WHO IS DOING THE AGITATING?

CLED E. WALLACE

Sometimes things take a peculiar if not unexpected turn. The effort we have made to set forth the Christian’s proper relationship to lawful government has brought forth one reaction that needs a little attention and it is going to get right here. We have received a deluge of endorsement which is unmistakable in its implications, but in addition to that we have received some criticism that runs the gamut from mildness to personal insult. We do not resent honest criticism but decline to be drawn into personal controversy with some who loudly and boisterously insist on a literal compliance with the terms of the Sermon on the Mount while they rudely violate them in their manner of speaking and writing. We have the word of the editor for it that “they may pass.” Nor do we have an idea of asking for any sympathy on the ground that they are potential murderers. It was creating some confusion. I word of the editor for it that “they may pass.” Nor do we have an idea of asking for any sympathy on the ground that they are potential murderers. It was creating some confusion. I

We have been accused of agitating “the war question” at an inopportune time. We invite our critics to review the facts and refresh their memories a bit. Who started this agitation? We admit that it should never have been started. We did not start it. We have defended the right of our sons to answer the call of their country and enter its armed forces only after they were attacked for so doing. Some preachers among us were preaching sermons, even before Pearl Harbor, designed to classify our boys in the armed forces of the country as potential murderers. It was creating some confusion. I have never preached on the question even since Pearl Harbor. When we finally with some reluctance expressed our honest convictions, which incidentally are those of a majority of the brethren, we were called “war-mongers” yearning to shed somebody’s blood and blah! blah! ad infinitum. We intended to state our views in an article or so and let the matter rest there. It did not rest there. The conscientious objector group who started the agitation kept right on agitating, are still at it, and everybody ought to know by now that we do not quit in the middle of a fight, especially when we are winning it. There is a good deal of weeping and wailing going on, but it is not in the Bible Banner. We are quite well pleased with the manner in which we have handled the situation. We decline to accept the implied stigma of guilt as agitators of a ticklish question at the wrong time. We have received at least half a dozen challenges to debate the question from more or less respectable sources, and the threat that more will be forthcoming when the war is over. It is quite a compliment to the effectiveness of what we have thus far had to say. Our purpose has been to eliminate some of the confusion that others have caused and we believe we have done a good job of it.

It must have been confusing indeed to some of the brethren to be called upon to contribute about thirty dollars per month each to able-bodied young men with sick consciences who had to go out of circulation during the war because they could not find anything they could afford to do to support their government in a crisis which entitled them to food and clothing. Such an appeal came out in several of our papers. The readers were actually invited to consider such extremists as heroes of faith. We are willing for any who wish to criticize us for declining to pass the hat in such cases to get all the comfort they can out of their poor opinions. We are not inclined to insist on anybody flying a plane, driving a tank, or firing a gun if he even thinks he ought not to. There are other things he can do besides taking up a collection. There is no reason whatever why we should feel compelled to join a club to make bandages for fanatical consciences. We prefer to try to teach such pitiful innocents the way of the Lord more perfectly. One of my good preacher friends is shedding buckets of tears in the Firm Foundation over the “shame” of “the congregations over the country refusing to support and care for these men.” The congregations are under no obligation whatever to support them, they are able-bodied and objects to support themselves. But we are tearfully told that they are “conscientious objectors to combatant service”! Indeed! There are thousands of conscientious objectors in this fair land who have put on uniforms on orders from the government and are doing the non-combatant duties assigned them. They are not calling on the churches to support them. According to Paul, even widows are not to be made charges of the churches unless they have arrived at an advanced age and meet specified qualifications otherwise. These “fourteen boys in the camp at Magnolia who are members of the church of Christ” are not widows, are not aged, nor are they otherwise qualified to demand support from the churches. If I understand the matter, they are so conscientious they refuse to perform any sort of service, even non-combatant, that gives them army status. Some few preachers are writhing in printed agony over the persecutions they are suffering. Well, of all things! The government has allowed them to enter a sort of detention camp, if somebody will feed them, to keep from sending them to the penitentiary. They are not quite crazy enough to send to an asylum to be fed by taxes, which other conscientious objectors help to pay. Persecution indeed! They are neither being starred nor shot at. They are in no physical danger. But my preacher friend all but breaks down and sobs that they are being frowned upon and ridiculed. What does he think we ought to do? Pin a
service medal on them? I trow not! We are told that these young men have been trained right. That is a reflection on every Christian in uniform who is doing either combatant or non-combatant service. It will be widely and properly re

sented. They have not been trained right. They are fanatics and to be pitied. Some of the preachers who are crying over them and quoting and misapplying scriptures to support them are the ones who ‘ought to ridicule, and I do not claim to be too good to point some of it at them. If they do not like to be ridiculed they should quit being so ridiculous. Nobody is even inclined to charge these poor misguided boys with seeking popularity. It is a compliment to the church that there are only fourteen of them. This is rather remarkable in view of the fact that some rather prominent preachers have even declared publicly that it is a sin to even buy bonds, lend money to the government on request, to carry on the work of defending this great country against aggression. Ridicule is about the only weapon that will do justice to such extremes. There are humorous angles to all this. The particular brother who is weeping over the persecutions suffered by a few boys over in Magnolia makes some rather ugly charges against some churches and preachers because they do not support the fanaticism of these misguided boys. Is he trying to “persecute” us? He is certainly criticizing us and some of his remarks approach the border of ridicule. He is certainly not blessing us according to the text he points at us. He calls us “popularity loving preachers ... who have poked fun at these young men.” I am not unduly fond of popularity but he presents a most tempting target for me to poke some fun at.

The brother commends Brother Showalter, editor of the Firm Foundation, for “giving space on his page” to the pitiful drivel that does not deserve anything more serious than ridicule. Why should he commend Brother Showalter? If I understand that busy and worthy gentleman, he is with us on the general principles involved. He has recently stated editorially that men who cannot put on a uniform and do non-combatant service certainly have “poorly educated” consciences. Incidentally he has a son, a very fine man and a friend of mine, in uniform. He talked to me a number of times about how he could best serve his country in this crisis. Has he been taught right? The inference is clear that even Brother Showalter has not been taught right, according to the brother who hastens to “commend” him. He supports the government. Neither has everyone of his brothers. He is certainly not blessing us according to the text he points at us. He calls us “popularity loving preachers ... who have poked fun at these young men.” I am not unduly fond of popularity but he presents a most tempting target for me to poke some fun at.

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"2. If a Christian cannot do anything through the government that he cannot do as an individual Christian, will you not have to refrain from officiating at marriages? You cannot perform a marriage ceremony as an individual Christian-not all Christians can officiate at marriages. Christ did not give the preacher any official dignity above other Christians; the government does that, and you accept that government rating or distinction when you act as a government official in executing a legal document. In this matter you are acting as a government agent or official. If not, why not? Then you make proper returns, informing his Sathanic majesty that you have properly executed his document. Marriage is divine, but Christ did not issue that marriage license. Can you reconcile your teaching with what you do?

"3. You certainly would advocate the withdrawal of fellowship from all murderers. Do you think all churches of Jesus Christ should withdraw fellowship from soldiers and everyone else who is doing anything to help soldiers to fight? If not, why not?

"4. Is it a sin for men who are not Christians to fight in wars? If not, why not?

These questions reach right down into the heart of the real issue and should help to educate the consciences of a good many of the brethren. Government is ordained of God to perform certain necessary functions. If such activities are wrong, sinful, God would not authorize anybody to perform them. When a sinner sins he does it without the authority of God. He is an outlaw in God's sight. The lawful functions of government are right. Significant questions of morality are involved in this. Some brethren seem to think that it is morally right for a sinner to perform certain acts of government, necessary acts, but that it would be wrong, sinful, even immoral, for a Christian to perform the same acts. Does God have one moral law for sinners and another moral law for Christians? How then did a sinner become such? He was not born that way! The execution of law may incidentally make a widow and some orphans. Is the officer who executes the law and is forced to take the life of a person and perform the duties of his duty to be charged with veneful motives and the desire to make widows and orphans? If the functions of government are morally sinful, then there should be no government. If they are not sinful, then they are right and a Christian may participate in them. This does not mean that he must do so. There are circumstances to be weighed. But it is now about time to sit back and listen to some of the brethren agitate. I just hope they do a little cogitating first.

A FACTIOUS MAN

C. E. W.

"A factious man after a first and second admonition refuse; knowing that such a one is perverted, and sinneth, being self-condemned." (Tit. 3 : 10, 11). The factious man is a promoter of strife, a sower of discord among brethren. The symptoms are uniform. He is purblind to his own faults, but meticulous in his demands on others. He will lead his ass to water on the Sabbath and be "filled with madness" at Jesus for restoring a withered hand on the same day. He is usually energetic with tongue and pen, in the interest of his factious plans. Laziness is not one of his sins. Berkeley says: "The factious man is apt to mistake himself for a patriot." In religion he is apt to mistake himself for a martyr when he encounters opposition.

"Such a one is perverted." A state of unsoundness exists in him. If he is not exactly rotten, he has deteriorated until after a first and second admonition refuse; he is forever messing with things he ought not to. You need not be his enemy, but it is a splendid idea to avoid him for reasons that are spiritually sanitary.

"Such a one sinneth." It is good and pleasant for brethren to dwell together in unity. God says so, and it is his will that they do so. "There are six things which Jehovah hateth; yea, seven which are an abomination unto him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood; a heart that deviseth wicked purposes, feet that are swift in running to mischief, a false witness that uttereth lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren." (Prov. 6: 16-19). He that soweth discord among brethren is in dangerous company. He is an abomination to God along with murderers and fellows. How hideous is sin! Paul numbers "enmities, strife, jealousies, wraths, factions, divisions," among "the works of the flesh," and says "that they who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Gal. 5 : 19-21.) The church is the body of Christ. It is a precious thing. "The body is one, and there should be no schism in the body." God will not deal gently with the man who renders ugly and painful wounds in the body of Christ. Such a one sinneth."

"Such a one is self-condemned." His own conduct condemns him, and his guilt is apparent to all observers except himself and those blinded by his influence. He and they mistake his party zeal for holiness unto the Lord. They are self-deceived as well as self-condemned. Give a factionist enough rope and he will hang himself, which would be all right, if he didn't manage to hang others with him who were not wise enough to avoid him. His own bitterness and rancor condemn him. A factious man is often a mean man. He will do anything or tell anything to accomplish his unholy purposes. "But if ye have bitter jealousy and faction in your heart, glory not and lie not against the truth. This wisdom is not a wisdom that cometh down from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where jealousy and faction are, there is confusion and every vile deed." (James 3 : 14-16.)

Christ promises blessings upon the peacemakers, not the trouble-makers. Christians must seek peace and pursue it. It is worth hunting for and running after. "So then let us follow after the things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another." (Barn. 14: 19.) "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without variableness, without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for them that make peace." (James 3 : 17, 18.) "Follow after peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no man shall see the Lord: looking carefully lest there be any man that falleth short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby the many be defiled." (Heb. 12: 14, 15.)

A root of bitterness is a poison plant. Should one come up in my yard and my child should eat of it and become poisoned, I would dig up the poison thing and cast it away. And I would look carefully for signs of more like it. Factious and profane men are troublesome and poisonous in a church. They should be dug up before they go to seed.

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THE GREAT COMMISSION

The last commission of Christ to the eleven, known as the Great Commission, is the embodiment of the constitution of the kingdom of Jesus Christ. Luke wrote Theophilus that Jesus was with the disciples forty days after the resurrection, "speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." (Acts 1:3.) The records indicate that the commission was given on more than one occasion during these forty days. Matthew and Mark record the scene of the commission on a mountain in Galilee, while in Luke's record the scene is in Jerusalem. It is entirely consistent with all that the facts and circumstances that Jesus should repeatedly instruct the disciples concerning his kingdom so soon to be inaugurated.

1. The Great Commission is the Constitution of the Kingdom.

It is evident that Acts 1:3 has a direct reference to the "all things" of the commission. This being true, all the principles of the kingdom are embodied in this divine constitution—the Great Commission. Everything that can be preached by the authority of Jesus Christ in the command: Teach them to observe all things that I have commanded you. The apostle preached nothing that did not come within the range of this commission. Everything that pertains to the kingdom of Christ is in it. Preachers today who preach anything about the kingdom which the apostles of Christ did not preach are outside the pale of divine command and are preaching things for which there is no authority in heaven or on earth.

When Philip went down into Samaria, he "preached Christ unto them" (Acts 8:5), and "when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women" (Verse 12.) With Philip, preaching Christ was preaching the Kingdom. How different must have been his preaching to the kingdom-theory preaching of some brethren now! When men today preach anything except Christ, they are preaching something about the kingdom that Philip did not preach. And if they preach anything Philip did not preach, they are not preaching the gospel of the kingdom. The gospel of the kingdom is simply the gospel of Christ, shorn of all doubtful theory and uncertain speculations. Theorizing on a "future kingdom" in the form of a millennial reign is a failure. Teaching is more than speculative—it is the claim of all power and the correlative command to "go and teach all nations." What does "therefore" mean, if it does not refer to exercising that power ascribed to him in the preceding sentence? It means that the authority of Christ is not physical; it is greater. He exerts it not as world rulers. Alexander the Great was once a world monarch. To bring Jesus Christ down from the right hand of God to an earthly throne of worldly power demotes the Lord of lords to the level of an Alexander or a Caesar. The gospel is the all power of Christ. He exercises it every time a soul is saved. And it takes as much power to save one soul as it does to save millions—&c. power.

If Christ does not exercise all power through the gospel, then, when he does exercise it, how will he do it? Will he have another force? Will he save men another way? If not, what would he do on earth that he did not do when he was here and that he is not doing now through the gospel? Why change his throne from heaven to earth, if his plan is to remain unchanged? But if the change of his throne results in the change of his plan, it nullifies the Great Commission and makes the gospel which the apostles preached a failure.

If Christ is not exercising all power through the gospel, the claim of all power and the correlative command to "go teach" was, at least, two thousand years premature! Such teaching is more than speculative—it is vitiating to the Great Commission. There is no alibi a gospel preacher can offer for preaching such theories, and there is no apology another gospel preacher can make for the one who does.

2. The Great Commission is All-Comprehensive. It includes All Power in Heaven and on Earth.

"All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth." How much power is all power in heaven and on earth? It is power seen and unseen-power unlimited and unbounded by geographical or ethereal lines. If Jesus should return to the earth and reign a thousand millenniums, he could never achieve more than all power of which he is in actual possession now. The Great Commission says so. "All power hath been given unto me."

Moreover, Paul says so. "Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." (Eph. 1:20-23.) In Pauline fashion this is a death-dealing argument to the future-reign theory. (1) Christ is exalted at God's right hand. (2) He is set on a throne in heaven. (3) He is above all earthly power, might, and dominion. (4) He is head over all things to the church. (5) When he was thus made head of the church, God put all things under his feet. Could he ever by any conceivable means have more power, glory, and exaltation than he now has, according to Paul? These theories of a Palestinian reign of Christ on a Judaistic throne in an earthly Jerusalem over a fleshly Israel are foreign to everything the New Testament teaches. It would bring Christ down from the throne of his Majesty in heaven and seat him on the earth—his footstool! And some brethren call that exalting Christ!

3. The Great Commission Not Only Comprehends All Powers, But It is Predicated on the Fact That Christ is Exercising All Power Through the Gospel.

"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations." What does "therefore" mean, if it does not refer to exercising that power ascribed to him in the preceding sentence? It means that the authority of Christ is not physical; it is greater. He exerts it not as world rulers. Alexander the Great was once a world monarch. To bring Jesus Christ down from the right hand of God to an earthly throne of worldly power demotes the Lord of lords to the level of an Alexander or a Caesar. The gospel is the all power of Christ. He exercises it every time a soul is saved. And it takes as much power to save one soul as it does to save millions—&c. power.

4. When the Great Commission Was First Preached, Peter Announced that Christ, Being Exalted at God's Right Hand, Was Seated on the Throne of David as the Lineal and Spiritual Heir to the Kingdom.

The second chapter of Acts is a prophecy-fulfilling chapter. Here the Great Commission was executed. The divine constitution had been ratified in heaven, and with the seal of heaven's authority it was sent in the power of the Holy Spirit to the apostles on Pentecost to be preached. The kingdom was established. David had prophesied a thousand years before that God would raise up One to sit on his (David's) throne, and Peter very definitely declared that the prophecy was fulfilled in the resurrection of Christ. (Acts 2: 29-33.)

Peter's star witness that the kingdom had come and that Christ was seated on David's throne was David himself. Hear his conclusion: "Let me speak freely unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he seeing before the resurrection of Christ, ... Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted ... he hath shed forth this, which
ye now see and hear.” (Acts 2: 29-33.) The “therefore” of verse 33 is the inspired conclusion that in the resurrection and exaltation of Christ the prophecies concerning David's throne and kingdom were fulfilled. Peter connects the event of Christ's sitting on David's throne with the event of his resurrection and not of his second coming. This fulfillment of David's own prophecy regarding the reign of Christ is the final argument that convinced the Jews, and it surely ought to convince brethren today. When a Jew accepts Christ, we have little trouble showing him that Jesus Christ is reigning on David's throne. Our greatest difficulty is in convincing a few Gentile preachers.

The truth of David's word, the surety of God's oath, and the inspiration of Peter are staked on the fact that David's throne is in heaven and that Jesus Christ is on it.

5. The Kingdom Which Began on Pentecost, of Which the Great Commission is the Constitution, is the Kingdom Which Will Stand Forever.

Six hundred years before Christ, Daniel depicted the rise and fall of four successive world powers and said: “In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, . . . , and it shall stand forever.” It was in the days of the Roman emperors, the last of that succession of kings foretold by Daniel, that the kingdom of Christ began. It was “at hand” when John appeared on the scene as its harbinger. (Matt. 3: 2.) Jesus taught his disciples to pray for its inauguration. (Matt. 6: 9.) Joseph, the Arimathæan, waited for it. (Mark 16: 43.) The penitent thief pleaded to enter it when the Lord should come into possession of it (Luke 23: 42), and the expectant disciples after his resurrection were yet anxious to receive it. (Acts 1: 8)

It is evident that the kingdom had not come before the resurrection of Christ. It is also obvious that it had come after the resurrection of Christ when the apostles referred to it as a present existing thing. (Col. 1: 13.) But is it really the kingdom of Daniel that would “stand forever,” or “look we for another” yet in the future? Hear Paul: “But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven. . . . Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.” (Heb. 12: 22-28.) Paul's argument is that when we received the church, we also received the kingdom which cannot be moved. Is there any difference between a kingdom which will stand forever and one that cannot be moved?

It must be plain to all who are not obsessed with the theory of a future earthly reign of Christ that the immovable kingdom of Paul is the everlasting kingdom which Daniel said God would set up. It began on Pentecost with the preaching of the Great Commission, its divine constitution. In obedience to the terms of the commission people entered it then, and may by the same gospel obedience enter it now. Thus with binding power of a future earthly reign of Christ that the immovable kingdom of Paul is the everlasting kingdom which Daniel said God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven.

A LETTER TO MY FRIENDS

November was a month that will be remembered at our house. There were days of tension and toil, and weeks of anxiety and distress. After some five weeks in the Scott & White Hospital & Clinic at Temple, Texas, Mrs. Wallace is home again in Oklahoma City and well on the way to recovery, and we hope, good health.

Hundreds of cards, letters and inquiries, impossible to answer, were received, all of which were and are still deeply and devoutly appreciated.

It will not be considered ungrateful to the Providence that has preserved us for me to mention disappointments. Thinking that Mrs. Wallace had passed her crisis I went to a meeting with the Irvington church in Indianapolis, five days late, which Brother C. G. Caldwell, their preacher, was holding until I could arrive. I was able to stay only three days, being called back to Temple on account of a backset and some unexpected complications in Mrs. Wallace’s condition. My personal friend, W. R. Elder, of Indianapolis, and his brother, J. L. Elder, who is an elder in the church at Jacksonville, Fla., also my friend, accompanied me on that trip and were of much assistance and consolation. Such a deep personal interest in a time of anxiety is not a thing to be forgotten. And I shall always appreciate the kindness, patience and forbearance of Brother Caldwell and the elders of the Irvington church in my attempts but failures in meeting the demands of their meeting.

It was also necessary for the meeting with Brother A. B. Keenan and the Fairview church in Detroit, Michigan, to be cancelled. Extensive preparations had been made for this meeting all over the Detroit area and I regret beyond expression the disappointment that occurred. I shall hope to make good my engagements with both of these churches before very long, if it is their will and the Lord's, With me, such experiences serve to bring us closer together in the Lord.

During the several weeks' absence from the Tenth & Francis church, in Oklahoma City, the elders called upon Brother R. L. Whiteside, of Denton, Texas, to do the preaching in several services each week and in teaching various classes. His work was appreciated, and Brother Whiteside formed lasting friendships in Oklahoma City. Other churches would do well to use him more and avail themselves of his ripe Bible knowledge.

The time at Temple afforded me the opportunity to visit with my brother, Cled E. Wallace, a thing I need to do more often, and also to see my father, who now lives and preaches at San Marcos, Texas. So according to the proverb, it is an ill wind that blows no good.

I will be at home for a while, preaching with the Tenth & Francis church, until they have had time to complete arrangements for a permanent local preacher. I shall always claim the distinction of being one of their preachers-to me, a rare distinction, for I do not believe there is a better church in all the land than the Tenth & Francis church in Oklahoma City. But soon I must resume my work in meetings—a waiting work in a wide harvest field.

With a feeling of deep appreciation to you all, I am, faithfully and fervently yours,

FOY E. WALLACE, JR.
The Jerusalem church had been impoverished by persecution and famine, and it became necessary for other churches to send relief. The apostle Paul, while endeavoring to arouse churches to this duty, wrote the Corinthian church in this language: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." (1 Cor. 16: 1, 2.)

In this statement a number of things of interest are revealed to us. Beyond doubt this is instruction in the matter of religious service. Such giving to the saints of God and to his cause could not be thought of as less than a religious service. To engage in a religious work of such import was to render service to the Eternal One. And not only was it a religious service, but it was a religious service enjoined for a particular day. Giving of our means to the cause of the Lord upon any day of the week would be a religious service; but when such service is specified for a particular day, it makes it all the more significant, for it not only teaches the service to be religious, but also makes the day a day for that service. And that would exalt the day to the position of a "religious day." Notice that Paul says, "Upon the first day of the week" perform this duty. What reason could there be for giving such instruction unless the first day of the week was a day to be devoted to religious service? If the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week, had yet been binding on the people of God, then that day would have been the logical one for such contribution to be made. But Sabbatarians claim that the Corinthian contribution was but a home duty. If so, why did he specify the first day of the week as a day for it to be performed? What reason could there be for performing any home duty on a particular day? Why would not the second day or the third day of the week do just as well? Home duties are never enjoined for a particular day. But this duty was, and there can be no reason for its performance on the first day of the week, except that that day was their day of religious worship.

Furthermore, the apostle did not limit the matter to one week; but, as the original language clearly states, it was to be done upon the first day of every week. That makes it a religious service to be repeated. It is a service for every week. Why specify the first day of every week unless that day was a day of worship and assembly? Certainly any day of the week would be appropriate for a home service—the middle of the week, or even the last. But Paul did not say, "Sometimes during every week perform this service"; but he said, do it on "the first day of the [every] week." That day, then, is a day particularly enjoined as a day for religious service.

Another interesting thing about it is that Paul gave an order for this to be performed: "As I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye." Webster says that an order is "a rule or regulation; also, a command; direction." Hence, the apostle gave a commandment for a first-day religious service. This commandment (order) had also been given to the churches of Galatia. Can Sabbatarians find where any apostle ever gave a commandment to any Christian to perform any religious service "on the seventh day of the week"? No such record is found in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Preaching, or many other religious services, might be done upon any day of the week; but where is the record that specifies the seventh day of the week as a day for a particular religious service? If such could be found, Sabbatarians would seize on it as indisputable evidence of Sabbath keeping. Yet, Paul did command that a particular service be done on the first day of the week; and when he gave that commandment, what did it involve? He answers himself: "If any man think himself not to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." (1 Cor. 14: 37.) So we have a "commandment of the Lord" for first-day religious service. It will not do to try to set this aside by finding where Paul gave his "advice" and "judgment" about things, and then decide that 1 Cor. 16: 1, 2 is not a commandment. Paul wrote many things to the Corinthian brethren that were not commandments; but when he did write a commandment, as he did in the text before us, it was a commandment of the Lord.

Sometimes men use Paul's statements in 2 Cor. 9: 8 to prove that the "order" of 1 Cor. 16 is not a commandment. In the second epistle Paul wrote: "I speak not by commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love." In this the inspired writer is speaking of the same contribution, but because in his second letter to them he speaks "not by commandment" does not destroy that fact that he spoke by commandment in the first letter. He appeals to their liberality and love in his second letter. In the first he gave an order. One does not set aside the other. And that order was given to other churches besides Corinth—the churches of Galatia.

They were also told to lay this by "in store." This is from an original word that means "in treasury," or "treasuring up." In fact, some translations give this expression as "putting into the treasury." This excludes the idea of a home duty. But it is often argued that as Paul said "lay by him in store," he intended for it to be laid by at home—that "by him" should be translated "by himself at home." Such, however, is not true. The expression is often translated "by itself," which simply means that it is separated from his other means. Or it may also suggest the idea that he is to do it of his own accord. It is to be done willingly.

And this collection was to be made on the first day of every week, Paul said, "that there be no gatherings when I come," or "that no collections be made when I come." If they carried it out as a home duty, each one putting aside his contribution at home, then when Paul came this would all have to be collected—there would have to be a gathering of it. That Paul did not wish to do. And if they carried out his order in the matter, no such gathering would be necessary—it would already be placed in the treasury. This is unmistakable evidence that they were to lay by in store in their assembly, not at home; for how would their contributing at home prevent the gathering of it when Paul arrived? In 2 Cor. 9: 5, Paul declared: "Therefore I thought it necessary to exhort the brethren, that they would go before unto you, and make up beforehand your bounty, whereby ye had notice before, that the same might be ready, as a matter of bounty, and not as of covetousness." This does not indicate, as I have heard it contended, that the church at Corinth laid by at home, and Titus and others were sent before Paul that they might go around to their homes and gather it up. Thus there would be no gatherings when Paul arrived. If this is the teaching of the writer, his language should read: "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by at home, as God has prospered him, and before I come I will send some brethren to make the rounds to your homes and collect it, that there be no gath-
erings when I come." However, Paul said no such thing. It was not the visit of Titus and others that would prevent any collections being made when Paul arrived. If they laid by in store as prospered, that thing itself would prevent it. But lest they become careless and neglectful toward making that contribution, Titus and other brethren were sent to stir them up to their duty, to arouse their love in the matter, so the contribution would be made as Paul had previously directed, and thus be ready when he arrived.

The Unity Question

G. K. Wallace

Brethren Witty and Murch come with a message of peace and unity. “The voice is Jacob’s voice but the hands are the hands of Esau.” All desire the unity for which Jesus prayed. However, we cannot allow these brethren to “come with subtility and take away” our blessing. The road to peace is not a road of compromise.

Lasting Peace

We have had a long and hard fight with the forces of evil. This fight is to achieve victory and to build a spirit of peace and security. We have won many a battle over materialism. The giants of Premillennialism have been put to rout in debate. Advocates of instrumental music in worship will no longer come out into the open for discussion. Winning a lasting peace is more difficult than defeating the enemy. The issues before the church are not dead simply because no one will come out in the open and champion them. The only way to make unity for which Jesus prayed universal is to completely destroy the enemy. The essentials of this peace would crumble with compromise. Jesus never once asked for peace on the basis of compromise. The beliefs in instrumental music and other false doctrines must be removed. As long as men have beliefs, they will strive to protect and expand them. Faith itself contains a militant crusading spirit. Those who are afraid to come out in the open usually speak out in the dark. “A little leaven will leaven the whole lump.” The unity for which Jesus prayed does not come like manna from heaven; it must be cultivated from rocky soil with discussions of the question and great human toil. You cannot love sin out of the church. You cannot love false doctrine out of the world. It must be rooted up. “Every plant, that my father planted not shall be rooted up.” (Matt. 15: 13.) The roots cannot be left. We have cut premillennialism and digression to the ground but the roots still remain. Like the roots of the bind-weed these roots are very deep. We must not allow our fight against these evils to disintegrate.

Invisible Sabotage

The effort to destroy the church still continues. Men no longer come out in the open. Yet they travel from place to place spreading gossip about those who have stood firm in the fight. They encourage all the half converted to hold on to their false doctrine for a while. They constantly brag on every man who sympathizes with premillennialism. They say that they do not believe premillennialism. Yet they maintain friendly relations with those who teach it. They accept their money and encouragement. They can but judge their work in the future by their work in the past. Here is just about the way it is. Clinton Davidson, endorses R. H. Boll. George S. Benson endorses Davidson. We are not under any illusions. A blind man can see into this. Where did Davidson ever condemn Boll or endorse Davidson. We are not under any illusions. A blind man can see into these roots. Where did Davidson ever condemn Boll or endorse Davidson? If we laid by in store as prospered, that thing itself would prevent it. But lest they become careless and neglectful toward making that contribution, Titus and other brethren were sent to stir them up to their duty, to arouse their love in the matter, so the contribution would be made as Paul had previously directed, and thus be ready when he arrived.

A New Type of Journalism

Another new type of journalism has arisen among us. This new type of journalism brought is being featured by papers like the “West Coast Christian,” the “Rocky Mountain Christian.” Glaring reports with newspaper headlines are the feature of these papers. Should one take the “Field News” of the Firm Foundation, Gospel Advocate, and Christian Worker and set them up in larger type with glaring headlines he would have just such papers as are mentioned above. It has been too well known by those who have read the papers for years that some are given to exaggeration in reporting. The church must realize that issues cannot be settled, false doctrines exposed by shouting hurrah! Over-optimism can burden our effort in driving the host of wickedness from heavenly places. Some of these papers have done much to encourage the work in the great Western part of the United States, but all this “hip, hip, hurrah!” will not advance the church nor settle any issues. Big caption type cannot substitute for a discussion of problems and issues. Discuss the issues the brethren face on the field, as well as stand up and cheer. Let us never forget that free, frank and bold discussion is the way to win the victory in Jesus’ name.

A Popular Preacher

Once upon a time there was a preacher. He was easy on the eyes. The intonations of his voice were pleasing and reassuring. His linen was clean, and every detail of his dress was proper. All men spoke well of him. He was the preacher of his community. He married all the couples and preached all the funerals. There was in that community an infidel. He was a pretty tough proposition. He was interested in religion and preachers as all infidels are. If you think infidels are not interested in preachers, you are mistaken... You can get a rise out of an infidel by mentioning a preacher, quicker than you can by saying something about Tom Paine. This infidel kept an eye on this popular preacher. One day he remarked to some of his friends: “When I die, I want that preacher to preach my funeral.” The remark occasioned some amusement. “Why, Bill, you old scoundrel, you know a preacher cannot do you any good talking over you after you are dead.” “I do not know about that,” said Bill, the infidel. “I have heard this preacher preach about a dozen funerals lately, and he hasn’t lost a case yet.” If a preacher loses a case like that, the proprieties demand that he do it gracefully. But the presence of a corpse should not stampede him into denying the faith. “I charge thee in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, who shall judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.” (2 Tim. 4: 1, 2.) “And I heard a voice from heaven saying, Write, Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; for their works follow with them.” (Rev. 14: 13.) It may be a popular voice, but it is not a voice from heaven, which says, “Blessed are the dead who die out of the Lord.” —Cled E. Wallace.
In John 15:1-6, Jesus teaches us a lesson of great importance. It is based upon the vine and branches. In Palestine people were well acquainted with vineyards—it was a country that abounded with vines. So the lesson the Lord taught them was well adapted to their understanding. Whether they were passing some vineyards along the way, or because their minds had recently been fixed on the Lord’s supper, or whatever the occasion, does not matter: the lesson is the important thing. In fact, a number of lessons are contained in the passage for us, and I invite your consideration of them as we study the divine record.

In the first place, an effort should be made to find out what is meant by the branches. In verse 1 Jesus said: “I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.” Then in verse 5 he said: “I am the vine, and ye are the branches.” These were terms with which they were familiar. The Father is the husbandman. This simply means “vine-dresser.” The vine-dresser is one who looks after and cares for the vine; he protects the branches and always feels an interest in the growth and development of the same. So it is with God. He has selected Christ as the true vine through which the branches are to receive nourishment and strength sufficient for growth. He is interested in our welfare and cares for us. And Jesus is the vine through which the Christian receives strength to develop in the service of the Lord. But Jesus says: “Ye are the branches.” So what does this mean? In other words, who are the branches?

This statement of the Lord has been used by more people, and more often, than any other statement in the Bible to sustain and support the idea of denominationalism in the religious world. If you call the attention of men to the fact that Paul said, “There is one body” (Eph. 4:4), and that “the body is the church” (Eph. 1:22,23), and you conclude that the Lord built but one church, they will at once remind you of the Lord’s statement relative to the vine and the branches. They will insist that when the Lord said that “ye are the branches,” he referred to denominations; hence, they conclude that there is just one true church, but all the denominations are branches of it, just as there is one vine with a multiplicity of branches.

This is manifestly a misapplication of the passage, as is seen by a careful look at it. It is true that many branches grow on the same vine—there is one vine and a multiplicity of branches; but all branches are of the same nature; they are all alike. The unchangeable law of God and nature is that “every seed brings forth after its kind.” If you plant watermelon seed, you expect to find watermelons growing on the vine; you do not look for pumpkins or cucumbers growing on that vine. If you set out a grape vine, you do not go to it looking for peaches, blackberries or figs; for you know that only grapes will be produced. James said: “Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries, either a vine figs?” Jas. 3:12. We know that such does not occur, but every vine produces after its own kind. This, however, would not be true if the Lord referred to denominations. Each denomination produces a fruit different from every other denomination in the world. In this case, then, the various branches of the vine produce conflicting fruits; and if you can think of a vine whose branches produce all the different fruits in the world, you have a conception of the Lord’s lesson, if he had denominations in mind as the branches of the vine. But let us look at it from another angle. Jesus said: “I am the vine, ye are the branches.” The pronoun “ye” is plural, second person. Second person pronouns refer to those who are spoken to. Hence, the branches were the ones to whom the Lord spoke—those who were present with him at the time. Were there any denominations in his presence to whom he could speak? Everyone knows that he was not speaking to denominations; but someone might suggest that he was speaking of denominations when he referred to the branches. In that case he would have said: “I am the vine, they are the branches.” Then he would have used the third person pronoun that pointed out pointed out those spoken of. But he did not say, “They are the branches.” He said: “Ye are the branches.” So there is a difference between “they” and “ye.” A group of disciples were with him, but Jesus did not say: “Ye are a branch.” Instead, He said: “Ye are the branches.” A number of disciples made a number of branches; and one disciple, of course, made one branch. This is shown in the Lord’s statement in verse 6: “If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch.” So that settles it for all who are willing to take the Bible for what it says. Jesus said a man is cast forth as a branch. It doesn’t take a whole organization of men to form a branch, but one man is a branch. Each Christian, therefore, is a branch of the true vine; denominations are not branches; and to make the passage mean denominations is to wrest the Scriptures.

But the passage also teaches us the importance of abiding in Christ if we hope to be fruitful and pleasing to the Father. In verses 4 and 5 we read these words: “Abide, in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.” I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing.” We know the utter impossibility of fruit being produced by a branch which has no connection with the vine. A branch cannot bear fruit of itself—it must get its nourishment from the vine. Separate the branch from the vine and you destroy all possibility of its producing fruit. The branch must abide in the vine if fruit is to be borne. Just so with the disciples of the Lord. We cannot bear fruit of ourselves. We must abide in the true vine (Christ) if we hope to be pleasing to the husbandman (God). We sometimes lose sight of our insignificance. We think we are important and we get the thought that we can do wonderful things upon our own strength. But Jesus said: “Without me ye can do nothing.” Like Paul, we might say: “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.” Phil. 4:13. But we must remember that, without him, we are helpless. Jesus might get along all right without us, but we cannot afford to try to get along without him. The vine can get along without some of the branches, but no branch can succeed without the vine. Therefore, we must abide in the true vine—we must abide in Christ to succeed in Christian living. To abide in Christ is to abide in his teaching. The man who runs counter to the will of the Lord is not abiding in him and cannot succeed in fruit bearing. Jesus further said in verse 2: “Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.” Just as the vine-dresser will prune the branch that bears fruit that it may produce more fruit, so God will assist us to be more fruitful.

The fruit that must be borne by the branches in the vine is Christian fruit—such fruit as a Christian character will produce. Paul, writing to the churches in Galatia, said: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law.” Gal. 5:22,23. The branch that does not produce this kind of fruit is not acceptable to the vine-dresser. If, in stead of these, our deeds are deeds of hate, strife, impatience, intemperance, pride, unbelief, and all such things that belong to the works of the flesh, we bring ourselves under condemnation. And God has declared that “they which do such things
shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.” Gal. 5:19-21. As branches in the vine, why not make an effort to he faithful to the service of the Lord? If you lack interest in the Lord’s work, but are very interested in the things of the world, there is something seriously wrong with you. If you neglect to meet to worship God as he has ordained, you are failing to produce the fruit God expects. If you are downright lazy toward the service of the Lord, how can you expect to hear him say, “Well done, • thou good and faithful servant”? To be good and faithful servants requires that we be fruit-bearing branches, that we live in harmony with divine requirements, and that we exemplify the traits of Jesus Christ in our own characters.

But another important thought is contained in the Lord’s statement in verse 2. He said: “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away.” The same idea is found in verse 6, as follows: “If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.” Some have reasoned that this is the “nominal Christian”-the one who claims a union with Christ but really had never been united with him. One commentary in my library says: “This doubtless refers to those who are professors of religion, but who have never known anything of the true and real connection with him.” But all such reasoning as this is absurd and is done for the purpose of sustaining a theory. Any sensible man knows that the husbandman does not take away from the vine, and cast forth to be withered, a branch that has never been connected with the vine. He takes away dead branches, or branches that are unfruitful, and burns them; but they are branches that had a connection with the vine. When men come along and gather the withered branches to burn that had been cast forth, where did those branches come from? Certainly, from the vine; their connection with the vine had been severed. Notice, again, what our Lord said: “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away.” Every branch “in me,” not every branch “out of me,” or every branch that seems to be in me; but every branch “in me.” Yes, the Lord says these branches are in him; so they do have a connection. Furthermore, Paul said: “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.” 2 Cor. 5:17. When one becomes a new creature, he becomes a Christian; and men become new creatures in Christ. Every branch, therefore, that is in the true vine represents Christians, children of God, those who have been saved. To say that these were but hypocritical pretenders, that they had never known Christ, that they never had any connection with the vine, is the height of folly; for Jesus said they were in the vine, or in him; and since that is so, they had become new creatures. If they had but an imaginary union with the vine, the severing of the union would be imaginary too. Does the husbandman really “take away” the branch that produces no fruit? If so, then it had one time been connected with the vine, for he could not take away something that was never there. If these were but professors of religion, who “had never known anything of true and real connection with him,” just what is accomplished when they are taken away? Their relationship to him would be severed; they are not connected now and were not then. So no change has been made in the matter. An imaginary severing of an imaginary union is all imagination anyway. But the fact is, these branches were really and actually connected with the vine-they were branches of the vine—but they produced no fruit and were taken away and cast into the fire. This is a true representation of those who become Christians, new creatures in Christ, but fail to live as God directs. They bring forth no fruit. So they are taken away and cast into the fire of hell. Stronger proof than this is not possible in showing that Children of God may fall away and be lost at last. Don’t let any man deceive you by telling you there is no danger. If there had been no danger, nor possibility, of God’s children being lost at last, Jesus would never have taught the lesson of the vine and branches. You may now be connected with the true vine, you may be a branch in that vine, but if you live in sin against God and do not produce the fruit of the Spirit, the Lord will take you away. It will be terrible to be severed from Christ, but such will occur, and you will be cast into the place of punishment for the wicked. Christians cannot commit any sin beneath the sun, die in the act, and still go home to Heaven. God will reward every man according to his works, and if you, as a child of God, spend your days in sin, you will have to spend eternity in hell. The thought is terrible to contemplate; so let us resolve to be fruitful branches in the true vine and be welcomed to bliss and joy at last.

COLLEGE TALK

I overheard a group of college students on the train discussing various topics. The group was composed of young men and young women. The young men were the most talkative and not averse to impressing those in hearing distance that they possessed a “scholarly” point of view on all matters. The opinion was expressed that marriage persisted because it was the “nature” of women to bow before the goddess of public approval, and little hope was entertained that it would ever be otherwise. The question of religion came up, as it invariably does in such groups. Religion is the most vital issue affecting mankind. It cannot be ignored. Human descent to brutality is accompanied by snarls at religion. One young man who bore external evidence of some polish and mental acumen knew nothing about religion, and, moreover, cared nothing about it, and considered anybody radical who would even discuss it. He, however, was apparently willing to be numbered among the radicals long enough to express contemptuous indifference toward the Bible as a whole and to cast a frown upon the first chapter of Genesis for offering not even a respectable hypothesis in explaining the origin of things. Nothing was said which indicated that he had ever read the first chapters of Genesis or that he was familiar with any other part of the Bible. He had heard about the whale swallowing Jonah, which is the extent of Bible information some college students receive after leaving home. The conversation drifted into a discussion of “hypotheses” of a vague and speculative type which arrived at nowhere, the true terminal of modern unbelief. The young ladies listened with an amused interest, punctuated by remarks which indicated that they did not take the young men seriously. This showed their good sense, as the young men did sound quite a bit like parrots. Who knows but that they may even turn out to be preachers yet? There are ordained clergymen whose lack of faith is about equal to theirs and who enjoy shocking conservatives with their radical opinions. Some “scientific” critics of Bible religion would smile knowingly at each other should they overhear a couple of illiterates discussing science, when it may be that they themselves do not know whether it was Balaam or Nebuchadnezzar who went to heaven in a chariot of fire, and think that Belshazzar rode an ass to the wedding feast where Elijah turned water into wine. As for explaining the marvelous unity of the Bible in view of its many books written by different authors of a long period of time, the persistent and beneficient influence it exercises over all who accept and practice its teaching-well, they just don’t! The very existence of the Bible, its wide circulation, its enemies, and its friends, its contents and what it does not contain-these are all worthy of the attention of thoughtful men.-Cled E. Wallace, 
Among the comments, pro and con, on the article titled “We must obey God rather than men,” published in the Gospel Advocate of Sept. 17, 1942, is an admirably terse, though courteous, criticism, which is made the subject of this article in the form of objections. It is encouraging that not a single misapplication of the apostle’s decisive statement, which was the title of that article, has been noted. And since all who have convictions on the Christian’s relation to civil government belong either to the class of conscientious objectors or to the class of conscientious approvers, and since the respective courses of these two schools of thought were recognized in the article, there could be no personal grounds for objections, for under its teaching self-classification was allowable.

Objection: “Do you ... consider it fair and proper to try to make a general commandment nullify a specific commandment?” No. Neither is it logical to make a specific command to an individual, who is not divinely ordained in a personal capacity to take vengeance, nullify a general command to an individual to obey the government whose divine mission is to take vengeance. Moreover, God’s general command becomes a specific command when God’s ordinance, the government, specifies anything to do that is in harmony with its divine mission. Hence, divine authority for doing a thing, rather than the thing done, determines its scripturalness.

Objection: “Furthermore, do you think Paul was telling Christians to be subject to government; or, to take upon themselves the duty of seeing that others are subject to government?” Both are enjoined to the extent that the government’s commands to “Christians” relate to the enforcement of tolerable behavior on the part of “others,” which is preeminently the divine mission of government. And the querist’s alternative question assumes that a Christian can be subject to government without obeying it, even within the realm of its divine mission. Some assumption! Some #submission! But the querist’s question is only alternative in form, not in substance, for Christians are not commanded “to take upon themselves the duty of seeing that others are subject to government.” The government does that very thing in performing its divine mission. All that Christians are “to take upon themselves” is the disposition to obey God; and to obey God’s ordinance, within the limits of its divine mission, is to obey God. That alternative question also assumes that it is not so essential to civilization for “others” to obey the laws to preserve civilization as it is for “Christians” to obey them, which ignores the fundamental purpose of civil government as divinely appointed.

Objection: “Of whom is the command, ‘Thou shalt kill, under the New Testament?’ (The querist omits the “not” in that command; perhaps intentionally, so I answer accordingly.) The substance of that command with “not” omitted is indirectly of God through his ordinance, the civil government, “for he (“it” -margin) beareth not the sword in vain: for he is a minister of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be in subjection, not only because of the wrath (anger, punishment, etc.), but also for conscience’s sake” (moral sense’s sake or for the sake of one’s moral sense, Romans 13:4, 5). Thus two reasons are given for submission. Observe that this text is ground for conscientious approvers, as it reflects genuine knowledge, yet other texts teach respect for conscience even when it only reflects spurious knowledge, except of course as it may demand that which is a menace to society, such as religious people endangering other by handling snakes. So conscience is scripturally on either side of the question, depending on the quality of the knowledge it may reflect. Let us, therefore, have scriptural respect for the conscience of others, which sometimes may be far from respecting the logic of others.

Objection: “How do you reconcile what you teach with Romans 13:9?” (The latter part of the verse is evidently meant): “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thy self.” It is understood in the light of Romans 12:18: “If it be possible, as much as in you lieth, be at peace with all men,” which implies that it may not be possible in all cases. So how does the querist reconcile what he teaches with Romans 12:18?

Objection: “Do you suppose that you can, in defiance of God’s specific commandment, teach Christians to kill and still be innocent?” (No leading of the witness, please!) No, not in defiance of God’s specific commandment, but in harmony with God’s general commands, one can teach Christians to obey the commands of God’s ordinance, the civil government, to the extent that such commands are in harmony with its divine mission, and still be innocent. Does the querist suppose that he can teach Christians to refuse to obey the commands of the government that are in harmony with its divine mission and thus, so far as Christians are concerned, nullify the divine mission of government, and still be innocent? If so, here is where respect for his conscience continues and respect for his logic (?) on this point ends.

Objection: “You had better do some more thinking before you put the home, government and church (or duty to God) all in the same category.” On the importance of distinguishing between what is and what is not a divine prerogative of government, the following observation was made in the article the querist criticizes: “This principle is equally true and applicable in the matter of obeying parents and elders, for all authority divinely vested in the human element of government, whether home, church, or state, is relative; and no violation of this principle can in the least logically vitiate the principle.” The querist would have contributed to our edification if he had specified anything erroneous in the statement. Since God calls for obedience in all three realms, and since the human element inheres in all three realms, and since we sustain a “relative” obligation in all three realms, I am unable to see anything wrong with the statement; and since the querist only asserts but specifies nothing wrong with it, I am forced to conclude that he knows nothing wrong with it. So the readers may determine who was nodding on that point, whether the writer or the critic.

On this subject, like the divorce question, some sincere people, in their reasoning, are inclined to become more righteous than God. On divorce, God says: “I hate putting away” (Malachi 2:16), yet under certain extreme conditions, provides for putting away by making it allowable. So one may now say, “I hate war,” and yet, under certain extreme conditions, engage in it and still be consistent with that principle of truth. Let us not allow idealism to obscure the truth on any subject.
R. H. BOLL'S SERMON OUTLINE

P. W. STONE STREET

On the subject of Premillennialism, R. H. Boll delivered a sermon over the radio in Chattanooga, Tenn., on Nov. 3, 1942. Several copies of his outline have been mailed out for public perusal. The outline lists a number of things that Brother Boll repudiates, stating that "none of these views have any necessary connection with premillennial teaching." One thing thus repudiated is: "That the church is an accident."

Brother Boll himself is responsible for that impression having been made, when he said: "If, after all He has so solemnly promised and sworn to this people Israel, God does not fulfill His word to them, but instead turns all into a spiritual and figurative fulfillment to a new spiritual contingent called 'the church'—then we cannot know any promise of God can be relied on, nor can we know what He means when He says anything." (Word and Work, March 1938.)"

Later answering a query about the church being an accident, Brother Boll says: "Certainly not. The church is not an accident or make-shift, but the supreme result of God's eternal plan and purpose, the master-work of His wisdom and power. See Eph. 3: 9-11. The word 'contingent', when used substantively, as above, does not carry the idea of anything accidental, but has the sense of a body of people, as for example, a detachment of soldiers in an army, a force, a company. I could of course have used the word 'company', which would have expressed my meaning fully." (Word and Work, Nov., 1938.)

Evidently Brother Boll used the wrong word in both statements, for "contingent" and "company" are not synonymous. And the word "company" in the sense of contingent when applied to the church would imply that the church is a detachment or a part of something else. But of what is the church a part? His correction of one end of his statement throws the other end out of line. Hypothetical reasoning concerning God's promises to Israel, leading to his erroneous conclusion concerning the church in his statement of March 1938, is erroneous, is easily seen by collating his corrected statement concerning the church of Nov. 1938 with his hypothetical premise of March 1938, thus: "If, after all He has so solemnly promised and sworn to His people Israel, God does not fulfill His word to them, but instead turns all into ... 'the supreme result of God's eternal plan and purpose, the master-work of His wisdom and power' ... then we cannot know any promise of God can be relied on, nor can we know what He means when He says anything." (A collated statement from the two statements in Word and Work.)

Obviously, Brother Boll's reasoning of March 1938 does not fit in with his estimate of the church of Nov. 1938. It is respectfully suggested, therefore, that his reasoning in the former statement should yield to his statement of fact in the latter, for why should it be thought a thing incredible that God's promises to Israel would not be in accord with his eternal plan and purpose respecting the church? And why does Brother Boll reason as though it would be necessary for God to turn to his "eternal plan and purpose"? Evidently because Brother Boll's reasoning respecting God's promises to Israel is at variance with God's eternal plan and purpose. Pray, tell me what else could be the reason?

So according to the collation of Brother Boll's two statements concerning God's promise to Israel and his estimate of the church, if his theory concerning God's promise to Israel is erroneous, then all is turned into "the supreme result of God's eternal plan and purpose, the master-work of His wisdom and power." Thus Brother Boll's reasoning presents either one of two alternatives for the consideration and indorsement of the readers: "God's eternal plan and purpose respecting the church, or Brother Boll's theory respecting those promises to Israel, was in the divine mind when those promises were made. May the readers properly and prayerfully ponder the question thus set forth.

Evidently the school of thought to which Brother Boll belongs on this question, like national Israel did, fails to make the mental transition from the literal meanings of terms to their divinely acquired spiritual meanings. This is the fundamental difference between Brother Boll's teaching and those who oppose his teaching. There are several manifestations of differences expressed in the outline under review, but this one principle is sufficiently fundamental to cover everything else in embryo. And with Inspiration the process of spiritualizing terms is very simple. It only amounted to using terms to spiritual ends. True, in some such applications the divine end in view is not plain from the immediate context; but, in all such cases, we may safely conclude that "the supreme result of God's eternal plan and purpose, the master-work of His wisdom and power," is in view in some of its phases. This being preeminently the Spirit-age, it is not strange that all such unfulfilled promises relating to the material and fleshly in former dispensations have been spiritualized. Otherwise we would be confronted with two instead one "supreme result of God's eternal plan and purpose." And even Brother Boll only specified one in his statement in Word and Work of Nov. 1938. And let us ever keep in mind the important fact that the spiritual realm of thought is dependent upon the natural realm of thought for its vocabulary.

One of the most general of such terms is the name "Israel," originally divinely given to an individual (Jacob), subsequently divinely given to "the twelve tribes" and even divinely given to national Israel in its entirety, with various other applications in the course of its history. Finally, in the New Testament, the term "Israel" is divinely given to Christians throughout the world, embracing all in Christ, where and when "there can be neither Jew nor Greek," as such. (Gal. 3: 28.)

The term being used in opposition to "as many as shall walk by this rule"; or, as Weymouth renders it, "all who shall regulate their lives by this principle"—the principle set forth by Paul-definitely applies the term to God's own people in this gospel-age, thus: "And as many as shall walk by this rule, peace be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God." (Gal. 6: 16.)

Inspiration having thus spiritualized one of the most general terms applying to God's elect race in that previous dispensation, all other terms of like import in the New Testament are necessarily spiritualized for the same reason, which it is unnecessary to particularly discuss now. Hence, only the significance of such terms that apply in common to God's elect race under both dispensations are practical for "Christians today, except as a matter of history, from which we may glean principles of obedience, with their warnings and encouragements, according to our attitude toward such principles. So as such terms are divinely applied to God's elect race under Christ, they have lost all their former national and racial significance, including promises and warnings, except such aspects as inhere in the spiritual applications, for the simple reason that they now apply to an elect race or nation in which there are no racial and national bounds but only spiritual or religious bounds.

Brother Boll's outline suggests that certain of the pioneers and preachers of later dates taught some things in harmony with his position on Premillennialism. This writer agrees that they did but denies that what they taught that was not in harmony with the New Testament is any better criterion than what Brother Boll teaches; hence, his suggestion is not germane to any basic proof for his position. But by following their (Continued on Page 16)
A REASON FOR THE CHRISTIAN'S HOPE

Oscar Smith

In all ages of the world there have been but two classes of people—the righteous and the wicked. When Jehovah purposed in his heart to destroy the wicked by a flood, there were only eight righteous people in the world, and they were saved in the ark. When the Son of God appeared upon the earth during the reign of the Roman emperors, there were but two classes, the good and the bad, or children of God and the children of the devil. This doctrine is as ancient as the history of the human family. Today there are but two attitudes that one can assume in regard to his fellow men—the attitude of a brother, or helper, and the attitude of a brute. I am persuaded that there is no middle ground.

A story has been told of a man in a country where they eat each other, defending his title to a piece of land on the ground that he ate the former owner. In this age there are people who have the erroneous idea that a nation stronger than some other nation has the right to go over and take charge of the other nation. That idea is based upon the doctrine that “might makes right.”

The Bible uses the words “brutish” and “beasts” in describing certain human beings. David says, “O Lord, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep. A brutish man knoweth not; neither doth a fool understand this.” (Ps. 92:5, 6.)

The prophet Jeremiah in referring to man and his idols declares that “man is brutish in his knowledge.” (Jer. 10:14.) Another prophet said, “Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood, and establisheth a city by iniquity!” (Hab. 2:12.) That military leader who decides to disregard the rights of man, and who makes war upon a small nation because he can conquer it, instead of being highly civilized is headed directly toward the marshes of the dark ages.

When the Son of God came into the world he opened up what the Bible calls a “new and a living way.” He died to establish an institution which he calls “my church.” All who become members of the church of the Lord have their feet planted upon the divine foundation. They have a hope which the unbeliever or the skeptic does not have. While many people have the idea that there are many ways leading to eternal life, I desire to be understood as teaching by the authority of the sacred scriptures, that there are but two ways for men to travel—the narrow way which leads to life and the broad way which leads to destruction. There are but two great leaders in the world—Christ, who is leading the forces of righteousness, and Satan, who is leading the forces of evil. There are but two places for men to go after death—to heaven, the home of the righteous, and to gehenna, the place of eternal punishment.

Many Christians during the first century were put to death for following the New Light which had sprung up in the land of Judea. They were stoned to death, some of them were thrown into the arena and were devoured by ravenous beasts. Some of them were burned at the stake, but as the blazen fagots leaped about their bodies they often breathed a prayer for their enemies. While they were being persecuted even unto death, the question went up, why do these feeble Christians continue to praise the name of the Galilean? Others asked, Upon what do they base their hope? The apostle Peter addressed a letter to some of the scattered saints in which he said, “But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.” (1 Pet. 3:15.)

I believe that the Christian has a hope that the unbeliever does not have. What is the hope of the Christian?

The word “hope” is often erroneously used. We have heard the question asked, “Are you a Christian?” and the answer about as follows: “I hope I am.” But if one is a Christian he does not hope that he is; he knows whether or not he is a child of God. For the Bible tells us what to do in order to become children of God, and we know whether or not we have done what it teaches us to do. Paul says, “For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?” (Rom. 8:24.) Again Paul says, “For the Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” (Rom. 8:16.) The Bible says, “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” (Rom. 8:2.) The Holy Spirit revealed the law for the cleansing of sin. He tells us plainly what we must do in order to be saved, and our spirits tell us whether or not we have obeyed. The Bible does not say that the Spirit bears witness to our spirit; it would have to read that way to fit modern theology. It says, the Holy Spirit bears witness with our spirit. One cannot become a child of God and not know it. Becoming a Christian is an intelligent matter. God addresses himself to man’s understanding. Since the establishment of the church, there has not been a single person in God’s kingdom who has not been taught. Isaiah in prophesying concerning the church declared that all should be taught of God. (Isa. 54:13.)

Jesus, while here in person, quoted from Isaiah when he said, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, “And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.” (Jno. 6:44, 46.)

If a man is a Christian, he is a new creature in Christ. “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” (2 Cor. 5:17.) Not only is he a new creature, but he is walking after the Spirit and not after the flesh. (See Rom. 8:1-4.) To determine whether or not we are walking after the Spirit is a very simple matter. Paul says, “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. . . Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like.” Then he tells us what it means to walk in the Spirit. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” (Gal. 5:16-25.)

The Bible plan of salvation is (1) preaching; (2) hearing; (3) believing; (4) confessing the name of Christ, and (5) baptism. The consummating act in entering the kingdom of God is baptism administered in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Paul says, “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” (Rom. 6:3, 4.) It might be suggested here that we, become children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, which is absolutely correct. But how do we become children of God by faith? Hear Paul’s answer, “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” (Gal. 3:26, 27.) Thus we find that we are baptized into Christ. Hence, one cannot become a member of Christ’s body, the church, and not know it. When one is saved by the power of God, he is delivered from the kingdom of darkness and is translated into the kingdom of Jesus Christ. “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be
partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son; in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." (Col. 1:12-14.)

When a man becomes a Christian, he is in the kingdom of Christ; has redemption, and the forgiveness of sins. Becoming a child of God is as simple as our a-b-c's. We can trace every step intelligently.

But what are the elements of hope? There are just three, viz., forecast, expectation, and desire. If either of these elements is lacking there can be no hope. If you were to ask me the question, Do you hope to be the next governor of Texas? I would answer, I do not. Would you like to be the next Governor? Of course I would. Doesn't forecast declare that Texas will continue to have a Governor as long as she exists as a State? Certainly. But I do not expect to be the next Governor of Texas. Just one element of hope is lacking, and hence I have no hope with reference to the office of Governor of Texas.

Let me ask a question: Do you hope to be saved eternally? I have never met a person who did not expect some day to stand with the redeemed. Let me put the question in another form. If you were to die in your present condition, do you think the Lord would save you? "Well," you say, "I would have to straighten up some matters which at the present would keep me out of heaven." If that is true, you could not say that you have any hope in your present condition.

But here is a man who has been in the church for twenty-five years, but who has never done anything but warm a bench about one hour each week during the period of time that he has been in the church. If the Lord should suddenly come to "make up his jewels," do you believe that he would embrace you as his child? "Well, I will admit," says he, "that I have not been as hard for the Lord than we are for anything else in this world, whether or not they are living the Christian life. The Lord has cried, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul his expectation shall perish: and the hope of unjust men is most miserable." (Job. 8:13.) Again: "For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul?" (Job. 27:8.) I submit to you, that the hypocrite, according to Job, has no hope.

There is no hope for the wicked. "When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish: and the hope of unjust men perisheth." (Pro. 11:7.) There is no hope for the hypocrite; there is no hope for the wicked. Who then has a hope?

When Christ came into the world, the disciples who followed him during his Galilean ministry expected him to build a temporal kingdom like the one David established many centuries ago. There are still many people in the world who are expecting the Lord to return and establish such a kingdom, so materialistic are their views. When the Lord allowed his enemies to put him to death, the disciples went away from the scene of the crucifixion saying, "But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel." (Lk. 24:21.) They were a disappointed group of disciples. Their hope in him as their King died when he expired on the cross. But let us stand with the apostle Peter at the sunrise of the new tomb and hear what he has to say: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." (1 Pet. 1:3.)

In studying the word "hope" as it is used in the Bible, there is but one class that can say, "If I were to die today, I would expect the Lord to take me to dwell with him," and that class is following the Lord faithfully. Relative to the future, forecast declares that the righteous shall be rewarded with everlasting life, a righteous man expects to be saved eternally, his desire for salvation is so strong that he obeys every command of the Lord. It doesn't get too cold for him to worship the Lord; it is never too hot; he goes right on doing what he knows he ought to do, and then, when he can no longer carry out the will of the Lord upon this earth, he falls asleep in the arms of his Redeemer to await the great day when all the righteous dead shall be called from their graves into the presence of their Lord, where they shall "dwell with him forever and ever."

The Christian's hope reaches far beyond this life. In Paul's discussion of the resurrection of the dead we find the following: "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." (1 Cor. 15:19.) A vessel on the ocean has to have an anchor. When the storm arises, if the anchor holds securely the vessel overrides the storm. Paul says, "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that which is within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." (Heb. 6:19, 20.) The veil was before the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle and was typical of heaven. The Christian's hope therefore reaches into heaven where God and Christ are.

When does the Christian come into possession of eternal life? Near the end of his career as a preacher, Paul addressed a letter to the young evangelist Titus in which he said, "Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, ... In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began." (Titus 1:1, 2.) Again: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." (Titus 2:11-13.) And again: "That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (Titus 3:7.)

We shall receive eternal life in the world to come. After the rich young ruler had refused to obey the Lord, as he walked away, "Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto thee, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life." (Mar. 10:28-30.) Christians have the promise of eternal life. "And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life." (1 Jno. 2:25.)

Eternal life comes after the fight of faith. "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses." (1 Tim. 6:12.) Paul was the veteran of a thousand battles. After having spent his life as a preacher of the gospel, and while spending his last days upon the earth in the prison at Rome, he said to his son, Timothy, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing," (2 Tim. 4:6-8.)
A GREAT MEETING

The fifth Tabernacle meeting with N. B. Hardeman as speaker, which opened here Sunday, marks a cycle in the religious life of Nashville. There is not the fanfare which attended the first such meeting in the spring of 1922. Attendance will be more modest—more moderately-sized buildings. The financial budget is more conservative. The length of the meeting is not as great. It is sponsored by the Chapel Avenue congregation. No special invitations were extended; the same invitation to cooperate was extended to all. But whatever is lacking in physical arrangements, as compared with the first meetings of this series, is more than compensated for in the spirit of this one and the response made to the invitation to cooperate.

The tone of this meeting is the same. Rom. 1: 16 could be said to be the keynote of them all. But the overtone of this one is Ps. 133: 1: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

The War Memorial Auditorium was filled Sunday afternoon for the opening service. B. C. Goodpasture introduced the speaker; R. V. Cawthon led the prayer. The Central Church Auditorium was filled Sunday night for the second sermon, the title of which was "Fellowship." A. R. Holton introduced the speaker; E. H. Ijams, president of David Lipscomb College, led the prayer. This service was at 6:45 p.m., and the sermon was broadcast over WLAC. Churches in the city called off their services, or adjusted the time, so that their members could attend or listen.

The meeting was arranged hurriedly, at the suggestion of H. Leo Boles. The original schedule called for only seven sermons. There will be fifteen, all of which will be included in the book to be published, making that volume uniform in every respect with the four volumes already published. There are seven sermons at the War Memorial Auditorium. Joseph R. Ridley, of Nashville, is leading the singing. Seven sermons will be presented at the Central Church, where Andy T. Ritehe, Jr., conducts the singing (all of these will be broadcast). And Brother Hardeman will address the students of David Lipscomb College at one chapel service.

The spirit of this meeting links back to the spirit of the first meeting of this kind, nearly twenty-one years ago. It is a great meeting, because it is a happy one—and this good news is without exception or reservation.—W. E. B., Gospel Advocate.

It will be noted that Brother Hardeman preached daily at the Central Church in Nashville during this meeting. The elders of the Central Church voted a refusal to announce the former Hardeman auditorium meeting in Nashville, and entered their refusal in the minutes of that elder's meeting. We are pleased to note their change of attitude. We know that Harde-man has not changed his preaching. While Central Church has issued no statement at this date, it is understood that A. R. Holton, their preacher, did tell the sponsors of this meeting that they made a mistake in that action. It now seems in order for the elders of the Central Church "to take another vote" and strike out of the record the blot that was placed upon the cause in Nashville by their uncalled for and unfortunate action. Not for Hardeman's sake—but for their own sake, and the sake of the cause of Christ, they should publicly rescind their action.

This would be generally applauded. It would be right. And everything should be done right.

Brother Hardeman had his own reasons, sufficient to himself, for preaching at the Central Church before this was done. That was a matter between him and them. But the public disavowal of their former action is a matter between them and the Cause they wronged. Men and fame are minor things, but the cause of God and the church of Christ are as precious as heaven and cannot be insulted with impunity.

A SISTER ALMOST SEVENTY SAYS A FEW THINGS

I have just finished reading the reprint of the editorials on "The Christian And The Government" and I hope you will have patience while your sister, almost seventy, says a few things. I've been a member of the body of Christ fifty-two years, heard many fine preachers of the gospel, read many religious articles in our papers, but yours is the first one that has struck the key-note on that subject, as I have felt it to be. The other attitude always seemed to me to strike at something fine and noble in man. It looks cheap—and often is just what it is usually called. Somehow I have never felt like it would bother my conscience to rise up in defense of my home and country. Right now I shouldn't hesitate to make a few bullets if it was required. Religion to me has always meant trying to be true in all the relationships of life. I like "Caesar" mighty well for all that he has meant to us, and to the church, and it isn't his fault that the church has not done more toward preaching the gospel to the whole world.

Now, Brother Wallace, I know this isn't worth a nickle to you. But I just wanted you to know how pleased I am to hear my views discussed by able students of the Bible. All these years I have held the secret conviction that the scriptures used to prove the other view did not prove any such thing. For example: "For if my kingdom was of this world then would my disciples fight." Isn't it silly? I remember your meetings in Dickson still with pleasure. Brother Ira Douthitt takes up work with the church here the first of December. Thanking you for this indulgence, I am, sincerely, (Mrs.) Eddie W. Swank.

[Note: Sister Swank is mistaken in one point, namely, her statement that her letter "isn't worth a nickle" to me. In proof that her good letter is worth more than "a nickle" to me, her name goes on the Bible Banner list complimentary, permanently, as long as she lives if it is published that long, and if I am its editor, which I hope may be until she can write me a letter as "your sister, almost ninety"! Nor does this good wish necessarily terminate at that particular age.—F. E. W., Jr.]

WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

I appreciate the many fine things in the Banner, and the continued good work it is doing. I most seriously object to the effort some are making on the war issue to have usclassed with such groups as Jehovah's Witnesses. To me it is nothing short of slandering the church. It is possible, of course, for people to become too radical in the other direction.—M. C. Cuthbertson, Denver, Colorado.
I have often heard about "fan mail" but never did get enough of it to make me any cockier than I naturally am, but beloved, you ought to see my crank mail. It is surprising how many people with a goodly supply of sunry notions read what I write and feel impelled to exhort me or berate me or both, and contribute to the U. S. Treasury to set me straight. They usually dare me to reply or forever bear the stigma of cowardice. One good woman was so deeply moved over something I had written that she composed and mailed me fourteen typewritten pages in an attempt to rescue me from the clutches of Satan and showed unmistakable signs of being genuinely distressed about me. Of course, I appreciate her concern, bless her heart, and read all she had to say, but I'm too busy reading what others say about me, nice and otherwise, to match words with her in the sort of private correspondence she evidently craves. Please accept my regrets, but my present program will not allow me to take on a strange lady who can talk to the tune of fourteen typewritten pages at a clip. I would tremble at the prospect if I had nothing else to do.

Nothing Like Him in the New Testament

In a certain meeting, a sermon was preached, an invitation was given, and a man came forward. He wanted to be a Christian, but said he did not want to be baptized, or to belong to the church. "I don't want to join any church," he insisted. Suppose his wish could be granted, and he became that the known bondholders, mortgages, and other enemies of a divine ordinance still babble that the river Jordan had either too little or too much water to immerse penitents in. If they lived in Judea, they would be capable of contending that the Mississippi river did not have enough water in it to float a canoe between Vicksburg and Memphis. And they could make some people believe it.

Hard to Nail

Some of the most obvious of errors are hard to nail. A vicious and dishonest propaganda keeps them in circulation. There are some very intelligent people who still think that you could dam the river Jordan with your foot where John was baptizing. Others contend that the banks of the river were so steep and the water so swift that immersion of the people was impossible. The lie, of either too little water or too much water, has the same result; it keeps people out of it. This is the result the propagandist wants, and he is not materially concerned over which lie the victim believes. The Book says: "Now John himself had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then went out unto him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about the Jordan, confessing their sins." (Matt. 3:4-6) Travelers take pictures, write books, and make speeches, so that the truth about the Jordan river is about as clear as it is about the Tennessee or Ohio rivers. But enemies of a divine ordinance still babble that the river Jordan had either too little or too much water to immerse penitents in. If they lived in Judea, they would be capable of contending that the Mississippi river did not have enough water in it to float a canoe between Vicksburg and Memphis. And they could make some people believe it.
WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

I have meant to write you before this to tell you that I appreciate so much your recent statements relative to the Christian and the government. I have so taught since I saw the first efforts to commit the whole church to a “creed” written by well meaning but misguided men at the close of the other great war in 1918. Your articles are clear-cut, straightforward and logical. The reasoning cannot be refuted. I congratulate you, and am sure that the thousands of our brethren in uniform get comfort from such teaching. May the God of the Universe bless us as we strive for the truth.-Rue Porter, Neosha, Mo.

I want to commend you for your stand on the war question and the excellent way in which you have handled it. It requires courage for a man to come out into the open on such matters, and few will do so. I have studied the articles carefully and can find nothing contrary either to the Bible or to common sense. I predict since the last articles in the Bible Banner your critics will be quieted. Your setting them against themselves should cause them to ponder. I am against war as I know you are, but I fail to see the difference between engaging in the war a little or a lot. And the man who hands up the shell seems as guilty as the man who fires it.-R. J. Findley, Longview, Texas.

I am writing to let you know that I still love and enjoy reading the Bible Banner. My prayer is that it will live as long as there are false brethren to mar the church and its peace. I know you will continue to fight false doctrine as long as you live. I have especially enjoyed the articles on the Christian’s relation to the Government-C. C. Woodard, Pampa, Texas.

I want you to know that I appreciate the articles on the Christian and the Government. I will frankly say that I, at one time, did not agree with your position now. And the one article in the March issue did not convince me. But I have been earnestly studying each succeeding article in the light of God’s word in a sincere effort to learn the truth. I understand the issue much more than before. I, therefore, thank you for the able discussion of it in the Bible Banner. Keep up the good work.—John H. Gerrard, Chattanooga, Tennessee.

How glad we are to get the Bible Banner. Each issue is a mine of wealth, a rich treasure. You are eminently correct on the war matter, and the way you check it up to those who want to “debate” it with you is unique—it is keen. When they agree among themselves we shall be ready to hear them.-A. LeRoy Elkins, Hugo, Oklahoma.

and strive on the one hand, and those things for which they are divinely forbidden to contend and strive on the other hand. So whatever the pioneers did by way of expending surplus mental energy on such vacillating flights into the unknown, their records show that their main purpose was to “stand fast in one spirit, with one soul striving for the faith of the gospel.” (Phil. 2:27.) And let it be observed that thus striving for the faith of the gospel logically involves striving against everything that is contrary to that principle of obedience. So as to whether or not striving and contending is divinely enjoined depends altogether on what one is striving and contending for, thus mere methods of procedure pale into insignificance as compared to the importance of far-reaching principles at stake.

WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

I always enjoy the Bible Banner, especially your pieces. I read them first. I have not just read the last issue, I have studied it. I appreciate your attention to burning issues while they are burning.-M. H. Peebles, Saratoga, Arkansas.

(Note: This letter started with “My dear friend.” I appreciate this Arkansas friend of mine. I don’t care who knows it, though he may. Brother Milton Peebles has been principal of the school at Saratoga quite a number of years. Naturally, I think he is intelligent enough to be the principal of a school in Saratoga, New York, because he likes my “pieces” and reads them first. Of course, reading an article first does not prove it the best; it could mean that it is the worst. Anyway, I am human enough to appreciate knowing who and where my good friends are.-F. E. W., Jr.)

Some days ago I wrote you that on account of several things we had to deal with we could not renew our subscription to the Bible Banner. Now, fearing that you failed to understand us as thoroughly as intended, I am writing you this to inform you that we are holding no ill-will toward any of your efforts, both in your sermons and through the columns of your paper, to repudiate and offset the efforts of R. H. Boll and his “young prophets” to destroy the simplicity of the gospel. We are glad that we still have godly men who are willing and have the courage to stand boldly in defense of the gospel of our Lord at all hazards. We are looking forward to the four weeks’ meetings the churches are preparing for you next summer. Wife joins me in the things expressed in this note.—Jesse Beall, Chattanooga, Tenn.

(Note: Brother Beall is approaching a ripe old age and has long been active in the church in Chattanooga. He can have the Bible Banner with the compliments of the editor, if he will accept it, and I appreciate his letter.)

A friend handed me your Bible Banner to read the articles on the Christian and the Government. It was such a wonderful piece to me, as I have a son in the service of his country. I would like for you to send me a few copies of the September issue, in which these articles were printed. I hope you can comply with my request.-Mrs. L. A. Walls, Dickson, Tennessee.

(We had a volume of such requests and supplied them all until the issues containing the articles desired were exhausted. We trust Sister Walls received her copies.)

You boys have the truth on the question of The Christian and the Government and I am glad to see you put it in print.-R. G. Hatter, Handley, Texas.