

"Holding fast the Faithful Word . . ."



The Word and Work



"Holding forth the Word of Life."

JANUARY, 1995

**YOU CAN
TRUST
THE BIBLE**

LILLY DALE/TELL CITY MISSIONS PRESENTS:

JESUS AND HIS FLOCK

At Lilly Dale Church of Christ

February 24-26, 1995

Friday

7:00 - 8:00 p.m. EST

The Good Shepherd

Earl Mullins

Saturday

4:00 - 5:30 p.m. EST

Living In His Flock

Workshop

1. Men: J. R. Satterfield
2. Women: Martha Embree
3. Youth (12-19): Tooger Smith

6:30 - 7:00 p.m. EST

Singing

7:00 - 8:00 p.m. EST

The Family In The Fold

Earl Mullins

Sunday

7:00 - 8:00 p.m. EST

Seeking The Lost Sheep

Earl Mullins

For more information or housing call Sam Marsh. Phone Number: (812) 836-2338

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS, DON'T MISS THIS!

Good teachers *want* to improve. Average teachers *need* to improve. And here's your chance. Experienced teacher-trainers will conduct workshops for teachers (whether veterans, beginners or haven't-started-yet).

WHEN: March 17-18 (Fri. p.m./ Sat. a.m.).

WHERE: Southeast Church of Christ, Louisville.

WHY: This is the annual Training Conference of the School of Biblical Studies.

WHO FOR: All teachers or prospective teachers or SS, VBS or other Bible classes.

WHO LEADS: Nathan Burks will speak on "Teach with Excellence--Lives Depend Upon It" (or some similar title). Then Sunday School experts from Standard Publishing Co. and "Group" Publishing Co. will lead separate sessions on teaching children/ teens/ adults. Details next month.

THE WORD AND WORK

"Declare the whole counsel of God"

Alex V. Wilson, Editor

The Word and Work (USPS 691-460) is published monthly except December under the auspices of the Portland Ave. Church of Christ, Inc., Louisville, Ky. Subscription: \$6.00 per year; bundles of 10 or more to one address = \$5.50 per subscription. Address correspondence to Word and Work, 2518 Portland Avenue, Louisville, KY 40212. Second class postage paid at Louisville, Ky.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Word and Work, 2518 Portland Ave., Louisville, KY 40212.

Vol. LXXXIX

JANUARY, 1995

No. 1

In This Issue

Theme: You Can TRUST The Bible

Editorial -- Alex V. Wilson	2
Wonderful Book -- William Jennings Bryan	4
Difficulties in the Bible -- R. A. Torrey	5
Teacher and Lord -- John R. W. Stott	9
Reliable Records? -- Anne Scott	10
Thought-Provokers -- Bible Text & Accuracy	16
The Logic of the Bible -- Paul S. Knecht	18
Christ's Teaching and Christ's Coming -- William J. Rowlands	22
Baptism and Fellowship -- Alex V. Wilson	25
Voices from the Fields	29
Blessed are the Dead who Die in the Lord	30
News and Notes - Jack Blaes	31

Theme:

YOU CAN TRUST THE BIBLE!

Alex V. Wilson

"In the religious world the question of our day concerns the integrity of that book which we call the Bible. Is it the simple, literal, un-mixed revelation of the mind of God or not?...If there is one question, more than any other, that needs a prophet to rise and answer it, it is this. Our religious newspapers, we mourn to say it, our orthodox religious newspapers, some of them, have and teach very loose views on the subject. Some of our pulpits are utterly in the fog. Some of our schools of theology give forth so uncertain a sound that it is hard to say what the teachers teach or the pupils learn.... We say that the question of the age lies just here.

"Does that sound like something you read recently...in connection with the growing debate about this country's spiritual and moral values? [Or about the Bible's "inerrancy"?--AVW] Well, as timely as those words may seem in our current situation, they were actually written over 133 years ago, by Alexander Campbell as he contemplated some disappointing trends in 1859. I introduce them here not to diminish the importance of our similar concerns [now]; but to highlight the fact that God's people must *constantly*, in every era, be familiar with the underpinnings of their religion.

"The chorus of opposition to the Christian's way of life, however well orchestrated, is not playing a new tune. It has been heard before; and although it caused anxiety in the hearts of the Lord's followers, it did not overwhelm them or rout them or silence them. Our communications technology allows instant and continual repetition of the carping criticism and ranting ridicule directed at Christian morals and standards. This media bombardment can nurture the illusion that the opposition is much stronger than it really is--like one person in a house of mirrors seeming to be a crowd. And, as in Campbell's time, sellouts by religious leaders can still lead many disciples astray."

The wise observations above were made by Travis Allen, editor of *Gospel Tidings*. They prove--Campbell's words especially--that even 150 years ago one of Satan's main tactics against Christians was to weaken confidence in the Bible by unbelief from within the church. Of course attacks against God's word have often been made by those *outside* the church--like Tom Paine, Robert Ingersoll and Madeline

Murray O'Hare, in the 1700's, 1800's and 1900's respectively. But only during the past two hundred years has a widespread movement *inside* the church attacked the inspiration and reliability of the Bible.

Nowadays many clergymen in pulpits, professors in colleges and even seminaries, and bishops who write books pooh-pooh the idea of Scripture's being a divine revelation, trustworthy and authoritative. In the July 1990 W&W I told of three young friends of mine who were exposed to such unbelief and ridicule in college classrooms. One was at a state university, which is not surprising. But the second was at a Protestant college and the third at a Catholic one. [Some copies of that important W&W are still available, by the way.]

Here is another example of what we face inside Christendom today: A professor in a prominent theological seminary publicly said, "We must understand that each of the gospels was written to correct the other gospels. So it is impossible to speak of the historical Christ." A few minutes later he went on to say, "We must get it into our heads that things are always going to continue as they are now and that Jesus Christ is never coming back." (Of course that statement fulfilled Biblical prophecy! See 2 Peter, chapter 3.)

Because this problem never goes away, we once more build an entire issue's theme around YOU CAN TRUST THE BIBLE. Then next month, D.V., we'll concentrate on You Can UNDERSTAND the Bible. There's no sense trusting it if you can't figure out what it means.

In addition to thinking *about* the Bible, we begin a series of articles this month on its *contents*. What does God say to us through Scripture? Are there any overall themes that tie the message together? How do its many parts relate to each other? The series author, Paul S. Knecht, wrote as follows in his preface when the booklet was first published in 1977:

This paper is...an attempt to integrate some major Biblical themes into a comprehensive unfolding theology. I have made no effort to "prove" anything in it, choosing rather a fast-moving style in hope of bringing the big picture rapidly into view. At present though only a beginning, its themes are of sufficient importance and enough of them have been tied meaningfully together to cause me to hope that the solid foundation of Christian truth has been more clearly identified, providing both the basis and direction for further development of Christian doctrine....

In words of the Psalmist it is the sum of God's word that is truth, and the more comprehensive our perception of the Bible, the less likely we are to distort or miss the meaning of any particular passage. Yet it is not being supposed that all scripture can be harmonized by this approach, nor is it being supposed that harmonization of all scripture is our task. The written word is a finger pointing to the Living Word, the Christ who is Himself The Truth, who alone gives our experience meaning and beckons us to eternal life.

You may or may not agree with all that our brother writes in this series, but you will find "The Logic of the Bible" stimulating.

WONDERFUL BOOK

William Jennings Bryan

Those who regard the Bible as [merely] a man-made book should be challenged to put their theory to the test. If man made the Bible, he is, unless he has degenerated, able to make as good a book today.

Judged by human standards, man is far better prepared to write a Bible now than he was when our Bible was written. The characters whose words and deeds are recorded in the Bible were members of a single race. They lived among the hills of Palestine in a territory scarcely larger than one of our counties. They did not have printing presses and they lacked the learning of the schools. They had no great libraries to consult, no steamboats [or cars or planes] to carry them around the world and make them acquainted with the various centers of ancient civilization. They had no telegraph wires [nor telephones, radios, TVs, fax machines or computer internet] to bring them the news from the ends of the earth, and no newspapers to spread before them each morning the doings of the day before. Science had not unlocked nature's door and unlocked the secrets of rocks below and stars above. From what a scantily supplied storehouse of knowledge they had to draw, compared to the unlimited wealth of information at man's command today.

And yet these Bible characters grappled with every problem that now confronts mankind, from the creation of the world to eternal life beyond the grave. They have given us a diagram of man's existence from the cradle to the grave, and they have set up warnings at every dangerous point along the path.

--From **The Making of a Man**; obviously adapted!

DIFFICULTIES IN THE BIBLE

R.A. Torrey

Every thoughtful reader of the Bible finds that the words of the Apostle Peter concerning the Scriptures, that there are some things in them hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest unto their own destruction (2 Peter 3:16), are abundantly true. Who is there of us who has not found things in the Bible that have puzzled us, yes, that in our early Christian experience have led us to question whether the Bible was, after all, the Word of God. We find some things in the Bible which it seems impossible for us to reconcile with other things in the Bible. We find some things which seem incompatible with the thought that the whole Bible is of divine origin and absolutely inerrant. It is not wise to attempt to conceal the fact that these difficulties exist. It is the part of wisdom, as well as of honesty, to frankly face them and consider them. What shall we say concerning these difficulties that every thoughtful student will sooner or later encounter?

1. The first thing we have to say about these difficulties in the Bible is, that from the very nature of the case, difficulties are to be expected. Some people are surprised and staggered because there are difficulties in the Bible. For my part, I would be more surprised and staggered if there were not. What is the Bible? It is a revelation of the mind, will, character and being of an infinitely great, perfectly wise, and absolutely holy God. God Himself is the Author of this revelation. But to whom is the revelation made? To men, to finite beings, to men who are imperfect in intellectual development and consequently in knowledge, and who are also imperfect in character and consequently in spiritual discernment. There must then, from the very necessities of the case, be difficulties in such a revelation, from such a source, made to such persons. When the finite tries to understand the infinite, there is bound to be difficulty.

2. The second thing to be said about these difficulties is, that a difficulty in a doctrine, or a grave objection to a doctrine, does not in any wise prove the doctrine to be untrue. Many thoughtless people fancy that it does. If they come across some difficulty in the way of believing in the divine origin and absolute infallibility of the Bible, they at once conclude that the doctrine is exploded. That is very illogical. Stop a moment and think, and learn to be reasonable and fair.

There is scarcely a doctrine in science generally believed to-day that has not had some great difficulty in the way of its acceptance.

When "the Copernican theory," now universally accepted, was first proclaimed, it encountered a very grave difficulty. If this theory were true, the planet Venus should have phases as the moon has, but no phases could be discovered by the best telescope then in existence. Yet the positive argument for the theory was so strong that it was accepted in spite of this apparently unanswerable objection. When a more powerful telescope was made, it was found that Venus had phases, after all. The whole difficulty arose, as most all of those in the Bible arise, from man's ignorance of some of the facts in the case.

The nebular hypothesis is commonly accepted in the scientific world to-day. But when this theory was first announced, and for a long time afterward, the movements of the planet Uranus could not be reconciled with the theory. Uranus seemed to move in just the opposite direction from that in which it was thought it ought to move in accordance with the demands of the theory. Yet the positive arguments for the theory were so strong that it was accepted in spite of the inexplicable movements of Uranus. If we apply to Bible study the common sense logic recognized in science, then we must demand that if the positive proof of a theory is conclusive, it must be believed by rational men in spite of any number of difficulties in minor details.

3. The third thing to be said about the difficulties in the Bible is that there are many more, and much greater difficulties in the way of the doctrine that holds the Bible to be only of human origin, and hence fallible, than there are in the way of the doctrine that holds the Bible to be of divine origin, and hence infallible. Oftentimes a man will bring you some difficulty and say, "How do you explain that if the Bible is the Word of God?"--and perhaps you may not be able to answer him satisfactorily. Then he thinks he has you, but not at all. Turn on him and ask him, "How do you account for the fulfilled prophecies of the Bible if it is of human origin? How do you account for the marvelous unity of the Book? How do you account for its inexhaustible depth? How do you account for its unique power in lifting men up to God?" etc., etc., etc. For every insignificant objection he can bring to your view of the Bible, you can bring very many more deeply significant objections to his view of the Bible. And any really candid man, who desires to know and obey the truth, will have no difficulty in deciding between the two views.

Some time ago a young man, who was of a bright mind, and unusually well read in skeptical and agnostic literature, told me he had given the matter a great deal of candid and careful thought, and as a result he could not believe the Bible was of divine origin. I asked him, "Why not?" He pointed to a certain teaching of the Bible that he could not and would not believe to be true. I replied, "Suppose

for a moment that I could not answer that specific difficulty, that would not prove that the Bible was not of divine origin. I can bring you many things far more difficult to account for on the hypothesis that the Bible is not of divine origin, than this on the hypothesis that the Bible is of divine origin. You cannot deny the fact of fulfilled prophecy. How do you account for it if the Bible is not God's Word? You cannot shut your eyes to the marvelous unity of the sixty-six books of the bible, written under such divergent circumstances and at periods of time so remote from one another. How do you account for it, if God is not the real author of the Book back of the forty or more human authors? You cannot deny that the Bible has a power to save men from sin, to bring men peace and hope and joy, to lift men up to God, that all other books taken together do not possess. How do you account for it if the Bible is not the Word of God in a sense that no other book is the Word of God?" The objector did not answer. The difficulties that confront one who denies that the bible is of divine origin and authority are vastly more weighty than those which confront the one who believes it to be of divine origin and authority.

4. The fourth thing to be said about the difficulties in the Bible is, the fact that you cannot solve a difficulty does not prove it cannot be solved, and the fact that you cannot answer an objection does not prove at all that it cannot be answered. It is remarkable how often we overlook this very evident fact. There are many, who, when they meet a difficulty in the bible and give it a little thought, and can see no possible solution, at once conclude that a solution is impossible by anyone. It would seem as if any man would have sufficient modesty to say, "Though I see no possible solution to this difficulty, someone a little wiser than I might easily find one." What would we think of a beginner in algebra, who, having tried in vain for half an hour to solve a difficult problem, declared that there was no possible solution to the problem because he could find none?

A man of unusual ability one day left his work and came a long distance to see me in great distress of spirit because he had discovered what seemed to him a flat contradiction in the Bible. It had defied all his attempts at reconciliation, but when he stated the case to me, in a very few moments I showed him a satisfactory solution of the difficulty. He went away with a happy heart. But why had it not occurred to him at the outset that, though it appeared absolutely impossible to him to find a solution, a solution might be easily discovered by someone else? He supposed that the difficulty was an entirely new one, but it was one that had been faced and answered long before either he or I were born.

5. The fifth thing to be said about the difficulties in the Bible is that the seeming defects of the Book are exceedingly insignifi-

cant when put in comparison with its many and marvelous excellencies. It certainly reveals great perversity of both mind and heart that men spend so much time emphasizing insignificant points that they consider defects in the Bible, and pass absolutely unnoticed the incomparable beauties and wonders that adorn and glorify almost every page. Even in some prominent institutions of learning, where men are supposed to be taught to understand the Bible and be trained to preach its truth to others, much more time is spent on insignificant points that seem to point toward an entirely human origin of the Bible than is spent upon understanding and admiring the unparalleled glories that make this Book stand apart from all other books in the world. What would we think of any man who, in studying some great masterpiece of art, concentrated his whole attention upon what looked like a flyspeck in the corner? A large proportion of the much vaunted "critical study of the Bible" is a laborious investigation of supposed flyspecks. The man who is not willing to squander the major portion of his time in this erudite investigation of flyspecks, but prefers to devote it to the study of the unrivalled beauties and majestic splendors of the Book, is counted in some quarters as not being "scholarly and up to date."

6. The sixth thing to be said about the difficulties in the Bible is that the difficulties in the Bible have far more weight with superficial readers of it than with profound students. Take that class of preachers who read the Bible for the most part for the sole purpose of finding texts to serve as pegs to hang their own ideas upon. To such superficial readers of the Bible these difficulties seem of immense importance, but to the one who has learned to meditate upon the Word of God day and night they have scarcely any weight at all. That rare man of God, George Muller, who had carefully studied the Bible from beginning to end more than one hundred times, was not disturbed by any difficulties he encountered, but to the man who is reading it through for the first or second time there are many things that perplex and stagger.

7. The seventh thing to be said about the difficulties in the Bible is that they rapidly disappear upon careful and prayerful study. How many things there are in the Bible that once puzzled and staggered us, but which have since been perfectly cleared up and no longer present any difficulty whatever. Every year of study finds these difficulties disappear more and more rapidly. At first they go by ones and then by twos and then by dozens and then by scores. Is it not reasonable then to suppose that the difficulties that still remain will all disappear upon further study?

TEACHER AND LORD

John R. W. Stott

Looking 'round at his disciples, Jesus said, "You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right; that is what I am." John 13:13

The Christian is under both instruction and authority. He looks to Jesus as his Teacher to instruct him, and as his Lord to command him. He believes what he believes because Jesus taught it, and he does what he does because Jesus said to do it.

He is our Teacher to instruct us, and we learn to submit and to subordinate our minds to his mind. We do not presume to have views or ideas or opinions which are in contradiction to the views and ideas of Jesus Christ. Our view of Scripture is derived from Christ's view of Scripture. Just as our view of discipleship, of heaven and hell, of the Christian life, and of everything else, is derived from Jesus Christ. Any question about the inspiration of Scripture and its authority therefore resolves itself to: "What did Jesus Christ teach about these points?"

We would say, without any doubt, that he gave reverent assent to the authority and inspiration of the Old Testament. There is no indication anywhere in his teachings that he disagreed with the Old Testament writers. He regarded the words of the Old Testament writings as being the words of God. He submitted to them in his own life, he believed them, he accepted their statements, and sought to apply their principles. He regarded Scripture as the great arbiter in dispute. He said to his contemporaries, "You make many mistakes, because you don't know the Scriptures."

We find in the New Testament that he invested the apostles with authority to teach in his Name. He said that the Holy Spirit would lead them into all truth, would bring to their remembrance what he had spoken to them, and would show them things to come. He evidently expected that in the providence of God there would be others to interpret, expound, and bear witness to the revelation given in himself, just as there were prophets raised up by God and inspired to bear witness to what he did in Old Testament days.

To sum up, the authority of Scripture is due to the inspiration of Scripture. The Old and New Testaments are authoritative in our lives, because they are in fact inspired.

And therefore, since Jesus Christ is our Teacher as well as our Lord, the authority of Christ and the authority of Scripture stand or fall together.

RELIABLE RECORDS?

Anne Scott

"I get tired of you Christians!" Henry got up from the table with an air of disgust, "You're always saying, 'The Bible says . . .,' 'The Bible says . . .'" as if that were the answer to every question. But as far as I'm concerned, that's just where the *questions* begin! Naturally if any of us believed for a minute that that collection of Eastern stories and mystical sayings really *was* true, we'd all have become Christians years ago. But that's just what I can't accept. It seems to me that even if there was such a person as Jesus Christ all the real facts about him will have been lost without trace by now, and even if the New Testament did once tell something accurate about him the whole record must have been changed beyond recognition in the two thousand years since then. It always seemed funny to me that supposedly intelligent university students seem to throw their intellects overboard when it comes to talking about the Bible!"

"But . . ." Ed, the Christian Fellowship president, groped for suitable words, but with the sinking feeling that he didn't know what to say. Then he noticed with relief that Dr. Stivers, the biology professor, had come into the cafeteria. "Doc," as everyone called him, was a mature Christian and also popular with the students for his friendliness. He noticed Henry and Ed.

"Hi, fellahs. What's up?"

"Well, sir," said Henry a little less fiercely, "It seems to me that no idea can be stronger than its basic premise. Now, as I understand it, the basic source of what you Christians call the truth about Jesus Christ is the Bible, isn't that right? My question is, just how reliable is the Bible? If I can't be clear about that, then I'm not prepared to believe in your Jesus, no matter how many meetings you take me to!"

"All right, Henry, why don't you sit down and just ask me some of those questions that are burning in your mind, and I'll do my best to answer you? You're quite right, you know, about basic premises being important. There are some mighty funny systems of thought in the world today, religious and otherwise, and they're usually quite logical if only you are prepared to accept an invalid basic presupposition. We can ask searching questions like this about the Bible and we don't need to be afraid that it won't stand up to our questionings. Now, what's your first query?"

Origin of the Bible

"Where did the Bible come from? I mean, did it just drop out of the sky? or was it written on gold plates by an angel and then someone was given a special pair of spectacles so that he could read it, as the Mormons say about their book of Mormon?"

Doc laughed. "No, Henry, it was written down by hand by ordinary men like us. You know that there are two parts to the Bible, the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament was mostly written in Hebrew and it was completed by about 400 B.C. though some of the books in it may have been written as early as 1300 B.C. The books of the New Testament were all written within the first century A.D. and were circulated separately at first and then, as men who had actually known the Lord Jesus and could speak at first hand about Him died off, these letters and records were collected together and used more and more in the Churches. The first formal pronouncement by a Church council about which books were felt to be authoritative was not made until the 4th century A.D. but all of these books had been read and used in the Churches for a long time before that."

Exciting Discoveries

"But all that is more than a thousand years ago. Paper and ink are so unendurable and there must have been wars and fires. How could we possibly still have accurate versions of the original texts?"

"Yes, I know that it seems unlikely, but do you know how many ancient manuscripts we have for the New Testament alone? Over 5,300! All of these were written or, rather, copied before the 10th century and the most important ones date from the 4th century and earlier. In the John Rylands library in Manchester there is a tiny fragment of papyrus containing a part of John's Gospel which was actually written down within a hundred years of Jesus' resurrection. I wonder what other ancient works of literature in either the East or the West could claim such early manuscript evidence?"

"People are always referring to the Dead Sea Scrolls. What exactly were those and what was so important about them?"

"That's an exciting story. In the early summer of 1947 a Bedouin shepherd boy found in a cave near the Dead Sea eight large jars containing scrolls. These manuscripts included many copies of Old Testament books, and radiation and other tests proved that they had been placed there about 66 A.D. although they had been written many

years before the birth of Christ. Why were they important? Well, previously, the accepted text for the Old Testament in Hebrew had been one which had been painstakingly corrected and annotated in the 7th century A.D. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls had reduced by at least one thousand years the time gap between the original writing and the oldest surviving manuscripts! And even then there were hardly any significant differences from the text we had always used."

Mistakes?

"You mean, that there *were* some mistakes? If they just copied things down by hand, there are sure to have been many errors. I know how different my notes in classes are from anyone else's!"

"Yes, sometimes a scribe could copy something down wrongly or miss out a word or write it twice--the study of this phenomenon is a really large and specialized field. But generally speaking, we can usually discover the original version by comparing the thousands of copies we have. Also, they were much more fussy about copying the Scriptures than we are about lecture notes. Do you know that the ancient Jewish scribes used to count not only the number of words, but also the number of letters in a whole book and then find out both the middle word and the middle letter and woe betide the poor copyist whose reckoning didn't come out right! Our English versions of the Bible are all based on these original Greek and Hebrew texts and they are frequently revised in the light of modern scholarship. But the changes and improvements are very slight--we can rest assured that the Bible as we have it now in whatever language we use is a pretty accurate reproduction of the original Scriptures. But I wonder if this is what is really worrying you, Henry? Your questions go a bit deeper than this, don't they?"

Is the Bible True?

"How do we know that what the Bible says is true?"

"I know what you mean. It would be nice to know that we had an accurate copy of "The Arabian Nights" but even then they would still just be imaginary stories and nobody would be asked to commit his life to one of the characters in the book?"

"Yes, it's what the Bible *says* that bothers me, especially when people get so serious about it. It's just a collection of legends and stories with a few moralistic and mystical bits added on, as far as I can see."

"Well, that's for you to decide on the basis of the evidence. But at least half of the Bible, that is, the first half of the Old and the first half of the New *claim* to be straight history, and the rest, that you call the moralistic and mystical parts, are a bit like kites; they may be flying to great heights of spiritual aspiration, but they're also firmly anchored to an actual situation. Most of the Old Testament prophets wrote during situations of great national danger. And Paul immediately after a 'mystical bit' ('I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness . . .') goes straight on to say, 'When you come, bring the cloak I left at Troas, also the books.' That too sounds like a real life situation to me."

"But I have heard that even some Christian theologians don't believe all that about Israel in the wilderness, and the miracles of Jesus. They say they are just folk myths."

"Yes, that's true--there are many so-called theologians who deny the historicity of many of the stories. But in most cases, this comes back to what we were saying earlier about premises and presuppositions. Naturally if you refuse to admit the possibility that even God can act sovereignly in the universe He created, then all the miracles of Jesus and the other Bible miracles must be mere fiction. There are quite a few professing Christians even now who make up their minds first what the Bible is saying and then try to make the evidence fit in with their interpretations."

"What about archaeology and all that? Could you use that to prove the Bible?"

"I'd prefer to put it the other way, and say that the Bible record can often help scholars understand the meaning and significance of their archaeological finds. But certainly some recent discoveries have made the Biblical critics of a few years ago look a bit silly. For instance, people used to look down on Luke, the author of Acts, as an ignoramus because of the odd term he used to describe the Roman official in Philippi. But actually it's recently been discovered that this special term *was* used exclusively in Philippi--it was Luke who was right all along."

Did Jesus Exist?

"What about Jesus, then? How can we know that there ever was such a person?"

Doc's eyes twinkled, "Well, I could say--because the Bible says so! But there are other evidences too, such as the fact of the rise of

the Christian Church from the most notoriously conservative race of people in the world, the Jews, and under the nose of the most ruthless people of the ancient world, the Romans. I'm no classical scholar, but would you like to hear the words of one who is? Professor Blaiklock of Auckland University in New Zealand says in his little booklet (entitled '*Myth or History?*')--'I have taught ancient history all my life; my approach to classics is historical; I have read and read again the documents of the world of Greece and Rome. And I tell you that I find the evidence for the unique life of Jesus Christ, His death and resurrection, better authenticated than most of those facts of ancient history which I teach with some confidence in class and lecture rooms.'"

Reason for Authenticity

"Hm-m-m. Doc, time's going by. Could I ask you just one more question? Why do *you* believe the Bible's true?"

"I can give you three reasons. And the first is what we've just been talking about, the historical and intellectual reasons. And along with that I should put what J.B. Philips describes as 'the ring of truth' in the Bible stories. You take the stories of the intrigues in David's court in Samuel and Kings or the stories in Luke or in one of the other gospels. Does this really smack to you of myth (or perhaps you haven't read enough myths to distinguish them)? And, remember, the novel hadn't been invented at this time--the only contemporary stories that are as vivid and artless as these are *true* stories. If they were just made up to deceive then the deception would have been a bit more expert and there wouldn't be divergencies in some of the Gospel accounts, for instance. As far as I can see, these little discrepancies are proof of genuineness. No, personally, I find nothing intellectually unacceptable in the proposition that the God Who created our eyes and minds and gave us the faculties of speech should be able and willing to communicate with His creatures through those same means, enlightening the minds of those who wrote these remarkable pieces of literature and marvelously preserving them for us."

"What would your second reason be, then, Doc?"

"Could I describe it as the 'Realism' of the Bible? I've never read another book whose view of the world and of human character so exactly fits the facts as I see them. Someone once said that the only explanation for the world of nature as we observe it is that it was created perfect but is now under a curse. This is exactly what the Bible affirms. We think of people in terms of black and white--but the Bible shows us how 'a man after God's heart' like King David can

sink to the lowest depths of vileness and wickedness, and it was the Lord Jesus and His apostles who showed the infinite possibilities for good in even the most depraved man or woman. An agnostic looking at this present world situation must be in despair. A reader of the Bible is distressed too, but he has hope because he knows that even this is no surprise to God, and that the final issues are in His hands.

"My third reason? It's a personal one, and I must say that it is the one that came to me first, long before I was particularly familiar with the Bible or had had a chance to study the intellectual problems. It's because somehow the Bible speaks to *me* with a strange power and authority and compulsiveness. Six words spoken once in middle school days rang in my thoughts for four years before as a first year university student I personally surrendered to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. They were, 'for He is faithful Who promised . . . ' "They continually haunted and challenged me; it was as if God Himself were speaking to me. And I now believe that that was indeed what was happening. And now I am going to show you a verse of Scripture, Henry, and I pray that it will penetrate to the *root* of your doubts. It is found in John chapter 7 verse 17 and it is an utterance of the Lord Jesus Himself. He said, 'If any man's will is to do His will, He shall know whether the teaching is from God'."

"It looks as if we're talking about presuppositions again, doesn't it, Doc?"

"Well, about conditions, anyway, Henry. Are your difficulties really intellectual or are they basically concerned with what you are or are not willing to do? If anyone were to admit the truth of the Bible, as you yourself said at the beginning, then he is conscience bound to obey it and to commit himself to it. and because we are proud and independent beings it is often more convenient to use intellectual queries to hide our own basic unwillingness to submit to God's estimate of us and His plans for us. That's worth pondering, isn't it?"

--From *The Way* magazine

THOUGHT-PROVOKERS

About the Bible's TEXT and ACCURACY

Reconstructing The Bible's True Text from the Many Manuscripts Available

Suppose a schoolteacher writes a letter to the President of the United States. To her great joy she receives a personal reply. It is a treasure which she must share with her pupils and so she dictates the letter to them. They are in the early days of their schooling, and spelling is not yet one of their strong points. In his copy of the letter Johnny has misspelled a few words. Mary has forgotten to cross her t's and to dot her i's. Billy has written one or two words twice, and Peter has omitted a word now and then. Nevertheless, despite all these flaws, about thirty copies of the President's letter have been made. Unfortunately, the teacher misplaces the original and cannot find it. To her great sorrow it is gone. She does not have the copy which came directly from the President's pen; she must be content with those that the children have made.

Will anyone deny that she has the words of the President? Does she not have his message, in just those words in which he wrote it to her? True enough, there are some minor mistakes in the letters, but the teacher may engage in the science of textual criticism and correct them. She may correct the misspelled word, and she may write in those words which have been omitted and cross out those which are superfluous. Without any serious difficulty she may indeed restore the original, by comparing the copies.

Now it is precisely this fact that caused Jesus to make the extraordinary statement recorded in Matthew 5:18. In the great maze of documents extant in His day, Jesus recognized a pure text that was accurate right down to the jots and tittles.

Why God should not have protected the original writings from destruction we cannot be sure, but with the record of idolatry in the church, I can guess why. With the veneration accorded the bones of saints and relics one can imagine what would have been done with the original documents of Scripture. God has purposed in His providence to perpetuate His truth in such a written form as to keep men from bibliolatry.

--Edward J. Young, *Thy Word Is Truth*

Historical and Geographical Accuracy of The Bible

It was the Roman custom to try to govern the scattered provinces of their great empire through rulers maintaining the forms to which those provinces were accustomed. So a great variety of titles was to be found in towns or provinces around the Mediterranean Sea, and a writer who had neither sat in the Foreign Office of the Emperor, nor gone around these areas himself, was unlikely to get all these titles correct. But Luke does get them right; he mentions a tetrarch, Herod, in Galilee, and another, Lysanias, in Abilene; another Herod is a king, by special favor of Emperor Caligula. He lists a proconsul at Cyprus; praetors at Philippi; politarchs at Thessalonica; Gallio the proconsul at Corinth; a townclerk and Asiarchs at Ephesus; chief-man Publius at Malta. All these titles we can confirm by independent evidence, either from historians or from coins or inscriptions.

--Rendle Short, *Archeology Gives Evidence*

Still More Examples

Every fresh archeological discovery tends to show how trustworthy the inspired record is....For example, for years it used to be thought that St. John's statement that Pilate tried Jesus "in a place called the Pavement, and in Hebrew Gabbatha" (19:13) was quite unhistorical--a bit of late embroidery on the simple story of the crucifixion! The scholars knew very well that there never was such a pavement. But a few years ago it was discovered some 15 feet below the surface of present day Jerusalem. It measured some 50 yards in each direction, and was the courtyard of the Roman barracks in Jerusalem.

The same was said about the pool of Bethesda with its five porches (John 5). This, too, was regarded as mythical, since not only had no trace of it been discovered, but there was no reference to it anywhere in ancient literature outside St. John. But now, not only have the porticoes of Bethesda been dug up, but the name has occurred in one of the scrolls at Qumran!

--E.M.B. Green, *The Authority of Scripture*

THE LOGIC OF THE BIBLE

[A Conceptualization]

Paul S. Knecht

(See the editorial for comments on this article)

THE BIBLE AND LOGICAL SYSTEMS

A logical system is any system that is composed of interrelated parts. If the system is well designed, the relationships are precise, and though they may be complex, one may enter the system anywhere. We begin to understand the structure of the whole by discovering how each individual part is related to the other parts. The Bible bears all the marks of a well defined logical system with an overall design.

The intent of this paper is to demonstrate that the Bible has a logical structure. Its overall message may be grasped and its many parts may be more meaningfully perceived in their relation to the whole.

THE CHRIST

I don't really know where I started picking up the threads of structure in the Bible, but the first major one to become apparent to me probably came out of the book of Acts. I had studied Acts for several years to discover every detail of the methodology of the apostolic church. One day it finally occurred to me to wonder what the apostles preached. Further study made clear that the apostles' main effort was directed toward convincing people that Jesus is "the Christ." What does it mean, I thought, to identify Jesus as the Christ? A careful reading of the gospels provided no clarification for the word "Christ," but the people involved all seemed to know what it meant. They were expecting some one who would wear that title. This expectation evidently had arisen out of the Old Testament. The centrality of this issue had only begun to dawn on me.

Eventually I realized that the Old Testament, in its very fabric, is given to portraying the nature and accomplishments of One who was to wear the title of "Messiah" or "Christ." Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, expecting the Christ, wrote as witnesses of the life and deeds of one Jesus of Nazareth. They offer the evidence and arguments that led them to believe that He, Jesus, is the Christ. He is the person in whom the Old Testament portrait of Christ is to be realized. John is especially specific, closing his gospel with this statement: "Many other signs did Jesus in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book: but these are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye may have life in his name." John thus pinpoints the objective of his writing and

the means by which he attempts to achieve it. He is recording some of the things Jesus did as signs or evidences that he is the Christ and he hopes these evidences will lead the reader also to believe that Jesus is the Christ. Finally, and of great importance, this is the specific truth about Jesus that is to be understood and believed if one is to "have life in his name."

The point here is just that the term "Christ" (English translation, "the anointed one") is given well defined meaning in the Bible. That meaning begins to be developed in Exodus 30 where, with due solemnity, God instructed Moses to prepare a "holy anointing oil." It was to be used in solemnizing the divine appointment of men to the office of priest, king, and (at least once) of prophet. The focus of the Old Testament from this point onward is increasingly fixed on a mighty One To Come: God's specially anointed Prophet, Priest, and King. In identifying Jesus as "the Christ," one says of Jesus: "This is the Man by whom God will accomplish all that He has promised mankind in the prophecies about a Messiah or Christ." Thus the structure of the Bible as developed through the gospels is this:

<p>Old Testament</p> <p>"Portrait" of the Christ: What He will accomplish and some details about His person and methods.</p>
--

<p>Gospels</p> <p>Evidence and argument that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ.</p>
--

Acts is the book of apostolic gospel preaching. It demonstrates clearly what the apostles believed the gospel to be, and how they proclaimed it to their generation. Throughout the book of Acts the continued focus on the great doctrine that Jesus is the Christ can be clearly demonstrated.

As we move out of Acts into Romans, a radical discontinuity must be noted. Beginning with Romans the remainder of the New Testament is addressed to people who have understood the gospel. They knew what it meant to accept Jesus as the Christ and had so accepted Him. Thus the diagram of the Bible can now be expanded as diagrammed below.

<p>Old Testament</p> <p>Portrait of Christ</p>

<p>Gospels</p> <p>Evidence/Argument: Jesus is Christ</p>
--

<p>Acts</p> <p>Resurrection confirms Jesus' identity as Christ: the good news proclaimed to the world.</p>

<p>Romans - Revelation</p> <p>Implications of this great truth to the world and especially to those who believe it.</p>
--

THE ETERNAL PURPOSE OF GOD

Though grand and comprehensive, the "Christ" theme is actually part of a still larger structure. The Apostle Paul, in the book of Ephesians, speaks of **"the eternal purpose of God, which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."** This suggests that all that God is doing in Christ, He is doing to accomplish an "eternal purpose." We do well to inquire what that purpose is, for the Bible develops it extensively.

Genesis 1:26 speaks of God's thought to make man in his own image and likeness. It also speaks of God's **purpose** in creating man: man was created to have dominion over all the earth. Noting, however, that the expression "have dominion" is a strong one in the Hebrew, the statement still doesn't seem especially significant, except perhaps that it is picked up as the theme of Psalm 8. The psalmist marvels at the dignity bestowed on man. God the Creator is mindful of him and visits him. God created him but little lower than **Himself**, (or the angels) and crowns him with glory and honor, giving him dominion, putting **all things under his feet**. So the statement of Genesis 1:26 is reaffirmed here and again in Psalm 72:8. We may not sense the determination behind it until we meet it again in the second chapter of Hebrews. Here after showing the incomparable greatness of the Son of God through whom God has now spoken to man, the writer cautions us against any indifference to the divine message. Its whole burden and focus is **man**.

"For not unto angels did he subject the world to come whereof we speak, but one hath somewhere testified saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him ... Thou didst put all things in subjection under his feet." (Hebrews 2:5-8) Several things must be noted here: "The world to come" is more explicitly rendered **"the inhabited earth to come"** in the margin and it is the subject "whereof we speak." It was central to the message of Christianity. This does not conflict with, but rather gives a perspective to the great emphasis on "The Christ." He is the great redeemer not only of man but also of man's dominion, the earth. Having picked up the theme of Genesis 1:26, by quoting from Psalm 8, the writer comments on the comprehensiveness of man's dominion: "For in that He subjected all things unto him (man), He left nothing that is not subject to him." And then adds, "But now we see not yet all things subjected to him."

Note the two words **"not yet"** for if God has purposed that man is to have dominion over the earth, and if indeed this is an eternal purpose of God to be accomplished through the ministry of Christ, then we may be very sure that though it has not yet been accomplished, it will be. Its accomplishment is still future. Our attention is now directed (Hebrews 2) to a certain person "who was made for a little while lower than the angels" i.e., to the One who became the Man **Jesus**. The remainder of the chapter is given to His perfect identification with

mankind. The final subjecting of all things to mankind is not further pursued here. The "world to come" was a familiar concept in the apostolic church, but the subject of Hebrews is the high priesthood of Christ rather than His Kingship. (Hebrews 8:1) We see this theme expanded in the strongly complementary passage in I Corinthians 15. Paul's objective in this chapter is to demonstrate the gospel's incompatibility with the position held by some at Corinth: they were teaching that there is no such thing as resurrection from the dead. He argues that the very gospel, and the sole basis for their Christian hope, proclaims the Christ--who though put to death for the sins of mankind was raised alive from the tomb that He might complete all the ministry that being Christ requires.

In sum, Paul argues if the Christ is dead there is **no good news**, for there is no great King to bring justice and peace to the world, but the Christ is not dead. Paul provides the evidence of many witnesses (including his own) to Jesus' resurrection.

Paul now proceeds to interpret the resurrection of the Christ as part of the grand scheme of God's eternal purpose for man. Since man brought death into the world, man has brought resurrection into the world. The very expression "anointed" (or "Christ") implies manhood for it speaks of one on whom the Holy Spirit of God has been applied. (Acts 10:38) In these passages we see God working to the very accomplishment of His eternal purpose for man. Through this man, Jesus, a human being filled with the Holy Spirit of God, He shall ultimately "abolish all rule, all authority, and all power," including death. When all things have been put in subjection under his feet..." (I Corinthians 15:20-28), He will then make a present of man's subdued dominion back to God "that God may be all in all." God and man reconciled shall dwell together in peace. What passage does Paul cite in expounding this truth? Genesis 1:26 and Psalm 8--"For, he put all things in subjection under his feet." It is reasonable that God created man for a purpose and it seems obvious that mankind has yet to fulfill that purpose. The testimony of scripture is that Christ came that God's purpose for man might finally be accomplished. We have followed this theme from Genesis to Hebrews. It is finally in Revelation, the last two chapters that we see God's purpose for man accomplished. The Christ has brought all things under control and God is invited to receive the Kingdom. In response to this He removes His dwelling place to earth where the honor and glory of the nations are laid at his feet! The "structure" of God's eternal purpose is straightforward and simple. What God started He will finish. As He said through Isaiah, "I have spoken, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed, I will also do it" (Isaiah 46:11).

[To be continued. The author welcomes feedback: 8013 Circle Dr., Georgetown, IN 47122.]

CHRIST'S TEACHING And CHRIST'S COMING

(Concluded from Last Month)

William J. Rowlands

What is the main teaching of Christ's prophetic sermon, the "Olivet Discourse" recorded in Matt. 24-25, Mark 13 and Luke 21? Firstly, that certain well-defined symptoms would mark the whole period from then until the end of the age: ward, famines, earthquakes; Jerusalem trodden under foot of the Gentiles and Israel scattered among all nations; disciples of Christ persecuted by all nations for His Name's sake; increasing power of delusion and lawlessness so that the love of the many shall wax cold; the gospel preached in the whole world for a testimony unto all the nations. These mark the general current of the whole period of our Lord's absence. They are clear and well-defined characteristics, but involving as they do all nations, and continuing as they do throughout the whole period, they are NOT given as the appointed signs of the Lord's coming. According to the usual method of Scripture they are given first to set forth the broad outline, or in other words, the background of the whole picture.

Specific Signs of the Specific Predictions

But the Olivet prophecy circles around two supremely important specific events: (a) the desolation of Jerusalem fulfilled in A.D. 70; (b) the second coming of our Lord. The specific sign of the first is-- "But when ye see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that her desolation is at hand" (Luke 21:20). the specific signs prelude the Lord's coming will be: (a) the abomination standing in the latter day temple at Jerusalem; (b) followed at once by a shortened period of unequalled tribulation; (c) closing with signs in sun, moon and stars, etc., immediately after which the Lord will come (Matt. 24:15-31).

While the Olivet prophecy declares matters which involve all nations, its center, as of all God's dealings with this earth, is Jerusalem. And Jerusalem is the place where the specific signs occur in connection with those two outstanding events. Over nineteen centuries have witnessed the steady fulfillment of the general predictions among the nations; and A.D. 70 witnessed the minute fulfillment of the specific prophecy of Jerusalem's overthrow by the Romans; and all these together bear witness to the truth of the prophecy and of Him who uttered it. They also bid us look for the same clear literal fulfillment of the still future events as of the past ones.

Those Who Flee During the Tribulation (Verses 15-28)

Matt. 24:15-22, 29-31 make it clear that a period of unequalled tribulation, shortened for the elect's sake that lives might be spared, *precedes* the coming of Christ.

Its greatest intensity is evidently to be in the region of Judea, else the disciples would not be commanded to flee therefrom. Jerusalem is its center, and so urgent is the need for escape that flight must be instantaneous. Those who escape must be those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, who know His Word and obey His command to flee. They may be Jewish or Gentile by birth, but must be Christians (disciples) by religion. It has been objected that the mention of Sabbath shows that they are Jews by religion, but if Israel in unbelief occupies Judea they, the unbelievers of Israel, will keep Sabbath [Editor's note: this was written in 1930, eighteen years before modern Israel's establishment.]. They will observe it with all rigidity of the Pharisees of old, and any one breaking it by taking such a journey will be open to persecution. The safety of those who thus flee is the thought of the passage, for no religious scruple could arise against saving one's life on the Sabbath. The mention also of winter and the tender infirmities of motherhood shows the Lord's gracious concern for these refugees (19-20).

Christ's Glorious Coming to Gather His People (Verses 29-31)

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days, the sun shall be darkened . . . and then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds of the heaven with power and great glory. And . . . his angels . . . shall gather together his elect from the four winds" (29-31).

To this agree the words of the Apostle Paul in 2 Thes. 1:4-10.

"We glory in you. . . for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and in the afflictions which ye endure. . . if so be that it is a righteous thing with God to recompense affliction to them that afflict you; and to you that are afflicted rest with us, at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of His power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God."

Both these passages teach the same thing, viz. that the coming of Christ by which all His redeemed ones get release from their affliction and persecution is at the revelation of Christ with His holy angels rendering vengeance on His foes.

The same thought is seen in 1 Thes. 4:13-5:11, for the "coming of the Lord" shown there is *not* by any means a *secret* affair. The trumpet's blast is mentioned, as in Matt. 24:31. And the Lord shall

descend "with a shout" (1 Thes. 4:16). This is a battle shout. Luther uses for the "shout" the German word for "war-cry." Conybeare and Howson translate: "with a shout of war." Lange comments: "Christ is thereby described as *a victorious captain whose order summons to battle for the destruction of His enemies.*" Rev. 11:18 tells us of the wrath of the Almighty falling upon the angry nations when our Lord takes His power to reign, thus showing us with whom our Lord will battle when He "descends from heaven with a shout," a shout of war. Rev. 19:19 is even more specific. How then can we think that our Lord will shout for the battle, and then instead of fighting it, rush His soldiers off the field to heaven, leaving evil predominant everywhere for a period of years? Why a battle shout and no battle? Will Antichrist "wear out the saints of the Most High" (Dan. 7:25) *after* the Lord Himself has shouted His war-cry? Most assuredly not!

Our Lord is coming again once, and that in manifested glory. When He so comes forth, we shall be caught up to meet Him in the air. We shall thus, in glorified bodies, be with our Lord when He immediately rescues the spared remnant of Israel, destroys Antichrist and his armies, and sets up His glorious kingdom.

"Take Heed . . . Watch Therefore" (Verses 32-51)

As our Lord commenced the Olivet discourse with the warning, "Take heed, let no man lead you astray," repeating the warning several times throughout the prophecy, so now in verses 32-51 He gives us a large section to impress the words "watch therefore." In A.D. 70 the Christians in Judea were watching for the appointed sign of Jerusalem's impending doom. They saw the sign as the signal to flee to the mountains and by obeying the Lord's words escaped with their lives to Pella. They watched for the sign while they awaited the event it signalled. Nor can we obey our Lord's command, "Watch therefore," unless we watch for the signs of His coming. "Watch therefore, for ye know not on what day your Lord cometh."

BAPTISM AND FELLOWSHIP

Alex V. Wilson

We refer again to the disagreement between Barton Stone and the early Alexander Campbell. We do this not because either of them is in any way our pope, but because in our congregations today the same two views are held. Thus their thinking back then illustrates present-day thinking.

In 1828 Campbell wrote, "Everyone, in the very instant in which he was put under the water, received the forgiveness of his sins." "No man has any proof that he is pardoned until he is baptized." Stone, in 1831, wrote, "We teach the doctrine, 'Believe, repent, and be immersed for the remission of sin,' . . . but we cannot agree that none but the immersed have their sins remitted . . . We have fellowship and communion with unimmersed persons."

Campbell's Views Nine Years Later

In 1837 a lady from Lunenburg, Virginia wrote to Campbell. She was a reader of his paper *Millennial Harbinger*, and expressed great surprise at something he had written there. He had said that there are real Christians in all the Protestant denominations. She inquired, "Will you be so kind as to let me know how anyone becomes a Christian . . . Does the name Christian belong to any but those who believe the Gospel, repent and are buried by baptism into the death of Christ?"

Here is Campbell's answer, condensed and slightly reworded for the sake of clarity. (I have supplied emphasis also.) "If there are no Christians in the Protestant denominations, there are certainly none among the Catholics, Jews, Moslems or pagans. In that case there are no Christians in the world except ourselves. Therefore for many centuries there has been no church of Christ, no Christians, in the world, which means the gates of hell have prevailed against his church! This cannot be; and therefore there are Christians among the denominations.

"But who is a Christian? I answer, Every one that believes in his heart that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the Son of God, repents of his sins, and obeys Him in all things according to his measure of knowledge of His will.

"I cannot make any one duty the standard of being a Christian, not even immersion. I cannot regard all that have been sprinkled in infancy as aliens from Christ. Should I find a pedo-baptist [sprinkled

as an infant] more intelligent in the Scriptures, more spiritually-minded and more devoted to the Lord than someone who is immersed as a professing believer, I could not hesitate a moment in giving my preference to the former. Did I act otherwise I would be a sectarian, a Pharisee among Christians. Someone may ask me, How do I know that anyone loves my Master but by his obedience to His commands? I answer, In no other way. But notice, I do not substitute obedience to one command, for general obedience. *It is the image of Christ the Christian looks for and loves; and this does not consist in being exact in a few items, but in general devotion to the whole truth as far as it is known.* John Bunyan and John Newton had very different views of baptism; yet they were both disposed to obey, and to the extent of their knowledge did obey the Lord in every thing. An angel may mistake the meaning of a commandment, but he will obey it in the sense in which he understands it. Many a good man has been mistaken. Mistakes are to be regarded as declarative of a corrupt heart only when they proceed from a willful neglect of the means of knowing what is commanded.

"My correspondent may think that we detract from the authority and value of an institution the moment we admit the bare possibility of anyone's being saved without it. But we think we do not undervalue either seeing or hearing when we affirm that neither of them, nor both of them together, are essential to life. I would not sell one of my eyes for all the gold on earth; yet I could live without it.

"There is no occasion then for making immersion, on a profession of faith, absolutely essential to being a Christian--though it may be greatly essential to his holiness and comfort. My right eye is greatly essential to my usefulness and happiness, but not to my life. As I could not be a perfect man without it, so I cannot be a perfect Christian without a right understanding and cordial reception of immersion. But he that therefore infers that none are Christians but the immersed, as greatly errs as he who affirms that none are alive but those with clear and full vision.

"I would unhesitatingly say that I think every man who despises any ordinance of Christ, or who is *willingly* ignorant of it, cannot be a Christian. Yet it is against my convictions to teach anyone that if he mistook the meaning of any institution, while in his soul he desired to know the whole will of God, he must perish. But to conclude for the present--he that claims for himself license to neglect the least of the commandments of Jesus because it is possible for some to be saved without it, does not possess the spirit of Christ. So I reason, and I think in so reasoning I am sustained by all the prophets and apostles of both Testaments."

Later Thoughts

Three months later, in answer to many people who criticized his position, Campbell wrote, "Some of our brethren were too much *addicted to denouncing the denominations* and representing them *en masse* as wholly aliens from the possibility of salvation--as wholly anti-Christian and corrupt. These very zealous brethren gave support to the widespread *accusation that we make baptism a savior, or a passport to heaven*, disparaging all the virtues of the professing Christians among denominations.

"When I see a person who would die for Christ; whose brotherly kindness knows no bounds; whose seat in the Christian assembly is never empty; whose inward godliness and devotion are attested by punctual obedience to every known duty; whose constant companion is the Bible: I say, when I see such a man ranked among heathen men because he never happened to ask but always took it for granted that he had been scripturally baptized; when he is thus criticized by someone who is greatly destitute of these virtues and whose chief recommendation is that he has been immersed: I feel no disposition to flatter such a critic but rather to say he is in error. And while I would not lead anyone to disparage the least of all the commands of Jesus, I would say to my immersed brother as Paul said to his Jewish brother: 'Sir, will not his uncircumcision, or unbaptism, be counted to him for baptism? and will he not condemn you, who though having the true baptism yet dost transgress or neglect other statutes of your King?'" (Rom. 2:25-29). [See our Aug. '94 issue for Leroy Garrett's comments on Campbell's Lunenburg letter.]

About twenty-five years later the whole question of immersion, salvation and fellowship came up again. The belief of Stone and of Campbell in his later years was this time succinctly stated by Isaac Errett in four propositions: "1) In primitive times all who partook of the Lord's Supper were immersed believers. 2) Corruptions have crept into the church because of Popery and have scattered the people of God into various sects. 3) Our plea is for a reunion of the people of God. While our plea does not recognize these sects as of divine origin, yet it recognizes a people of God among them. 4) We are compelled, therefore, to recognize as Christians many who have been *in error* on baptism, but who in *the spirit of obedience* are Christians indeed."

So we have seen the Biblical interpretations and implications which led Stone to have fellowship with unimmersed persons and led Campbell in later years to believe there were true saints among the Lutherans, Presbyterians, Episcopalians and Methodists. Many today hold the same views and so participate in para-church groups mentioned in earlier articles. Many others do not, and agree with the

view of Campbell during the 1820's and of Ben Franklin, who in reply to Isaac Errett wrote, "Did the first Christians commune with un-immersed persons? It is admitted they did not. Shall we, then, deliberately do what we admit they did not do?" What shall we say to these things? Let each one be fully persuaded in his own mind, without despising or attacking those who disagree.

On the Other Hand

Before concluding, it might be fair to hear the views of those who support infant baptism. Though I believe they err, *they* believe the practice is Bible-based.

Once I saw a tract with this title on the outside: "What the Bible Teaches about Infant Baptism." Opening it up, I discovered nothing but the blank pages! The point, of course, was that the Bible says nothing about the practice, therefore it is unbiblical and wrong. But those who believe in it draw a different conclusion from the silence of the New Testament, and argue thus: In Old Testament times, infants were accepted into the community of God's covenant people (via circumcision and the parents' membership among God's people). Therefore, if God intended His New Testament people to operate on a different principle, He should have commanded infants *not* to be baptized! Silence implies consent, runs the argument--consent to the principle of accepting infants among God's people. They admit that Scripture says faith and repentance should precede baptism, but insist that this refers to outsiders converted as adults rather than to children of believing parents. Now I believe this argument overlooks some basic differences between the Old and New Covenants (though there are similarities too, of course). We lack time to develop a full Scriptural rebuttal here. It seems enough to say that becoming a disciple through faith in Jesus plus repentance are New Testament pre-requisites for baptism always, without any hint of exceptions. Church history also opposes infant baptism: it cannot be traced back to earliest times but came as a later innovation. Also its practice has often produced tragic results. Nevertheless the point here is, many Christians sincerely believe they have a Biblical basis for this practice of baptizing the infants of believing parents. The Lord knows their hearts.

Thank God for the truth of 2 Tim. 2:19, "'The Lord knows who are his,' and, 'Let every one who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity.'" We may misjudge others, though we seek not to, but God knows His people. For our part we must depart from iniquity and disobedience to His will as we understand it, and urge others to do the same. God clearly commands baptism, so let us preach and practice it. But remember too those wise words of Campbell: "It is the image of Christ the Christian looks for and loves; and this does

not consist in being exact in a few items, but in general devotion to the whole truth as far as it is known."

But even greater than devotion to the truth is devotion to Him who is The Truth. Probably the most important words in this protracted series of seven articles were those of E.L. Jorgenson, with which we conclude:

Among many heresies, there is "the heresy of emphasis," wrong emphasis; and of this heresy too many Christians of our kind have been guilty. If we aspire to be "New Testament Christians," a people after the pattern of Paul and Peter, James and John, we must *put the emphasis where they put it. Christ was central.* Jesus Christ himself, the glorious risen, living Being who is the center of all that concerns Him—*He* is our main concern. It is quite possible, in fact easy, to become taken up with "movements" and subjects good as they may be, more than with *Him*, our only Lord and Savior.

[End of series]

VOICES from the FIELDS

Robert and Joy Garrett Box 30, Ruwa Zimbabwe Nov. 19, 1994

Tribute to Bro. C. V. Wilson

Bro. C.V. was always a little larger than life. His love for the Lord was obvious. A man of great ability and energy who used that energy in serving the Lord. He was very unselfish, truly thinking and acting for and helping others.

He was a man who "understood the times and knew what Israel should do." and did it! He did not restrict his efforts to his own immediate horizon but was truly missionary minded. He helped many missionaries, the field was the world; and he sent his only son Alex, also to the foreign fields.

He was "Uncle C. V." to our children who leaving their parents behind in Africa must come to the States for their college education, were far from home. He went out of his way to help them and be an uncle in the Lord to them.

He was a constant source of encouragement to Joy and me in our missionary work in Africa. In fact He was leading influence in causing the Portland church to sponsor us on the mission field. On our furloughs to the U. S. he went out of his way to help us to find accommodation and organize our visits to the churches. Once a week he would come and pick me up and take me to the "Y" to swim with him for exercise and fellowship. Often, during our furloughs, he would come and take Joy and me out to dinner at his favorite restaurant. Every Christmas there came a Christmas card from him with a love gift. His frequent letters to us were always an encouragement in the Lord. In times of trial on the mission field he stood behind us and strengthened us.

Bro. C.V. is one of those I truly look forward to seeing again when the Lord comes for His own.

"BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHO DIE IN THE LORD"

The church in Heaven is growing fast. Four dedicated disciples of the Lord Jesus went Home in December or early January. **John Bradshaw**, in his early 60's, was the youngest of them. He died from complications resulting from a freak auto accident, in which his car aquaplaned and flipped over three times. He seemed to be improving afterwards, when the Lord called him Home. Several of the family had a moving Lord's Supper service in his room just the day before. He and his wife, June, had seven children, and actively served the Lord at Buechel, Rangeland, and other churches through the years. The Bradshaw family loved to sing God's praises, and often blessed their hearers with special numbers.

The day after Christmas, **Dr. Horace Wood** of Dallas fell asleep in Jesus. He died from heart failure before even getting to the hospital, having enjoyed strength and mainly good health up to the end. What a way to go! He was 93 years old but had the vigor and mental alertness of a much younger man. And his zeal in serving Christ never abated.

Dr. Horace supported himself as an orthodontist, but considered his primary calling to be a witness of Jesus. He was an enthusiastic man: words like "magnificent," "marvelous" and "glorious" were often on his lips. His exuberance sprang from strong faith and hope, based on God's word and also answers to prayer. He was loving too--always friendly and generous. During the last 20 years of so of his life he carried on a worldwide sermons-on-cassettes ministry. He had over 6,000 sermons or Bible classes of outstanding preachers/teachers on tape. Assisted by his dear wife Rosalind, he distributed over 20,000 tapes yearly. More than 300 foreign missionaries received his tapes regularly, plus many folks in the U.S. He poured his time and finances into this ministry up to the time of his departure. Years ago he was an elder at the old Mt. Auburn Church of Christ, and he also wrote for Word & Work and was a column editor for us.

Paul J. Knecht (father of the Paul whose article appears this month) died on Dec. 30 at age 91. Born in France, as a boy during World War I he saw soldiers kill his dad. He came to Cincinnati later, and as a self-made man whose schooling had been stopped at grade 5, he rose to become an excellent chef for prestigious hotels. Hungering for spiritual growth, he left a good job and an 11-room house on 3 acres for a small, crowded house in Louisville--so he and his family could attend R.H. Boll's Bible classes. He served as a deacon at Portland Ave. Church for many years. He was a man of deep convictions and tender affections, who loved to tell others what the Lord had done for him.

Word just arrived from Johnson City, Tenn. that **James Lewis** died on Jan. 6. He was a sturdy Christian, devoted family man, and longtime elder at the Locust Street Church. It was my pleasure to visit briefly with him and his beloved wife a couple of months ago. He was around 90, I believe.

May the Lord raise up other zealous disciples, strong family men, and church leaders to replace these four faithful servants of His. -- A.V.W.

NEWS and NOTES

Edited by Jack Blaes

Important Events During 1995

Write these down on your calendar & date-book for the year, and plan now to take advantage of them.

Feb. 24-26: Tell City/Lillydale Workshop; Gatchel, IN.

Mar. 17-18: SBS Annual Training Conference: How to Teach Sun. School Better. To be held at the Southeast Church of Christ, Louisville. Bring all actual & potential teachers of SS, VBS, etc.

April 22: Ladies Inspiration Day, Belmont Church, Winchester, Ky. Theme: "That Your JOY May Be Complete."

July 16-20: North American Christian Convention; Indianapolis.

Aug. 7-10: Louisville Christian Fellowship Week. Theme: "Making Connections Spiritually."

Oct. __?: Ladies Overnight Retreat, at Camp Kavanaugh, Crestwood, KY.

Nov. 8-10: "Restoration Forum," at the Galt House, Louisville, KY.

Nov. 13-16: Central Louisiana Christian Fellowship Week; Glen Mora.

Nov. 23: Louisville area Thanksgiving Service, 10-11a.m., Atherton High School auditorium.

We trust that the folks in charge of these events will provide us more information soon, so we can pass it on to our readers.

Change in Location

Paul and Rita Estes have moved from Louisville to Virginia. Paul preaches for the Stella Christian Church, an active congregation which has already reproduced 2 daughter churches. Their address: Rt. 1, Box 214, Patrick Springs, VA 24133. Tel.: 703: 957-2833.

Add Insights, Stretch Thinking

Leroy Garrett's monumental history book, *The Stone-Campbell Movement*, newly revised, is just off the press. Anyone ordering it from W & W before March 1 can get it for the pre-publication price of \$20 + postage, or 2 copies for \$35 + postage. After that the price

will be \$25, which is still very reasonable for a 573-page, illustrated book, hardbound. The first edition was a gem. Now some chapters are totally rewritten, including those on the 3 churches of the Movement, along with a concluding chapter on the Movement's future. This would make a great gift for your preacher or elders. Put one in your church's library, too.

Book on R. H. Boll To Be Published

Lord willing, during this year W & W will publish a book about its outstanding former editor & Bible teacher, R. H. Boll. Tom Bradshaw wrote it as his thesis while earning his Master of Divinity de-

gree from Emmanuel School of Religion in 1992. The subtitle is, "Controversy & Accomplishment among Churches of Christ."

We are not sure how many copies to print. It will depend to some extent on how much interest is expressed by potential buyers. Many who knew Bro. Boll have passed on to Glory, and the rising generation knows him only by name--if at all. Should we print 500? 1000? 2000? Give us your input if you will. Some folks may want to contribute financially to this project too. That could be a determining factor as well. This book will probably contain 150-175 pages and cost \$5-7 or so. Send your order in before May and when it comes out we'll send it to you and bill you for \$1 cheaper than its final price.

Letters We Like #1

"I just wanted to convey to you how much I appreciate your kind words in the Sept. W&W. It was very thoughtful of you to say the kind things about Image (and Wineskins and One Body) and I especially appreciated your thoughtfulness in putting our address in W & W. . . --Denny Boultinghouse, editor of Image magazine

Letters We Like #2

"Just a brief note to compliment you on your recent article in W&W entitled, 'Baptism: God's Command, Man's Interpretation,' (Oct.) It was really outstanding. . . ." --David Reagan, Lamb & Lion Ministries

Brief Visit From Alaska

Winston and Irene Allen visited the "Lower 48" for about 2 weeks. It was far too short, but enabled them to visit their children, grandchildren and other loved ones in various places. On Dec.1 Winston

spoke & showed slides of the Alaska work to over 70 people from churches in the Louisville area. The meeting was held at Portland Ave.

Though the Allens are now in Eagle River again, you may have them visit your church by means of his slides+tape-recorded message. For information about this, contact Ken Stockdell, c/o Main St. Church of Christ, Gallatin TN 37031

Maple Manor

Adult Division

The President of the Board of Directors for 1995 is Robert Campbell who was one of the first children in the Home back in the beginning. The Vice President, Darryl Witten, also lived in the Children's Home. I feel it is quite a good thing that these men are on the Board and have made a considerable contribution to society and to the churches. Robert is a member and deacon at Sellersburg, and Darryl, with his family, is involved in the work at Southeast in Louisville. The Secretary for 1995 is Robert Lyon.

Children's Division

Claude "Bud" Ridgeway is a new employee of Maple Manor Christian Children's Home. Bud is now the Coordinator of Services. He comes to the Home with a wide range of experiences in preaching, fund raising, counseling, and child care.

Bud and his wife, Betty, live in Louisville, KY and attend the Southeast Church of Christ on a regular basis. They are very active. Both have Masters Degrees in the counseling field and are subject to using their God-given talents in working with the children in placement.

Bud will be visiting with churches and individuals in the coming months. He will update each congregation, identifying the home's needs, and make presentations pertaining to new programs for the home.

We welcome Bud to the staff at Maple Manor. If you would like for Bud to come speak to you or your congregation or church group, please give him a call at (812) 246-2769.

Cramer Church, Lexington

We continue to be thankful for the many ministries at Cramer. The bus ministry continues to bring the children every Wednesday night with a growth in some on Sunday. Our Nursery and Children's church has been revitalized and a puppet ministry begun. Last summer we returned to Woodland Bible Camp after being semi-retired and were able to send some also to Antioch. We also have seen renewed interest in the Central Kentucky gathering for fifth Sunday Singing. Our adults continue to be used in teaching as we rotate our adult Sunday School classes. The prayers, serving and giving continue to abound at Cramer as we reach out to each other and those around us.

Adele and I are especially looking forward this year to a trip to the Holy Land in February given to us by a special friend and our church family. --Bennie Hill

Southeast Church of Christ

Kirstan Buck will be using her God-given talents as a Spanish speaking Christian woman to work in Sunday school coordination,

women's activities, and women's Bible studies in Santiago, Chile from January-April 1995. Kirstan's mission work is being cosponsored by Southeast Church of Christ and the Southside Church of Christ in Lexington where she has been attending while in college. We have been praying that God would "send forth reapers," and this is a definite answer to that prayer. Let's give Kirstan our support!

Under the direction of Karen Garceau our "Drama Team" presented a moving story of those who had to come "face to fact" with their life-style in light of God's will. The drama made all of us think seriously about our life.

We continue to see much hard work going on around our facility from the Service Team.

A Delightful Quote

Leroy Garrett, visiting Australia, found this statement in a Church of Christ pamphlet there:

"The church in the whole world is the Church of Christ. Each local Christian congregation is a Church of Christ. Churches of Christ simply desire to call themselves what they are--churches of Christ. They recognize that other congregations of Christians using other names are also churches of Christ. They would be happy for them to describe themselves as they are. It might cause some confusion in the church if tomorrow every church notice board in Australia said simply, 'A Church of Christ,' but it would lessen the confusion in the world about the church."

THE GOLDEN BOOK OF SACRED SONG

50 YEARS OLD AND STILL GOING STRONG



Shape Notes, With Supplement

(No Responsive Readings) Single Copy \$5.95

150 Copies or More 5.75

Postage and handling charge must now be added to the above charges. Kentucky residents add 6 % tax.

All books have colored headbands, blue water-proofed cover cloth (you can wash it), presentation page, a ravel-proof book mark, and tinted edges.

The late shape-note books are, mechanically, the finest and most beautiful ever fabricated. New plates for Offset printing were made from sheets that had been run off and stored for this purpose and this expectancy years ago, before the original plate had begun to show any wear whatsoever. The resulting type-page is therefore as sharp and clear (both words and notes) as the very first book ever printed—with the added beauty and uniformity that the Offset method of printing offers.

WORLD'S ONLY ALPHABETIZED COLLECTION

THE WORD AND WORK

2518 Portland Avenue

Louisville, Kentucky 40212