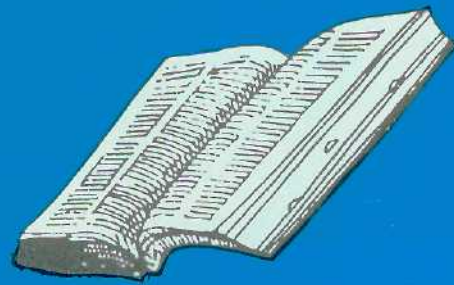


# Gospel Truths



"Love . . . rejoices in the truth"  
1 Corinthians 13:6

Volume II Number 9

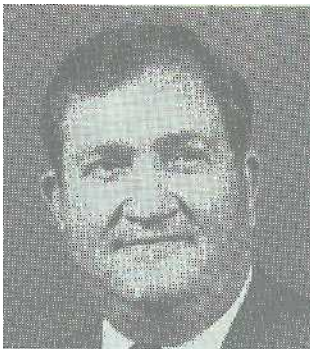
September 1991

## Keeping the Unity of the Spirit

by James E. Cooper

IT is as clear as day that Ephesians 4:1 -6 emphasizes the importance of unity among the people of God. Many sermons on the "seven-plank platform for unity" have been preached from verses 4-6. However, in this article we propose to emphasize the spiritual pre-requisites for unity mentioned in verses 1-3. In order for us to keep the unity of the spirit, we must cultivate the attitudes which promote unity.

**Our text teaches us that maintaining unity will demand effort.** We are to "endeavor" or "be diligent" in our attempt to keep the unity of the spirit. The Greek word used by Paul, *spoudadzw* (*spoudadzo*), emphasizes the exertion of energy. In some passages it is used in the sense of *making haste* (cf. II Timothy 4:9; II Timothy 4:21; Titus 3:12). In others it refers to engaging one's self wholeheartedly toward reaching an objective: aiding the poor (Galatians 2:10), assisting other Christians in need (II



Corinthians 8:6-7, 16), or righting a wrong (II Corinthians 7:11-ff.). Those who lead are to do so "with diligence" (Romans 12:8). Instead of "lagging behind in diligence," all are to be "fervent in spirit, serving the Lord" (Romans 12:11). Each is to "give all diligence" to develop the seven graces of Christian character (II Peter 1:5).

That we are urged to be diligent to "keep the unity of the spirit" indicates that unity will not be maintained without effort on our part. It seem to me that too many brethren spend time and energy in an attempt to destroy, rather than to maintain unity among God's people. There are many factors which could be allowed to destroy that unity. Let us consider several factors which must not be allowed to destroy it. **Differences in personal opinion must not be allowed to destroy the unity of the Spirit among us.** We must not insist that our personal opinions on every matter be shared by everyone else. There are those who are

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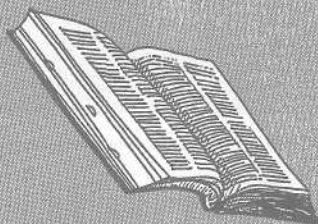
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**VOLUME II  
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SEPTEMBER 1991**



## EDITORIAL . . .

J. T. Smith, Editor

P. O. Box 906087 • Tulsa, Oklahoma 74112

### The Hobby-Riders Have Saddled Up Again



**H**OBBY-Riders are particular doctrine they are promoting. It seems that is all they can think or write about. Every time something is said that appears to be a distant relative of a forty-second cousin to their hobby, they maneuver it into position so that one seems to be talking about their hobby. In light of what has transpired in the July 1991 issue of **Faith and Facts Magazine**, that could truthfully be said about John Welch, Keith Sharp, Wayne Greeson and I know not how many more writers who are connected with **Faith and Facts Magazine** and **With All Boldness** (both publications owned by Welch & company). The most unscriptural thing that has come out of all this was the effort put forth in the October 1990 issue of **Faith and Facts** that Jesus was just a man, nothing more than a man, "just an ordinary guy like you and me." This doctrine was presented to show that since Jesus was just an ordinary guy like you and me that man can live above sin. However as I have pointed out over and over again even if he could live above sin no one does, so it is a moot point. If these brethren know of such a person who is responsible before God (of course with the exception of Jesus Christ) who has done so or is doing so, I wish they would send me his name, address, and telephone number. And even though John Welch of late has been as nervous as a long-tailed cat in a room full of rocking chairs about this matter (claiming he has made amends for teaching such doctrine concerning Jesus) the above mentioned special issue of **Faith and Facts** upholding this doctrine came out *after* his so-called *amending*. John doesn't need to amend anything. He needs to retract his position for it is false doctrine. However as far as I know he still ridicules the idea of Christ being 100% man and 100% God while here on earth. (Brethren I apologize for having to deal with such foolishness).

For the past several years (John said 20 in his article) - it seems like forever - these brethren have been on the hobby of "continuous cleansing." Anyone who disagrees with them in the slightest is branded a Calvinist, or at least teaching a form of Calvinism. In the past three or four years alone I have received three or four challenges from these brethren. And as recent as this year brother Sharp in a sermon he preached in Bradenton, Florida accused me and several others of teaching a form of Calvinism. Now then in the July 1991 issue of **Faith And Facts** brethren Welch and Sharp have challenged a number of us to debate.

In the June issue of **With All Boldness** I understand that Walton Weaver was accused of misrepresentation regarding an article he printed in his final issue of **The Apostolic Messenger** and I printed in GT by Steve Cawthon entitled "Does Man Have To Sin." (The reason I say "I understand" that it was said is because I do not receive **With All Boldness**). Though brother Sharp and I agreed to an exchange of papers, I only received the first two issues of **WAB** after it began.

The alleged *misrepresentation* told by brother Weaver involved something that Steve Cawthon said. Walt reported Steve as saying he sent the article to

he sent the article to Keith to be printed in **With All Boldness**. Keith denies that it was ever sent to him for publication - only for review. Brother Weaver said that Keith refused to print the article. Now truly there is misrepresentation or a misunderstanding somewhere. Brother Cawthon told me, Ward Hogland and Maurice Barnett that he sent it to Keith for publication but Keith would not print it and told him the reason he would not print it. Yes someone *has* misrepresented the facts.

There is also another interesting aspect to this situation. Brother Cawthon is one of the staff writers for **With All Boldness**. He is also a cousin, by marriage, to Keith. Now in the June issue of **With All Boldness** Keith blasted Walton and me for commending Steve's article and wondered if we would *defend* our belief. However he said not one word about brother Cawthon, who wrote the article, defending his belief. Hmmmmm! Wonder if there is some legal way I could become a relative of Keith's. Have these brethren ever read what Paul told Timothy "...doing nothing by partiality" (I Timothy 5:21).

### "Say It Like I Say It - Or Else!"

Regardless of how hard you may try to get your point across to these brethren, and how careful you are to state your position, there always seems to be a letter in a word, a syllable - something that was not said like they think it ought to be said - and here come the propositions. Many throughout the brotherhood are getting sick of all the foolishness that goes on with the "you didn't say it like I think you ought to" brethren. (Again brethren, I apologize for having to deal with such nonsense).

### "Proposed Debate" - The Deity and Humanity of Jesus - Continuous Cleansing - Have To Sin."

The above subtitle sets forth the headlines on the front page of the July issue of **Faith and Facts**. The challenge for the proposed debate was by no less than John Welch himself, and Keith Sharp of course, including propositions, rules, location (Louisville, Kentucky) etc. Those selected as the ones who would meet these fearless defenders of the faith are Eugene Britnell, Gene Frost, Ward Hogland and me. Also Dudley Ross Spears was included but John seems to think that, "Brother Spears decries oral debate..." thus I assume the reason for naming me. John said one of the reasons why he involved me is because of the recent joint article that Dudley and I had as an editorial in this publication on the subject of continuous cleansing.

Below are the propositions just as they appeared in **Faith and Facts** that John wanted me to sign on continuous cleansing.

**Resolved:** the Scriptures teach that Christians must repent of (turn away from) all of their sins, whether caused by weakness, inadvertence, or willfulness.

Affirm: John A. Welch or Keith Sharp

Deny: J. T. Smith or Eugene Britnell

**Resolved:** the Scriptures teach that Christians are continuously forgiven of their sins of weakness and inadvertence, on the basis of their generally faithful life.

Affirm: J. T. Smith or Eugene Britnell

Deny: John Welch or Keith Sharp

Now remember, **these are the propositions proposed by brother Welch**. I am unable to sign where John wants me to sign on the above propositions. Though I have not discussed this with brother Britnell I have discussed it with brother Spears and we have decided that we are willing to affirm and deny the following propositions.

**Resolved:** the Scriptures teach that Christians must repent of (turn away from) all of their sins, whether caused by weakness, inadvertence, or willfulness.

Affirm: J. T. Smith or Dudley Ross Spears

Deny: \_\_\_\_\_ Who will sign to deny?

**Resolved:** the Scriptures teach that Christians are continuously forgiven of their sins of weakness and inadvertence, on the basis of their generally faithful life.

Affirm: \_\_\_\_\_ Who will sign to affirm?

Deny: J. T. Smith or Dudley Ross Spears

These brethren remind me a blind man in a cellar at midnight looking for a black cat that isn't there.

Now someone may say, "But the above propositions that you and Dudley have agreed to affirm and deny are the same propositions that John and Keith wanted to affirm and deny." Ah, you are very perceptive. You see brethren, even though I detest having to deal with foolishness like this as our elders pointed out after reading the **Faith and Facts'** article, "though we know you do not hold that position, others who don't know you will probably think that you do because brother Welch represents you as believing it." If the **Faith and Facts** boys had just stated their position 20 years ago and gone on to other things there would never have been an issue about this in the first place. It would have died a natural death - and it should have. As I have told these brethren over and over again (but they refuse listen) there is not a gnat's whisker difference in what we all believe. That should be obvious from the fact that we can all affirm and deny the same propositions. We just don't say it like they think it ought to be said.

Anyway, this whole thing about continuous cleansing is just a "smoke screen." I say that because as John said in his July article, "At the beginning of the discussion we said that 'Continuous Cleansing,' the 'have-to-sin' issue, and the nature of the humanity/deity of Jesus were all linked together." Thus the crux of the matter is this. You either believe what John and company believe about the humanity/deity of Jesus or you are a Calvinist.

Now regarding the propositions that John set forth for me and Ward Hogland to affirm and deny. They are as follows:

**Resolved:** The Scriptures teach that it is possible for a child of God to live without sin, but that none of us do so.

Affirm: Keith Sharp

Deny: J. T. Smith or Ward Hogland

**Resolved:** The Scriptures teach that man does not have the ability to live without sin and that man has to sin in order to fulfill Scripture.

Affirm: J. T. Smith or Ward Hogland

Deny: Keith Sharp

In this connection I quote from brother Steve Cawthon's article in the March 1991 issue of *Gospel Truths* knowing that I am on safe ground with these brethren if I quote from Steve. "This is an ambiguous question. (The question of whether or not one has to sin - jts). Answer it with a simple 'yes' or 'no' and you're sure to be in trouble. Capable preachers and writers can prove by the Bible that you're a heretic no matter how you answer."

"Actually the question is not a difficult one. But it needs to be defined. The problem is that those who answer 'yes' have one definition in mind while those who answer 'no' are using an entirely different definition."

"...It is unfair to force someone into a 'yes or no' answer to an ambiguous question. How would you answer (with a simple 'yes or no') a question like, 'Are we saved by works?' If you say, 'Yes' you contradict Ephesians 2:9. If you say, 'No' you contradict James 2:24. You can't win with a simple answer to a complex question."

Brother Cawthon is correct. Some explanation must be made in reply to a number of questions instead of just a yes or no answer. And as Steve points out, the question of whether or not man has to sin is one of these questions. However the problem is, and as dishonest as it may make these brethren seem, you can tell them you don't believe that, or that is not what you said and they will continue telling folks that you do believe it in spite of your objection. I have not one ounce of confidence or respect for brethren who treat others in that fashion. Again I say, it is impossible to please these brethren. For unless you say it just like they think it ought to be said, you'll get propositions (unless you are kinfolks) and you'll never get them to believe that you are in agreement with their position regardless of what you say. **GT**

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**Editor's Meetings September**

**22-27 - McAlester, OK**

**October 13-18 - Steele, KY**

**20-25 - Lawrenceburg, KY**

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**Continued From Front Page**

"weak in the faith," whose consciences will not allow them to participate in things for which the Lord allows them liberty. For them to violate their conscience would be to sin (cf. Romans 14:23). We are to "receive" such persons, "but not to disputes over doubtful things" (Romans 14:1). His conscience may allow him to eat only herbs, while we know that God has made "all meats clean" (cf. Mark 7:19; I Timothy 4:3), but we must not "despise him." God will accept him, even with his scruples. Furthermore, the "weak" brother is cautioned against "judging" [i.e., condemning] the brother whose conscience is not as restrictive as his own (Romans 14:3-4). There are surely matters about which we must "let every man be Silly persuaded in his own mind" (Romans 14:3-5).

**Differences in levels of spiritual maturity must not be allowed to destroy the unity of the Spirit among us.** The "strong" are urged to "bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves" (Romans 15:1). Too many of us are only concerned about pleasing ourselves. We need to be more concerned about others. Must one be perfect [i.e., "agree with me in everything"] before I can accept him as a brother? If you find that you have difficulty accepting an imperfect brother, think about how imperfect you were when Christ accepted you!

On the other hand, "weakness" is no excuse for failing to try to conduct ourselves properly. We all have our weaknesses, and it is obvious that none of us can do any better than we know. But, "I'm doing the best I know how" is a lame excuse for ungodly behavior. It is not enough to "do the best we know how," if at the same time we are not doing our best to know what is best. "Let us then keep to this way of thinking, those of us who are mature. If there is any point on which you think differently, this also God will make plain to you. *Only let our conduct be consistent with the level we have already reached*" (Philippians 3:15-16, *New English Bible*, emphasis mine, jec).

**Differences in personalities must not be allowed to destroy the unity of the Spirit among us.** Brethren are sometimes upset if their favorite preacher is not in the pulpit. Some insist on a "dynamic preacher" with a sparkling personality. Timothy was not a Paul, but Paul wrote the Corinthians, saying: "See that he may be with you without fear; for he does the work of the Lord, as I do. Therefore, let no one despise him. But send him on his journey in peace, that he may come to me: for I am waiting for him with the brethren" (I Corinthians 16:10-11). Apollos was a man of eloquence (Acts 18:24), while some complained about Paul that "his letters are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible" (II Corinthians 10:10). Which one would you have wanted in the pulpit where you worship? Some today would have quickly given Paul his "walking papers," and asked the eloquent

Apollos to work with them.

Some preachers do better in the pulpit than in one-on-one situations, while with others it is the opposite. But, as long as they are "doing the work of the Lord," we should "despise" neither. Squabbling over preachers is evidence of carnality, not spirituality (I Corinthians 3:1-3). The proper attitude toward preachers is set forth in I Corinthians 4:1-6. We should look upon them as "servants of Christ" (4:1) who are striving to be faithful stewards (4:2). We must "not to think beyond what is written" (4:6). The spiritually immature are "tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men..." (Ephesians 4:14). We need to checkup on the preacher (cf. Acts 17:11) to see if what he teaches is so. Let us think more of God and His Word than we do of any man.

Differences in social status must not be allowed to destroy the unity of the Spirit among us. Social distinctions are removed in Christ. Before God, "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). The Lord's people must not allow themselves to be class conscious, and discriminate against people from different social circles. Onesimus was a runaway slave who had been converted by Paul. But when he was sent back to his master, Paul urged Philemon to receive him as he would the apostle himself: "as a beloved brother" (Philemon 10-18).

Not many years ago, after hearing me present a lesson based on James 2:1-13, a brother observed that churches of Christ now seem to appeal to the "upper middle class" in society. That is an unhealthy development. James teaches that when we discriminate against someone on the basis of superficial outward appearances [i.e., by his clothes, or the color of his skin, etc.], we "become judges with evil thoughts" (2:4). By such discrimination we "commit sin, and are convicted by the law as transgressors" (2:9). The particular law is the one which says, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself (Leviticus 19:18; cf. Matthew 22:37-40). We cannot possibly expect to have God's approval when we allow social differences to divide us.

Racial differences must not be allowed to destroy the unity of the Spirit among us. God removed racial barriers between Jew and Gentile; and, in principle, between all others. He has made "in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace" (Ephesians 2:14). When he came to Antioch of Syria, Peter ate at the same table with the Gentiles. However, when certain men came from Judea "he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision" (Galatians 2:11-12). Because his conduct influenced "the rest of the Jews," including even Barnabas, Paul withstood him to his face. God did not have one church for Jews and another for Gentiles. They were "all one in Christ" (Galatians 3:28). When will we learn that segregation

brought about by racial prejudice is a sin?

Sexual differences [i.e., **the feminist movement**] must not be allowed to destroy **the unity of the Spirit among us**. Women do not come to Christ by way of men, nor do men come through the women. Each individual, of either sex, has equal access to the blessings of Christ (cf. Galatians 3:28). Male or female, "through Christ" we all have "access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:2).

This does not mean that a woman becomes a man, or that a man becomes a woman. Their respective sexual roles remain the same. Men can never become mothers and women can never become fathers! The God-established relationship between male and female remains the same (cf. I Corinthians 11:3). The husband is to be the head of the wife (Ephesians 5:23), and the wife is required to submit to her own husband (Ephesians 5:22). Still, there is much that women can do in the service of the Lord. A woman doesn't have to stand in the pulpit and preach, or serve as an elder, in order to have value in the work of Christ. She can be a Phoebe, who was commended as a "servant of the church which is in Cenchreae" (Romans 16:1-2). One of the greatest services a woman could perform today would be to "admonish the younger women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed" (Titus 2:3-5).

In spite of all these differences, we must all cultivate that disposition of mind which will enable us "with one mind and one mouth" to "glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 15:6).

*We must cultivate attitudes that will promote unity.* The apostle Paul lists several essential characteristics in Ephesians 4:1-3 and Colossians 3:13-14:

Lowliness of mind. This "includes a low estimate of one's self, founded on the consciousness of guilt and weakness, and a consequent disposition to be low, unnoticed, and unpraised. It stands opposed not only to self-complacency and self-conceit, but also to self-exaltation, and setting one's self up to attract honor which comes from men" (Charles Hodge, Commentary, 199). Paul urges everyone of us, "not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think" (Romans 12:3).

Gentleness. This is "softness, mildness, which when united with strength is one of the loveliest attributes of our nature." Meekness is that "unresisting, uncomplaining disposition of mind, which enables us to bear without irritation or resentment the faults and injuries of others" (Hodge, *ibid.*, 200). Jesus described Himself as "*meek and lowly in heart*" (Matthew 11:29). Maintaining unity among God's people requires us to be meek.

Long suffering. The word refers to the willingness to suffer long. It is "self-restraint which does not hastily

retaliate a wrong" (Thayer). If one has this trait, he will endure much before "losing his cool." Reflecting upon his own salvation, the former "chief of sinners" observed that he had obtained mercy, "that in me first Jesus Christ might show all *long-suffering*, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life" (I Timothy 1:16). Along with long-suffering is the trait of *forbearance*. We are to "bear with one another in love" (Ephesians 4:2). This word literally means, "to bear with; to endure." The idea is that our love for one another causes us to endure one each other's imperfections.

**Compassion**, literally "bowels of mercy," indicates that we have deep feelings for one another. The NKJ renders the phrase, "tender mercies."

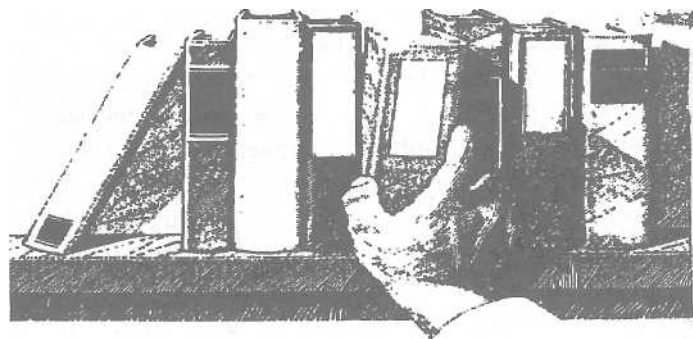
**Kindness** is the opposite of harshness, sharpness and bitterness. One will not be kind unless he can truly be sympathetic with another. Kindness will result in expressions of good will toward one another.

**Forgiveness** has reference to the "inclination to forgive or pardon" (Webster). To forgive is "to give up resentment against or the desire to punish" another. Too often we make unreasonable demands of others before we are willing to forgive them. "If anyone has a complaint against another," let us forgive "even as Christ forgave" us (Colossians 3:13). Jesus pointed out that those who are unwilling to forgive others will remain unforgiven themselves (Matthew 6:14-15).

It is only when we cultivate these personal character traits that we will be successful in maintaining the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. We can firmly and faithfully proclaim the Lord's prayer for unity (John 17:20-21), Paul's plea for unity (I Corinthians 1:10) and the seven-plank platform for unity (Ephesians 4:4-6), but until we manifest the attitudes emphasized by the apostle (Ephesians 4:1-3) we will fail to be united as the Lord wants us to be. Let us resolve to be what Christ would have us to be, and to do what He would have us to do. Let us put forth every possible effort to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

GT

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## Book Reviews by Dudley Ross Spears

(Books that are to be reviewed in *Gospel Truths* should be sent to Dudley Ross Spears, 2081 Old Scottsville Road, Alvaton, KY. 42122-9717.)

A fairly recent addition to published helps in daily Bible reading from Kenny Chumbly and Mike Schmidt rates a very high mark. It is published monthly and has easy to use guidelines. Each month has a special topic for study with a preview of what is on tap for the next month.

For information on subscriptions, write to "Running the Race," Route 2, Box 134, Gibson City, IL. 60936, or call (217) 749-2331. It might prove a good investment to help you discipline your daily Bible reading and study.

### From Eerdmans —

**The New Century Bible Commentary** continues to be issued by Eerdmans. The offering submitted for this review is the commentary on **Lamentations**. It is written by Iain Provan, lecturer in Hebrew and Old Testament Studies at the University of Edinburgh. He has written several other commentaries on Old Testament books.

**Lamentations** may be one of those books often overlooked. It is short, appears to have a rather depressing message (judging from the title alone), and doesn't have a lot in it to attract those who love controversial issues. But it is a wonderful work from the pen of an inspired prophet, sometimes known as "the weeping prophet."

Provan does not provide stock in trade answers to textual interpretation. He offers several possible ways of understanding the prophet's lament over the sad condition of his beloved Jerusalem. The interpretation in this commentary provides more help and less personal position. The student of **Lamentations** will benefit from the excellent material presented on a basic problem all humanity experiences - human suffering. It is not only a good study of man, it provides provocative insights into the nature and personality of the Almighty.

Eerdmans publishes this in paper back. It may be purchased from any religious book store including **Religious Supply Center**, Louisville, Kentucky, 1-800-626-5348.

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# Anent the Current Welch and Company Campaign

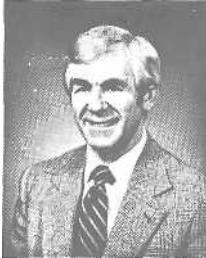
by Dudley Ross Spears

**F**AITH and Facts, a journal edited by Robert C. Welch, and published by John Welch, claims to be tiring of what the publisher calls "fratricidal wars." Publisher Welch and company have been in their own declared fratricidal war for over a decade. Beginning with the infamous "Sowing Dragon's Teeth" debacle, that journal has engaged in this slug fest of "hurling insults" at gospel preachers with very little interruption. You might say they have waged a continual besmirching campaign against "the brethren." Read over whatever back issues you can find and count the articles which attribute some unwholesome view to "my brethren." And apparently they are just warming up to their "mother of all battles."

In the July offering of **Faith and Facts** the publisher has thrown down the gauntlet and wants a debate which involves several of the notables in recent controversies ranging from "continual cleansing," to the view that "man has to sin," and whether Jesus was 100 percent man and 100 percent God while He lived here on earth. Welch (publisher) says out of one side of his word processor that he wants a fair and equitable arrangement for debate and out of the other side issues false allegations repeatedly against those he lovingly calls brethren.

Publisher Welch has been reading something that has led him to conclude that "these brethren are taking the position that Jesus was not a man." Now really, John! Then Welch adds, "They are teaching that he overcame sin by his deity." Anyone so deluded as to think Welch could verify these allegations has reached the fullness of delusion. If John Welch does not know this is false and misleading, he is not worth even considering as a debate opponent.

Welch wants to debate Gene Frost; wants Keith Sharp to debate everyone else. Welch wants Sharp to debate J.T. Smith because J.T. Smith agreed with an article I wrote. But he says, "Brother Spears decries oral debate, while brother Smith has made a point of avowing it." Publishers ought to be much more careful in their use of terms. Decry means literally "to cry down." It means to denounce, to condemn. Welch took this from a statement I made when he offered me the opportunity to meet him in debate. I declined. But decry? Welch knows that I have offered to meet Wayne Greeson in public debate anywhere, any time. I just have no interest in tangling with John Welch in public debate. But decry? I thought John Welch could do better than that, but apparently



I was wrong.

Welch links issues - but he also is good at linking everything else. He links J.T. Smith to everything I have had to say on the question of continual cleansing. He offers J.T. Smith a proposition to deny which says that Christians must repent of all their sins, whether caused by weakness, inadvertence, or willfulness. If Welch can get Smith to sign that proposition in the negative, I will sign the affirmative and I will debate J.T. (Decry John?) Is this the John Welch who wants to be fair with "reasonably unrestrictive" propositions? He would have his readers believe that this would contribute to a "wonderful week of Bible study." It will never even take place with the propositions offered by Welch and company.

*Welch has been told repeatedly* that my relationship to *Gospel Truths* is limited to typing manuscript articles into usable form so that J.T. Smith, the one and only editor of that paper, can then edit them. But Welch says that I am a "major factor in the preparation and publication" of *Gospel Truths*. My role is far from being major, even in preparation - but it is nil in regards to publication of the paper. *Gospel Truths* has one editor and publisher, J.T. Smith. Maybe John should read my lips.

He imagines up a menagerie of fellowships involving Gene Frost, Maurice Barnett, and me. He opines that there has been private correspondence among us in which ideas are shared and avers that those are shut out who tolerate the current **Faith and Facts** position on the nature of Christ on earth. He claims that Frost has invited me to write on the nature of Jesus. And since I have had articles on this question (and a number of others) published in **Gospel Anchor**, and since I am a notorious "continual cleanser," Frost, and all who are associated with Frost, are secretly in league with me, according to the misinformation Welch holds. The facts are that **Faith and Facts** represents a group of writers who generally hold the very same views Welch has been spreading around since March 1990. Their lectureships are filled with only those with whom they have general agreement. Would it be fair to say that Welch, and all who write for his paper have a sense of fellowship among them and that those of us who oppose what John has to say about Jesus are excluded? Has Welch invited anyone to write on the nature of Christ who differs with Him? Do all those whose names appear in **Faith and Facts** hold identical views with John? I am described as a "prolific writer and teacher" on the

question he calls "continuous cleansing." Welch is remiss again in his use of words. Prolific? Rabbits are prolific producers of little rabbits. Prolific does not describe my writing on the question of continual cleansing. If brother Welch is ready to start counting, I will enter a simple contest with him. Count the articles that he has written against his warped view of the continuous cleansing question and I will count the ones I have written. "Prolific" John? That assessment by the publisher is about as accurate as his use of the word decay.

I believe the following proposition -1 offer it to the good publisher in hopes that he will either hush me or correct me or hush himself- one of the three.

Resolved: I John 1:7 teaches conditional continuous cleansing for those who walk in the light of God.

Everyone knows John Welch, and his ilk, will never deny such a proposition. If he or any of them do, he ought not be too sensitive to the term "heretic," or "party." His comrade and confidant, Keith Sharp, is not reluctant to apply the term heresy — especially to those who are not his relatives. The above proposition represents what I have written in the few (not "many," John) articles that touch the topic. Never have I taught or written that sins are automatically covered by one who has a generally spiritual life. Never have I even considered any kind of automatic forgiveness. Consistently I have argued, and still will, that cleansing from all sin is conditional. But Welch cannot answer this, thus he constructs a position he thinks he can handle.

Publisher Welch seeks to link this with the "have to sin" issue, and the nature of Jesus. He has consistently and continuously done this. Had it not been for the articles John Welch has written, and the sermon he preached in Shively, Kentucky in the spring of 1990, no one who thinks straight should have ever linked the idea that one can theoretically live a completely sinless life with Jesus as 100 percent God and 100 percent man while in the flesh. That link comes from the labored efforts of John Welch to prove his contention that a mere man can live a sinless life. John may be right. I doubt that he is. But one thing is certain. He did not need to go to the extremities he did in arguing that Jesus was "just a man, an ordinary guy." He did not need to argue that Jesus actually doubted that He was God's son when Satan tempted Him. He did not need to argue that Jesus was actually afraid to die and unsure of what would happen after His death on the cross. But those are things Welch preached quite boldly and are on publicly distributed tape recordings of his sermon.

Welch claims that he has corrected misstatements. To this good minute, what he has corrected is a mystery. He claims that he has been mistreated by those who continue to refer to what he says he has retracted. Yet he is vague and evasive on just exactly what he retracted. So now is a good time to clear the air. If publisher Welch believes that Jesus was fully

God and fully man while in the flesh, why does he differ with what Donald Townsley wrote about Jesus' omnipresence? Why did he use what I wrote on Christ's omnipresence as bait for Gene Frost to debate?

Let publisher Welch tell his readers plainly that he believes Jesus was fully God and fully man with all the unrestricted and unlimited essential qualities of both deity and humanity. When he does, if he can find something about that to debate, and someone who wants to debate him, a debate might be in order. Until he does, John Welch is just paddling with one oar in a very small pond.

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## Correction

Some time back a clerical error was made in an article written by Dick Poplin. The article read: "All of these except the NIV sound as though James is being called at apostle. In the NIV, it could be understood to mean (and with that in mind, possibly the others also) that Paul saw no other apostles but Peter. He also saw James the Lord's brother Galatians 1:18 lends plausibility to this interpretation. Of the apostles, he saw Peter, but in addition to seeing Peter, of the apostles he saw James, son of Zebedee and brother of John, not James the less, son of Alphaeus (Matthew 19:3; Mark 15:40). The brothers of Jesus are named in Matthew 13:55 and Mark 6:3 as James, Joses, Simon, and Judas."

It should have read:

"All of these except the NIV sound as though James is being called an apostle. IN the NIV, it should be understood to mean that no apostles other than Peter were seen (see Galatians 1:18) and he also saw James, the Lord's brother.

"James the Lord's brother was neither of the James in the list of the original twelve - James son of Zebedee and brother of John nor James the less, son of Alphaeus. The brothers of Jesus are named in Matthew 13:55 and Mark 6:3 as James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas."

We are sorry for the error.

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# Reviewing Brother Hailey's Book - Part 6

by Bill Robinson, Jr.

(Please note: All quotations in this manuscript which are noted only by the page numbers) in parenthesis are taken from **The Divorced And Remarried Who Would Come To God**, by Homer Hailey, published by Nevada Publications, 1991.)

Brother Hailey argues his position from the obscurity of the moral law under the Old Testament as it applied to the Gentile. We are astounded that brother Hailey argues extensively from the precepts and words of a law which he admits has not been revealed or expressed (page 58). How can any man know so much about things that are not revealed? (Deuteronomy 29:29). He further compounds his error by taking principles from the Mosaic Law and arbitrarily applying them to passages in the New Testament.



He fails to see, as we pointed out in the previous article, that Deuteronomy 24:1-4, is merely contingency legislation - that is a law given to regulate a practice already in existence (compare the translation of the passage in the New International Version and the New American Standard Bible). It is clear that the passage is not instituting divorce as an acceptable alternative to the divine intent for the permanency of marriage but rather divorce is treated as a practice already existent in Israel.

This fact becomes increasingly clear in Matthew 19 in the exchange between the Lord and the Pharisees over the question "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" (verse 3). The Lord in his reply took them back to creation, the beginning of marriage and concluded with "What therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder" (verses 5,6). Not satisfied with the divine ideal, the Pharisees raised a question in defence of the practice of divorce under Moses' law (in particular Deuteronomy 24:1-4) asking, "Why then did Moses command to give a bill of divorcement, and to put her away?" (verse 7). Jesus responds by saying that Moses tolerated the practice of divorce but not without regulating it. Consequently, it is clear from Jesus' answer that Moses' legislation neither preceded nor instituted the practice of divorce - the legislation came after the practice of divorce and the practice grew out of their hardness of heart toward the divine ideal which was expressed from the beginning (verse 8). We bid brother Hailey, in this matter of appealing to Old Testament perversions as proof of his position, to give heed to his own stricture, "A distinction

must be made between a thing allowed and divine approval, between toleration and sanction." (page 21).

Brother Hailey has taken us to new depths in his systematic theology and reconstruction of the New Testament teaching on divorce and remarriage. He would have us believe that adultery means covenant breaking and that the sexual act is not under consideration in the word adultery (page 57,72).

Brother Jerry Bassett, who agrees with brother Hailey's position, has penned the greatest understatement regarding our amazement at this new definition of the word adultery in Matthew 19:9 by saying,

"This form of non-sexual adultery may be new to the thinking of most of us. It is however, exactly what Jesus described" (**Rethinking Marriage Divorce & Remarriage**, page 77).

No "may be" about it - it is new! However, we object to such new thinking not because it is new but because it is anti-scriptural (without and against any contextual evidence of the Scriptures), much less it is presented without any reputable lexical evidence. We cited scriptural evidence in our last article showing that the word may be used figuratively. Even so, such usage has its figure represented in the unlawful sexual act. Consequently, when the word is used figuratively it is because the literal act fitly represents the relationship under consideration (see **A Commentary On The Minor Prophets**, by Homer Hailey, page 141).

This heretical view of adultery plunges its proponents deeper and deeper into error. If adultery is nothing more than covenant breaking then there is no such thing as living in adultery, according to them. However, brother Hailey doesn't discuss the passage that talks about living in adultery, namely, Colossians 3:5-7 and other related passages like I Timothy 5:6. However, shunning such passages is no mystery it is a necessity for those who teach such error (Matthew 22:29).

## V. Repentance

We offer the following definitions on the word "repentance." "The word that expresses the biblical concept of repentance is *sub* [Hebrew - b.r.]. This verb is found over a thousand times in the OT, with a wide range of meanings. However, in the 164 uses of this word in a covenant context, it indicates turning from evil to God, from evil ways to God's ways, or from God to idols. *Sub* is that commitment to a faith

and way of life that involves turning from a previous way, and this is to 'repent.'" (**Expository Dictionary Of Bible Words**, Lawrence O. Richards, page 522). Vine says of the New Testament word "*metanoeo*" which is translated *repent* that it "signifies 'to change one's mind or purpose,' always in the NT, involving a change for the better, an amendment and always, except in Luke 17:3,4, of 'repentance' from sin." (**An Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words**, Unger & White editors, published by Nelson).

Brother Hailey is correct when he wrote:

"Repentance is a major argument used against my position. It is argued that a couple who has been divorced and remarried is living in an adulterous relationship" (page 71).

For clarification we note that the above quote is correct to the extent that we are talking about unscriptural divorce and subsequent remarriage. For we clearly believe that one who puts away their mate for the cause of fornication has a right to remarry another who has never been married before, or whose spouse has died, or who has put away their mate for the cause of fornication. Otherwise, all subsequent remarriages constitute adultery (Matthew 19:9; Luke 16:18; Romans 7:1-3).

In order for brother Hailey's position to be a correct answer he must prove two things: 1) That there is no such thing as living in adultery; 2) That repentance does not demand a separation. Conversely, if we are correct we must prove: 1) That there is such a thing as living in adultery; 2) That repentance does demand a separation. We have answered brother Hailey from the Scriptures on the first point (see the article last month and the brief review in this article above). We shall proceed in like manner with the second point.

#### A. What Does Repentance Demand?

The writer begins by giving us a definition of repentance saying (please note that all emphasis are the writer's),

"Repentance is a change of mind or will. Jesus spoke a parable about a man who had two sons: 'and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work today in the vineyard. And he answered and said, *I will not*: but afterward he *repented* himself, and went" (Matt. 21:28-29). Clearly, the son's repentance was a change of will. He first said, 'I will not'; he then repented (changed his will) and went, thus bringing his will into subjection to the father's will." (page 71)

Brother Hailey needs to have done only two things differently to make this a more accurate picture of repentance. He should have emphasized the word "went" in Matthew 21:29 and he should have inserted his parenthetical "(changed his will)" following our suggested emphasis on the word "went". The reason we suggest this is that there could never have been true repentance on the part of the son without the "went" in the passage. For, true repentance always results in an amendment to one's life. Nonetheless, brother Hailey's statement "he then repented (changed his will) and went, thus bringing his will into subjection to the father's will"

satisfies the biblical concept of repentance, as long as we understand the need for the word "went." For a person to repent who is guilty of adultery, (in such remarriages as under consideration in this review), they like the son in the parable must have a change of will and go ("went") - that is they must leave (quit/abandon) their sin and go do that which is right.

Brother Hailey's position is tied neatly together as seen in the following list of quotes from his own words.

1. "The sin [the adultery - br] was in breaking the covenant by the wife (or husband) in order to marry another and not in a 'continuous sexual adulterous condition.'" (page 72)

2. "To demand that a remarried divorced couple break their marriage covenant on the basis of repentance rests on their assumption that their marriage is 'an adulterous marriage' or that 'they are continuing to live in adultery.'" (page 71-72)

3. "Therefore repentance [of adultery - br] demands that they do not break such a covenant again." (page 72)

Brother Hailey's failure to apply his accurate definition of repentance is a consequence of his false assertion and arbitrary definition on the word adultery. Namely, that adultery means *covenant breaking*. We remind you that such arbitrary definitions are but a fulfillment of the words of yesteryear that "Every heresy in the church writes its own dictionary." Jesus made it clear that "Every one that putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth one that is put away from a husband committeth adultery" (Luke 16:18). Jesus said adultery is committed when a person who puts away (for some other cause that fornication) their mate and marries another; or when one who is put away marries. In either case, adultery is committed upon remarriage and not in the act of putting away. In which case the marriage has to be repented of (change of will that leads to a reformation of life) in order to cease from the sin of adultery resulting from that marriage.

Brother Hailey's position that one can continue to live in adultery after baptism is destroyed by his own appeal to the Scriptures on repentance. We have already shown that one can live in adultery prior to baptism (Colossians 3:5-7; I Corinthians 6:9-11). Our question is how does one living in adultery (which all agree that adultery is a violation of God's Will) before or after baptism repent of the sin? Repentance is not simply saying I am sorry. Brother Hailey admits that, for the son who repented in the parable "changed his will *and went*, thus bringing his will into subjection to the father's will." In other words, how would one who commits adultery "change his will and bring his/her will into subjection to the Father's will"? The answer is obvious. The same way the son repented of his rebellion - he changed his will - left his rebellious condition and went and did that which was right. He didn't just say "I am sorry of my rebellion and I'll never do it again" and leave it at that. He went from his rebellious state and began living right - he brought his will into

subjection to the father's will.

The alien sinner who steals a car and is subsequently taught the truth and obeys the gospel has no more right to keep the car after he is baptized than a man has a right to keep the woman with whom he commits adultery in remarriage prior to his baptism. This illustration compares the individual's relationship to sin and not the differences in the sin (adultery vs. stealing). The fact is true repentance is not effected until one abandons the sin and reforms his/her life with respect to sin of which he is repenting whether it be lying, stealing, adultery, etc.

We are in agreement with our writer and wish to be just as emphatic that penance "is a demand that God nowhere makes!" (page 72). However, brother Hailey thinks that to demand separation of two people living in adultery is to be guilty of "penance." In view of this we are forced to ask, when has righting a wrong ever been penance in the Bible? Was it "penance" that the son did when afterward he changed his mind and went — that is, when he stopped doing the wrong thing (rebellion) and went (i.e. "bringing his will into subjection to the Father's will")?

Was it penance or repentance that those new converts practiced, who were formerly practitioners of sorcery and idolatry, when they went and "brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all" (Acts 19:18-19)? The Bible further tells us they counted up the price of the books and found them to be worth 50,000 pieces of silver (Acts 19:19). No doubt the world of the occult watched in horror believing that the burning of such valuable books was an awful penalty to pay to be a Christian. However, to those newly converted Christians they recognized that it was not penance (penalty) but a change of will that resulted in a reformation of life bringing their will into subjection the will of Christ. It was repentance which demanded a decisive break from their continuing practice of idolatry.

### **1. David's Adultery**

Brother Hailey likes to run to David's adultery to justify his position which condones adultery. However, as in our fourth article, we will again show that his appeal to David proves too much. He writes:

"Surely no one would deny that David repented, yet he was permitted to keep the woman as his wife. Repentance did not demand that she be put away or that the two live apart for the remainder of their lives..." (page 73)

Now let's see just what is brother Hailey's book allegedly trying to prove? Let's hear him again on the matter:

"Does God require those who were married, divorced and remarried while in the world and who would obey the gospel to separate after they become Christians; or does he accept their marriage as lawful? I believe that He accepts them without requiring their separation and I shall show the reasons why." (page 9)

We represent brother Hailey both clearly and fairly when

we charge him with teaching that the alien sinner is not amenable to the law of Christ, especially with regard to divorce and remarriage. Was David an unbeliever/alien? In fact he has this whole thing out of order and before it is all over brother Hailey is going to have both the alien and Christians with the right to "divorce at will" and remarry. This is the very point we made in our first article.

Consistency is going to demand that brother Hailey's doctrine apply to both alien and Christian alike. Or else, brother Hailey is going to have to cease his special pleading with the example of David and Bathsheba to justify the alien sinner because he is mixing apples and oranges. On the one hand, brother Hailey is insistent that the alien (in both the Old and New Testament dispensations) were not under the those respective covenants and so the covenant law cannot apply to them. Then with the other hand, he summons forth an example of adultery committed by one in covenant relationship with God to justify the alien sinner (one who is not in covenant relationship)! Yet, it is brother Hailey who condemns us for bringing the alien sinner under Matthew 19:9 which according to him is applicable only to those in covenant relationship. Something has gone awry but so it is with the best laid plans of mice and men!

Brother Hailey's attempt to justify the alien sinner with the example of one who is in a covenant relationship raises a nagging question, which further exposes the absurdity of his position. What law governs the marriage between a Christian and an alien? Can the alien in such a marriage commit adultery and be put away for it with the right to remarry but the Christian cannot? Indeed what a tangled web we weave...

### **B. I Corinthians 6:9-11 and other related passages**

"Or know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God" (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

On the basis of this passage, Brother Hailey is forced to admit that "fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, etc. would not inherit the kingdom of God in that condition..." (page 66). Observe our writer's phrase, "in that condition". What condition is that brother Hailey? Clearly he would answer in the condition of fornication, the condition of adultery, the condition of idolatry.

Now what does "in that condition mean"? The word condition is defined: "The particular mode or state of being of a person or thing" (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, page 277). Accordingly then, brother Hailey is saying that those in 1 Corinthians 6:9 were in the "state of being (in that condition) adulterers." That trans-

lates rather plainly to mean living in adultery and one would have to have expert help to misunderstand that. Nonetheless, our writer continues to press, "Where did God ever speak of unbelievers who are now believers as 'living in adultery'?" (page 66). We answer, in the same place where He said that they were "in that condition."

Let's pursue our brother's arguments further. In reference to 1 Corinthians 6:11, he writes:

"a justified person is one who is accounted righteous by faith in Christ. Furthermore, Paul said, 'Let each man abide in that calling wherein he was called...Brethren, let each man, wherein he was called, therein abide with God' (I Cor. 7:20,24); this included his answer to questions about marriage. Someone will ask if we mean to say they may continue in an adulterous marriage? This begs the question. Where did God ever speak of unbelievers who are now believers as 'living in adultery?' It must be proved by scripture that God considers such remarried non-believers, who through faith come to the blood of Christ, are living in an adulterous state.?" (page 66)

We are not begging the question. We borrow from brother Hailey's own words and note that he states that there were some "in that condition" which means a state of being. State of being what? The state of being adulterous. Not only has the writer's position been unable to stand in the light of divine Scriptures but his own words condemn him.

Who is begging the question? It is brother Hailey who runs from chapter 6 to chapter 7 of I Corinthians and assumes that those under consideration in 7:20,24 are remarried people. Until brother Hailey can prove that such remarriages, which he is defending, are under consideration in I Corinthians 7 he is begging the question. Think about it...the letter of I Corinthians was written to the church at Corinth that is those in covenant relationship with God and brother Hailey is appealing to it to justify the alien which he says is not amenable to the New Covenant. As Alice would say, "Curiouser and curiouser."

Again, as noted earlier, brother Hailey is faced with the dilemma in trying to deal with the divorces of mixed marriages (that is marriages between Christians and non-Christians). He is either going to have to say it is a sin to marry a Christian or he is going to have to say that a put away fornicator who is a Christian can remarry. He already says the alien can practice such ungodliness. Why not the Christian?

Brother Hailey doesn't like his position being put to the test by the question of homosexual marriages for he cries, "We are discussing marriage, not the abominations of homosexuality." (page 66) Our respected friend and scholar of the Old Testament needs to be reminded that adultery is condemned as an abomination in the same passage that homosexuality, bestiality and incest are also (see Leviticus 18:6-30, see verses 19-23 in particular). We might also add as an aside

that Jehovah said that it was for these very sins that the heathen nations (non-covenant people) were to be destroyed from off the land. Yet, brother Hailey wants us to believe that non-covenant people were not under a law that condemned adultery. If that is so, we wonder why God would charge them with defiling the land through such deeds?

The gist of brother Hailey's argument is simply this. That if we could prove that aliens are "living in an adulterous state" then repentance would demand that they separate. Well, we have proved it from the Scriptures and by brother Hailey's own words. We accept it. The question is will he accept it and cease from "perverting the right way of the Lord" and seek His forgiveness? This is our prayer for him. (Next month we will deal with Christ and his jurisdiction over the alien sinner).

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# ???Training Elders for the Future???

by Loren T. Stephens



Many times emphasize the need to train preachers and teachers, but what about the men who will one day serve the church as its elders? Should they be trained as young men to prepare them for the greatest of all responsibilities the Lord has for men on the earth? There are many churches today struggling to function without qualified leaders, men who are qualified by God's standards. Some of these congregations have elders in oversight who are totally unqualified for one or more reasons, and some of these simply do not have elders. Either circumstance is shameful for congregations which have existed for several years. Generally, they are just existing, keeping house for the Lord, as the saying is. All congregations not having elders are short of the mark God has set for them, but not all of these are inactive, just not all that God would have them be.

The Jere Whitson Road congregation, where I labor, does not at the present time have an eldership overseeing it. We don't plan to stay that way, nor do we subscribe to the dangerous position of elders at all cost. We have begun and recently completed a series of classes for our young couples, married with children, and any others and their wives who are interested in serving the Lord's church in the future as elders. It being a package deal, there is no such thing as a qualified elder without a qualified wife at his side, we planned and carried out the classes with both husband and wife in attendance, but without any of the children present to distract from the efforts of the class. Our intent is to advise and prepare our young men and women concerning the expectations of the Word of God regarding their lives as children of His, so that they will be better prepared to avoid the pitfalls of Satan and when they mature, they will be qualified, as well as mature.

Some today are teaching that there is no such thing as an appointed office called variously elder, presbyter, shepherd, bishop, or overseer. Two passages of Scripture simply and forevermore eliminate that line of reasoning, if one is honest. Acts 14:23 says, "And when they had ordained them elders in every church ..." That passage tells that men were ordained (selected, appointed, chosen) to a certain thing, an elder, the word signifying a position or office. Can a man be "selected" to be older? Can he be "appointed" to be older? Honest common sense does away with that whole false doctrine with the examination of this one verse. But look also

at II Corinthians 8:19, where Paul uses the same word, which is rendered "chosen" instead of "ordained." "And not that only, but who was chosen of the churches to travel with us ..." This brother Paul speaks of was not selected to continue something he already was doing, he was selected to travel, set aside for a special task, not just designated a traveler because he was already one. That setting aside to a special function is precisely what happened in Acts 14:23! Same word, same point, case closed.



Going on now with the preparation of young people toward this God-ordained privilege, we had a brief study of the qualifications given for the office by the One who ordained it. We studied I Timothy 3 and Titus 1 and 1, to refresh our minds as to the meanings of the words used there. We did not dwell there, though, for most Christians are hopefully aware of these definitions. The place where understanding seems to run away is in the realm of application... what do each of these qualities have to do with functioning as an elder? On examination, we found that most of the currently available teaching material ignored for the most part this particular question, choosing to deal with lengthy definitions and such, with very little, if any, practical applications presented.

Wanting to train people for the duties ahead of them, we made some preparations of our own, and set about carrying out our plan. The Lord will be left to know the outcome, but we had a shot at trying to help our young people prepare. Because there was no specific material found with which to have this class, we are sending this article to hopefully be of assistance to other congregations in doing this all-important job.

First of all, we prepared some hand-outs for the participants. The one on top was probably the most important, for it told them that by openly participating in such a class, they were announcing to the world their intent to qualify for the eldership, and in so doing, they would be giving up their "private lives," people would be observing them for the rest of their lives, noticing how and where mistakes might be made or being extra critical of their maturing as Christians. Emphasis was placed here at the beginning so that they would begin to realize the kind of commitment God requires of them.

The second step in the series was to prepare a listing of information for a fictitious congregation, giving names and biological identities to the members and their families in this "make-believe" church. Then using this list of people as the functional basis, each class period saw the selection (arbitrarily) of two of the men present to be "elders for the next class. Sometime between the classes, morning, noon, night, or later, one of those people, or more, in the "congregation" would phone one or both "elders," or their wife or wives, with a problem in need of the attention of the elders. Great effort was made to use real problems encountered by elders in functioning churches during the past several years. These young men then would meet together and examine the problem they were confronted with, and with that scenario before them, try to work out the problem, using the "qualifications" to guide their decisions. The class leader would then present the "problem" to the entire class, and the "elders" in turn offered their solutions. Then group discussions followed regarding the decisions, the problems, and questions which arose from them.

We had eight classes this way, and twenty members to participate, which really pleased everyone. Time will be the telling factor, for all we can do it teach. The growth and maturity required for such is entirely up to the individuals involved. We do believe that the church must be busy training and teaching specifically toward having good men and women for this responsible office and as the wife of the man in the office. They do not become qualified by accident.

We don't have anything to sell, but if you'd like a copy of the things we put together, we'd be most happy to send it to you.

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## A Reply to Louis E. Mullen

by Vernon Love

**I**N the May 1991 issue of *Gospel Truths*, Louis E. Mullen wrote an article entitled, "Are 80 % of Our Preachers Going to Hell?" I have not an axe to grind with the author as I do not know him nor does he know me. But, it seems he may have an axe to grind with some preachers by the conclusions he reached in the article.

Mr. Mullen quotes James 3:1 but leaves out an important part of the passage. "Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment" (ASV). When Mr. Mullen quoted it, he left out "my brethren: and set out to try to prove it is the "preachers" who are mostly doing the teaching in the brotherhood. This passage was written to "brethren: and is not limited only to preachers. If you will read the epistle of James, you will find the term "brethren" used fifteen times or more and not once can you say it applies only to "preachers." It includes all the members of the church.

Mr. Mullen tries to prove that it is the "supported preachers" who do most of the teaching so they need to be most concerned with this passage. I do not know how he learned this as that certainly is not the case in the several states I have lived and preached. In every congregation I have been associated with, many brethren have been teaching the word of God in Bible classes both at the building and in homes. They also worked full time jobs to make a living. I believe they are as much concerned about James 3:1 as any "supported preacher."

One would think that Mr. Mullen has traveled far and wide and has made a survey of "preachers" and the work they are doing. Or, perhaps he sent a questionnaire so he could come to the conclusion that "80% of our preachers are going to hell." But this is not the case. On page 8, he says, "Unfortunately, this writer and others sense a growing tendency toward this type of 'men pleasing' teaching and preaching in the brotherhood today." We wonder how many preachers Mr. Mullen personally knows. We also wonder how he would know they are being "only men pleasers."

Mr. Mullen also speaks of "preachers and teachers who always do "positive" preaching, seldom get excited or visibly concerned while preaching or teaching, seldom or never preach on the obvious sins in the congregation, "that being a member of the church of Christ and right on the issues

will save their souls." If he knows of one preacher or teacher like this, he should do as the apostle Paul. When Paul found that Peter and Barnabas were not "straight forward about the truth of the gospel," he "opposed them to their face" (Galatians 2:11,14).

Mr. Mullen sets out to condemn preachers who are not working to save souls. We have no disagreement with his conclusions from Ezekiel 3:17-21 or Acts 20:28-31. It is obvious that this is the work of preachers, elders, and members to "preach the whole counsel of God and warn souls." However, to say "80% of our preachers" are not doing this without any proof is what we are objecting to in this article.

In the next to the last paragraph we are told where Mr. Mullen got all his information about the "preachers" in the brotherhood. He makes the bold claim that "only a small majority of our preachers" are working even reasonably diligently to save souls." There are several preachers who travel and hold a lot of meetings among our brethren that would not say this. Mr. Mullen lets the "cat out of the bag" when he tells us how he learned this startling fact. "The 80% figure in the article's title came from a *discussion* between this writer and a relative." (Emphasis is mine, VL). Then he said, "We estimated, based on our *limited knowledge*, (emphasis is mine, VL) that about 10% were working diligently to save souls and another 10% to 20% were doing so some of the time but not consistently."

How can any two people know what 80% of our preachers are doing in the brotherhood? How can they know what 10% to 20% are doing with "limited knowledge?"

This kind of a conclusion is based on "limited personal knowledge" and is just that, "limited," and therefore is not true. When Paul opposed Peter to his face, it was based upon truth and not what Paul "sensed" or from a "discussion" with a relative from "limited knowledge." This kind of conclusion comes up in business meetings when some of the brethren have decided the preacher needs to move on. Some one will say "We do not know what he is doing" or "what has he done since he has been here?" The obvious conclusion that is supposed to be reached by all is that since they do not know what the preacher is doing, then he must not be doing anything and therefore needs to be fired.

Mr Mullen and his relative and others like him should be spending their time reading the rest of James 3 and learn how to control the "tongue." This kind of judgment which is based upon little or no facts has no place in the Lord's kingdom. God will decide who will go to Hell and will not send anyone there on "limited knowledge."

## 80% Going to Hell?

by David Posey

**I** have already written brother Mullen on two occasions, voicing my extreme objection to the tone and much (not all) of the content of his article (Are 80% of Our Preachers Going to Hell?, *Gospel Truths*, May 1991). Brother Mullen responded to the first but has not (yet) responded to the second.

My correspondence with brother Mullen convinces me that he probably does not realize that he bit off much more than he was prepared to chew when he wrote his article. I've never met the brother and I suspect he's probably a nice fellow who got a little carried away. But the attitude he manifests in his article may be one that reflects the thinking of other brethren and, frankly, that scares me.

Because he responded to my first letter, I have a little insight into what brother Mullens meant when he wrote his article, with the aforementioned title. According to his letter, his main point was that, in his judgment, 80% of "our preachers" (is he talking about preachers in the universal church? No preacher who is truly in the universal church is going hell. Apparently he means those in local [sound?] churches around the world) are not doing the job of evangelism in their local communities. When you read the article, you will notice that brother Mullen does not get to his "main point" until midway through the article.

In the first half of his article, brother Mullen spends a great deal of time talking about the "selective preaching" that is going on in congregations, presumably around the globe (I assumed that his 80% figure applied to this problem as well). He says he and "others" sense a growing tendency toward this type of "men-pleasing preaching." Included in this "sinful practice" are such things as "positive" preaching and not getting "excited or visibly concerned" while preaching. No one will argue that there is "men-pleasing" preaching going on or that some preachers don't care about the people they are preaching to or that some subjects are never preached on in some congregations. But how does he know who is doing or not doing these things? I'm getting weary of the idea that only "issue" preaching is "good" preaching. In other words, there are some brethren who feel that as long as you preach on certain subjects x number of times during the year, you've done some good preaching. And they often define what those subjects are. That's absurd. Good preaching is preaching which declares the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27). I prefer to preach expository lessons through each book of the Bible, leaving no stone unturned. That way all the "issues" get covered,

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# How Does Faith Work?

by James W. Shear

**E**VEN so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone... show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works" (James 2:17-18). "Faith without works is dead..." (verse 20).

Regardless of the clear statements from God, delivered by James, regarding the works of faith, there are some who contend that one can be saved by a dead

faith. To advocate salvation by "faith only" is to advocate salvation by a dead faith. "Faith only" doctrine is an outright denial of the Word of God, yet those who advocate it claim to be serving God. There are others who have cluttered, camouflaged and confused *faith* until it means little, or nothing at all. They are ignorant of *saving faith* and know nothing about how it works. But what has brought about such an

unholy attitude concerning the "one faith" (Ephesians 4:5)? The answer to this question is quite obvious. Man has allowed Satan to destroy his faith in God's Word.

For example, the above Scriptures are not difficult to understand. That is not man's problem. His problem is disbelief in that which God has said. When man disbelieves God's Word, he cannot accept the "substance of things

## Continued From Page 15

and people learn what the Bible says about how to have a relationship with Christ.

The rest of brother Mullens' article deals with the problem of preachers failing to work diligently to save souls. He says "only a small minority of 'our preachers' are working even reasonably diligently to save souls." He tells us that the 80% figure came from a discussion he had with a relative and they estimated (admitting limited personal knowledge) that about 10% were working diligently to save souls and another 10 to 20% were doing so "some of the time, but not consistently." The other 70-80%, he says, are doing nothing more than preaching sermons on Sundays in the church building, and even those efforts were wasted because the average person in the pew "senses" that they are not often concerned about God's way.

I haven't read an article in a long time which offended me as much as the latter part of this one (I'd probably react even more if I lived in the Nashville area, where brother Mullens is from). According to the last sentence of his article, 80% of us ought to "leave the ministry" (i.e., quit preaching) because all we do is play golf and run errands.

This is a serious matter because brother Mullens has put himself in the place of God, whether he intended to or not. Though he admits having only limited personal knowledge, he has somehow been all-knowing enough to come up with a percentage of preachers who are going to hell because they are not doing what he believes is the work of an evangelist. And that percentage is no less than 80%. Even if he had visited every congregation and personally spoken with and spent a few days with every preacher, he still would be out of line. In fact, I wonder how many preachers he has contacted personally (or would be willing to) and say to them: "You are going to hell."

I realize there is a lot of faulty teaching about "judging." It is obvious that we must engage in some judging, or we would could hardly know who to preach to. But we must be very careful about how we judge. Jesus said that we will be judged using the same measure we use (John 7: 1ff). Brother Mullens has used a very dangerous (and non-scriptural) measure. He has used the measure of conjecture, not fact. We are instructed to speak as the oracles of God (I Peter 4:11), and not to think beyond what is written, "that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against

the other" (I Corinthians 4:6). Jesus said we will be judged for every idle word we speak (Matthew 12:36-37) and if these aren't idle words, then I've never heard one. The 80% is pure speculation.

The attitude behind the figure is perhaps the most disturbing aspect of the article. We are all concerned about the fact that churches aren't growing as much as we would like them to. And, of course, some preachers are not doing the things they ought to be doing. There are constructive ways to make that point in preaching and in print. But to sit around the fireplace and decide that a certain number of "our preachers" are eternally lost, even as we speak, at the worst betrays an arrogant, holier-than-thou disposition toward brethren and at the best is a waste of time.

The command to us, however, is to love the brethren (John 13:34-35: I John 3:14, etc.). If brother Mullens knows of some preacher who is not doing his work, then love dictates that he will go tell him, personally, about his sin. If he doesn't know of such a one, then the part of his article that indicts us is strictly idle talk, of which he should repent.

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hoped for" (Hebrews 11:1) as a product of that Word (Romans 10:17). How can man have faith in the promises and claims of God's Word, if he does not believe God's Word? He can't. It is not possible. He may have faith in something, but it is not a faith through which he can be saved by the grace of God (Ephesians 2:8).

When men talk about "your faith and my faith" and "the faith of one's choice," as well as other remarks that imply that man is the author of his own salvation, he has lost his faith in the Word of God, whether he will admit it or not.

Christ has declared that He is "the way, the truth, and the life." And he added: "no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). That excludes any "way of our choice" other than Christ, who is *the way and the truth*. A faith built upon anything other than "the truth" is a vain faith that cannot put one into Christ where God placed all spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3). An active faith built upon God's Word is required. A faith that acts by following God's Word, the truth (John 17:17).

The only thing that stood between our first parents (Genesis 3) and the forbidden fruit in the garden, was the Word of God. They were not robots, and like us today, they had the power of choice. The only way the old devil could entice Eve to sin was to dispute God's Word. Eve had no problem stating that which God had said (see verses 2 and 3). There is no indication that she, at that point, misunderstood nor disbelieved God's Word.

The devil's job was to break down the barrier (God's Word) that stood between Eve and the forbidden fruit. He denied God's Word. He told Eve, "ye shall not surely die. For God does know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:4-5).

Evidently Eve liked the "not" in the devil's tale and she allowed his words to replace God's Word. She could then look at the forbidden fruit in a different light. No barrier stood between her and the forbidden fruit. The devil had destroyed her belief in God's Word, with his lie. She ate and gave to her husband and he ate and they both died spiritually that day.

We don't like to think that we can be so foolish as our first parents and allow Satan to destroy our faith in God's Word. But God warns, through Paul: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Corinthians 10:12).

It is more than evident that the devil is having success today with the same approach he used in the garden (Genesis 3). Many today, as in days gone by, "...have a zeal for God but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (Romans 10:2-3).

The devil has influenced many to believe that they can know "good and evil" separate and apart from God's Word;

just as he did Eve in the garden. Man likes this feeling of self righteousness and belief that he can do as he pleases. Satan's message can sound mighty good when we forget the price we pay when we reject God's Word. God will not hold us as unwilling slaves. He will let us follow Satan if we choose to do so, but we will suffer the consequences of our choice (see Revelation 20:15).

This is not a pretty picture but sin does not have the proper features of beauty to make a pretty picture. It is much uglier and harder to view when we see those who should know better decide that they are "as gods, knowing good and evil". Some who claim to be in Christ, walk as they please. Certain Scriptures are disbelieved and disobeyed. Hebrews 10:25 is considered optional and/or simply not believed by some who claim to be following Christ. They will meet with the saints if there is nothing better they would like to do. They seem to think they have a God given option to do as they please with no regard for pleasing God nor any responsibilities to others.

Others seem to feel that a good hard sermon on attendance is punishment enough for their sin. And if they sit through such a sermon, they have paid their dues and can continue in their present path, doing as they please, assuming no responsibility.

Some want *all positive preaching and no negative preaching at all*. And the devil has enough gospel(?) preachers to accommodate their demands. They fill the pulpits of man's desires and offer comfort and consolation to him in his sins. This is not the way saving faith works, but it is a way for preachers to gain popularity, praise and "the pleasures of sin for a season" (Hebrews 11:25).

It is sad to say, but some of our preaching brethren have stopped preaching and started performing. It is becoming common place in the church to advertise the preacher, his accomplishments and popularity. Good entertainers in the pulpit are more in demand than faithful gospel preachers. Some seem to think that one is not much of a preacher unless he can slip up on the blind side of the unconverted and, in an entertaining way, give some kind of painless injection of the gospel. Of course this has to be sandwiched in between personal antidotes and experiences so as not to be noticed nor to offend.

The preacher must be cagey enough not to mention God's plan of salvation in his sermon. The mention of baptism for remission of sins might scare one off and keep him from obeying the gospel, if he knew that was included in God's Will. The preacher should be skilled enough to get some kind of commitment from a prospect and then gently spring baptism on him when he is in a position where he can not refuse; even then, it might be better not to mention that it has anything to do with his salvation.

This kind of preaching can have more effect if the sign outside the building does not indicate that this is the church of Christ who meets there. This is thought by some to help

eliminate any prejudices, caused by those who have gone before preaching God's plan of salvation in an understandable and intelligent way.

It is *popularity plus*, when a man can preach such a wonderful sermon, as described above, sprinkled with a few jokes to "keep'em laughing" with a one of a kind delivery. But don't you know that Christ must be ashamed of us. Man is not to preach himself, but he must preach Christ and Him crucified; it is to be preached without shame (Romans 1:16).

The faith that saves is not a creation of man's innate ability but it is born of God's Word (Romans 10:17). There is only "one faith" (Ephesians 4:5) for all to follow and for all to follow alike. Let us notice some ear marks and requirements of the faith mentioned in our text.

**1. The Faith Can Be Identified.** James says: I will show thee my faith by my works." We can show our faith, as did James, by doing that which God commands. Faith and God's Word go hand in hand together; we can't deny one without denying the other. When we can identify the religious works with the Word of God, we can see the "one faith" (Ephesians 4:5), as it is put into action.

**2. The Faith Is Sure.** The Word of God is sure (II Peter 1:19). Since faith comes by hearing the Word (Romans 10:17), faith is as sure as the Word of God. We can be as sure of our faith as we are of God's Word. To doubt one is to doubt the other.

**3. Faith Must Know.** When we walk by faith and not by sight, we must know the Scriptures that guide us in that faith. They must be followed without addition or subtraction (Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 22:18,19). This requires that we study God's Word (II Timothy 2:15). To depart from the Word of God is to depart from the faith.

**4. Saving Faith Is Not Like Going To Burger King.** "HAVE IT YOUR WAY" is a good slogan for Burger King, but it does not work in our approach to God. God warns that His ways are not our ways (Isaiah 55:8-9). And again, "It is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps" (Jeremiah 10:2). Christ stated: "In vain do they worship me teaching for doctrine the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9). And He also said: "Not every one that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

**5. Saving Faith Is A Working Faith.** James said: "I will show thee my faith by my works." Some think there is a contradiction between that which James stated and that which Paul taught in Ephesians 2:8-10. But this is not the case. James was talking about works of faith and Paul was talking about boastful works. When we do that which God commands in His Word, as a matter of faith, it is a work, but not a boastful work. Paul remembered without ceasing the Thessalonians' "*work of faith, and labor of love*" (I Thessalonians 1:3).

**6. Faith Is Illustrated In God's Word.** It may help us to

see how faith works by dropping in on an old saint of long ago. All the ingredients are there; God's Word to direct, Noah's faith in action and the salvation of his house and himself (see Genesis 6).

It was not necessary for God to name all the different kinds of wood He excluded, when He specified that Noah build the ark of gopher wood. In specifying gopher wood, God revealed *His will* in the matter. This may not have been Noah's choice of wood, if he had been given the benefit of choosing, but it was God's choice. This is that which we must remember if we are to walk by faith and not by sight (II Corinthians 5:7). It must always be that which is God's will that moves us to action; not our will.

The ark was to be 300 cubits long, 50 cubits wide and 30 cubits high with one door and one window. The Scripture states, "Thus did Noah, according to all that God commanded him, so did he" (Genesis 6:22). Hebrews 11:7 tells us: "*by faith*, Noah, being warned of God...*prepared an ark*"

Noah could not have changed a single thing God told him to do in building the ark as long as he did it "by faith." Faith will follow God's instructions just as God has stated. Noah could not have put an extra window in the ark regardless of how much Mrs. Noah might have enjoyed the view and at the same time obeyed God's will in the matter. If he had departed from God's Word, it could not be said that he did it by faith, as stated in Hebrews 11:7.

**7. We Must Walk By Faith Today And Not Be Sight** (II Corinthians 5:7). Among many other things, God has revealed in His Word the music of His choice. He specified *singing* (vocal music) (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). No other place in the New Testament names any other kind of music for us to praise Him with in this dispensation; just vocal. Faith will not allow us to use any other kind of music in our worship to God. Faith must act upon that which is revealed in God's Word and "without faith it is impossible to please him" (Hebrews 11:6). We can be as sure of the kind of music that God desires in New Testament worship as we can be of His Word on the subject. If we accept the New Testament as His Word we must of necessity accept vocal music as His Will.

If given a choice, we might have chosen some of the mechanical instruments. But when God specified His choice, that settled it for those who walk by faith.

There are, however, those who "as gods, knowing good and evil," think they *know* that God desires mechanical instrumental music in our worship today, though there is nothing in God's Word to suggest such a thing. In fact, the kind of music to be made in New Testament worship was settled in heaven before we, who are living today, were born (Matthew 16:19). Even an angel from heaven cannot change it (Galatians 1:6-9).

It is a shame when Satan can convince us that we can decide

# The One Baptism

by Harold Hancock

**J**ESUS said one must believe and be baptized to be saved. Both belief and baptism are necessary (Mark 16:16). One cannot be saved without the forgiveness of sins. Our sins are forgiven when we are baptized (Acts 2:38). One cannot be saved out of Christ. We are baptized into Christ (Galatians 3:27). As God saved Noah by the waters of the flood, He saves us when we are baptized (I Peter 3:21). There is only one baptism acceptable to God today. It is a water baptism (Ephesians 4:4). The eunuch and Cornelius were both baptized in water (Acts 8:35-39; 10:47,48). Persons baptized are to be immersed. Baptism is a burial (Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12).

Those baptized are to believe in Jesus as the Christ and be penitent of their sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). They should be baptized for (in order to obtain) forgiveness of their sins and to be saved (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21). Through baptism one is added to Christ and His one church (Romans 6:4; Galatians 3:27; I Corinthians 12:13).

This baptism is administered by the authority of God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38). This is the meaning of "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" or "in the name of the Lord." John also baptized with water and immersed people. Why else would he baptize where there was "much water" (John 3:23)? He taught people to believe on the Christ to come (Acts 19:4). His baptism did not put one into the church. Christ had not yet died, and the church had not yet been

established. John's baptism was to last only till the cross (Acts 19:1-5). Though John's baptism was similar to the "one baptism" it differed somewhat. John baptized people who believed the Christ would come, not those who believed He *had come*. He did not baptize people into Christ and His church since Christ had not yet died and His church was not yet established. John's baptism was for those before the cross. Those baptized in Acts 19 with John's baptism saw the need to be baptized again with the "one baptism."

Some denominations claim to baptize with the Holy Spirit while others use water. Some will immerse; others will sprinkle or pour. Some will baptize infants; others insist on believers. Most baptize because they think a person is already saved, not to save them. They do not baptize into the one body; they do not believe in one church. They believe in many churches or denominations. These baptisms cannot be with the authority of God and Christ when they are not according to the Scriptures. Denominational baptism differs from the "one baptism." We must be baptized with the "one baptism."

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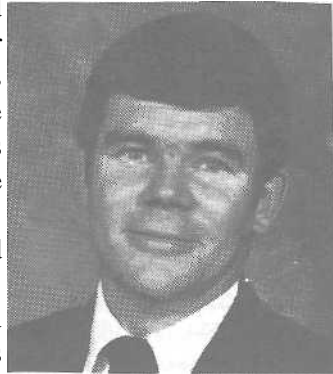
Continued From Page 18

within ourselves, separate and apart from God's will, how we are to worship God. But if we really respect God, we will desire to carry out His will and not that of our own.

Even convicts are treated with more respect in this country than some people treat God. Convicts get to listen to the kind of music they like to hear, but there are those who would rob God of His choice of music. But in doing this they rob themselves of the "precious promise" (II Peter 1:4) of God. This is not how the "precious faith," (verse 1) works.

8. God Allows U-Turns. If you have started down roads of your own making and are not governed by God's Word, you need to make a u-turn (repent) and determine to obey God in every thing. This is how faith works. It can work for you too!

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**News From Florida:** The work here continues to make progress. We have just had a record for Wednesday night Bible study. We had 58 with many of our number ill or out of town. This is the first summer that our Sunday morning attendance has been in the 90's. Hard work on the part of many members has made the difference. At present we have five home studies and a singing each week. At two of these studies recently we had thirty five each week. We have a weekly ladies class also. I have had two good meetings this year. One in Walnut Ridge, AR and the other at Boonesville, KY. In both meetings we had day and evening services. Brother Randy Reynolds from Indiana held our meeting and did a very good job. Charlie Graham, Sr.

**Debate:** September 19-20 - The "Sponsoring Church" and "One Nation Under God" Campaign. Affirmed by Marian W. Ferrell. Denied by Dick Blackford. Charleston church of Christ, Charleston, Missouri. 7:00 P.M.

#### **Review of the Jenkins-Gibson Debate- by David Bonner**

On the nights of July 8,9,11,12, Jesse G. Jenkins and Steve Gibson debated the work of the church in benevolence. The first two nights were with Gibson in the affirmative in the building where he preaches in Taylor, Texas (Highway 95 church). The last two nights were in College Station, Texas in the building of the

Twin City church where Jenkins preaches. Terry Hightower of the Shanandoah church in San Antonio moderated for Gibson with Dan Tarbet keeping time and working the charts. I moderated for Jenkins with Bob Craig of Georgetown, Texas keeping time and Robert McDonald of Longview working the charts. Only good demeanor was had by the audience at all times and there were approximately 200 present each night with those of Jenkin's view in the vast majority (some estimated 75%). Most know the "institutional" churches have polarized (if not split) with the more conservative ones among them in the *vast minority*. That explains the small crowds for them since both Gibson and Hightower are "conservative" among the institutional folks. One man from the South West church in Austin told me they recognize only about three or four churches in Austin represented (and there are some 18 institutional churches there). That's the way it is in most places now.

Gibson affirmed: "The Scriptures teach that a church, from its treasury, may provide benevolent aid to a sinner or to one who is safe." He plans to put the debate in book form and all four nights he seemed to be going as fast as possible to get all his material in the book. He has written a 100 page book (letter-size pages) trying to prove Galatians 6:10 is the *great collection* of Romans 15; I Corinthians 16; II Corinthians 8,9. His basic Scriptural arguments to prove his proposition were Matthew 5:43-6:2; II Corinthians 9:13; Galatians 6:10. On Matthew 5 he read Sirach 12:1 -12 and kept this on a *big* cloth chart in the front of the building at all time. Sirach is found in *Ecclesiasticus* of the *Apocrypha*. Jesse pointed out that the Jews did not accept Sirach. Sirach 12:4 states, "Give to the godly man, and help not a sinner." Gibson claimed Jenkins is just like Sirach since from the church treasury Jenkins cannot help sinners. Jenkins asked Gibson if Sirach's teaching allowed individuals to help sinners, and he said no! Jenkins pointed out that he, then, is not like Sirach for he'll help saints and sinners individually. Gibson used Sirach *every* night and constantly quoted from men and commentaries to sustain his Galatians 6:10 in the Great Collection theory. Jenkins constantly reminded him the proposition read, "The Scriptures Teach ...", so they needed to go to the Bible. Gibson made the usual arguments institutional folks make on

Galatians 6:10 and II Corinthians 9:23. Jenkins showed Galatians 6:10 is *individual* and *spiritual* by context, and therefore *not* church and physical as Gibson tried to make it. Gibson argued "*do good*" means physical but Jenkins cited Luke 10:42, "Mary hath chosen the *good* part, which shall not be taken away from her," to prove *good* can be spiritual so the context will have to determine, and Galatians 6:10 is definitely spiritual good.

The last two nights Jenkins affirmed: "The Scriptures teach that a local church's benevolent work is limited to relieving only saints who are unavoidably destitute." In defining the terms Jenkins pointed out that "limited" and "only" are redundant but Gibson insisted Jenkins word it that way. Jenkins showed that there are but nine passages in the Bible on the work of the church in benevolence (Acts 2,3,6,11; Romans 15; I Corinthians 16; II Corinthians 8,9; I Timothy 5:16), and in all these passages *only saints* were cared for by the church. Gibson called this "*chicken thief theology*" and used the hackneyed illustration that if two eyewitnesses saw a man steal chickens but the man argued innocence because he could present twenty who did not see him, he would be guilty. He paralleled Jenkin's argument of the nine passages with no sinners in them and said he had presented three passages (Matthew 5:43-6:2; Galatians 6:10; II Corinthians 9:13) as three witnesses showing church relief of sinners. Jenkins did an able job of showing Matthew 5 has sinners in it but no church, Galatians 6:10 has sinners in it but no church and no physical relief, and II Corinthians 9:13 has the church in it but no sinners, only saints. Jenkins showed II Corinthians 9:12-13 teaches two things. Verse 12 shows the poor among the Jerusalem saints (Romans 15:26) would be fed and all the Jerusalem saints would be thankful the Gentiles were subjects for the gospel. On verse 13 Jenkins argued that if "ministration" and "distribution" both mean the same thing, then it is redundant as used in II Corinthians 9:13. He argued "ministration" was the giving of relief, and "distribution" (*koinonias*) was *fellowship* (as it usually is translated) shown toward all the Jerusalem saints. Gibson argued the *primary* purpose of the *great collection* was to help the Jewish-Gentile Christians' relationship. Jenkins affirmed the *purpose* was to *relieve* the poor among the saints but an additional benefit would be to help the Jew-Gentile Christians' relationship. Gibson argued Galatians 2:10 ("remember the poor") referred to the *great collection* and that Paul was eight years in raising the funds. Jenkins argued Galatians 2:10 did not say *relieve* the poor and the context is on Paul preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, not benevolence. Galatians 2:10 took place in Acts 15. There is no indication Paul tried to raise funds before I Corinthians 16 (58 A.D.). Gibson used Acts 24:17, "Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings," to prove Paul was "*many*" years in raising the funds (8 years, from Acts 15 to Acts 21). The contrast of many years, however,

seems to be from the time Paul came out of Judaism and was converted to Christ to the time of Acts 24:17. Remember the poor (Galatians 2:10) is preach to them — Luke 4:18.

Outside of reading the propositions, one would think Gibson were in the affirmative all four nights. He was reading as fast as he could apparently to get his material in his book. He would not or could not deal with Jenkin's arguments.

Gibson had the last speech and I had to call a point of order. He said Jenkin's *gospel* will not allow benevolence. I pointed out that he had misrepresented both what Jenkins said and what he believes. Jenkins taught his gospel not only allowed the individual to do benevolence to all, but it also allowed the local church to do benevolence to all for whom there is Bible authority. This seemed to really upset Gibson and even his moderator claimed the "tapes will show" what Jenkins said. Both debaters were well prepared. Jenkins was prepared in the Scriptures. Gibson was prepared in *Sirach*, many men, his book, and the arts he has learned in law school (he is presently in law school at University of Texas in Austin). All agreed he'll make a good lawyer. Debates do good. They cause people to study. The truth was taught and any sincere person with regard for the Scriptures should have been able to see the truth.

We live in an exciting time. It will be interesting to see what happens in the "conservative institutional" movement.

**205 SW 76th Street, Lawton, OK 73505**

#### **Keith Bender - 1952-1991**

On July 20, 1991, about 3:30 in the morning, Keith Bender, a faithful preacher of the gospel was killed in a tragic highway death. Keith and his wife Mona, and their son Jamie, had taken an elderly brother and his wife to the V.A. Hospital in Lexington Kentucky on Friday night. They had waited a while at the hospital before leaving early that Saturday morning. While heading south on US 27 in Jesamine County, three 18 year old boys were in Keith's southbound lane. Keith swerved to the left to avoid them and they also swerved, and the two hit head on. Keith and sister Deboard were both killed instantly, and the driver of the other car was also killed and burnt up. Mona suffered several broken bones (a leg, ankle, 2 wrists, and neck), cuts, and bruises. Jamie suffered two broken legs and several cuts and bruises. Both are still in the U.K. Medical center and are improving at the time of this writing. Keith obeyed the gospel at a young age in Lincoln County, Ky. He

preached on Sunday's at Waynesburg while going to College. He taught High School one year, then devoted his life to full time preaching. He worked with the Caesarea church in Scott County Kentucky for about two and one half years. They moved to Corbin, Kentucky to work with the Brummett church for 11 years. They had lived in Crab Orchard and worked with the church there for almost three years. Keith was sound in the faith, and a dedicated Christian. He and his family had made many sacrifices to preach the gospel of Christ. He was a levelheaded and compassionate person who walked in humility of heart. He was a zealous personal worker, a very good speaker, a superb song leader and teacher, a good husband and father. Keith had good influence and reputation among the churches in this area. He had preached in several meetings around this area, and had several scheduled for the future. His love and stand for the truth will be greatly missed. I spoke at his funeral to a full house from Fox Funeral Home, Stanford Kentucky-

**Danny McKibbin, Route 4, Mt. Vernon, KY 40456**

#### **Dorval McClister 1929-1991**

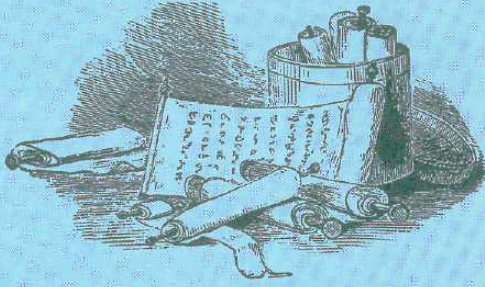
Dorval McClister, who labored in the Chicago area for 32 years as a preacher of the gospel, left this life on July 22, 1991, at the age of 62 years. He labored with the church in Crestwood, IL for 10 years, and with God's people in Burbank, IL for 22 years. In January of this year he moved to Jamestown, KY to take up work with the brethren there. On April 5th dad was diagnosed, after a biopsy, as having an inoperable brain tumor. After his diagnosis he was not able to preach again, due to the very aggressive nature of his illness and to the effects of the radiation and chemotherapy he underwent.

The funeral was in Colombia, KY, just a few miles from where dad was raised, and he was buried on July 25th in the McClister family cemetery in his home town of Fairplay, KY. Melvin Curry, a longtime friend of our family, and who first encouraged dad to take up the work of preaching the gospel, preached the funeral. Our family was well-comforted by several brethren in the Lord, many of whom came for out of State for the funeral. To them all we express our sincere appreciation. —

**David McClister, 7845 Cottonwood, Lenexa, KS 66216**

**Earl Robertson** will be in a gospel meeting with the church in Franklin, N. C. September 15-20. **Hoyt Houchen** will be with the Westwood church of Christ, Glasgow, KY, in a series of gospel meetings September 29 thru October 4.

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## *Writings From Yesteryear*

### **The Power Word**

Words have power. Words can produce panic among those of an entire nation. Words can comfort the broken hearts of those in sorrow. Words can create anger that will seek to kill. Words can mislead to the point of destroying people financially, morally, socially, and spiritually. Words can also be used to convert the unconverted and change the attitude of men and women from evil to righteousness. Because words have such power we are warned in the Word of God to be careful what we say and how we say it. Jesus said that "every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment" (Matthew 12:36). Paul wrote: "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man" (Colossians 4:6).

The Word of God is much more than the words of men, and the power is far greater. If the words of men will do so much in affecting the minds and lives of men, how much more will the Word of God do for those who will hear and understand it? Men's words will change from generation to generation, but the Word of God will never change. The words of men will pass away with time, but the Word of God will live forever. The Word of God is incomparable with the words of men, but many wise men of the world seem to think that their words are as great and powerful as the spiritual words of which Paul spoke in I Corinthians 2.

We cannot overlook the fact that the basis of judgement of the world will be the Word of God we now have. I know of no recognized work of man that claims to pass judgment on the human race to decide the eternal destiny of men. But Jesus said of His word: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48).

by H. E. Phillips – Taken from  
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