WHAT ABOUT IT BRETHREN?

R. L. WHITESIDE

Sometimes we overlook a passage of scripture that has a vital bearing on a point of controversy. If I am not mistaken, I have such a passage in mind.

The future kingdom advocates have arranged this program for the Lord: The Lord will come for his saints, at which time the dead in Christ will be raised, and with the living saints will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air. Then there is to be a period of tribulation! and then the Lord will come with his saints to reign on earth one thousand years. At the end of the thousand years the dead sinners will be raised. According to the theory, all who die in their sins before his second coming will not see him “coming in the clouds of heaven.” Now read Matthew 26: 62-64: “And the high priest stood up, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee? But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou art the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.” The plural pronoun “ye” shows that Jesus addressed, not the high priest alone,

but the whole council. These hardened sinners, now dead these many centuries, shall see the Lord “coming on the clouds of heaven.” It seems to me that the future kingdom advocates will have to revise their theory to make it fit these words of Jesus, or else show that he was not referring to his “second coming.”

COMMENTARY ON ROMANS

CLED E. WALLACE

Brother R. L. Whiteside’s new book, Commentary on Romans, is off the press and orders are being filled. I have received my copy and devoured every word of it with sustained interest. I had read parts of it in manuscript and knew it would be a superior book, but it is even greater than I expected. It is the clearest and most satisfying exposition of Paul’s great letter I have ever examined and I have done some browsing around in my time. My copy is a personal and priceless possession. The Bible student should not overlook this rare offering of a brilliant and devout mind. A work of such merit does not appear often. We are satisfied with just a taste of many books. This one can be eaten and digested with maximum relish and satisfaction. If my enthusiasm appears to be on the superlative side, reserve judgment until you get a copy and take a few bites. Every bite I took called for more.

NOTICE

The delay in delivery of the Houston addresses, “Modern Millennial Theories Exposed,” has been due to difficulties in the printer’s office. Arrangements have been made with the Firm Foundation Publishing House to proceed with the book and complete it. It will be ready for delivery soon. Pre-publication price, $1.50; after publication, $2.50. Order from Roy E. Cogdill, Publisher, ‘701 Legreen Street, Houston 8, Texas.
THE NEW COMMENTARY ON ROMANS
By R. L. WHITESIDE
Cloth Binding - 301 Pages - Price, $2.50

G. H. P. SHOWALTER SAYS:

“It is my opinion that it is the best in the way of a commentary on any book of the New Testament that has been offered.”

OSCAR ELLISON SAYS:

“It’s the best I have seen on the Roman letter. The author has the rare ability of putting profound thoughts in simple language.”

R. L. Whiteside

C. R. NICHOL SAYS:

“It is my judgment that Brother Whiteside’s commentary on Romans is the best that can be had.”

TED W. McELROY SAYS:

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This NEW COMMENTARY ON PAUL’S LETTER TO THE SAINTS AT ROME is a study, verse by verse, by an outstanding, consecrated scholar, preacher, debater and writer.

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Bold without dogmatism; reverential without assumed piety; logical in his conclusions; obsessed with the determination to teach the truth in the simplest language, that all may understand fully the truth taught.

Study Classes:

The book went on sale July 25. Already it is popular. A number of classes have been formed to use this boon to the study of the book of Romans.

Preachers And Teachers:

No preacher or teacher in the Church of Christ should fail to secure a copy of this book.

Limited Edition:

Because of the limited paper supply it has been impossible to bring from the press a large number of these books. Secure your copy at once.

ADDRESS ALL ORDERS TO:

MRS. C. R. NICHOL, Publisher, Clifton, Texas
W. P. Reedy has “changed fellowships” and Carl Etter has “left the Church of Christ.” Both went to the Congregationalists. Jimmie Lovell let them use up a couple of pages of the West Coast Christian in explanation of the whys and wherefores of their change. From the manner in which he wrings his hands and carries on Jimmie evidently thinks he is standing before stark and unprecedented tragedy. But it has not shocked him into speechlessness. He says:—

“The whole matter has been as a sore spot in my heart, and God is certain to be displeased with all of us. I feel, as I reported, that much fault is ours, and the fact that fewer than two dozen of you brethren who read the notice bothered to spend a three cent stamp proves that I mean. Let any one of us begin to weaken, and the greatest sport of our group seems to be in driving him down.”

His idea seems to be that because a couple of preachers, who have confessedly done a lot of wobbling for some years, have decided that the spiritual grazing is greener in denominational pastures, that much of the blame is to be placed on the church. Of course Brother Reedy and Brother Etter give the church credit for all the blame. They have suffered untold agony for years trying to put up with our narrowness and lack of appreciation of their advanced attainments in spiritual discernment. They kept on growing or swelling until they basted right out of the straitjacket of our intolerance and landed smack in the middle of the Congregationalists. They profess to have found the peace they long have sought, even if it has broken Jimmie’s heart and thrown him into a fit of semi-hysterics. His effort to saddle the blame on the rest of us suggests that if the church were a circus, Jimmie could get the place of head-clown by acclamation. When these two prize horses walked off and vamoosed the ranch the brethren did not trouble to lock the door of the empty stable. Of course Brother Reedy and Brother Etter give the church credit for all the blame. They have suffered untold agony for years trying to put up with our narrowness and lack of appreciation of their advanced attainments in spiritual discernment. They kept on growing or swelling until they basted right out of the straitjacket of our intolerance and landed smack in the middle of the Congregationalists. They profess to have found the peace they long have sought, even if it has broken Jimmie’s heart and thrown him into a fit of semi-hysterics. His effort to saddle the blame on the rest of us suggests that if the church were a circus, Jimmie could get the place of head-clown by acclamation. When these two prize horses walked off and vamoosed the ranch the brethren did not trouble to lock the door of the empty stable. Of course Brother Reedy and Brother Etter give the church credit for all the blame. They have suffered untold agony for years trying to put up with our narrowness and lack of appreciation of their advanced attainments in spiritual discernment. They kept on growing or swelling until they basted right out of the straitjacket of our intolerance and landed smack in the middle of the Congregationalists. They profess to have found the peace they long have sought, even if it has broken Jimmie’s heart and thrown him into a fit of semi-hysterics. His effort to saddle the blame on the rest of us suggests that if the church were a circus, Jimmie could get the place of head-clown by acclamation. When these two prize horses walked off and vamoosed the ranch the brethren did not trouble to lock the door of the empty stable. Of course Brother Reedy and Brother Etter give the church credit for all the blame. They have suffered untold agony for years trying to put up with our narrowness and lack of appreciation of their advanced attainments in spiritual discernment. They kept on growing or swelling until they basted right out of the straitjacket of our intolerance and landed smack in the middle of the Congregationalists.

The departed customarily sing a swan-song of outspokenness in their last testament. They endured much pain in arriving at a decision. They needed more room in which to exercise their advanced conceptions of truth. They were victims of intolerance on the part of ignorant and creed-bound minds. And finally they enjoy a peace they never knew before they left home. And frankly I doubt it.

Jimmie thinks these wandering stars “are standing in the presence of the sin against the Holy Spirit-lost.” It does look a little like it from this distance and it is not likely that a shower of three-cents stamps will snatch them from the burning. Since he is anxious to assume some of the blame, it occurs to me that possibly some of it is his. As I glance over the long list of complaints and charges of the self-righteous delinquents, I recognize several that Jimmie has made and repeated over and over again in the West Coast Christian over a long period. It may be that these men came to the conclusion that the church is as bad as Jimmie has been saying that it is, and “left” it. What do you mean—“much fault is ours”? Two preachers got smarter than God and left the church. You needn’t look at me! I’ve done some fairly mean things in my time but I didn’t have anything to do with this. And after reading what they have to say in the way of childish and lame excuses, I am not going to join Jimmie in calling mourners because “fewer than two dozen . . . bothered to spend a three-cent stamp on them.” In view of the circumstances it would look like a prodigal waste of the Lord’s money. In a way Jimmie derives some comfort from our failure in the use of stamps. He claims that it “proves what I mean.” Evidently it doesn’t take much to prove what Jimmie means.

As lamentable as it is, there is nothing new in men becoming wise above what is written and leaving the church. It happened in the days of the apostles and has been going on all the way from trickles to floods and back ever since. I need not take up space to cite the particulars. The departed customarily sing a swan-song of self-justification. Their change did not come suddenly. They endured much pain in arriving at a decision. They needed more room in which to exercise their advanced conceptions of truth. They were victims of intolerance on the part of ignorant and creed-bound minds. And finally they enjoy a peace they never knew before they left home. And frankly I doubt it.
Brother Reedy and Brother Etter have followed the usual pattern. All do not land with the Congregationalists. Some go digressive and some just go nuts. One brilliant young preacher climbed to the top round of the educational ladder, became somewhat of a national figure in scholarship and politics. He was and is interviewed and written up, and modestly confessed that when he “discovered science he lost his faith.” A sorry swap I call it. His own brother quotes him as saying that when he looks down from the top of the ladder he has “an empty feeling.” I should think as much.

As I look over the loquacious and self-written obituaries of the departed, their wailing complaints are neither new enough nor true enough to even be irritating. They are for the most part echoes of charges that sectarian debaters and partisan bigots have been making for many years. Reedy and Etter will have no more success in proving these charges than others have had. “Twenty unwritten creeds;” “interested in heresy hunting;” “refusing to hear those who have persisted in their quest for truth;” “the Church of Christ is based upon a superficial interpretation of the Bible and is fundamentally in error;” “forbids the voicing of any newly discovered truths or the expression of honest convictions;” “the church has devised a formal pattern, to which one must conform even to pre-conceived and inherited theories of Biblical inspiration”; “parley over matters of second-rate importance”; “pre-conceived and inherited interpretations of the Bible on the grounds that it was written to another people or a different age”; “some of the most cherished doctrines of the Church of Christ burst as irides- cent bubbles when exposed to the searchlight of the scientific approach in religion;” “rejecting large portions of the Bible on the grounds that they have never joined a denomination by that or any other name. I have never been handicapped or out for that matter, is free to try to set me right wherein he thinks I am wrong. I have been chousted around a good deal in my time, but there is not enough meanness in circulation either in or out of the church to drive me into a denomination which is, by common consent, when he contends that he is not free to speak out against sin anywhere at any time. The talking-fest constantly going on in churches of Christ by both the wise and the foolish is a loud answer to the charge that we have no freedom of expression. How could we so abuse what we do not have?

If things are as bad as Brother Reedy says they are, he seems to be acting with poor grace. For some years he was associated with one of the most intolerant “groups” in the church. He helped create the sorry mess. It looks like he ought to stay and help clean it up instead of holding his nose and running off to a denomination which he confesses is not the church of Christ and is only in part, a part of it and he is not sure which part that is. The confusion of the brother ought to be embarrassing.

There really isn’t much difficulty involved in properly appraising this little situation which has scarcely caused a ripple in the church. If these two black sheep know what they are bleating about, they have been wrong all the time. They confess that they have belonged to a denomination “so labeled” “the Church of Christ” which does not include all true Christians.

Such a denomination regardless of what it is called is both unscriptural and anti-scriptural. These brethren should never have joined it, much less stayed in it as long as they did. The church of Christ is the family of God, including all the children of God. So at best, whichever way you want to look at it, these brethren have got out of one denomination and landed in another one. The one they now belong to is smaller than the body of Christ and bigger than a local congregation of Christians and is not the church of Christ in any sense as it is defined by New Testament teaching. At best they have just jumped out of the fire into the frying pan. At worst it is the other way round.

I cannot help but feel a little “smug” even though it seems to irritate the departed brethren. I believe that Baptists used to call it “the Campbellite grin.” Brother Etter seems to be trying to be as ugly as the Baptists, but I don’t think he will ever make it. His intentions may be pointed in that direction but he has neither the ability nor the practice to be an artist in that line. Nobody can really do it like a Baptist can. Now, I have been a Christian and a member of the church of Christ, lo, these many years. I have never joined a denomination by that or any other name. I have never been handicapped in expressing myself on any matter I thought needed talking about. Anybody in the church, or out for that matter, is free to try to set me right wherein he thinks I am wrong. I have been chousted around a good deal in my time, but there is not enough meanness in circulation either in or out of the church to drive me into a denomination which is, by common consent,
not the church of Christ, including all true Christians.

These befuddled brethren appear to be greatly worried because some of us are slow in recognizing the Christians whom they feel they know are among the denominations. They are a bit inconsistent at this point for they appear to admit that there are some members of the denomination they have joined who are not Christians and that nobody but God knows who are and who are not. Then why be too exacting of us, especially when sheep away from home are not always easy to locate? There were no Christians in the denominations in New Testament days because there were no denominations for them to get into. However, they did get into a lot of things they should have stayed out of and it kept the shepherds quite busy looking after them. Christians are still getting into things they ought to stay out of, possibly including some respectable denominations. If there are any in the denominations they are undoubtedly where they ought not to be. If Brother Reedy and Brother Etter are still Christians in the “true” sense, then there are at least two Christians in a denomination. A couple of babes lost in the woods, so to speak. Jimmie is sure they stand face to face with the sin against the Holy Ghost and are lost. Not being as dogmatic and intolerant of human waywardness as Jimmie is, I think I'll for the present at least refer their case to the Lord. However, I do know that the Lord sometimes if not oftener blots some names out of his church book, scratches them off. Nor can I assure them a clear signal on the detour they are making for glory. From my observation post, it looks like it couldn't possibly be any better than a hard climb and a tight squeeze. I'm terribly afraid they can't make it, considering the opportunities they have had for knowing better.

Now, what is really the matter with these brethren? We do not have to guess for they have told us. They have told us some of the faults of the church and have exaggerated to the point of prevarication, but that isn't near all they have done. At the same time they have told us what is the matter with them. The church which has in it some rather weak specimens of humanity struggling along trying to get to heaven by the grace of God, has plenty the matter with it, humanly speaking; but after that subject has been exhausted, that is still not the trouble with Reedy and Etter.

They have been “denied in the Church of Christ a whole hearted fellowship in which we could raise our family” and been hounded and abused by “heresy-hunters” and their intellectual freedom has been restricted by intolerance, etc. Well, I wonder! I have done a little thinking and talking in my time, have run into some intolerance and hobbyistic foolishness, including the kind that Brother Reedy used to sponsor, but I have not felt any strictures on my freedom. I have also raised a family in some, “whole-hearted fellowship” and been kicked around some toboot, but then I did not expect perfection from the brethren when I started out and I haven't been disappointed. When some heresy-hunter decides to run me off into some denomination for shelter, I think I can promise him a show that would justify an admission fee and give the West Coast Christian a case of chills.

A real heresy-hunter is all right and has divine credentials. But he must trail and tree heretics and not become a nuisance by unduly heckling the Lord's people. A bird dog is good when he finds birds, but he can become exasperating if he chases rabbits. Judging from what Brother Reedy and Brother Etter reveal regarding themselves, the heresy-hunters did not have to smell around much. They hit a hot trail that led them right into the Congregational Church. Take Brother Etter, for instance. He says that “in order to preserve preconceived and inherited theories of Biblical inspiration and interpretation we vilify God before our youth by identifying him with the wars of the Jews and the slaughter of ancient races.” God then did not authorize Saul to destroy the Amalekites and Samuel did wrong when he hewed Agag to pieces before the Lord! God did not authorize Israel to make war on the nations of Canaan or take their land! Those who so hold “vilify God before our youth.” If Brother Etter should favor us with his uninherited views of inspiration it would undoubtedly throw more light on “Why We Left The Church of Christ.” He thinks that “instrumental music is an incidental” along with “the modern hymnal and many other things” of a purely incidental character. He didn't tell us what he thinks of the action or necessity of baptism. Brother Reedy who was once so intolerant will never again he says make instrumental music an issue. Since he is now with the Congregationalists we can think of a lot of things he will no longer make an issue of, if he stays with them. How could these brethren feel that churches of Christ should extend them “whole-hearted fellowship” when they entertained such views?

Speaking of liberty, I enjoy one priceless liberty that neither Brother Reedy nor Brother Etter can ever have again if they remain where they are. I can preach the gospel. They cannot. If they are minded to test the matter, let them try to lead out on the New Testament church, its establishment, its terms of membership, the covenants, baptism, its action, subjects and design. There are some other things but this will do to begin with. Let them stick
to the book and “preach the word” and “be of whole-hearted fellowship!” They will enjoy of “whole-hearted fellowship!” They will enjoy freedom in Congregationalism because they feel no longer bound to preach the whole truth as it is in Christ Jesus. Farewell, brethren. While you are trying to enjoy a new-found freedom in an unscriptural liberalism, we propose to “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints.”

A footnote for Brother Lovell. If you think that three-cent stamps can either prevent or cure this sort of thing among fidgety malcontents among the brethren, it might be a good idea to start a campaign and stick a few dozen on Brother Earnest Beam. Some of his late symptoms are alarming. It appears to be too late to do a man any good after he lands among the Congregationalists. It would not surprise me at all if Carl Etter should start to calling us Campbellites.

WHITESIDE ON ROMANS

FOY E. WALLACE, JR.

My copy of “A New Commentary On Paul’s Letter To The Saints At Rome,” by R. L. Whiteside, has been received and perused. It is even better than it appeared to be in manuscript form. It strikes me as a companion volume to “A New Commentary On Acts Of Apostles,” by J. W. McGarvey. Arranged in much the same form, written in the same easy flowing style as a book to read, Whiteside on Romans is equal to McGarvey on Acts in literary quality, and in depth of thought excels it. It is written in a more profound vein and a deeper strata. I marvel at its simplicity and its depth. It is to me a priceless volume. I shall read it and study it, and use it in my preaching.

Brother Whiteside will live in the church in the years to come through this work that he is leaving to successive generations. So while commending his book, I want also to commend the praiseworthy work C. R. Nichol and his wife have accomplished in producing the book. Their unselfish spirit in devoting their time and energy to the task of publishing and marketing this book, without remuneration or personal gain, as a friend to Brother Whiteside and of the Cause of the Lord, will find a sympathetic response in the hearts of many appreciative brethren.

Send $2.50 to Mrs. C. R. Nichol, Clifton, Texas, and get a copy of this book. Order two or three dozen for your Bible class in Romans.

A NEW PREACHER

Announcements have appeared in the weeklies that Wilson Wallace, 19, son of Foy E. Wallace, Jr., has launched out as a full-fledged preacher and evangelist. Already he has held three gospel meetings and is now in the midst of his fourth. Some baptisms were reported as a result of his first meeting. This meeting was held at Bluff Dale, Texas, in Erath County near Stephenville, where his father filled his first appointment in the year 1912. Wilson’s second meeting was at Sap Oak in the same county. Max Crumly, youngest son of much loved and lamented J. W. Crumly, and preacher for the Stephenville Church, was responsible for these two meetings, and he has given Wilson a good report and an excellent launching as a preacher. Max is in his twenties but is an experienced preacher and one of the very best of the younger set. He has two brothers who are also creditable dispensers of the Word. Though death terminated the career of their brilliant father while he was yet in his prime, through his fine sons “he being dead yet speaketh.”

Wilson’s third meeting was with the 40th and Capitol Church, Indianapolis, Indiana, where Dr. O. S. Jaquith is an elder. Dr. and Sister Jaquith are friends of the Foy E. Wallace, Jr., family, having vacationed in meetings with them in the west and visited in their home in Oklahoma City. They are interested in Wilson’s preaching and have given us a good report of his work with them. We appreciate their personal interest.

After filling a few short engagements in East Texas, with his grandfather, Foy E. Wallace Sr., Wilson is now in his fourth meeting at Bishop, Texas, and indications are that he will be kept busy in the work.

Wilson has waited until he is well equipped to launch out as a preacher. He finished Central High School in Oklahoma City with honors several years ago, and has now completed his college attendance at the University of Oklahoma, and is waiting for his B. A. degree to be issued at mid-term, having finished his classes in the summer term.

Wilson’s desire is to preach all of the time, to hold gospel meetings, and he will go wherever he may be called, where he can do good by preaching the plain and simple gospel of Christ, which he has been taught all of his life, which he believes and loves, and which above all things else he desires to preach.

He was named 19 years ago, Albert Wilson Wallace, for A. W. Lee, an elder of the Tenth & Francis Church in Oklahoma City. It is our hope that Wilson will be worthy of all of his connections and of the high and holy calling which he has chosen. He may be addressed at 1219 North Shartel, Oklahoma City.
FAIRVIEW IN BIRMINGHAM

It was recently my privilege and pleasure to do the preaching in a downtown meeting with the Fairview Church in Birmingham. This was my third meeting with this congregation. Though one of the newest in the “Birmingham District,” it is composed of many mature men and women, fully developed in the work of the church. Its elders are P. M. Towry, P. C. Barnett, A. M. Doss, and W. C. Graves. They are experienced men, well informed in the Bible, who hold the esteem and confidence of the congregation, and they merit it.

The latest addition to the eldership of this congregation was made in the appointment of W. C. Graves a year or so ago. He has been a definite strength to the official force of the congregation. Brother Graves has been active in the growth of the church in the district for over thirty years, as a preacher, a leader, and an elder. Several churches have been “planted and watered” by him. No man in Birmingham exerts a wider and stronger influence, and though he has worked quietly, without sounding a trumpet before him, no one man has accomplished more good in that locality. For years Brother Graves has been an executive in the Southern Bell Telephone Company and has exerted a salutary influence as a respected citizen and business man as well as a Christian and a preacher. He possesses a fine knowledge of the Bible, is unblemished in character, amiable in disposition, and has always backed any preacher who will stand for the truth. I regard him as among the great men in the church and I esteem him as a personal friend.

The preacher for the Fairview Church is J. S. (Sidney) Astin. I have never met or been associated with a finer, truer young man. He has an excellent wife and two sweet little girls. Brother Sid has done as good a work with this church as I have observed anywhere. He has become already one of our best preachers, and I figure the church will be hearing of him and from him in the years to come.

My first meeting in Birmingham, in October, 1936, nine years ago, was with the Parkview Church. During this period I have held nine 10-day meetings and one 10-day debate in the city, and I feel that I have many friends in Birmingham.

This latest meeting was in the Central Church Auditorium downtown, but sponsored and supported by the Fairview Church. They desired to hold a more largely attended meeting than their building would accommodate. The Central Church generously made available to them their auditorium. Brother Emmons and the Central congregation, as well as other preachers and congregations of the district, cooperated well.

Though one of the newest congregations in Birmingham, if not actually the latest to be established, the Fairview Church has already taken its place among the strongest churches in the entire district and is able to accomplish any work to which they set their hand. This is due to the faith of a fine group, directed by the wise leadership of able elders. They have been kind to me, liberal in their support, strong in their endorsements, and I love them all.-F. E. W. Jr.

ALTUS, OKLAHOMA

One of the most pleasant and profitable experiences of several years was the meeting at Altus, Oklahoma, in September, a flourishing town of some eight or ten thousand. I came to know this church in successive meetings with them between 1924 and 1930. I had not preached in Altus for nearly fifteen years. There has been a steady growth in the church. In its membership are some of the most substantial citizens, farmers, doctors, merchants, teachers, and several preachers. They have built and paid for in full one of the best church houses in Oklahoma, a practical, commodious, and beautiful brick building. They are now out of debt and are beginning to do considerable work outside Altus in fields that have been waiting for the Word.

Dr. E. W. Mabry, without doubt the best doctor in western Oklahoma, and George Starks, one of the city’s progressive merchants, are elders of the church and they have the respect and confidence of both the townspeople and the members. Their efficiency is attested by the constant growth of the congregation and the unity that prevails.

W. Wallace Layton lives at Altus and preaches for the church there, when he is not preaching in meetings elsewhere. It is hard to keep as good a preacher as he is at home. Brother Layton is a young man but is no longer a young preacher. His experience has removed him from that bracket, and he ranks with the best evangelists in the church. That he has made good use of his mind, his talent, and his resources for the past few years, is very evident. His development has been rapid. He is a splendid speaker, with an easy flow of well-chosen words, and is a strong preacher of the plain word of God.

Brother and Sister Layton have a family of four obedient children, three boys and a girl. One of the boys, Foy Wallace Layton, was named for me. His middle name, of course, could be for his father, but I think I can claim them both.

Brother Wallace Layton made everything easy for me in the Altus meeting. He left nothing undone that he could do or get done, both for the meeting and for me. A bond of friendship was renewed and made stronger by this association, which the years will not break.-F. E. W. Jr.
The debate on the "new heresy" was conducted at Boynton, four miles north of Leachville, Arkansas, for four nights-May 29 to June 1. The new heresy is the false doctrine, fathered and sponsored by Thomas L. Conner of Leachville, that there is no judgment after death. This doctrine has been introduced in recent years into churches of Christ by Brother Conner and his companions-in-heresy. Within the last year or so they have constantly agitated this new doctrine and caused trouble, disruption and division in the body of Christ. Brother Conner has had a number of debates with denominational preachers and seemed to have great confidence in his ability as a debater. He became very bold in his challenges for any man to meet him in debate. He seemed to have the idea that brethren everywhere were afraid of him and knew they could not meet the issue. He was making others believe his new heresy because no man had taken him to task. They seemed to be getting the idea that surely Conner had the truth or somebody would meet him. When, therefore, the challenge reached me I accepted immediately and propositions were arranged for the debate. Two propositions were signed. They were as follows:


2. The Scriptures teach that the intermediate state of the dead was destroyed when Jesus arose and all judgment for man takes place during his lifetime in the Christian age. Affirmative: Thomas L. Conner. Negative: W. Curtis Porter.

Two nights were devoted to the discussion of each proposition in the order given above. R. C. Walker, minister of the church in Paragould, Arkansas, served as my moderator. Tracy L. Wheeler, another heretic, moderated for Bro. Conner. Large crowds were in attendance throughout, loud speakers being arranged for the multitude on the outside who could not get into the house. Approximately fifty preachers of the church of Christ attended the discussion. Arkansas, Missouri, Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Louisiana and Oregon were represented among these preachers, and there may have been some other states represented, as I did not get an accurate register of all preachers present.

In giving a report of this debate it will be impossible, of course, to give in detail every argument that was introduced, but I do want to give a rather full report of those things discussed. As I led in the affirmative the first two nights I call your attention first to the course I pursued and the major arguments introduced. Then I shall call attention to the developments that occurred as these arguments were discussed from session to session. I stated that it was unnecessary for us to discuss things on which we were agreed. If we could eliminate things on which we agreed and draw the issue distinctly with respect to the things over which we differed, we would accomplish much at the very outset. So I presented five things upon which I believed we could agree. Here they are.

1. We agree that some judgment goes on now in man's lifetime.
2. We agree that one of us is a false teacher.
3. We agree that division has been caused over this question. (The fact of the debate proved this point.)
4. We agree that one of us should be marked and avoided according to Paul's instruction in Rom. 16:17.
5. We agree that the agitation of a false doctrine to the division of the church will send one of us to hell.

I asked for an expression from Brother Conner on these points and he agreed with me upon them and shook hands in the presence of the audience as a token of such agreement. Regarding the first point I showed that the issue had been definitely revealed, that both of us agreed that some judgment goes on now, but the question is, How much? Brother Conner says that it all takes place now, and I say that some of it takes place hereafter at the second coming of Christ. It will not be enough, I insisted, for Brother Conner to produce passages that indicate that in some sense man is judged during his lifetime. I have always preached that. But he must introduce a passage that says "all judgment" occurs in man's lifetime, or at least that contains words that convey that meaning. When he meets a denominational preacher on the question of salvation by faith only, he will not accept a passage that simply says a man is saved by faith. Brother Conner teaches that too. But he
demands the passage that says “faith only” or words equivalent thereto. And now I make the same demand of him. He must not produce a text that says “judgment” but one that says “all judgment.” If he fails to do that, he has lost the discussion; but if I produce one passage that puts any judgment after death, my affirmation is sustained. His agreement with me on this point proved his undoing, for he could never find the passage that mentioned “all judgment” as now taking place. The agreement on the other points served the purpose well as the debate went on.

In defining my proposition I showed that the word judgment had a variety of meanings. The following definitions were given: 1. A statute or law. 2. The administration of law or government— and in this sense the word is often used as a synonym of equity, righteousness, fairness and justice. 3. A trial to determine one’s guilt. 4. The passing of sentence. 5. The execution of sentence. According to some of these meanings of the word, judgment goes on in the lifetime of a man, but some of them have reference to a judgment after death. I illustrated the matter in the following manner: 1. The state passes a law against murder. 2. Death is fixed as the penalty unless mercy is recommended by the jury. 3. A man charged with murder is tried in court to determine his guilt. 4. The jury returns the verdict of guilty—with no recommendation for mercy. 5. The judge names a day on which he will pass sentence. 6. When the sentence is passed the day of execution is set. This illustration represents the various stages of judgment. All judgment is not over as soon as the law is entered on the statute books. When the man violates the law he stands condemned to death by that law, and yet that is not all of judgment. He must be brought to trial, but when he is, and all the evidence is given, and the jury returns the verdict of guilty, that is judgment; but it is not all of that judgment for the murderer. The judge steps in and sets the day to pass sentence, even after the man’s destiny has been sealed by the verdict of the jury. This is part of judgment. And setting the day of execution and the actual execution of the murderer are all involved in judgment. Just so with man in his relationship to God. God has given a law, and man’s guilt or innocence is being determined during his lifetime—by his obedience or disobedience to God’s law. “The unbeliever is condemned already.” John 3:18. And “the Lord knoweth them that are his.” 2. Tim. 2:19. Thus man’s destiny is sealed when he dies and the Lord will not have to have a judgment for man after death to enable him to know who is saved and who is lost. The Lord knows that already. But this does not eliminate the sentence and the execution as a part of judgment for man after he dies. Brother Conner could never be induced to notice this comparison.

For my affirmative arguments I selected five major points and these I mentioned in my very first speech. I presented them in this way as things I would undertake to prove by the Bible. 1. There is a future judgment. 2. That judgment is after death. 3. That judgment will take place at the coming of Christ. 4. It will be on the day of the resurrection. 5. And it will occur on the day on which the world is destroyed by fire. And now for some of the affirmative arguments I presented on these points.

1. A Future Judgment

In Acts 24 we are told of the address of Paul before Felix. Verse 25 tells us that “as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come, Felix trembled.” I remarked that it would have been a fine thing for old Felix if Brother Conner had been there. He could have removed all the terror from Felix by informing him that Paul was wrong about this whole thing, that there is no judgment to come, but all of it takes place right now, and that Felix was already facing the only judgment that he would ever face. This would have been great comfort to Felix, but Paul told him there is a “judgment to come.” I read from a number of translations, all of which agree with the idea of a future judgment, some of them saying “judgment to come,” or “the coming judgment,” or “the future judgment.”

Then I introduced Paul’s statement in Acts 17:31: “Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.” Attention was called to the fact that a number of things are mentioned here in the present perfect tense—“hath appointed” a day; “hath ordained” a man; “hath given assurance” to all; “hath raised” Christ from the dead: but the judgment day is put in the future tense—he “will judge” the world in righteousness. And although this was emphasized from time to time, Brother Conner could never be induced to notice this comparison. He merely assumed that “day” in this passage is equivalent to “day of salvation” in 2 Cor. 6:2.

To prove a future judgment I also based an argument on 2 Cor. 5: 10 and Rom. 14: 10. Then upon the word “reserved” which means “kept for some future time” as recorded in 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6 and 2 Pet. 2:9. To this argument no reference was ever made by Brother Conner.

2. Judgment After Death

That this future judgment takes place after death I proved by several passages, the first of
which is the statement of Paul in Heb. 9:27: “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” Then the judgment pictured in Rev. 20:11-15 was shown to be a judgment of the dead, not merely a judgment of the living who had never died. John said: “And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” After this I showed that Jesus is to be the judge of the living and the dead, according to statements in Acts 10:42; 2 Tim. 4:1, 1 Pet. 4:5, and insisted there could be no judgment of the dead unless it takes place after death. Otherwise it would simply be a judgment of the living. Rev. 11:18 was also introduced in which the statement is made that “the time of the dead” is come “that they should be judged.” The preceding verses show that this refers to the time when “the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ,” and the remainder of this verse shows it to be when both the righteous and the wicked are rewarded. Hence, it refers to a future judgment of the dead, for “they (the dead) should be judged.”

3. At Second Coming Of Christ

Because Brother Conner has a theory built on Mat. 25:31-46 I introduced that as my first argument to prove a judgment at Christ’s second coming. Here is a judgment of all the nations who are separated before the judge as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. This takes place at the Lord’s second coming, for it reads: “When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.” The things said about this passage will be given later in this report. I used also the prophecy of Enoch as reported by Jude that “the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints to execute judgment upon all.” Jude 14, 15. This, too, puts the judgment at the Lord’s second coming. And in 1 Cor. 4:5 Paul said: “Judge nothing before the time until the Lord come.” The time for judging is thus shown to be when the Lord comes. All these passages definitely prove a judgment at the second coming of Christ.

4. On The Resurrection Day

That the future judgment will occur on the day of the resurrection I proved by statements made in John 11:24, 6:40 and 12:48. According to the first reference Martha expected her brother Lazarus to “rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” And in the second reference Jesus declared concerning those who accept him: “I will raise him up at the last day.” Thus the resurrection of the righteous is shown to be an event that will occur at the last day. The Christian age of the world is sometimes called “the last days” (plural number) but never “the last day.” In John 12:48 Jesus shows that the man who rejects him will be judged “in the last day.” That is the same day on which the righteous will be raised. The resurrection of the righteous is yet future; so is the judgment of the wicked: and resurrection day and judgment day is all the same day.

Jesus declared that certain ones would be present on the judgment day who had died in years gone by. This proves their resurrection necessary to this judgment. He said it would “be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment” than for certain cities then existing on the earth. Mat. 10:15; 11:24. But according to Gen. 19 these cities with “all the inhabitants” were destroyed about 1898 years before Jesus was born. Therefore, more than 1900 years after they were dead Jesus said they would be present in the day of judgment with men who lived in his time. He also said in Mat. 12:42 that “the queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation.” The queen of the south lived in Solomon’s day, about 992 years before Jesus was born. Hence, about a thousand years after she died Jesus said she would meet in the day of judgment the generation who lived in his day. Also that she would “rise up” for this judgment, showing it to be the resurrection day. And in Mat. 12:41 he said the same thing concerning the men of Nineveh. They lived in the day of Jonah and heard him preach about 862 years before Jesus was born. Nearly 900 years after they were dead Jesus said they would “rise up in the judgment” and meet there the generation to whom he preached during his personal ministry. All of this clearly puts the judgment day at the resurrection day. These points were emphasized in such way as to make them stand out before the audience.

5. When World Is Destroyed By Fire

In 2 Pet. 3:7, 10, 12 Peter definitely shows the judgment day to be the day in which the world is destroyed by fire. In verse 7 he refers to it as “the day of judgment” unto which the world is reserved unto fire. In verse 10 he calls it “the day of the Lord” and declares “the heavens shall pass away with a great noise
and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." And in verse 12 he mentions it as "the day of God" in which "the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat." Since the heavens have not passed away with a great noise, nor have the elements melted with fervent heat, and since the earth and the works therein have not been burned up, the day of God, the day of the Lord, the day of judgment here referred to has not come. But it will come, I insisted, when this destruction occurs.

These are the major arguments, given in brief form, that I used in my affirmatives. Under the fire of discussion they were developed for the benefit of the audiences. But I want to make a report of some of the developments and tell of some of the highlights of the discussion.

Workers Of Division

You recall that among the things upon which we agreed at the beginning of the discussion, as I have already mentioned, is that division has been produced by the agitation of this question, that one of us is a false teacher, and that one of us should be marked and avoided. If I am a false teacher, and division has resulted from the preaching of that for which I stand, then the churches of Christ should mark and avoid me; if Brother Conner is a false teacher, and division has occurred as a result of his agitation of his theory, then the churches should mark and avoid him. But if they mark and avoid me because of the stand which I take upon this question, they will have to mark and avoid more than 99% of all preachers in the church of Christ today, for I stand where preachers of the church of Christ have always stood. I challenged Brother Conner to name one outstanding preacher of the church today that agrees with his position. This challenge was made in the first speech of the debate. Brother Conner responded by saying as many preachers stood with him as with me. In my next speech I proposed that a test be made. Many preachers were in attendance, and I suggested that we see how many stood with him and how many with me. Conner backed down on this and said: "Not now, but when the debate is over." So the next minute after the debate closed I proposed that we carry out Brother Conner's suggestion and see how the present preachers stood on the question. But he again backed down. The audience was able to understand why.

Repeatedly throughout the discussion I charged Brother Conner and his fellow-heretics with causing division over this question. I affirmed that they were guilty of causing disruption and discord in the body of Christ. This charge was never denied by Brother Conner. It was too manifest. Everybody knew they had caused division by agitating the theory.

He made belief in his theory essential to one's salvation, declaring we could not go to heaven but would go to hell if we failed to believe what he preached about it. I pressed him then to tell us what he was going to do with us. If we are wrong, we should be marked and avoided, and he said we were all going to hell. So I wanted to know if he was going to continue to fellowship the whole group of us who are on the way to hell. It took much pressure. Ag of the question to get him even to mention it. He saw he was on the spot. But finally, under pressure, he said he would give us space in which to repent. And when I begged to know just how long a space that would be, he would never give any answer. I stated without hesitation my belief as to what should be done with Brother Conner and his fellow-teachers and supporters. They are false teachers, I insisted, and have caused trouble and division in the body of Christ contrary to the teaching of the apostles. Therefore, churches all over the country should mark, avoid and disfellowship them, give them no support whatever and put thumbs down on them forever till they repent of their heretical preaching and get back to the truth of God's word. And certain churches everywhere should begin right now to do that very thing. Within this section of the Bible Banner there will appear a list of the names of these heretics so that you will know who they are and that you may not make a mistake of calling them for work in your community and find yourselves faced with trouble and division.

Proven By The Prophets

When I had made my first affirmative and Brother Conner began his first reply he said that I had not gone to a single prophet of the Old Testament to prove my proposition but had confined myself wholly to the New Testament. And he took the position that nothing could be proven in the New Testament except as it could be traced through the prophets of the Old Testament. In reply I asked him if he had ever tried to prove that baptism is for the remission of sins, and whether or not he believes it is; and if so, from what prophet of the Old Testament could he prove it. He felt the force of this reply and looked down. I pressed the question upon him with force that the audience might see his predicament. When he came to reply to it in his following speech he said that he had not contended that everything in the New Testament had to be traced through the prophets of the Old Testament, but every important thing. I spoke from my seat and asked: "Is baptism important?" This stunned him and he stood for a moment without being able to make reply; the audience laughed at him, and then he retorted: "Oh yes, try to say something to make your little bunch laugh."
His Smile Erased

Brother Conner has had many debates with denominational preachers and has made a reputation of being able always to smile under the pressure of his opponents. His grin was somewhat regarded as a permanent fixture and I have heard it said that no one could erase the smile from his face. He was always able, when his opponent was pressing him, to look up and meet the pressure with a grin. And I have never heard any one say that he was ever known to break down under such pressure. But he broke in this debate. During my first affirmative he looked up at me with his characteristic grin. But before my second speech was finished the grin had been erased, and an expression of agony took its place as he sat staring down his nose. Furthermore, the characteristic grin never returned throughout the discussion. One brother has told me since the debate that he had heard Conner in five debates before this one, and had never seen any man erase the grin before. I do not claim all the credit for this. On other occasions he was contending for the truth and meeting error, but on this occasion he was contending for heresy and fighting against the truth. This made a great deal of difference. The load was too heavy for his grin and it gave way.

Cross Examination

When the debate began Brother Conner entered into a course of cross-examination with me-1 would answer his questions from my seat, and he would answer mine from his seat. This sort of thing has always been “right down my alley.” So I was pleased, as I always am, when he as my opponent entered into this. At the beginning of this he seemed to think it was a fine thing, and when I answered from my seat, he said: “That is fine—speak right up.” But it had not gone far till he didn’t think it was so fine—he found himself in too many predicaments. He soon reached the place where he definitely refused to answer my questions in writing for him to answer in writing. He made a stab at the first group I gave him, but after that gave this up also and refused to answer any more in this way. Such has always been true with false teachers—they prefer not to say anything about some issues that develop, for they find the best way to keep out of trouble is to refuse to answer questions.

“After This The Judgment”

Attention has already been called to the language of Heb. 9:27 in proof of a judgment after death. Here Paul said: “As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” In an effort to set aside this statement Brother Conner wanted to know how many men were involved in this. He claimed it was not all men but just the priesthood of the Old Testament. I replied that it mattered not how many men were involved. If it has reference to the priests of the Old Testament, it remains true that there is a judgment for them after death, and my proposition was sustained and if these were judged when Jesus arose, as he claimed they were, that was still a judgment after death for them. But I maintained that it does not refer to the priesthood of the Old Testament. If reference were made to them, it would read: “It was appointed unto the priests of the Old Testament once to die.” Or if he wants to make it include all men of the Old Testament period, it will have to read: “It was appointed unto men once to die.” But it does not say this. Paul does say it “was appointed” but it “is appointed.” He was writing more than thirty years after Jesus arose from the dead, and according to Conner, more than thirty years after their judgment—three distinct positions concerning Heb. 9:27 within the last few months. A short time ago on one of his radio programs he endeavored to fix up Heb. 9:27. He declared that this portion of the statement—“after this the judgment”—is not inspired. He read from the Twentieth Century translation—death being followed by judgment—and said this translation put this part of the verse in brackets, which proved it to be an interpolation. It is not the word of God at all, he asserted, but is a spurious interpolation. In reply to that on a broadcast of my own I showed that Bro. Conner does not know the difference between brackets and parentheses,
for this statement is placed in parenthesis by this translation and not in brackets at all. Furthermore, if he rejects as uninspired all the New Testament that this translation places in parentheses, he will have to reject a large portion of the New Testament. This cured Bro. Conner of this position. And a short time later in a personal interview with him in the presence of others he said the judgment of Heb. 9:27 is a judgment for the body. He failed to stay put and defend what he preached in the first instance concerning Heb. 9:27. But in the debate he said it refers to the priesthood of the Old Testament. So he changed again. First, it was an interpolation; second, it was a judgment for the body; and third, it was a judgment for the priesthood of the Old Testament. So it looks like he may not be as stable as he claimed to be. And I did not find him ready to defend what he had preached about it. It would be utterly impossible for him to defend all of his positions. And, try as I did, I could never get him even to refer to these three positions he had taken. He did not so much as mention with a denial-he knew the charge was true and thought best to let it alone.

And he became even more reckless with regard to verse 28: "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation." He declared this coming of Jesus took place at Pentecost. To him and his fellow-heretics, therefore, the second coming of Christ is past. If he comes again, it must be his third coming or his fourth coming or some other-it cannot be his second coming, for according to them, that occurred at Pentecost. But the tense of the verb again arose to disturb his theory. Paul said: "Unto them that look for him shall he appear a second time." "Shall appear" is the future tense of the verb. So the second coming of Christ was future when this language was written. But Brother Conner makes it refer to an event that he says occurred thirty years before the language was uttered. That is very enlightening — "shall appear" — past tense-thirty years ago. In an effort to ward off this blow he said it is not strange that Paul referred to the second coming of Christ thirty years after it occurred, for in the same verse he mentioned the death of Christ, and that took place thirty years before. It is true, I replied, that he mentioned the death of Christ that occurred thirty years before, but he did not mention it in future tense. He said: "Christ was once offered." "Was offered" is the past tense of the verb, and he referred to the death of Christ in the past, but "shall appear," which is used concerning the Lord’s second coming, is not past tense, and the cases are in no sense parallel.

He tried to offset these arguments in another way. Reference was made to the prophecy of Isa. 9:6: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given." Here an event is spoken of in the present tense hundreds of years before it occurred. It is true, I replied, that prophecy is often put in the present and past tenses when reference is made to the future. God often spoke, Paul says, of "things which be not as though they were." Rom. 4:17. Thus future events are mentioned in present or past tense. But that is not parallel with Brother Conner’s position on Heb. 9:27, 28. He makes Paul refer to the past in future and present tense. He did not succeed in finding where God called those "things which were as though they were not." He had the matter completely reversed. But he felt sure he had found a case parallel to his position in Heb. 8: 13: "In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." He said that I would admit that the old covenant had vanished away thirty years before, but Paul says: "It is ready to vanish away." So he insisted that "is appointed" may refer to those who died in the past. But here again is proof was not adequate. Paul did not refer to a past event in a present tense. He simply laid down a general principle—"anything that waxeth old is ready to vanish away." He read from the Twentieth Century translation which makes this all the more apparent: "Whatever becomes obsolete and loses its force is virtually annulled." It is a principle that is always true. It is true when Paul writes. "Whatever waxeth old is ready to vanish away." This statement is true now; and it was true when the old covenant passed away. It had been made old in the past and became ready to vanish away in the past. So he still had not found the past tense referred to in the present or future. The truth still stands that "it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" and that Christ “shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation.”

The Great White Throne Judgment

When I introduced Rev. 20:11-15 that describes the judgment of the dead before one seated on a great white throne I did not know just what position Brother Conner would take concerning it. I emphasized the fact that it is a judgment of the dead. This necessarily put it after death, for if these were judged before they died, it would be a judgment of the living and not of the dead. So I presented to Brother Conner, in connection with some other questions, this question in writing:

"Does Rev. 20:11-15 describe a judgment of the dead or of the living who had not died?"

His written answer was: "Of dead."

We have then, according to his admission, a judgment after death for somebody. And this led to a further explanation of his position. He
claimed this referred to the judgment of all the dead of past ages. When Jesus arose from the dead he liberated all the dead of past ages from hades, passed judgment upon them and sent them to heaven or to hell. To show conclusively that this can refer to no such judgment at the resurrection of Christ, as Conner fancied, I appealed to the language of the text. John says in verse 11: “I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.” When this judgment occurs, John says, the earth and the heaven flee away so that no place is found for them. And the first verse of the following chapter, which has a direct connection with this judgment scene, says: “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.” At the time of this judgment, therefore, heaven and earth and sea pass away. This did not occur at the resurrection of Jesus. It has not yet occurred. Haven and earth and seas still remain, and just as long as they remain we know that this judgment is not over. If they passed away when Jesus arose, where are we now? I asked Brother Conner repeatedly: “Where are you tonight?” “You cannot be in heaven, on the earth or in the sea, for, according to you these things are all gone.” But he was never able to give me his location. It was plainly evident that he was “at sea” and that without a rudder. We have the same heaven and earth and seas that existed during the Old Testament ages; they have not gone; they are still here; and the judgment of the great white throne is still in the future. It is a judgment of the dead that will occur in the future when the heaven and earth and seas are destroyed.

While discussing some other points concerning future judgment, or judgment after death, Brother Conner insisted there could be no sense or reason in a judgment after death, unless a second chance was to be given. So he asked me the question: “Is our destiny sealed when we die?” I answered immediately: “Yes.” On this he endeavored to make quite a play, claiming if our destiny is sealed when we die, then why will God judge us after death? There is no need for any such judgment, he claimed. He presented a number of questions in this connection, such as: “What need can there be for a judgment after death?” “What kind of God do we have anyway?” and “Did God make a mistake when he judged us the first time before we died?” These questions were easily attended to, for I simply turned them around and handed them back to him. He had admitted that the people of past ages were judged after death, according to his interpretation of Rev. 20:11-15. So I simply handed the questions to him relative to his position on this passage. Here are the questions:

“Was the destiny of men of past ages determined before they died?”

He answered: “Yes.”

“Since their destiny was sealed when they died, what need was there of judgment after they died?”

No answer was ever given.

“What kind of God did they have?” no answer.

“Did God make a mistake when he judged them before they died?” No answer.

I insisted that he would answer these questions relative to his position on Rev. 20:11-15, he would have the answers he was seeking from me. The same reason exists for a judgment after death that existed with the people of past ages. If he will find the reason for their judgment after death, he will have the reason for ours. If God judged them after death without proving he made a mistake before they died, a judgment after death for us would not prove God made a mistake in our lifetime. But these questions he would never answer.

He also claimed that a man cannot be judged twice for the same offense; and as our destiny is sealed when we die, if we are judged after death, we are being judged twice for the same offense. So I simply asked him if the men of past ages, according to his interpretation of Rev. 20:11-15, were judged twice for the same offense. He admitted their destiny was sealed when they died, yet he claims they were judged after death. So the question was right back in his own hands demanding an answer. But the answer was never given. However, the audience could see his predicament.

He also made a play on the idea of two judgments, saying according to my position, we are judged before we die, and that is one judgment. Then we are judged after we die, and that is another judgment. So two judgments are necessary, he claimed, if my position is true. So he pressed the question: “How much judgment do we get before we die?” As to the first of these I handed it back to him as before, and asked him this: “Did the people of past ages have two judgments—one before they died and another after they died?” But he saw his question had rebounded and he made no effort to answer. And as to how much judgment we get in this life, such does not matter as far as the propositions are concerned. If I should admit that we get 99% of it in this life and only one per cent after death, he would still be wrong and my position would be right, for all judgment would not take place in life and there would still be some after death. I did not admit this, however, but simply showed that if it should be true, my position is still correct. But I turned this question back to him also: “How much judg-
ment did the men of past ages get in their lifetime?” He says their destiny was sealed when they died. So if he can determine how much judgment they got before they died, he will know how much we get before we die. So at every turn his arguments and questions rebounded and gave him a knock-out blow.

The Book of Life

With reference to the judgment of Rev. 20:11-15, in which the book of life is mentioned as one of the books out of which the dead were judged, Brother Conner asked me the question: “Is the book of life the New Testament?” I answered from my seat: “No.” Then, he contended, God will be an unjust God if he calls forth the dead and judges them out of a book they never saw during their lifetime. This, however, did not prove of any help to his cause. He was contending that this judgment of Rev. 20 was for all the dead of past ages before Christ came. These two questions I therefore gave him:

*Were* they judged out of a book they never saw in their lifetime?

“When did they see the New Testament?”

It is evident that those referred to in this passage were judged out of the book of life (John saw the vision, of course, and related it in past tense). But if it refers to the dead of past ages, they all died before Jesus arose and before the New Testament was ever given. They could never have seen the New Testament during their lifetime, for it did not exist. So if the book of life is the New Testament, and these were the dead of past ages, they were judged out of a book they never saw, and that, according to Conner made their God an unjust God, I pressed him to tell me when they saw the New Testament? His only reply was: “They saw Christ through the prophets.” But Christ is not the New Testament, and this does not answer the question. He was in a predicament from which he could never extricate himself.

I took the position that the book of life is a register of names of the people of God. Paul in Phil. 4:3 referred to certain fellow-laborers in the gospel “whose names,” he says, “are in the book of life.” It is not the New Testament but a register of names. It does not contain the names of unbelievers but the names of God’s people. Rev. 20:15 says: “Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” Since people are going to hell who do not have their names written in this book I asked Brother Conner to tell us if his name is written in the New Testament. And if his name is written in the New Testament, I would like to have book, chapter and verse where I can read about it. He claimed his name is written in the New Testament, and that the name is “Christian.” Then I introduced the statement found in Rev. 3:5: “He that overcometh will not blot out his name out of the book of life.” This indicates if a man does not overcome, his name will be blotted out of this book. Brother Conner will admit that a man may fail to overcome, unless he takes the Baptist position of once in grace always in grace; and if any man ever has failed, or if any man ever does fail, to overcome, then the name “Christian” is to be blotted out of the New Testament. This is the predicament to which a false theory will drive a man when he tries to defend it. Conner made no effort to extricate himself from this predicament. There is no escape from it if the book of life is the New Testament and the name written in it is the name “Christian.”

Conner made the charge that I had preached at Black Oak, Arkansas, that the book of life is the New Testament and that he had witnesses to prove it. From my seat I denied the charge. Then he said: “Brother Cosner, stand up.” A Brother Cosner stood up and said the charge was true. I replied: “I still deny it.” It so happens that I have a record of all the sermons I have ever preached. These I brought with me for my next speech. Then I asked Brother Conner when I preached this at Black Oak. He replied: “In 1920.” So I turned to my record and read a list of every sermon I preached at Black Oak in that year, and not one single sermon was concerning the book of life. And it was several years later before I ever preached on this theme at Black Oak. I asked him what subject I preached on at the time he heard me make this statement. He didn’t remember. So I went back of 1920 to keep the record straight. I had a sermon outline that I made in 1917 or early in 1918. I read the main divisions of this sermon outline and they all showed that in 1918—two years before he said he heard me preach that the book of life is the New Testament-1 believed the book of life to be a register of names and not the New Testament. Then I went back beyond this. I wrote a little tract on “The Possibility of Abostasy” in 1914, which was published in 1915, and on two different pages of this tract my statements showed that at that time I believed the book of life to be a register of names. This tract was written the first year that I preached-and was six years back of the time that Cosner said he heard me. So from the very first year of my ministry I have always held to the same position I now hold, and when a man says he heard me preach a thing that I have never believed, there is just not a word of truth in it. But Cosner visibly suffered under this lashing, but such is what a man gets himself into when he allows himself to be used a tool by a heretic. Brother Cosner has taken his stand with Brother Conner on this heresy and will have to suffer the consequences of his stand.
New Testament Speaks To Living

At another time during the discussion Brother Conner made the argument that there can be no judgment after death, because the New Testament is to be the standard of judgment; and the New Testament, he said, speaks to the living. It cannot be made to apply to or speak to the dead. Hence, with this as a standard of judgment, there cannot be a judgment after death.

This line of reasoning, however, did not stand the test nor help him any in upholding his theory, for he had already claimed that the dead past ages had been raised from the dead and judged after death out of the New Testament—which he said the book of life is. So he makes the New Testament speak to the dead in that judgment. If he reasons away any judgment after death for us, because the New Testament speaks to the living and not to the dead, how will he manage to uphold his position on Rev. 20:11-15? As he makes the book of life mean the New Testament in that case he has it speaking to men after death. But this could not be, according to his later argument, and thus he upsets his own theory by trying to sustain it.

The Judgment Of All Nations

I have already mentioned the fact that I introduced Mat. 25:31-46 early in the discussion as it is upon this passage that Conner bases much of his theory. The coming of the Lord, he contends, in this passage refers to the day of Pentecost; all nations are gathered before him as the gospel is being preached to all nations; and the sheep are being separated from the goats as some obey the gospel and some do not; and the sitting on the throne of his glory occurred when he took his seat on David's throne at Pentecost. It is true, I contended, according to Mat. 19:28, that Christ is on the throne of his glory now; and it is also true that he will be on the throne of his glory when he comes, for after all, the passage does not say that "then he will begin to sit upon the throne of his glory."

I showed, however, from various points of view, that the coming of Christ mentioned in Mat. 25:31 is his future coming and that it did not occur at the day of Pentecost. The following points were presented in favor of this.

1. The context of the passage shows it to be his second personal coming.

Attention was called to the fact that chapters 24 and 25 of Matthew make up one discourse delivered by Jesus on the mount of Olives. He had told his disciples that the time would come when the temple and Jerusalem would be destroyed. So they asked: "When shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?"

Mat. 24:3. In the sermon that followed, comprising these two chapters, Jesus answered these questions. A part of chapter 24 through verse 28 Jesus discussed the first question that pertained to the destruction of Jerusalem. Beginning with verse 29 and on through chapter 25 he discussed the second question that pertained to his coming and the end of the world. And over and over through this portion of the divine record Jesus referred to his second coming. He said: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Mat. 24:36, 37. Again: "Watch therefore; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come." Verse 42. And: "Therefore be ye also ready for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." Verse 44. These verses all refer definitely to the Lord's second coming. And the same thought is discussed on through chapter 25, being mentioned expressly a number of times in the chapter, and at verse 31 the Lord said: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory." So the entire context of the passage shows beyond doubt that Jesus referred to his second coming at the end of the world.

2. Also the coming of verse 31 is when he "comes in his glory."

This, beyond any question, refers to his second coming, for Mat. 24:30 shows that he comes "in glory" when he comes "in the clouds of heaven." He did not come in the clouds of heaven at Pentecost but will so come at his second coming which is yet future. Acts 1:9-11; Rev. 1:7.

3. This coming occurs when, he comes with his angels—"and all his holy angels with him."

Paul tells us when the coming with the angels will occur. "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Thes. 1:7, 8. So he comes with his angels when he is revealed from heaven "in flaming fire." This has not occurred yet, but it is the same coming of Mat. 25:31. Paul speaks of it in the future tense—"when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven." The coming of Mat. 25 is therefore the future coming of the Lord.

4. When he separates the sheep from the goats.

This did not occur at Pentecost nor is it yet taking place. The gospel is making sheep out of goats as men obey its requirements, but these were sheep before they were separated from goats. It is a separation that is to take place at the Lord's coming. I wrote on the board the following simple outline:

Sheep-Goats
Wheat-Tares
Just-Wicked
I showed the parallel as here outlined. The sheep, the wheat and the just refer to the same class of people; and the same class is represented by the goats, the tares and the wicked. The separation of the sheep from the goats is the same as the separation of the wheat from the tares and of the just from the wicked. If we can find when the just are separated from the wicked and when the wheat is separated from the tares, we will know when the sheep are separated from the goats. Jesus declares this will take place in the harvest “in the end of this world.” Regarding the parable of the tares Jesus said: Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.” Mat. 13:30. This is the separation of the wheat and the tares. But what does it mean? Jesus explained in Mat. 13:39:40 as follows: “The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of the world.” The tares and wheat (children of the devil and children of God) are separated in the harvest. But the harvest is the end of the world. Therefore the separation of the tares and the wheat will occur “in the end of this world.” These are the exact words of the Son of God. Then with reference to the wicked and the just, as presented in the parable of the net in which the good fish and the bad are separated, Jesus said: So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth and sever the wicked from among the just.” Mat. 13:49. We learn, therefore, that the wicked are severed from among the just “in the end of the world” and the tares are separated from the wheat “in the end of this world.” And since this is the same as the separation of the sheep from the goats, this also will take place in the end of the world. This completely upsets Brother Conner’s pet theory on this judgment of all nations.

He took the position that the word “world” meant “age” and that it did not mean what I indicated in my use of the passage. I asked him, if the word means “age” in this passage, then to what age does it refer? Jesus was speaking in the Jewish age of time, and he said: “in the end of this world.” Does this mean “in the end of this (Jewish) age? Brother Conner took the position that it does mean this. Then I showed, according to him, the harvest was already over, the judgment was completed and the righteous and the wicked were already separated before the Christian age began, for if it occurred “in the end of the Jewish age,” that would not be “the beginning of the Christian age.” Yet he claims the judgment begins with the Christian age and the separation occurs during that age as men obey the gospel. This put him into a predicament that he could never get out of. In fact, he could never pick up courage, although I prodded him much, to make an effort to get out of it. There is no way out of it. Although “world” sometimes means “age” it does not mean such in these passages, and clearly refers to the end of this earth when it and the works therein are burned up. Then is when the righteous are separated from the wicked and each class is given its eternal reward.

4. After The Tribulation Of Those Days

When I had shown that Mat. 25:31 must refer to the future coming of the Lord, for it is when he comes “in his glory,” but he comes “in glory” when he comes “with the clouds of heaven” according to Mat. 24:30, Brother Conner took the position that the coming of Jesus with the clouds in Mat. 24:30 refers to his coming on the day of Pentecost. This proved to be a very difficult position for him. I called attention to a “great tribulation” mentioned in verse 21. Premillennialists apply this to the second coming of Christ at the end of this age. They say the righteous will be caught away, and for them it will be the rapture, and while they are away the wicked left on earth will undergo the great tribulation, before the Lord comes in the second phase of his coming. I do not believe this refers to any such and did not think Conner would take this position either. But I stated that this great tribulation was that which came upon the Jewish people beginning with the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus. I asked Brother Conner if he would agree with me in this matter. He said that he would and shook hands with me that this great tribulation began at that time. Then I showed that Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus and his army in A.D. 70, nearly forty years after Pentecost. But Jesus said in verses 29 and 30: “Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” This coming of Jesus, the Son of God himself, will occur after the tribulation of those days. But that tribulation did not begin till nearly forty years after Pentecost. Hence, this coming cannot refer to Pentecost. If so, then Jesus was mistaken about it, for Pentecost came nearly forty years “before the tribulation of those days.” But he said he would come with the clouds of heaven “after the tribulation of those days.” This so completely blocked Conner with respect to his position on this that he could never be induced to make any effort to clear up the matter. It could
not be done, and the best thing for him was to stay away from it just as far as he could.

Christ’s Coming At Pentecost

Inasmuch as Brother Conner applied so many passages that spoke of the coming of Jesus to the day of Pentecost, he was pressed to tell how he came on the day of Pentecost. I asked him the question: “Did Christ come in person on the day of Pentecost?” His answer was that he “came in power.” That did not answer the question but was an evasion of it. I wanted to know if a personal coming of Jesus occurred on that day. In conversation with others, I have been reliably informed, Bro. Conner had said that Jesus came in person and was visible to human eyes on the day of Pentecost, but he could not be induced to answer during the debate. The fact is that Jesus did not come in person on the day of Pentecost—he came only through the representation of the Holy Spirit. In other words, the Holy Spirit came as his representative. In this way only did Jesus come on Pentecost. So his application of so many passages to Pentecost was a misapplication. He relied greatly upon the statement made in Mat. 16:27, 28: “For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.” This would occur during the lifetime of some who were then present and was fulfilled on Pentecost when the Spirit came as the representative of Jesus. But Conner insisted that if verse 28 refers to Pentecost, verse 27 also does; and his coming “in the glory of his Father with his angels” occurred on Pentecost. He wanted to know by what authority I could make verse 28 refer to Pentecost but verse 27 to a yet future coming of the Lord. I showed that at the coming of verse 27, as mentioned by the Lord himself, all men will receive their rewards—“then he shall reward every man according to his works.” If this refers to the day of Pentecost, every man got his reward that day; for when Jesus comes, according to this passage, “then (at that time) he shall reward every man.” The word “then” does not mean a long time after his coming but when he comes. I did not get my reward at Pentecost; Conner did not get his reward on that day. So I know this coming of Christ did not then occur. Conner said the people on that day were rewarded with remission of sins when they obeyed Christ and wanted to know if I had not received the same reward. I replied that I had received remission of sins, but I did not receive it on the day of Pentecost when people did who heard Peter preach. I did not receive his reward at the same time. So the passage cannot be made to refer to the day of Pentecost but to the future coming of the Lord when he comes to reward every man.

The Resurrection Already Past

As I have before mentioned I showed that the day of judgment takes place on the same day as the resurrection. Martha said concerning Lazarus: “I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” John 11:24. Thus it is seen that the resurrection will occur on “the last day.” But Jesus says those who reject him will be judged “in the last day.” John 12:48. So the “resurrection day” and the “judgment day” is all the same day. Brother Conner tried to offset the force of this by saying: “If Porter had read the next verse after the statement made by Martha, he would have ruined his argument. In John 11:24 Jesus said: ‘I am the resurrection!’ ” He emphasized the word “am”—“I am the resurrection—not I will be, but I am.” So he insisted that this proved the judgment to be right then—not somewhere in the future. This was another unfortunate adventure for Conner. If this proves the resurrection day to be when Jesus uttered that language, then the resurrection is past already, and we have no future resurrection to look forward to. Brother Conner had claimed he believes in a future resurrection, but his argument on this destroys such an idea. Furthermore, if the resurrection and judgment were right then, it was in the Jewish age when Jesus spoke these words and not in the Christian age at all. So that puts the whole thing at the wrong time to fit Conner’s theory. It is true that Jesus said: “I am the resurrection” but he went on in the same verse to say: “He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.” And “shall live” is future. It remains true, therefore, that the “resurrection day” is the last day, and the “judgment day” is the same.

Conner’s Affirmatives On Judgment

I shall give briefly Conner’s affirmative arguments made to sustain the idea that all judgment takes place during man’s lifetime in the Christian age. He seemed to think if he found the word judgment anywhere in the Old Testament, regardless of the connection in which it was used, it had to apply immediately to the Christian age of the world. So he introduced a number of passages from Psalms that had reference to the time of David. But he applied all these to the Christian age. He made but little argument on them—he simply dealt with them in running fashion and assumed the point to be proven. The following is an example of his ramblings.

“The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth.” Psa. 9:16.
"The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment." Psa. 37:30.
"The meek will he guide in judgment." Psa. 25:9, 10.
"The ungodly shall not stand in the judgment." Psa. 1:5.
"Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven." Psa. 76:8, 9.

With perhaps one exception none of these passages can be applied to the Christian age of the world-they were true in David's day, and if they prove anything at all as far as this issue is concerned, they prove the day of judgment to be in the time of David instead of the Christian age. In fact not one of them says anything about "all judgment," even if they should or could be made to refer to this age, and the passage that Conner must find is one that says "all judgment occurs now" or word equivalent to this.

Other Passages From Psalms
Psa. 72:2 was introduced as an affirmative. David says: "He shall judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment." Note the two words used in this passage-righteousness and judgment. If this proves all judgment is now (provided it refers to the Christian age), it proves all righteousness is now. If it works in one case, it must work in the other. So according to Conner, there will be no righteousness after this age is over. This reply applies to many arguments made by him and upsets his whole scheme. Concerning such I asked him the question: "Will any justice or righteousness be exercised or manifested when Jesus comes?" He answered in writing: "Not on soul of man." So, according to his answer, whatever God sees fit to do to the souls of men after Jesus comes again, it will be neither upon the principles of justice nor righteousness. He will therefore treat the souls of men with injustice and unrighteousness. Such is the straits to which false teachers are driven in their efforts to defend a heresy.

He also used Psa. 98:10-13. This states that the Lord "shall judge the people righteously." But it does not even intimate that it refers to a judgment in his lifetime. In fact, verse 13 says: "For he cometh, for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth." This cannot refer to his first coming, for he said he "came not to judge the world" (John 12:47.) But he is coming the second time to judge the world. Jude 14, 15. So if the passage has reference to a personal coming of the Lord, it is still future and sustains my position concerning judgment. The same is true concerning his argument on Psa. 98:7, 9.

Arguments From Isaiah
A number of arguments were based upon the prophecies of Isaiah by Brother Conner. These will here be noted briefly.

"He shall judge among the nations." Isa. 2:2-4.

At least Conner found a passage that refers to the Christian age, for this is a prophecy of the establishment of the church on Pentecost, as can be readily seen by reading the entire passage. I have given only the statement that concerns judgment. But Conner and I had already agreed that according to some meanings of the term, judgment goes on now in man's lifetime. What he must find is a passage that contains "all judgment." This passage does not. It does not say: "He executes all judgment among the nations." One office of a judge is to decide controversies and promote peace. And that is true according to this passage. There was a middle wall of partition between the Jews and Gentiles (the nations), and this had to be removed that peace might be made. Paul declares Christ broke down this wall between the nations by his crucifixion on the cross and brought them to a condition of peace. In that sense the Lord "judged among the nations." But the passage falls far short of sustaining the new heresy proclaimed by Conner and his associates.

"The Lord standeth up to plead, and standeth to judge the people." Isa. 3:13.

The verse before and the verse after this passage shows reference is made to Israel in the Jewish age of the world and that it has no reference to the Christian age. Verse 12 says: "As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them." And verse 13 reads: "The Lord will enter into judgment with the ancients of his people, and the princes thereof: for ye have eaten up the vineyard; the spoil of the poor is in your hand." The covetousness and oppression of the rulers of Israel are pointed out and God was ready to judge them. This verse gives no support to Conner's theory concerning all judgment in man's lifetime in the Christian age.

"But the Lord of hosts shall be exalted in judgment, and God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness." Isa. 5:16.

This too refers to Israel in the Old Testament age, as it refers, according to verse 13, to God's people who went into captivity. But if by any twist it could be made to refer to the Christian age, it would still prove too much. Note the expressions: "exalted in judgment" and "sanctified in righteousness." If this means all judgment now, it means all righteousness now. So there would be no righteousness after the death of man. Conner is not yet ready for this;
conclusion. But if it holds true with one statement, it holds true with the other.

“Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever.” Isa. 9:6,7.

Again Brother Conner found a prophecy that refers to the Christian age, for this distinctly points out the reign of Christ on David’s throne. But again it proved too much for him, for the passage says his government would be established “with judgment and with justice.” If this means all judgment occurs during the whole period of the Christian age, it means all justice occurs at the same time. If it proves there will be no judgment after death, it proves there will be no justice after death. Remember, “that which proves too much proves nothing.”

“But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth.” Isa. 11:3, 4.

This is also a prophecy of Christ and his reign over men, as the whole context clearly shows, but nothing is said about “all judgment” occurring during the lifetime of any man. If it proves all judgment is now, it proves all righteousness and equity are now; and that is too much for Conner, although he did say, as before mentioned, that no justice will be shown to the souls of men at the coming of Christ. He still thinks their bodies may get some justice, righteousness and equity.

“Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet.” Isa. 28:16, 17.

This argument has the same defect, as far as Conner’s theory is concerned, as others just mentioned, even though it does refer to the reign of Christ. For if “judgment will I lay to the line” means there will be no judgment after death, the “righteousness to the plummet” would mean there will be no righteousness after death.

“The Lord is exalted; for he dwelleth on high; he hath filled Zion with judgment and righteousness.” Isa. 33:5. Conner claimed that Zion meant the church, and as Zion was “filled with judgment” it proves that all judgment goes on through the church now.

I contended that Zion sometimes means the church and sometimes not, but even if I should agree that it does in this text, it still fails to prove his contention, for not only was Zion “filled with judgment” but also “filled with righteousness.” Hence, if it means no judgment at the second coming of Christ, it also means no righteousness at his coming.

I have not given every argument based by Conner on Isaiah, but these give the general trend of his contention and show that his whole theory must be based upon a misrepresentation of the passages. All the others are just as easy met, but space forbids a complete review of every passage.

**Judgment In The Earth**

Two prophecies from Jeremiah were used by Conner to sustain his heresy. Here they are.

“Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.” Jer. 23:5.

“In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land.” Jer. 33:15.

These, of course, refer to the reign of Christ, the righteous Branch, and Conner emphasized the fact that the verses say that he “shall execute judgment in the earth” and he “shall execute judgment in the land.” If in the earth, it could not be after death, he claimed. But the judgment that will occur when Jesus comes will be “in the earth” for Jesus will come to judge the earth. Like many others already mentioned these prove too much for Conner, for they say he will execute “judgment and justice in the earth” and “judgment and righteousness in the land.” If they prove no judgment after death, they prove also no justice and righteousness after death. They prove too much when used according to Conner’s views—therefore they prove nothing for him.

**Hallowing The Sabbath**

An argument that proved very embarrassing to Conner was one he based on Ezek. 20:19. The text reads: “I am the Lord your God; walk in my statutes, and keep my judgments and do them.” Conner emphasized the idea that we must “keep his judgments” in our lifetime in the Christian age—hence, judgment day is now.

I replied by calling attention to the fact that the word “judgment,” according to the definitions I gave in my first speech of the debate, sometimes means “law.” And that is the meaning of it here. To “keep his judgments” simply meant to “keep his laws.” But to show you how far a heretic will go in his desperation to prove his heresy and how he will misrepresent a text of Scripture to carry his point, all that is necessary is just to read the next verse. It says: “And hallow my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you.” Thus Conner has taken a passage that refers to the Jews under the law and told them to “keep the sabbaths” and makes it apply to Christians in the New Testament age. There was no need for any man to make this blunder if he were not trying to prove a theory that lacked Bible sanction. I asked him repeatedly, and pressed the question with telling effect: “Brother Conner, are you hallowing the sabbaths?” He could never be persuaded to return to the passage to say
anything about it. It proved his undoing at this point, and the debate closed with the question never answered or even mentioned by him.

**Judgment Given To The Saints**

An interpretation equally as bad as the foregoing was made by Conner on a prophecy of Daniel. It is found in the seventh chapter of Daniel. His arrangement of his arguments was as follows:

1. “Thrones were cast down—Ancient of days did sit.” Verse 9.
2. “The judgment was set, and the books were opened.” Verse 10.
3. “Judgment was given to the saints.” Verse 22.
5. From this he concluded that the saints possessed the kingdom at Pentecost, judgment was then given to them then, the judgment was set and the books opened, and the judgment day is now going on.

The fallacy of his interpretation was easily shown. Verses 21 and 22 say: “I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.” So this horn made war with the saints “until they possessed the kingdom.” Conner says they possessed the kingdom at Pentecost. So the horn made war with the saints before Pentecost and until Pentecost. This horn was the little horn that sprang up among the ten horns of the fourth beast of Daniel’s vision. So I pressed Conner to tell us when this little horn made war with the saints before Pentecost. He never told us. The fact is, the little horn was the papal power that sprang up from the Roman kingdom (the fourth beast) and this horn did not even exist till after Pentecost. Another of Conner’s arguments took wings and left him.

**Destruction Of Hades**

Conner’s proposition required him not only to prove that all judgment takes place during man’s lifetime but also that the intermediate state of the word was destroyed when Jesus arose. In other words, he claims that prior to the death of Christ when men died their spirits went to hades, or to the intermediate state of the dead. But when Jesus arose, he claims, he liberated all that were held in hades, judged them and sent them to their eternal rewards; and he destroyed hades. Since then when men die, he says, they go straight to their eternal rewards—to heaven or to hell.

As negatives to this idea I showed that Jesus in A. D. 96-long after his resurrection from the dead—was said to “have the keys of hell (hades) and of death.” I tried to find out why he would still have the “keys of hades” in A. D. 96 if hades itself was destroyed in A. D. 33. Furthermore Rev. 20:11-15 shows that “death and hell (hades) were cast into the lake of fire” when “the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.” Since earth and heaven have not yet fled away then death and hades have not yet been destroyed—cast into the lake of fire. This argument remained unharmed when the debate was over. It proves conclusively that hades was not destroyed when Jesus arose. But I wish to note some of the argument made by Conner in support of his contention.

**A Group Of Scriptures**

He gave a group of passages in “running fashion” without saying much about them but intending for all of them to prove that hades was destroyed when Jesus arose. Briefly I give them as follows:

“Wilt thou show wonders to the dead? shall the dead arise and praise thee?” Psa. 88:10.

“Thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest hell.” Psa. 86:13.

“But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave.” Psa. 49:15.

“O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave.” Psa. 30:3.

“Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise.” Isa. 26:19.

“Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake.” Dan. 12:2.

“He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.” John 11:25.

Some of these passages point out the final resurrection of the dead. Some of them refer to David’s time and to David’s experience. They refer to a resurrection of the dead out to deliverance from death. Conner had already taken the position that the men of Nineveh and Sodom and Gomorrha had been raised from the dead when Jesus arose. So I asked him: “Did that resurrection include all the rest of the dead of past ages?” He answered that it did. So he had committed himself by his answer to this question and his use of the foregoing Scriptures to the idea that every person who died before Jesus did was raised from the dead when he was. All this was involved in his idea of a destruction of hades. So I turned to the second chapter of Acts and read Peter’s statement about David. He said: “Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day.” Acts 2:29, David was among the dead of past ages, but Peter, on the day of Pentecost, this side of the resurrection of Jesus and the time when Conner claims hades was destroyed, said that David “is dead and buried.” He did not say he “was dead” but he “is dead.” He was dead at the time Peter
spoke. He had not been raised from the dead and Conner is wrong in saying all the dead of past ages arose when Jesus did. Furthermore, Peter said concerning him: “For David is not ascended into the heavens.” But Conner says all the dead of past ages were taken to heaven with Jesus. Either Conner is wrong or Peter is wrong, and I could not believe it was Peter. Brother Conner came back and said he did not mean to say that their bodies were raised—that Peter’s body was still in grave, but he referred to their spirits instead of their bodies. But I showed that he used the passage of Daniel—“many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake”—and applied this to the destruction of hades; and I wanted to know what part of man sleeps in the dust of the earth. Is it the spirit that goes to the dust, or the body? After all, the spirit does not die, and if anybody was raised from the dead it was a resurrection of the body and not the spirit. This completely upset his argument on this point and he made no further effort to recover.

He Led Captivity Captive

The statement of Paul in Eph. 4:8 was used as a major argument in favor of his idea of the destruction of hades. Paul said: “Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.” This is a quotation from Psal. 68:18. The marginal reading of Eph. 4:3 is: “He led a multitude of captives.” The argument based upon this runs in this manner, The captives were the people held in hades; Jesus went to hades when he died, and when he came out he liberated all the captives held there; he destroyed hades, and those who since death cannot go to hades; and he took the liberated multitude to heaven with him when he ascended.

But I showed the falsity of this reasoning. 1. There is nothing to indicate that the captives were those held in hades. 2. If it be admitted that these were captives of hades, it does not say that all were liberated—just a multitude. 3. Nothing is said about hades being destroyed. These things must be assumed. In Matt. 27:52, 53 we read that “many bodies of the saints which slept arose and came out of their graves after his resurrection.” If releasing a “multitude” from hades means all in hades were liberated, then raising “many” from the graves would prove that all were raised. Even Conner later denied this to be true. And if releasing a multitude from hades proves hades was destroyed, then raising many from the grave would prove that the grave is destroyed. Yet men are still being buried. And if delivering a multitude from hades proves that no one goes to hades when he dies now, then delivering many from the grave would prove that no one goes to the grave when he dies now. If it so works in one case, it will work in the other. Thus you can see the absurdity of the argument. But the passage says nothing about liberating anybody from hades. The picture is of Christ as a conquering king who has captured a multitude of his enemies and leads them away in triumph. Thus he leads them away as captives just as a king might lead away captives from an opposing king. And if the captives Christ led away were men held in hades, then while they were there and before Jesus led them away, they were the enemies of the Lord. We would have to conclude that all who were in hades were released a multitude from hades proves hades In Jude 14, 15 Jude quoted from the prophecy of Solomon—“many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake”—and applied this to the destruction of hades; and I wanted to know what part of man sleeps in the dust of the earth. Is it the spirit that goes to the dust, or the body? After all, the spirit does not die, and if anybody was raised from the dead it was a resurrection of the body and not the spirit. This completely upset his argument on this point and he made no further effort to recover.

Righteous Go To Christ

Brother Conner argued that the righteous go to heaven as soon as they die. This he tried to prove by two statements made by Paul. In Phil. 1:20-24 he expressed a “desire to depart and be with the Lord.” And in 2 Cor. 5:6-8 he declared his willingness to be “absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.” Conner reasoned that this proves men go straight to heaven when they die, for when men leave the body they go to Christ. But Christ is in heaven. So they go to heaven—not to hades—when they die.

But I countered with the statement of Solomon in Eccl. 12:7. He declared at death “the spirit returns to God who gave it.” This was true in his day. But Conner says in the days of Solomon, before Jesus arose, men went to hades when they died. But Solomon says they went to God. Where was God? Many passages declare that God was in heaven. Then since God was in heaven, will Brother Conner please tell us how men went to hades when they died, inasmuch as Solomon says the spirit returned to God? If he can tell how men went to hades, and yet went to God (who was in heaven), he will be able to understand how men can go to Christ now (who is in heaven) and yet go to hades. An explanation of one is an explanation of the other.

Coming With His Saints

In Jude 14, 15 Jude quoted from the prophecy of Enoch: “Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints.” This, Brother Conner claimed, proves that Christ took those saints to heaven with him when he ascended. Otherwise he could not come “with them.”

I asked Brother Conner if it would have been possible for the Lord to come “with ten thou-
sand of his saints” before Jesus ascended and took them to heaven. He said that such would not have been possible. I then turned to the testimony of Moses in Deut. 33:2: “The Lord came from Sinai, and rose up from seir unto them; he shined forth from Mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of his saints.” Thus it is declared in the days of Moses that the Lord “came with ten thousands of his saints.” That was a long time before Conner says hades was destroyed. So if the Lord could come with ten thousands of his saints in the time of Moses without having destroyed hades, why could it not be true in the time of Jude?

Furthermore, I showed that the word “saints” in Jude 14, 15 is from the Greek Word “hagios” which is translated “holy one” or “saint” and that it is often applied to angels. When the Lord comes with his angels, he comes with his saints or holy ones. Incidentally this will also take care of the premillennialist argument about Christ coming “for his saints” and then coming “with his saints.” His angels are “holy ones” or “saints” and when he comes with all his holy angels, the prophecy of Enoch will be fulfilled.

Liberty To The Captives

The prophecy of Isa. 61:1, 2 was applicable by Conner to the liberation of captives from hades. Isaiah said: “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he that sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the eyes to the blind; to set the captives free, and to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” The liberty of the captives mentioned in this prophecy is comparable to that of the world. Hence this text was quoted by Jesus in Luke 4:18-21 when teaching in the synagogue and said: “This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.” Jesus at that time was preaching “deliverance to the captives.” He said so far he declared the Scripture was being fulfilled that day. But that was before he died and arose. It was before the time that Conner says he destroyed hades. Then I asked Conner if Jesus that day was preaching to the captives in hades. But he could not be persuaded to answer. Everyone knows he was not preaching to men in hades that day, but he was preaching to men in the prison of sin. These were the captives that Jesus came to deliver. This was a complete overthrow of Conner’s argument, and he made no effort to set it up again.

Swallow Up Death In Victory

Conner quoted Isa. 25:8: “He will swallow up death in victory.” He applied this to the resurrection of Jesus and contended that it was fulfilled when he destroyed hades at his resurrection. Then the victory over death was won. But this proved to be a very unfortunate move for him. I turned to 1 Cor. 15:54 and read the statement of Paul. In connection with the sounding of the last trump when the dead will be raised and the living changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, Paul said: “So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.” So Paul quotes the very passage Conner introduced: “Death is swallowed up in victory” and declares it will “be brought to pass” or be fulfilled when the last trump of God shall sound. Conner says it was fulfilled when Jesus arose from the dead and destroyed hades. I pressed this with telling effect and Conner felt the force of it. His misrepresentation of the scripture stood out in bold outline. But he came back with Paul’s statement to Timothy that Christ “abolished death” (2 Tim. 1:10) and wanted to know if Paul lied about it. I promptly told him that Paul did lie about it if his (Conner’s) position is true. Conner says it was fulfilled when Jesus arose; Paul says it will be brought to pass when the last trump sounds. If Conner is right, Paul lied about it, for they certainly do not agree.

Beware Of These Heretics

I have made no effort to give every argument made during the course of the discussion, but I have tried to give enough that you may have a proper conception of the issues debated. And now I want to warn you against the heretics who are preaching this new heresy. I do not want to damage any one who might be rescued from this theory, but the following men have definitely taken a stand for the theory and are preaching it:

Thomas L. Conner, Leachville, Arkansas.

Marshal Conner, his son, Leachville, Arkansas.

Tracy L. Wheeler, who moderated for Conner, Portageville, Mo.

James F. Brents, Luxora, Arkansas.

If you want trouble in your congregation, call these men to preach for you. That is a sure way to have it. But if you want to avoid trouble, then refuse to use these men in any capacity whatever. They are heretics of the rankest dye and should be “marked and avoided” according to the instruction of Paul in Rom. 16:17. And remember if you aid them and bid them Godspeed, you become a partaker of their evil deeds. The way to avoid all this is to refuse to let them preach for your congregation. Put thumbs down on them forever unless they repent of their heretical teaching.
E. G. COUCH AND MANHATTAN DIGRESSION
TED W. McELROY

Efficiency, honesty, and soundness in the faith do not require a veil of secrecy. Brother E. G. Couch writes me and sends his reply to the public criticism, and says, "This statement was not prepared for publication." His reply is for those, "Who inquire concerning the Bible Banner article," (Bible Banner, June 1945 page 34). His statement is a kind of "mail order" thing, you get one only if you write in and ask for it. I got mine free, but if you other folks want one, you ought to send a dime with your request to cover the cost of handling and mailing. It appears a peculiar quirk of mind to want to circulate a private reply to a public criticism. The compromise of brother Couch and the Manhattan church is not my private grievance, it concerns all loyal Christians and all have a right to know the facts. This thing took place up in the Northeast corner of the United States, but I shall do all that I can to prevent it from being hid in any corner. The New York lectureship or conference covered 4 days, but only the one session devoted to "unity between the church of Christ and the Digressives" is under fire at this time.

Brother Couch scolds me for saying he did not answer my letter to him. He admits that no reply came for over two months. After the lapse of a reasonable time I assumed that he did not aim to reply, and I prepared and submitted the article to the Bible Banner. Then after more than two months, I got a letter stating that he had "just received" my letter, he did not deny the Christian Unity (Witty-Murch Publication) report, and made no explanation that changed anything; therefore I let the article stand as sent. Possibly brother Couch did not receive my letter addressed to him at his home in New York for two months; but if he did not receive and attend to his electric bill during that interval, I will venture they cut him off and who would blame them. He must be a very busy man not to receive nor answer his mail for a period of two or three months, brethren should provide him a private secretary to help take care of his manifold responsibilities.

In his "mail order" reply to my article brother Couch says, "Brother McElroy assumes that the meeting was in some way connected with the Unity Movement of which Witty and Murch are the leaders. This is entirely incorrect. The meeting had no connection with that movement." My assumption is well-founded. It is perfectly obvious to the most superficial observer that someone around the conference had some connection with and interest in the Witty-Murch brand of unity. On no other ground can you explain the fact that the report was sent to and published in their paper. The digressive preacher who sent the report was in sympathy with Witty-Murch, so there is at least on one side a sympathetic connection. Furthermore, editorially Witty and Murch claimed that the "Unity Sessions" in the lectureship, boosted their brand of unity and they were encouraged by it. Anything that pleases and encourages Murch and Witty "stinks" like compromise to me. But if it is not connected with Witty-Murch, it is an independent "Couch-Darsie movement" of the same order.

In the Christian Unity Quarterly April, May, and June 1944, the same issue that published the report "New York Ministers Confer," Witty and Murch gave editorial approval and honorable mention to brother Couch's lectureship: "We call attention to the two articles "Unity in Louisville" and "New York Ministers Confer." Here are recounted actual efforts of brethren to get together in meetings for 'better understanding.' According to the Unity editors the meetings in Louisville and New York were similar in nature and identical in purpose. Brother Couch did the arranging in New York, who did it in Louisville? E. L. Jorgenson, premillennialist of the Highland church, and assisted by a digressive preacher.

Brother Couch in the "mail order" reply said, "The concensus of opinion was that good had been done after the meeting was over." Whose concensus of opinion? The Christian church preachers were evidently, from their report, highly pleased. To them it must have been a sweet morsel, savored with sugar and spice. Witty and Murch thought "good was done." Does brother McGaughey "who had to go home" before this session came off, hold the opinion that good was done?

These facts remain undenied, sustained by the report in the Christian Unity Quarterly and by the admissions of brother Couch in his correspondence: 1. There was a meeting in New York of Church of Christ and Christian Church preachers to discuss unity. 2. E. G. Couch and the Manhattan church arranged the meeting and the program. 3. J. P. Sanders represented the view of the church of Christ. 4. The Christian Church preachers were invited to be representative speakers on the program. 5. The digressive preacher who reported the meeting, Witty and Murch, and E. G. Couch, are all happy over the affair, and are of the opinion "good was done."

It is my conviction that any meeting that pleases the digressive preachers and receives the approval of Witty and Murch is a compromise.
A DARKLING PLAIN

A. B. KEENAN

"Still thou art blest, compared wi' me!
The present only toucheth thee:
But och! I backward cast my e'e
On prospects drear!
And forward, though I canna see,
I guess and fear!” (Burns.)

"Present fears are less than horrible imaginings." (Macbeth.)

It does not need to be argued that most of us will gladly put up with what woes we have before we’ll fly to those we know not of. “In the world ye shall have tribulation,” the Redeemer foretold. No one who has reached the years of maturity with his mental faculties intact can do other than abundantly confirm the coming-to-pass of the Savior’s prophecy.

It is this trouble of one kind and another, experienced, being experienced, or anticipated which leads men and women to be afraid of life. Christians, despite their birth from above, are still men of like passions with their fellow human beings. They are subject to the same phenomena. If you tell one a joke, he’ll laugh; if you relate a sad story, he’ll be moved; if you prick him with a pin, he’ll bleed. Christians have fears which are common to all men, and they possess others which are peculiar to themselves.

First, Christians live in fear of being ignorant. “And his disciples asked him, saying, what might this parable be?” (Luke 8:9) Life has taught them that they know too much that just isn’t so, too little that is. Their years in Christ have been devoted to the eradication of misconceptions by a close scrutiny of what is written. They realize that they know too many things that are harmful, too few that are helpful. They have been scarred by unfortunate experiences, the language of the streets along which they walk, demoralizing associates.

Their thoughts on the subject of truth have led them to a belief in its oneness, whatever its subdivisions: revealed, scientific, sociological, historical. They accept their Lord as the truth, and that any truth anywhere of whatever kind finds its source in Him. Revealed truth is for them the most precious kind, and that is why they make Bible reading a daily practice, the Sacred Scriptures a constant subject for meditation. They know there is no virtue in ignorance per se, and that is why they will listen to anybody who can throw light on their problems, rejecting meanwhile any obscurantists,—whatever their reputation for piety.

In the second place, members of the church live in fear of failure. The gospel net gathers in all kinds of fish. The bad at the Judgment will be cast away. Or to vary the figure, not all sown gospel seed produces a harvest. No one can tell what the fate of a new born babe in Christ will be: only time can tell. Are they “wayside” material? Are they the “rocky soil” type? Do they belong to the “thorny ground” group? Or are they of the good ground, thirty-, sixty, and hundred-fold calibre? In proving that they are not one of the undesirable classifications, children of God work out their own salvation.

Their ministers, servants, preachers, teachers in public and in private life in fear of their work’s being consumed. “For the day shall declare it.” (See I Cor. 3:10-15.) They are afraid not all of their conversions will prove to be type number four—the good soil folk. It may prove futile enough for the evangelist to keep visiting types one, two, and three. But the aforementioned ones will stick by their profession, made before many witnesses, in spite of the preachers.

Third, brethren often live in fear of public disdain. “Thy mother and thy brethren stand afar from the coming-to-pass of the Savior’s prophecy.” (Verse 49.) What’s this parable be?” (Luke 8:9) To a definite degree each of them, like Paul, is a “spectacle unto the world, and angels, and men.” A gazingstock, no less. Christians are often the objects of curious interest, commiserating smiles. It takes constant heavenly vitality to combat a fleshly desire to get quietly home (as the family of the Lord wished to get Him quietly home) and uncer cover-there to shroud our light, undoubtedly offensive to some, with a bushel.

Then, in the fourth place, Christians are afraid of nature. “And there came down a storm of wind on the lake.” (Luke 8:23.) Natural forces tear at the strength of their frail bodies. Like Trophimus, they are often ill. Like Paul, they have need of cloaks, garments. Like Timothy, they are advised to resort to medicinal aids. Christians, no less than non-Christians, have been the victims of floods, droughts, eruptions, cyclones, lightning-bolts, heat waves, and blizzards.

Fifth, they live in fear of Jesus Himself. “What manner of man is this!” (Luke 8:25. See also verses 37 and 47.) Their worthlessness is always contrasted in their minds with His peerless Majesty and Purity. The latches of His shoes they do not make bold to unloose. How many of them indeed have cried aloud, “Depart from me, for I am sinful man, 0 Lord!” His separateness awes them, His being higher than the heavens, His altogether loveliness.

Finally, Christians live in fear of futility. “Trouble not the Master.” (Verse 49.) What’s the use? Why worry ourselves with useless struggle? Why bother the Lord with our endless, bootless petitions? Why continue on the treadmill of His service when results are so difficult to discern?
But we have not finished the verse with which we began this lesson. “In the world ye shall have tribulation.” But, thank God, the text continues: “But be of good cheer. I have overcome the world.” All the foregoing depressing considerations are outweighed in the scale of the love of the Savior and the providence of God. “Thy faith hath made thee whole.” (Verse 48.) This is indeed the victory that overcomes the Christians’ fear of ignorance, of failure, of public contempt, of nature, of the Lord Himself, of futility, in fine, of the world itself—even their faith.

Faith in Jesus Christ is the touchstone of abundant success, abundant overcoming of the world, the flesh, and the Devil. Knowledge may fail the children of God, success may fail them, public acceptance likewise, together with the “brethren.” But Jesus never. God, is love. Christ is God. Christ is love. Lover never faileth. Christ never faileth.

HARDING COLLEGE APPEALS FOR BLOOD MONEY

TED W. McPEARY

It is not the purpose of this article to discuss the question of civil government—I leave that, for the present at least, to others who are better able and more experienced than I am. This might be called an “argumentum ad hominem,” and its purpose is to bring to light the ridiculous inconsistency between the Harding College Dean’s appeal and the Harding Bible Professor’s teaching. I do not share the Harding College view; and what is pointed out that they say, I do not believe.

During this war I have known many service men. I have baptized several. I have nothing in my heart but the kindest feelings of appreciation, love, and sympathy toward our service men. It irks me to see the Dean of Harding reaching for the service man’s money, and at the same time the Bible Professor lambasting the same men calling them “killers” and “murderers.”

James Bales, who is now the Professor of Bible at Harding College, is probably one of the most noisy of the advocates of the Conscientious Objector position on the government question. Maybe this particular idea was his pre-eminent qualification for the Harding College job. Harding College is traditionally committed to the Conscientious Objector position, and Brother Armstrong made quite a record along the line of opposing the government in the last war. Brother Bales has written a book of more than 200 pages trying to prove this doctrine, in my sincere judgment he failed to touch the issue; but he did succeed in casting some rather dark reflections and accusations upon the men who have defended our nation, he says they are “killers” and “violaters” of the law of Christ. If they are “killers” as Brother Bales charges, the money and the benefits they receive for the job will be blood money. In Brother Bales’ opinion Judas was no more guilty of blood, than are our beloved sons and brothers who are fighting this war. The priests refused to take the blood money from Judas and put it into the temple treasury (Mt. 27:6), but Brother Sears is not so scrupulous for he is very anxious to get the blood money into the Harding treasury.

L. C. Sears is the Dean of Harding College. In a circular letter postmarked May 1945 and addressed to the elders of the church. Brother Sears says, “We are very anxious to secure the names and addresses of all the young men from your congregation or from homes of the congregation who have been called into the Armed Service. . . These young people should by all means take advantage of the opportunity given by the government to continue their education. It would be fine if they would select a good Christian school. . . We want to give them information. . . Will you not see that a list with complete addresses is made at once and returned to us?” The obvious intent of Brother Sears is to get as many of these Service Men enrolled in Harding College as possible; they will be supplied government money as continued remuneration for their war effort and the lucrative Dean is anxious to get at these prospects.

When Brother Sear mails his propaganda to these boys, will he be honest enough to tell them plainly that the Bible Professor classes them as common “killers”? There are about 65 to 70 boys from this congregation in the Armed Forces, but their names and addresses won’t be turned in by me.

In trying to “sell” the school to the brethren and persuade them to send their children there, the college advertises a fine environment and fine association. But now they will have to quit that. They are trying to fill the school with returned soldiers, whom they rank as common “killers.” James Bales in his book implies that these “killers” get worse as time goes by, note this quotation, “love dies, if unexpressed in some manner; how much more so will it perish if our expressions are those of hate, violence and a desire to be avenged?” So the Dean wants to fill the college with men, in whom, the Bible professor says, love has perished and whose expressions are hate and violence. If the soldier is as bad as they say he is, your son or your daughter would be safer and in better environment in the penitentiary, than in Harding College after Dean Sears fills it with these boys, who, according to Bales, are “killers” and getting worse.
Suppose some soldiers do go to Harding College when they are released from the army, of course, brother Bales will have the courage of his conviction and teach them that they have been "killers." Suppose he converts them to his fanatical idea, if they repent of their former manner of life will they not have to renounce the hire of that life also? And if they give up the government aid, they are likely to have to drop out of college. So as fast as Brother Sears can get them in, Brother Bales will teach them to repent of the sin of having been a soldier, renounce the hire of unrighteousness, and consequently they will have to drop out.

If participation in this war of defending our country is sin, Harding College is very anxious to become a partaker of the sin. They not only enjoy the freedom the boys protected, but now they appeal for the money the boys are to be paid for the job. It appears that they want to participate in the freedom and rewards, while at the same time they are calling the boys "killers." This scripture seems to be in point, "Wherefore thou art without excuse, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest dost practice the same things." (Rom. 2:1)

The appeal of the Dean in contrast with the teaching of the Bible Professor is revealing. It manifests either a presence of discord or a lack of conscience in the Harding faculty. If the Dean agrees with the Bible Professor and the traditional Harding College position, he has allowed his lucrative greed to overcome his conscience—he seeks a portion of what he believes to be ill gotten gain. If, on the other hand, the Dean does not agree with the position of the Bible Professor, it would be wonderful for him to have courage enough to come out and say so, before everybody. Bales teaches that the soldier and his money is stained with blood; Sears says, we want it.

It becomes obvious that the happiness mentioned by Paul in Rom. 14:22 is absent from the Harding faculty, "Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth."

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MARKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

J. A. McNUTT

The world in general and religious people in particular ought to recognize that teachers and preachers have no more right to handle the Word of God deceitfully than the teller in your local bank has to juggle his books and mis-appropriate the funds of others. The theiving bank clerk if brought into court would land in jail, and the false teacher after judgment will dwell in torment. “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.” (Gal. 1:8, 9.)

Modern Churches

Many churches have become famous because of the grandeur and splendor of their church buildings, the high educational attainments, or the gifted oratory of the minister. Others have gained favor among the people because of their social and recreational activities. They build a stage, sound the trumpets, and put on a show for the benefit of the world. The play room displaces the prayer room. Lectures and book reviews take the place of Bible teaching and an ounce of Bible preaching against popular sins would cause as much consternation as a “block-busier” on Broadway. Such places are not churches, they are social clubs and recreational centers. There is a vast difference between the modern churches of today when they are contrasted with a model congregation of the New Testament period. Some one has written a poem on “The Modern Church” which will illustrate what I mean. It is too lengthy to quote in full but here are a few selections from the poem:

“Well, wife I’ve found the modern church and worshipped there today;
It made me think the good old times had surely passed away.
The meeting house was finer built than they were years ago,
But I found when I went in ‘twas mostly built for show

An usher led me down that stylish aisle (he knew that I was poor),
And found a plain uncushioned seat away back by the dobr;
I saw the people coming in their silks a rustling made;
They did not come to worship God—it was a dress parade.

I wish you’d heard the music, wife, it had the opera ring,
The preacher did not rise and say, (Let everybody sing):
No, no, dear wife, that’s out of date, they’ve got way up higher,
They don’t make music in their souls, but praise God with a choir.
There was an organ and a horn, a banjo and a flute,
And almost every kind of thing that’s used to squeak or toot.
It made me think of younger days when I attended balls,
They didn’t sound the Savior’s name, of ‘Crown him Lord of all’.

I wish you’d heard the sermon, wife, ’twas not the old time truth;
It did not suit old men like me, nor help the giddy youth.
It did not sneak of dying love, nor Yet of rising power
Nor of the Father’s watchful care, extended every hour.

He did not speak of church or creeds, the gospel’s power to save,
Or whether we should pour or cross, or dip beneath the wave.
He did not say, ‘Confess your sins’ believe, repent or pray.
You could not tell there was a soul that needed aught that day.”

These few verses from the pen of T. R. Burnett serve as an indictment of modernism in religion. 1st is for social entertainment? Do you go to church to hear lectures on social, political, or, economic issues? Do you go to church to hear a book review of some current, best-seller in the field of literature? Or do you go to church to hear God’s word proclaimed, the Bible taught in its purity, and engage with other kindred souls in the most devout and sincere worship of God the Father? Jesus said to the woman at Jacob’s well, “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” (Jno. 4:23, 24)

Vain Worship

Jesus further informs us that it is possible for us to worship God in vain. To the Pharisees, the strictest sect of that day, Jesus said, “This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” (Mt. 15:8, 9) The religious world today needs to realize that a “thus said the Lord” is vital in all worship and teaching. God’s revelation of the acts of worship, and the conditions of pardon, stands complete and final. He has given unto us all that pertains to life and godliness. (2 Pet. 1:3) We have a “Perfect Law of Liberty in Christ (Jas. 1:25), so we should be careful to continue therein. That which is perfect never needs amendment, substitution, or subtraction. In this connection let’s read (Rev. 22:18, 29), “For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this
book. If any man shall add unto these things God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”

Loyalty To The Truth

The church of Christ in your community believes in calling Bible things by Bible names, teaching the truth in its primitive simplicity, and worshipping the Father as the Bible directs. The power of plain gospel preaching, and the beauty and simplicity of a scriptural worship service are the only attractions we have to offer the world. We have no plea but the gospel and no creed except the New Testament. If you are interested in becoming better acquainted with a group of people who profess to be Christians only, here are a few considerations that will help you to understand:

1. Who We Really Are

The church of the Lord, in your community, is composed of those believers in Christ, who have become obedient from the heart to that form of doctrine delivered unto men. (Rom. 6:17) being thereby made free from all past sins, and having become children of God and heirs with Christ. (Gal. 3:26, 27) As heirs with Christ and followers of his teaching, the members of the church, wear the name Christian signifying their relation to Christ. (Act 11:26).

We believe that the whole heart of man composed of the intellect, emotions, and will power, must be completely turned from a love of sin and unrighteousness to an abiding love for God and right. This complete change of heart is accomplished by the Holy Spirit through the gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation. (Rom. 1:16)

The Spirit testifies through the gospel of Christ and we having heard this testimony, became believers in Christ. (Rom. 10:17) The gospel is the instrument that the Spirit used to produce spiritual life in our hearts, (1 Cor. 4:15)

Realizing that faith must work by love to avail anything (Gal. 5:6), we became obedient to the faith (Rom. 1:5) and at this point Christ became the author of our salvation. (Heb. 5:9) Our souls were purified by obedience to the truth (1 Pet. 1:22), and in our submission we acknowledged Christ as “King of Kings and Lord of Lords.”

Faith in the Spirit’s testimony led us in godly sorrow to repent of all past sins. (2 Cor. 7:10) Then, realizing that salvation was possible only in Christ, we desired to enter into Christ where such spiritual blessings as redemption and the hope of Life eternal might be received. From the Spirit’s teaching we learned that the believing, repentent person should be baptized into Christ (Rom. 6:3), and that such a baptism is unto the remission of past sins (Acts 2:38), we were then “buried with Christ in baptism, and then raised to walk in newness of life.

All those baptized, who were baptized in accord with the Spirit’s instructions, were added to the church by the Lord himself (Acts 2:47), so we also, by the same Lord, were in the same manner added to the same church. If not why not? Has the Law of reproduction failed? Has the Lord disregarded his divine plan of adding to the church daily, such as should be saved? No, the Lord has not failed, neither has the plan been altered. Comply with the conditions of pardon specified in God’s Word today, and the Lord will still add you to his church now just like he has added thousands of others in ages past.

2. As To The Worship Service

We assemble on the first day of the week “To break bread” or observe the Lord’s supper (Acts 20:7) and by this solemn service we keep alive in our hearts the memory of our Lord’s suffering and death until some glad day we shall see him coming on the clouds of heaven. (1 Cor. 11:17).

There is no melody sweeter than the heart-felt melody of human voices rising in praise and devotion, in “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs” (Col. 3:16). And since the Lord commanded that we make melody WITH our hearts unto him in song, we do not presume to use a mechanical instrument which is wholly unauthorized in the New Testament.

We fully recognize the need and obligation of teaching and giving much time to the study of God’s word. We also, as did the brethren in Jerusalem, desire to continue in the “Apostle’s doctrine, fellowship, breaking of bread, and prayers.” (Acts 2:42)

We are taught to give our means as we are prospered (1 Cor. 16:1, 2), out of which funds we support all the work of the church. The contribution on the first day of every week is assessed by Jehovah according to our ability, but there is no assessment by man, nor do we ever raise money by entertainment to support the Lord’s work. “As a man purposeth in his heart, so let him give” (2 Cor. 9:8)

Do you know friends that the most desirable and happy life on earth is the Christian Life? And the way the Lord reveals in his word is clearly defined and will safely lead us home to heaven. Why not walk that way today?
I. “Now The Birth of Jesus Christ Was on This Wise”

When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But when he thought on these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins.” (Matt. 1:18-21)

The doctrine of the virgin birth, or rather, the virgin conception of Jesus is a very prominent one in the New Testament. That it was miraculous, no one will deny, except doubters of all classes, unbelievers and skeptics, and modern religious teachers called “Modernists.” Rejecting an important teaching in the scriptures would seem to belong naturally to the great body of avowed unbelievers, but strange to relate, men who claim to accept Jesus and his teaching are a great source of unbelief today. Modernism has crept into the pulpit, press, and radio programs of a great many modern denominations. They preach the “social gospel,” omitting any reference to the miraculous because they reject the idea, and many times do not want their parishioners to find it out. The virgin birth is one of the fundamental facts that all true believers believe; it is one of the fundamental facts of the gospel of Christ. On this point the apostles John says, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets have gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every one that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: because many false prophets have gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every one that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” (I Jno. 4:1-3)

How did Jesus Christ come in the flesh? He came just as our text says born of a virgin. This is further elaborated by Luke thus: “And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” (Lu. 1:35) But it has been charged against belief of the New Testament account of the virgin birth of our Lord that it is an utter impossibility for a woman to conceive without natural contact with a man. This is the answer to be expected from minds that are concerned wholly with externals and who observe only the workings of the law of procreation, without taking into account that there would be no law without a law-giver. The God of the universe, the supreme Lawgiver, created the world and all that is contained therein. His crowning creative act was man. Once the claim of the Bible that there is a God who is responsible for bringing the world and man into existence, together with all of the laws governing them, is accepted, there is no difficulty with the New Testament account of miracles, including the virgin birth. Few, perhaps, could state clearly and definitely why they believe there is a God. It might be well, at this point, to point out why we do so believe.

Paul gives us the beginning point when he said in Romans 1:18-20: “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hinder the truth in unrighteousness; because that which is known of God is manifest in them; for God made it manifest unto them. For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity.” The true atheist says, “There is no God.” When he says that he must be prepared for these conclusions: He must know everything in the universe: if he admits there is something he does not know, then that which he does not know could be God: he sets himself up as deity; the God of the Bible knows all things, therefore the atheist claims to be God. Since Paul says the everlasting power and divinity of God may be seen or perceived through the things that are made, let us look into some of them.

1. Intuition

We shall call it that for want of a better term. This has been defined as “knowledge which comes without reasoning.” The child knows that space and time exist without reasoning about it. Sir Isaac Newton, the great scientist, said that space and time are attributes of God. This being true, then God of necessity exists, for space and time of necessity exist.

2. The Idea of God

The existence of God is implied in the very idea of him. Where did the idea of God come from? That the idea of his existence is with us no one can deny. The fact that the idea of God exists in the mind of man, although in many different forms, is still implied proof that
man in ages past had dealings directly with God and has perpetuated the idea down through the ages.

3. Everything in The World is Finite

It is limited. That is, the creation which we see with our natural eye. It is an axiom accepted by all, believer and unbeliever, that something cannot come from nothing. The "spontaneous generation" theory was long ago exploded. Then if there is that which is finite, there must be infinity behind it. The universe could not have brought itself into existence. Everything in the world is dependent. That which is dependent implies the Independent.

4. Evidence From Geology

Geology is that science which explains to us the structure of the earth. But geology has found that there have been crises in the history of the earth as well as orderly development. Blind matter could not have guided itself through the great crises of ages past. Even accepting the explanations of geology on the great crises that have occurred in the course of the earth's history, it must be admitted that a power higher than itself was needed to bring it safely through to its present state.

5. Proof From Astronomy

David said in the long ago, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork.” (Ps. 19:1) The heavens declare the power of God. Think for a moment of the giant planets, suns, and stars riding in space. What holds them there? Why, the “law of gravity,” someone says. But can you talk about the law of gravity and ignore the Lawmaker behind the law? The heavens declare the wisdom of God. When we look at a charted map of the heavens and see the millions of heavenly bodies with their myriads of orbits, some of them so vast that the human brain is staggered in contemplating them, yet there is no clashing of these bodies, everyone of them stays on its orbit, we are overwhelmed with the wisdom of it. Only intelligent wisdom could perform such a feat. The heavens declare the glory of God in their relationship to law. We think it wonderful that man can work out schedules for vast networks of railroads. When man does it, he errs sometimes and trains have wrecks or are late. But when you consider the heavenly bodies and their far-flung orbits, not a one has had a “wreck,” nor have they been “late.” In fact, we can even tell time by their movements to the barest fraction of a second. Astronomers can also tell to the dot when a planet or a comet will appear, even years in advance. Do you say they are governed by law? Then no law can exist without a lawyer. There must be a supreme Lawgiver behind the law.

6. Design in Creation

Sir Isaac Newton said that the human eye is a cure for atheism. It is both microscope and telescope. It can adapt light coming from the sun over ninety million miles away so as to see a small thorn in hand and the distant stars together with the distant mountain ranges and the far-reaching deserts. This shows design and not blind chance or special evolution. Look at the wing of the bird for flying and the foot of man for walking. They show design rather than evolutionary development. Some look at the circulatory system, the nervous system, the skeletal system, and the digestive system of animals and man and conclude that they developed from the rudimentary to the complex. But it shows, rather, the design of the Great Designer of all things. David said, "I am fearfully and wonderfully made." (Ps. 139:14) Look at the blood that flows through the human body, carrying oxygen to the remote tissues, and in return carrying off waste. This shows design, and design implies a Designer. Take also a look at the brain of man. In its mysterious folds it generates and holds the thought that advances civilization with all of its wonders and has filled the libraries of the world with knowledge. Did this come by blind chance? No, it shows the perfection of the Great Designer—the Supreme Intelligence. As we recognize the work of a Raphael or a Rembrandt, a Shakespeare or a Poe, so we recognize the Great Architect and his work in the universe.

7. Religious Instincts

Wherever we find man on the earth; whether in a low state of civilization or a high one; whether barbarian or savage, there is always present the desire to worship. They may even be head hunters, but they worship the skulls of their victims. We are prone to think of the last as only degradation and ignorance, but on second thought, where did the idea that they should worship come from? These religious instincts simply show that somewhere in the remote past, man was acquainted with God.

8. Conscience

Many today think conscience an infallible guide, directing them into doing the right thing; and we hear such expressions as, “let your conscience be your guide,” “My conscience knows.” But even the heathen man, the pagan, has a conscience for he very religiously performs the rites his conscience tells him are right. Conscience, therefore, does not teach that which is right of itself, but is that faculty of mind which sits as a judge in the mind of man and warns him according to the way he has been taught. It is independent of right or wrong, but if a man is taught right, then it warns him.
when he has done wrong. The beasts do not have it. Here is a definite gap in the organic evolution theory. But the fact of a conscience implies that there is a moral Lawgiver to whom man is obligated.

With these very definite and good reasons before us that there exists a God who created all things, then the so-called impossibility of the virgin conceiving, passes away; for the God who created the law of procreation could certainly suspend it if he chose, as the case clearly shows he did. Then Jesus came in the flesh just as the New Testament claims he did.

II. “Thou Shalt Call His Name Jesus”

Have you ever stopped to consider the significance of divinely given names? They have always had a significant meaning. Abram—“High Father;” Abraham—“Father of a multitude;” Sarai—“Contentious;” Sarah—“Princess;” Simon—“Favorable hearing;” Peter—“A Stone” Jesus—“Saviour” Christ—“Annointed;” In Acts 4:12 we have this statement “...for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” We are also baptized into his name. (Matt. 28:19).

It has been argued in defense of denominational names, that the “rose” would smell just as sweetly by any other name, and “there is nothing in a name.” Who is authority for these statements? Mr. William Shakespeare. That puts the denominations in a rather embarrassing position; for in order to justify the use of denominational names, they go to a worldly dramatist for their authority instead of to the word of the Lord! If they are so anxious to take Mr. Shakespeare on the name, why don’t they take some of his characters as models for character-building? Or do they? The fact is that the New Testament reveals the name of the church under the guidance of men who were directed by the Holy Spirit, and they called it simply, “the church” (Acts 2:47; “The churches of Christ” (Rom. 16:16; “The Church of the Lord” (Acts 20:28); “The church of the firstborn” (Heb. 12:23). Since modern denominations and their names were not mentioned by the New Testament writers, it follows that they exist without divine authority. We had better stick to the practice of “calling Bible things by Bible names, and doing Bible things in Bible ways;” it is safe. But the fact also remains that we associate things with a name. When things were named in the long ago Adam, we presume, named some of them (Gen. 2:19)—a certain flower was called a “rose” in our language. Now suppose, following Shakespeare’s argument, that we just call the rose by any name; it would not change the smell; but suppose we should prefer to call it “skunk.” The would-be justifiers of “just any old name will do,” would be the first to object, for the power of association has too long associated the word “skunk” with a bad odor. Following the logic of denominationalists we would have utter confusion. We would be unable to classify anything. The exact sciences would be crippled for lack of a reliable medium with which to express themselves. Imagine, if you can, the school teacher trying to keep his subjects straight when the pupils could call things by the first word that popped into their minds! It would have one advantage for an absent-minded professor or preacher, for he could just call everybody “Jones” and get by with it. But no one believes the idea except when trying to justify the unscriptural course pursued by men in the church-making and naming business. God named his people “Christians.” “And the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.” (Acts 11:26) “...but if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name.” (I Pet. 4:16)

III. “He Shall Save His People From Their Sins.”

“His people.” Who are they? There was a time when the Jews were the only people of God. They were the only ones in covenant relationship with him. But under the gospel dispensation, all nations, all races, are offered the privilege of becoming God’s people. The prophet Hosea said, “Now when she had weaned Loruhamah, she conceived, and bare a son. Then God said, Call his name Loammi: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God. Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, ye are the sons of the living God.” (Hosea 1:8-10) Where was it said unto them that they should not be the people of God? In Jerusalem. The Jews, because of unbelief, were rejected there; and there also the world-wide gospel was first proclaimed, which contained among other things, “For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto him.” (Acts 2:39) “But now in Christ Jesus ye that once were far off are made nigh in the blood of Christ.” (Eph. 2:13) But that which in the days of the Hebrew prophets was hidden in mystery (was not fully revealed), was fully revealed by the apostles and prophets of the New Testament; that not only the Jews; but also the Gentiles, “are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.” (Eph. 3:6) Therefore God’s people today are those Jews and Gentiles who have obeyed the pure gospel of Christ and have been incorporated into one body by the Lord himself; and both “reconciled in one body by the cross.” All of God’s people
today are in that one body called the church. (Eph. 1:22-23) Col. 1:18, 241: which was God’s eternal purpose for mankind: for all nations and races. (Eph. 3:1-13) The apostle Paul quotes the prophecy of Hosea quoted above to show that God also called the Gentiles by the gospel. (Rom. 9:25, 26). The Great Commission shows that God’s people now are those who hear and obey the conditions set forth therein. (Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16; Lk. 24:46-49). Why do people need saving? Paul shows in the first chapter of Romans the terrible condition of the Gentile world, and in the second chapter that the Jews were no better off before God! even though they boasted of knowing God and of keeping the law given through Moses, they broke that law and became just as guilty as the Gentiles. His conclusion is found in 3:9, 23 —“... for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin.” “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” But some may inquire, “What is sin?” “How may I know that I have sinned?” The New Testament gives a three-fold definition of sin: with that definition before us we may know what sin is and when we have sinned. “... sin is the transgression of the law.” (I Jno. 3:4); “All unrighteousness is sin.” (I Jno. 5:17) “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.” (Jas. 4:17) God has drawn a line between good and evil; when you go over that line, you sin. Since “all unrighteousness is sin; and since David said “All of thy commandments are righteous;” (Ps. 119:172) it follows that the man who does something other than God’s commands commits sin. Under this definition come the sins of religious people in departing from God’s word. And according to the statement of James, the one who knows and neglects to do is guilty of sin. That takes in all men in all conditions of life. Many people know what God requires of them, yet they are afraid of what their friends or associates, who think otherwise, might say: they are afraid of social ostracism or business difficulties involved in doing what God says; so neglect to do what God says. Many know the truth on how to become a Christian and how to live one, but because of prejudice will not obey the Lord. And there is still another angle to the matter. In Matthew 11:20-24 is recorded the upbraiding by Jesus of the cities of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum because they did not repent at his preaching. Above this is recorded the fact that in these three cities most of his mighty works were done. We conclude that Jesus held the people in these three cities responsible for what they could have easily known that he was the Son of God. The gospel is being preached everywhere. Thousands of people hear it annually who do nothing about it. Are they not in the same condition that these three cities were in? Many preachers in human churches hear and read gospel truth constantly; they know full well the truths for which the church of the Lord stands; their debaters prepare their arguments in the full light of Scripture teaching on first principles, the work and worship of the church, the organization of the church; in short, all of the teaching of the Bible on the scheme of human redemption, and yet they refuse to listen. If Jesus held these three cities responsible for accepting the truth of his greatest miracles,” of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye,” he shall hold for these people who have at their finger tips the full glory of the gospel in the New Testament?

Still another question comes up at this point: what is the penalty for sin? Paul tells us that “... the wages of sin is death,” (Rom. 6:23) and again, “... rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus: who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might.” (2 Thess. 1:8-9)

With all men thus under condemnation, behold the marvelous love and compassion of our heavenly Father in sending his Son into the world to “save his people from their sins.” He came not to save them from temptation, or tribulation, or sickness, or sorrow, or trial, nor even physical death, but “from their sins,” which saves them from eternal death and destruction. Jesus executed the plan of salvation that God had planned. He fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning him; proving that he was the promised Messiah. He taught men; proved that he was the Son of God by the miracles, signs, and wonders which he performed; was crucified on the cross; buried in Joseph’s new tomb; rose from the dead the third day; was crowned at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens; sent the Holy Spirit to guide the apostles whom he had chosen to declare the whole counsel of God concerning man’s salvation; concerning which salvation we have the carefully preserved record in the New Testament; and “being made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him, the author of eternal salvation.” (Heb. 5:9) This means that man must learn the facts concerning him, believe on him as the Son of God sent down from heaven, and obey the commands or requirements of that system of redemption which he revealed, enjoy then the forgiveness of his sins and the right to “enter in by the gates into the city.” (Rev. 22:14)
With apologies to the public we yield to the necessity of publishing the following documents. It is by no means a pleasant thing to have one’s personal matters always before the public; there are some individuals in the church in various quarters who seem determined that some of my private business affairs shall be the constant topic of discussion. While I feel somewhat a victim in all of these publicized matters, if it is necessary for the sake of the cause we have striven to defend and uphold that I should become a gazing stock, I submit to the humiliation.

I was invited by the elders of the Norhill church of Christ in Houston, Texas, of which Roy E. Cogdill is a member and for which he is the preacher, to deliver ten sermons in Houston on special subjects; the purpose of which was to preach the gospel of the kingdom of Christ and to expose modern millennialism with all of its auxiliary theories and consequences. The meeting was first arranged as a Norhill meeting, to be held in the auditorium of that congregation. Later Jack Meyer and the Heights church, of which he is a member and for which he preaches, manifested a marked interest in the purpose of the meeting, and it was suggested that the meeting be conducted on a larger scale, through the Norhill church. It was then decided that the meeting should be held in a downtown auditorium, and arrangements to do so were made. Other churches of Christ in the city were invited to participate on a strictly voluntary basis. I know of no pressure that was brought on any person or congregation by the Norhill church to accept their invitation to cooperate. All of the churches, except one, immediately volunteered cooperation and support of the meeting. The Central church, of which Burton Coffman is a member and for which he preaches, did not choose to cooperate, and so far as I know their “commitment” to the elders of the Norhill church, to accept their invitation to cooperate. All of the churches, except one, immediately volunteered cooperation and support of the meeting. The Central church, of which Burton Coffman is a member and for which he preaches, did not choose to cooperate, and so far as I know their “commitment” to the elders of the Norhill church, to accept their invitation to cooperate, was accepted without question. Brother Roy E. Cogdill and the Norhill elders certainly did not attempt to force any congregation into the arrangements for which they themselves assumed whole and sole responsibility.

Knowing the elders of the Central church, however, and having been associated with them in meetings, Brother Jack Meyer felt that he could approach them as an individual and a friend, show them the advantages of all the churches having a part in the meeting, and thus make it unanimous. It was in this exchange with Brother Meyer that the preacher and the elders of the Central church elected to make a personal issue of “the speaker” for the meeting, and upon them rests the responsibility for the personalities injected into the discussions before and after the meeting.

The elders of the Norhill and Heights churches believe that the principles involved are such that the truth should be made known to all. Rumors and remarks concerning the matter which affect the cause of Christ and reflect on the integrity of the churches of Christ have become current, and I have been asked by the elders of these churches, and by brethren Cogdill and Meyer, to publish the following correspondence, so that all may know exactly what occurred. I do not feel justified in denying their request.

Inasmuch as my personal honesty and honor have been made the subject of discussion, I have been reluctant to enter into an argument on the matter, simply because I have never regarded my personal character as a debatable question—within me it is not. But I have yielded to the judgment of brethren Cogdill and Meyer, whom I esteem and trust as true and tried friends, and to the will of the elders of the Norhill and Heights churches. I hereby and therefore submit the documents which they believe should be published in interest of the cause of Christ.

I submit, first of all, their joint request to me; then, in order, the letters that make up the record, all of which very definitely speak for themselves.

Mr. Foy E. Wallace Jr., Editor, The Bible Banner, Oklahoma City, Okla.
Dear Brother Wallace:

In January, 1945, twenty churches of Christ of Greater Houston officially united efforts in presenting you in an outstanding meeting in Houston’s Music Hall, exposing modern millennial theories. The elders of the Central church, 4100 Montrose Blvd., declined to allow Central as a congregation to participate, at first claiming “previous commitments” as their reason. In a series of events, they finally, how-
ever, revealed what they admitted was their real reason—in a letter to the Norhill elders they refused to endorse you, charging your "general reputation and tactics." In a regular monthly luncheon of preachers of Houston and vicinity, brother Burton Coffman, Central minister, and brother Lawrence Rutledge, Central elder, brought the matter before the preachers, going considerably further than their letter in charging you with dishonesty and a generally bad reputation. After the luncheon, brother Fletcher Dailey, another Central elder present at the luncheon, concurred actively in the charges against you.

With full confidence in your honesty, the Norhill and Heights elders and ministers, after lengthy joint consideration, by letter called on the Central elders and minister to produce evidence on which to base their public charges against you. After long silence, Central obviously refuses to attempt to back up the charges made against you publicly and in your absence. Since we cannot persuade Central either to attempt to support the charges or even to perform the ordinary courtesy of replying to our letter, we have decided to place the matter, including all correspondence involved, in your hands. We believe that the long-range good of the church will be served if, through your Bible Banner, brethren generally are informed as to the tactics of these reputation assassins.

The Houston churches have arranged for another meeting with you in the Music Hall in 1946. We believe that if a sister church singles out a preacher whom all other Houston churches endorse, and charges that preacher with having a bad reputation and dishonest character, we have a right to demand the evidence. If such a church will not produce evidence for such charges, we believe that comes under the head of circulating false reports. It calls for repentance and correction.

Through the years these charges have generally been promoted over the country by those who are either (1) avowed Bollites and premillennialists, (2) those who are friendly to and sympathetic with the Bollites, or (3) those who have been forced reluctantly to take a stand on premillennialism and its advocates among us—and who resent the fight you have waged against Bollism and those who in the controversy have "worked both sides of the street." We are interested in putting a stop to such malicious attacks, or, failing to stop them, in letting the brethren over the country know who tries to destroy reputations by making charges that they fear to attempt to sustain. This is not the first time that such an attack has come here from the same source. About two years ago, in another preachers' luncheon here, when a proposal was made that the Houston churches sponsor a big union meeting downtown, using one of our best known and most highly respected preachers as speaker, brother Fletcher Dailey, Central elder, objected most strenuously, charging that he personally knew enough against the character of this preacher to make him unworthy of Christian fellowship. Brother Burton Coffman, Central minister, was present and endorsed this character attack made by Dailey.

The cause of truth will be well served, in our judgment, if you will give this matter full publicity, liberal space, and major treatment.

In Christian love and confidence, we are:

D. C. Batson, Samuel W. Loe, G. W. Howard, Steve Holmes, Elders, Norhill Church of Christ; Roy E. Cogdill, and Luther Blackmon, Ministers, Norhill Church of Christ; L. C. Stephens, H. B. Springfield, J. J. McCarty, Elders, Heights Church of Christ; and Jack Meyer, Minister, Heights Church of Christ.

November 29, 1944

Elders Norhill Church of Christ,
Dear Brethren:

Due to the heaviest commitments in the history of our congregation for next year, we regret that we shall be unable to help Norhill with the proposed meeting in the Music Hall during the month of January with Brother Foy E. Wallace, Jr.

We appreciate your asking us, and we pray God's blessings upon you and your great congregation in the work of the Lord.

Sincerely yours,

Signed: Fletcher W. Dailey, Elder, for the Elders of Central Church of Christ, Houston, Texas.

Dec. 19, 1944

Mr. C. L. Patterson, 7112 Dallas, Houston, Texas
Dear Brother Patterson:

To you, Brother M. E. Reddick, Brother Fletcher Dailey, Brother Lawrence Rutledge, as elders of Central Church, and to Brother Burton Coffman, as minister of the church, I am addressing this letter. There are no copies being mailed or shown to anyone. If I know my own heart, I am thus approaching you brethren as a friend of Central. Shortness of time alone forces me to use this method of approach, instead of talking with each of you face to face.

I know full well that each church 'is free under God to run its work without outside interference and meddling, and that others should be most careful about making suggestions and appeals such as will be made in this letter. On the other hand, in this city we are a community of congregations. We should feel free to help each other avoid pitfalls. I am taking the liberty of asking you to reconsider a decision, because I believe the decision in question will rebound to your personal and congregational hurt, to the
hurt of the future relations among the churches of Christ here. My testimony, Brother Patterson, comes from one who has only goodwill for Central. I have preached in a meeting there, and know Central to be a good church; have said so publicly and privately; have defended Central and boosted her against some criticism. This move I am making is in the hope that you will not without any necessity whatever put a club in the hands of any who might seek occasion to put the wrong kind of a mark on a church which has a great future and which can be of great benefit in stimulating all the churches to more ambitious work, provided the church can have the right confidence in Central.

Yes, as you are already thinking, I have reference to your late decision not to stand with the other churches of the city in the January Music Hall meeting, in which Foy E. Wallace, Jr., has been engaged to preach, exposing modern millennial theories. Central gave as a reason, previous commitments.

My hope is that, since Central is having such large contributions, according to the representations of your own members, you may be able to find some way to contribute at least a token payment, so that you may be able to say truthfully that you are supporting the effort. But if Central is unable to contribute, at least, let us say, $50.00, more or less, may I ask you this: cannot Central officially support the meeting with your moral support?

In our meeting last week at Pierce and Baldwin, of leaders of Houston churches, I made that request publicly of all churches (of which there are only three or four) that had indicated that they could not support the meeting because of heavy financial obligations. That night two of these churches served notice that they would back the meeting with their moral support, and one of them indicated it would probably do so financially. In addition to that public request, I think enough of Central to make this private appeal to each of you.

It has fallen to my lot to head a committee that will advertise this meeting. It is our ambition-frankly expressed-to let the world know that all churches of Christ of Greater Houston are backing this endeavor. Such an approach to the world will make a strategic effect on the world, for the sake of the influence of the gospel. As it is, enough churches are already in, financially and morally, for us to put the matter on a basis of a union meeting of practically all churches. If any church declines to cooperate, we are not going to feature and advertise that, as we are not seeking to divide the cause here. But you can see that if, for example in our radio and newspaper advertising, we can say that all churches are backing it, that will carry tremendous public appeal. And this is for the church, and not for any individual.

Central’s money isn’t necessary, and to be quite frank, it is my judgment that this meeting is going to cause such response that enough people are going to flood the place to guarantee a huge attendance if not a single member from Central comes. That, Brother Patterson, is my sincere belief. However, if Norhill and the other churches, with their “commitments” are adding this meeting to their budget, it would be not unfair for Central to bear some expense. And Central members will be helped by attendance. But, whatever Central does, the meeting will go right on to a blazing success. And if two or three churches decline to cooperate, that probably will make the other churches work harder and may even generate more vigor-of a kind, but of a kind which I do not desire.

But I am thinking of two big points. First, the effect on the unity of all these congregations of any single church refusing to officially have a part in this effort. Second, in view of the fact that this meeting is dedicated to “exposing modern millennial theories” (this to be our advertising theme, along with the fact that this is a union meeting) I do not want anyone to have any excuse for putting a question on Central as to these matters. I think I can assure you of this: it is not the desire of the leading spirits of this meeting to do this. But I devoutly believe that Central’s refusal to be an official party to this meeting will raise the question, and put Central somewhat by herself on these matters. Now get me straight on this: I am not saying that such will be just; I am only seriously predicting that result. A number of things will combine to produce this result, and I think you know exactly what they are:

As a friend of Central, I would like to appeal to you along this line: regardless of how it may irk you that brethren over the country will so interpret your decision, if you make it stick, why not rather face the question realistically, and face life as it is and not as we think it should be. Central right now faces its brightest future. It is overcoming some old handicaps, and is now preparing to step out into the fore of our strongest churches. It has not reached the place where it can deliberately ignore the confidence of brethren. When it would be so easy to go in with the other churches of Christ and back this effort morally and publicly, and, perhaps, even to find some way to have a part in the whole program financially, why not officially do that-that is, the leadership of Central as a unit-and remove any doubt, and any possibility for misunderstanding.

Regardless of what any of you individually in Central may think of the speaker for this meeting, he certainly is a specialist in this field. He is a top-flight platform speaker. He is the choice of the churches of Houston. And I do not mind saying that he would be my individual
Mr. Jack Meyer
Harvard & Sixteenth,
Houston, Texas.

Dear Bro. Meyer:

In reply to your letter of December 19th, with respect to Central Congregation participating in the Wallace meeting sponsored by Norhill congregation, in addition to our letter to the elders of Norhill, we wish to state:

1. This congregation appreciates any suggestions and constructive criticisms from any one; but we very deeply regret our inability to respond to your wishes in this matter. As you doubtless understand, we have the right as a congregation to participate; or not to participate financially, in this meeting, and without further expressing our reason therefor, and in so doing we do not deem that we are guilty of any doctrinal error.

2. As to the pre-millennial question, this congregation has long since endeavored to comply with the admonition of James 2:18, “and I will show thee my faith by my works.” More than four years ago Central Congregation, for the purpose of owning and holding its property, and the carrying on of its secular business, was incorporated under the laws of the State of Texas. Its Charter expressly declares against all pre-millennial theories, and further expressly affirms that Christ is now upon his throne and ruling: our Charter further prohibits anyone holding the pre-millennial theories from participating officially in the affairs of this congregation. Our Charter further provides that such restriction is fundamental, and not subject to change. We have been informed that Central’s Charter is in all probability the first Charter or Deed, in the history of the Church, containing such provision.

The Charter of Central Congregation is on file in the office of the Secretary of State at Austin, Texas, able and indestructible monument to the position of this congregation on the pre-millennial question. Central Congregation purposely and unanimously won the title of all the real estate it now owns, or may hereafter acquire, the above restriction against pre-millennialism, as well as restrictions against other false teachings and practices.

3. We have not knowingly permitted anyone to preach or teach anything in this congregation that is not in complete harmony with the provisions of the New Testament as expressed in our Charter. Our present minister, Brother Burton Coffman, has preached many sermons in condemnation of the pre-millennial theory, and in our recent meeting by Brother C. C. Brew- er, the greater part of three of his sermons were in criticism and condemnation of the pre-millennial theory.

With the above conclusive facts, it is our opinion that no one can misunderstand our position on this heresy.

With kindest personal regards, we are,

Yours in Christ,

L. P. Rutledge, M. E. Reddick, C. L. Patterson, Fletcher W. Dailey, Joe B. Foster, Elders, Central Church of Christ, Houston, Texas.

To Brethren L. P. Rutledge, M. E. Reddick, C. L. Patterson, Fletcher W. Dailey, and Joe B. Foster, Elders, Central Church of Christ, Houston, Texas.

Dear Brethren:

I have your letter of Dec. 27, signed by you in the above order as elders of the Central church, in reply to my letter to you of December 19, in which my appeal was to the Central Congregation to stand with the other churches of Christ in the January Music Hall meeting. A reply to your letter is deemed necessary. To make it easier for you to consider said reply, a copy of this letter goes to each of you who signed the Dec. 27th letter, and to Brother Burton Coffman, your preacher. With the Lord, as my witness, I can only say as I did in my first
letter, that I am approaching you brethren as a friend of Central.

You are correct in saying in your reply of Dec. 27 that you have the right to participate or not financially in the meeting under consideration—and I said that very thing in other words in the opening lines of the second paragraph of my first letter. So, that is not an issue between us.

You also have the right, as you further stated, to participate or not “and without further expressing our reason therefor.” There is no issue there, as to right. However, just because something is lawful, it does not necessarily follow that it is expedient. (1 Cor. 10:23)

You can be within your rights, and yet hurt yourself and others. One may say that he has the right to do thus and so, and that very act be so subject to question as to justifiably lay him open to suspicion, particularly if he is already under question.

It is also doubtless true, as you say, that your property charter forbids any preacher or official holding to premillennialism to have any connection with Central. But that fact does not within itself prove your soundness, brethren. For example, I would be most surprised if you denied this: there are churches of Christ which have the restrictive clause against mechanical instruments of music in worship in their deeds, which nonetheless have elders and deacons and preachers who are soft on the question. Or, there are churches with said restrictive clause that have no officers or preacher who believe in the “music” but who have influential members who do; Now, obviously, such a church could not point with assurance to its deed as a proof of its soundness. Such a church would be doing a better job of protecting its property than its heart. You can see how that such a fact could be true, as to the deed, and still the officials undergo a change of heart or be so influenced by others that the “creed in the deed” would be no guarantee of soundness. It would make brethren only laugh at such claims, as I can assure you that it will in your case.

Too, whoever informed you that you were the first church to have such provision in your charter gave you very poor information. You say that such took place four years ago.

Brother Roy Cogdill, who formerly practiced law, has advised me that he has been writing such provisions against premillennialism into church property deeds for many years earlier than that. I give you this information, brethren, so that you may not make yourself ridiculous by any such claims of pioneering in this respect. But if you were first or last in this provision, it would be no more guarantee of soundness than the music clause would be of soundness in a church against music. In fact, it is possible for a church to reach the place where it is sorry it has the no-instrument clause, and where it would do something about it if it could. Would you call that a sound church? Certainly not.

Now, brethren, with me “a straight line is still the shortest distance between two points,” for that removes all doubt as to what we mean. When I write letters I do not try to write them to keep from saying what I am thinking—I write in order to say what is on my heart. So, we may as well go to the heart of this matter now.

According to testimony of Brother Burton Coffman, your minister, to me as well as to the Norhill elders and to Brother Cogdill, Norhill preacher, you brethren resented my appeal, made privately to you in my December 19 letter. Brother Coffman represented that he and you resented it because I asked you to do the very thing you had already done-officially endorse the meeting with your moral support if you did not feel free to do so with your finances. Brother Coffman censured me for not having read your letter of November 29 to the Norhill elders before I made such an appeal. He insisted that you had endorsed the meeting.

But your letter of Nov. 29 did not give any indication of moral support to the meeting. After stating that you could not help because of heavy financial commitments, you then merely said: “We appreciate your asking us, and we pray God’s blessings upon you and your great congregation in the work of the Lord.”

Where is there anything in that letter about endorsing a meeting? Brother Coffman told me that it was intended as an endorsement. Well, if so intended, why did it not state it in plain language? Please ask yourself this question why should you brethren resent my asking you to do something you had not done on the ground that you had already done it, when the language says no such thing? Now, brethren, to make matters worse: after becoming quite incensed and rebuking me for asking you to endorse a meeting that brother Coffman says you had already endorsed, Brother Coffman in a later conversation with Brother Sam Loe, Norhill elder, admitted that in your letter of Nov. 29 you were trying to hold something back: you were trying to endorse the meeting without endorsing Brother Foy Wallace Jr.

Instead of my apologizing, as Brother Coffman insisted I should do, for asking Central to do something it had already done, it seems to me that Brother Coffman, as speaking your sentiments, and you have talked yourself into a most unenviable position. As for me, at least I have not told conflicting stories. And, brethren, I did not ask you to endorse something you had endorsed. Your letter said nothing about endorsing the meeting: the Norhill elders have written you that they do not consider your letter as an endorsement of the meeting;
and Brother Coffman admits that you refrained from a plain endorsement because you refuse to endorse Brother Wallace.

Now, I would not mention these matters had I not been accused by you, through your minister, of leaving the impression that you had not done what you had done—when your letter shows you had done no such thing. In self-defense, so that you may have the whole record of my action, I thus set this before you. I still believe in your fundamental honesty enough to believe that once you have the whole story, you will not believe any false claims about what I have done. Now, with this before you, the whole matter resolves itself into this: the elders of the Central Church of Christ are on record, through the testimony of the Central minister, Brother Burton Coffman, to the effect that Central refuses to officially endorse the January union meeting of practically all churches of Christ, exposing modern millennial theories, because Central refuses to endorse Brother Foy Wallace Jr.

Just stand off and take a look at that, brethren. Isn't that something? Is it anything of which to be proud? Do you flatter yourself that such action will hurt the meeting, or Foy Wallace, Roy Cogdill or Jack Meyer? As a matter of fact, since the question mark is already over you brethren, this would come nearer helping than hurting us individually. If you let this stand, it will be the very thing that I sought to avoid for your sake. Brethren, for the sake of your personal influence and the confidence of people generally in Central, you can't afford to let a thing like that go down in history. It could make you think better of me and avoid more unpleasantness if I had let the matter rest after your letter to me of Dec. 27, but I insist that I still feel that there is something in you that can be appealed to to take a safer and more generous course than you are now doing. It still is not too late to reverse yourself, regardless of pride and what anyone has said. It is unthinkable that you will put Central outside a meeting where the other churches are uniting, just because you do not care for Brother Wallace. If you lend your official endorsement and actual encouragement to this meeting, that doesn't mean that you necessarily approve of everything Foy Wallace, or anyone else, says or does.

In my heart I hold no ill will against any of you brethren. I am hoping that Central doesn't here put herself for all time on the questionable side. This will be a good opportunity to remove suspicion. The position Central is taking on this meeting will make people have no confidence in her claims of soundness on premillennialism. Many of our people claim they do not believe the theory, but love R. H. Boll, its chief exponent “among us,” so much that they hate Foy Wallace for the fight he has made on Bollism. This is where brethren generally will locate Central even more than now. Brother Patterson told brother Sam Loe he regarded my appeal as an act of friendship for Central. Brother Coffman told me the rest of you did not so regard it. God knows that such is the sentiment of my heart, and I still hope that you may not needlessly allow the finger of suspicion to be pointed at you and may practice the kind of unity we preach. How you receive this is your responsibility. With cordial good will, I am,

Sincerely,

Jack Meyer

December 27, 1944

Elders, Central Church of Christ

Dear Brethren:

As there seems to have been some misunderstanding and confusion resulting from Brother Meyer's letter to you of December 19 relative to the participation in an endorsement of the Wallace meeting to be shortly held under the sponsorship of the Norhill congregation, we thought it advisable to clarify our position.

After the receipt of Brother Meyer's letter to you, all the elders at Norhill were called on the telephone by Brother Burton Coffman in which conversation he stated that Central did mean their letter of November 29 to be an endorsement of the meeting and seemed rather inconsistent that we accept it as such. Frankly, we did not really give Central's letter much consideration but regretfully assumed that the matter was closed. However, since the question has come up, the elders at Norhill wish to clarify their position by stating that we do not consider your letter an endorsement of the meeting. As Brother Coffman mentioned he did not keep a copy, we are enclosing one with this letter.

While we were and still are most anxious for Central to participate in and join us in sponsoring this meeting, Brother Meyer's letter to you, as he very definitely states, was written independently of the elders at Norhill and on a purely personal and friendly basis, a knowledge of which we did not have prior to the apparent misunderstanding.

We regret that there has been a misunderstanding, but we do want to keep the records straight, and while we did not authorize Brother Meyer's letter we do believe it was written in a truly Christian spirit with sincere motives.

Most brotherly,

D. C. Batson, Steve Holmes, Samuel W. Loe, G. W. Howard, Elders, Norhill Church of Christ.

January 5th, 1945

Elders of Norhill Church of Christ

and Brother Jack Meyer,

Houston, Texas

Dear Brethren:
In order to clear up any impressions you may have with reference to the meeting Norhill is sponsoring in the music hall, we would like to say:

(1) Our first letter wishing you good brethren success in every work of the Lord was intended as a tacit endorsement of your meeting. Brother Coffman explained this to you personally. Our reason for that type of endorsement was the possibility that a more specific endorsement might be misconstrued as an endorsement of the particular speaker selected for this meeting, which endorsement we never had any intention of giving. Subsequent developments have confirmed our judgment on this as altogether correct. Of course, any gospel meeting, even one for the announced purpose of the one in the music hall, we endorse “in principle.” However, when it comes to signing in advance an unqualified carte blanche endorsement of a man in a meeting which we had no part whatever in arranging, we simply cannot do it in truth and conscience.

(2) We are planning now and have been since we heard of it to cooperate with you in this meeting in every way consistent with our sovereign independence as a congregation. This means that we shall attend the meeting, that we are with you in your objective of teaching the truth on all questions, including premillennialism, and that we shall announce the meeting as we are already doing. We have appointed a committee to secure rooms and board for out of town visitors you expect for the meeting. This fellowship and cooperation we are glad to give our sister congregations.

(3) However, we wish to state that we are not joint sponsors with you of this meeting, Brother Foy E. Wallace, Jr., being the speaker. The truth is we did not even know such a meeting was contemplated till all arrangements had already been made by you. Furthermore, as stated in our first letter, the heaviest financial program in our history makes it unwise in our judgment to assume any further load. There is also another reason which we had hoped it would be unnecessary to state; but the insistence of some makes it unavoidable. Therefore, we must tell you that although we have no doctrinal difference with the speaker for this meeting on the points to be discussed, nevertheless we do not endorse him because of his general reputation and tactics as they are well known throughout the brotherhood.

Yours in Christ,

L. P. Rutledge, Fletcher W. Dailey, M. E. Reddick, C. L. Patterson, Joe B. Foster, Elders.

P. S. Enclosed is a copy of our letter of December 27th to Brother Jack Meyer for your information.

Elders Central Church of Christ
Houston, Texas

March 1, 1945

Dear Brethren:

In your letter of January 5, addressed by you to the Elders of the Norhill Church and Brother Jack Meyer, you state among other things, that the reason you could not have any official part in the Music Hall Meeting in which twenty congregations of this city did cooperate, was because of Brother Foy E. Wallace’s “general reputation and tactics which are well known throughout the brotherhood.” We might still have been uncertain as to your meaning, not being aware of the fact that Brother Wallace has come into disrepute as far as the brotherhood at large is concerned, had not your preacher, Burton Coffman, and two of your group of Elders, Fletcher Dailey and L. P. Rutledge, in a meeting of preachers and brethren gathered together on January 6. In this meeting it was repeatedly made clear that by such a statement you meant to impeach and attack Brother Wallace’s character and honesty, and to revert to the old time-worn attack made by all premillenialists, and those who sympathize with them, ever since he has led out in the fight against these false doctrines. This was made evident by such statements as, “It is a known fact that for twenty-five years he has failed to pay his debts,” and “no honest man will have to write a 76 page magazine to prove that he is honest,” and several other statements which were made at that time in the presence of many witnesses.

In view of the fact, therefore, that you have professed to be in the possession of some information or evidence that makes Brother Wallace unworthy of your fellowship, and in view of the fact that twenty churches of this city did fellowship and use Brother Wallace, and have made plans to use him again in just such another meeting in 1946, we deem it right and just that we ask you to produce the evidence which you have, and upon which you relied in such an attack. If Brother Wallace is not worthy of your fellowship, then he is not worthy of ours. If he refuses to honor his honest obligations, then he should not be fellowshipped by any of the brethren anywhere. These veiled and indefinite charges have been floating through the air long enough, and we believe that it is demanded by justice and righteousness that they be pinned down and either established and correction demanded or forever silenced. We give you our assurance that if and when you furnish us an instance and evidence of Brother Wallace’s dishonesty, we will take the matter up with the eldership of the congregation where he has his membership and with Brother Wallace himself, and demand that it either be disproved or dealt with in accordance with the will of the Lord.

If such evidence is not furnished by you, then
Mr. Burton Coffman, Minister,  
Central Church of Christ,  
Houston, Texas.  
Dear Brother Coffman:  

One day last week you called me and asked that I preach at a service in an approaching meeting at Central, in turn with all other preachers of the city. On the spur of the moment I agreed. After further reflection, however, I find myself unable to fill this appointment with a clear conscience, and I must therefore ask you to count me out. I am choosing this method of conveying to you this decision, so that I may have a record of exactly what I have said, in case there is any need for such documentary proof.

You may wonder why this refusal to participate as speaker in your meeting. I could evade the issue by giving you any number of excuses which would be quite plausible, but I prefer frankly to let you know my reason.

I could not conscientiously accept an invitation from you and the elders of the Central congregation until you and said elders correct to the churches of this city your charge against the man that we have all supported in our recent Music Hall meeting. I do not mean that I will not preach for a church that does not admire the men I admire. But the Central elders have just charged, over their signature dated Jan. 5, 1945 (and you orally before a preachers’ meeting in Houston supported their charge) Foy E. Wallace, Jr. Your charge was this: “We do not endorse him because of his general reputation and tactics as they are well-known throughout the brotherhood.” Central church thus charges that the general reputation of a gospel preacher, Foy Wallace, is so bad that Central refuses to endorse him. I deny that brother Wallace’s reputation is bad. While I do not approve of everything that any gospel preacher has done (including myself) and do not support everything Brother Wallace teaches, I still endorse Foy Wallace as a gospel preacher, a great influence for good, and as thoroughly honest-regardless of what any scandal-mongers say about his honesty. Since Central has made such charges against the man whom we have supported, and I believe those charges to be untrue, scandal-circulating in their nature, and unchristian, how could I keep my self-respect and participate in such a meeting as you propose? You and the Central elders are already known far and wide for this charge against Brother Wallace. I have every reason to believe that you feel the effects of it. My sincere opinion is that you are planning this meeting simply as a means of trying to restore at least some of your lost prestige and confidence of the people, and I aim not to be sucked in by the maneuver.

Further, according to testimony given me by Brother Thornton Crews, in whose integrity I have the utmost confidence, one of your elders, Brother Fletcher Dailey, after the rather “explosive” January preachers’ luncheon at the Lamar, charged that jealousy among preachers was at the root of this Music Hall meeting trouble because Central is “paying Brother Coffman a pretty good salary”—Brother Dailey’s quotation. Now, Brother Crews tells me he will face Dailey anywhere on that. This is a reflection on every preacher in town. I don’t even know what your salary is, and I do not believe there is a preacher in this town jealous of you on that account, or any other. How could any gospel preacher accept an invitation from such an elder with such a charge as that made by the Central eldership?

This is the same Brother Dailey who made charges against Brother N. B. Hardeman in a preachers’ luncheon last year when he was proposed for a downtown union meeting. According to Brother Crews’ testimony to me, Brother Dailey charged the character of Brother Hardeman, and said that “I know plenty on him.” Frank Smith also told me of this character attack. I believe Hardeman and Wallace to be Christians. I think such charges as you and the Central elders make come under the head of character assassination. You people resent rumors about Central, but the Central eldership and present minister are too free with charging gospel preachers, and in their absence, and I just can’t accept an invitation from such an eldership and minister until these ugly personal charges are withdrawn and apologized for.

So, for these reasons please excuse me from accepting your invitation to speak.

Sincerely,

Jack Meyer.  

February 19, 1945

Mr. Burton Coffman,  
701 Taft,  
Houston, Texas.

Dear Brother Coffman:  

I am writing you in regard to the invitation...
you gave me to speak during the meeting you have arranged to be had sometime during March. I accepted the invitation, but wish to withdraw my commitment.

The church at Central could not and would not support the meeting at the Music Hall, nor endorse the speaker. I supported the meeting one hundred per cent and endorsed the speaker. Since we could not work together in that meeting I do not see how we could successfully work together in this one.

It is reported commonly that one of the elders at Central made this statement: “The preachers in Houston are jealous of Central and Brother Coffman because of the good salary he is getting.” Nothing like that has every entered my mind, nor do I believe it has ever entered the mind of any gospel preacher in the city. I am not jealous of Central nor do I have any malice toward you or any member of the congregation. I felt like the statement I quoted above was a personal rebuff to every gospel preacher in Houston.

Since you talked to me on the phone, and I committed myself to speak, I have had time to reflect on the matter and do not feel that I would be very comfortable over there trying to make a speech.

Sincerely and fraternally Yours,
-F. F. Conley, 4730 McKinney Ave., Houston, 3, Texas.

Feb. 21, 1945

Mr. Burton Coffman,
701 Taft,
Houston, Texas.

Dear Brother Coffman:

Since talking to you over the telephone concerning the meeting you are planning at Central with the preachers of the city participating and in which you invited me to have a part, I have given the matter further consideration and have reached the conclusion that I cannot have any part in the meeting.

I regard the attack made by you and the elders of the Central church against Brother Foy E. Wallace, Jr., as unfair, vicious, dishonorable, unchristian and sinful. Such “tactics” as were employed by you against a fellow-christian and especially a gospel preacher, were designed only to do harm and could not have been productive of good of any sort. It revealed a vicious disposition upon the part not only of yourself but also of the elders of the congregation for which you preach. I do not care to be in any manner associated with a group of that character, in any sort of endeavor.

Furthermore, I am of the opinion that the meeting is a political maneuver upon your part to overcome the impression made upon the brotherhood at large by your attitude toward the Wallace meeting. It would look well for the report to go out that all the preachers at Houston had preached in a meeting at Central and with such a report the impression be made that everything is lovely and all the preachers endorse you and the congregation for which you preach. It will take more than such a meeting, and an article or two in the Firm Foundation, to set you right in the eyes of most of the brethren in this country for they know what such display portends. As for me, I do not want to be put in the position of endorsing either you or the church where you preach until you make right the wrong you have done and manifest a different attitude toward the truth.

Finally, you and the two elders who were with you at the luncheon the first Monday in January were not only unfair but engaged in so many misrepresentations that I have no confidence in your honor or integrity.

These words are plain, but they state my attitude and I am telling you, not someone else and am giving you the real reason and not a subterfuge. I bear you no malice and if I know my own heart, I would be glad to see proper adjustments made by you concerning these matters. However, until you do adjust and make right these things wherein you are wrong, I cannot and will not extend you any co-operation whatsoever.

Sincerely,
Roy E. Cogdill.

Perhaps no comment from me on the foregoing documents is necessary. My friends know me and explanations to them are certainly unnecessary; and my enemies would not believe me on oath, nor accept any explanations and overtures on my behalf from any other source. But there are a vast host of people in between who are affected by these things and who love the Master whose cause is involved. It is for them and for that Cause, and for no other reason under heaven, that I have subjected myself to the suffering of publicizing for so long matters of purely a personal and private business nature. I doubt if a single one of my critics would be willing to submit his personal record to the scrutiny that has been given mine. In fact, should any of them accuse another in the presence of the Lord in business and financial matters, I wonder if He would not stoop before them to write something on the ground. Could any of them cast the first stone? Let them open their private records for the inspection and scrutiny of others and see.

Whether further comment is necessary or not, there are some remarks that I feel are permissible in the premises.

First, I am not even concerned, much less anxious, over the matter of whether the elders of the Central church in Houston and their preacher endorse me or do not indorse me. Further-
more, there has been no effort made to violate the autonomy of their local church. I am certain that I have made no demands of that sort, and I do not believe anyone else has done so. They elected of themselves to inject the personal attacks into the correspondence, when they released their pent-up feelings and revealed their real reasons—at least, their real attitude, if not worthy to be named reasons for their actions. In so doing they chose their own ground.

Second, the statement of one of their elders that a man would not publish a defense of his honesty if he were not dishonest is an assertion which would work more than one way. Did they not write a letter defending themselves against charges that they are premillennial in sympathy? Read the letter in which they attempt to convince other churches that they are not premillennialists. So according to their own dictum they are premillennialists! They would not publish a defense of themselves if they were not guilty, and they would not deny it if it were not true!

Of course, everyone knows that I did not publish a “seventy-six page” magazine to defend my honesty. The Special Issue of the Bible Banner was published to refute the propaganda of J. Frank Norris against the church, to correct his falsehoods, to put the correct information in reference to the Fort Worth debate in the hands of all, to show to all the world that the recent Norris challenges for another debate had been accepted, and to expose J. Frank Norris in the character that he really is. The issue accomplished its purpose. It was in connection with this exposure that a few pages were devoted to the “campaign of calumny” which he had waged, aided and abetted by certain members of the church, of whom some were preachers. And herein lies the real trouble with Brother Burton Coffman and his elders. A sore spot was touched; they felt it, and winced. It is regrettable, indeed, that a gospel preacher and elders of a church of Christ will stoop to “tactics” of J. Frank Norris and thus descend to his level. It is my opinion that when loyal members of the church over the country learn the facts, it will require more than “seventy-six pages” to clear their name of this self-imposed stigma.

I believe that all fair-minded people can see that it is the conduct of such men as J. Frank Norris, Clinton Davidson, and now Burton Coffman, that makes it necessary for me to defend, for the sake of the cause I strive to serve, my name and character against their attacks.

Third, it is significant, and should not be overlooked, that this “Central” church in Houston has linked itself with a “Central” church in Nashville which opposed a meeting thirty Churches of Christ were holding to expose premillennialism. True to form, the opposition of this “Central” Church in Houston was to a meeting twenty Churches of Christ were holding to expose premillennialism. Of course, they are not premillennialists—no! They do not even “sympathize” with the “sympathizers!”

Fourth, concerning indorsements, a letter from Brother Burton Coffman to me some months ago might be interesting reading here, especially to the elders of the church for which he preaches, under the circumstances.

“Your stand on the Christian’s attitude during the present crisis is one hundred percent correct. The drivel that is being passed out in some quarters these days, in my judgment, is pure nonsense. Power to you in your stand on these troublesome questions.”—Burton Coffman, Houston, Texas.

It is known that Burton Coffman agrees with the position of the Bible Banner on the civil government issue and the “war question.” He was not concerned about my “general reputation and tactics” on that question. He appeared to have no objection to my reputation and he really indorsed my “tactics” in that discussion. It was “one hundred per cent,” which is quite a good grade, and he would impart “more power” to me. When it was announced without my knowledge or permission some months ago that I would lecture on the “War Question” in Houston, Brother Burton Coffman expressed to me a keen disappointment that I declined to do so. He was eager for me to expose the conscientious objectors. Behold the difference! When it was announced that twenty churches of Christ were bringing me to Houston to expose modern millennial errors, all at once Brother Burton Coffman objected to my “general reputation and tactics,” and joined the elders of his congregation in opposing it! Still, they are not premillennial sympathizers—no! Well, it will take more than a seventy-six page edition and an article in the Firm Foundation on ancient “Chiliasts” (copied from an encyclopaedia, the name of which I could call) to convince a lot of people in Houston and elsewhere that they are not. I am told by some who are in a position to know that the family of one of the elders was reared in a strong “Boll” community in North Texas and have been strong admirers of R. H. Boll always. Shall we call names?

Fifth, as for indorsements, I enjoyed the fellowship and confidence of twenty churches of Christ in Houston, composed of people who have known me from my boyhood, and who have known and loved my father before me. Their expressions of confidence in me were unbounded, their fellowship unrestricted, and their generosity unlimited. With the fellowship of twenty to one, I would really rather be in my place than in Burton Coffman’s position—even with the “salary” that he appears to be boastfully waving over some of the other preachers in Houston.

Furthermore, I feel a humble pride in the fact that I hold the confidence of the elders of the church in Oklahoma City, where I have lived and labored many years. They, too, have known
me from my youth, and they know my affairs even in detail. They have "indorsed" me so many times through the years that indorsements from them have become a mere formality to meet these periodical attacks and stereotyped outbreaks and onslaughts. The whole nation knows the relations that exist between me and the church where I live, and that I have always had their indorsement and support. Examples of this fact are too numerous to relate.

When Doctor Harry Rimmer came to the University of Oklahoma and injected permillennialism and certain other theologies into his campus discussions, Brother Weldon Bennett challenged his teaching; whereupon Doctor Rimmer wrote out the propositions with his own hand for debate. These propositions were wired to me, and I accepted them by return wire as written by Doctor Rimmer himself. But when the knowledge of a debate with Doctor Rimmer reached the ears of certain brethren they immediately advised the Doctor that because of my "general reputation and tactics" he should not engage me in debate. We have a letter from Doctor Rimmer stating that some of "Mr. Wallace's own brethren" had warned him of "disturbing things," so he withdrew the propositions drafted in his own writing, and cancelled the debate. It was then that the elders of the Tenth and Francis church in Oklahoma City, my home congregation, addressed a letter to Doctor Rimmer informing him of the source of such reports, assuring him of their indorsement of me, and asking that the debate be held in Oklahoma City. The elders of the Culbertson Heights and Capital Hill churches joined in these indorsements and expressed their willingness in written statements to back the discussion in Oklahoma City. Later, during the California debate, in Los Angeles, without my previous knowledge, even to the extent of a hint, Brother Yater Tant, the present proficient minister of Tenth and Francis church, communicated to me a telegram of encouragement signed by all of the churches in Oklahoma City, expressing their personal interest in me and their confidence in the triumph of the truth. Still more recently, when J. Frank Norris renewed his challenges to the churches of Christ for another debate, the Oklahoma City churches joined the churches of Fort Worth and Dallas in the required indorsements for that showdown. When it comes to indorsements, I am about the most indorsed man anyone has ever read about. But these indorsements from the church where I have lived for years, and where I now live, are not enough for the men who oppose me. They are determined that I shall be a bad man regardless; too bad, indeed, to be fellowshipped by them.

After all is said, my membership is in the Tenth and Francis church, Oklahoma City. Its elders to a man have known me practically all of my preaching life. Their names are A. W. Lee, L. E. Diamond, L. L. Estes, C. R. Todd and Paul Broadus. If I am a dishonest man, and have proved myself unworthy the fellowship of Christian people away from Oklahoma City, where I live with my family, then I am not worthy of the fellowship of Christian people at home. It thereby becomes the duty of those who have charged me with such unworthiness to submit the evidence for such charges to the elders of the church under whose oversight my life for years has been placed, and where most of the preaching part of it has been spent. Upon numerous occasions I have suggested that they do so. I invited Clinton Davidson to Oklahoma City, and offered him a reception on whatever ground he might choose, legal or religious. And whenever any of these brethren who now charge me with dishonesty desire to bring the evidence of their charges to the elders of the church where I live, I again assure them that I shall not leave town when they come.

Knowing my own heart and habits I have no fear of their impeachment. Though misfortune has been my lot in the past, there was never a debt disowned nor an obligation unacknowledged. By the providence of God, through the loyalty of His friends and mine, I have been able to discharge obligations when otherwise I might not have been able to do so. This has apparently been much to the disappointment and dissatisfaction of some who were avowedly bent on my personal destruction.

There are references in the correspondence inserted, and in other letters not made public, that indicate the intention of Brother Burton Coffman and the elders of his congregation to recede from their public charges without retraction, and wage a private campaign. I have it in writing that when Brother Coffman attempted to relate the "inside" to a certain brother, the brother asked him why he did not take it to the elders who had demanded that he do so. His reply was that he preferred to select certain individuals in various churches and "convince" them "privately." The size of a man who will stoop to such a thing is microscopic-too diminutive to be seen with the naked eye. His stature is further evidenced by the boast that certain "calls" for meetings have come to him because of his "stand" on this issue in Houston. And he is said to have named the Tenth and Austin church in Wichita Falls, Texas, and Sears &Summitt church, in Dallas, as examples. That he would receive calls and encouragement from a certain element, in the brotherhood, no one doubts and I believe I could name the places and call the signatures on the letters he may receive, without seeing them, but I do not believe the two churches mentioned are among them. I know the people in both of them and I do not believe they want to be so catalogued. The Sears and
Summitt church in Dallas joined all the other churches in the recent indorsements for the Norris-Wallace debate to come to Dallas, and it would be quite inconsistent in them to lend such encouragement to Burton Coffman in what he is doing now in Houston. When these churches, and other churches, learn that Burton regards an invitation from them for a meeting as an indorsement of his actions in this matter. I wonder if they shall be willing for the thing to stand on that basis before the public. It should be noted that Brother Burton Coffman regards an invitation from a church for a meeting as a vote of approval of his stand against the twenty churches of Christ in Houston, Texas, in a city-wide effort to expose modern millennial errors. When the facts are fully known it will be revealed that the Central Church of Christ in Houston, Texas, is shot through and through with softness, including weakness in attitude toward premillennialism and its advocates. Brother Burton Coffman has placed himself in a most unenviable position as a gospel preacher.

It is further revealed in the correspondence that Burton Coffman has been boasting of being the highest paid preacher in Houston (which very probably is not a fact). Gloating over his asserted "top salary," he revels in the thoughts that his fellow preachers have been provoked to jealousy. His imagination appears to have run riot and his vanity apparently knows no bounds. But I feel absolutely certain that there is not a faithful gospel preacher in Houston who would take his place if it were offered him. They do not covet his salary-small and paltry, no matter what it is. As for me, I could not envy his little pie, and certainly do not covet his present position.

When men begin to think and talk in terms of salary they need to suffer some of the hardships that fidelity to the gospel, and a faithful defense of its purity, will necessarily and invariably entail. Nevertheless I would not want even Brother Burton Coffman to pass through some of the experiences that I have suffered; and if any of my boys devote their lives to the preaching of the great gospel of Christ, I pray that a kind providence may spare them the heartaches and sorrows that have entered into my life. But if "the best wine comes from grapes that have been crushed"; and if "the nightingale sings sweetest when her breast's against the thorn," it may be that out of the depths men render unto God their highest service.

Toward Brother Burton Coffman I hold no malice, not even ill-will; nor do I harbor hatred toward any man on this earth. All such has long since been cast from me, and I can truly say that my heart heaves no such sentiments, whether I am in the company of men or alone with myself and God.

To the faithful preachers of the gospel and the elders and members of the twenty churches who "indorsed" me to preach Christ in a great meeting, and who have again done so for another such meeting in the near future-the confidence thus reposed in me is a solemn trust, as sacred to me as the good confession itself. My appreciation of it is as high as heaven but as humble as a hovel. My emotions with regard to it run too deep for utterance. Rather than violate that trust, I would surrender title to my life, give up the world and my right to dwell in it. Before I break faith with them let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; let my arms be palsied and rendered impossible of another gesture; let my limbs become limp with impotency, and let the grave receive my mortal frame.

Finally, I am set not for the defense of myself but for the defense of the gospel. Friends may forsake me, foes may beset me, but knowing that our Cause is Christ's, I shall not be deterred. Whatever abuse may be heaped upon me by some who hate me, I shall accept the results for His sake, whom I serve and whose I am. Personal attacks upon me are not important, if only personal effects are involved, for my person is nothing. But when loyalty to the church and the defense of the gospel are involved in the fight, as in the present case, it is important. I shall not surrender to them—and they shall not pass!-F. E. W. Jr.

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If the method of getting a good work done produced discord among the workers, cheapened religion in the view of the world, or weakened the spiritual fibre of some, either at the giving or receiving end of the line, it would be a strong presumptive evidence that the method was not scriptural in principle. Our methods should enable us to do good, and no harm at all. They should aid us in making the gospel attractive to all men. They should not weaken its influence at any point.

We have developed religious institutions and have experimented with plans and methods for a long time without possessing a well-defined and comprehensive philosophy of these things. Why can we not study them in the light of the Scriptures and our experience, to see how we should aid us in making the gospel attractive to all men. They should not weaken its influence at any point.

If God is not honored, the receiver cannot be saved; for it is God who saves. Why should God be honored? Not only that the receiver be saved, but the giver may be saved also. We must not merely honor God once in primary submission, but continually, to save ourselves and others. The receiver becomes a giver. Any plan of work that interferes with all three parties involved being blessed, is, at least, partly dead.

Let us now narrow the discussion to institutionalism as the chief source of dead works. Let us have a clear understanding of the term institutionalism. It does not ordinarily mean, and is certainly not here used to signify, merely the doing of work through institutions. The word carries an onus; it is so used here. If the onus consisted merely in working through institutions, that would by implication mean that all institutions were bad. Surely we all think that some
things can best be done through institutions, else we had surely better study the question; for we do work through them. On the other hand, I take it that all of us think that all work that can be done by the individual or the congregation and should be so done.

Paul exhorted Christians as they had opportunity to do good unto all men. He did not exhort the brethren to take the easy way out by contributing to a fund to support some other individual or an institution to do the good. He did not put the premium upon paying for good to be done, but doing it. It just happens to be a psychological fact that the greatest dividend from a good work is in the doing of it. It is spiritual suicide for one to hire a substitute to do a good work. The work freely done by Christians is worth more to them than it is to the cause for which they work. It is a potent means of grace, that should never be neglected, when it is possible.

In addition to doing all the good he can personally, the disciple should help support other individuals in going where he cannot go, and doing what he cannot do. If the work is of such a nature that an institution is necessary to the performance of the function, he can help support the institution. When a scriptural institution does a scriptural work in a scriptural way, nobody would think of applying the epithet "institutional" to it; but that term is rather applied to the unnecessary, excessive, and improper use of institutions or organizations to do work that should be done by the individual or the congregation. It is the abuse, not the proper use, of institutions that is called institutionalism. The term church-ianity is not given to the act of working through the church; but is rather applied to a false emphasis placed upon the church. It is an excessive resort to the legitimate idea of legality that is dubbed legalism.

By institutionalism I usually mean the disposition to resort to some kind of organized effort to avoid working personally-the effort to buy one's way out of his duty. When the elders of a church tell the preacher to do all the work, that is what they are paying him for, they are demonstrating the spirit of institutionalism and of folly. In this instance the preacher is the institution. The elders are treating him as an institution, instead of a fellow laborer in the Lord.

It is better to do work individually or by congregations where it is at all practical, for the following reasons:

1. Misplaced Loyalty

While discussing the trend of this article with my wife, she suggested a caution which had already occurred: "You will have to be very careful, or they will think you are fighting institutions." My answer was: "That is my first reason for wishing to avoid working through an institution when possible." Why this supersensitivity about "our religious institutions?" I think it must be because in our subconscious mind we have a notion that maybe they are "ours." People usually get angry more quickly over something about which they have some misgivings. Sometimes anger is a sort of whistling by the cemetery. Also they are prouder of something in which they have a part. Brethren will flare up much sooner and stay madder longer over something that reflects upon a religious institution in which they are interested, than over any aspersion upon the church in general, or of the congregation of which they are members.

When some one calls in question something the preacher has said, the same principle is illustrated. If the point questioned is one upon fundamental teaching, the preacher is not apt to become angry. He may feel sorry for the dis-senter; but after all, the matter is plain, and the issue is between the man and God's word. The preacher can be philosophical and serene. On the other hand, if the preacher has indulged himself in a choice morsel of speculation; if he has aired out a pet opinion, it puts a different face on it. Unconsciously, he takes it personally, and appropriately so; for after all his quarrel is not with God's word but with the preacher. The man has stopped investigating truth and gone to fighting the preacher!

Do institutions provide a ripe opportunity for focusing the loyalty of the member upon something visible and close at hand, which should all be centered in the Lord Jesus Christ? Institutions provide an objective for religious pride. Whereas the teachings of the Bible would probably prevent pride centering upon the church itself, the religious institution seems to be the logical objective. Sectarian churches have become so much alike, have so minimized their differences, and their members know so little about their own faith, that about all they have left is denominational pride, and that centers chiefly in their traditions and their denominational institutions.

2. Built upon Failure.

Some of our religious institutions seem to be predicated more or less upon the failure of the church, or the members individually, to do their duty. If our abortive and freak one-man missionary societies can be dignified by the name of institutions, they have used that excuse almost exclusively. Doubtless some congregations have contributed a few dollars to foreign missions, which would not have done so, if the opportunity on a small scale had not been brought to their door. But in addition to being thoroughly unscriptural, wholly irresponsible, subversive doctrinally, the means of building up a faction in the church, and petty nuisances, they have by satisfying the consciences of some churches, turn-
ed out to be real enemies and hindrances to missionary work. There are a number of congregations now which individually are supporting more preaching than these societies ever supported through their much publicized efforts.

It is generally conceded that the best plan for handling orphans is for members of the church to adopt them. That eliminates the constant fight for funds, and imposes no burden upon the ones receiving them into their homes. The financial problem is worked out almost without any noticeable effort, and without any cost of overhead and buildings. The adopting parents feel adequately paid for their efforts and usually cease to regard it as a special act of Christian service, when the children have merged into the family circle. It is the natural, normal way of life, and usually the best thing that could happen for all concerned.

3. The Emergency Permanent.

There is a strong tendency to make the failure in the response of the church to its duty permanent when institutions are started to supply the need. The work of the institution becomes visible and vocal, and the brethren begin to think in terms of the activities carried on there. The churches were satisfied to send their pittances to the field through the so-called missionary who had contacted them. They did not make as much effort to institute a work of their own. The institution thrives and makes a good showing. How much preaching is done since the orphanages have become so numerous and efficient to get members of the church to adopt orphans? The integrity of the home should be maintained as long as possible; but the first thing the brethren think about is sending the children to the home. It has led me to wonder whether or not, if when the home first appeared upon an emergency basis, we had spent as much time and effort and money to teach Christian men and women their duty about providing places in their homes for orphans, if the problem could not have been solved that way. Could it not be possible that by being satisfied with the substitute—and surely the finest orphanage that can be designed is merely a substitute for a real home—is a case of the good becoming the enemy of the best?

If the orphanages are really essential—and it is not likely that we will ever change-then we would certainly not hurl the charge of institutionalism at those who are laboring so earnestly to give the best training to the children under their care. But personally I feel that every brother who does no more than contribute a few dollars to this work, and prefers to have it that way, because it is easier to pay than to work, is himself guilty of the crime of institutionalism, with all the onus that attaches to the word.

4. A Bad Bargain.

Sometimes cheap goods are the most expensive.

The institutional way of work is naturally more expensive; for there are only two working units that charge no fee—the individual and the congregation. Institutions are almost always promoted and maintained by a system that makes the work cheap at the giving end—namely, by small amounts from numerous sources. There is no greater waste of money, nor deader end to religious work than for small amounts to be given by a comparatively strong congregation. The average member of such congregations does not know anything about the contributions. Sometimes the elders do not know where the money is going. Nobody knows but the treasurer who sends out the checks each month. Therefore, it cannot do the church any good which sends it. There is the broken connection, the shortage in the plan of doing good work.

If the work is done by an unscriptural institution, or in a manner not consistent with the divine will, God is not honored. He is left out. If the congregation or individual does not send his love along with his gift, he is not blessed neither is God honored by the giver. And when a church contributes ten dollars a month to a project, and the members do not know that it is being sent, there is nothing that goes but the puny check. It may do as much good to the receiver; but the giver and God are left out. The performance of every Christian duty requires thought and effort. Mere pittances sent without the thought of those sending is nothing but sordid money. It is strictly a financial transaction.

A very small congregation might be conscious of the contribution. It might even be considered a sacrifice in rare instances. And the members of any church could know, and they could go, and see the work, and give something besides cash; but the way it is generally done makes it dead works at one end of the line, and so far as those thus contributing is concerned, it is strictly institutional. It does not mean a thing except so many dollars to those who are receiving it.

Whiteside’s Commentary

"This scholarly work possesses that rare trait of "readability." It is one of the few truly authoritative works which can be read right through as one would read a fascinating play or an interesting article. The average reader cannot fail to get a fresh and invigorating grasp of the whole Roman letter, seeing vivid perspective the struggles and problems with which these early Christians had to deal. Many of the "difficult" passages become so obvious that one wonders how they could ever have been thought "hard of interpretation" by anyone-Yater Tant."
I have had numerous requests of late for a report of my work the past few months and some have insisted that I give an account of myself—so here it is.

The year 1945 has been the fullest year of the more than thirty years that I have been preaching the word. I have held more meetings and covered more territory than any other year of my life. If I am permitted to fill the remaining engagements of the year, when December 31 has come I will have held thirty-five gospel meetings, the shortest in length was seven days and the longest eleven days. That is, I believe, an all time record for gospel meetings in one year. Many of these meetings were among people I have known and loved for many years, others in new places where new associations were enjoyed and friendships formed. Of these thirty-five meetings, half of them were held in Texas, my native state. Others in Oklahoma, Louisiana, Tennessee, Kentucky, Indiana, Alabama, New Mexico, Michigan, Oregon and California. The Texas meetings were at Houston, McLean, Wellington, Beaumont, Sweetwater, Ferris, Rhome, Hamilton, Gatesville, Memphis, Texarkana, Denison, Dallas, Corpus Christi, Fort Worth (two meetings, Polytechnic and Castleberry), and Killeen. In other states, Altus and Shawnee, Oklahoma; Haynesville, Monroe and Tallulah, Louisiana; Memphis, Tennessee (two meetings, McLemore and Bethel churches); Birmingham and Florala, Alabama; Roswell, New Mexico; Flint, Michigan; Bowling Green, Kentucky; Indianapolis, Indiana (Irvington church); and on the West Coast, Oregon and California.

In these meetings there was no spectacular success, but the steady preaching of the gospel, to average audiences under prevailing conditions, and I have been assured by sober-minded brethren that the church in every place was made stronger in the fundamentals of the gospel and the basic truths of Christianity.

In the midst of this extra heavy schedule of preaching engagements, I have endeavored to carry on the Bible Banner. The readers of the Bible Banner have come to know that it “is due when it arrives,” and to “look for it when they see it coming.” But when it comes it is “all there” and every single issue of it is worth the subscription price for the whole year, for the Bible Banner is not just a paper, nor even a mere magazine—it is a book in every issue. It should be remembered, with a degree of forbearance and allowance, that its editor is a travelling preacher, publishes the Bible Banner on his own, without office force or editorial assistance. During the past few months there have been difficulties in printing and problems in publication, besides the inconvenience of constant travel to the editor. In these problems may be found the reasons why the Bible Banner is not altogether regular. That, however, is incidental, as it serves a special purpose, fills a special need, and unlike the regular weeklies, it is not intended to occupy the field of a religious newspaper.

Someone has inquired as to what I do with my spare time—well, between the printing and the sprinting of the foregoing report I spend the rest of the time at leisure!—(F. E. W. Jr.)

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Of R. L. Whiteside's qualification to write a commentary on the apostle Paul's masterpiece, I need to say but little. For many years he has been recognized by the brotherhood as one of our ablest writers and preachers of New Testament teaching. In this new book he has given to the reading public the very capstone of his great storehouse of biblical knowledge, acquired through a lifetime as a student of the Bible. I know of no one better qualified to explain the Roman letter to us than is he.

Of the book, I say unreservedly that it is a book for the common people. Its easy free-flowing style, with a charming use of the simplest verbiage, makes it the busy man's constant companion. It speaks the language of the man in the street. Its profound simplicity, wholly free from high-sounding phrases, easily gives it first place in its field of endeavor as the helper of the common people.

The writer's references to the so-called authorities are scarce indeed. When references are made to the original language in which the Roman letter was written, it is made with becoming modesty. He seems always able to have at hand the word needed to perfectly convey his exact meaning. When he needs a divine statement to confirm his conclusion, it is at hand, and that without any funnelling to make it a perfect fit.

In its careful reading I have seldom found myself wishing he had said more in a given comment. He covers the whole ground and in the fewest words.

In my humble judgment, it is safe and sound. It should, and no doubt will, meet with a favorable reception by the brotherhood, but not so by the teachers of error. Buy the book and read it along with the Bible and you will appreciate Paul's letter more than ever.-M. O. Daley.

C. E. Wooldridge Says:

I have carefully read Brother Whiteside's "Commentary on Romans." It is the most readable, and helpful commentary I have ever read, and I have a number in my library. This book should be in the home of every Christian. Preachers and teachers owe it to their audiences and classes to secure, and study this book. Its teaching and preaching values are unsurpassed. A grateful brotherhood will long remember and profit by this crowning work of a most dilligent, capable and faithful student and teacher of the Master's word.

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