfolding of the eternal purpose and plan of God (Eph. 1: 8-11; 3: 10). This is not an impersonal plan but centers in the Person, Jesus Christ. And every voice must admit that love is essential, it is basic; and thus is a basic requirement! Love does not earn our salvation, but without it we are nothing. However, if the Bible is as faulty a book as this particular voice argued, in leaving a pall of uncertainty over every passage of scripture, ²⁵ we have no grounds for believing that there is salvation to be found through a relationship of grace with God; and even if it were, we would have no certain idea as to how to establish this relationship.

This voice went on to suggest that Jeremiah 7 attacks the priests for "offering the people a false hope through legalism" of the sparing of Jerusalem. What does Jeremiah 7 mean?

"Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel: Add your burnt-offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat ye flesh. For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices;... " (Jer. 7: 21-22) What does Jeremiah mean? Had not God commanded the sacrifices? Israel was living in disobedience to God. In spite of their immorality and disobedience they claimed that they were all right because they had the temple of Jehovah. But Jeremiah said that they must amend their ways. "Trust ye not in lying words, saying, the temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah, the temple of Jehovah, are these" (Jer. 7: 4). "Behold, ye trust in lying words, that cannot profit. Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and burn incense unto Baal, and walk after other gods that ye have not known, and come and stand before me in this house, which is called by my name, and say, We are delivered; that ye may do all these abominations? Is this house, which is called by my name, become a den of

robbers in your eyes? Behold, I, even I, have seen it, saith Jehovah. " (Jer. 7: 8-11).

Their disobedience was so great that their sacrifices were useless. Insofar as helping their relationship with God was concerned, they could use their sacrifices for food. Thus he said: "Put your burnt offerings unto your sacrifices, and eat flesh" (Jer. 7: 21). They were to take even those things that God had commanded to be burnt in an offering to Him (Lev. 1: 9) and use as food for themselves. Their sacrifices were of no value in their relationship to God so they might as well be consumed for the nourishment of their physical bodies.

Jehovah went on to say: "For I spake not unto your fathers, nor commanded them in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings or sacrifices: but this thing I commanded them, saying, Hearken unto my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people; and walk ye in all the way that I command you, that it may be well with you" (Jer. 7: 22-23). The expression "in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt" referred to the time when God brought them out and gave them the ten commandment law. Thus we read "There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone which Moses put there at Horeb, when Jehovah made a covenant with the children of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt" (1 Kings 8: 9). "And there have I set a place for the ark, wherein is the covenant of Jehovah, which he made with our fathers, when he brought them out of the land of Egypt" (1 Kings 8: 21).

At the time He gave them sweet water God said to them: "If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of Jehovah thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his eyes, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases upon thee, which I have put upon the Egyptians: for I am Jehovah that healeth thee" (Ex. 15: 26). After God had given them the ten commandment law, the people said they would both hear and do what God said through Moses (Deut. 15: 27). God said: "Now this is the commandment, the statutes, and the ordinances, which Jehovah your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it; that thou mightest fear Jehovah thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged. Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee; and that ye may increase mightily, as Jehovah, the God of thy fathers, hath promised unto thee, in a land flowing with milk and honey.

"Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah: and thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be upon thy heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down and when thou

risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be for frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thy house, and upon thy gates. " (Deut. 6: 1-9).

The fundamental ground of agreement between God and Israel was the agreement of Israel to be in submission to the will of God, and God's agreement to bless them and to be their God. Their life was to be a life of obedience. When God revealed the Levitical system of sacrifice to them, and established the temple system, the life of submission would obey God in the sacrifices just as they obeyed him in other things. For their life, being a life of obedience, would manifest itself in obedience in the sacrificial system. God's agreement was not if they would but keep the sacrifices that He would be their God and bless them. If this had been the agreement, all that they would have had to do would have been to keep the sacrifices. But the foundation of the agreement was not would they support a ritualistic system of sacrifices but would they live a life of obedience. They were not, however, living this life of obedience in Jeremiah's day. (Jer. 7: 24-28).

The meaning of Jer. 7: 21-23 can be illustrated with the Lord's supper. If the foundation of our agreement with God was that we would observe the Lord's supper then just so long as we observed the Lord's supper we would be in fellowship with God. However, the foundation of our agreement was the acceptance of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (Acts 2: 36-38; Rom. 10: 9). This means that we call Him Lord, Lord, and do the things which He says. (Contrast Luke 6: 46) Obviously we observe the Lord's supper because He has told us to do it in remembrance of Him. But this is only a part of our general life of obedience and of Christian privileges. The observance of the Lord's supper is not the foundation of our covenant with God. If we simply observe a few things that God requires in worship to Him, and this is the extent of our life of obedience, then God in effect would tell us to make these things a means of satisfying ourselves. Turn the Lord's supper into a meal for your own physical benefit, for when God commanded us in the day that He redeemed us He did not base our relationship on the Lord's supper, but upon our submission to His will. If we will hearken to His voice, obey His will, we shall be His people; and He will be our God. We shall observe the Lord's supper as a part of our general life of submission to the will of God. We shall not trust in lying words that say: The temple of God, the temple of God, we are the temple of God; and then live a life of stealing, of adultery, of false swearing, of oppression, and of such like. (Comp. Jer. 7: 4, 6-9).

GALATIANS 5: 6

One voice argued that Paul is telling the Galatians not to leave the prophetic religion and go back to the priestly religion, when he said that: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith working through love. " (Gal. 5: 6)" This voice views a fundamental faith in the Bible as the word of God, and the

effort to go by the Bible, as priestly religion. In fact, his entire chapter is entitled "The Failures of Fundamentalism." Paul, however, is not saying that circumcision never had any value, but this voice seems to classify it as a part of priestly religion which he thinks was condemned in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. As long as the Old Testament was in force circumcision was required of all the descendants of Abraham. It was commanded by God Himself, and if a descendant was not circumcised he was viewed as having broken the covenant and was cut off from the people of God (Gen. 17: 9-14). However, the New Covenant has come and the Old Covenant has been done away. Circumcision is no longer binding. For a Christian to be bound by circumcision as a part of the law of Moses is to be bound by the entire law. "Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye receive circumcision, Christ will profit you nothing. Yea, I testify again to every man that receiveth circumcision, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. Ye are severed from Christ, ye who would be justified by the law; ye are fallen away from grace." (Gal. 5: 2-4). One did not have to accept the law and become a Jew in order to become a Christian. Circumcision was a part of the law, but it is not a part of the gospel. It is "in Christ", and not in the law, that circumcision is without value. "For *in Christ Jesus* neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith working through love." (Gal. 5: 6). Whether one is a Jew or Gentile is irrelevant in so far as the gospel and being in Christ are concerned. Circumcision availed under the Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 17: 9-14), and under the law of Moses; but not under Christ. What avails in Christ is faith working through love. Faith must have its works. With the attitude this voice has toward works, one would have thought that he would have accused Paul of legalism in maintaining that what avails under the gospel is faith working through love. This faith does not work at random in love, but in harmony with the revealed will of God. Without the Bible, we could not really know what faith involved, what kind of works it must do, nor what this love is. If the Bible is as covered over with uncertainty as this voice maintains, he could not know whether Paul said faith working through love, or faith working without love, or love without faith, or one availing without faith, without works, and without love. Of the Bible this voice said: "There have been so many glosses, additions, and editorial changes in the process of time that we have no way of knowing exactly what the original text was. From what we have, we get glimpses—little more."²⁸ And yet, the way this voice quoted scriptures to try to prove his argument about prophetic religion versus priestly religion, one would have thought that these texts were clear and certain. For all that he knows, if he is right in his view of the text, the Bible may have originally condemned the prophetic religion and approved the priestly religion!

SABBATH MADE FOR MAN

It is argued that priestly religion, and fundamentalism as a form of

it, are demolished by Jesus' use of Hosea's statement that God desires mercy, and not sacrifice; and Jesus' affirmation that the sabbath was made for man and not man for the sabbath.²⁹ We might ask this voice whether, viewed from his own standpoint, we can depend on these texts as actually being what Jesus taught; and even if they can be thus depended on, whether or not they are relevant to us since Hosea lived long before Jesus, and Christ lived two thousand years ago?

Do these statements of Jesus, and of Hosea, justify us in ignoring the commandments of Jesus today? Jesus said that we are to be taught to observe all things which He has commanded (Matt. 28: 20). Can we use Jesus' statement concerning the Sabbath to nullify Jesus' statement concerning His commandments? One of Jesus' statements may show that another statement is limited, but certainly one does not nullify another. If one nullifies another, why is it not just as scriptural to use the commandment passage to nullify the Sabbath statement?

Jesus did not teach that the Sabbath was not to be observed under the Old Covenant. Sabbath keeping was a law of God (Ex. 20: 8-10; 16: 23-30). Could an individual have the "spirit" of the law concerning the Sabbath, and ignore the Sabbath?

However, Jesus did show, both from the Old Testament and from His own authority, that there were occasions when it was permissible to make an exception to the general law of Sabbath keeping. When Jesus' disciples were accused of violating the Sabbath by plucking some grain to eat, he replied on several grounds. First, the Jews themselves justified the conduct of David in eating the showbread because of the need of David for food (Matt. 12: 1-4). This exception, however, did not justify David in making it a way of life. We ought to assemble on the Lord's day for the Lord's supper, but this does not mean that emergencies may not arise which justify our failure to assemble and to partake of the Supper. However, if we are able to assemble, and make into a way of life the missing of the assembly, we cannot justify ourselves on the grounds that certain human needs and emergencies justify our missing the assembly sometimes. A person might not be able to be baptized today because of the lack of water, but what physical or spiritual necessity is there for one to make this failure into a way of life? What physical necessities justify people in a continued refusal to be baptized? What necessity is there in going through life ignoring this commandment of the Lord?

Because Jesus showed that certain needs of man did temporarily take precedence over the prohibition to work on the Sabbath, we must not draw the conclusion that we can treat His commandments just any way we want to as long as we can argue that human needs justify this type of treatment of the commandment. A voice argued that legalists think of sin as disobedience to a written law which may or may not be relevant to the needs of man. "Man's need had precedence over legal requirements and taboos."³⁰ What shall we say to this? (a) Sin is trans-

gression of a law. "Every one that doeth sin doeth also lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness." (1 John 3: 4). Sin, however, is more than this because violation of the law is not the violation of an abstract law but a violation of the will of the lawgiver. Sin is an affront to God. Sin is a failure to live in harmony with the will of God. (b) The weightier matters—love, mercy, justice, etc. —are also law and they are also written. If we of ourselves are the authority as to what man's needs are, and how they are to be satisfied, we could abolish quite a few of the weightier matters as well as of the lesser matters. In fact, we would come nearer abolishing the weightier matters than we would the lesser ones. What if a man says that he needs alcohol, that he needs dope, or that he needs sexual partners in addition to his wife? Do these "needs" take "precedence over legal requirements and taboos"? (c) If a follower of the "prophetic religion" maintains that God's will, and fellowship with God, take precedence over the interpretation that some people make of their "needs", has he not become guilty of "legalism"? Is he not saying that there are requirements and taboos which take precedence over the needs of at least some men? If there are no bounds, man is justified in being lawless, (d) We are not saying that there is no mercy of God for the sinner, but we are saying that we must not take one passage of scripture and use it to undermine other passages.

Second, Jesus said: "Or have ye not read in the law, that on the sabbath day the priests in the temple profane the sabbath and are guiltless?" (Matt. 12: 5). God *required* certain services of the priests on the Sabbath day in the temple, and thus God Himself made them an exception to the Sabbath law while they were serving in the temple. What spiritual service has the Lord required of the pious unimmersed which exempts them from baptism? Furthermore, in the commandments of Jesus where is the exception made for not being baptized; as an exception was made of these priests concerning the Sabbath? Then, too, if He wills on judgment day to make exceptions, what right have we to make exceptions today without any authorization from Him? Who are we to take the law into our own hands?

Alfred Edersheim maintained that "the reason why David was blameless in eating the shewbread was the same as that which made the Sabbath-labor of the priest lawful. The Sabbath-Law was not one merely of rest, but of rest for worship. The Service of the Lord was the object in view. The priests worked on the Sabbath, because this service was the object of the Sabbath; and David was allowed to eat of the shewbread, not because there was danger to life from starvation, but because he pleaded that he was in the service of the Lord and needed this provision. The disciples, when following the Lord, were similarly in the service of the Lord; ministering to Him was more than ministering in the Temple, for He was greater than the Temple." ³¹

On what service of the Lord are the pious unimmersed, that they should fail to be baptized even though they have years within which to

do it? What obedience to God necessitates their omission of baptism?

No one here on earth today is greater than the temple, so there is no one on earth today who can sanction the omission of baptism.

Third, Christ also said: "But if ye had known what this meaneth, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless." (Matt. 12: 7). Neither Jesus nor Hosea denied that God required sacrifices in the Old Testament. However, the sacrifices were not a substitute for qualities of the spirit; as Micah emphasized (Micah 6: 6-16). They have failed to meet God's *requirements* of justice, mercy, and humility (Micah 6: 8). But neither justice, mercy, nor humility before God can justify us in omitting baptism. If God chooses to weigh one's justice, mercy, and humility and on the day of judgment waive one's baptism, that is His business. But his servants do not have the ability to read the hearts of men to know why they were not baptized, nor to evaluate their lives with reference to justice, etc.; and neither do they have the power to know the mind of God beyond what He has revealed, nor authority from God to omit baptism which He has commanded.

Fourth, Jesus affirmed that He was Lord even of the Sabbath. (Matt. 12: 8). As Lord of the Sabbath, He had the right to relax the rigidity of its requirements if He saw fit. He also had the power to abolish the Sabbath, and He did so (Col. 2: 14-17). As Lord of the Sabbath He could authorize exceptions. Christ is also the Lord of baptism. We are not. Therefore, in submission to Him who is Lord of all, we were baptized into Christ, and we teach others to do the same. It is one thing to leave the question of the pious unimmersed in the hands of the Lord of baptism, and it is an entirely different thing to be so presumptuous, as to take matters into our own hands.

Fifth, Jesus said that "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath". (Mk. 2: 27). Man needed the rest and the worship which took place on that day, and the Sabbath served these needs of man. It was made for man's good and not man for it. There were at times actual needs of men which conflicted with the demands of the Sabbath, and the needs of man took precedence in such a clash. One could lift a sheep out of the pit on the "sabbath day; " but if the sheep go into the pit on every "sabbath day" one should either fill up the pit or pen up the sheep! But what are the spiritual needs of man for which baptism should be sacrificed? Furthermore, there is a vast difference between a violation of the Sabbath on such an occasion as the plucking of the grain by Jesus' disciples, and living an' entire life without ever observing the Sabbath. If I knew that a person's physical condition were such that to immerse him at this time would kill him, I would not counsel his immersion at this time; but is one therefore justified in saying that it is not important whether one is baptized at any time? This individual may have neglected many opportunities in the past. But because emer-

gencies may arise it does not mean that we are justified in rejecting baptism.

LETTER AND SPIRIT

A voice maintained that Paul's conversion was not from one religion to another, but to the prophetic faith from the priestly faith. Like Jesus he realized the meaning of "the prophetic stream of Judaism. When he wrote that 'the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life,' he was probably speaking out of his own harrowing experience of changing from the priest to the prophet."³² First, Paul was converted from the Jews' religion to the Christians' religion. While in the Jews' religion, he persecuted the church of God (Gal. 1: 13-14). After becoming a Christian he now preached the faith which he once persecuted (Gal. 1: 23). It is true that in his Jewish faith he incorporated the traditions of the fathers (Gal. 1: 14). He was living by the law (Phil. 3: 6), but he shows that no man could do a perfect job of it; therefore no man was justified by the law. (Gal. 3: 10).

Second, Paul's own realization that the law killed was not based on the "sacrificial system" as such. In fact, the sacrificial system spoke of mercy for the sinner, of atonement for sin, and this gave man hope. The things which really left man hopeless were the moral and spiritual requirements of the law. The law required that one love God with his entire being, but no man had done a perfect job of this. The law required that one love his neighbor as himself, but no man had perfectly done this (Matt. 22: 37-40). Micah showed that God required that one do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly before God; but no man had done this perfectly. The ten commandment law is concerned mostly with eternal principles—with the exception of the Sabbath law. These principles have to do with man's relationship to God and man's relationship to man. These are at the core of what this voice calls the prophetic religion. And yet, these things emphasize to man that he is a sinner under the curse, for no one has done all these laws required nor done them all of the time (Compare Gal. 3: 10). In speaking specifically of some of the moral principles of the law, Paul showed that it was necessary in some sense to become dead to the law—yea, to become dead to "prophetic religion"—in order to be saved. (Rom. 7: 1-6). How do we know he has in mind moral principles of the law? He stated in verse 7: "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Howbeit, I had not known sin, except through the law: for I had not known coveting, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (Rom. 7: 7). But coveting is one of the reasons that people do not love justice and do mercy to their fellowman. Thus the "prophetic religion", far more than the "priestly religion," shows that we are under the sentence of death. And, as we shall show, in 2 Cor. 3, the "letter" means the decalogue covenant itself; the ten commandments, nine of which are embraced in "prophetic religion". Since through these laws and his violation of them Paul became conscious of his own sin it is obvious that the law which made

him conscious of sin could not make him conscious that he was not a sinner. (Rom. 3: 19-20).

The priestly aspects of the Old Testament system spoke of mercy for the sinner, and this mercy was not spoken of in the moral principles themselves, or in the principle which demanded that they love and serve God. These laws said "Thou shalt not", but man had. These laws said: "Thou shalt", but man had not done all of these nor had he done them all of the time. Therefore, he was condemned by them. The priestly aspects of the law spoke of offerings for the sins of man, and thus held forth hope for him. The prophetic and the priestly were not separated by the Lord but were all part and parcel of the Old Testament system. Those who separated them were left without hope, (a) If we separate the priestly from the prophetic, from the moral requirements, we do not have God's way of salvation and the sacrifices will not atone for a life which continues in rebellion to God. (b) If we separate the prophetic from the priestly, we are without hope for no man has lived the perfect life and no man can earn his salvation on the basis of deeds of justice and of mercy, or a life of perfect humility.

Third, there are those who argue that the "letter" refers to the external of a command, or its literal sense, and the spirit refers to its inward sense or the spirit of the command. In emphasizing that baptism is a burial and a resurrection, we are accused of following the letter and ignoring the spirit. If letter refers to the external aspect or aspects of a command, it would be deadly to obey the externals, even when obedience was from the heart. For, Paul said, the *letter killeth*. One should have the spirit of the commandment concerning baptism, but he should not obey its externals. To be baptized would be to be killed. One should not use the bread and the fruit of the vine, (1 Cor. 11: 23-26), for these are the externals of the commandment. To submit to the letter is to be slain. One could have the spirit of the commandment, but he must not obey its letter. The spirit of the command not to commit adultery is to have a pure heart and not to look on a woman to lust after her. The letter of the commandment is to refrain from the physical act of adultery. One should have the spirit, but he should not obey the letter and refrain from the physical act because the letter killeth. This type of reasoning kills Christianity. Therefore, there must be something wrong with the interpretation that the spirit is the inward spirit of a commandment and the letter is the outward act. The Bible teaches us that we should obey the Lord's commandments from the heart. To go through the outward form without the inward obedience is to fail to submit to the commandment of God. For the Lord has tied the inward and the outward together. To go through the form of partaking of bread and fruit of the vine, but failing to discern the Lord's body is disastrous (1 Cor. 11: 27-29). One cannot plead, however, that he has the spirit of the commandment and then refuse to partake of the bread and the fruit of the vine. Baptism is burial and a resurrection, but it is not Biblical

baptism unless it has its inward meaning. Baptism involves obedience from the heart unto the form of doctrine (Rom. 6: 17-18). From a heart of faith trusting in the cleansing blood of Christ we are baptized into His death. We are buried with Him and raised to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6: 2-5). If our baptism does not involve this, it is not Biblical baptism even though it involved a burial in and resurrection from the water.

The way that we help demonstrate that we have the spirit of the commandment is to be careful to obey the commandment. Obedience to the commandment involves the inward attitude as well as the outward act of submission.

What does Paul have reference to when he speaks of the letter? The apostle is contrasting the two covenants. The old or decalogue covenant he designates as the letter and the new as spirit. What is the letter which killed? (2 Cor. 3: 7) It is "the ministration of death" (3: 7). What is the "ministration of death?" It is that which was "written, and en-graven on stones" at the time that Moses' face shone (3: 7, 13). What was written in stones at the time that Moses' face shone? The decalogue, the ten commandment law, the law which was the foundation of the old covenant and is often identified as the covenant (1 Kings 8: 9, 21; Ex. 34: 27-35). Indeed, it was the "prophetic religion" that killed.

Paul also contrasts the tables of stone with the fleshly tables of the heart (2 Cor. 3: 3). The new covenant law is written on the heart (Heb. 8: 10). Thus Paul was a minister "of a new covenant; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. " (2 Cor. 3: 6). That he is speaking of the covenants is further brought out in his reference to Moses being read, and the reading of the old covenant (3: 14-15).

The decalogue was filled with "thou shalt, " and "thou shalt not. " Within itself it did not have mercy for the sinner. But all sin, for no one has ever been able to do all the law says and to do it all of the time (Gal. 3: 10). This is true concerning the decalogue, and it is true concerning any law of God to man. If we must be judged on the ground of merit, we are condemned. Although the law is holy, we are unholy, and it becomes to us the ministration of death. But under the Old Testament God gave the sacrificial system to make provisions for their sins, and this sacrificial system had value only because of what Christ was to do in His death for our sins and for their sins, too (Heb. 9: 15; 1: 3).

BEWARE

It is important to refute false charges of Phariseeism. If individuals do not understand what Phariseeism is, they may sanction some wrong things under the impression that they are thus avoiding Phariseeism. They may think that they would be Pharisees if they were careful to study and to do God's will. On the other hand, not knowing what Phariseeism is, they may become Pharisees even while denouncing Phariseeism. Thus it is important to understand what Phariseeism is

that we may not bear false witness against others, and that we ourselves may keep from becoming Pharisees.

One can be a Pharisee even though his religion costs him something. The religion of the Pharisees cost them at least ten percent of their income. It cost them the time and effort to go through whatever rituals and traditions they practiced.

A person may be a Pharisee and regard himself as being amongst the most religious of people. The Pharisees so regarded themselves. Furthermore, one may be a Pharisee and be regarded by others as very religious. George Salmon suggested that "the Pharisees put no higher estimate on themselves than the people willingly conceded to them, " and we are confident that this is true concerning at least many of the people.³³ How startled some people must have been by Jesus' charges; especially when He said that the publicans and harlots went into the kingdom before the Pharisees (Matt. 21: 28-32).

The publicans and harlots recognized that they were sinners. The Pharisees, who claimed to do the will of God and did it not, thought that they were righteous. They trusted in themselves that they were righteous (Lk. 18: 9-14). Who is nearer the kingdom, the sinner who realizes he is a sinner, or the sinner who is not convinced that he is a sinner? Although those who realize that they are sinners do not always accept Christ, yet one cannot accept the Savior unless he first recognizes his need for the Savior. The self-righteous, however, think that they are good enough of themselves. "The real mischief is that the self-righteous man destroys all hope of his rising above that moral condition—with which he is so well contented. There is hope of the slave of sin who groans under his bondage, and longs to break his chains; but what hope is there of him to whom the servile yoke gives no discomfort or uneasiness? How is he to be benefited who, though 'wretched, and poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked, ' imagines he is 'rich and increased with goods, and has need of nothing?'"³⁴ "The very first step towards the attainment of true righteousness is the abandonment of false confidence that righteousness has been already attained; and the greatest progress in holiness has been made by men who have started with the deepest convictions of sin."³⁵

Phariseeism is a demonstration that a movement may fall from its high beginning. The Pharisees started with the determination not to compromise with the pagan world. The term meant "separate. " These religious people determined to be as separated from sin as light is from darkness, and to make all of life as holy as if it were the temple of God. The prophets taught that God's people were to be separated from the pagans, and that they were not to combine Judaism with paganism. God had separated His people from the world, but as time went on the Pharisees began to separate themselves in self-righteousness. George Salmon wrote: "But it has constantly happened, that after the admiration of men has been justly won, that admiration continues to be claimed

and given after it has ceased to be deserved. Children of Abraham claim Abraham's privileges who do not the works of Abraham. Men who have done real service to mankind are followed by others who claim to be their representatives and successors, but whose likeness to them is only-outward, and who are destitute of their spirit. "³⁶

The churches of Christ of the first century gradually drifted away from the teaching of Jesus in many things until congregation after congregation became an apostate congregation and merged into larger apostate groups.

We ought to be New Testament Christians. We ought to endeavor to answer the Lord's prayer for unity. We ought to be Christians, nothing more and nothing less; but people who do this may be followed by others who only argue for that for which the others also lived. They may become proud of what their ancestors have done, and trust in themselves that they are righteous just because they say that we ought to answer the Lord's prayer for unity.

Sin is deceitful and pride manifests itself in many subtle ways. Christ so thoroughly exposed the Pharisees that no one today wants to be known as a Pharisee. However, as Salmon remarked, "His lessons, no doubt, constantly need to be revived, because the foe whom he assailed ever disguises himself in new shapes; for as the hollowness of one form of outward piety is discovered, and so that form ceases to gain men's admiration, they who have exposed it may, in turn, be made the model for imitation, by successors falsely claiming to be like-minded with them; and thus it happens that the respectable Christian of the present day is in outward appearance very unlike the Pharisee of our Lord's time. But still the lesson having been once taught, that we must not admit unquestioned that which passes itself with ourselves or others as zeal for God, it has not been difficult to detect the spirit of Pharisaism in the new forms in which it has showed itself, and to smite it with our Lord's condemnation. "³⁷

In some cases Pharisees may hide from themselves their Phariseeism by mislabeling Phariseeism and accusing others of being Pharisees. Because they are different from these people, whom they label Pharisees, they think that it is impossible that they themselves can be Pharisees. For example, the Pharisees set others at naught. They looked down on them. If anyone lives on a higher level than someone else, the person on the lower level may feel that the better person is being self-righteous and is setting him at naught. "For they who strive to live by a higher standard, however little they may pride themselves on their own performances, do silently condemn those who are content with lower aims, and these last will be ready to stigmatize as over-righteous, and possibly as self-righteous, any who exceed the measure of what they count sufficient. "³⁸ One is not being self-righteous because his devotion to God raises him to higher levels of living. He is not a Pharisee because his better life is a rebuke to those who are content to live on a lower level.

"Yet, on the other hand, it is not self-righteousness to be conscious of the attainments we have made in holiness: nor do those escape it who are ready to acknowledge freely the small extent to their spiritual progress. It is not required of a Christian that he should be blind to the work of God's grace in his soul. He is not required to live in a kind of inverted hypocrisy, confessing himself to be worse than he has reasonable cause to think himself, and pronouncing on himself a judgment which everyone else must feel to be unjust. I have read the lives of some Roman Catholic Saints who, while they attracted the admiration of their brethren by their supereminent sanctity, yet professed themselves to be the vilest of wretches, a disgrace to the community, only fit to be trampled by them under foot, and whom they were amazed their brethren were willing to tolerate among them. Yet, when I find them not making confession of particular sins, which would really cost them their brethren's good opinion, but only such general acknowledgments as swelled their fame still higher by adding the praise of humility to their other virtues, I find it hard to recognize such language as prompted by true humility. St. Paul, indeed, has startled us by calling himself the chief of sinners, for when most honoured by God for the successful exertions he had been permitted to make for His cause, he could never forgive himself for having persecuted and wasted the Church of God. Yet, he was not un-conscious of what God had done in him and by him. 'The grace of God,' he says, 'which was bestowed on me, was not in vain, but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet,' he adds, 'not I but the grace of God which was in me.' Surely, when the apostle owns what God by His grace had wrought in him, this is not self-righteousness; it would, on the other hand, have been hypocrisy if he had pretended to be ignorant of it. No; the humility of the saints of God is preserved in a different way. Not through refusing to see, or to acknowledge the triumphs of Divine grace, or the work of God's Spirit in their souls, but by the deeper sense of sinfulness, which the closer approach to God, and the more intense love of Him is sure to generate. Those sins which we once thought trifling, pardonable frailties, the way of the world, the infirmities of human nature, assume in our judgment a deeper dye as we are more penetrated with the love of Christ. Then, it seems to us no small matter that His boundless love to us should be rejected with base ingratitude. Thus it was with St. Paul, that the insulting and persecuting the name of Christ which once had seemed to him his duty, appeared to him, when his spiritual eyes had been enlightened, such amazing wickedness as to fill him with never-ceasing wonder that even he, the chief of sinners, had obtained mercy. And not only this, but the conscience of him who walks with God is strengthened; his spiritual discernment is increased; multitudes of secret sins start to view which had never been noticed by his conscience while formerly torpid and hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. And as he strives to walk closely with God, he becomes conscious of innumerable shortcomings; the more he strives

to follow Him who is infinitely perfect, the greater the distance appears.

~~He, in short, who is manfully fighting in his Master's cause will have some~~ defeats and reverses to tell of, of which the man knows nothing who has never struck a blow in his Saviour's service. These are ways in which a Christian's humility is preserved, and not by his being ignorant of what God has done in him, nor by his being unable to say, through the grace of God I am what I am. In fact, the greater a man's real righteousness, the less danger he is in of self-righteousness.

"And this brings me to the next point, and one by no means needless to be mentioned: Righteousness is not self-righteousness. The irreligious man, as I have already said, is apt to set down as self-righteousness everyone who can claim to be better than he pretends to be. Men of a different character, who have caught up the one doctrine, that we are not to put confidence in our own works or deservings, which is part of the Gospel, though not the whole of the Gospel, are seriously alarmed when they hear of any aiming at being righteous, as if it would necessarily follow that they must become self-righteous; or, if a preacher dwell upon works, as if he must teach salvation by works. That was a risk which St. Paul was not afraid of incurring, for great part of his epistles is taken up, not merely with general exhortations to holiness, but with very detailed instructions as to particular duties. The truth is, that as far as my experience goes, the danger is an imaginary one of a man's doing too much good works, and so being led to trust that he will get salvation by them. Many men do works that would generally be called good works without any thought of the next world at all; but among Christians who really concern themselves about salvation, the knowledge of Christ's atoning work is too generally spread to allow it to be a very common mistake to refuse to place trust in that to the exclusion of every other ground of confidence. In truth, there is nothing wrong in being righteous, or in doing good works. The only thing to be frightened about is, if the righteousness be not real, or the works not truly good. And, as I have just said, the less the real righteousness, the greater the danger of self-righteousness."³⁸

"If we clearly understand that self-righteousness consists, not so much in thinking oneself to be good as in thinking oneself to be good enough, we perceive that it is compatible with a great absence of real righteousness. The man who laughs at all professions of piety, who thinks that the sins he has committed are in God's sight trifling frailties, and who gives the name 'Pharisee' to those who make a show of living after God's will and in obedience to God's commands, is, if the truth were told, himself the Pharisee. For though he does not assert himself to be good, it is plain he feels confident that he is good enough. He has no idea of higher excellence than his own; for in his heart he believes his character to be much more amiable than that of those whom he pronounces over-righteous people. And so he is as far as any Pharisee from that real conviction of sin, which rouses the benumbed conscience,

and awakes the first hunger and thirst after real righteousness.

"There are, again, men of quite a different stamp, who inveigh against self-righteousness, yet are themselves deeply involved in it. Everything that is good has its counterfeit. That conviction of sin, which is the first step to the prodigal's return to his father, is simulated by a false conviction of sin, which means no more than that they who experience it, are for the time frightened at the possibility that they may go to hell. That it is no more than this is evident from the fact, that it commonly does not include consciousness of, nor repentance from, any particular sin; nay, by many, self-examination for such sins or acknowledgment of them is discouraged. And when once they have quelled their fears by the acknowledgment that our Blessed Lord is the only way of salvation, they care not to remember the lessons of self-denial He has taught, and go on living the rest of their lives in as easy satisfaction with themselves as the worldling of whom I spoke just now; or rather easier, inasmuch as the conscience of the latter is seldom quite comfortable, and theirs has received a strong opiate.

"But it may be urged with truth, that there have been innumerable cases in which a conviction of sin, which probably was no more than terror of judgment to come, has been the turning-point of a transition from a life of careless ungodliness to a life of consistent holiness. Far be it from me to dispute the beneficial effects which the terrors of the law have in some cases produced. It sounds in our ears exceptional arrogance that the Pharisee should say, I am not as other men are. It is in truth what the voice of every one of our hearts whispers to us; and if I were asked to name the chief cause of danger to a young man of taking a course which may wreck his life, I think I should answer, his persuading himself that he is not as other men. For we are each the centre of our own horizon. We know ourselves as we can know no one else: in fact, we guess at others from what we know of ourselves. And in spite of theoretical conviction, it is hard to resist the impression that that one being, whose happiness is all the world to us, and whom we know as we know no other, must be different from any other. And it seems incredible to us that the disaster which has befallen others should overtake us. We cannot bear to think it possible that our own life should be a failure and a wreck. The gamester, though perfectly aware that the chance of the table are against him, fears not to take his risk, trusting that, however others may have been ruined, exceptional good fortune will bring him out a triumphant winner. And similarly, too, a young man is apt to expect that he will be an exception to the law that whatsoever a man soweth he shall reap. He thinks that he can touch pitch without being defiled; the good feelings of which he is conscious will guard his heart from being hardened by the deceitfulness of sin; others have been entangled beyond extrication in the downward path on which he ventures to tread; but it cannot be but that when he

pleases, there will be a way of return for him. Happy for him if a wholesome fear dispels this delusion, and out of the conviction that the way of sin is a way of real danger, there springs earnest desire to escape from it.

"In another sense, it is easy for us to persuade ourselves that we are not as other men. It is not pleasant to be on bad terms with ourselves; and the commonest way of satisfying ourselves is to try ourselves by the standard of other men, the result of which is sure to be favourable, since we can choose our own standard of comparison. The very worst man we know, knows others worse than himself; not worse, perhaps, in every respect, but worst in some points, and these are the points which he will consider really important; and so he prides himself that with all his faults he is not such as they. It was a true remark as to the effect of bad example, that for one who is hurt by being led to imitate a bad example, two are hurt by being content with being themselves a little better. It is a common remark, how the tone of a whole party, religious or political, is altered by violent and extreme men, whom the great bulk of the party repudiate. Far be it from them to justify such language or opinions; but still new ideas arise as to the length to which men may go; and men pass now, in comparison, for quiet, moderate men, who would have been counted extreme before. Just in the same way, every sinful act lowers the moral standard of those who witness it. (I would say that it encourages the lowering of the standard. J. D. B.) Men compare themselves with the flagrant offences or easily marked inconsistencies of others, and flatter themselves that because they have escaped these, all must be well with them. And their heart fills with secret and very ill-founded pride; and if they ventured, in their prayers, to express the true feelings of their hearts, their address to God would also be that of the Pharisee: 'God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are. '

"Brethren, the best practical rule for avoiding the dangers which arise from comparing ourselves with others, is to strive to keep ever before our minds as our rule of life, the character of Him who gave us an example that we should follow in *His* steps. 'Be ye holy, even as I am holy,' is the charge of Him whom we are bound to follow. If we strive not to walk by His rule, what will it profit us that we have been a little less unfaithful than others? As well might the guest who came into the marriage supper without a wedding garment, boast himself that he had not repulsed or slighted the messengers who brought their master's invitation. He had not made light of his summons; much less had he involved himself in the deeper guilt of those who used those servants despitefully, and slew them. There he was in obedience to the master's call. He was not another men. Yet on him the sentence was pronounced, 'Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ' Even so it is that there is no example, but one, which may not mislead us—mislead

us even when we have succeeded in arriving at the standard we aim at, or in going beyond it. There is but One in striving to resemble whom we can never be led astray; One whose character the more closely we study, and the more thoroughly we love, the more nearly we approach to be perfect, even as our Father which is in heaven is perfect. The contemplation of such an example, and the contrast with what you know yourselves to be, cannot but deepen your sense of sin, and drive you to the supplication, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner.' Remember, then, that it was for sinners Christ died; for sinners He gave His precious blood; to sinners He promised His Holy Spirit. He has revealed God as a loving co-operator in the work of your sanctification. When you need strength to overcome your spiritual enemies, you cannot be so ready to ask it as He to give it. If the sense of sin drive you to Christ, if you feel that it is too great to be hidden by any fig-leaf covering of your own devising, if it force you to cast yourselves unreservedly on Him, then you will know His pure and spotless righteousness as sufficient to cover all your sins, and such that you may present yourselves arrayed in it without reproach in the presence of God. May God then declare to you so much of your true state, that you can never trust that you are righteous, never be content whereunto you have yet attained, but be always straining upward, always aiming at something higher. Then will you not despise others, but love them, help their tottering steps when they fail where you have been strengthened by God's grace to stand, help them, counsel them, pray for them. "⁴⁰

PRIDE VERSUS HUMILITY

Phariseeism is pride which has matured. Thus it trusts in itself that it is righteous, and it in this same pride which leads it to set others at naught. Pride is so subtle that sometimes it assumes the guise of humility. The apostle Paul spoke of "a voluntary humility and worship-ping of the angels. " (Col. 2: 18). They went by the traditions of men "which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship, and humility.... " (Col. 3: 23). There are those who, like Ahaz, pretend to a humility which they do not really have. Thus, although the Lord told him, through the prophet, to request a sign he refused to do so on the grounds that he would not tempt God (Isa. 7: 11-12). God knows our sinfulness far better than we do, but He still invites us to come to the throne of grace to our high priest (Heb. 2: 17-18; 4: 14-16). There are some, however, who say that since man is so sinful and Christ is perfect, we ought not to be so brazen as to go directly into His presence. Instead, we ought to go through a series of beings, such as departed saints or angels, who are better than we are, and let them take our petition before Christ who is on the throne of grace. God has said we can come directly to the throne of grace, but this false humility, this humility based on the will of man rather than on the will of God, says that we ought not to be so proud as to do this. In other words, the will

of man can better decide, than can the will of God, as to how one is to show humility. This is pride indeed.

Pride, in one form or another, is a problem for all of us. Pride if persisted in separates us from Christ; and this includes false humility. The apostle Peter told Jesus: "Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. " (John 13: 8). Plummer, in his commentary pointed out that: "The negative is the strongest form possible; 'thou shalt certainly not wash my feet for ever. ' " Westcott observed that: "He assumed that he could foresee all; hence his reverence takes the form of self-will, just as in the corresponding incident in Matt. 16: 22, where also his self-willed reverence for Christ, as he interpreted His office, brings down a stern reproof. " "Christ meets the confidence of the apostle with a declaration of the necessary separation which must ensue from the want of absolute submission. 'Unless I render thee this service, unless, that is, thou receivest that which I offer, even when thou canst not understand my purpose, thou hast no part with me. ' The first condition of discipleship is self-surrender. " As Plummer observed: "To reject Christ's self-humiliating love, because it humiliates Him (a well-meaning but false principle), is to cut oneself off from Him. It requires much more humility to accept a benefit which is a serious loss to the giver than one which costs him nothing. In this also the surrender of self is necessary. " Peter then impetuously reacts in the same spirit, at least to some extent it seems, in which he had made the first statement. "Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. " (John 13: 8). Westcott thought that "Peter, with characteristic impulsiveness, still answers in the same spirit as before. Just as he had wished to define what the Lord should not do, so now he wishes to define the manner in which that should be done which he admitted to be necessary. He would extend in detail to every part the action which Christ designed to fulfil in one way according to His Own will. " However, Jesus' statement which followed this was not the severe statement which he made in reply to Peter's refusal to let Christ wash his feet.

All must take care lest humility be turned into pride which thinks that it knows better than the Lord how things should be done. Of course, where Christ has left us free we are free. We are not free, however, to decide of our own will that our way is better than the way which He has revealed.

"God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. " (Jas. 4: 6). The proud are self-sufficient and thus they will not receive the grace of God. Instead of being blessed of God, their spiritual condition is such that they must have pronounced on them the "woes" of Matthew 23. However, those who are self-renounced, those who recognize their spiritual poverty, they can be receptive to the blessings of God, and on them can be pronounced the beatitudes (Matt. 5: 3).

CHAPTER V FOOTNOTES

- 1Sanders, 35-47.
- 2*Voices*, 122. For samples of additional charges of this nature see *Voices*, 41, 122-123, 138, 145, 149.
- 3*Firm Foundation*, March 4, 1952, 3. The present author has written a book on Matt. 23 entitled *Woe Unto You?*
- 4*The Life Line*, February, 1953, Vol. 8, No. 1.
- 5Etter, 106.
- 6"The Spirit's Certainty", *Christianity Today*, Oct. 22, 1965, 47.
- 7Rom. 8: 16. This is discussed in James D. Bales, *The Holy Spirit and The Christian*.
- 8*Christianity Today*, February 3, 1967, 43.
- 9Etter, 107.
- 10Hibbett, 60.
- 11Ralph V. Graham, 139. 12Ralph V. Graham, 130. 13Ibid.
- 14Sanders, 35-36.
- 15"What's Wrong with Legalism?" *Mission Messenger*, Sept., 1966, 153-154.
- 16Sanders, 35-36. 17Graham, 138. 18Graham, 130. 19Key, 123.
- 20Hardeman, 90. 21Sanders, 35-47. 22Sanders, 35. 23Sanders, 39.
- 24Sanders, 36. 25Sanders, 42. 26Sanders, 39-40. 27Sanders, 37-38.
- 28Sanders, 39-40. 29Sanders, 36-37. 30Sanders, 41.
- 31*The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Vol. IT, 58. 32Sanders, 37. 33George Salmon, *Non-Miraculous Christianity*, London: McMillan and Co., 1881, 188.
- 34George Salmon, *Non-Miraculous Christianity*, 199.
- 35Ibid., 198.
- 36Ibid., 189.
- 37Ibid., 190-191.
- 38Ibid., 191.
- 39Ibid., 193-196.
- 40Ibid., 199-204.

Does the Christian Have Any Freedom?

A theme which recurs in *Voices* is that the Christian is free but his freedom is being denied in churches of Christ. Therefore, in order for one to be free under God one must break with the church. Freedom is stressed in the Bible, but what does it mean to be a free man in Christ? How are we to know in what this freedom consists, and what are its boundaries, if boundaries exist? That there are boundaries at least many of the voices, if not all, recognize. They do not think we are free to be Pharisees or to dictate to others what they must believe. In considering our freedom in Christ, it is well to underscore in the beginning that we are not free just because we feel free.

A SENSE OF EMANCIPATION

One is not free because he feels joy in his assumed freedom. Some spoke of the sense of relief they felt when they broke with us and became free, and one said he "felt almost a glee in emancipation."¹ A sense of liberation, when one has broken with previous restrictions, is not within itself proof that one should have broken with the restrictions or that one is now free in reality. One can be thrilled by his freedom,² but this is not a divine confirmation that he has not gone beyond the boundaries which God has established. Those who have cast away the Biblical teaching concerning sex, may feel a sense of freedom since they are no longer restrained as they once were. And some may even claim that they are inculcating a new sense of responsibility to handle this newly found freedom. Thus Frederic C. Wood, Jr., an Episcopal minister told the women students at the college where he is chaplain that "Sex is good... Sex is fun. . . it is also funny... Premarital inter-course is (not) 'bad' or dirty. Indeed, it can be very beautiful. " He later said that: "I was trying to confront the students with the fact that they are very free, and that with their freedom comes a responsibility, a responsibility to the law of love. . . " Are we bound by the law of love? He argues that the "spirit" not the "letter" of the law must be primary. "For a Christian, " he said, "that which makes us free is the love of God, which assures me that no matter how deviant my behavior may seem to be according to any given code, I myself am acceptable. I am lovable. I am OK. "³ If there is no certain standard, if there is no inspired Bible, who is to say that one is not free to turn freedom into license? Certainly their feeling of freedom is as much a confirmation of the correctness of their conclusions as is the feeling of freedom of those who felt emancipated when they left the church. A sense of freedom is not a divine confirmation of the reality of freedom; for one may be mistaken as to what true freedom is; and thus he feels free because he thinks he is free, even though he is bound.

Although one of the voices thought that there should be a limit to one's freedom,⁴ he joined the Episcopal Church which tolerates such

teaching as Mr. Wood delivered; and even more so, for look at the teaching of Bishop John A. T. Robinson. Furthermore, in speaking of conditions in the Church of England, in which this voice sought "Wider Horizons", Jenkin Lloyd Jones said: "My own fellow Unitarians... have by their insistence on 'absolute freedom' become an amorphous mass of Christians, agnostics, pantheists, atheists, communists, humanists, etc., 'without form, and void,' as Genesis puts it. There is a point at which belief in everything becomes indistinguishable from belief in nothing. "⁵ Surely their freedom has turned into anarchy.

FREEDOM THROUGH TRUTH

The truth, Jesus said, shall make us free (John 8: 32). What truth is this? It is the word of Christ (John 8: 31), which He received from the Father (John 17: 8), and gave to the apostles (John 13: 2; Matt. 26: 20-25), and unto which the Spirit guided them (John 14: 26; 16: 12-14; 2 Pet. 1: 3; Jude 3). This is the word through which we believe (John 17: 15-20), by which we are sanctified (John 17: 17), and by which men shall be judged (John 12: 48-52). We receive Christ and His word in receiving the word of those whom He sent, and if we keep this word He will abide with us (John 17: 6, 8, 18; 13: 20; 14: 23-24).

We do not have inspired apostles and prophets today, but the written word of inspired men is as authoritative as their spoken word (2 Thess. 2: 15). To have the word of inspired men is to have them, and to listen to their word is to listen to their voice (Lk. 16: 29-31; Acts 13: 27; 15: 21). The written word is not only the voice of the prophet (Acts 13: 27), but it is the voice of God (Matt. 22: 31) and the testimony of the Holy Spirit (Heb. 10: 15). It has the power to produce faith and to instruct us (John 17: 20; 20: 30-31; Eph. 3: 3-4).

Modernism assumes that all the truth was not revealed to the apostles and prophets in the first century. To this we say: First, how can they claim to love Christ and to be loyal to Him when they discredit His promise that certain men would be guided into all the truth? While they claim to be disciples of Christ, they try to make Christ their disciple and to teach him that he was wrong. Some voices criticize our "backward look in religion"⁶ and think that the fruits of modern scholarship in religion go beyond what is found in the Bible. And yet, if Jesus is the truth, His promise that the apostles would be guided into all the truth was fulfilled before the last one of them died. Therefore, it is necessary for us to take the backward look to the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints. If all the truth was delivered, we must grow in Christ and not go beyond Christ; for in him "are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden. This I say, that no one may delude you with persuasiveness of speech. " "As therefore ye received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him rooted and builded up in him, and established in your faith, even as ye were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. " (Col. 2: 3-4, 6). If all truth is not in Christ and His word, then we have already outgrown Him for He revealed Himself as a false teacher by making the

ridiculous claim that certain men would be guided into all the truth.

Second, all the truth has been delivered, for the promise of Jesus Christ did not fail. We ask modernists to state one moral or spiritual truth which is not found in the Word of God. If they will list some of the new truths which they think they have, we are convinced that it can be shown that either: (1) They are found in the Bible. (2) They are discernible by human reason. (3) They are condemned by the Bible. (4) They are condemned by human reason.

Knowledge of the truth makes us free (John 8: 32). This knowledge is more than an intellectual grasp, for it involves obedience. We have been begotten again by the word of God (1 Pet. 1: 23). "Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth." (Jas. 1: 18). This involved our obedience for "ye have purified your souls in your obedience to the truth unto unfeigned love of the brethren" (1 Pet. 1: 22). Knowledge of truth involves the practice of truth (1 John 2: 3-4; Jas. 1: 21-25), and thus the abiding in Christ's word (John 8: 31).

It should be obvious that no one has a perfect grasp of all the truth, much less a perfect practice of it. There is room for growth for "as newborn babes, long for spiritual milk which is without guile, that ye may grow thereby unto salvation". (1 Pet. 2: 2). Some have not grown, and need to be fed milk when they ought to be eating meat (1 Cor. 3: 1-3; Heb. 5: 11-14). This is not a healthy situation, and in Hebrews the exhortation to go on to maturity is followed by a warning concerning some who had totally fallen away (Heb. 6: 1-6). Since no one perfectly practices all the truth, it is clear that God must overlook some things in order for anyone to be saved. How much He will overlook is not mine to know, and I am happy that I must leave this to the judge of all the earth who will do right. However, this does not mean that I should be presumptuous and neglect my obligation to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 3: 18).

The truth, however, is not a cold and impersonal system, but is rooted in, always related to and embodied in Jesus Christ who is the way, the truth and life. (John 14: 6). He and His truth free us. "If ye abide in my word, then are ye truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." "If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." (John 8: 31-32, 36). Our freedom, therefore, is not in an impersonal system of abstract truth, but in Christ and His living word.

However, we are not free to deny the truth. One or more of the voices thought that we are free to use the so-called scientific approach in religion to discredit certain doctrines taught in the Bible.⁷ Some want to be free to bring various innovations into worship.⁸ We are not free to establish our own standard of fellowship. Some have done this in making fellowship too narrow, and so me in making it too broad. Several of the voices want us to fellowship them in their modernism and thus in their denials concerning the Bible.⁹ While some people need to broaden

their view of fellowship, there are others who need to make theirs much narrower. We are not free to denounce the revelation of God in the Old Testament with reference to certain of the Old Testament wars.¹⁰ There is a Biblical "unity in diversity, " for Christians are certainly at different stages of growth; but there is not sufficient diversity to include within this unity those who reject the Bible. If this author ever becomes convinced that the Bible is not inspired of God, as it claims to be, there will be no fellowship of "unity in diversity, " because without the divine revelation we could not maintain that there is any fellowship in which men are obligated to receive one another.

FREE FROM THE LAW OF SIN AND DEATH Christ has freed us from living under the law of merit wherein we would have to earn our salvation. If we were under law in this sense we would have to do all God requires and do it *all of the time*. (Gal. 3: 10). If we did this, we could boast of what we had done and we would receive the reward as wages due for work done (Rom. 3: 27-28; 4: 4). No one has lived the perfect life. All have sinned and have fallen short (Rom. 3: 9, 19-20). We do not have to transgress every law and trans-gress every law all of the time, in order to be condemned by the law (Jas. 2: 9-11). If we are to be saved it must be on some basis other than merit; on some grounds other than doing all the law says and doing it all of the time. This way has been provided through the blood of Jesus Christ and the grace of God (Rom. 3: 21-26). We are to have faith and the obedience of faith (Rom. 1: 5; 6: 17-18; 16: 26), but these acts of faith do not merit salvation. They draw their value from the fact that they are in God's plan of salvation and related to the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Thus in Christ we are not under condemna-tion, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. " (Rom. 8: 1-4). "So then, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh: for if ye live after the flesh, ye must die; but if by the Spirit ye put to death the deeds of the body, ye shall live. " (Rom. 8: 12-13).

We are free from the dominion of sin. "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under law, but under grace. " (Rom. 6: 14). This does not mean that a Christian is not under law in any sense, for if he were it would be impossible for him to do wrong; for sin is transgression of law (1 John 3: 4). But it is possible for us to do wrong (Rom. 6: 15). Furthermore, we are under the law of Christ (1 Cor. 9: 21). However, we are free from the dominion of sin (Rom. 6: 14, 22). If we were under the law of merit, once having sinned we would enter the bondage of sin, and be under its dominion or rule without any hope of

escape. But God in His mercy has made provisions for our forgiveness; and being forgiven we are then treated as though we had not sinned. Being free from sin's rule, however, does not mean that we are free from temptation or that it is not possible for us to go back into bondage. But it does mean that through the mercy of God we have escaped, and can continue to remain free from its dominion if we walk after the Spirit and not after the flesh. We do not have to let sin rule over us unto death.

FREEDOM TO OBSERVE THE LAW?

One voice cited Acts 21: 17-26 to "show clearly how first century Christians felt free to continue observing the religious customs of the Law of Moses." ¹¹ In the context in which he cited this passage, it is implied that it sanctions Roman Catholic rituals and doctrines. This is a difficult passage, and we hope to treat it in greater detail, the Lord willing, in another book. How could Paul thus participate in a sacrifice in the temple in order to prove that he kept the Law? (Acts 21: 24, 26). Hebrews tells us that Jewish Christians must abandon Judaism, and that those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat of our altar (Heb. 13: 10-15). The explanation which, so far as the author knows, does not violate any Scriptures, and which takes into consideration the general context, is that this was a period of transition wherein God permitted Jews to continue in the observance of the Law until He finally made it impossible through the revelation of all the truth and the destruction of the temple.

Christ promised the apostles that they would be guided into all truth (John 16: 12-13). All truth, however, was not revealed at one moment and thus they were not required to live by the full revelation until the full revelation was made. Revelation was bit by bit and not all at once. (1 Cor. 13: 8-11) It was not God's will to reveal everything to the church on Pentecost. God did not make crystal clear to the church on Pentecost that the Gentile was to come into Christ without having to have anything to do with the law. And thus for a period of time the church did not think that it was right to go into men uncircumcised, eat with them, and bring them into Christ without their having to have anything to do with the law. But finally God made this crystal clear in the revelation given at the household of Cornelius (Acts 10: 11; 15). After this it was no longer permissible for the church to have the attitude which it had had toward the Gentile before Acts 10. As J. W. McGarvey wrote: "But in Paul's earlier epistles, though some things had been written which, carried to their logical consequences involved all of this (cf. Eph. 2: 13-15; Heb. 7: 8; 9: 10. McGarvey may mean to compare Eph. with Heb., instead of saying that Hebrews was an earlier epistle of Paul, J. D. B.), these points had not yet been clearly revealed to his mind and much less to the minds of the other disciples; for it pleased God to make Paul the chief instrument for the revelation of this part of his will. His mind, and those of all the brethren, were as yet in much the same condition on

this question that those of the early disciples had been in before the conversion of Cornelius in reference to the salvation of the Gentiles. If Peter, by the revelation made to him in connection with Cornelius, was made to understand better his own words uttered on Pentecost (Acts 2: 39, and we may add: The Lord's statement in the great commission concerning all nations wherein gospel-terms, not law-terms, were bound, J. D. B.), it should cause no surprise that Paul in his early writings uttered sentiments the full import of which he did not apprehend until later revelations made them plain. That it was so is but another illustration of the fact that the Holy Spirit guided the apostles into all the truth, not at one bound, but step by step. In the wisdom of God the epistle to the Hebrews, the special value of which lies in its clear revelations on the distinction between the sacrifices and priesthood under Moses and those under Christ, was written but a few years previous to the destruction of the Jewish temple, and the compulsory abrogation of all the sacrifices of the law; and that thus any Jewish Christian, whose natural reverence for ancestral and divinely appointed customs may have prevented him from seeing the truth on this subject, might have his eyes opened in spite of himself. "¹²

Does Paul's example furnish us with authority to participate in acts of worship which God has not otherwise authorized today? First, these Jews came from a *different background* from that of any religious people today. The law had been a divine institution for centuries. God had revealed it and required it. This is vastly different from people continuing in, regardless of how much long-suffering we may manifest in trying to help them get away from some of their background, or *entering into* things which never were of divine origin; and thus which had never been required of them or their fathers by God.

Second, we find no case where the apostle Paul, or any other inspired man, participated in a pagan worship service. Paganism was never of divine origin. Paul not only said we should not worship in a pagan temple because it may cause a brother to stumble (1 Cor. 8: 9-12), but he also clearly stated that it was wrong within itself. "What say I then? that a thing sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have communion with demons. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of demons: ye cannot partake of the table of the Lord, and of the table of demons. Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?" (1 Cor. 10: 19-22). And because some professed Christians have introduced various aspects of paganism into their worship and doctrine, it does not make it right for us to participate in it. We do not even have the right to commune (1 Cor. 10: 18) with Israel's altar (Heb. 13: 10; Acts 21: 25). Does this voice think that Paul could have participated in a pagan religious ceremony *in order* to prove that he, Paul, kept that pagan religion? But in Acts 21: 24 *he proved he kept the law*.

Third, Acts 21 deals with a *different people from, any people today* on whom some try to bind, or justify in accepting, the religious ritualism of the law or of the traditions of men. That generation of Jews, mentioned in Acts 21, had been brought up under the law as a divine institution *while the law was still in force*. This cannot be said of any generation of the Jews since the first century. Furthermore, no Jew for centuries has been able to keep the old law, for the temple itself was destroyed. No Jew has authority from God to re-build it, and re-institute its ritual.

Fourth, we are in a *different time* today. They lived in a time of transition from the law to the gospel, and God dealt with them in long-suffering. In fact, He gave Israel herself around 40 years in which to hear the gospel and to repent before she was destroyed as a nation and scattered, and before He made it impossible for anyone to keep the law by destroying the temple in His overruling providence. We are not in such a transition period. We live in the time of the complete revelation, and this complete revelation makes it clear that neither Jew nor Gentile should keep the sacrificial system of the old law. How can we offer an animal sacrifice when it is crystal clear that Christ is our only sacrifice for sin, and that there can be no more offering for sin?

Fifth, any attempt to bind on Gentiles the ritual of the law was forbidden even in this transition period; and it is certainly forbidden today. James expressly said: "But as touching the Gentiles that have believed, we wrote, giving judgment that they should keep themselves from things sacrificed to idols, and from blood, and from what is strangled, and from fornication. " (Acts 21: 25). No one was permitted to put on them the yoke of the law (Acts 15: 10). To have done so would have been to subvert their souls (Acts 15: 24). It would have implied that the law is a part of the gospel.

In the light of these considerations we ask: How can one use Acts 21 to justify the traditions of men in the elaborate ritualism of Roman Catholicism today?

FREEDOM WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF THE GOSPEL We are free from the law but we are not free to go back to the law. "For freedom did Christ set us free: stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage. " (Gal. 5: 1). Jews who obeyed the gospel were dead to the old law, and Jews and Gentiles are made dead to the principle of justification on the basis of merit. But we are freed from this that we may be joined to Christ and bring forth fruit unto God (Rom. 7: 1-7). We are not free to bring forth just any kind of fruit, but fruit which is the result of the relationship which we sustain to Christ.

We are free, but we are not free to turn liberty into license and to serve the flesh. "For ye, brethren, were called for freedom: only use not your freedom for an occasion to the flesh, but through love be servants one to another. " (Gal. 5: 13). We are not free to sow to the flesh, but to sow to the Spirit (Gal. 6: 7-10). We are not free from the demands of the

law of love, except that we do not have to perfectly live up to the law of love. If we did perfectly live up to the law of love we would earn our salvation; but no man has done so. We are, however, called on to try to fulfil the ethical requirements which are summed up in the law of love (Rom. 13: 8-10). Ethically speaking, we are on a higher plane than the Jew for Christ has revealed the new standard of love (John 13: 34-35).

Although we have some minute regulations, we are free from the multiplicity of requirements of the law of Moses. However, this does not mean that we are less responsible to God. In fact, we are under greater responsibility. Some would like to have everything stated in minute detail so that they could feel that they had arrived when they had checked off these things. Also it would spare them from doing very much thinking about the matter. However, much of our life is regulated by principles such as the golden rule; or, to put it another way, the law of love for our fellowman. It takes a lot of thought, in different situations in life, to know how to apply the golden rule. As Richard Whately suggested: "Hardly any restraint is so irksome to man as to be left to his own discretion, yet still required to regulate his conduct according to certain principles, and to steer his course through the intricate channels of life, with a constant vigilant exercise of his moral judgment. It is much more agreeable to human indolence (though at first sight the contrary might be supposed) to have a complete system of laws laid down, which are to be observed according to the letter, not to the spirit; and which, as long as a man adheres to them, affords both a consolatory assurance of safety, and an unrestrained liberty as to every point not determined by them; than to be called upon for incessant watchfulness. —careful and candid self-examination, —and studious cultivation of certain moral dispositions." ¹³

Wherein the gospel leaves us free, we are not free to use our knowledge so as to lead people into sin; for this would be to assume that we have been made free from the law of love. Paul showed that eating meat in an idol's temple was wrong on two counts. First, it was a violation of the law of love. If an individual with a weak conscience saw us doing this, he would be emboldened to participate in a sacrifice to an idol. "But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to the weak.... For through thy knowledge he that is weak perisheth, the brother for whose sake Christ died. And thus, sinning against the brother, and wounding their conscience when it is weak, ye sin against Christ. " (1 Cor. 8: 9-12). He who does not use knowledge in love does not know as he ought to know. Knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth. If any man thinketh that he knoweth anything, he knoweth not yet as he ought to know; but if any man loveth God, the same is known by him. " (1 Cor. 8: 1-3). Second, it was wrong within itself to eat at the idol's altar. "What say I then? that a thing sacrificed to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons,

and not to God: and I would not that ye should have communion with demons. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of demons: ye cannot partake of the table of the Lord, and of the table of demons. Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?" (1 Cor. 10: 19-22).

What if the meat was not in the context of the worship of an idol, either in the idol's temple or in a home? One was free to eat it (1 Cor. 10: 25-27). However, since we are under the law of "Let no man seek his own, but each his neighbor's good" (1 Cor. 10: 24)—in other words, we are to love our neighbor as ourselves—what shall we do if any man say unto you, "This hath been offered in sacrifice, eat not, for his sake that showed it, and for conscience' sake: conscience, I say, not thine own, but the other's; for why is my liberty judged by another conscience? If I partake with thankfulness, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks? Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give no occasion of stumbling, either to Jews, or to Greeks, or to the church of God: even as I also please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of the many, that they may be saved. Be ye imitators of me, even as I also am of Christ." (1 Cor. 10: 28-11: 1).

Although we are free from the Old Testament ritualism, and are under the system of worship in spirit and in truth (John 4: 20-24), we are not free to go back to the Old Testament temple or altar and serve it (Heb. 13: 10-16). We are not free to add to New Testament worship. For example, our Lord instituted the Lord's supper at the time of the passover meal; but He instituted the supper and not the meal. And the apostle Paul showed that we do not have the authority to introduce into the assembly a meal along with the Lord's supper (1 Cor. 11: 20-34).

FREEDOM IN ROMANS 14

The apostle Paul deals with certain aspects of the Christian's freedom in Romans 14. What about the individual who has a defective view of his own freedom as a Christian, and thus who does not utilize this freedom in every area in which Christ has made him free? Is he condemned by the Lord? No, for "God hath received him." (Rom. 14: 3). Are we to receive him also? "But him that is weak in faith receive ye, yet not for decision of scruples." (Rom. 14: 1). The one who is weak in faith believes in Christ, has accepted His sacrifice, has come into Christ, and is endeavoring to live by the will of Christ. However, he has failed "to understand what it involved in respect of freedom from the rules of earlier or human systems." (Liddon)

It must be underscored that this freedom—not to be aware of and thus not to utilize the entire scope of his freedom as a Christian—is not freedom with reference to his duties and responsibilities as a Christian. He is not free where Christ has bound Him, for he is under law to Christ (1 Cor. 9: 21). Christ, however, has made him free from the obligation to know and to act on his total range of freedom. This kind of freedom

has been clearly authorized by Christ, but it does not authorize us to declare that a man is free where Christ has bound man.

They were not free to accept the baptism of John instead of the baptism of the great commission (Acts 19: 1-7). They were not free to add a regular meal to the Lord's supper (1 Cor. 11: 20-22, 34). They were not free to be immoral. Their freedom had to do with such private acts as refraining from meats (Rom. 14: 2), and of observing certain days which had not been bound by the Lord (Rom. 14: 5-6).

The weak brother is not free to eat vegetables as a part of a sacrifice to idols, for this would be no more permissible than to eat meat sacrificed to an idol as a part of an idolatrous service. (1 Cor. 8: 10-13; 10: 20-21). Furthermore, this weak brother in Romans 14 did not have idolatry in mind. He did this thing as unto the Lord because he thought that the Lord required it of him (Rom. 14: 6).

They were not free to teach that their refraining from meats, and their observance of days, were laws of Christ. They were not laws of Christ "for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. " (Rom. 14: 17). They were not laws of Christ for Paul said: "I know, and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean of itself: save that to him who accounteth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. " (Rom. 14: 14). They were to hold these beliefs to themselves before God (Rom. 14: 22), for they were not laws to be bound on others. "Let not him that eateth set at nought him that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth. " (Rom. 14: 3).

By the same token, they were not free to create factions in the body of Christ by establishing a non-meat eating sect; nor were the meat-eaters to create a sect of meat-eaters as the only Christians.

Although the weak brother is not required to understand all of his freedom, he is bound to act conscientiously. In other words, he is not free to disregard the conscientious scruples which he has concerning meats, days, and drinks. ¹⁴ As long as he is fully persuaded in his own mind that he should not do certain things (Rom. 14: 5) which in reality are lawful, he is not free to disregard his scruples. Paul said that to him it is unclean. "I know, and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean of itself: save that to him who accounteth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. " (Rom. 14: 14). "All things indeed are clean; howbeit it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. " (Rom. 14: 20). One should act conscientiously, and if he thinks that he should not do it, it is wrong for him to do it. "The faith which thou hast, have thou to thyself before God. Happy is he that judgeth not himself in that which he approveth. But he that doubteth is condemned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; and whatsoever is not of faith is sin. " (Rom. 14: 22-23). If we trample underfoot our conscience, and do that which we are convinced is wrong, we have willed to do what we believe is wrong; and this is sinful. The fact that we were wrong as to the

nature of the thing involved did not do away with the fact that we made a decision not to do what we were convinced was right but to do what we were convinced is wrong. This is the way in which the conscience finally becomes hardened. If one's sense of duty becomes lost, if one's urge to do right is seared, what hope is there for him? He will not do the right, nor refrain from the wrong, even when his knowledge concerning these matters is accurate.

However, those who refrain from meats and who observe days are not free from any concern on our part. They are "weak in faith" (Rom. 14: 1-2). The apostle Paul was deeply concerned about the Galatians who seemed to want to be "in bondage over again? Ye observe days, and months, and seasons, and years. I am afraid of you, lest by any means I have bestowed labor upon you in vain. " (Gal. 4: 9-11). However, in Rom. 14 he counseled long-suffering with one another. The context suggests that Paul's concern for them in this matter was due to the fact their observance of days, etc., was an indication that they were returning to the bondage of paganism (Gal. 4: 8-11), and at least in some cases to the bondage of the law (Gal. 5: 1-4). Although it might be difficult at times for us to tell which is which, is there not a vast difference between a person, *coming out* of paganism, or of the law, while continuing to hold to some superstitious attitudes and practices, and a person doing these things as an indication that he is turning from the gospel and *going into* paganism and the law?

Although we may be concerned about the weak brother in Romans 14, we are not to deny him the right to abstain from meats and to observe one day above another. He is free to do this. He is free to keep these things himself, but he is not free to bind them on us (Rom. 14: 5-6).

We are not to judge him as not being a brother, or to set him at naught otherwise. He is to be free from our judgment in this sense. Christ, not we, is his judge (Rom. 14: 3-12).

He is to be free from constant nagging, or argumentation, or contention on our part with reference to his scruples. He also is to abstain from forcing his scruples on us. Paul said: "But him that is weak in faith receive ye, yet not for decision of scruples. " (Rom. 14: 1). The margin gives it as "to doubtful disputations. " Lard suggested that the best explanation he knew of to this difficult expression was: "Accept him, but not to the end of deciding relative to his thoughts in regard to certain things. These thoughts are his own' private opinions respecting things about which there is no command. He, therefore, has the right to hold them without interference from others. The things which his thoughts respect are in themselves indifferent; and therefore the thoughts which relate to them are indifferent. Consequently, so long as the thoughts do not lead him who holds them into wrong, he is not to be disturbed in them. "

We are not to ride him out of, the church either on a rail or by constant argument, dispute, or contention.

What shall we do if he comes to us and wants to know why we do not hold to his scruples? It is obvious that we shall tell him why we do not do so. Furthermore, when we are dealing with the subject of a Christian's freedom, or when we are in a series of expository sermons on Romans, or when it seems important on other occasions to get across to brethren the principles in Rom. 14, we shall expound this passage. However, it will not be a hobby with us to keep on talking about the weak brother; nor shall we censure him for being such a weak brother.

The way that some fiercely maintain the right to exercise all of their freedom and privileges, without regard to what others think or say, indicates that they do not have the love which seeks to edify, and which is willing if necessary to forego its privileges; and to forego them without thinking that they are martyrs! Christians are not free from the law of love so that they may disregard the impact of their exercise of their freedom on the brother who has a defective view of his freedom. This shows that this freedom is not an unlimited thing but is within the general boundaries set up by the laws of Christ. We are not free to disregard the fact that "none of us liveth to himself, and none dieth to himself. " (Rom. 14: 7). We must consider, therefore, the welfare as well as the rights of others. We are not free to denounce and to cast out the weak brother (Rom. 14: 1-4). We are not free to cast a stumbling block in his path so as to cause him to sin. "Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge ye this rather, that no man put a stumbling block in his brother's way, or an occasion of falling. " (Rom. 14: 13). To do this is to imagine that we are free from the law of love, but we are not free from this law. "For if because of meat thy brother is grieved, thou walkest no longer in love. Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died. " (Rom. 14: 15). "Overthrow not for meat's sake the work of God. All things indeed are clean; howbeit it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. " (Rom. 14: 20). We do not have to eat meats, and we should take care that our good be not evil spoken of. "Let not then your good be evil spoken of: for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he that herein serveth Christ is well-pleasing to God, and approved of men. " (Rom. 14: 16-18). We must follow after peace and the things which edify (Rom. 14: 19).

This brief examination of our freedom, as set forth in Romans 14, doubtless indicates that we have more freedom than some think and less freedom than some others maintain. We are not free to use our freedom to bind others where Christ has not bound others, nor are we free to disregard the conscience of others so that our freedom results in their enslavement by sin.

We may have some difficulties at times as to just what our freedom includes. As long, however, as an individual does not bind me, as long as he is not constantly bringing reproach on the cause of Christ, as long as he is not repudiating what the Lord has bound, and as long as he is

not building a faction, we need to bear with one another.

The Christian is free from all men in that he is the spiritual and religious servant of God and not of man. He is in subjection to the will of God and not in bondage to the will of man. Furthermore, he is not the slave of man so that he has to bind himself to serve them and their will. And yet, through love for man, through love for the gospel, and thus through the desire to bring men to Christ, he may voluntarily subject himself to man in those matters wherein it is lawful to do so. There are privileges—not duties—which we can forfeit because of others. "For though I was free from all men, I brought myself under bondage to all, that I might gain the more. And to the Jew I became as a Jew, that I might gain Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, not being myself under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, not being without law to God, but under law to Christ, that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak I became weak, that I might gain the weak: I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some. And I do all things for the gospel's sake, that I may be a joint partaker thereof." (1 Cor. 9: 19-23)

Paul did these things "that I might gain the more" (9: 19); "that I might gain them that are under the law" (9: 20); "that I might gain them that are without law" (9: 21); "that I may by all means save so. me" (9: 22). He did it for the gospel's sake.

However, since he did it for the sake of the gospel he could not repudiate the gospel or corrupt the gospel in order to win people to a corrupted gospel. This would have defeated his purpose, and would have been unlawful. Paul could not participate in a feast to an idol in an idol's temple, not only because it would lead a weak brother to perish (1 Cor. 8: 10-13), but also because it was wrong (1 Cor. 10: 21).

Paul could become all things to all men only within the area of that which was lawful. Lawful things were not always expedient and thus he did not always do that which was permitted him to do. (1 Cor. 10: 23-33) He had reference here not to his duties, but to those things wherein he had been left free. He had the right, he had the privilege, of being supported by those to whom he preached the gospel, but he did not have to avail himself of this right. Under some circumstances he could win more by not utilizing it; therefore, he did not act on this right (1 Cor. 9: 1-23). But he had no freedom beyond the boundaries established by the law of Christ. Thus he said: "not being without law to God, but under law to Christ: " (1 Cor. 9: 21).

FREE FROM ALL AUTHORITIES?

We are not free from all authorities. We are not free from the authority of God. The church is not free from Christ its head, and thus we are not free from the word of the apostles and prophets of Jesus Christ. "So then, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye were taught, whether by word, or by epistle of ours." (2 Thess 2:15). A

tradition was something which was handed to or delivered to another. The traditions of men are not binding on us in religion because of their source; i. e. they are of men. The traditions delivered by the apostles and prophets of Christ are binding because their source is Christ Himself. The Thessalonians had been taught the word orally by the inspired apostle Paul. His oral word was just as inspired and binding as his written word, but we have no oral word from him today. We have only the written word. Paul further said "And if any man obeyeth not our word by this epistle, note that man, that ye have no company with him, to the end that he may be ashamed. " (2 Thess. 3: 14)

Servants were not free from the will of their masters (Col. 3: 22-25), nor were masters free from their obligations to their servants (Col. 4: 1).

Wives had some authority in the home to rule or guide the household (1 Tim. 5: 14). Children were not free from the authority of their parents, nor were parents free from their responsibilities toward their children (Col. 3: 20-21; Eph. 6: 1-4).

Christians are not free from all the demands that others may make on them, although there are limitations to these demands.

All the human authorities by which we are circumscribed are themselves circumscribed by our supreme loyalty to God and His supreme authority. Thus when the two conflict, we must obey God rather than men (Acts 5: 29).

FREEDOM FROM THE ELDERS

If I understood one of the voices, he wanted to be free from the authority of elders.¹⁵ There are some in the church who rule (Rom. 12: 8). Of course, the apostles and the prophets spoke authoritatively for they were inspired by the Spirit (1 Cor. 14: 37). However, were there any individuals who ruled in the various congregations? Their rule, of course, was circumscribed by the rule of Christ, and under His rule, but were there any who ruled in any sense other than did the inspired men? Hebrews says: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them: for they watch in behalf of your souls, as they that shall give account; that they may do this with joy, and not with grief: for this were unprofitable for you. " (Heb. 13: 17). Is this speaking of elders? Are they overseers of the flock? Do they have to give an account? "The elders therefore among you I exhort, who am a fellow-elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, who am also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according to the will of God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall be manifested, ye shall receive the crown of glory that fadeth not away. " (1 Pet. 5: 1-4). Paul also is clear in teaching that elders are to rule. "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and in teaching." (1 Tim. 5: 17). Authority

is implied in the very fact that they are overseers of the flock. And as overseers they must guard the flock against wolves (Acts 20: 29-30). If they have no authority, how could they keep the wolves out; and how could they discharge a teacher, for example, who would not respond to instruction from the Bible? Without some authority they could not stop their mouths, for they would be able to continue to teach the church even though opposed by the elders. But there are mouths which the elders must stop and they evidently have the authority to do it, even though some people may want these mouths to continue talking (Titus 1: 9-11).

The way in which some define freedom leaves each individual, in effect, as a law unto himself to decide what are the bounds, if any, of freedom.¹⁵³ Of course, an individual is free to do as he pleases, in so far as being free from the authority of anyone in the church to force him to do a certain thing. However, he is not free to bind us to fellowship him if we are convinced that the Bible does not sanction our fellowshiping him. He is free to do as he pleases, and we are free to refuse to finance him, endorse him or fellowship him. Elders have a special responsibility along these lines. The wolves want to be free to ravage the flock; but the elders must protect the flock even though it curtails the wolves' freedom (Acts 20: 28-30). And some of the wolves may even raise their "voices" in unison and howl for enough "unity in diversity" to permit them to circulate freely amongst the flock; and to be financed by the elders while they do it. If you are not what they call sweetly reasonable in exposing them, they feel that you are not nearly as nice as the wolves. Surely the wolves are not free to force us to buy them a hunting license, to furnish the flock, and then to turn them loose in the flock.

FREE FROM THE VERY PRINCIPLE OF AUTHORITY?

It seems to this author that some write as if Christians are free from the very principle of authority. "He acknowledges no authority to which he does not freely consent as internalized truth. He is subject to no control above his own conscience. He does not obey because it is commanded, but because it is the way of truth and wisdom."¹⁶ Obviously, we need to recognize the authority of truth, but in one sense truth is impersonal and has no authority. In Christ truth consists not only of abstract statements, for He himself is the embodiment of the truth. Truth is personal as well as abstract. If man is subject to "no control above his own conscience," every man is a law unto himself and as such is free from the control even of God. Man is free to rebel against God but even so he is not free to escape the consequences, and God, not just man's conscience, will judge him.

It is important for us to see, when it is possible, the reason behind a commandment, but what this voice seems to have overlooked is the vital importance of man's acceptance of the very principle of authority. Man is bound to obey God whether he understands how this obedience is in

the way of truth and wisdom. Because man is the creature, and God is the Creator and all wise, man should recognize that God knows best. He should submit to God's commandments because God has commanded them, even if he cannot see the wisdom of the commandments. He needs to accept the principle that it is God's right to command and man's duty to obey. If man is subject just to his own conscience and his own insights into what is wise, he is never in subjection to God. He never obeys God. Instead, he only seems to obey God in certain things because God's commandments happened to coincide with what man figures out as good and wise. When he cannot see that God's way is best, he shows by going his own way that he has been following his own way all along. God just happened to be going the way that he was going for a time.

The Lord emphasized to Peter that he must submit his will to Him even though it was in a matter wherein it did not seem fitting to Peter that he should do so. Peter, with a false humility, did not want the Lord to wash his feet. "Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet, Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. " (John 13: 8) As Alvah Hovey wrote: "His intended confession of inferiority is dictatorial. " As Westcott observed: "Christ meets the confidence of the apostle with a declaration of the necessary separation which must -ensue from the want of absolute submission. 'Unless I render thee this service, unless, that is, thou receivest that which I offer, even when thou canst not understand my purpose, thou hast no part with me. ' The first condition of discipleship is self-surrender. " As Plummer suggested: "To reject Christ's self-humiliating love, because it humiliates Him (a well-meaning but false principle), is to cut oneself off from Him. It requires much more humility to accept a benefit which is a serious loss to the giver than one which costs him nothing. In this also the surrender of self is necessary. "

Even if we have not misunderstood this voice's assertion, it is our opinion that he has overstated himself, and on reflection would not accept his own statement in the unqualified way in which he expressed it.

It is the author's conviction that although parents should not always pull their rank on their children—and in fact, are not always effectively able to do so—their children need to learn to accept the principle of authority. There are some things they are to do just because the parents said so, even though the children cannot see any reason for them. If a person never learns to submit, in at least certain things, to the principle of authority he will not find it possible to work for another. In working for another, there are things that one must do regardless of whether they make sense to him. That the one in charge said for him to do it is a sufficient reason; unless, of course, it involves wrong doing. Just because some people have always depended on pulling their rank on others, does not mean that we must go to the extreme and maintain that the principle of obedience to authority is not only unnecessary but also unhealthy.

FREEDOM FROM CRITICISM?

If one expects to be free from criticism he is naive concerning human nature, he is ignorant or too proud to admit some truths about himself, and he does not have a very wide knowledge of the Bible. A knowledge of human nature emphasizes to us that people will criticize others. No matter what you do, it has been said that you will be thought of as a knave or a fool by someone. If you know very much about yourself you will realize that at times you deserve and need criticism. And a scanning of the Bible will make it clear that men, even good men, cannot escape criticism. Let us not be so naive that we are upset just because we are criticized, or too proud to learn from criticism.

We do not generally jump for joy when we deserve and receive criticism. Thus it is no wonder that we may be upset when we do well and are criticized for it. Sensitivity to criticism, combined with the sense of having been dealt with unjustly, leads some to resent very bitterly any criticism which is unjust. But why should we think that just because we are doing right everyone will praise us? This has not happened to men in the past, so why should we expect that no one will criticize us when we do right? Do we have to be rewarded, right here and now, for doing right by receiving only praise, and by being spared criticism? "For consider him that hath endured such gainsaying of sinners against himself, that ye wax not weary, fainting in your souls. " (Heb. '12: 3). "But even if ye should suffer for righteousness' sake, blessed are ye: and fear not their fear, neither be troubled; but sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord: being ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear: having a good conscience; that, wherein ye are spoken against, they may be put to shame who revile your good manner of life in Christ. For it is better, if the will of God should so will, that ye suffer for well-doing than for evil-doing. " (1 Pet. 3: 14-17). "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial among you, which cometh upon you to prove you, as though a strange thing happened unto you: but inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings, rejoice; that at the revelation of his glory also ye may rejoice with exceeding joy. If ye are reproached for the name of Christ, blessed are ye; because the Spirit of glory and the Spirit of God resteth upon you. For let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief, or an evil-doer, or as a meddler in other men's matters: but if a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name. " (1 Pet. 4: 12-16).

UNSCRIPTURAL AUTHORITY OF MAN

While some of the voices charged that there was not sufficient freedom in the church, at the same time they urged more human authority in the church with power to bind believers! One made the broad charge that "your leaders" have planted "themselves so squarely between you and God, and who say to you, 'Accept our teaching or reject the Christ. ' "" Occasionally the author has met someone who seemed to

partake of this attitude, but surely this is false witness when borne concerning the leadership of the church as a whole. If someone believes they have this authority, we do not have to be bound by their word. However, this voice advocated an unscriptural use of authority in the church when she said, concerning certain Scriptures, that the church "by its constituted authority has a right to ignore these passages"¹⁸ of Scripture; although she did say that the church does not have the right to require of men as conditions of salvation that which cannot be found in the Bible.¹⁹

Another voice implied that we should have authoritative church councils today. Do we ignore the Biblical teaching and example concerning church councils?²⁰ What about Acts 15? When Paul went to Jerusalem, with reference to the controversy raised by those who wanted to bind circumcision and the law (Acts 15: 2, 5), he, Peter, and the other inspired men knew the truth on this matter. They were not by human authority trying to determine what the church should believe and do. Although they knew the truth on this matter, it was important for everyone to know that the Judaizers were wrong in opposing what Paul taught, and that Paul was in harmony with the church in Jerusalem. We have no such meetings today because we have no inspired prophets and apostles. The discussion involved the elders, but some of the elders in the first century were inspired, for some were elders by gift (Eph. 4: 7-11). But the apostles and prophets were also involved. (Acts 15: 2, 6, 25, 27, 32). Uninspired Judaizers were evidently involved for they were disputing Paul's teaching concerning the Gentiles and the law. The church reached agreement on the matter, but it was not a matter of majority vote. (Acts 15: 22-25). Who today can rise up like Peter and tell of what God by inspiration had done through his work at the household of Cornelius? (Acts 15: 7-11). We have no apostles today. Who like the apostle Paul, and the prophet Barnabas, can rehearse "what signs and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles through them?" (15: 12). Who like James can give an inspired interpretation to prophecy? (Acts 15: 14-18) Who today can authoritatively say: "Wherefore my judgment is... " (15: 19)? Who can write an epistle in which it is said: "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us.... " (15: 28). Who among us, since none of us are inspired, can presume to speak for the Holy Spirit in this way? Who among us can send an authoritative epistle to the churches by means of an apostle and a prophet, like Paul and Barnabas (15: 22), and send along some additional prophets to tell them the same thing by word of mouth? (15: 22, 27, 32). Since we cannot do any of these things we cannot have a meeting like the one in Acts 15. Brethren can gather together and discuss matters, but who can send out an authoritative decree? And yet the same voice which said that we did not follow the New Testament on church councils, maintained that we have individual liberty in Christ and that: "Men do not have the right to dictate and determine the content and expression of a Christian's

faith. "21 But the message that went out from Jerusalem was authoritative, and authoritatively stated that the Judaizers had no commandment from the brethren in Jerusalem (15: 24); however, certain things were laid on the brethren, (15: 29). God has not placed us under the authority of human dictators, whether they are church councils or individuals.

FREE FROM DICTATORS

There may be some, however, who think that there are dictators who are trying to force them to take certain positions, when in reality they are just afraid that someone will criticize them if they take a certain stand. They cannot stand to be criticized, although they may be free in criticizing others, and thus they feel that anyone who is critical of their positions is a dictator who is trying to force them to conform to his way of thinking. They may finally become so unsettled by this fear that they leave the church. But why should we live in such fear? We should not try to be different in order to be different, and we should not try to stir up fights, but if we have convictions, and reasons for them, let us express them in love and be willing to stand the consequences. If we let dictators grow up amongst us by submitting to them, it is our own fault, and not that of the Lord. We should stand as free men in Christ, and disregard actual dictators. Although they may close some congregations to us (3 John 9-10), it is impossible for them to cast us out of the universal body of Christ.

We can be free in the church from man's control in that we are always free to do what we are convinced Christ wants us to do, although we are not free to force others to do it, or to force them to back and finance us while we do it. But some of these men did not seek freedom from the authority of man; instead they joined some denominations which bind them with human authority. In Christ they could be free from such ecclesiastical authority, as G. C. Brewer points out. "They had all the promises that any Christian ever had. They could learn, love, believe and preach anything that God has ever revealed to mankind. There was no limit except the limit of their own ability and faith. They could practice anything the Lord authorizes his children to do and they had the solemn promise of the risen and all powerful Saviour that he would be with them in such a life and work to the end of the world!

"What more did they want?

"What did they gain by joining a sect?

"Answer—They gain the right to be *Modernists*: to *disbelieve* any part of God's word that men *may tell them* that scholars (?) reject. They may not yet know just how much they will have to reject but they will reject it when they learn. That is the principle upon which they have moved away from the hope of the gospel.

"If as faithful members of the Lord's body and as preachers of his word unmixed with the traditions and errors of men they found themselves alone and unappreciated—if even they were persecuted by factionalists and partisans they would have been passing through an

experience that every other humble and loyal servant of the Lord has known. Elijah felt that he was alone and wanted to die. Brother Larimore expressed a similar feeling in the excerpts given herein. But experiences like that give one a closer touch with one's Lord; and after all our religion is not a *professional matter*. It is not an *institutional matter*. It is not a matter like a business venture that may be abandoned if it does not prove pleasant and profitable. It is a relation of the soul to God. It is a spiritual union with Christ. It is private, personal and precious. If it disconnects us from earth and from friends it puts us in correspondence with heaven and into communion with God. We may often say with the Psalmist—

'Hear my prayer, O Jehovah, and give ear unto my cry;
Hold not thy peace at my tears,
For I am a stranger with thee,
A sojourner as all my fathers were.' "22

G. C. Brewer went so far as to say:

"Since there is no authority in the Lord's church to which anyone is compelled to submit except the authority of Christ himself, all this talk about being fettered and restricted and suppressed is just *vain talk!*"²³ Too often what people want is the authority to bind us so that we are not free from the obligation to finance them, endorse them, and otherwise back them while they teach contrary to that which we believe is right. We have our responsibilities to do what we are convinced is right, and we have -our freedom to do it.

FREE FOR SPONTANEOUS PARTICIPATION There is work in the kingdom of heaven to which people need to be assigned. One should not take it on himself, for example, to write checks on the treasury. It is not my place in the congregation to arrange for the services of a preacher or to tell him that his services are no longer needed. On the other hand, much of the work in the kingdom of heaven does not need to be assigned. We need more spontaneous sharing of the good news with others. Too many of us lack the spirit of Andrew who, when he had found Jesus, went and found his brother Simon and brought him to Jesus. As far as we know Christ did not command him to do this, or assign him to this specific task. Andrew took it on himself to do this job (John 1: 41). As far as we know, Jesus did not tell the woman of Samaria that she was to go back into the village and tell the people about him. She was so excited by what she had learned she "left her waterpot, and went away into the city, and saith to the people. Come, see a man, who told me all things that ever I did: can this be the Christ? They went out of the city, and were coming to him. " (John 4: 28-30). "And from that city many of the Samaritans believed on him because of the word of the woman, who testified, He told me all things that ever I did. So when the Samaritans came unto him, they besought him to abide with them: and he abode there two days. And many more

believed because of his word; and they said to the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy speaking: for we have heard for ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world. " (John 4: 39-42).

Some people, in order to be encouraged to do more work for Christ, need to be given some tasks which are in line with their capacities; but no one needs to feel that there is no work for him in the kingdom because he has not been assigned to a specific work. Too long too many have felt that the work of the kingdom is the work of a handful of other Christians, instead of a responsibility of all of us. In an effort to emphasize that each one of us is responsible for work in the kingdom, the author has recently written, with Jerry Jones, a book on *Evangelism: Every Member and Every Day*.

Some of the voices seem to have overlooked the fact that they were free in Christ to participate in a multiplicity of opportunities for the spread of the kingdom, and that they did not have to consult others, or be authorized by others, in order to avail themselves of these opportunities.

WHO IS STOPPING YOU?

In a charge that is all too true in many places, one critic said: "Nor is it active at the 'unwashed throng' level, leaving the lower urban classes and slum warrens to the Pentecostals and Jehovah's Witnesses. "²⁴ Too often the following is true concerning many of us. A church building had carved in stone over its door: "And the Poor have the Gospel preached to Them. " Under it someone put: "Yes, but not here. " Too many continue to be content to have it so, although there are those who are becoming more conscious of these fields of labor. However, in all justice, we must recognize that there have been congregations who for decades have been backing work among the down-trodden. But many congregations and individuals need to get on their knees and ask for forgiveness and mercy, and then arise to do more of this type of work.

All of the critics who make this kind of charge against the church have considered, even in the cases where they do not so consider themselves now, themselves to be members of the church. Why do they sit and criticize the church for not doing these things, when they themselves usually are not doing these things? If they are a part of the church, the place to start, to get the church to do more, is with themselves. Who had a rope tied around them so that they could not go into slum areas and start Bible classes? Who denied them the freedom of voluntarily doing benevolent work among such people? Who kept them from getting others to volunteer to help them? Who tied their hands so that they could not organize any self-help efforts among such people? Who forbade them finding jobs for some of these people? They have always had all of the freedom which they needed to launch out and do such things. And if they have not been willing, as many have not, to make an individual effort, why should they criticize congregations for not making a collective effort? Why try to place everything on the

shoulders of congregations instead of showing us how more individual Christians can be good Samaritans themselves?

Some, who talk about their freedom as Christians being interfered with, are not very interested in using their freedom in many areas. The only freedom some of them want is not really freedom but license to believe anything and everything they want to believe, or almost nothing at all, and still bind others to fellowship and to back them in various ways.

FREEDOM TO TRY TO ESTABLISH AN IDEAL CONGREGATION

Those who think that the congregations which they know are not as dedicated, not as active, and not as apostolic, as they ought to be are free to go out and to establish congregations which they believe will be closer to the ideal standard in the New Testament. There is no one who can tell them that they cannot do this. It does not mean, of course, that everyone must agree with them, or must finance them in this effort. If it is freedom they seek, can they not find it this way? Do they think that they are finding freedom by becoming identified with denominations which are ignoring at least certain parts of the divine standard? Why swap some errors for others? Why not act in freedom and establish the type of congregation which they think ought to exist?

The way some voices spoke, one would think they felt that they were duty-bound to build on another's foundation; and that if others would not let them run the church, in the way that they felt it ought to be run, there was nothing for them to do but to go and join a denomination. It may be that some of them are would-be dictators, while it may be that others are disillusioned idealists who visualize an ideal congregation and who are dismayed because the real one with which they are identified is not ideal. Likely the one which they would establish would not be ideal; in fact since it would have them in it as well as other human beings it would not be ideal! Because they felt restrained, because they were not given the freedom to remodel as they wished a congregation which others have established, do they have no freedom to go out and establish a congregation? Do they have no freedom to go where they would not be building on another's foundation? Why do they think that they must be free to tell everyone else how things must be built on the foundation which another has laid? They are free to go out, and to imitate Paul in laying the foundation of various congregations (1 Cor. 3: 10). They are free to be unlike Paul, who then after a time went on elsewhere and let others build thereon (1 Cor. 3: 10-11). They are free to remain and thus not only to be the one who laid the foundation but also to be at least one who builds thereon.

The vast majority of them do not want to exercise this kind of freedom. They want the freedom to bind others in congregations which are already established and to run these congregations as they see fit. Of course, a congregation does not belong to any one man even if he established it. However, if he does establish the congregation, and works

with it from the laying of the foundation to the construction of the superstructure, he will certainly be in a better position to help influence the congregation to be more like what he believes it ought to be.

UNITY

Not only what we have already said, but also the fact that Paul teaches unity, shows that freedom is not unlimited. He speaks of "giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all. " (Eph. 4: 3-5). We are not free to ignore this plea for unity. We must not affirm there are many bodies of Christ, or many Spirits; nor are we to deny the hope, or to affirm that there are many lords, many faiths, many baptisms from which we may choose, and many Gods. This body is the body of Christ (Eph. 1: 22-23), this faith is the faith once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3), and this baptism is into Christ (Rom. 6: 2-5; Gal. 3: 26-27).

Many of the voices granted that we are not to be unconcerned about the Lord's prayer for unity, and one said that we must not be comfortable in "sectarian security, untroubled by the divisions which separate us. " We must "fervently" pray "that the Spirit of God will further enlighten us all, and draw us closer together, and in His time reunite us. "²⁵ Is this sufficient?

First, all who -profess love for and loyalty to Jesus, and who know of His prayer for the unity of believers (John 17: 20-21), cannot love Him as they ought if they are not concerned to answer, in so far as their own lives are concerned, this prayer. Division is contrary to His will, and it is a stumbling block in the path of some who might otherwise believe.

Second, we need to pray for unity but prayer is not a substitute for study of -God's word. Teaching which is not based on the Bible is not the teaching of the Spirit. All the truth has been revealed in the faith once for all delivered to the saints (John 16: 12-13; Jude 3; 2 Pet. 1: 3; Col. 2: 3). What further word from God would be necessary to lead us to answer the Lord's prayer for unity? Those who do not heed what the Spirit has revealed on this matter in the Bible would not heed if a thousand more pages were revealed on the subject (Compare Lk. 16: 29-31).

Third, it is now God's time, and has always been, for us to answer Christ's prayer for unity. Since today is the day of the evangelization of the world, and has been since the establishment of the church, today has always been the day that Christ wants us to be united so that the world may believe that God sent Him. To pray that God unite us "in His time" shifts, consciously or unconsciously, the responsibility for the ending of religious division, and the time of the ending, to the shoulders of the Lord instead of to man. If one does not let the Bible have the final word with him, he can always justify his denominationalism by asserting that it is not yet the Lord's time to unite us; so why should

we try to do prematurely what it is not yet the Lord's time to do⁷ We cannot escape in this manner our responsibility for doing what we can do now to answer the Lord's prayer for unity And certainly each one of us can be simply members of the Lord's church, nothing more and nothing less We have no right to remain in denominationalism and to imply that we are waiting for further enlightenment from the Spirit, and that we are waiting until the Lord decides that it is time to do the job

Fourth, this voice did not make a contribution to answering the Lord's prayer for unity by going into a denominational church Why should he think that any sectarianism among some professed Christians justifies him in joining a sectarian Church? Look in the New Testament as he may, he cannot find the Church he joined or certain of its doctrines One does not answer the Lord's prayer for unity by openly taking his stand in denominationalism Some people may be unaware of the fact that they are sectarian, but the solution to sectarianism is certainly not achieved by openly joining a sectarian organization

Fifth, this voice wrote as if church history was simply a great procession of which the early Christians and we are a part, and that it is all "Christian history"²⁶ He wrote as if there had been no apostasy, no falling away, from the faith The Bible predicted apostasies (1 Tim 4, 2 Thess 2, etc), so we must make a distinction between the history of the church, and the history of departures from New Testament Christianity But this voice said "To cut ourselves off from any of this heritage is to impoverish ourselves"²⁷ We must separate from much of church history for there is much in it in creed and conduct in doctrine and deed, which are contrary to the teaching of our Lord We do not minimize a study of "church history" It has such values as (a) We may learn from the arguments and insights of others (b) We can see in some cases in church history what the ultimate end of certain trends among us today will be if we persist in these trends In other words church history can help us to realize that we may be making a new trial of old errors (c) We can learn that our generation is not the first generation to be faced with great difficulties, trials, and tribulations These and other things can be very helpful to us, but we can know what is scriptural from a study of the Bible and not by a general study of church history We judge church history in the light of the Bible, and not the Bible in the light of church history

DOCTRINE INVOLVED

It is urged that the unity taught in the Bible is "not doctrinal, organizational or ritual unity, but a unity of character, purpose, action, love, fellowship, and will"^a One could have organizational unity without being truly united, and certainly character, etc, are involved Even the faith, that Jesus is the Christ, which this voice indicated is the ground for fellowship, is doctrinal Furthermore, the apostle Paul teaches that this unity involves such doctrines as the one body, the one

faith, the one baptism as well as having meekness, longsuffering, and forbearing one another in love (Eph 4 2, 4-5) Sound or wholesome doctrine includes moral principles (1 Tim. 1:9-11)

When it is urged that some have failed to restore the spirit of New Testament Christianity we agree, but we do not agree that it is therefore right for us to join a religious body which is not mentioned in the Bible just because some of its members seem to have some things which some members of the church lack We do not restore the spirit of New Testament Christianity by ignoring other aspects of the one faith, and joining a denomination

THE CHURCH IS DIVIDED

The churches of Christ are accused of preaching unity and practicing division, with being as badly divided as any other religious body²⁹ and with being the most denominational of all denominations³⁰

In the first place it must be granted that some who claim to be just Christians are denominational Furthermore, even the best of us has no more done a perfect job in answering the Lord's prayer for unity than we have done a perfect job in living the life of a Christian If we live a perfect life we would be living the perfect answer to the Lord's prayer for unity However, our failure is not a justification for becoming members of something other than Christ's body Our challenge is to be what we ought to be as members of Christ's body Thus we must not become members of something else, but to be more of what we are as *children of God* We must more and more be, as it were that which we already are—members of Christ's body which is His church In other words, we need to do a better job of living up to our responsibilities

Second, the church has never perfectly measured up to the divine ideal of unity Factionalism existed in Corinth wherein some were endeavoring to build parties around men These men were good men and loyal teachers of the gospel, who did not want anyone to build a faction around them Thus Paul rebuked this division Among other things, this division implied three things which were not true, i. e., that Christ was divided, that a man such as Paul had been crucified for them, and that they had been baptized into a man's name (1 Cor. 1:10-13) Since Paul condemned the very beginnings of division, how much more so is to be condemned the denominationalism which exists in the world today.

Third, Paul was not bound by their division He did not become a party to it, or set them the wrong example by joining some church other than the Lord's church, or by saying that since they were so sectarian in their attitude that we might as well all be sectarian, or by saying that we need to join denominations and wait until it is God's good time to unite us Instead, he remained a member of Christ's body, and rebuked those who were endeavoring to divide it

Fourth, there is a real need to study closely the teaching of the Bible concerning fellowship The Lord willing, the author hopes to make a contribution in a later study on *Fellowship Its Basis and Its Breadth*,

Because of a lack of longsuffering and understanding of the Scriptures too many of us divide too quickly. The solution to the problem of useless divisions is far from easy, but it certainly is not to be found in embracing denominationalism.

Fifth, there is far greater unity among us than many people realize. Too often we magnify some small difference while ignoring the vast areas of unity.

Sixth, although we cannot cover up our problems by pointing to the problems of others, it is well to recognize that there is far greater division, for example, in the Roman Catholic Church than exists among churches of Christ. There are such differences as: (a) Differences of worship. One Dominican priest told the author that in certain orders within the Roman Catholic Church there were such wide differences in worship in some features that one would think he was in a different religious body, (b) Differences which embrace a wide range of superstitions which are held by Roman Catholics in certain countries but not in others; or not among the more educated members of their church, (c) The church as an ecclesiastical organization believes that it has the right to use force on false teachers.³¹ But there are many Roman Catholics who do not believe this, and who advocate that even if the church had the power to forbid religious freedom to others she should not do so. On the other hand, when possible their Church today has circumscribed the religious freedom of others to some degree, such as in Spain and in Italy, (d) There are Catholic priests and professors who repudiate the Genesis account of creation. Today we are seeing open manifestations of divisions within Roman Catholicism, which are far beyond what most people had suspected.

Seventh, even though many Christians are divided, the Bible still teaches what it teaches on unity. Furthermore, it is the duty of each Christian to do what he can to answer the Lord's prayer for unity. This does not mean that our only task is to try to answer the Lord's prayer for unity. The church is to evangelize the world, as well as to give diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Of course, the greater the unity the greater the impact that will be made on the world; for Jesus indicated that unity would be a factor in leading the world to believe. On the other hand, the greater the evangelistic effort of the church, the more her energies are directed toward leading people to Christ, and nurturing them in Christ, the less time we shall have for squabbling, and the more apt we are to be united.

Those who pointed to the divisions in the church, and who then joined a denomination, are under as much obligation as we are to give diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. They are not exempt from the New Testament teaching concerning unity. They cannot escape their responsibility to God by criticizing us, and then by being that of which they accuse us—denominational. Why not show us

the way by establishing congregations which more nearly practice the ideal of New Testament unity?

UNITY IN SUCH DIVERSITY?

A basic theme of *Voices* is that the unity for which we must seek, and which the Bible teaches, is "*unity in diversity*."³² It claims that all of the voices accept Jesus as Lord.³³ With this as the basis of unity, there is unlimited diversity. The jacket of the book said that the purpose of the book is to lengthen the ropes, and strengthen the stakes, of the tent of faith so that all of God's children can dwell in it. However, *Voices* contains conflicting voices of confusion and apostasy which destroy the tent of faith and create a tower of Babel.

How can there be Biblical unity in such wide diversity as the following: (a) The voice which still has an aversion to the traditional theism—which is the Biblical theism—in which he was reared.³⁴ (b) The attitude of the editor toward believers of "forty-two different denominations," and we assume toward all of them, is one of acceptance; while holding his personal convictions.³⁵ (c) Modernists who in varying measures discredit the inspiration of the Bible.³⁶ (d) One who thinks that he speaks in tongues and is supernaturally guided by the Spirit by direct revelations.³⁷ (e) Just where would the Episcopal priest drive down the stakes of the tent of faith? His Church contains the atheist Thomas J. J. Altizer who asserts that God is dead, and Bishop Pike who opposes many Biblical doctrines.

There is a vast amount of diversity in *Voices* but this amount of diversity cannot be included in Biblical unity. How can they keep the unity of the Spirit by repudiating it? Although some of them may have an understanding of the church as the universal body of Christ, there are others who do not believe that any body is the body of the superhuman head, Jesus Christ. Some of them do not believe that the one Spirit has spoken infallibly, authoritatively, and finally in the New Testament revelation. How can a man, who has an aversion to the traditional theism in which he was reared, and who repudiates evidence for the supernatural revelation, have the one hope which Paul taught? How can those who repudiate the Biblical teaching on baptism—and some deny that anything which the religious world calls baptism is significant—hold to the unity of the Spirit which includes the one baptism? How can they hold to one Lord, when some of them deny the virgin birth, the miracles, the resurrection, and the reign at God's right hand of our Lord Jesus Christ? How can they be said to believe in the one faith, when some of them repudiate the faith once for all delivered to the saints? How can they be united in faith in "one God and Father of all," when without a supernatural revelation we cannot have any grounds for believing that God is our Father with reference to the new birth?

Although the Bible holds before us as the ideal standard of unity the unity which exists between Christ and God (John 17: 20-21, 23), yet

provision is made for the fact that as imperfect men we shall not be able to attain the perfect standard. But the standard is always there to beckon us onward and upward, and to keep us humble as we see something of the gap between us and the standard. Thus the Bible does teach unity in spite of certain diversity. First, Christians are at different stages of growth and development. There are babes in Christ who by reason of time cannot be anything other than babes. They should not be expected to know as much, and to have grown as much in character, as those who have been in Christ for many years. In the church, as in the home, we must give children time to grow. We must not expect of them as much as we expect of grown people. And thus we must learn to bear with them in many things as we encourage them to overcome sin and error and to grow in grace and knowledge of the Lord. There are babes who are spiritual dwarfs. They have been in Christ long enough to have grown, but they have not grown as they ought. They need to be encouraged and warned. (Heb. 5: 11; 6: 3) They have to be fed with milk, and not with meat (1 Cor. 3: 1-4).

Second, that there is a great deal of difference in stages of growth in knowledge which Christians have attained, is also illustrated by Paul's instructions in Romans 14. We are to bear with one another in such diversity. We are not to nag and agitate one another about these matters.

Third, however, this unity within diversity comes to an end when someone tries to bind on us such diversities to which he holds in his weakness of faith. (Rom. 14: 3). There are many things in which we bear with one another, but when someone endeavors to bind on us what we cannot in good conscience do, he is the one who has driven the wedge between us.

Fourth, we cannot have unity with those who repudiate the gospel (Gal. 1: 6-9) and deny the Lord who bought them. (2 Pet. 2: 1).

Fifth, there are moral grounds for disfellowship (1 Cor. 5; 2 Pet. 2: 1-2). It must be confessed that many congregations have fallen down in failing to disfellowship some who should have been disfellowshipped, and on the other hand in disfellowshipping those in some cases who should not have been disfellowshipped. But it is still true that there are some whom we are not to receive (2 John 7-10).

Sixth, the factionalist and heretic who endeavors to split the body of Christ with his heresies should be rejected after efforts to turn him from his wilful way. (Titus 3: 10; compare 1 Cor. 11: 19; Gal. 5: 20; 2 Pet. 2: 1).

Seventh, there are false brethren who need to be exposed and opposed (2 Cor. 11: 26; Gal. 2: 4). However, we must exercise care not to judge by momentary appearances, to make snap judgments, and jump to conclusions which are not justified.

In the light of these considerations, it is obvious that there are some people whom we are not to fellowship. And certainly those who separate

themselves from us have no grounds on which to complain because we do not fellowship them. One voice said that he and the congregation with which he worked were "subjected to a West Berlin-type of isolation because of my views."³⁸ Why should he have wondered or complained, since he was "quite outspoken",³⁹ and found himself "in complete disagreement with the aim, views, message, method, and attitudes" which characterize the Churches of Christ. "We are 'incorrect theologically, philosophically, psychologically, or, to be quite practical, unscriptural, irrational, and unhealthy.'"⁴⁰ He hopes that friends and brethren would not "want to disfellowship me for the step I have taken."⁴¹ How could we fellowship one who so repudiates our basic positions, and why should he want fellowship with us?

It is our hope, the Lord willing, to return to this subject and write an intensive study on the question of fellowship, but this book is already too long. We must call a halt somewhere, in dealing with its different positions, as it would take several volumes to deal thoroughly with all of the errors set forth in *Voices*.

CHAPTER VI FOOTNOTES

- 1Reedy, 243, 245; Franklin, 178.
- 2Darnell, 222.
- 3*Newsweek*, Dec. 21, 1964, 45.
- 4Franklin, 180.
- 5As quoted in the *Lutheran News*, Jan. 23, 1967, 4.
- 6Etter, 109.
- 7Etter, 106.
- 8Ibid., 107-108.
- 9Ibid., 109-110.
- 10Ibid., 108.
- 11Darnell, 224.
- 12J. W. McGarvey, *New Commentary on Acts*, Vol. II, 208-209. 13Richard Whately, *Essays on Some of the Difficulties in the Writings of the Apostle Paul, and in Other Parts of the New Testament*, London: John W. Parker and Son, 1854, 7th Edition, 123.
- 14For a discussion of wine see James D. Bales, *The Deacon and His Work*, 24-36.
- 15Parks, 69-86.
- 15aCompare Graham, 133-134.
- 16Ibid., 80-81. 17Hibbett, 49.
- 18Voices, 57-58. 19Hibbett, 57. 20Graham, 138. 21Ibid., 133.
- 22G. C. Brewer, *As Touching Those Who Were Once Enlightened*, Nashville, Tennessee: Gospel Advocate Company, 60-61. He wrote about Reedy and Etter. 23As Touching, 66. 24Parks, 73.
- 25*Voices of Concern*, 183. 26Franklin, 183-185. 27Franklin, 184. 28Graham, 133.
- 29Reedy, 239; Graham, 137. 30Etter, 106. 31See the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. VIII, pp. 26-36; Vol. VII, 260-261, 323; Vol. XI, pp. 703-704; Vol. XII, p. 266.
- 32Meyers, 5.
- 33Meyers, 5; *Restoration Review*, Jan. 1967, 19.
- 34Hardeman, 93, 99.
- 35Meyers, 253.
- 36Etter, Reedy, for example.
- 37Stolz, 211, 213.
- 38Graham, 130.
- 39Ibid., 130.
- 40Ibid., 130.
- 41Ibid., 129.

What About Baptism?

Do churches of Christ contend for "the 'right' baptism where validity is best ascertained by the 'soundness' of the baptizer"?¹ If they did, it would not prove it is true, for the Bible is the final authority. The author recalls only one or two people who seemingly took such a position. Of course, if one has accepted a baptism which is not authorized by the Bible, he should accept the baptism of the great commission when he learns better; as did those whom Paul baptized in Ephesus (Acts 19: 1-7).

However, if one has accepted the baptism commanded in the great commission, it is valid regardless of the baptizer. Truth is truth, and is binding, even if it is taught by hypocrites (Matt. 23: 1-4), and thus Paul rejoiced even when Christ was preached by hypocrites (Phil. 1: 5-18). To preach Christ fully, includes teaching the believing penitent to be baptized into Christ (Acts 8: 35-38). If the validity of one's baptism depended on the administrator, one could never know that he was baptized scripturally; for he could not know the heart of the one who baptized him, or the one who baptized that person and so on all of the way back to the days of the apostles. One break in the chain of "valid" administrators would break the chain from there on.

Paul shows that we are made free from sin when we obey from the heart the form of doctrine (Rom. 6: 17-18, 2-5). Those whom Judas baptized during Christ's personal ministry were not "unbaptized" because Judas was a thief and a devil (John 6: 70-71; 12: 6). Of course, if the administrator teaches us a baptism foreign to the New Testament, and we accept it, it is not Biblical baptism. One could not be taught the wrong baptism, and accept it, and be baptized scripturally; but it would be because he was not obeying from the heart the gospel as taught in Rom. 6: 2-5, 17-18.

PIOUS UNIMMERSED

The apostle Paul emphasized "that the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." (Rom. 14: 17). One voice concluded that Paul opposed "exalting petty details into required doctrine which all must accept." They were not "to quarrel and divide over the minutiae." Baptism was mentioned in this context. "If an unimmersed Christian should seek to enter that church, he might well find the sect's creed on immersion barring his way."²

Although we are to bear with one another in certain things (Rom. 14: 13-23), yet there are commandments which we are to obey (1 Cor. 14: 37). And the same Paul who wrote Rom. 14: 17, said that we must be baptized into Christ (Rom. 6: 2-5, 17-18; Gal. 3: 26-27). Paul did not contradict Jesus' teaching concerning the new birth (John 3: 3-5).

One critic said that he "ridiculously rebaptized" someone.³ Whether this was ridiculous depends on whether or not the Bible is the word of God, and what it teaches on baptism. The apostle Paul baptized in the

name of Jesus Christ some individuals who had been immersed unto John's baptism. They had received John's baptism when it was no longer valid. Some of the voices would have rebuked Paul, if they had been with him in Ephesus (Acts 19: 1-6). Of course, he was inspired and they were not.

Another voice maintained that our failure to fellowship those who have not been immersed is the biggest block to our spiritual growth. We are charged with misunderstanding and misusing the covenant-sign of baptism, as the Jew misused the covenant-sign of circumcision.⁴ God gave to Abraham and his seed the covenant of circumcision. It was required, and one who was not circumcised was cut off for it was considered that he had broken the covenant (Gen. 17: 9-13). They were not to rest on their circumcision, for they were to have the covenant life as well as the covenant sign. No one can show where anyone was considered to be in the Abrahamic covenant if they were uncircumcised.

Baptism itself is not parallel to circumcision. As a general rule a person was born into the covenant race, and then he was circumcised (Gen. 17: 13-14). There were those who were not born into his house, or were not bought with Abraham's money, who could become a part of the covenant people. But to do so they had to be circumcised and keep the law of God. Baptism is a part of the new birth into the family of faith.

Another voice complained that churches of Christ "compel even the most devout and godly believer to be rebaptized";⁵ that is, if this believer has not been baptized scripturally. It is right, not wrong, to teach even godly men more perfectly in the way of the Lord if they know only the baptism of John (Acts 18: 24-26). How much more so is it right to do this with reference to baptisms based on the authority of men. It is right, not wrong, to baptize in Jesus' name those who have not been scripturally baptized (Acts 19: 1-7). If we have the right to decide that just any and every baptism, regardless of whether it is based on the Bible or not, is acceptable, we can accept someone in India who has been baptized in connection with paganism.

The same voice urged that we must give up "salvation by baptism" because the "scholarship of the world does not support" it.⁶ Salvation is by the grace of God, but man must respond in faith and involved in this response is baptism into Christ. This is recognized by much of the "scholarship of the world;" and it is the teaching of the Bible, whether some scholars recognize it or not.

We assume that all of these voices once knew something of the teaching of the Bible concerning the purpose of baptism, the necessity of faith before baptism, and that baptism is a burial and a resurrection. Why do they object to such teaching now? At least some of them feel that it is uncharitable to insist on baptism, and that the Spirit has indicated that one does not have to be baptized into Christ in order to be a Christian.

E. STANLEY JONES

A voice said: "but it was hearing E. Stanley Jones and reading his books which finally clarified the problem for me. It all boiled down to one simple fact: if God sent His Holy Spirit to live and work in a man who was not immersed, who was I to refuse to recognize him? And since the evidence of the presence of the Spirit is the fruit of the Spirit, then it is undeniable that regeneration is not always correlated with immersion. " We can understand his feelings in the matter, but we cannot leave it on the basis of feelings and assertions.

First, the apostle Paul, in the very epistle in which he mentioned the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5: 21-23), teaches us that sonship through faith involves baptism into Christ (Gal. 3: 26-27). None of us have the authority to use Paul's statement in Gal. 5: 21-23 to undermine Paul's statement in Gal. 3: 26-27.

Second, unless the baptism is that of a believing penitent, into the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, it is not Biblical baptism; and thus it is not the actual washing of regeneration of that person (Titus 3: 5). Of course, not all who have been immersed have been regenerated, for some have not obeyed from their heart.

Third, the voice spoke of "one simple fact, " but he did not prove that God had sent His Spirit to live and work in Jones. He knows nothing about the Spirit except what is taught in the Bible; anything aside from the Bible is his unsupported human opinion. The Spirit is promised to believing penitents who are baptized into Christ (Acts 2: 38). The Corinthians, having been baptized into Christ, were told by Paul that their bodies were temples of the Spirit (1 Cor. 6: 19-20). As we have brought out, in an examination of certain passages in our book on *The Holy Spirit and the Christian*, the Spirit dwells in Christians. But this voice, consciously or unconsciously, has taken the authority on himself to declare as a fact that the Spirit lived in a man who had not met one of the conditions which God through the Spirit said he must meet. Does he know more about the Spirit's indwelling than does the Spirit Himself? Since we are under authority, and not in authority, we must be submissive to what the Spirit has revealed in the Bible. We do not have the authority to declare exceptions when the Spirit has not declared them.

Fourth, the voices said that Jones bore the fruit of the Spirit, and this is the proof that the Spirit dwelt in Jones. Paul describes the fruit of the Spirit in Gal. 5: 22-23. However, for us to use in someone's lives certain aspects of these, or in some measures all of these, does not mean that the person is a Christian and that the Spirit lives in him. Taking Gal. 5: 22-23 out of the context of other passages of Scripture, one could maintain that being a Christian does not involve either faith in God, Christ, the Spirit, or the acceptance of God's grace being a condition of the Spirit's indwelling. Gandhi had at least some of these aspects of the fruit of the Spirit; and Jones thought Gandhi was helping to bring in

the kingdom of God.⁸ Since the fruit involves moral and spiritual qualities, and since even the Gentiles had some understanding of morality, to some degree some of them would have these qualities. To the extent that anyone follows a moral and spiritual law to that extent it bears fruit in his life. There are individuals who have been influenced by the leaven of the gospel and the fruit of the Spirit in the lives of Christians; and yet have not themselves become Christians. But one is not a Christian just because he has aspects of this fruit. The apostle John mentioned many tests, including tests in addition to the fruit mentioned in Gal. 5: 22-23. (1 John 1: 5-7, 8-10; 2: 3-5; 5: 2; 2: 6; 2: 10; 2: 15-17; 2: 24; 3: 3; 3: 17; 3: 18; 3: 23; 3: 24; 4: 1-3; 3: 6; 4: 15; 5: 4-5; 5: 21).⁹

The Holy Spirit works through the word of God in teaching people. But the Spirit does not live in everyone on whom He works through the word. The people on Pentecost had heard the word, but this was not equal to the indwelling of the Spirit. For the Spirit was promised to those who heard and obeyed the word, and this included baptism (Acts 2: 38, 40, 41). They received the word before they were baptized (Acts 2: 40-41), but they did not receive the Spirit until after they were baptized (Acts 2: 38). All the principles which Jones taught, which are found in the Bible, are principles taught by the Spirit. To the extent Jones taught them, he set forth the Spirit's teaching for they are from the Spirit and not from Jones. To the extent that Jones let the word of the Spirit influence his life, to that extent the Spirit did work on him and even through him through the influence of the word. To the extent that Gandhi followed a principle of Jesus, to that extent the word and influence of the Spirit was working on him and through him in the sense that the Spirit's word influenced him and others through him. But if we depend on what the Spirit said through the inspired apostle Peter, we cannot say that the Spirit lived in Jones or Gandhi. This voice, if consistent, would accept a devout Buddhist because he has some fine qualities.

Fifth, what were some of the things taught by Jones? At the very time Stalin was starving people to death, or otherwise killing them; and at the very time injustice was rampant in the USSR, Jones was not only willing to work with them, but claimed they were a part of the Kingdom.⁹ There is abundant evidence available to anyone, With eyes to see, that communism was an evil system with evil fruits. Yet Jones said: "When the Western world was floundering in an unjust and competitive order, and the church was bound up with it and was a part of that order, God reached out and put his hand on the Russian Communists to produce a juster order and to show a recumbent church what it has missed in its own gospel. That does not mean that God, or we, can approve all they have in that order, nor all they have done to bring that order into being, but it does mean that God through the Communists is judging the injustice and wrongs inherent in our present system. To the degree that the Communists have caught the meanings of the

Kingdom of God and have embodied them they are a part of that Kingdom, even if they repudiate that Kingdom in the very act of embodying some of its ideals. "¹⁰ Jones' socialism instilled in him some illusions, as it has with many others, as we have brought out in our book *The Phoenix Papers: If Not Treason... What?* Communism as a fruit of sin and error may be a judgment on the world, but it is not a part of the kingdom. It is diametrically opposed to it in theory and practice; as is clearly shown in our *Two Worlds: Christianity and Communism*. We refer the interested reader to these books for documentation for which we do not have space here.

Jones was a modernist, and modernism undermines the Bible which is the word of the Spirit. Surely no one who believed the Bible can believe that the Spirit lived in Jones and helped him destroy at least certain parts of the word of the Spirit. The voice's confusion concerning Jones is another illustration that when we cut ourselves off from the authority of the Bible, God's word, we are adrift.

Paul teaches that baptism is into Christ. Do we have the right to affirm that one is in Christ even though he has not been baptized into Christ? In other words, can we make exceptions where the Bible has not made exceptions?

WHAT ABOUT EXCEPTIONS

God is the Lord of baptism and He has the authority to make exceptions if He so wills. Although John's baptism was required of those to whom he preached (Lk. 7: 29-30), John was not baptized. He was sent to baptize others (John 1: 33), but they could not say that they were exempt because John was not baptized. The apostles were baptized during the personal ministry, but this was not the baptism of the great commission which involves faith in Christ who died for our sins. They did not yet believe this (Matt. 16: 21-23; Lk. 24: 1-11; John 20: 24-29), and thus -they were not baptized into the church which did not start during the personal ministry (Eph. 1: 19-23; 2: 13-16). They were charter members, so to speak; but others could not make themselves exceptions to the baptism of the great commission because the apostles were exceptions. But this does show that God can make exceptions.

Although a rule may have exceptions, if so willed by the one who gave the rule, it is our duty to live by the rule. Unless Christ declares that certain ones are excepted, and we have no such word from Him, we cannot so declare. God can make exemptions to the rule that it is appointed unto man to die (Heb. 9: 27; 11: 5), but we cannot promise or make such exceptions. We did not write the Bible, and we do not have the authority to change it. Nor do we have the power, nor the inclination, to tell God that He cannot make exceptions to His own laws. If on judgment day there are some on His right hand who had no promise, and if I am on the right hand, I shall not ask for a transfer.

Brethren have usually understood the fact that it is within the power of God to make exceptions, if He so wills, but that we do not have the

power to do so. We must wait until judgment day to see if there are exceptions and who are the exceptions. We shall give the gist of some statements of some brethren which, although they are not authoritative for the Bible only is the authoritative Word, show that many brethren have not been as dogmatic and uncharitable as some of the voices assume. (1) Earl Irvin West thought that F. D. Srygley expressed the feelings of most members of the church when he promised only what the New Testament promised, and left for God to settle what allowance He will or will not make concerning the pious unimmersed.¹¹ (2) T. W. Brents emphasized that God has not revealed what He will do with those who sought the truth but "made an honest mistake with regard to baptism or anything else," and thus we could not decide it. However, we cannot change their state if they have gone on, and it will not help us who know what we ought to do, but fail to do it, if God saves them. "They are in the hands of a God whose infinite love and mercy will secure a just decision as to them; and this is all you can know on the subject."¹² Robert Milligan expressed the opinion: "That some men may still, under extraordinary circumstances, be saved, as were the ancient patriarchs, with a very limited knowledge of God and of His Gospel, we may, I think, joyfully concede."¹³ (4) Alexander Campbell said we could not tell with certainty what God would do, but it was his opinion that when the failure to be baptized was not due to an aversion to God's will, but was "a simple mistake or sheer ignorance," that God would admit them into the eternal kingdom in heaven. However, he did not say that therefore we should consider them to be in the church.¹⁴ We could not know with certainty why they were not baptized. (5) G. C. Brewer said that we must leave it to the Lord to judge in such cases, but this was no reason for us to fail to teach and practice what the Lord teaches on baptism.¹⁵ (6) Guy N. Woods thought that idiots and insane persons do not fall within the scope of God's plan to save; since they are not accountable for their deeds, are not lost, and do not need salvation.¹⁸ (7) J. W. McGarvey did not say that he knew, but that he hoped the pious unbaptized would be saved. James A. Harding said he had no great expectations for those who, in this land of Bibles, neglected God's will in this matter, but he would try to keep anyone from running such a risk. He would be glad if such were saved on judgment day.¹⁷ (8) J. D. Thomas indicated that Christianity is based on grace rather than on merit, and "that surely God has arrangements to do for man all things that man is not able to do for himself...,"¹⁸ He seems to have had in mind the principle that "it is acceptable according as a man hath, not according as he hath not." (2 Cor. 8: 12). (9) Foy E. Wallace, Jr. pointed out that what the Bible teaches about baptism must be decided on the basis of New Testament law. We must argue on the basis of this law. "But the court has power of clemency. That is over and above and outside the law. If the great Judge of all men in the last day extends clemency it is within his power alone, and outside revealed law. It is not

within my province to preach, to promise, or to offer clemency. If such there is, it is the divine prerogative, and not the preacher's privilege. "We do not have power to make void of add to God's covenant (Gal. 3: 15). Thus we cannot make unilateral changes, but the God of the Covenant can make exceptions and save those who were not in the covenant if He so desires. The Master can do as He wills with His own, and our eye should not be evil if He shows extra generosity to anyone (Matt. 20: 13-15). Let us leave all "what ifs" to the Judge of all the earth, who will do right, and preach and practice the law of Christ.

CHAPTER VII FOOTNOTES

1Parks, 75.

2Sanders, 44.

3Hardeman, 91.

4Fox, 18.

5Graham, 139.

6Graham, 141.

7Fox, 18.

8Christ's *Alternative to Communism*, New York: The Abingdon Press, 1935, p. 225.

9*Ibid.*, p. 225.

10*Ibid.*, p. 224.

11*The Search for the Ancient Order*, Vol. II, 1866-1906, 1950, pp. 277-278. 12*The Gospel Plan of Salvation*, 12th Edition, Gospel Advocate Company, Nashville, Tennessee, 1928, p. 570.

13*Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 239. 14*The Christian System*, p. 202. 15*Gospel Advocate*, April 21, 1955, p. 309. *Gospel Advocate*, June 16, 1955, p. 494-495.

G. C. Brewer, *Contending for the Faith*, p. 74. 16*Gospel Advocate*, Sept. 5, 1946, p. 843. 17*Debate on Baptism, and the Work of the Holy Spirit*, J. B. Moody and J. A.

Harding, Brandon Printing Company, Nashville, Tennessee, 1889, pp. 138-139.

18*Gospel Advocate*, August 31, 1961, p. 552. 19*Bulwarks of the Faith*, 1951. Vol. II, pp. 29-30.

What About the Judgment?

The Bible clearly teaches that God hath appointed a day in which men shall be judged by Jesus Christ (Acts 17: 30-31; Heb. 10: 30-31). "Knowing therefore the fear of the Lord, we persuade men... " (2 Cor. 5: 10-11). We realize that it takes more than saying, "Lord, Lord" to enter the kingdom, that many enter the broad way, and that "if the righteous is scarcely saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?" (Matt. 7: 21-23, 13-14; 1 Pet. 4: 18). We cannot repudiate the teaching of the Bible concerning judgment and accept it concerning grace.

Regardless of how many are saved, it is our responsibility to save ourselves and all those whom we can influence to accept Christ. Our Lord was asked whether there were few who would be saved, "And he said unto them, Strive to enter in by the narrow door: for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able. " He went on to show that workers of iniquity would not enter in (Luke 13: 23-24, 27). We are saved or lost one by one. We shall not be less saved ourselves regardless of how many others are saved, and we shall not be less lost, if we are lost, no matter how few the lost might be. Instead of speculating on the number of the lost or the exact number of the saved, we should concentrate on saving ourselves and all those whom we can reach for Christ.

CHRIST OUR JUDGE

God and Christ are the ones who shall judge men, and God has delivered judgment into the hands of Christ. (John 5: 22; Acts 17: 30-31). This Judge tells us: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I spake, the same shall judge him in the last day. " (John 12: 48). No matter what judgment some men may have had concerning Paul, he wrote: "he that judgeth me is the Lord. " (1 Cor. 4: 4-5). Although we should not be bound by the errors of another Christian, so that we participate in what we believe to be wrong, yet we must recognize that he is not our servant, but that he is the servant of the Lord. The Romans, to whom Paul wrote, had obeyed the gospel and thus they were in Christ (Rom. 1: 7; 6: 2-5; 17-18). As Christians, however, they were at different stages of growth and development. They needed to learn to bear with one another and not bind one another where the Lord has not bound us. Christians are servants of Christ. They belong to Him, and He is their judge. Although Paul in Rom. 14: 4 is not referring to the final judgment, yet the principle which he sets forth is as applicable then as it is applicable now. "Who are thou that judgest the servant of another? to his own Lord he standeth or falleth. " (Rom. 14: 4). On the final day God will judge our brother, the world and us. (Rom. 14: 9-12). As Godet pointed out, Paul in effect said: "Do not judge thy brother, since God will judge *him*; " and "Judge thou thyself, since God will judge *thee*. "

THE FAITH UNDER FIRE
RESPONSIBLE FOR YOURSELF

We are to give an account unto God of ourselves, and therefore we must try to be as ready as possible. We do not have to give an account, in this sense, for our brother whether he is weak or strong. We do not have to give an account for our parents. And yet some refuse to accept certain truths which they see because they feel that if they do they will be condemning their parents who did not see these particular truths; or for some other reason did not obey these truths. If those whom we love are still on this earth, we need by word and deed to show them the way of the Lord more perfectly. We shall not help them by failing to accept truths which they have not yet seen. On the other hand, if they have already gone on we are still obligated to accept the additional truths which we see. We cannot change their condition one way or another. Our refusal to accept a truth will help neither their condition nor ours. Why should anyone think that we are justified in accepting errors which we do see, just because our parents did not understand that these things were errors? Why should we reject a truth just because they did not accept it? Is a person justified in rejecting Christ just because his parents did not believe in Christ? If we say that our parents were honest, and they did not see this truth, it should be pointed out that if they were as honest as we say they were, they would have accepted this truth if they had seen it. We, however, cannot be as honest as we say that they were if we reject a truth which we see. Thus our heart is not as honest and as submissive to God as we say that theirs was. If sincerity were the only condition of salvation, and we are not suggesting that it is, they would be saved and we would be lost. If they walked in the light which they had, and we refuse to walk in the additional light which we have, we certainly cannot plead ignorance.

Let us, therefore, strive to enter in at the narrow gate and leave judgment to the Judge of all the earth who will do right. (Luke 13: 23-24; Rom. 14: 9-12).

WITHIN HIS RIGHT

The Master can do what He will with His own. In the parable of the householder who hired men to work in his vineyard, there were some who had a definite contract of so much pay for so much work (Matt. 20: 1-2). There were others who worked under the assurance that they would receive what is right (20: 4). Then there were others who went to work at the eleventh hour—the first hour they were called—without any agreement at all except, when they said no one had hired them, he told them to go into the vineyard. Thus in effect he hired them, but they went to work for him without any definite contract. When it came time to pay them, he paid everyone alike. Those who had no promise of a "penny" (Matt. 20: 7), were given a "penny" (20: 9). This did not give anyone else, who had been promised a "penny" and got everything which they were promised, a right to grumble. (Matt. 20: 10-13). The eleventh hour workers had been hired but they had worked with no

definite promise of what their reward would be. They were not promised a "penny" but they did receive a "penny".

In this parable the Lord laid down the basic principle that He has the right to do as He pleases with that which is His own. When some complained that they had borne the heat of the day, and yet received no more than those who came at the eleventh hour (but who were willing to work, but no one had hired them, and who had needs as surely as did those who were hired early in the morning), the Master said: "Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a shilling? Take up that which is thine, and go thy way; it is my will to give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? or is thine eye evil, because I am good?" (Matt. 20: 13-15). Surely no one of us will grumble if others receive a "penny" even though they did not work nearly as long as we worked.

If an individual labored for Christ under the mistaken impression that he had a contract with the Lord, and yet he had not met the Lord's conditions of the contract, and thus had no promise of a reward, it will be within the right of the Master, if He so wills, to deal with him on the day of judgment as if he had worked under contract. It is lawful for God to do as He wills with His own. And if He does for some people above and beyond what He has promised, it is His right to do so. And no -one, who has been saved by the mercy of Christ, will complain and have an evil eye because the Lord is good. Of course, we do not have the right to promise what the Master has not promised. And we do not have the right to do, with that which is His own, whatever we may want to do; but He can do as He wills. We are not in a position to dictate to the Master one way or another.

DEGREES

Christ the judge teaches that there will be degrees of punishment. It will be more tolerable for some in the day of judgment than for others; for some have sinned against the greater light. (Matt. 11: 20-24; 12: 41-42; Mk. 12: 40). The servant who knew not his master's will and did it not shall be beaten with few stripes, but he who knew his master's will and did it not shall be beaten with many stripes. (Lk. 12: 47-48).

PRINCIPLES INVOLVED IN JUDGMENT

One is not guilty of teaching that everyone else will be lost except "us, " when he sets forth what the Bible teaches about salvation and judgment. Our feelings and our opinions, furthermore, cannot change what the Bible teaches. We cannot justify or condemn, but we should urge men to accept the Savior or else they shall have to face Him as judge.

What are the principles involved in judgment? First, faith is involved. It must not be a dead faith (Jas. 2: 14-26), but one which, although weak at times (Mk. 9: 24), is a growing faith which believes that God is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek

Him (Rom. 4: 20-21; Heb. 11: 6). Faith must work through love (Gal. 5: 6). Our faith is not perfect, and thus we do not trust in our faith but our faith is trust in God and His mercy.

Second, Christ requires faithfulness of His servants; but as we cannot know the heart we are not qualified to judge Christ's servants (1 Cor. 4: 1-5). We shall not produce the same amount, but we should be faithful in what we have (Matt. 25: 15, 20-23, 26-30).

Third, Jesus said: "He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." (Matt. 10: 39). In his *Commentary on Matthew and Mark*, J. W. McGarvey observed that: "Here is a play on the word *life*, which is used alternately for temporal life and eternal life. He that finds it is he who saves his present life by shrinking from duty: he shall lose the eternal life. He who loses the present life for the sake of Jesus, finds life eternal." There have been some cases of people who, while seeing Christians persecuted, confessed Christ and were immediately killed by the same persecutors. It was, physically impossible for them to be baptized into Christ, although some may have had the opportunity in times past. Did the Lord save them because of their baptism of suffering, their baptism of blood as some put it? They have lost their lives for Christ's sake, and although we know that one passage may limit another passage, we can at least desire that they find it. The Master can do as He wills with His own.

Fourth, the evil intent of the heart is counted as sin (Matt. 5: 27-28). This is more than the idea or temptation, for it involves *looking to lust*. It is the settled purpose of the heart. Is the intention to do God's will, even though one is not always able to do the overt act, counted as good? Faith, which is not perfect, is counted for righteousness (Rom. 4: 3, 5). This is in line with the opinion, which is common to all of us, as far as the author knows, that the intention of the heart of the dumb person is accepted even when it is physically impossible for him to confess with his mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord (Rom. 10: 9). He may confess with his fingers in sign language, if he knows the sign language, but he cannot confess with his mouth the faith which is in his heart. This, however, is not parallel to an individual who faces no such impossibility with reference to baptism. Those who have neglected their responsibility along this line for years are not parallel to one who cannot confess with his mouth. The only parallel that could be drawn is that of an individual who has just believed on Christ, and is on his way to be baptized into Christ but death strikes him down before he can be baptized. Of course, death could strike a man down who was for the first time learning of Christ, and who was on the verge of believing in Him. If there is any condition of salvation one can always ask what if something happened to that person just before he obeyed it. Leaving all "what ifs" to the just Judge of all the earth who will do right, let us exhort all to believe in Christ and put Him on by being baptized into Him (Gal. 3: 26-27). Paul showed,, and it seems to the author that

Paul is applying a general principle to the particular case—giving, that the willingness is important and that it is "acceptable according as a man hath, not according as he hath not. " (2 Cor. 8: 10-12).

Fifth, although more than sincerity is involved, honesty is essential to conversion and eternal life (Lk. 8: 15; contrast 2 Thess. 2: 10-12; 2 Tim. 4: 3-4). There is a difference between the individual who is willing to walk in the additional light when he sees it, and the individual who will not do so.

Sixth, one must not only be honest enough to admit the truth, but be conscientious in practicing it (Acts 24: 16).¹

Seventh, love is essential to salvation (1 Cor. 13). This is not a sentimental attachment, but is the refraining from evil and the doing of good (Rom. 13: 8-10; Matt. 7: 12).

Eighth, included in love is the spirit of mercy and forgiveness. We shall not be forgiven if we are unwilling to forgive (Matt. 6: 14-15; 18: 35; Jas. 2: 13).

Ninth, obedience is involved (Matt. 7: 21-23; Heb. 8: 9). None of us render perfect obedience, and thus we do not merit our salvation. But the deeds that are done in the body will be considered in judgment (Rom. 2: 6-10; 2 Cor. 5: 10). We must not only flee lust, but also follow that which is good (2 Tim. 2: 22). Doing good, and loving others, includes benevolent works (Matt. 25: 34-46; Jas. 1: 27). It is not enough to argue that faith must work, we must also work as well as talk.

Tenth, our words are involved (Matt. 12: 36-37), and thus we need to learn to bridle the tongue (Jas. 1: 19; 3: 1-12). A word which cheers another, whether to a smile or to laughter, is not an unprofitable word unless it is a word of evil.

Eleventh, if it were not for God's grace no one could be saved (Rom. 5: 8-11), for no one is perfect in knowledge and in deed. God must overlook some ignorance in order to save anyone. Some are to be saved; so some ignorance will be overlooked. We must leave to God the question of how much ignorance He will overlook, but we should not be presumptuous and refuse to learn.

Twelfth, the judge of all the earth will do right (Gen. 18: 25; Rom. 2: 5). We may not understand it all now, but we shall on the day of judgment see that His judgments are righteous.

Thirteen, when we think of all that is involved in judgment, we may ask with the disciples, "then who can be saved? But he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God. " (Lk. 18: 26-27).

Fourteen, since we must give account of ourselves (Rom. 14: 12), let us not neglect the great salvation (Heb. 2: 1-4), but labor diligently to enter into His rest (Heb. 4: 11-16). Leaving the final judgment, and thus all "what ifs, " to the Lord, let us seek to save ourselves and others.

CHAPTER VIII FOOTNOTE

¹For a more extended discussion of conscience see James D. Bales, *The Deacon and His Work*, Shreveport, Louisiana: Gussie Lambert Publications, 1967, 43-55.

Why Take Heed?

Does an individual need to take heed lest he depart from Jesus Christ? Although some voices think that apostasy is possible, and that the churches of Christ have become apostate, some of them wrote as if it were impossible to fall away from the faith. For example, one voice has repudiated the Bible, has denied that there are any criteria whereby to establish the reality of any supernatural intervention of God as recorded in the Bible, has thus denied the atoning death of Jesus as well as His resurrection, and yet the editor of *Voices* still likes to think that he is in the faith and in subjection to the Lordship of Jesus.¹ To be consistent he would have to maintain that the matured and hardened Pharisee is also in subjection to Christ. But what will he do with Matthew 23?

THE BIBLE IS CLEAR

The Bible is clear in its teaching that apostasy can take place. It tells us in many places to take heed, it exhorts us to be steadfast lest we fall, it instructs us to grow and to guard against apostasy, and it furnishes us with examples of some who have fallen from the faith. First, the possibility of apostasy is revealed in cases of apostasy. "This charge I commit unto thee, my child Timothy, according to the prophecies which led the way to thee, that by them thou mayest war the good warfare; holding faith and a good conscience; which some having thrust from them made shipwreck concerning the faith: of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I delivered unto Satan, that they might be taught not to blaspheme." (1 Tim. 1: 18-20). Paul hoped that they would repent, but at the time, however, their faith was in a shipwreck condition. Demas forsook Paul, "having loved this present world." (2 Tim. 4: 10). One cannot love the world and love God, so to continue in this state means that one has separated himself from God. (1 John 2: 15-17). Second, we are warned against apostasy. "Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God: but exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called To-day; lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin: for we are become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end: while it is said, To-day if ye shall hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation." (Heb. 3: 12-15), Third, we are exhorted to be on our guard against the error of the wicked and we are instructed to grow. "Ye therefore, beloved, knowing these things beforehand, beware lest, being carried away with the error of the wicked, ye fall from our steadfastness. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and for ever. Amen." (2 Peter 3: 17-18). Fourth, it is possible to become so hardened that one cannot be brought to repentance, and the certain judgment awaits him (Heb. 6: 4-6; 10: 26-

31). Let us briefly consider some of the causes of apostasy, for by avoiding the causes, and by doing those things which enable us to grow in Christ, we shall not fall by the wayside.

SPIRIT OF REBELLION

After urging Christians to contend for the faith, Jude pointed out that the spirit of rebellion leads to apostasy. There are some who are in rebellion against authority only temporarily, although it may result in a settled attitude of rebellion. One voice said that at the age of 18 he was in a state of unbelief. He thought "at that point in my adolescence I would probably have rejected any religious view with which I had been brought up. This appears to be, for many people, a part of the psychology of that stage of development. It is possible that if my associates during that period had been more understanding of that psychology, there would have been less of hostility and bitterness. But I believe that neither the faith itself nor anyone connected with the church was in any appreciable degree responsible for my rejection of fundamentalist Christian belief."² In 1948 in *Roots of Unbelief* we dealt briefly with this problem.

As children grow up they more and more assert their own personality. They begin to learn, as they must, to think for themselves and to stand on their own feet. Some individuals do not go through a period of deep questioning and of rebellion as do others. But it is at this age that many individuals feel that their parents have been dominating them as tyrants and that they are behind the times. It is said that at fourteen Mark Twain was surprised at how dumb his daddy was, but that seven years later he was amazed at how much the old man knew!

The adolescent is also passing through a period in which restraint becomes more and more irksome and seems less and less reasonable. Some of them rebel very much against the authority of the parents. As Albert Clarke Wyckoff pointed out: "If parents are wise enough to sense the need for reasonable readjustment of authority at this period, serious consequences are averted." The Scriptures teach that we should not put our children under such dominating pressures that we encourage this spirit of rebellion. Thus children were not only told to "obey your parents in the Lord", because it was right and there were blessings which flowed from it (Eph. 6: 1-3), but Paul also said: "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but nurture- them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord." (Eph. 6: 4).

After parental authority, as Wyckoff observed, the "next line of defenses which are attacked are those of religious authority. For religion is a real regulative power in the life of a child. Here, however, open revolt does not accomplish the desired object. For one's own conscience is such a large factor in the problem that some other tactics must be adopted. It is for this reason that the subtle strategy of psychological camouflage is employed. While the problem is distinctly psychological, yet the intellectual difficulties which the progress of modern science and

Biblical criticism have created, furnish a most convenient excuse for rejecting the authority of religion. If to the assertion: 'I do not think everything wrong you and father do, ' is added: 'I do not believe everything you and father do, ' the childhood defenses of home and Church are shattered. And the external authority which might have suppressed the growing individuality of the child is forced to allow this new personality to become a co-operator in making and exercising voluntary control.

"Up to this point, however, the young are only feigning intellectual unbelief. Genuine intellectual difficulties which strike deep down to the very roots of their religious faith are still unknown. Their real problems are moral and spiritual, and they know this perfectly well all the while they are trying to camouflage this fact by throwing up a barrage of intellectual difficulties between them and their elders. Genuine intellectual difficulties are rare among uneducated adolescents. They do not develop sufficient interest in the intellectual problems involved to make that phase of the problem of any vital importance. This is the reason they enjoy shocking their elders with their new ideas and denials. As soon as the religious worker understands this truth, it is a simple matter to dig down and find out the psychological trouble which is masquerading in the garb of intellectual unbelief. Little serious attention need be paid to the religious doubts and denials of this group of adolescents. For theirs is really pseudo-unbelief or rationalization. " Wyckoff, of course, does not mean that one should not point out to them the fallacies which underlie the criticisms of religion which they have heard and which they pass on to us. He is emphasizing that we must recognize the problems of adjustment which are beneath this brazen, in some cases, exterior; problems which need wise, patient attention and problems which must be looked for beyond the bare statements of the young person.

This stage of unbelief, however, can develop into something very serious if the young person is constantly exposed to an atmosphere which is anti-Christian and which drills into him some intellectual reasons for unbelief. This is especially dangerous when it is done in the atmosphere of a college classroom by a professor whom the student thinks is very learned and unbiased, and who has a "halo" around him in the mind of the student. Although this is the period of time of conversions, yet in some environments this feigned unbelief of the rebellious adolescent may become hardened into settled unbelief.³

There are several things which can help one not merely to keep his faith, but to deepen it, in his adolescence and in his college years. First, he should realize that although a thing is not true just because he was brought up to believe it, it is not false just because he was brought up to believe it. There are some people who reject something just because they were brought up to believe it, and accept something new without any more reason than that it is new and something they were not brought up to believe. Second, one should recognize that in some cases

it is not argument but environment, and our reaction to it, which leads to unbelief. It is possible for an individual to be convinced that a bad practice is good for his health, and he becomes unhealthy by having been converted to a false position. But what usually happens is that we simply neglect those things which are essential to physical health. If a believer neglects those things which lead to spiritual life, spiritual death will result. We may allow various things to crowd out Christ from our lives. "And that which fell among the thorns, these are they that have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection." (Luke 8: 14). Third, the individual must plan, and then put the plan into operation, to keep the spiritual man alive and growing. He must study the Bible, and not just fill his mind with other things, even though they are good within themselves, so that they shape the content of his thinking and gradually secularize him. He must associate as much as he can with Christians, and with those who share certain ideals with him. He must work for Christ while in college. He must not forsake the public assembly or the private prayer closet. Fourth, one must have the right purpose in mind in seeking a college education. He should seek it in order to become the best possible servant of God and humanity. If he simply desires to advance himself for selfish reasons, he will find that his faith in Christ will hinder him in such a goal in life, and he will either change his goal or give up his faith. Fifth, one should respect learning, and be willing to consider the things which are presented to him. However, he should not stand in such awe of his college professors that he takes their word regardless of what they may say. They, too, have their prejudices, and they, too, are ignorant of many things. One must distinguish between their facts, and their interpretations of the facts; as well as try to detect when they are soundly reasoning from evidence, and when they are either just assuming something or reasoning wrongly. Sixth, one must not be afraid of the ridicule of others. Seventh, one must not let the boastful, and cocksure, attitude of some unbelievers intimidate him out of his faith.

There are some things, of course, which we ought to fight against. In this sense we are in rebellion against these things. Some of the voices seemingly were given a very narrow view of Christianity in their childhood. They had certain truths emphasized to them, or at least their attention seems to have concentrated on a few truths. Furthermore, they do not seem to have understood that God really loves them and they were to love God and their fellowman. The attitude of compassion for lost souls does not seem to have been impressed on them, and doubtless in some cases it was due to defective teaching. When they saw through this partial view of Christianity, they so rebelled against it that they went to the extreme of emphasizing certain passages to the neglect, or even denial, of some of the truths which they had been taught in

order to accept truth which they had not been taught, or which if they had been taught, they did not grasp it at the time.

EXTREMISTS

There are people who seem to be extremists. They may change what they are extreme about but they do not cease to be extremists. Sometimes when I have seen someone who leaned over backward, I have tried to push him up straight while fearing all of the time that he would fall on his face instead of walking upright. As extremists they may react against the extreme which they, or others, occupy, and then go to another extreme. They may be extremely narrow to begin with and when they finally see how wrong this is, they may become extremely broad. Some of them may seem to be in the middle for a period of time, but in reality they are simply passing the middle on their way from one extreme to another. They may think that they are in reaction against the attitude of brethren as a whole, while in reality they are reacting against their own extremism, and that of some others, which they have projected on to almost all of the brethren whom they know or know about.

Some of them seem to have grown up in a very narrow environment wherein there were harsh, supercritical members of the church — or whom they imagined to be such. They took a few samples and thought that these adequately reflected the attitude and understanding of practically all members' of the church. They reacted against these. But in reacting against sectarianism in the church one should not depart and embrace denominationalism, as many of them have done.

Then, too, it seemed to the author that some of these individuals were just as harshly critical of us as they accuse us of being of others.⁴

DO WE LOVE THE BRETHREN?

John emphasized that love of the brethren is one of the tests of whether or not we are walking in the light. This love manifests itself in many ways. (1 John 2: 7-11; 3: 10; 14-18; 4: 11, 20-21). One of the danger signs, and it leads to apostasy if it ripens, is when an individual begins to look down in contempt on brethren. It may be that he sets them at naught because he is better educated than they are, or because he sees some truth which they do not see, or because he thinks that he is on a higher plane than they are on. He may think that all brethren south of the Mason and Dixon line are to be scorned, even while he asks them for financial support, or he may think there is a question as to the faith of those north of that line. It may be he thinks that the older generation really knows nothing, and that they will have to go before the church can really move forward. Whatever may be the cause, and however it may be manifested, the anti-brother complex is a danger signal.

APOSTASY THROUGH DRIFT AND NEGLECT

"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things

that were heard, lest haply we drift away from them. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation?" (Heb. 2: 1-3). To drift is to let something slip away from us whether it be from our mind or from our grasp. One does not have to intend to apostatize, he can go into apostasy simply through drifting. He can do this through failing to give earnest heed to the word of God. This can be done through a failure to feed on the word because we let other things crowd it out. Instead of drifting we must set our mind on the things that are above, where Christ is (Col. 3: 1-3). In the same context we are told not to neglect the great salvation. "Neglect" implies a carelessness which involves an indifference, and "not mere inadvertence."⁵ It is a carelessness which does not seem to care, and which makes light of God's salvation (compare Matt. 22: 5). Deliberate action is indicated in this word as it is used in Heb. 8: 9 where God regarded not, or disregarded, Israel because of her sins. We hold the gospel lightly, we neglect it, if we count the praise of men as greater than the praise of God, and as a result turn our backs on Him. We must be on our guard lest we carelessly drift away from the gospel, and lest we regard it lightly. The promise is to those who hold fast; for we are Christ's house "if we hold fast our boldness and the glorying of our hope firm unto the end." (Heb. 3: 6).

HARDENED INTO UNBELIEF

"Take heed, brethren, lest haply there shall be in any one of you an evil heart of unbelief, in falling away from the living God: but exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called Today; lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin: for we, are become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm unto the end: while it is said, Today if ye shall hear his voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation." (Heb. 3: 12-15). The evil heart of unbelief may not go so far as to deny the existence of God. It can deny that the promises of God can be depended on or that the threatenings of God will be carried out. This unbelief can admit His existence while denying it is important that we obey Him. But God was displeased "with them that sinned", and them "that were disobedient" could not "enter in because of unbelief." (Heb. 3: 17-19). The life of disobedience is linked with the heart of unbelief. The word may be heard, but it cannot profit if it is not "united by faith with them that heard." (Heb. 4: 2, 6, 11; 5: 9). Through its deceitfulness sin can harden men, who only meant to play with sin for awhile, until they embrace sin as their life-long companion. Sin is not so deceitful that even if we study and practice the word of God we shall be deceived by it. And thus oftentimes in Hebrews, after warning them against the danger of apostasy, they are given some encouraging reasons as to why and how they can persevere (Heb. 2: 17-18; 4: 14; 6: 1-3; 6: 9-20; 10: 32-39). Sin is so deceitful that if an individual does not measure himself by

the word of God, he may think that he cannot apostatize because he knows by heart the scriptures on apostasy, and can prove the possibility of apostasy. These passages were not put in the Bible that we might win a debate, but that we may be on our guard lest we fall. They were put there to warn us so that we may win the crown of life. Of course, it is right to defend this teaching, as well as other teaching, of the Bible against misunderstanding of these verses; and in this way they can enable one to win over error. But it is not enough to know the arguments; one must also personally take heed lest he fall.

DISUSE RESULTS IN APOSTASY

One can refuse to use, by failing to obey, the principles of Jesus. The Hebrews had grown dull of hearing, they were not growing through using what they had learned (Heb. 5: 11-14), and thus needed to be exhorted to go on to maturity. This exhortation was immediately followed by a warning concerning some who had become so hardened that they could not be renewed unto repentance (Heb. 6: 4-8). However, the writer did not leave them discouraged but in many ways motivated them to steadfastness and growth (Heb. 7: 9-20).

FORSAKING THE ASSEMBLY

One is beginning to drift when he begins to neglect the assembly. Thus the writer exhorted them to provoke one another to good works, and not, to forsake the assembling of themselves together (Heb. 10: 24-25). This was immediately followed by the warning example of those who had gone into total apostasy (Heb. 10: 26-31). But then he encouraged them by pointing to their past faithfulness, by mentioning his confidence in them, and by citing the great heroes of faith in times past (Heb. 10: 32-11: 40).

FAILURE TO KEEP OUR EYES ON THE GOAL

"Therefore, let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. " (Heb. 12: 1-2). If we fail to keep our eye on the goal, if we fail to remember what Christ went through and why, and what His reward was, we may fail to run with steadfastness the race. One of the things which can hinder us is the persecution which we may have to endure; but we can endure if we will utilize it as discipline from the Lord (Heb. 12: 3-13). Let us set our minds on the things above, where Christ is, and let us keep our minds set there (Col. 3: 1-3). If we take our eyes off of Christ, and, concentrate on the difficulties without looking at them in the light of His presence, We, like Peter, shall begin to sink (Compare Matt. 14: 28-31).

ROOT OF BITTERNESS

We are warned to look "carefully lest there be any man that falleth

short of the grace of God" (Heb. 12: 15), and some of the things which can cause this are mentioned in the context. First, "lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby the many be defiled" (Heb. 12: 15). A. C. Kendrick, in his commentary on Hebrews: said that the root of bitterness in Deut. 29: 18 "is a source of corruption, tempta-tion, and apostasy: heathen men and women, dwelling among the Israelites, and alienating them from the worship of the living God. So here the 'root of bitterness' is a person... sowing among the disciples the seeds of doubt, heresy, and utter alienation from the doctrines of Christianity.... The bitter and poisonous root, then, denotes here pri-marily persons, not doctrines or dispositions... " One such root may defile many. (Heb. 12: 15).

There are other roots of bitterness which can spring up within an individual's soul. He may become bitter because of the persecution which he had to endure, or the misfortunes which he has experienced. He may finally rail against and then deny God because God permits these things to happen to him. A preacher may have a root of bitterness springing up within his soul when he sees that some brethren want the preacher to do everything; including the willingness of some to let him bear all of the hardship for the gospel. Some may become bitter because brethren are not as zealous as they ought to be, and because some of them will do nothing but squabble for the gospel. The author is not moved to bitterness by the following; but he has been tempted at times. One voice said that we are "writing no significant books. "⁶ We do not know how many significant books he determined to write to supply the lack; and this was the place for him to start, i. e. with doing something to meet the need which one sees. We do know that significant books have been written by brethren, but we also recognize that too few are being produced: And one reason is that those who are interested in writing books, and are capable (and not all who are interested are capable), are usually necessarily so involved in other works that they are unable to devote the time which is necessary to produce any kind of book, much less a book which is really well done. It takes time to study, it takes time to write, and it takes money to buy books and supplies, to get the necessary secretarial help, and it takes money to publish. And even when this is done, there are too few people who are interested in buying and reading the books in general and religious books by brethren in particular. Churches have not been educated to the place where they will commission an individual to write a book, support him while he writes it, and thus enable him to make available a manuscript to publishers. A book once written right will never go into apostasy, although the author may depart. And it can go to places where he cannot go, and speak for generations after he has gone. There are individuals, or groups of individuals, who could contribute money to an author for a period of time to enable him to produce a book, which he is qualified to write, on a subject which needs to be written upon. Some

individuals could remember authors in their wills, but it would be better to help them also while you live so you can see at least some of the fruit of your contribution. There are many needed books which have not been written because someone was not interested enough to free authors from other tasks so that they could write these books. However, one should not allow a root of bitterness to spring up within him so that he concludes that if others do not care, why should he. Each of us has the responsibility to utilize his talents and opportunities as he can, and if others are able and do not see fit to help, this is their responsibility. Whatever may be the source of bitterness, we should put it away from us. (Eph. 4: 31).

Second, a fornicator or profane person can be a root of bitterness whose influence leads others astray. It is possible to be indifferent to one's spiritual privileges in Christ, as Esau was to his position as the first-born of Abraham, and sell them for physical things of this world.

PERSECUTION

If one has only a second hand religion, if he is by inheritance only that which his parents were by conviction, he has no root within himself and in time of temptation will fall away (Matt. 13: 20-21). In time of persecution "many stumble, and shall deliver up one another, and shall hate one another. " (Matt. 24: 9-10). We should not let persecution lead us to deny Christ. First, because it means that we have lost all we have invested in the gospel; all we have been, and done, and given, and endured in times past (Compare Heb. 10: 32-39). Second, we must remember that we have "better possession, " the "recompense of reward" (Heb. 10: 34-35), and thus we should endure as seeing Him who is invisible (Heb. 11: 26-27). Third, persecution will not last forever; in but a little while our reward will come (Compare Heb. 10: 36-39). Fourth the example of the steadfastness of Jesus should encourage us (Heb. 12: 1-3). Fifth, we "have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. " (Heb. 12: 4). Sixth, we should view the persecution as discipline from the Lord, and should look to the ultimate outcome and not to the immediate pain (Heb. 12: 5-13). Seventh, we should heed the warning of Jesus, "See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not when they refused him that warned them on earth, much more shall not we escape who turn away from him that warneth from heaven: whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more will I make to tremble not the earth only, but also the heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made, that those things which are not shaken may remain. Wherefore, receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us have grace, whereby we may offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe: for our God is a consuming fire. " (Heb. 12: 25-29).

OVERWHELMED BY INIQUITY

"And because iniquity shall be multiplied, the love of the many

shall wax cold. But he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved. " (Matt. 24: 12-13). One individual told me that the world was in such a mess that he did not think that he could do anything about it; so he didn't try. He did not even start with himself and then influence those whom he could influence. Some people seem to go along smoothly as long as they think there is not very much wrong, but when they begin to see how much evil there is in the world, they get discouraged and let themselves be paralyzed spiritually. They look to their own feeble strength and become discouraged. Instead, we should look to God and His power and recognize that through His strengthening us we can do much (Compare Phil. 4: 13). We are fellow-workers with God, and ought not to be so shortsighted as to look just to what we are, and how small is our strength. Furthermore, we should desire to save ourselves, and those whom we can influence, even though many enter the broad way that leadeth unto destruction. And yet, there are some who will become discouraged and quit when they see individuals leave the church; and in some cases they may be individuals in whom they had confidence. Regardless of how much apostasy and iniquity may abound, let us abound in the work of the Lord. "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not vain in the Lord. " (I Cor. 15: 58).

Voices charged us with almost every sin, except the sin of Sadduceism or modernism, and the modernist voices would not view this as a sin. It is the author's opinion that one or more persons in the church have been guilty of one or more of these sins, and that all of us have been guilty of some of these sins. However, the presence of iniquity in our own lives and in the lives of others should not lead us to resign from the army of the Lord and to cease to wage the fight of faith with the sword of the Spirit. Instead, we should determine with God's help to try to overcome in our own lives the sins, which we condemn in the lives of others, and to try to embody in our lives those principles, the lack of which we criticize in others. Of course, we should measure ourselves and others in the light of the word of God. Without any sense of self-righteousness, let us try to be the kind of person that we want others to be, and of which we realize there are far too few.

Our faith should be in God as revealed in Christ, and not in brethren or in ourselves. Sooner or later brethren will let us down, or we will think that they have let us down, and we shall also let ourselves down. If our faith is in men, we should be downcast and perhaps our faith will be destroyed. But our faith should be in God. "Be ye therefore imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, even as Christ also loved you, and gave himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for an odor of a sweet smell. " (Eph. 5: 1-2). "For this ye know of a surety, that no fornicator, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no

man deceive you with empty words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the sons of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them; for ye were once darkness, but are now light in the Lord: walk as children of light (for the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth), proving what is well-pleasing unto the Lord; and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather even reprove them; for the things which are done by them in secret it is a shame even to speak of. But all things when they are reprov'd are made manifest by the light: for everything that is made manifest is light. Wherefore he saith, Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee. Look therefore carefully how ye walk, not as unwise, but as wise. " (Eph. 5: 5-15).

LED ASTRAY BY FALSE TEACHERS

"And many false prophets shall arise, and shall lead many astray. " (Matt. 24: 11). "But the Spirit saith expressly, that in the latter times some shall fall away from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons, through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies, branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by them that believe and know the truth. " (I Tim. 4: 1-3). Timothy was warned that "evil men and impostors shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. " (2 Tim. 3: 13). What safeguard was there? He was to abide in the word of God, whether taught orally by Paul (3: 10), or in the sacred writings (3: 14-17).

The apostle Peter warned: "But there arose false prophets also among the people, as among you also there shall be false teachers, who shall privily bring in destructive heresies, denying even the Master that bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their lascivious doings; by reason of whom the way of the truth shall be evil spoken of. And in covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose sentence now from of old lingereth not, and their destruction slumbereth not. " (2 Pet. 2: 1-3). "Ye therefore, beloved, knowing these things beforehand, beware lest, being carried away with the error of the wicked, ye fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and for ever. Amen. " (2 Pet. 3: 17-19).

SEED CHOKED OUT

If we fail to keep the thorns plucked out of our hearts, they can choke out the word. These thorns are the cares of this world or life, the deceitfulness of riches, and the pleasures of this life (Matt. 13: 22; Lk. 8: 14). There are perils of poverty, there are perils of riches, and there are perils of pleasure. As George R. Bliss suggested in his commentary on *Luke*, "The *cares* of life are the anxieties and solitudes from what-ever cause, harassing the mind in the experience of daily life. The

riches of life are worldly wealth, regarded as engrossing much thought; and the *pleasures* of life are mentioned, both because they satisfy the ordinary desires of men, and dull the capacity for higher ambitions and enjoyments. The heart already occupied with either of these kinds of experience, and especially if occupied by them all, mingled or in succession, ~~has no room for the~~ hospitable entertainment of purposes and activities involving improvement in holiness, and reaching out toward eternity. These may find partial place, for a season, but they lack air and light, and the natural disposition not being suppressed, are finally stifled, before the fruits of earnest struggle with sin, and Christ-like love to others are developed. " All have cares, but we should not let them overcome us so that we become worried sick about tomorrow, and so depressed that we lose our faith in God. Riches can be used to glorify God, but if they are our goal in life, they will destroy us spiritually for we cannot serve God and mammon. We must seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matt. 6: 24-34).

LOVE OF THE WORLD

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vain glory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever. " (I John 2: 15-17). Charles Wordsworth pointed out that: "The carnal Appetite, Covetousness, and Pride, these were things by which the Devil endeavoured to overcome Christ at the Temptation; and these are the things, in which Christ conquered Satan, and has taught us to conquer him. " Henry A. Sawtelle suggested that: " 'The world' here means not only the sinful ways of the world, but all objects and concerns considered as divorced from God, and as an end in themselves. It includes all that may receive attention, and become an idol to our hearts, in place of God" One man's idol may not be another man's idol, but it is an idol nonetheless. And thus John specifies the three broad areas which reign the world—the world which he says we must not love. Sawtelle continued by pointing out that the word "lust" means "*longing desire*, considered as inordinate. The various appetites of the bodily nature are intended. The love of the world in some is shown by seeking as their chief good the gratification of their appetites. (Phil. 3: 19). And here comes to view the drunkard, the glutton, the epicurean, the libertine, in their various stages. "

The lust of the eyes involves subjective desire. "The eyes are the exciting cause or occasion of the desire. This desire is less animal and more intellectual than the former, yet no less sinful when gratified for its own sake. This form of worldly love finds supreme pleasure in those things which gratify the outward sight, such as raiment, fashion, fine horses and chariots, palaces and furniture. Nor are those things which gratify the inward sight excluded. If one lives merely to gratify his

intellect in systems, problems, philosophies; if he seeks art or science for their own sake only, and not with the higher end of loving and serving God, then is he as really, as supremely a lover of the world, as the devotee of dress. "

The pride of life is "the manner, course, and circumstance of living; one's worldly state, or attainment. It becomes the exciting cause or occasion (subjective genitive) of pride. This pride is the boastfulness, swagger, vanity, ostentation, self-gratulation so prominent with some people. It finds ample means and occasions. How it grows upon one when indulged! How plain that he loves the praise of men more than the praise of God! This world is to him the means and theatre of vanity. His mind is filled with himself, and not with God. Unlike Paul (Gal. 6: 14), he glories in the show of this life. All this 'threefold concupiscence' (Augustine), now considered, is strongly brought to view and illustrated in the temptation of Eve (Gen. 3: 6), and in the temptation of our Lord. (Luke 4: 3-11). "

TAKE HEED

Because it is possible to depart from the living God, we must take heed. We must take heed that we sincerely serve God, instead of doing our works to be seen of men (Matt. 6: 1-18). We must take heed how we hear (Lk. 8: 18). We must take heed that we despise not the little ones who believe (Matt. 18: 6, 10). We must take heed lest there be in us an evil heart of unbelief (Heb. 3: 12). We must take heed to ourselves (Lk. 17: 3; 21: 34; Acts 20: 28; 1 Cor. 10: 12). We ~~cannot take for granted~~ that once we have entered the_ narrow way we are safe regardless of how we live.

SHALL WE BE ABLE TO SAY IT?

The important thing is not did the world recognize us, or did brethren applaud us, or did brethren criticize us, or did we get the recognition which we thought we deserved, but whether or not we kept the faith. Shall we be able to say with the apostle Paul: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but also to all them that have loved his appearing. " (2 Tim. 4: 7-8).

ANY SECURITY?

The Christian must not fail to heed the warnings concerning apostasy, but at the same time he must recognize it is possible to be saved, and he does not have to go through life without any sense of security. It may take a good deal of growth for some of us to strike a balance between failing to take heed and living without any sense of assurance of salvation.

One voice tells us of his sense of insecurity as to whether he was saved. He had nightmares wherein he saw himself as lost eternally.⁷ He did not seem to realize that God watches over us not as a spy to see

whether He can find some excuse to send us to hell,⁸ but as a Father who is concerned for His children, who wants to protect them, and who helps them stand up again after they stumble. It may be easy for some children to think of the "all-seeing Eye" as watching them in search of an excuse to pounce on them. Although we should let our children know that God disapproves of wrong doing, they should also understand that He watches over us to help us. As one of my children put it, when we said that God would see them if they did wrong: "Yes, but He won't tell the policeman!"

This voice also saw little certainty, and much anxiety, on this matter among brethren.⁹

CAUSES OF THIS INSECURITY

First, "we were taught at church and through our religious papers that the Gospel of Christ is another *law* in the same sense as the Law of Moses. We were taught that we stood condemned or accepted before God on the basis of a complete keeping of the law."¹⁰ Why did he grow up with such an unscriptural position? Not knowing enough of his background, I could not say with certainty. However, there are some explanations which do show why some have had this attitude, (a) There are some who may actually have this attitude, and thus teach it to others. It is easy to go from one extreme to another. Some religious people have maintained that law in no sense applies to a Christian. Since the Bible makes it clear that law in some sense does apply to a Christian, there are some extremists who take this teaching and react to the extreme that law applies to the Christian in the sense that he must do all Christ says and do it all of the time (compare Gal. 3: 10). If this is the case, none of us, whether awake or asleep, can visualize ourselves as saved on judgment day; for all have sinned (Rom. 3: 9, 19-20). (b) Some of the preaching which he heard was based on the assumption that it was unnecessary to deal with any truth which our religious neighbors teach. The only thing necessary was to deal with certain of their errors in order to instruct them more perfectly in the way of the Lord. In other words, since denominationalists believed in the grace of God, this was not a matter of controversy except when they said that it was by grace only. Therefore, some preachers took it for granted that everyone believed in the grace of God, and thus it was unnecessary to stress grace. However, the generation reared on their preaching grew up without an adequate understanding of grace. The corrective to this type of preaching is as follows: (1) Individuals should learn all they can from preaching, but their knowledge of the Bible should not be limited to what they learn in sermons. Instead, they should carry on a balanced program of Bible study. (2) We should not be reactionists and decide what to preach solely on the basis of what others do not preach on, or what they do not understand. While we need to take into consideration these two things, we must have a balanced approach and positive approach which endeavors to present not

just a neglected part of the faith but the faith in its fullness. Expository preaching through books of the Bible will help us to do this. (3) We should show how faith and obedience are related to the grace of God, and thus to the blood of Jesus Christ.

As this author grew up, he did not get the idea that salvation was based on his doing a perfect job in keeping the will of God. Thus although some may have preached that we are saved through perfect obedience, it is unfair to think that this is what all believed. On the other hand, there are too many, and even a few would be too many, who do not have the sense of security in Christ which they ought to have. Each generation must do its own growing up, and thus we shall always have those who have not yet grown in a sense of security; and perhaps some whose faith is always somewhat weak. We need to realize that nothing outside of us can snatch us from His hand, and that God guards us. However, we must not become so confident that we stand that we grow careless and fall (1 Cor. 10: 12). We are guarded through the power of God *through faith*, and we have the responsibility to keep the faith (1 Pet. 1: 5; 2 Pet. 1: 5-11).

Second, this voice traced his insecurity to the idea, which he asserts was generally held, that brethren knew *what* they believed but not, like Paul, *whom* they have believed.¹¹ (2 Tim. 1: 12). Undoubtedly this is true of some, but one does not have to go into "another fellowship" in order not to be bound by such a position. The *whats* are important because they are related to, and grounded in, the *Who*. We must proceed from the Commander to the commands. The commands are without significance if they have no relationship to Christ. However, because He is who He is, the commands are significant. And it must be remembered that a saving knowledge of God involves submission to His will. To say that we know Him, and keep not His commandments, is not really to know Him (1 John 2: 3-6). Obviously love is also involved (1 Cor. 8: 3). This does not mean that we have done all God said and that we have done it all of the time; for John had just said that if any man claimed that he had no sin he was self-deceived (1 John 1: 8-10). If we never sinned, we would have no need for the Advocate, but we need our Advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous (1 John 2: 1-2). However, what is the manner of our life? Where do we dwell? Is our *abiding* place in sin, or is it in the light? Do we persist in sin, or do we repent of our sin?

Third, this voice grew up with the idea that one had to be right in everything in order to be saved. One had to know all the truth.¹² However, he learned that brethren were wrong on some matters — as is obvious from the fact that differences exist — and finally concluded that: "On the basis of being perfectly *right* in understanding and life I knew myself lost."¹³ If one has to be right in everything, there is no hope for anyone. No one knows it all. And even that which we know, we do not know as we ought unless we use this knowledge in love (1 Cor. 8: 1-2). Furthermore, there are people who are not members of

Christ's church, and who may even be atheists, from whom we may learn. One does not receive an anointing with knowledge just because he becomes a Christian. An attitude which has long been preached, and which needs to be stressed, is that none of us are right within ourselves, but the Bible is right; and thus we should study and measure ourselves in the light of the Bible.

This voice charged that we believe that God will not overlook any errors in knowledge but He will overlook errors in life. "A long bitter road has led us to believe that God forgives every kind of error but 'doctrinal' error. What makes us think that He forgives stinginess, lust, character assassination, worldliness, laziness — everything but instrumental music in worship?"¹⁴ If anyone believes this, his knowledge and his belief are not right, (a) Sound doctrine, even though some may have viewed it otherwise, includes moral qualities. Paul spoke of murderers, the profane, the unholy, the fornicators, the perverts, the liars, the false swearers, and such like as being "contrary to the sound doctrine." (1 Tim. 1: 9-11). (b) Just how many people really believe what he characterizes them as believing? Against how many of us is it false witness? (c) There are at least some who certainly live as if they believed it, and as a test of what one believes is what one does, I would conclude that some do believe it. (d) How much error God will overlook, I do not know. He must overlook some things to take anyone to heaven. Certainly our attitude as well as our actions are involved, (e) There is a difference between falling into a sin, and persisting in a sin. (f) There is also a vast difference between being in Christ and having some error, and not having come into Christ, (f) One does not have to think that a particular error in teaching and practice will automatically send a person to hell, in order to teach against that error, (g) If some professed members of the church can get to heaven on their "faith only" — for they talk about faith but do not do anything about it—some denominationalists who outwork them would enter heaven before them on their works. However, we should not be one or the other, but simply Christians whose faith works through love.

CHRISTIANS SHOULD HAVE SECURITY

Although it is possible to fall from grace, as the Bible teaches and as some authors in *Voices* demonstrate—and we are made sad by it, the Christian does have some security. Thus we ought to live with confidence, although not with self-righteous cock-sureness. On what is our security based? On God and His promises. If salvation had to be based on our merit, we could not be saved.

We should have a sense of security because nothing *outside* of us, unless we let it take possession of our lives and then it is *in* us, can take us away from the Savior (John 10: 28; Rom. 8: 31-39). We are guarded by the power of God through faith unto the salvation ready to be re-vealed in the last time. (1 Pet. 1: 5).

Those who live by faith, which involves the obedience of faith but

does not involve a meritorious life which does all God has said and does it all of the time, do not have sin reckoned to them. "Even as David also pronounceth blessing upon the man, unto whom God reckoneth righteousness apart from works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not reckon sin. " (Rom. 4: 6-8). This does not mean that the sinner's sin is not sin; for the fact that sin is sin is brought out in God's forgiveness of iniquities. It means that God justifies us not on the basis of deeds of merit, but on the basis of faith which, other passages show, includes acts of obedience. As Moses E. Lard said: "The word 'deeds' (or works, J. D. B.) here includes the sum of human duty; hence, 'without deeds' means without doing our whole duty. To count justification without deeds to any one, is simply to justify him without perfect obedience. "

" 'We conclude that man is justified by belief without deeds of law. ' This is the proposition. In proof, Abraham is first brought forward who lived before the law. Was he justified by deeds? He was not. On the contrary, his belief was counted to him for justification. Justification to him, therefore, was a matter of favor and not of debt; it was a gratuity, and not the payment of a due. David's testimony is next adduced, who lived under the law, and spoke while it was still in force. How does he depose? Blessed is the man to whom God counts justification without deeds. But who is this man? The man whose iniquities are forgiven; he to whom the Lord does not count sin—he is the man to whom justification is counted. Therefore, both from the case of Abraham and from the testimony of David, justification is shown to be by belief, as the condition of it, and not by a perfect life before the law, nor by perfect obedience under it. " If one were justified by merit, through doing all God said and through doing it all the time, he could boast of what he had done, and he would receive the reward as wages due for work done (Rom. 3: 27-28; 4: 4). But no one has done this, and if under either gospel or the law men had to do this to be saved no one would be saved for all have sinned and are thus under the curse (Gal. 3: 10; Rom. 3: 19-20).

Faith is not able to render perfect obedience. In fact, our faith itself is imperfect. However, it is the means which God has ordained that we exercise in order to lay hold of the benefits of the blood of Jesus. Faith must function but it never perfectly functions. We must always trust in God, and not in ourselves, for salvation. Faith itself, no matter if it is very strong, has no power to save. Faith saves because it is faith in the Savior. Repentance cannot undo the past, nor blot out transgressions. It avails because it is in God's way of making men righteous, and it results in our turning to God. Neither confession nor baptism have power within themselves. They are in God's way of making men righteous, and are related to the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. For in all of these things we are depending not on our faith, our re-

penitance, our confession, our baptism, but on Jesus Christ and His cleansing blood. And when we walk in newness of life, we are not saved on the basis of living a perfect life; for all of us sin. But we do turn to God for forgiveness.

Faith is not perfect, and does not have to be perfect in the sense that we have absolute trust in God with no wavering. It should grow. However, Abraham's faith was so weak that at times he lied, and placed his wife in an adulterous situation; and yet, his weakness in faith did not dominate his life. He grew in faith. We are saved through this life of trust — which is not a life of trust if faith does not work — and not through a perfect life. And the life of trust is not itself the ground, the cause, of our salvation. But it is ordained of God as the way in which we receive His grace, which is the underlying cause of our salvation.

We can have security for we are continually cleansed by the blood of Jesus. "If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in the darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanseth us from all sin. " (1 John 1: 6-7). This does not mean that we live perfect lives, for John went on to say that we are self-deceived if we deny that we sin. "And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world. " (1 John 2: 1-2). This is not, however, to encourage us to treat sin lightly, for he goes on to emphasize that one must keep the word of God (1 John 2: 3-6). Those who live, or dwell, or walk, in the light commit acts of sin from time to time. But their manner of life is not a sinful life. They do not dwell, or abide, in darkness. Their will is to do God's will, even though they falter at times. And they have sins and errors that they may not know about; but their determination is to live in the light, walk in the light, and trust God and the blood of Jesus for salvation. We are, therefore, as it were, continually under the blood of Jesus; for His blood cleanseth us, which implies a continuing process. My trust cannot merit my salvation, and I am not in this sense depending on my faith. My faith is clinging to Christ for salvation.

The Bible teaches us to combine a sense of security with the determination to press on and to realize that in one sense we have not arrived; thus we cannot rest on the faith of the past, but must continue to have the faith which works through love (Phil. 3: 8-16; Gal. 5: 6). It may take some effort to combine the sense of security with the realization that we are not to be presumptuous, or rest on our "laurels" of the past, but is not this that which we should do? We are the elect "according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his great mercy begat us against unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the

dead, unto an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, ye have been put to grief in manifold trials, that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold that perisheth though it is proved by fire, may be found unto praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ: whom not having seen ye love; on whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing ye rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls. Concerning which salvation the prophets sought and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what time or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did point unto, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories that should follow them. " (1 Pet. 1: 2-11).

CHAPTER IX FOOTNOTES

¹*Restoration Review*, Jan. 1967, 19.

²Franklin, 178.

³*Acute and Chronic Unbelief*, New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1924, 1617, 22-23, 24-25.

⁴For some examples see 48, 53, 54, 56, 58, 60, 61, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109; 69-84.

⁵G. H. Lang, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, London: The Paternoster Press, 1951, 49.

⁶Darnell, 218.

⁷Key, 117.

⁸Compare 125.

⁹*Ibid.*, 117.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 117.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 117.

¹²*Ibid.*, 118.

¹³*Ibid.*, 119.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 124.