

“Why I Could Not Be a Member of the ...”

**13th Annual Central
Oklahoma Lectureship**

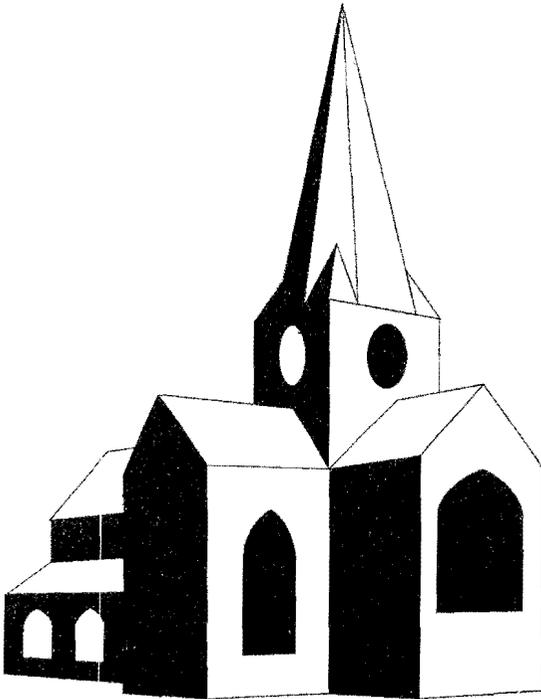


**September 6 –9, 2007
Church of Christ McLoud, OK**

Editor: Wayne Price

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WHY I AM NOT A MENNONITE

Steve Harbison

BACKGROUND

The Protestant Reformation had its beginning in Europe in the early days of the 16th century. Martin Luther (1483-1546) the German reformer was ordained a Catholic priest in 1507 after which he was sent to Wittenberg, Germany to teach moral theology in the University at Wittenberg. Due to his own study, he soon had a personal crisis between his conscience and the training he had received from the Catholic Church. At that time, the Catholics were raising money to build a huge Basilica in Rome. To do this they were selling indulgences to the people. These indulgences, if purchased, offered partial remission of the penalty of their sins. Luther strongly objected to this practice and to many others. He placed a challenge to debate 95 separate details concerning these issues with anyone at the school in Wittenberg. This act of defiance placed him in the open sights of the Catholic Pope and he was excommunicated in 1521. He continued his departure from the Catholic Church by further teaching his ideas, especially that salvation was not to be earned by actions, but obtained solely by one's faith.

There was another reformer at that time; in fact he was born less than two months after Martin Luther. His name was Huldreich Zwingli (1484-1531). Zwingli was also ordained a Catholic priest in 1506. He later became the preacher for the Great Minster Cathedral in Zurich, Switzerland (1518). He soon began some gradual reforms to Catholic teachings. He criticized abuses of the Catholic Church and believed that people should interpret the Bible for themselves. He was called to a public defense of his teachings by the town council. He defended himself so well that the whole council began to follow him. He also believed in the supreme authority of the Bible but differed with

Luther on a number of points, especially communion. Zwingli always brought his reforms before the Zurich city council for their approval, thus keeping strong ties between religion and civil government. He died in a battle with Catholics in 1531.

ANABAPTISTS

With this as a background, we are now able to understand what caused the beginning of the movement which would ultimately bring to the world the Mennonite church. Some of Zwingli's followers became opposed to his methods. They also saw a contradiction in Zwingli's teaching on salvation & baptism. Zwingli taught that salvation was solely by faith (as Luther had taught) but that infants should still be baptized. This led Conrad Grebel, Felix Manz, Georg Blaurock and others to rebel. They were opposed to the baptism of infants and to keeping the church so closely tied to the government. They re-baptized themselves in Zurich, Switzerland on January 21, 1525. Thus they were soon called "Anabaptists" which means re-baptizers. However, they preferred to be known simply as "brothers and sisters in Christ." In 1537, a Dutch priest, named Menno Simons joined the movement. The name Mennonites comes from his name.

Frustrated at the slow pace of the religious reformation under Zwingli, these "Anabaptists" soon proceeded to throw off every vestige of Catholicism. This was something that Luther and Zwingli were not willing to do. They were only trying to reform the Catholic Church. These new "protestants" were interested in a restoration of New Testament Christianity. An interesting fact, for us today, is to realize that back then, it was a crime to baptize an adult. Catholics were so common and had such control over all governing bodies, that everyone was "baptized" as infants. This act of re-baptizing adults, who would have already received Catholic "baptism" as infants, brought severe persecution on them, both from the Catholics and the new reformers. They had discussions with Zwingli on the subject of infant baptism but could not overcome his arguments. So

the Zurich city council ordered all infants to be "baptized" within 8 days of birth or they & their parents were to leave the city. Originally, these "Anabaptists" baptized only by immersion, but they soon adopted pouring as their preferred method. By 1526, the Zurich city council decreed death to anyone who re-baptized another. The persecution that followed was both fast and severe. By 1535, 50,000 had been put to death, either by drowning, from Protestants or by burning from Catholics.

Back in 1527, the first Anabaptist Confession of Faith was written at Schleithem. It contained seven articles which formed the basic beliefs which all their groups still hold in common: (1) baptism of adults, (2) taking the Lord's supper, (3) exclusion of the Lord's supper for outsiders, (4) separation from the wickedness of the world and Catholic control, also a refusal to use weapons of any kind, (5) preachers were to be supported and overseen by the church, (6) a ban on serving as judges since they employ the sword and (7) rejection of all swearing and oath taking.

The main cause of their being persecuted was their opposition to the union of church and state. This made them subversives in the eyes of both Catholics and civil governments. Luther, Zwingli, John Calvin, King Henry VIII & Queen Elizabeth I, as well as all Catholic authorities sanctioned violent treatment of Anabaptists. Eventually there were some who began to advocate violence as a response to all the persecutions.

Menno Simons, had been a Catholic priest when he converted in 1537 to the Anabaptists. He soon re-directed them back to their original peaceful course. Others in the group became influential as well. Jacob Hutter joined in 1529. Inspired by Acts 4:34ff they soon developed a commune style of existence. The Hutterite branch of the Anabaptist movement is named after him and they continue to follow his leading. They are generally the most conservative of all Anabaptists.

PRESENT SITUATION

Some Anabaptists spread to England at the invitation of King Henry VIII. In America, William Penn offered a home to all in Europe who were persecuted for their faith. Mennonites were severely persecuted in Switzerland and in Germany and took advantage of Penn's offer and made the trip to America in 1683, settling in Germantown, now a part of Philadelphia. Today, there are more from this movement in America than any other place.

Today there are four discernable main groups which owe their existence to the Anabaptists, they are the Hutterites, the Amish, the Mennonites and the Brethren. Over the years each of these groups have split many times into other smaller groups. There are MANY similarities between these four groups and there are MANY subtle differences too. Generally, the Hutterites are the most conservative, with the Amish groups being a little more progressive, followed by the Mennonites then the Brethren are usually thought of as being the most progressive. This however, is VERY inadequate in describing these people. There are many overlapping teachings and practices between these four groups. Each of them has within them conservatives, progressives and others in between.

What Mennonites are most known for today

1. Stressing separation from the world, seen in the very plain way they dress and live.
2. A reluctance to adopt new technologies at home and in work.
3. Non resistance from violence; and being conscientious objectors to war.
4. Non participation in government activities of any kind.

Due to a multiplicity of divisions among Mennonites, there are more than 20 groups today, it is not always easy to establish just what a particular group believes or practices without direct contact with members. They have divided over such things as, Sunday schools, the use of the English

language, the use of new technologies, the use of the horse and buggy or automobiles, farm work or other occupations. But generally it can be said that most of them do have a number of things in common.

WHY I AM NOT A MENNONITE!

1. Because it is a failure to complete a full restoration to the first century church.

The Anabaptist movement got it's start with a noble idea, that of restoring the church to its New Testament ideal. And while many strides were made towards that end away from the corrupt Catholicism which existed late in the Middle Ages, they left much of the work undone. They did remove infant baptism and instrumental music. They also effectively separated the church from the governing bodies of the state. They also went a long way in showing that mankind could study and learn from the Bible as individuals without being spoon-fed by the religious authorities of that time. We have to admire the eagerness with which they were willing to make these changes and to live by them. It was because of those New Testament ideas that thousands of them were being killed by both the Catholic authorities and also the civil ones.

But they stopped far short of the true first century church that is revealed in the pages of the New Testament. We will consider more issues which they should have taken up in the issues that follow.

2. Because of the use of written Articles of Faith and a rule of life called an *ordnung*.

From the beginning of this movement, the people adopted creeds or confessions of their faith to try to explain what they stood for and that they were only trying to follow the Bible. Yet in doing so they condensed their beliefs into several documents which were separate from the New Testament itself. Over the years they have referred to these documents and have updated them as they saw the need arise. They have and are continuing to use them as official statements of their faith and to follow them as a way of identifying themselves

as the descendants of those early reformers. They follow the principles set forth in The Schleithem Confession of Faith, 1527; The Dordrecht Confession of Faith, 1632; The Fundamentals of the Faith, 1921 and The Mennonite Confession of Faith, 1963.

In addition to these, each of the conferences of the Mennonite church, as well as the Amish, maintain what they call simply the *Ordnung*. The *Ordnung* is a continuously updated rule for the life of their community. It spells out what is acceptable and what is not. It tells them how to live their lives down to the smallest details. It tells them how they may dress. It tells them what will happen to them if they violate the teachings of the *Ordnung*. In many ways, it has become their Bible.

We must know that we are not free to add to the Word of God. Revelation 22:18 teaches us not to "add to these things." This is almost the last verse in the whole Bible. It is there to warn all who would try to make additional rules or doctrines other than those contained in God's Word. No matter how noble our intents may be. No matter how close we are to the actual teachings of the Bible, God does not need any additional instructions added to it. We will only be judged by what is contained in it when it was finished in the first century.

3. Because the church should be named after Christ and not a man.

As far as anyone can determine the Mennonite name comes from Menno Simons, a Catholic priest who converted to the Anabaptist movement in 1537. He was a leader and teacher for those people in the days of their greatest persecutions.

But for a people who wished to restore Christianity to its original condition as it is taught in the New Testament, they should have looked there to see how the church was designated. In the Bible Jesus said that He would build His church (Matthew 16:18). After it is in existence, most of the time it is simply referred to as "the church" (Acts 2:47). But

there are other times when the writers of the New Testament give different designation for Christ's church. It is called: the body of Christ, Colossians 1:18; the bride of Christ, Revelation 21:9; Ephesians 5:23 - 25; the church of Christ, Romans 16:16; the church of God, Acts 20:28. All of these names give honor to the one who died for it and gave His blood for it (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:25). The church which Jesus built should never be called by the name of someone else.

4. Because they teach that salvation is obtained by faith and repentance without baptism.

From the beginning of the protestant reformation, the doctrine of salvation by faith alone has been taught. Martin Luther believed he found the doctrine in the New Testament and it has been passed down to nearly every protestant denomination ever since. Certain passages are emphasized in the New Testament that mention the importance of faith and that it is connected with salvation. But other passages are overlooked which mention other necessities to obtain forgiveness of sins. Repentance is taught by the Mennonites as being necessary for salvation to occur. With these two, faith and repentance, they believe that a person can obtain salvation from God. They believe that same person should also be baptized in water, but they teach that it should take place some time later. The usual age for a person to be baptized in water in the Mennonite faith is 19 years. They also believe that along with salvation comes the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, they believe, will then guide them in living the Christian life and empowers them for service. For them, baptism in water is only an outward sign of an inward conversion and therefore it is not essential to that conversion.

As I stated a moment ago, this is not an uncommon doctrine in the denominational world. But it overlooks the full teaching of the New Testament on the subject of salvation. Yes, faith is certainly necessary to be pleasing to God (Hebrews 11:6). But more is needed. Yes, repentance is

also a requirement for Jesus Himself taught so (Luke 13:3). Paul asked, "How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?" (Romans 6:2). We must put away our sins. When Peter on the Day of Pentecost answered the question of those who asked, "What shall we do?" he told them to "Repent, and let everyone of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:37, 38). In addition to the command to repent he added another, baptism. He also stated the purpose of doing these two, the remission of sins. The apostle of the Lord, on this birthday of the church gave us the steps of entrance to that church. He had preached the identity of Jesus to them. He knew that they had come to believe it for they were cut to their hearts and cried out for something to do about their sins. Peter did not tell them that that was enough, he told them to repent and be baptized for remission of sins. Peter is not alone in teaching that baptism is the final step in the plan of our salvation.

Ananias was sent by Jesus to tell Saul how to be saved. In Acts 22:16 he told Saul to, "Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins." This same Saul, later called Paul, also taught the same doctrine. In Romans 6:4 he wrote, "We were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." So the new life begins after the waters of our baptism. Peter continued to teach this same doctrine. In 1 Peter 3:21 he wrote, "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us." We should not be surprised at these words. For Jesus Himself gave us this simple plan for our salvation. In Mark 16:16 Jesus said, "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved." Faith is required but it is not enough. Repentance is required but it is not enough. When we do all that the Lord and His apostles require to be saved, we shall have the forgiveness of our sins.

5. Because when baptism is performed, it is done by pouring.

In the earliest days of the Anabaptist movement, baptism

was practiced by immersion. But it soon began to be done by pouring and it has stayed that way ever since.

The Bible however is very clear on how baptism should be done. In the first place, the word translated "baptize" is acknowledged by all Greek scholars to mean immersion and not sprinkling or pouring. And when Paul described baptism in Romans 6, he referred to it as imitating the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus (verses 3, 4). Jesus' burial was obviously a complete covering by the earth as the stone was placed over the entrance of His tomb and was sealed (Matthew 27: 60, 66). Today, those who want to truly baptize as the New Testament teaches it was done will do it by immersion.

6. Because they take the Lord's supper only two times each year.

This is a matter about which many denominations are in the dark. If we were to ask ourselves how often did the early church observe the Lord's supper, the answer would not be that hard to find. In Acts 20, the apostle Paul was in a hurry traveling back from Europe to Jerusalem and he stopped in Troas to send for the elders of the Ephesian church. The account indicates that Paul got to Troas on Monday (verse 6) but he waited until the "first day of the week" in order to "break bread" with the church. It plainly says, "Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them" (verse 7). This tells us that it was the practice of the church in Troas to observe the Lord's supper "on the first day of the week." They did it that time not only with the participation of the apostle Paul, but also with his approval.

The question could be asked, "Does this require doing it every week?" It certainly does. In 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2 where Paul is giving instructions on how often to take up a "collection" he tells them to do it "on the first day of the week." That is the exact same expression in Greek and in English. It means the same thing as that in Acts 20:7. So, as often as we take up a collection, we should also observe the

Lord's supper. And that is every week.

7. Because some of them do not evangelize, choosing to propagate by procreation.

Mostly it is the Amish and the Hutterite divisions which do not actively get involved in evangelism. But there are some among the Mennonites who follow that path also, especially the "Old Order" groups. They believe that the best way to grow as a group is to have large families and to work very hard at converting their children to their faith. They are very good at doing this but they are not 100% successful. However, most of the Mennonite groups are growing in numbers. They are very helpful in assistance activities to their own members and to the society at large as well.

This is a command that is very easy to find in the New Testament. Jesus' great commission that He gave to the apostles as He left the earth gives us the mission of the church until He returns. He said, "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19, 20). There is so much emphasis on evangelizing in the rest of the New Testament that I am amazed how it could be overlooked. The book of Acts is filled with accounts of the apostles fulfilling Jesus' command. They "went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). When we truly understand that God is "not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9) we will be busy telling everyone we meet about the Savior and how salvation can be theirs if they will obey His teachings.

QUESTIONS OVER CAPTER ONE

1. What were men like Martin Luther & Huldreich Zwingli trying to do to the Catholic Church?
2. What are indulgences and why did these men oppose their being sold?
3. Why did these early restorers of religion practice rebaptism?
4. What happened on January 21, 1525?
5. Who all were involved in the early persecution of these Anabaptists?
6. What was the leading issue that led to the persecution?
7. Why did William Penn offer a home to the Anabaptists in America?
8. What is the *Ordnung*? Is it a good idea to have one?
9. How do Mennonites baptize and for what purpose?
10. What is it that causes some restoration movements to have better results than others?

WHY I CANNOT BE A MEMBER OF THE SALVATION ARMY

Johnie Scaggs, Jr.

INTRODUCTION

The Salvation Army is an organization that is well known throughout our land and even more so across the sea. They have been in existence for many years and in all fairness to them they have aided many less fortunate folks than ourselves. Because of their marketing efforts and all the good they do in helping others, many folks have come to believe that the Salvation Army is nothing more than a benevolent organization. We have all seen the little red money cans outside of stores such as Wal-Mart and others, with Salvation Army workers ringing a bell asking for your donations to help the poor. To most folks it seems all quite innocent. After all, the argument is made that the funds are going to a good cause and therefore it surely cannot be wrong. If it were a benevolent organization and not a religious organization, we could say nothing evil of it. However, if it is a religious organization, then is not the New Testament church. Hence we would have to ask the question, why would any Christian want to be in fellowship with it, by supporting the same? They, of their own admission, testify as to what they truly believe and what their mission in life is all about. Their mission statement says:

“The Salvation Army is an international movement, sharing in the mission of Christ for the salvation and transformation of the world in over a hundred countries.” “The Salvation Army, an international movement, is an evangelical part of the universal Christian Church. Its message is based on the Bible. Its ministry is motivated by the love of God. Its mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in His name without discrimination.”

Wayne Jackson writes, "According to its charter issued in New York State in 1899, the Salvation Army is an organization "designed to operate as a religious and charitable corporation" whose paramount purpose "is to lead men and women into a proper relationship with God" (What Is the Salvation Army?, pp.8-9). (An Analysis of the "Salvation Army" – Christian Courier).

The main focus of the Salvation Army is to "preach the gospel of Jesus Christ." They state that they are a part of the universal "Christian church." Their message according to their own words is based on the Bible and they are motivated by the love of God. Sounds to me more like a religious group rather than a benevolent group.

In America, we have historically looked at the Salvation Army as being more of a benevolent organization than anything else. But in other countries, it is seen as more of a religious (fundamental) group, spreading the gospel of the Lord.

HISTORY OF THE SALVATION ARMY

"The Salvation Army began in 1865 when William Booth, a London minister, (Methodist JJS) gave up the comfort of his pulpit and decided to take his message into the streets where it would reach the poor, the homeless, the hungry and the destitute.

His original aim was to send converts to established churches of the day, but soon he realized that the poor did not feel comfortable or welcome in the pews of most of the churches and chapels of Victorian England. Regular churchgoers were appalled when these shabbily dressed, unwashed people came to join them in worship.

Booth decided to found a church especially for them — the East London Christian Mission. The mission grew slowly, but Booth's faith in God remained undiminished.

In May of 1878, Booth summoned his son, Bramwell, and his good friend George Railton to read a proof of the Christian Mission's annual report. At the top it read: THE CHRISTIAN MISSION is A VOLUNTEER ARMY. Bramwell strongly objected to this wording. He was not a volunteer: he was compelled to do God's work. So, in a flash of inspiration, Booth crossed out "Volunteer" and wrote "Salvation". The Salvation Army was born.

By the 1900s, the Army had spread around the world. The Salvation Army soon had officers and soldiers in 36 countries, including the United States of America. This well-organized yet flexible structure inspired a great many much-needed services: women's social work, the first food depot, the first day nursery and the first Salvation Army missionary hospital. During World War II, The Salvation Army operated 3,000 service units for the armed forces, which led to the formation of the USO.

Today, The Salvation Army is stronger and more powerful than ever. Now, in over 106 nations around the world, The Salvation Army continues to work where the need is greatest, guided by faith in God and love for all people." (Taken from their web page).

ARTICLES OF FAITH FOR THE SALVATION ARMY

The Salvation Army has articles of faith. That is, they have a belief by which they are governed. Their "soldiers" must comply with their articles of faith before they can become members of the Salvation Army. The International Headquarters of the Salvation Army is in London, England. Their National Headquarters is in Alexandria, VA.

There are eleven articles of faith. Most of these statements we would have no argument with if not for the fact that they are not necessary. If they state what the Bible states, then we already have them, thus there is no need for them. However, if they go beyond what the word of God says then they are not God's truth and we don't need them. Speaking to a commissioned officer (ordained minister) the officer stated that in order to become a commissioned officer he and all others had to commit themselves to the eleven articles of faith, which are as follows:

“HAVING accepted Jesus Christ as my Saviour and Lord, and desiring to fulfil my membership of His Church on earth as a soldier of The Salvation Army, I now by God's grace enter into a sacred covenant. I believe and will live by the truths of the word of God expressed in The Salvation Army's eleven articles of faith:

1. We believe that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God: and that they only constitute the Divine rule of Christian faith and practice.
2. We believe that there is only one God, who is infinitely perfect, the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of all things, and who is the only proper object of religious worship.
3. We believe that there are three persons in the Godhead—the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost—undivided in essence and coequal in power and glory.
4. We believe that in the person of Jesus Christ the Divine and human natures are united, so that He is truly and properly God and truly and properly man.

5. We believe that our first parents were created in a state of innocence but, by their disobedience they lost their purity and happiness; and that in consequence of their fall all men have become sinners, totally depraved, and as such are justly exposed to the wrath of God.

6. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has, by His suffering and death, made an atonement for the whole world so that whosoever will may be saved.

7. We believe that repentance towards God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ and regeneration by the Holy Spirit are necessary to salvation.

8. We believe that we are justified by grace, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; and that he that believeth hath the witness in himself.

9. We believe that continuance in a state of salvation depends upon continued obedient faith in Christ.

10. We believe that it is the privilege of all believers to be wholly sanctified, and that their whole spirit and soul and body may be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

11. We believe in the immortality of the soul; in the resurrection of the body; in the general judgment at the end of the world; in the eternal happiness of the righteous; and in the endless punishment of the wicked.

In America alone they have 1,286 Corps Community Centers or as we call them, "church buildings." In order to have Corps "church building" in the community the town must be of considerable size, usually about 20,000 or larger. I

write these words simply because many folks will state, “I have never seen the Salvation Army’s church buildings, therefore they cannot be a religious organization.” Where I live at the present time (Sedalia, MO) I drive by a “Corps Community Center” ever time I go home. It sets one block west of our house. Years ago they agreed not to call their buildings “church buildings” because they believed that it would cause many folks to stay away. So they have called them down through the years “Corps Community Centers.” They have worship service in these centers each and every Sunday. The one in Sedalia, MO., has a gym, church offices, and an area that is called the Sanctuary – the “place of worship.” Their total units of operation in America is 8,715, this would include their rehabilitation centers, medical facilities, etc. They state,

The basic service unit of The Salvation Army is the corps community center. Some cities my have several centers. They provide a variety of local programs, ranging from religious services and evangelistic campaigns to family counseling, day-care centers, youth activities, and general programs. The religious and social services implement the Army’s purpose of preaching the gospel to effect spiritual, moral, and physical reclamation. (Taken from their web-site).

In 1865 when William Booth started the Salvation Army, he taught the faith of the Methodist church. Since that time they have gone away from the Methodist doctrine and have adopted the belief of the Lutheran church and are heavily influenced by Armenian (which is Calvinism with the exception of the one doctrine of once saved always saved). In their publication, “War Cry of the Salvation Army.” They list the “ABC’S of Salvation, they are as follows: (1) Admit your need – “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). (2) Believe in Christ – “Believe in the

Lord Jesus, and you will be saved” (Acts 16:31). (3) Commit yourself to Christ – “Yet to all who received Him...He gave the right to become children of God” (John 1:12). Being truly sorry for your sins, and through the power of Christ forsaking them, go forward to live for Christ. He will give forgiveness, power, victory, purpose, the Holy Spirit and life eternal!” (War Cry of the Salvation Army, March 3, 2007 – page 14).

WHY I CANNOT BE A MEMBER OF THE SALVATION ARMY

I understand that the Salvation Army is a religious organization. I have come to this understanding through the evidence which they have given by means of their booklets, web-site, articles of faith, and by personal conversations with commissioned officers (ordained ministers). Because of these things, I cannot be a member of the Salvation Army, nor can I work with them in any of their fund raising efforts for the following reasons:

First, to be a member of the Salvation Army and or to work with them in their efforts to raise money is the same as having fellowship with them. This is something which one cannot do because the Salvation Army is not the New Testament Church. The Salvation Army is a separate organization that is different from the New Testament Church. The Bible clearly teaches that we cannot serve the Lord and the devil at the same time. “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Matt. 6:24). We are to have no other gods before us, (Ex. 20:3). Paul tells us that we cannot sup of the cup of the Lord and the cup of the devils. Listen to his words, “Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils” (1 Cor. 10:21). To drink from the cup of some one in ancient times signified that the one who was drinking was in fellowship with the one who possessed the cup. The same is true of the table as well. To set at the table

and to partake of the food set before one also signified fellowship. Hence, Paul was saying that you cannot set at two tables or drink from two cups, for in doing so, you would show that you are in fellowship with both. To do this is to cause God to be jealous, "Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?" (1 Cor. 10:22). In Paul's second letter to the brethren at Corinth he said, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. 6:14-18). If we are to have fellowship with God, then we cannot have any part with the unbelievers; no fellowship with the unrighteous, no communion with darkness, no agreement with idols, we must be separate and not have anything to do with the works of unrighteousness. Paul wrote, "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11).

To aid them in money is to be in fellowship with them. Notice the words of Paul in the giving and receiving of funds from the brethren. Paul said to the brethren in Philippians, "Howbeit Ye did well that Ye had fellowship with my affliction. And Ye yourselves also know, Ye Philippians, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church had fellowship with me in the matter of giving and receiving but Ye only;" (Phil. 4:14-15). (ASV) From this text we can rightfully conclude that when we can give money or things of value to others, we are in fellowship with them. To give money or things of value such as clothes,

furniture, etc., is being in fellowship with them. You are a partaker of their evil deeds. The false doctrine which they teach you help aid them in this when you give your support to them.

Second, I cannot be a member of the Salvation Army because they are not the New Testament Church. Any church that did not start on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) cannot be the New Testament Church. The Salvation Army church admits that they started in about 1865 when William Booth, A London Methodist minister who was not happy with the organized method of the Methodist church decided that he would take his cause to the streets of London and go about to establish churches of that day which would reflect his dream of bringing in the shabbily dressed and unwashed people into a place of worship. He established a church which would help him to realize his dream and called it the "East London Christian Mission." This was the birth of what is now called "The Salvation Army" (it was renamed Salvation Army in 1878).

Jesus did not build "The Salvation Army church." Jesus said, "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). Jesus promised to build His church and He did so. That church was established on the day of Pentecost, (Acts 2). Any church that stated before or after that date cannot be the New Testament Church. They have admitted that they came out of the Methodist church; a church which was also man-made. The Methodist had its birth in about 1740. Jesus said, "But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Matt. 15:13). The Lord's church was not and still is not a denomination created by men. It is the spiritual body of Christ. As Paul stated speaking of the church, "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:22-23).

Third, I cannot be a member of the Salvation Army

because of its mission statement:

“The Salvation Army is an international movement, sharing in the mission of Christ for the salvation and transformation of the world in over a hundred countries.” “The Salvation Army, an international movement, is an evangelical part of the universal Christian Church. Its message is based on the Bible. Its ministry is motivated by the love of God. Its mission is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in His name without discrimination.”

Notice: “The Salvation Army ...is an evangelical part of the universal Christian Church.” How can one be a part of the universal church and be different? It cannot be! There is only one church, “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling” (Eph. 4:4). The body is the church, “And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence” (Col. 1:18). The New Testament church is not a part of the universal church; it is the universal church. They state that their message is based on the Bible. But, their own ministers admit that they once followed the Methodist beliefs but now they are more in agreement with the Lutheran church and are heavily influenced by the Armenian doctrine. How can their message be based on the Bible when they admit to teaching doctrines of man-made religious groups? Furthermore, their ministers must agree to their eleven points of the articles of faith. Point number five states: “We believe that our first parents were created in a state of innocence. But by their disobedience they lost their purity and happiness; and that in consequence of their fall all men have become sinners, totally depraved, and as such are justly exposed to the wrath of God.” Notice the wording, “that in consequence of their (Adam and Eve JJS) fall all men have become sinners, totally depraved.”

This is the same thing as saying we are born sinners. Armenians teach that one is born a sinner, that one is totally depraved. Their doctrine is not the doctrine of the Bible, but rather it is the doctrine of men.

Fourth, I cannot be a member of the Salvation Army because of the doctrinal errors which they teach. When setting forth their ABC's of salvation they clearly deny God's plan for salvation. They have a three fold step to salvation which is; (1) Admit your need; (Rom. 3:23), (2) Believe in Christ; (Acts 16:31), (3) Commit yourself to Christ, (John 1:12). God's plan is a little bit different, (1) Hear the gospel (Rom. 10:17); (2) Believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God (John 8:24); (3) Repent of your sins (Luke 13:3); (4) Confess the name of Christ (Rom.10:9-10); Be baptized into Christ (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; Acts 16:33; Gal. 3:26-27).

Wayne Jackson has noted seven different doctrines which they teach that are absolutely false;

1. **Hereditary Total Depravity**—The Salvation Army teaches that in consequence of our first parents' sin, we are born sinners, totally depraved, having inherited a disposition to self-pleasing (**Handbook**, pp. 85—86). The Bible teaches the opposite. Sin is not inherited (Ezek. 18:20), and "little ones" know neither good nor evil (Dt. 1:39). God is the Father of our spirits (Heb. 12:9), hence, when they come from Him (Ecc. 12:7), they are as pure as the Source. Man begins to practice evil in his youth (Gen. 8:21). Jesus had a human mother. Was He half depraved?
2. **Direct Operation of the Holy Spirit**—The Salvation Army actually denies the biblical affirmation that the gospel is the power of God to save (Rom. 1:16). This organization teaches that man has neither the will nor the power to be saved. Although he may have heard "the gospel message many times, by this inner illuminating (of the Holy Spirit) he now knows it to be true, and true for him personally" (**Handbook**, pp. 89, 133; yet cf. Rev. 22:17; Eph. 1:13).

3. **Denial of the Necessity of Baptism**—The Salvation Army administers no baptism. They assert that it is not necessary “in order to receive salvation.” They reason that there are climates and circumstances which would make immersion impractical, so only repentance and faith are required (**Handbook**, pp. 185-186). But Christ commands, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believes and is baptized shall be saved” (Mark 16:15-16). Peter also connects baptism with repentance in Acts 2:38. Clearly, “circumstances” do not negate divinely commanded requirements involving salvation!
4. **The Lord’s Supper Excluded**—The Salvation Army makes no provision for the celebration of the Lord’s Supper. Jesus plainly said of the memorial supper, “This do in remembrance of me” (1 Cor. 11:24). The Salvation Army excludes it so that they might testify to themselves and others “against the danger of trusting to any external rite as though it has a virtue in itself” (**Handbook**, p. 188). Such is the “testimony” of arrogance and unbelief.
5. **Instrumental Music in Worship**—The use of instrumental music in Christian worship is not authorized by the Scriptures. It is an addition to the specific command to sing (Eph. 5:19). It is well known that it was a human introduction in about the seventh century A.D. But “music plays an important part in Salvation Army religious work . . . It is symbolic of the cheerful quality of Salvation Army religion” (**What Is the Salvation Army?**, p. 25). This is a further indication of the Salvation Army’s disregard of divine truth.
6. **Women Preachers Accepted**—Catherine Booth (the founder’s wife) was a woman preacher who addressed great audiences. She wrote a vigorous defense of the “female ministry.” The Bible teaches

that women may not function in a teaching, authority role over men (1 Tim. 2:12ff). The role of a public teacher over man is not the place of woman.

7. **Unscriptural Financing**—The work of the New Testament church was supported by free-will contributions of its members (Acts 11:29; 1 Cor. 16:2). The Salvation Army is involved in various money-raising enterprises and must “look to the public for some of the financial support” (**What Is the Salvation Army?**, p. 26). (Wayne Jackson, *Christian Courier – An Analysis of the “Salvation Army”*).

CONCLUSION

We all would like to be able to be involved in as many good works as we can. But, we must also be careful not to become involved in works that are not in agreement with the work of God. Glory given to God can only be given through or by means of the New Testament church, “...unto him (be) the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations for ever and ever. Amen.” (Eph. 3:21). As a member of the Lord’s body, the church, I have joined myself to an exclusive group of people who are in fellowship with God. Because of this, I am forbidden to be in fellowship with any other people who are not God’s people.

QUESTIONS OVER CHAPTER TWO

1. The mission of the Salvation Army is twofold, what is it?
A. _____
B. _____
2. Does the Salvation Army believe that they are a part of the universal "Christian church?" _____
3. How many articles of faith does the Salvation Army have?

4. Their "church buildings" are called what?

5. Who is the founder of the Salvation Army?

6. What do they teach as it relates to salvation?

7. If we give money or things of value to them does this mean that we are in fellowship with them?

8. What do the scriptures say about our fellowship?

9. Is the Salvation Army the New Testament church?

10. What two religious groups do they base their beliefs on?

WHY I COULD NOT BE A MEMBER OF THE MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

Wayne Price

INTRODUCTION

It is claimed that when our country began, there were two Baptist groups: Regular (Calvinistic) and General (Arminian) Baptists (www.svng.com/grace). Later, when the General Baptists swayed the Southern Baptist Convention to do mission work through the “board system” (a missionary society system doing mission work independent of local church authority), a division loomed on the horizon. Landmark Baptists opposed a missionary society, with J.R. Graves leading the way in 1851. In 1902-03, at a state convention in Arkansas, the Landmarkers finally split off from the SBC. In 1905, following B.M. Bogard, they resigned and formed the Missionary Baptist Church.

BECAUSE OF ITS ORIGIN

Missionary Baptists usually attempt to trace their origin back to the 1st century, stating that Christ organized it during His earthly ministry. Perhaps this is the most widely accepted view, i.e. that it began while Jesus was here on earth. Some have argued that it began during the days of John the baptizer (see J.R. Graves’ book, Landmarkism: What Is It?, p. 121).

However, the Lord Himself declared that Hades would not prevail against Him establishing His church (Matthew 16:18). That means that he would die **before** the church was established, and that His entrance into the Hadean realm after His death would not prevent His coming back and establishing His church. At the time He made this prophecy, the church obviously was not yet in existence! At what time in the future it would begin is understood by Christ’s equating the “kingdom” with the “church” (Matt. 16:18-19). When the kingdom came, the church came, but the kingdom would come during the lifetime of some of those to whom the Lord spoke in Mark 9:1. The fact is that a few weeks after Christ’s resurrection from the dead, that kingdom came into

existence, as seen in Acts 2. Every reference prior to Acts 2 speaks of the church coming in the future, but following Acts 2 (especially **verse 47**), the church is spoken of as being in existence. Thus, the church began on the day of Pentecost following the Lord's resurrection from the dead in the 1st century!

The Missionary Baptist Church, in their Articles of Faith, lists its basic beliefs. This document is not understood "as a substitute for the Holy Scriptures, but as exponents of what are conceived to be the fundamental doctrines of the Word of God," they contend. Such fundamental doctrines include (1) The True God, (2) The Holy Scriptures, (3) The Creation of the Universe, (4) The Personality of Satan, (5) The Fall and Depravity of Man, (6) The Eternal Purpose of God, (7) The Way of Salvation, (8) The Grace of Regeneration, and doctrines concerning the perseverance of the saints, Baptism, etc. With some of these doctrines we are in agreement, but we do plan in this treatise to expose some of their errors where we disagree with their false doctrines.

BECAUSE OF ITS TEACHING ON WHEN ONE IS SAVED

They teach that one is saved at the point of faith, without any acts of obedience on the part of man being necessary. Under "The Way of Salvation," they argue: "...the full benefit (of Christ's death on Calvary)...is received by faith alone (Rom. 3:20-28) in the shed blood of Christ (Rom. 3:24-25) and that no repentance, no faith, no feeling, no resolutions, no sincere efforts, no submission to rules and regulations of any church, no baptism, nor any other thing can in the least way add to the value of the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ (Titus 3:5)." The interesting contradiction of "no faith" (listed above) and their contention that "the great gospel blessing which Christ secures **to those who believe in Him** is salvation." Do they not know that faith and belief are the same? Which is it? If faith is not essential, then why contend that one must believe in Christ?

Under the section "The Ordinance of Baptism," they

contend that baptism must be “by the Divine authority of a true New Testament Baptist Church,” and then state that baptism is not for the purpose of obtaining “remission of sins, but to declare that the believer has already been saved by the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:1-11).

The New Testament teaches that man is involved in his own salvation, regardless of what the Missionary Baptists teach! The New Testament says that “*without faith it is impossible to please*” God (Heb. 11:6), and that such faith “comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom. 10:17). Is a person saved as soon as he believes without further acts of obedience? That is the question! If so, then the world of demons are going to be saved (James 2:19), as well as some chief rulers among the Jews who refused to confess Christ (John 12:42). They believed in Christ, but would not confess Him, and you remember what happens to those who refuse to confess Christ (Matthew 10:32-33), do you not?

The truth is, “the faith that saves is the faith that obeys.” In Luke 6:46, Jesus asked: “*Why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?*” Christ further taught that those who will enter heaven are “the ones who do” the will of the Father (Matt. 7:21). Little wonder then that John writes by inspiration “*Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments*” (1 John 2:3), and note that last word is PLURAL! If they reject baptism because they deem it to be a work, then consistency demands they reject faith also, since it (like baptism) is a “work of God” (John 6:29). Their problem is that that make no distinctions between works of men which do not save, and the works of God which are necessary for salvation.

The Bible teaches that repentance is also necessary, as is stated in Acts 2:38, Acts 3:19, Luke 13:3-5, and elsewhere. Confession of our faith in Christ is likewise an essential (Matt. 10:32; Rom. 10:10).

The Missionary Baptists, along with Southern Baptists, teach that baptism is “not for the remission of sins” but rather

that it is done to declare that a person has already been saved. The Bible teaches the opposite! "*He that believeth AND (the doing of something else) is baptized shall be saved*" (Mark 16:16), said our Lord. The very doctrine of Missionary Baptists that baptism is not for remission of sins is refuted by the Apostle Peter who declared that it was for that purpose (see Acts 2:38, as well as Ananias' command to Saul of Tarsus in Acts 22:16). Once more, toward the end of the New Testament, Peter declares the necessity of baptism for salvation in 1 Peter 3:21, where he forthrightly declares that "*baptism does now save us.*"

It is interesting to note that since one cannot be a Baptist without being immersed, and if this immersion is nonessential, then the Baptist Church is likewise nonessential! They make it more difficult to become a Baptist that they would make it to become a Christian, according to their doctrine.

BECAUSE OF ITS TEACHINGS ON THE FALL AND DEPRAVITY OF MAN

They teach that the fall of Adam caused him to lose "all spiritual life, becoming dead in trespasses and sins and becoming subject to the power of the Devil; that the sin of Adam was imputed to his entire race, and that a corrupt nature has been transmitted to all his posterity by ordinary generation, and hence every descendant of Adam is by nature a child of wrath (Eph. 2:1-3), totally destitute of spiritual life...wholly inclined to evil, and without strength or hope unless...made alive by the Holy Spirit."

There are so many unscriptural doctrines taught in this section of their fundamentals that it will take a few pages to refute all of the false doctrines. First, let's give attention to the concept of total hereditary depravity described in the above paragraph. Such a repugnant doctrine alleges that little children are viewed by God as vile and deserving of God's wrath. They teach that such a person is dead in sin, is not free to choose good over evil, and therefore he is corrupt. Hence, he cannot come to a saving faith by reading the Bible and

obeying it; he must be regenerated by the Holy Spirit to make him alive and give him a new nature.

This false doctrine of inherited depravity alleges that man inherited such a nature from Adam because Adam's sin was "imputed to his entire race..." and thus "every descendant of Adam is by nature a child of wrath." In short, such Calvinism teaches that man is born a sinner, guilty from the womb.

The Bible teaches the exact opposite. Sin is an action, not a state into which one is born! We sin by thought, speech, and deed but an infant is incapable of being involved in any of these actions. It is only AFTER a child becomes capable of thought, speech and action that he can commit sin and be held accountable by God for his actions (1 John 3:4-8). The Bible clearly states that the guilt of sin is NOT passed on from father to son (Ezekiel 18:20), thus this doctrine of inherited sin is false.

The Bible teaches that children are innocent (Matthew 18:1-14; 19:13-14), hence the doctrine that they have a corrupt nature and are children of wrath at birth is ludicrous. Children are "*a heritage of the Lord*" (Psalm 127:3). Does that sound like they are sinners at birth?

This doctrine of depravity being inherited is due to a woeful misunderstanding of Ephesians 2:1-3. These Ephesians addressed by the Apostle Paul were born pure and sinless, as are all infants. When they sinned, they then became as described in verse 1, "*dead in trespasses and sins,*" but the same is true of all humans (Romans 3:23). When they sinned, they became spiritually dead; they were not born that way! Peter declares "*ye were as sheep going astray,*" i.e., sheep stray, they are not born astray, and people are the same way, says Peter (1 Peter 2:25). But then Peter concludes that they "*are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls*" (Ibid.), which illustrates their free will choice. When the Ephesians obeyed the gospel, they were "*made alive*" and Paul includes himself in that group (Eph. 2:5). The Gentiles were not lost because they were born that way, but rather because they, like the Jews, committed sin (1

John 3:4).

BECAUSE OF ITS TEACHING OF PREDESTINATION

“We believe that election is the eternal, personal, unconditional purpose of God, according to which He graciously regenerates, sanctifies, and saves lost sinners,” (Articles of Faith of the Missionary Baptist Church, Section VI, “The Eternal Purpose of God”), and then they have the audacity to maintain that this is consistent with the free agency of man. But if God’s action to save a sinner is **unconditional**, then it cannot include man’s freedom of choice and will! It can’t be unconditional, and yet conditional at the same time!

The Bible teaches that man is saved by the grace of God (Heb. 2:9) when he accepts and obeys the conditions of pardon laid down by God, and that includes repentance, confession, and baptism (Matt. 10:32-33; Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38, et al.). That Missionary Baptists reject such conditions is seen in the following: “...no repentance, no faith, no feeling, no resolutions, no sincere efforts, no submission to rules and regulations of any church, no baptism, nor any other such thing can in the least way add to the value of the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ” (Articles of Faith, Section VII, “The Way of Salvation”). Nothing which our Lord requires is a work of man, but rather a work of God, even as faith (John 6:29). Certainly a thing which the Lord commands that we do to bring about our own salvation is not to be equated with the blood of Christ, but neither does that fact mean that the Lord’s commands are not required. The Bible still has Jesus saying “*Why do ye call me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?*” (Luke 6:46).

BECAUSE OF ITS TEACHINGS REGARDING THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

“We believe that such only are real believers as endure unto the end, that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that by a special providence watches over their

welfare, and they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation (Articles of Faith, Section XII, "The Perseverance of the Saints"). This is the doctrine of eternal security, better known as "Once Saved, Always Saved," or the "Impossibility of a Christian to become lost."

The Bible, on the other hand, teaches that Judas "*fell*," and he did so when he sinned (Acts 1:25). Paul's warning to Christians is clear: "*I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway*" (1 Corinthians 9:27). If an apostle of Christ could be lost, how dare any Christian today claim that he cannot be? "*Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, TAKE HEED LEST HE FALL*" (1 Cor. 10:12), warns Paul. What happened to the "special providence that watches over their welfare?" we might ask. The fact is that one can fall from grace (Galatians 5:4-5), and man is warned not to do so (Hebrews 12:15).

They correctly state that Christians are "kept by the power of God through faith," for so states 1 Peter 1:3-5, yet evidently they do not realize that such a fact itself is conditional! God's power in keeping a Christian safe includes man's faith, but when man becomes unfaithful, he becomes lost (Romans 11:11-23; Heb. 11:6, et al.). They unknowingly contradict themselves by affirming that a Christian has a "special providence that watches over his welfare," yet at the same time maintaining that the Christian is kept by God's power **through faith!** Which is it, a special providence, or faithful obedience of man's part?

If one believes that man must accept the conditions mandated by God if he wants to be saved, then he understands that salvation is contingent upon his acceptance of those conditions. Furthermore, that means that it will not be necessary to argue, as do Missionary Baptists, in their Articles of Faith, that if one does not endure to the end, then that merely proves that his faith was superficial, and he was never really saved in the first place! Calvinists would have you believe that the non-elect cannot be saved, even if they

wanted to be (the doctrine of predestination), and that the elect cannot be lost, even if they wanted to be (the doctrine of perseverance)! Such false doctrines will surely help populate hell by the millions for they have been around for centuries, leading men astray.

BECAUSE OF ITS TEACHING REGARDING THE CHURCH

“We believe...that only sound New Testament Baptist churches today preserve the essential apostolic faith and practice...that these true churches on earth alone possess Divine authority; therefore, we brand as unscriptural open communion, alien baptism, pulpit affiliation with heretical ministers, mission boards, ecumenicalism, unionism, modernism, modern conventionism and associationism, one-church dictatorship, preacher-dictatorship and all kindred evils arising from these practices” (Articles of Faith, Section XIV, “The New Testament Church”).

In the above statement, they brand all others as heretics, even Southern Baptists. They claim that they alone are the true church, and that only sound Baptist churches preserved the apostolic faith and practice. Strange that they should argue that, since nowhere in the New Testament do we ever read of a Missionary Baptist Church! Their very name denies what they teach!

The Bible teaches that our Lord built His church in the first century, exactly as He desired it to be. Since it is His, and since He shed His blood to purchase it (Matt. 16:18; Acts 20:28), then it is only right to refer to it as a “church of Christ” (Romans 16:16). This church existed thousands of years before any manmade church ever came into being, and all other religious organizations came into existence as a result of a disagreement in doctrine with another religious organization from which they came.

The Lord’s church still exists in the world today, and will do so as long as the word of God holds sway in the hearts of mankind (Luke 8:11). It is the same today in name, organization, worship and doctrine as it was in the first

century, before man began to “*depart from the faith...*” (1 Timothy 4:1; Acts 20:29-30).

It continues to “do Bible things in Bible ways, calling Bible things by Bible names, speaking where the Bible speaks, and remaining silent where the Bible is silent” as instructed in 1 Peter 4:11. It does make a difference as to which church you belong!

QUESTIONS OVER CHAPTER THREE

1. There were two Baptist groups in America's early history. Who were they, and what major issue divided them before the Missionary Society issue developed?
2. Show why we know the Lord did not establish His church before His death on Calvary.
3. Show the connection between the "kingdom" and the "church" as laid out in the New Testament.
4. How do the Missionary Baptists (hereafter abbreviated MB) argue against any act of obedience on the part of men being necessary for a person's salvation?
5. According to the MB, what is the purpose of baptism?
6. How does MB's teaching make it more difficult to be a member of their church than to be a Christian?
7. What is the doctrine of inherited sin, and show why it should be opposed?
8. Show why the truth about WHEN the Ephesians (Eph. 2:1-3) became spiritually dead is important.
9. Give a refutation of the MB's teaching regarding the salvation of mankind being unconditional.
10. Why should their interpretation of a believer being "kept by the power of God" (1 Pet. 1:3-5) be rejected?

WHY I COULD NOT BE A MEMBER OF THE UNITED PENTECOSTAL CHURCH

Charlie Bailey

INTRODUCTION

It is my humble pleasure to participate in this series of lectures on the subject of "Why I Could Not Be a Member of ..." I think it vitally important that our faith be founded upon the plain teaching of holy scripture rather than on a blind faith loyal only to that which we have always been taught or always believed (Rm. 10:17; II Tim. 3:16-17). Our faith and our religious practice is without value and useless if we simply follow the traditions of men for traditions sake (Matt. 15:9).

As members of the body of Christ, we are aware of the countless number of people, many of whom are friends, family and acquaintance, sincere and devout people, who belong to the hundreds of differing religious organizations that meet in every city, town and community. Perhaps we wonder, what is the difference between what we believe and what they believe? A lectureship such as this will certainly help us to identify our various differences, but beyond this I hope it will help us give diligent effort to search the scriptures and identify a common scriptural ground upon which to build our faith. It is insufficient to simply know our differences; we must be willing to cast off all vain traditions of human design and wholeheartedly seek the Lord's way.

In the great commission Jesus said, "All power (authority) is given unto me in heaven and in earth; Go ye therefore and teach (make disciples of) all nations, baptizing them in (into) the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (Matt. 28:18-20) If we are to have biblical faith, we must obey our Lord and do that which He has commanded, nothing less and nothing more. We must be members of the churches of Christ, not because our parents

were members before us, or because we were 'raised in the church,' but because we understand the instruction of the holy scripture and desire to obey the command of our Lord. We do not say, "I could not be a member of ... (this or that religious group)" simply because of a practice or teaching that is different from what we have always been taught or have always believed. The statement is made in reference to a practice or teaching that is foreign to the holy scripture and unauthorized by the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is "the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:9), therefore we dare not substitute any doctrine or practice for that which Jesus has commanded. Our eternal salvation is at stake.

THE UNITED PENTECOSTAL CHURCH IS A DIVISION OF PROTESTANT DENOMINATIONALISM

Having said that, my assigned topic is, "Why I could not be a member of the United Pentecostal Church." My reasoning has nothing to do with personality or personal preference. As a teenager I was a member of a very popular protestant denomination and was interested in becoming a preacher within that organization. I asked the 'pastor' of the church where I attended, "why are there so many different denominations?" The answer I was given at that time was something like this "God knows that we have different personalities and personal preferences and so He has many different churches to worship Him in various ways. When we become a Christian we are able to look for and find a church that suits our personality." This reasoning may sound good, but it certainly is not in step with scriptural teaching. No where in the holy word do we find Christians choosing which denominational group best suits their personality, but we certainly do read that "the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). In fact, Paul wrote to the Corinthians and "all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord," beseeching them to "speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you" (1

Cor. 1:2, 10). God certainly did not authorize an organized system of division whereby when we become Christians we can find a denomination that suits our personality! My personality and personal preference has nothing to do with why I could not be a member of the United Pentecostal Church.

But because the United Pentecostal Church is a part of that unauthorized system of religious division called Protestant Denominationalism, I could not be a member of this church. The United Pentecostal Church has an interesting and very detailed history. Anyone who desires to know a more complete history can go to Wikipedia on the internet and retrieve as much information as they would like. According to the Handbook of Denominations, as the name indicates, The United Pentecostal Church, Inc. "is made up of a union of 2 Pentecostal bodies merged in 1945: the Pentecostal Assemblies of Jesus Christ and the Pentecostal Church, Inc." (Frank S. Mead, Handbook of Denominations in the United States, Abingdon Press, New York, Nashville, copyright MCMLI by Pierce & Smith). These two Pentecostal bodies were themselves the result of various mergers of Pentecostal organizations, ultimately all of which trace their history back to the early twentieth century around the time of the so called Azusa Street Revival out of which also came the Assemblies of God denomination (dealt with elsewhere in this lectureship).

Jesus promised to build his church (Mt. 16:16); He did not promise to build a religious system of organized division. His is an everlasting, eternal church and Hades will have no part in its death! Jesus has not forsaken His one church for a system of religious division. Protestant Denominationalism is an attempt to reform the Roman Catholic Church which itself is the result of spiritual apostasy. Jesus never promised to build the Catholic Church with its Papacy nor did he promise to reform the Catholic Church into hundreds of different denominations. Neither Catholicism nor Protestant Denominationalism has replaced the church Jesus promised

to build. Hades has not prevailed against the church of Christ, it still exists today in the same form and pattern as at the beginning. When we obey the gospel of Jesus Christ and do all the Lord has commanded us, nothing more and nothing less, we have the church Jesus established in the first century. The church Jesus promised to build predates The United Pentecostal Church by 1900 years. It predates Protestant Denominationalism. It predates Roman Catholicism. I could not be a member of the United Pentecostal Church because it is not the church Jesus promised to build.

THE UNITED PENTECOSTAL CHURCH CLAIMS A MODERN DAY OUTPOURING OF THE HOLY GHOST

In addition, I could not be a member of the United Pentecostal Church because it is identified with modern Pentecostalism. The Pentecostal movement within Protestant Denominationalism claims a modern day outpouring of the Holy Spirit such as was promised to the apostles of Jesus Christ (John 14:26; Luke 24:49) and was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost following the ascension of Jesus (Acts 2). Pentecostals maintain that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is a free gift promised to all believers and that every believer should actively seek this baptism. Time and space are limited and certainly this subject is well covered elsewhere in this lectureship so I will not address the matter at this time. Suffice it to say, I could not be a member of the United Pentecostal Church because they claim a baptism that was never promised to modern man, and miraculous gifts now unavailable by the laying on of the hands of the chosen apostles of the first century.

THE UNITED PENTECOSTAL CHURCH DENIES THE SEPARATE, PERSONAL IDENTITY OF THE FATHER, THE SON, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

The root of denominationalism is division caused by a difference in practice or belief. I could not be a member of the United Pentecostal Church because of the belief and practice that separates this organization from most other

Pentecostal bodies as well as most other denominational organizations. Specifically, we are referring to the belief that Jesus alone constitutes the Godhead and that He is the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. This "Oneness" belief denies the separate identity of three persons in one Godhead.

There are many questions that immediately come to mind when considering this teaching. If Jesus is the Father, Son and Holy Ghost all in one, who spoke from heaven when the Son was baptized saying, "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased"? (Luke 3:22) Was Jesus a ventriloquist of some kind and 'threw' his voice to the heavens to deceive those who were present at the time? And if it was not the Holy Spirit in a separate personage that descended from heaven in the bodily form of a dove, who was it? Was Jesus also an 'illusionist'? When Peter, James and John went up into the mountain with Jesus and he was transfigured before them, was it the voice of Jesus that spake from the cloud, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him"? (Matt. 17:5) That would certainly be a bit self-serving wouldn't it? The "oneness" doctrine does not make sense.

When Jesus taught his disciples to pray he said, "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name." (Matt. 6:9) If Jesus is the name of the Father, and Jesus himself is the Father, why did he teach his disciples to pray to the Father who is in heaven? Surely he would have known that if he were the Father he was not in heaven but on earth? Could Jesus be in two places at once? Could God be one person but be in two places at once? The "oneness" doctrine of the United Pentecostal Church is nonsensical in too many places.

Pentecostals maintain that Holy Spirit baptism is available today for all believers as it was promised to the chosen apostles. Does this mean that today Jesus as the Son prays to Jesus as the Father to send Jesus the Holy Spirit in the name of Jesus the Son to teach believers all things whatsoever Jesus the Son has said unto the chosen apostles? (John 14:16,

26) Does this make any sense whatsoever? If Jesus the Holy Spirit is guiding the teachers of the United Pentecostal Church into all the truth (John 16:13), God is become the God of great confusion in all churches of the saints! (1 Cor. 14:33)

One of the Lord's prayers is recorded in John chapter 17, "These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." Who was Jesus praying to, Himself? In the garden of Gethsemane, "he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." (Matt. 26:39) Who was Jesus praying to? Was He making an appeal to Himself? If Jesus is both the Father and the Son, is there a difference between His will as the Son and his will as the Father? When Jesus cried out to the Father as he was dying on the cross, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:46), was He commending His spirit into His own hands? If Jesus died on the cross, and was dead in the grave three days, and Jesus alone is God, was the whole creation without God during His death? Or, if God did not die, but Jesus alone is the one person of the Godhead, did Jesus really die for our sins? Can you make any sense of this "oneness" doctrine in light of plain scriptural teaching?

Hebrews 9:24 says that Christ is "entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." If God and Christ are the same person, did He enter into heaven to appear in His own presence? Why did He go into heaven to appear in the presence of God for us; wasn't He already in His own presence?

Christ was raised from the dead and ascended into heaven to sit upon the throne of David at the right hand of God (Acts 2:25-34; Heb. 1:1-14). While being stoned, Stephen, "being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, 'Behold, I see heavens opened, and the Son of

man standing on the right hand of God." (Acts 7:55-56) If there is only one person of the Godhead in heaven, did Jesus ascend into heaven to sit down at His own right hand? Did Stephen see Jesus standing at His own right hand? How is this possible? Does it make any sense?

After his resurrection, at the time of his ascension, Jesus said, "All authority is given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). Who gave Jesus this authority? Did he give it to Himself? If he gave it to Himself, He must of had it before he gave it? Does that make sense? Jesus is now sitting upon his throne and reigning in his kingdom. 1 Corinthians 15:24 speaks of the coming of Christ, "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power." If Jesus is the Father, does this mean He will deliver the kingdom up to Himself? Verse 28 says, "And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." Who put all things under the Son? If Jesus is both the Son and the Father, did He put all things under Himself? Or is there some being greater than God that put all things under God the Father and Son? Doesn't make sense, does it?

And what sense does it make, if the Lord Jesus Christ is the same person as the Father, for Paul to write to the Ephesians, saying that he prays, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him..." (Eph. 1:17)? And why would He further say that this same Father had "put all things under his feet (the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ), and gave him to be the head over all things to the church.." (Eph. 1:22). Did Jesus put all things under His own feet? The absurdity of this claim is seen over and over again. I could not be a member of the United Pentecostal Church because this religious group denies the separate, personal identity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

THE UNITED PENTECOSTAL CHURCH INSISTS UPON THE PRACTICE OF BAPTISM IN THE NAME OF JESUS ONLY

As a result of this false teaching, the "oneness" people refuse the practice of baptizing into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, as Jesus commanded (Matt. 28:19), and instead follow a formula of baptizing in Jesus name only. The "oneness" folks, believing that Jesus is Himself the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, understand that the name "Jesus" is the name of the Father, and the name of the Son, and the name of the Holy Ghost, therefore to baptize using the formula of "in the name of Jesus" fulfills the command of Matthew 28:19.

Early in this study we began with an emphasis upon the great commission as recorded in Matthew 28:19-20. It was stated that to have Biblical faith we must be willing to do all that Jesus has commanded and thus authorized. Jesus commissioned his disciples to "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Thus Jesus authorized baptism into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

The "oneness Pentecostals" find in the examples of conversion in the book of Acts, where baptism according to this authority is obeyed, a supposed prescribed formula to be uttered at the time of baptism. They maintain that one must be baptized only "in the name of Jesus" in order for the baptism to be effective. But as we have shown that it is scripturally absurd and nonsensical to deny the individual personality of three separate persons in the Godhead, so it becomes nonsense to insist upon baptism in the name of Jesus only. As a foundation to the great commission, Jesus said, "All authority has been given unto me in heaven and in earth" (Matt. 28:18). Baptism "in the name of Jesus Christ" is not a prescribed formula of words to be uttered at the time of

baptism, but is instead an indication of authority upon which the baptism is obeyed. If there are certain words to be said at the time of baptism, it would be the very words Jesus authorized when he gave his disciples the commission to go and make disciples, "baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." To baptize in the name of Jesus is to baptize in the manner he has authorized. To say it is wrong to follow this order is to deny that which Jesus authorized and commanded. This is absurd!

Jesus Christ alone has the authority to take away the guilt of our sin (1 John 2:1-2). The scripture does not say that we have many advocates, but rather "an advocate," namely, Jesus Christ. To baptize "in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38) is to baptize by (upon) the authority of the only one who can make due payment for our sin. "In the name of" means "upon the authority of."

In Acts chapter 3, Peter and John healed a lame man near the gate of the temple in Jerusalem. He was asking for money, but they gave him healing instead. Notice by what authority they healed this man: "Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk." (Acts 3:6) This was not some kind of required, prescribed formula of words to be said at the time of miraculous healing. If it were, then Paul evidently forgot to say this when he healed a certain lame man at Lystra (Acts 14:8-10). At this time Paul simply said, "stand upright on thy feet." The man leaped and walked as did the lame man at the Jerusalem temple, but Paul did not utter the "oneness Pentecostals" formula of "in the name of Jesus."

At the temple, these words were uttered simply to indicate the authority by which the man was being healed. How do we know this? Later Peter and John were questioned by the Jewish authorities concerning this miraculous healing, "And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, 'By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?' (Acts 4:7) The Jewish authorities wanted to know, who has given you the

ability to do this thing? who has given you the authority? It did not come from the high priest or his kindred, where did these men get the ability and authority to heal the lame man? Peter then proclaims that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth the man had been healed, and further says, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12) Only Jesus has the power (ability) and the authority to save men.

That is why the disciples in Jerusalem baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ." (Acts 2:38) That is why Philip in Samaria baptized "into the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 8:16). This is why Peter commanded the household of Cornelius to be baptized "in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10:48). And this is why Paul baptized the men of Ephesus "into the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:4). We do not find in these various examples a precise, common formula of words to be uttered at the time of baptism, but do find the authority of Jesus in every case, and the ability of Jesus alone to take away the guilt of sin when one is baptized in his name for the remission of sins. Paul wrote, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Rom. 10:13), and this is precisely why Paul was told to "arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16) The scripture does not indicate **what** was said, but rather what was **done**.

In the great commission Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." (Mark 16:15-16) As the disciples went forth into all the world making disciples of every nation, what was the manner in which they were authorized of Jesus to baptize? "Baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Before we do away with the manner of baptism authorized by Jesus and substitute some other practice, we do well to heed 2 John 9;

"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."

There are many reasons why I could not be a member of the United Pentecostal Church, but time and space are limited. Suffice it to say, the United Pentecostal Church is not the church Jesus promised to build, and does not hold to the doctrine and practice Jesus has authorized.

QUESTIONS OVER CHAPTER FOUR

1. Does God have many different churches so that we can choose a church that suits our personality or personal preference?
2. Did God authorize an organized system of religious division such as Protestant Denominationalism? (1 Cor. 1:2, 10)
3. When did the Pentecostal churches become organized as modern religious bodies?
4. Did Jesus promise that someday His church would cease and modern churches would replace it? (Matt. 16:16)
5. What peculiar teaching separates the United Pentecostal Church from other denominations?
6. How many separate persons of the Godhead were present at the baptism of Jesus? (Luke 3:22)
7. Who did Jesus teach His disciples to pray to and where was this individual? (Matt. 6:9)
8. Why do the United Pentecostals baptize "in the name of Jesus" only?
9. What is meant by the phrase "in the name of"?
10. What manner of baptism did Jesus authorize? (Matt. 28:19)

WHY I AM NOT A MEMBER OF THE SPIRITUALISTS

Jamie Beller

INTRODUCTION

While there are many questions that members of the church ought to be able to answer, it is sad to know that there are a number of members who cannot answer the question, "Why are you a member of the church of Christ?" On the other hand, it may sadly be the case that they are well able to answer the question, but they are ashamed to do so. Brethren, let us not be ashamed to answer the question, "Why are you a member of the church of Christ?" Let us be always ready to give a Biblical answer to such a wonderful question.

Yet, suppose you were asked the question, "why are you not a member of the Baptists?" or "the Methodists?" or "the Catholics?" What kind of response would we give? Just as we should not be ashamed to tell others why we are members of the church of Christ, neither should we be ashamed to tell others why we are NOT members of denominations. However, knowing how to answer such requires that we be acquainted with the truth about the church about which we read in Scripture.

Relative to our study, our task is to consider, "Why I Am Not A Member of the Spiritualists?" Prayerfully with this study, we will have a greater appreciation for being members of the church of Christ, and if presently we are not members of the church of Christ, we will be further convinced to become members of this church which was purchased by Christ (Acts 20:28).

With regard to the identity of spiritualism, A.E. Newton observes,

The term SPIRITUALISM, in modern usage, often means no more than the alleged fact of spirit-intercourse; or, to express it in full—*that human spirits have a conscious individual existence after the death of their physical*

bodies, and can and do, under suitable conditions, manifest themselves and communicate with persons in the body. Those who believe this to be a fact are termed Spiritualists, whatever else they may believe or disbelieve.

As with any other denomination, when I consider why I am not a member of the Spiritualists, I must consider its foundation, its founder, its futility, its fraud, its faith, and its future.

BECAUSE OF ITS FOUNDATION, I AM NOT A MEMBER OF THE SPIRITUALIST

While “spiritualism” dates back many years, it must be understood that the antiquity of a religion does not always make the religion right. Take for instance, that age of Judaism. Though Judaism dates back to the days of the Old Testament, it was never meant to continue beyond the cross. Paul observed,

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ (Gal. 3:24-27).

Concerning ancient Spiritualism, brother Wayne Jackson writes,

The practice of “spiritualism” (not to be confused with the biblical use of the term “spiritual”) reaches far back into antiquity. It was vogueish in both Babylon and Egypt (the latter country being known as “the mother of the occult”). There is considerable evidence that even the Hebrews, during the Old Testament era, became entangled in this

mysticism on occasion.

Perhaps the most familiar examples of “spiritualism” is of King Manasseh, of whom it was said,

And he made his son pass through the fire, and observed times, and used enchantments, and dealt with familiar spirits and wizards: he wrought much wickedness in the sight of the LORD, to provoke him to anger (2 Kings 21:6).

Clearly the actions of King Manasseh were without Divine authority. Throughout Scripture the inspired writers denounced the practice of “spiritualism.” Inspired writers, both of the Old and New Testaments, denounced the practice of “spiritualism,” thus indicating the foundation of such is without Divine authority. Consider some of the denunciations. Moses declared,

There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or an observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, Or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the LORD: and because of these abominations the LORD thy God doth drive them out from before thee. Thou shalt be perfect with the LORD thy God (Deut. 18:10-13).

Brother Wayne Price rightly observes,

All of the occult practices mentioned above are said to be “abominations” (v. 12). God demanded that the people make the distinction between revelation and occultism, and that failing to do so was tantamount to

contaminating God's Word. They were to be upright, sincere, and mature (complete). The LXX (Septuagint, the Greek Old Testament) has **teleios** for "perfect" signifying the idea of maturity as well. Hence, occult practices are branded as immature, not walking uprightly with God, and (in that O.T. age) those guilty of such practices were to be punished with death (Lev. 20:27). Has God changed His mind regarding occultism, even though it does not carry the death penalty today? The gravity of the sin remains, and such paganism surely provokes the Lord to anger just as in olden times (II Kings 21:6).

Again Moses warned, "Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the LORD your God (Leviticus 19:31).

The prophet Isaiah declared,

And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them (Isaiah 8:19-20).

While others could be included, these are mentioned in order to emphasize the fact that "spiritualism" is without Divine authority. Thus, the foundation of "spiritualism," particularly "modern spiritualism," is not a Divine foundation. In contrast, the New Testament church, which is the church of Christ, has a Divine foundation (Matt. 16:18). It is the New Testament church—the church of Christ—of which I am delighted to be a member, and of which I encourage others to be members. Thus, I am not a member of

the Spiritualists because such is built upon the wrong foundation. The church of which I am a member is built upon a foundation that standeth sure (2 Tim. 2:19). She is built upon the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

BECAUSE OF ITS FOUNDER, I AM NOT A MEMBER OF THE SPIRITUALIST

Though the practice of "spiritualism" dates back to the days of the Old Testament, modern spiritualism dates to March 1848 in Hydesville, New York. However, the Swedish scientist Emanuel Swedenborg is credited with being the practitioner and promoter of the central tenets of spiritualism first significant. It is observed that,

Swedenborg claimed to be able to communicate with spirits and travel through the spirit world, and his followers believed that he was a highly skilled medium. He wrote many books on his experiences, though he said that the books were not written by himself. Rather, he claimed they were inspired by spirits and angels from the spirit world. Some of his books, he claimed, were inspired by infants. He also claimed to have developed skillful powers of clairvoyance and psychic ability. From his study of dreams, Swedenborg concluded, came predictions of future events.

It is thought that,

Modern spiritualism dates to March 1848 in Hydesville, New York. On December 11, Mr. and Mrs. John and Margaret Fox and their daughters, Catherine and Margaretta, moved into a house that was rumored to be haunted. The family experienced unexplained noises such as rapping sounds. The girls devised a system of communication with the entity making the noises. Specified numbers of raps

meant "yes," "no," or different letters of the alphabet. Eventually they discovered that the communicating spirit was a man named Charles B. Rosna, who had been murdered by the previous owner of the house.

Though the story of the founder and the founding of spiritualism are fascinating, it does not mean that the founder is Divine. Spiritualism was founded by mortals who died, and have yet to resurrect. The sad story of the Fox sisters suggests that,

Over the years, sisters Kate and Margaret had developed serious drinking problems. Around 1888 they became embroiled in a quarrel with their sister Leah and other leading Spiritualists, who were concerned that Kate was drinking too much to care properly for her children. At the same time, Margaret, contemplating a return to the Roman Catholic faith, became convinced that her powers were diabolical. Eager to harm Leah as much as possible, the two sisters traveled to New York City, where a reporter offered \$1,500 if they would "expose" their methods and give him an exclusive on the story. Margaret appeared publicly at the New York Academy of Music on October 21, 1888, with Kate present. Before an audience of 2,000, Margaret demonstrated how she could produce – at will – raps audible throughout the theater. Doctors from the audience came on stage to verify that the cracking of her toe joints was the source of the sound.

Eventually the lives of the Fox sisters would come to a tragic end. Nancy Rubin Stuart writes,

In the fall of 1888 when Maggie publicly

admitted that spiritualism was a fraud, nonbelievers rejoiced. Advocates blamed it on the fact that for some time Maggie -- as well as her sister Katy -- had been slipping into severe alcoholism. A year later when Maggie recanted her confession, the credibility of the Fox sisters shriveled, and they slipped into obscurity. Katy died of end-stage alcoholism on July 1, 1892, and Maggie on March 8 the following year.

In contrast, the New Testament church, which is the church of Christ, has a Divine Founder. Jesus declared, "upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18). Not only is Jesus the founder of His church, but He is also the Head of His church. Paul declared,

Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all (Eph. 1:20-23).

Though the founder of the church of Christ was crucified, by the power of God He was raised from death, and ascended to the right hand of God where He reigns over His church, which is the Kingdom (Acts 2:29, 30). Search the tombs of denominational founders, and in our case the founders of spiritualism, and there you will find that their bodies have returned to dust, and their souls are in the Hadean realm awaiting the judgment. In that the founders of spiritualism are not divine; in that the founders of spiritualism are not reigning on the right hand of God, I am not a member of the

spiritualists.

BECAUSE OF ITS FUTILITY I AM NOT A MEMBER OF THE SPIRITUALIST

When we speak of the futility of the spiritualist religion we have in mind the question, "What purpose is there for the spiritualist religion?" Further, we ask, can one be saved without being a spiritualist? When we speak of the futility of spiritualism we have in mind the idea that spiritualism is useless in so much as being a member of it is useless and vain. Yet, such is not only the case with spiritualism, but such is also the case with any religion that is not approved by God. Thus, any religion that is not founded upon God's Word, and by Christ is vain and useless.

With regard to the futility of spiritualism, brother Jackson rightly observes,

The claims of spiritualists are as useless as they are sinful. As Job might describe these religious con artists, they are "forgers of lies" and "physicians of no value" (Job 13:4). The following points are well worth considering.

The dead cannot analyze the complexity of earth's events on behalf of the living, because the dead "know not anything ... under the sun," i.e., upon the earth (Ecclesiastes 9:5-6; cf. Isaiah 63:16).

The dead cannot reveal the secret counsels of God because "the secret things belong unto Jehovah our God: but the things that are revealed belong unto us and our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law" (Deuteronomy 29:29).

The dead cannot inform the living of their own plight, nor send messages regarding after-death experiences. The rich man, referenced by Christ in Luke, chapter 16, recognized his inability to communicate with his brothers on earth, for he pled with

Abraham to send someone to them with a message of warning. The rich man was informed, however, that his brothers had “Moses and the prophets,” i.e., the Old Testament scriptures, and those documents were sufficient for their preparation for eternity.

Given that every religion that exists contrary to God’s will is futile, why should I be a member of a religion that is contrary to His will? The burden of proof does not necessarily lie upon us to explain why we are not members of man-made religions, the burden of proof lies upon members of such religions to show, in light of Scripture, why we must be members of such religions.

While man-made religions are futile, such is not the case with the church of Christ. Paul declared the essentiality of being a member of the Lord’s church when he stated, “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the Saviour of the body” (Eph. 5:23). If I am not in His body, which is His church, then I am without a Savior. Thus, the church is essential! Because spiritualism is futile, as well as fatal to the salvation of my soul, I am not a member of the spiritualists.

**BECAUSE OF ITS FRAUD, I AM
NOT A MEMBER OF THE SPIRITUALIST**

One of Satan’s most effective tactics is deception. Sadly, those who are spiritualists have been greatly deceived. It is truly sad that such deception is so great, that even when the religion is proven to be a fraud, many still remain faithful to such a religion. With regard to its fraud, brother Jackson noted,

To say that the “spiritualist” movement is “haunted” by fraud is a tremendous understatement. Before his death, the renowned magician Harry Houdini, a vigorous opponent of necromancy, pledged to his wife that if it were at all possible to contact her

from the post-mortem realm, he would do so. Though she anxiously awaited a message for years, it never came and ultimately she abandoned hope.

Dr. Robert E.D. Clark noted that “sometimes the presence of the dead seems convincing but the evidence is valueless; all spiritualists admit widespread impersonation and heartless fraud.” Clark told of a medium, Blanch Cooler, who communicated with Gordon Davies, a military man supposedly killed in battle. “His voice was imitated, unusual features of a house were described, the future was seen, statements, unknown to sitters, were verified. But it transpired that Davies was alive and had no interest in Spiritualism.”

Not only did others regard spiritualism as a fraud, but so did its own founders. Again Stuart stated,

In the fall of 1888 when Maggie publicly admitted that spiritualism was a fraud, nonbelievers rejoiced. Advocates blamed it on the fact that for some time Maggie -- as well as her sister Katy -- had been slipping into severe alcoholism. A year later when Maggie recanted her confession, the credibility of the Fox sisters shriveled, and they slipped into obscurity. Katy died of end-stage alcoholism on July 1, 1892, and Maggie on March 8 the following year.

In contrast the founder of Christianity—Jesus Christ—never regarded Christianity as a fraud. As he stood before Pilate, Jesus stated, “My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence” (John 18:36). Though men attempt to prove that Jesus, and thus, His church are frauds, such attempts are futile and fatal. Because it is a fraud I am not a

member of the spiritualists.

**BECAUSE OF ITS FUTURE I AM
NOT A MEMBER OF THE SPIRITUALISTS**

What future is there for a religion that is without a Divine foundation, a Divine founder, is futile, and has been proven to be a fraud? What future is there for those who are members of such a religion? Such questions ought to cause us to ensure that the future, yea the eternal future, of the religion of which we are members, is the future that we desire. Sadly, while many desire heaven as their eternal home, they are members of religions that have no future of heaven. Yet, what future is there for the spiritualist? Certainly Jesus answered such when He declared, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up" (Matt. 15:13). Further, Paul stated,

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: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power (2 Thess. 1:7-9).

Those who know God and who obey the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, are those upon such obedience are added to the church of Christ (Acts 2:41, 47). Those who continue to know God, and who continue to obey the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (Col. 1:23; John 8:31-32), are those who will have a future home in heaven (Matt. 25:46). Thus, because of its future, I am not a member of the Spiritualist. What future is there for the religion of which you are a member?

CONCLUSION

Why Am I Not A Member of Spiritualists? Having observed the question, I am not a member of the spiritualists because it has the wrong foundation, and founder. I am not a member of the spiritualists because is futile and fatal to my

soul. I am not a member of the spiritualists because it is a fraud, and its future is not heaven. For those reasons I am not a member of the Spiritualists. On the other hand, because of the foundation, founder, faith, and future I am a member of the church of Christ! Of that I am not ashamed!

QUESTIONS OVER CHAPTER FIVE

1. What does it mean to be a spiritualist?
2. Explain what it means for a religion to have a Divine foundation?
3. How can we determine if the foundation of a religion is authorized by God?
4. Explain the importance of a religion having a Divine foundation?
5. Explain the importance of a religion have a Divine founder?
6. What is meant by the futility of Spiritualism?
7. How can we determine whether a religion is useful?
8. How do we determine whether a religion is a fraud?
9. How important is the future of a religion in determining of which religion I ought to be a member?
10. What is the future for those who are not members of the Lord's church?

WHY I AM NOT A UNITARIAN

David Ray

INTRODUCTION

This lecture is not intended to offend anyone, but rather to teach the truth in love. There are many options in religion today, and we must study the Bible in order to determine what is right and what is wrong. When there are those that teach unbiblical doctrines and practices in the name of God, Jesus, or religion in general, it is our responsibility to **lovingly** reprove them, following the instructions of Ephesians 5:10-11, proving what is acceptable to the Lord. This is our goal today.

DEFINITIONS

What is Unitarianism? According to Dictionary.com Unabridged (v.11), a Unitarian is “a person who maintains that God is one being, rejecting the doctrine of the Trinity.” In other words, there is no Godhead. God is only one part – the Father – and neither Jesus nor the Holy Spirit is a part of Deity.

On the website of the Unitarian Universalist Association, which claims to represent “over 1,000 liberal congregations in North America” (www.uua.org), under Frequently Asked Questions, the UUA describes the history of this view.

In the first centuries of the Christian era, Christians held a variety of beliefs concerning the nature of Jesus. In 325 CE, however, the Council of Nicea promulgated the doctrine of the Trinity – God as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost – and denounced all those who believed differently as heretics. In the sixteenth century, Christian humanists in Central Europe – in Poland and Transylvania – studied the Bible closely. They could not find the orthodox dogma of the Trinity in the texts. Therefore, they affirmed – as did Jesus, according to the Gospels – the unity, or oneness, of God. Hence they acquired the name *Unitarian*.

(<http://archive.uua.org/aboutuu/uufaq.html>)

Notice that this issue begins with the questioning of Jesus' deity ("the nature of Jesus"). Was or wasn't Jesus God? This question is at the heart of the issue for Unitarianism in antiquity. This we will address biblically in the following section, "General Beliefs and Practices."

What is Universalism? The Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) formed in the United States in 1961 with the merger of the American Unitarian Association and the Universalist Church of America. According to Wikipedia, the Internet encyclopedia, in the U.S. and Canada, most Unitarians are Unitarian Universalist (UU). For this reason, it is necessary to give a brief definition of Universalism.

The American Heritage Dictionary (3rd edition) defines the word "universal" as "Extending to or affecting the entire world; worldwide." For "Universalism" it says, "The theological doctrine that everyone will be saved." Dictionary.com Unabridged (v.11) defines Universalism as "the doctrine that emphasizes the universal fatherhood of God and the final salvation of all souls."

From the Unitarian Universalist Association website,

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, radical reformers in Europe and America also studied the Bible closely. They found only a few references to hell, which they believed orthodox Christians had grossly misinterpreted. They found, both in the Bible and in their own hearts, an unconditionally loving God. They believed that God would not deem any human being unworthy of divine love, and that salvation was for all. Because of this emphasis on universal salvation, they called themselves Universalists.

(<http://archive.uua.org/aboutuu/uufaq.html#who>)

This apparently either means that there is no Hell, or if there is, God will not send anyone there. Yet in passages about final judgment, such as Matthew 25:31-46 and John 5:28-29, Heaven and Hell are spoken of literally, and in the same context. So if Hell is not real, then to be consistent,

Heaven is not real either. It is improper hermeneutics to say one is real while the other is not.

GENERAL BELIEFS & PRACTICES ADDRESSED

Lately, many (if not most) religious groups, while holding to their own denominational beliefs, claim that one set of beliefs is just as good as another. However, with Unitarianism, there is *no* claimed set of beliefs; each member can believe as he or she chooses and still be acceptable to God and to the Unitarian religion.

Unitarianism is a religious movement that imposes no creed on its members. Each person is helped and encouraged to discover his or her own path to truth and meaning in life, and to practice tolerance towards the views of others.

(<http://www.theopenmind.org.uk/about/index.html>)

Unitarianism is an open-minded and individualistic approach to religion that gives scope for a very wide range of beliefs and doubts.

(<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/unitarianism/ata glance/glance.shtml>)

Locally, the website of the First Unitarian Church in Oklahoma City, under the heading “Who We Are,” says the following:

We are the people next door, the family down the street, your coworker, the parent at a soccer game. ... We’re the gay man, the lesbian couple, the extended family. We’re liberals, conservatives, centrists, traditionalists, Republicans, Democrats, Christians, atheists, agnostics. (http://www.uuokc.org/About/about_us.htm)

This statement clearly shows an inappropriate attitude about the Scriptures, which expressly condemn homosexuality (Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Rom. 1:24-27).

Additionally, since some in this list are atheists,

apparently members don't even need to believe in God (cf. Rom. 1:28)! One must ask, "how can any group with these beliefs claim to be affiliated with Christianity, or God, or religion, etc.?"

Whatever the answer, there are three foundational ideas (regarding God, Jesus, and the Bible) to which most Unitarians hold. These beliefs will be presented, showing where they differ from Biblical instruction.

God – Unitarian, not Trinitarian. As has already been mentioned, a Unitarian by definition believes that God is one and not three, although based on their own comments, many of their number do not even believe in God at all.

"Some Unitarian Universalists are nontheists and do not find language about God useful. The faith of other Unitarian Universalists in God may be profound, though among these, too, talk of God may be restrained.... Whatever our theological persuasion, Unitarian Universalists generally agree that the fruits of religious belief matter more than beliefs about religion - even about God." (<http://archive.uua.org/aboutuu/uufaq.html#who>)

Since many don't even believe in God, why then the division over the Unity or Trinity?

Regardless, Unitarianism is about the nature of God, whether He is one or three (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). Of course if God is only one in the Unitarian sense, then Jesus was *not* God, and the Trinitarian view is incorrect. This discussion goes back to the first century. It has been noted above that its source can be found in the "variety of beliefs concerning the nature of Jesus." Was Jesus God, or merely man?

Gnosticism, which was prevalent in the first century and refuted in the epistles of John, claimed that all flesh was evil, while the spirit was good. Beginning with this false belief, it was then taught that Jesus could not have been God because he was flesh, and God cannot become something evil. From

this came many different beliefs about the nature of Jesus. By answering the question of whether or not Jesus was Deity, we will answer the question of Unity or Trinity. For if He was Deity, and not a created being, then the Unitarian view of God fails.

Jesus – man only, not God This second belief is seen in the following statements from Unitarians about the nature of Jesus:

...Jesus was a man whose teaching was to be followed rather than a God to be worshipped (the "Unity" as opposed to the "Trinity" of God).
(<http://www.theopenmind.org.uk/about/index.html>)

Classically, Unitarian Universalist Christians have understood Jesus as a savior because he was a God-filled human being, **not a supernatural being** [emphasis mine, DR].... Among us, Jesus' very human life and teaching have been understood as products of, and in line with, the great Jewish tradition of prophets and teachers. He neither broke with that tradition nor superseded it. (<http://archive.uua.org/aboutuu/uufaq.html#jesus>)

Many of us honor Jesus, and many of us honor other master teachers of past or present generations, like Moses or the Buddha. (Ibid.)

Was Jesus, as suggested above, just another in a line of many Old Testament Israelite prophets? Or was He supernatural – God in the flesh? Remember, those prophets told of the *coming* Messiah, while Jesus claimed to be the Messiah (John 4:25-26; 8:23-24,58; 9:35-37; 10:30). Additionally, the following scriptures answer this question regarding Jesus.

1. **John 1:1-2, 14** – *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."* In verse fourteen it is clear that "the Word" was Jesus

Christ. So we know that Jesus has an eternal existence. There was never a time that He was not in existence.

2. **John 1:3** – “*All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.*” **Colossians 1:16** says, “*by him were all things created, things in heaven and things in earth....*” This includes everything. So Jesus was *not* a created being, for how could He create Himself?
3. **Galatians 4:4** – “*...God sent forth Jesus, born of a woman....*” God didn’t *create* Jesus, but sent Him forth. This is because Jesus already existed spiritually with God, as God (John 1).
4. **Hebrews 1:8** – “*But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God is for ever and ever...*” So God called Jesus “God.”
5. **Hebrews 3:3-4** – Jesus Christ is greater than Moses in that He is the *builder*, not the building. The writer then says that *God* is the builder, thereby equating Jesus with God.
6. See also **Phil 2:6, John 10:30, 1 John 4:1-2 and 5:1, and 2 John 7.**

Though Jesus was “begotten” of God physically (John 1:14), He has always existed spiritually. When we take the whole of biblical teaching on this matter, we conclude that Jesus was in the beginning with God, was God, and was God’s only begotten Son. So, spiritually Jesus has always existed as part of the Godhead, but physically was begotten or created as a human in order to accomplish His great mission on Earth of providing a plan of salvation and reconciling of all humans to God. (Regarding the proper translation of the Greek “monogenes” as “only begotten,” please refer to Robert Taylor’s lecture titled “*Is Christ God’s ‘Only Begotten Son?’*” in the 1989 Memphis School of Preaching lectureship book.)

The Bible – valuable, yet uninspired. In practice, Unitarians place little emphasis on the Bible. Consider these words from the UUA website (<http://archive.uua.org/aboutuu/uufaq.html#bible>).

In most of our congregations, the Bible is read as any other sacred text might be - from time to time, but not routinely. ... We do not, however, hold the Bible - or any other account of human experience - to be either an infallible guide or the exclusive source of truth. Much biblical material is mythical or legendary...

According to this, to a Unitarian the Bible is nothing more than an account of fallible, mythical, *human* experience. But to make a claim is not to prove it! The Bible was penned by approximately forty different humans over a period of over 1600 years. They came from many different walks of life (kings, shepherds, doctors, fishermen, etc.). Yet amazingly they tell the same story, never contradicting each other. This is because they all wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:20-21), thousands of times claiming to be speaking and/or writing the words of God and not men.

This Bible also claims to be our all-sufficient source of authority in life and godliness (2 Peter 1:3). *All* of the Bible comes from God, and thoroughly furnishes us for every good work (2 Tim 3:16-17). Therefore, everything we say and do requires the authority of Jesus (Col. 3:17), and it is His word that will judge us (John 12:48).

So what is the Unitarian's source of ultimate religious authority? Marta Flanagan, co-minister at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, in her pamphlet, "*We Are Unitarian Universalists*," wrote:

We believe that personal experience, conscience, and reason should be the final authorities in religion. In the end religious authority lies not in a book, person, or institution, but in ourselves. We put religious insights to the test of our hearts and minds.

We must ask, how does Ms. Flanagan know this? Did God tell her this? It cannot be found in the Bible. It is this very belief that causes such tremendous division among those claiming to be Christians today. The inspired prophet

Jeremiah said, "*O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps*" (Jeremiah 10:23). And Jesus told us whether or not the heart is a safe filter with which to test "religious insights." He said, "*For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies*" (Matthew 15:19).

CONCLUSION

The Scriptures plainly teach the Trinitarian concept of God, not the Unitarian. Jesus was *not* a created being; He has always existed, and He created everything that has been created. The Bible is God's complete, authoritative, and all-sufficient instruction for mankind. It is not to be altered in any way, regardless of the prevailing cultural winds. Never blindly accept human teachings. Rather, search the Scriptures to see whether these things are so (Acts 17:11)!

QUESTIONS OVER CHAPTER SIX

1. What are the three main points of departure of the Unitarian beliefs?
2. List and discuss the Scriptures to which you would go to defend the Deity of Christ.
3. Do Unitarians accept the Bible to be infallible?
4. In reference to question three, which Scripture would you consider to be the most important in dealing with this issue?
5. Discuss what "rejection of the trinity" does to the "God/man" status of Jesus (especially in regard to passages like Hebrews 4:15).
6. What does the Bible say about the acceptance of homosexuals into fellowship.
7. According to Marta Flanagan, the Unitarian Universalist looks to personal experience, conscience, and reason as the final authority in religion. How can we appeal to their reason to see the error in that position?
8. In regard to Universalism, list and discuss the Scriptures you would use in order to refute the teaching that *everyone* will be saved?
9. Discuss the idea of "tolerance" that is prevalent in our society.
10. As Christians, we are commanded to go and teach, making disciples of all nations. How could a Christian approach a Unitarian?

WHY I CANNOT BE A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST SCIENTIST

Ben Bailey

INTRODUCTION

If a person is not careful, the constant struggles and challenges of life can cause him to become a hobbyist. If those hobbies then consume him and turn into his obsession, it may not be long until he is looking for a platform to preach his "*new found religion*." Such is the case with different religious movements throughout history. For example, Joseph Smith's fixation with the fanciful and mystical eventually led him to form one of the greatest religious hoaxes ever—Mormonism. L. Ron Hubbard's insatiable desire for wealth and power eventually became his religion--Scientology. Another great example of this is the Church of Christ Scientist. Mary Baker Eddy's obsession with sickness and health led her to create the religion known as Christian Science. This study is designed to show that the church of Christ Scientist is not God's church because it was founded out of a physical obsession, it does not fit the divine blue print for the church, and its doctrines are in direct conflict with Scripture. For one to understand how this religion came about and what its core tenets are, he first must understand the history of Mary Baker Eddy.

THE HISTORY OF MARY BAKER EDDY

The seeds of Christian Science are found in Mrs. Eddy's constant struggles with pain and illness. It is reported that Eddy was a nervous child and missed much schooling. She was chronically sick with such ailments as paralysis, hysteria, seizures, and convulsions. For years, she was a semi-invalid. Some believe she had a spinal weakness that caused seizures and eventually resulted in a complete nervous collapse. Throughout her life, Mary continued to be in very poor health. In her quest for health, she visited Dr. Phineas P. Quimby of Portland, Maine. She found his non-medical principles cured her of her illnesses. Over a short period,

Mrs. Eddy absorbed Dr. Quimby's system and became one of his most devout disciples. In fact, there is some very credible evidence that suggest Dr. Quimby, not Mrs. Eddy, is the real founder of Christian Science and its doctrines. After becoming a disciple of Dr. Quimby, Mrs. Eddy's health was dealt another harsh blow. On February 1, 1866, she fell on an icy pavement and was painfully injured. She reported that the doctors had pronounced her injury fatal and that she only had a few days to live. Interestingly enough, she read the passage of the paralytic in Mt. 9:2-8 and "took up her bed and walked" with better health than she had ever had before. In spite of this unexpected recovery, she still tried to claim money from the city for her injury. She based her claim on the grounds that she was 'still suffering from the effects of that fall'. From this brief history of Mary Baker Eddy's life, a person can see that she was plagued by and obsessed with sickness and *she let that obsession rather than the Bible direct her in religion.*

WHAT IS CHRISTIAN SCIENCE ALL ABOUT?

The movement known as Christian Science is a religion emphasizing divine healing as practiced by Jesus Christ. If a member of the Christian Science movement is sick he does not call for the doctor, he realizes that sickness is an illusion and overcomes the problem in his mind. In essence, Christian Science denies the ability of medical science to help humanity. Christian Science adherents teach that the sickness and pain a person feels is "all in their head." Adherents of Christian Science believe that if you have truth on your side, you will be healthy in body. This doctrine is truly a "health" gospel. In the preface of *Science and Health with Key to Scriptures*, Mrs. Eddy states, "Sickness has been combated for centuries by doctors using material remedies; but the question arises, is there less sickness because of these practitioners? A vigorous 'No' is the response deducible from two connate facts,--the reputed longevity of the Antediluvians, and the rapid multiplication and increased violence of diseases since the flood." Notice how cunning

Mrs. Eddy is in the above statement. She expects one to believe that medicine has not contributed to “less sickness” and her proof is that people before Noah’s flood lived longer and disease is much more common and violent today. Should a person blindly accept Mrs. Eddy’s claim that science is bad? Are we supposed to accept her “proof”? Surely not! In fact, the most credible evidence suggests that people lived longer before the flood because they were not affected by radiation from the sun as we are now. In addition, medical science has done much good in combating such things as the flu, mumps, measles, malaria, pneumonia and many other diseases. In fact, medical science is helping people to live longer all the time. The proof Mrs. Eddy offers is not based on solid reasoning.

DOES THE CHURCH OF CHRIST SCIENTIST FIT THE NEW TESTAMENT BLUE PRINT?

What is the main problem with the Church of Christ Scientist? It is very simple: *It does not fit the divine pattern for the church.* Anytime we study a religious group we must first compare it to the blue print of the church located in the Bible. Notice how the Church of Christ Scientist does not fit the divine blue print.

Wrong Founder. The Scriptures teach that Jesus is the founder of the New Testament church. In Matthew 16:18 Jesus said, “I will build My church...” Jesus had already promised His disciples that He would establish the kingdom while on earth (Mk. 9:1). Since the kingdom is the church (Mt. 16:18-19), we can know that Jesus is the founder of the New Testament church. The question then arises, “Who founded the Church of Christ Scientist?” The official homepage for the Church of Christ Scientist states that, “Eddy established The First Church of Christ, Scientist. As the number of readers of *Science and Health* grew, Eddy established a Church organization to communicate the ideas in *Science and Health* for humanity’s benefit.” Since Mary Baker Eddy established the Church of Christ Scientist, then one can know it is not the church Jesus established.

Wrong Date of Origin. In Daniel 2:44, God promised that during the time of the four kingdoms mentioned that He would set up a new kingdom that would never be destroyed. The four kingdoms that follow Daniel's prophecy are the Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman kingdoms. During the first three kingdoms, God did not set up a new kingdom. However, during the time of the Roman kingdom a new spiritual kingdom was established. Jesus promised to establish His kingdom, the church (Mt. 16:13-18; Mk. 9:1). In Acts 2, the Bible records for the first time that "the Lord added to the church daily..." (Acts 2:47). During the time of the first century, the Apostle Paul said that Christians were transferred from "...the power of darkness and conveyed into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Col. 1:13). It is obvious from Old Testament prophecy and New Testament fulfillment that the church began in the first century A. D. One must now ask the question, "When did the Church of Christ Scientist begin?" The official statement from the Christian Scientist webpage says, "After publication in 1875 of *Science and Health*, Eddy's primary work on spirituality and healing, readers began meeting to discuss the ideas and share their healing results. Then, in 1879, Eddy established what became The First Church of Christ, Scientist (The Mother Church)." Once again, a person can see that the Church of Christ Scientist movement does not fit the blue print. It cannot be the church found in the Bible because it began 1800 years too late.

Wrong Place of Origin. Seven hundred and fifty years before Jesus was born, Isaiah proclaimed that the house of the Lord would be established in Jerusalem through the preaching of the Word (Isa. 2:1-4). This glorious event came to fulfillment when Peter stood up with the eleven Apostles and preached the first gospel sermon in Acts 2. At the close of his sermon they asked "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter told them to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of their sins (Acts 2:38). The Bible further tells us that those who gladly received his

word were baptized and the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved (Acts 2:41; 47). In harmony with the prophetic promise, God's church was established in Jerusalem. Now one must ask, "Where did Church of Christ Scientist movement begin?" Religious history records that Mrs. Eddy in Boston, Massachusetts, started the Church of Christ Scientist. Again, this does not fit the divine blue print for the church. Therefore, the Christian Science movement cannot be the church of the New Testament.

Wrong Religious Head. Who is the head of the New Testament church? The Bible teaches that Jesus is the only head of the church. The inspired Apostle Paul stated that, "He put all *things* under His feet, and gave Him *to be* head over all *things* to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all" (Eph. 1:22-23). Paul later stated that just as the husband is head of the wife, so Christ is the head of the church (Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18; 2:19). If Jesus is the head of the New Testament church, then who is the head of the Church of Christ Scientist? Amazingly enough, Mary Baker Eddy is still the head of Christian Science. Notice the following statement from the Church of Christ Scientist webpage, "The Church is governed by Mary Baker Eddy's church manual, which provides for its overall structure." Since Jesus is the head of the church, any group that is governed by human beings cannot be the Lord's church. Thus, the Church of Christ Scientist has missed the divine blue print once again.

Wrong Authority. What is the source of authority for the church today? The Bible is the ONLY source for authority in the church. Christians are only to do that which is authorized by God's word (Col. 3:17). All men will be judged by the words of Christ in the final day (Jn. 12:48). The church must not add to or take away from God's word (Rev. 22:18-19; Prov. 30:6). Christians are commanded not go beyond that which is written (1 Cor. 4:6). From these verses, a person can easily see that God's inspired word is the only authority for the church. What is the authority for the Church of Christ

Scientist? The *Bible and Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* are the primary texts used for individual study and spiritual growth. Together they are the foundation for Christian Science teaching and practice, and are used during church services. Mrs. Eddy ordained these books as a "dual and impersonal pastor" for these services. According to the Church's official Web site, followers use both books to "unlock The Bible . . . It was the specific mission of Science and Health to give the world this key to the Scriptures to open up their treasures and enable everyone to use them." Once again, the Church of Christ Scientist does not fit the divine blue print for the church and its authority. How sad it is when a human being thinks that he can write a book to unlock God's Word! A person needs to very leery of any religious group that claims one needs "their" book to understand the Bible.

Wrong Name. Since the Bible teaches a person must not add to or take away from God's word, then it is only logical to say that any religious group must wear a biblical name to please God. What names does the Bible authorize for the church? Jesus spoke of the church as His church (Mt. 16:18). Thus, the name *church of Christ* is a biblical description (see Rom. 16:16). The church is also described as the "church of God" (1 Cor. 1:2; 2 Cor. 1:1; Gal. 1:13; 1 Tim. 3:5). Paul described the church as "the church of the Lord" in Acts 20:28. All the designations for the church in Scripture give God and His Son the glory. Since Jesus purchased the church with His own blood, any group that calls itself by another name is not giving Christ the honor He deserves (Acts 20:28). A person can search the Bible from cover to cover and never find the name "scientist" applied to Jesus or His church. Therefore, the church of Christ *Scientist* cannot be the New Testament church because it does not wear a biblical name.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE DOCTRINES EXAMINED FROM SCRIPTURE

To understand what is wrong with the Christian Science

movement, a person must compare their doctrines with Scripture. The Church of Christ Scientist has not only missed the divine blue print for the church, it teaches some of the most damnable and corrupt doctrines that have ever been taught. Following are an examination of some of their false doctrines.

1. *Christian Science teaches that physical sickness and disease are all figments of the mind.* Christian Science affirms that sickness, pain, and other physical ailments are not a reality but only states of mind. Regarding physical pain, Mrs. Eddy said, "Sickness and disease are illusory, the product of a false belief, and not an actual result of sin." The cause of all so-called disease is mental, a mortal fear, a mistaken belief." In fact, Mrs. Eddy actually taught that you should not go to a doctor or take medicine. This doctrine has to be one of the most absurd and idiotic doctrines that the mortal mind has ever invented. How could anyone believe that pain and sickness are just illusions? A person knows when he hurts and he knows that pain is real! We can know this is a false doctrine because Jesus, by implication, authorized people to go to doctors when they were sick. Jesus said, "'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance'" (Mk. 2:17). In this verse, Jesus taught by implication that sick people NEED a doctor! Throughout Scripture there are various cases of real sickness and disease that people faced (2 Cor. 12:7ff; James 1:2-3; James 5:13; Acts 9:37; 2 Tim. 4:20). Not only do the Scriptures teach this doctrine to be false but a good dose of common sense will prove this doctrine absurd. For example, what would happen if a man were to raise a hammer high over his head and then bring the head of that hammer down on his thumb? Would it hurt? Sure, it would! Common sense

teaches us not to do that. However, a true Christian Science believer would have to say that the throbbing pain he feels in his thumb after hitting it with a hammer is only an illusion. Friend, this doctrine is both unscriptural and lacking in good common sense.

2. *Christian Science teaches the Bible is NOT the inerrant and infallible Word of God.* Christian Science teaches that the Bible is a fallible book that has been contaminated by men. Concerning the Bible, Mrs. Eddy said, "The decisions by vote of Church Councils as to what should and should not be considered Holy Writ; the manifest mistakes in the ancient versions; the thirty thousand different readings in the Old Testament, and the three hundred thousand in the New, these facts show how a mortal and material sense stole into the divine record, with its own hue darkening to some extent the inspired pages." From the outset, a person needs to realize that Mrs. Eddy's claim is not based on good factual evidence. There are not thirty thousand *different* readings in the Old Testament and some three hundred thousand *different* readings in the New Testament. For example, Neil Lightfoot, in *How We Got the Bible*, makes the following observation:

"It is wholly misleading and untrue to say that there are 200,000 errors in the text of the New Testament. This large number is gained by counting all the variations in all of the manuscripts (above 5000). This means that if, for example, one word is misspelled in 4,000 different manuscripts, it amounts to 4,000 'errors.' Actually, in a case of this kind only one slight error has been made and it has been copied 4,000 times...A person is either unlearned or of a skeptical mind who tries to

take this large number of variations and use it in such a way as to undermine our faith in the Word of God.”

Not only are Mrs. Eddy’s facts based on deceptive information, they are not in accord with what the Bible claims. Jesus said the Bible is the full and complete truth from God (Jn. 17:17, 8:32). Paul proclaimed that “All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Like the Psalmists, we need to know that, “The entirety of your word is truth...” (Ps. 119:160). A person ought to be very skeptical of any group that claims the Bible is NOT the perfect word of God.

3. *Christian Science denies the Trinity.* Concerning the triune nature of God, Mary Baker Eddy said, ““The theory of three persons in one God (that is, a personal Trinity or Tri-unity) suggests polytheism, rather than the one ever-present I Am.” In conflict with Mrs. Eddy’s teachings, a thorough study of Scripture will show that there are three persons in the godhead. Paul included all three members of the Godhead in 2 Corinthians 13:14 when he said, “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.” A careful study of the following Scriptures will teach that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all part of the godhead (Mt. 6:9; Gen. 1:26-27; John 1:1-4; Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 9:14; 2 Cor. 13:14; Eph. 4:30; Jn. 20:28; Tit. 2:11-13).
4. *Christian Science denies the ability of Jesus’ sacrifice and atonement to save us from God’s wrath.* With reference to the sacrifice of Christ, Mary Baker Eddy

said, "One sacrifice, however great, is insufficient to pay the debt of sin. The atonement requires constant self-immolation on the sinner's part. That God's wrath should be vented upon His beloved Son is divinely unnatural. Such a theory is man-made." She later went on record and said, "The material blood of Jesus was no more efficacious to cleanse from sin when it was shed upon 'the accursed tree,' than when it was flowing in his veins as he went daily about his Father's business." If there is a false doctrine this group teaches that should really disturb faithful Christians it is this one. How could anyone who claims to be a "Christian" make such a blasphemous statement? The atonement and sacrifice of Christ is NOT a man-made theory. The Scriptures teach that Jesus bore the sins of the world in His body (2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 2:24). This is why God was separated from His son for a time (Mt. 27:46). It is the shed blood of Christ on Calvary that cleanses men from their sin today (Acts 22:16). How could a person be in a movement that denies the efficacy of our Lord's sacrifice and death on Calvary?

5. *Christian Science denies that Heaven is a REAL place.* Pertaining to Heaven, Christian Science teaches that, "Heaven is not a locality, but a divine state of Mind in which all the manifestations of Mind are harmonious and immortal. . . ." The idea that Heaven is a state of the mind is in direct contradiction with Jesus' teaching. Jesus prayed, "Our Father who is in Heaven..." (Mt. 6:9). It is evident that Jesus believed the Father was in a REAL place called Heaven. Jesus promised that he was going to prepare Heaven and that He would come again and take the faithful to Heaven (Jn. 14:1-6). To deny the reality of Heaven is to deny what the biblical record says about the final resting place of the faithful (Heb. 4:9; Rev. 21:1-4; Mt. 25:46; 2 Cor. 4:16-5:2; Phil. 1:20-21).

6. *Christian Science denies the reality of the Judgment Day.* In relation to the Judgment Day, Mrs. Eddy said, "No final judgment awaits mortals, for the judgment-day of wisdom comes hourly and continually, even the judgment by which mortal man is divested of all material error." Although Mrs. Eddy makes the bold claim that "no judgment-day awaits mortals," such a claim is not in accord with God's Word. On Mars Hill Paul proclaimed, "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31). Paul preached to Felix about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come (Acts 24:25). There are a host of Scriptures that teach a real judgment day awaits all mankind (2 Cor. 5:10; Eccl. 12:13-14; Jn. 5:28-29; Rev. 20:12-15; Rom. 14:10; 1 Jn. 4:17).

IS THE CHURCH OF CHRIST SCIENTIST MOVEMENT ACCEPTABLE TO GOD?

Is the Church of Christ Scientist the church you read about in the Bible? Absolutely not! It was started due to an obsession with physical sickness, it does not match the New Testament blue print for the church, and its doctrines are in direct conflict with Scripture. Thankfully, recent studies reveal that Christian Science is actually in a strong state of decline. In the spring 1992 edition of the *Christian Research Journal*, William Alnor states church membership had gone from 268,000 members in the 1930s to 150,000 members in 1992. In light of these statistics and out of a pure love for the New Testament church, may we say "God haste the day when the Christian Science movement dwindles out of existence!"

QUESTIONS OVER CHAPTER SEVEN

1. What led Mary Baker Eddy to found the Christian Science Movement?
2. What is the Christian Science movement all about? Is it what we would call a "health gospel?"
3. What two facts does Mrs. Eddy give to show that medical science has not helped humanity?
4. Does the Church of Christ Scientist fit the divine blue print for the church? Show from Scripture the divine blue print.
5. Show from Scripture that sickness is not just "in your head."
6. Mrs. Eddy claimed that the Bible was full of many errors and had been corrupted by men. Show how her claims are both deceptive and contrary to the facts.
7. Does the Bible teach there are three persons in the godhead? Prove your answer from Scripture.
8. How is the sacrifice and atonement of Jesus central to the gospel message?
9. Why do you think the Christian Science teach that Heaven is just a state of mind.
10. Do the Scriptures teach there is a day coming when all men will stand before God and be judged?

WHY I AM NOT A MEMBER OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH

James Cudd

INTRODUCTION

N. B. Hardeman once declared, "The confusion of the twentieth century is denominationalism." Now, with the arrival of the twenty-first century, the confusion continues.

The Lutheran Church is the oldest of the protestant denominations. Its founder, Martin Luther, was born November 10, 1483, in the village of Eisleben, Germany. His parents were consecrated Catholics, therefore, he was baptized at one day old. In his early twenties Luther became a devout monk at the Augustinian Convent at Erfurt, Germany. On October 31, 1517, while serving as a priest at the church in Wittenburg, Luther posted his famous 95 theses on the church door in protest against the sale of indulgences by the Roman Church. That event sparked the Protestant Reformation which led to the origin of the Lutheran Church. Luther really did not intend to begin a new church; he only wanted to reform the Church of Rome. His efforts, however, resulted in the formation of another denomination similar to the one he left.

There are a number of reasons why I am not a member of the Lutheran Church. All of them are biblical reasons.

BECAUSE THE LUTHERAN CHURCH CAME TOO LATE

I am not a member of the Lutheran Church because it is a man-made religious body that came into existence fifteen centuries too late to be the church that Christ established. In the first century, on the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Jesus, the church of Christ was established as recorded in Acts 2. Jesus had nothing to do with bringing the Lutheran Church into existence. He did not purpose it. He did not found it. He did not authorize it. He did not sanction it. He built his church in the first century. He spoke no plans to

build more in later centuries. Christ promised, "I will build my church" (Mt. 16:18). The word "church" is singular. One is the number Jesus promised to build. He purchased only one church with his blood (Acts 20:28). Every drop of Jesus' blood went into the purchase of his church which is identified in the New Testament. The Lutheran Church came too late to be purchased by any of the blood of Christ. Christ had already obtained his church with his blood long before the Lutheran Church made its appearance.

In the first century when sinners became saved by obeying the gospel (Mk. 16:15-16; Acts 2:38), the Lord added the saved to his church (Acts 2:47; 5:14). Not one of the saved in the first century was added to the Lutheran Church because it did not exist. It came too late. If one desires to enter the Lutheran Church, he must do so by some other means than by being added to it by the Lord.

Paul wrote, "For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior" (Eph. 5:23). Note that Jesus is the head and Savior of His body which is His church (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18, 24). The church of Christ, therefore, consists of the saved. Paul says nothing about Jesus being the Savior or head of any other religious body. The Lutheran Church came too late for Jesus to be its Savior or head.

There are thousands of denominations today, all claiming to be the church or part of the church that Jesus built. That is impossible, however, because none of them, including the Lutheran Church, can point to the first century as their starting point. They all came too late to be the church that belongs to Christ. His church began in the first century. If the Lutheran Church is the church or is part of the church that Jesus founded, why is there no mention of it in the New Testament? Why did Jesus not promise it? I am not a member of the Lutheran Church because it came too late to be the church that Jesus built.

**BECAUSE THE LUTHERAN CHURCH STOPS TOO
SHORT**

I am not a member of the Lutheran Church because it stops too short regarding certain teachings and practices.

In promoting salvation by “faith only”

The Lutheran Church stops too short when it presents the process by which the sinner is saved from sin. The Lutheran denomination advocates salvation by faith alone, separate and apart from all works. This false doctrine emerged during the Reformation as a radical reaction to the Catholic Church’s system of salvation by works only. Luther, and other prominent men of the Reformation, swung to the other extreme promoting salvation without works at all. They taught that faith was the only factor essential to obtaining the forgiveness of sins.

Those who hold to the “salvation by faith only” doctrine oppose things taught in the Bible that are necessary in order to become a Christian. For example, they reject baptism of the penitent believer for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). They teach that remission of sins is obtained on the basis of “faith only” before, and without, baptism. In their view baptism is a work which, if considered necessary to be saved, would constitute earning salvation. But Jesus declared, “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned” (Mk. 16:16). Jesus makes baptism essential to salvation.

The doctrine of salvation by “faith only” is wrong. It stops too short; it does not include everything that God has placed in his plan of salvation. The Bible says, “You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone” (Jas. 2:24). James also wrote, “For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead” (Jas. 2:26). Paul pinpoints in Rom. 6:17-18 when salvation is realized, “But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.” The sinner is not “set free from sin” until he has been “obedient from the heart” to gospel teaching. “Faith

alone” will not result in freedom from sin.

One is not saved by faith without works any more than he is saved by works without faith. Both ideas fall short of Bible teaching. We must understand the biblical usage of the word “works,” which is used in at least three different ways in the New Testament. First, it sometimes refers to “works of merit” devised by man for the purpose of saving himself. Paul said, “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast” (Eph. 2:8-9; cf. Tit. 3:5). Second, there are the “works of the Law of Moses” that cannot justify. Paul makes this point clear throughout the book of Galatians. He said that “by works of the law no one will be justified” (Gal. 2:16; cf. Gal. 3:10). Third, there are commands from God that we must obey. These are “works of God.” Faith is such a work. “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent” (Jn. 6:29). A faith that complies with the works of God is a saving faith. “Faith alone” will not save. The faith that counts is the “faith working through love” (Gal. 5:6).

In baptizing by sprinkling or pouring

The Lutheran Church also stops too short regarding baptism. They recognize any “mode” of baptism, whether by immersion or pouring or sprinkling; the “mode” is not essential. Lutherans claim that neither the meaning of the word baptism, nor the instances of its administration in the scriptures show how it was carried out. Sincere as they may be, Lutherans stop too short when they sprinkle or pour water on a person and call it baptism. The sinner must be “buried” (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12) in water for the act to be scriptural baptism. Sprinkling or pouring a little water does not go far enough. You will never read of “modes of baptism” in the Bible.

Contrary to Lutheran teaching, the meaning of the word baptism does indeed enlighten us as to the “how” of the practice. The Greek word *baptisma* means to “dip,” “submerge,” or “immerse.” The standard Greek lexicons

affirm this. *Baptisma* does not mean to sprinkle or to pour. It has never carried such a meaning. "Sprinkle" is from the Greek word *rhantizo*, while "pour" is from *cheo*. The rendering of "baptism" in most English translations of the Bible stems from transliterating (rather than translating) the Greek term *baptisma*. Such a treatment of the original term obscures and conceals the true meaning of the word. Some translations, however, such as *The Simple English Bible* and *McCord's New Testament Translation*, correctly translate the word *baptisma* as "immersion."

Years ago, one zealous but misguided gentleman responded to a newspaper article I had written on 1 Pet. 3:20-21 by writing his own the next week. In his column he quoted the passage, ". . . the like figure where unto, even baptism doth also now save us . . ." and then declared, "How anyone can get immersion out of this statement is strange indeed." In a personal letter to this individual I discussed the meaning of *baptisma* and then stated, "You question how one can get immersion out of 1 Pet. 3:21. I hope you now can see it's in the word 'baptism.' It can't be missed. That is the meaning of the original Greek word that the inspired Peter used. You cannot get any action but immersion from that word."

Those baptized in the first century "went down into the water" and "came up out of the water" (Acts 8:36-39). This would have been unnecessary if sprinkling or pouring a little water would suffice. John administered baptism "at Aenon near Salim, because water was plentiful there . . ." (Jn. 3:23). Much water is needed to immerse; little is required for sprinkling or pouring. I am not a member of the Lutheran Church because it stops too short when administering baptism by sprinkling or pouring. Divine promises follow a scriptural immersion, none result from sprinkling or pouring.

**BECAUSE THE LUTHERAN CHURCH GOES TOO
FAR**

In the doctrine of consubstantiation

I am not a member of the Lutheran Church because of its

erroneous teaching regarding the Lord's supper. Lutherans have gone too far in what they teach concerning the elements of the communion meal. According to the Bible, the communion consists of two elements – unleavened bread and fruit of the vine. It is a simple memorial of Christ's body that was hung on the cross and the blood which He shed there in His death. The emblems represent His body and blood.

Lutheranism denies the Catholic doctrine of *transubstantiation*, where the bread and wine are actually changed, in substance, into the literal flesh and blood of Christ, even though the elements appear to remain the same. The Lutheran Church, however, holds to the doctrine of *consubstantiation*. The idea is that in the communion, the body and blood of Christ, and the bread and wine, coexist in union with each other. The bread is both bread and the body of Jesus. The wine is both wine and the blood of Jesus. "Luther illustrated it by the analogy of the iron put into the fire whereby both fire and iron are united in the red-hot iron and yet each continues unchanged" (*The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, p. 337).

Consubstantiation results from misunderstanding the type of language the Lord used when he instituted the Lord's Supper. When Jesus took bread and fruit of the vine, gave these objects to the disciples, and said, "this is my body . . . this is my blood" (Mt. 26:26-28), he spoke figuratively, not literally. He still possessed his literal body and blood. Jesus used the figure of speech that is known as a *metaphor*, in which one thing (bread) is compared to another (his body), but represented figuratively as that very thing.

Other examples of metaphors are found in the Bible. Jesus referred to Herod as a "fox" (Lk. 13:31-32). The ruler was not a four-legged animal with a bushy tail, but he had fox-like traits. Jesus once said: "I am the vine; you are the branches" (Jn. 15:5). Here again, the Savior used symbolism. Likewise, the language Jesus used in establishing the communion celebration, "this is my body . . . this is my blood" is also symbolism. When Jesus instructed his

disciples to partake of the Lord's Supper "in remembrance of me" (Lk. 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:24), He implied that He would not be present physically in the communion celebration. I am not a member of the Lutheran Church because it goes too far in teaching that the body and blood of Jesus are present along with the bread and fruit of the vine in the Lord's Supper.

In the teaching of inherited sin

The *Augsburg Confession of Faith* (1530) is the most widely accepted specifically Lutheran confession, or statement of faith. It declares that ". . . all men, born according to nature, are born with sin, that is, without the fear of God, without confidence towards God and with concupiscence, and that this original disease or flaw is truly a sin, bringing condemnation and also eternal death to those who are not reborn through baptism and the Holy Spirit" (Article II).

Lutheranism teaches the doctrine of "original sin." According to this teaching, every baby born into this world inherits the guilt of Adam's sin and is completely depraved when conceived. This, of course, explains the Lutheran practice of infant baptism.

Biblical teaching successfully refutes the erroneous notion of original sin. The innocence of infancy is clearly affirmed in numerous Bible verses. Consider the following: "The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father for the iniquity of the son" (Ezek. 18:20). Sin is not inherited. Every person is responsible for his own conduct (Rom. 14:12). Furthermore, human sinfulness commences in that period of one's life that is characterized as "youth" (Gen. 8:21; Jer. 3:25). Sin is not present in infancy. A child must reach a certain level of maturity before he is able to choose between evil and good (Is. 7:15-16). If infants are born with inherited sin, why did Jesus set forth the qualities of little children as models for those who would aspire to enter the kingdom (Mt. 18:3; 19:14), and for those already in the church (1 Cor. 14:20)? Are we to emulate little, totally corrupt sinners? I am not a

member of the Lutheran Church because it has gone too far in teaching that babies are born as sinners.

In the wearing of Luther's name

I am not a member of the Lutheran Church because of the name it wears. Martin Luther made the following request of his followers: "I pray you leave my name alone and not to call yourselves Lutherans, but Christians. Who is Luther? My doctrine is not mine. I have not been crucified for any one... How does it then benefit me, a miserable bag of dust and ashes, to give my name to the children of Christ? Cease, my dear friends, to cling to these party names and distinctions; away with all of them; and let us call ourselves only Christians, after Him from whom our doctrine comes" (*Churches of Today in the Light of Scripture*, L. G. Tomlinson, p. 37-38). Obviously Luther's followers ignored his pleading and endeavored to glorify him rather than Christ.

Jesus purposed, promised, and purchased His church. Those in His church should wear His name. Paul condemned the Corinthians for their divisive spirit in calling themselves after other men's names (1 Cor. 1:10-13). In New Testament times when sinners obeyed the gospel, they became Christians. "And in Antioch the disciples were first called Christians" (Acts 11:26). They wore the name of Christ their Savior. The apostle Peter charged, "Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name" (1 Pet. 4:16). The name of Christ is a good name. His is the only name under heaven by which we are saved (Acts 4:12). I am satisfied and honored to wear the name of Christ.

CONCLUSION

I am not a member of the Lutheran Church because it came too late to be the church of the New Testament. It stops too short in its teaching of salvation by "faith only" and in its lack of water in baptism. It goes too far in its teaching about the Lord's Supper, in its claim of original sin, and in wearing the name of Luther. All who call themselves Lutherans are challenged to examine their beliefs and practices in light of

the word of God. Search the scriptures to determine if the Lutheran religion is taught in the Bible. If you find the Bible to lack such teaching, then resolve to simply be Christians, and members of the church that Christ established.

QUESTIONS OVER CHAPTER EIGHT

1. How does one reconcile the biblical passages that teach salvation is by works (Jas. 2:24) with those that teach salvation is by faith (Eph. 2:8-9)?
2. Why are sprinkling or pouring not biblically acceptable “modes” of baptism?
3. What “proof-text” do Lutherans use to justify their teaching of “original sin”?
4. How is the erroneous teaching of “consubstantiation” refuted by Jn. 6:40-63 along with 1 Jn. 3:24?
5. How does one become a member of the church of Christ?
6. What is wrong with wearing the names of men in religion?
7. Why does the doctrine of salvation by “faith alone” stop too short in describing God’s plan of salvation?
8. If you are a member of the Lutheran Church, how did following the Bible make you a member of that religious group?
9. How does one become a member of the church we read about in the New Testament?
10. Why is it impossible for the Lutheran Church to be the church we read about in the New Testament?

WHY I COULD NOT BE A MEMBER OF THE “COMMUNITY CHURCH”

Keith A. Mosher, Sr.

INTRODUCTION

The church of Christ as initiated by the Lord is **one** body of people over whom Christ is Head and in whom His spirit dwells (Col. 1:18; 1 Cor. 3:16-17). This church, (Greek, **ekklesia**, “called-out”) started on “Pentecost” (c.a. A.D. 30 converted calendar) and is the **only** true church (Isa 2:2-3; Acts 2:1-47). One becomes a member as a penitent believer, immersed, upon his confession of the Christ as Deity, for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). One does **not** join the church of Christ, as one would a denomination, but is **added** to all other baptized believers by the Lord (Acts 2:47).

The Bible term, church, is not descriptive of a building, denomination, or of a man-made group; but, the term is used of the one, true body of people who have obeyed God’s New Testament requirements **and** who continue to obey (Matt. 16:18; Rev. 2:10). The true church of Christ exists according to a canon or rule (Gal. 6:16) and this pattern is inviolable (Prov. 30:6; Rev. 22:18-19). McDade wrote that “whether the pattern followed is the New Testament or a man-made pattern, a discernible, identifiable system of teaching is being followed.” In other words, either one **is** following the New Testament or one **is not**. Logically, there is no middle ground for a “thing cannot both be and not be” at the same time.

The modern “Community Church,” a split from churches of Christ, follows a man-made pattern and is not worthy of the same honor the true body of Christ receives (Eph. 3:20). Why I would not join a denominational church is that I want to go to paradise. Only the true church is saved (Eph. 5:23); the “Community” groups are not the true church for the following reasons.

THEIR HISTORY IS NOT LINKED TO THE NEW TESTAMENT PATTERN

Historically “community churches” began around 1800

and were not nationally organized until 1923. This historical group has, presently, about 250,000 members with a diverse liturgy. One might call these groups “freelance” churches.

The groups calling themselves a “Community Church: A church of Christ” are not affiliated with the historic group and did not begin until the twentieth century whereas **the** true church of Christ began on the day of Pentecost, A.D. 30 (Acts 2). The contemporary pattern for the modern groups is fashioned after the megachurch trend the model for which is one Willow Creek Community Church in South Birmingham, Illinois pastored and promoted by Bill Hybels. The public broadcasting system has tagged the Willow Creek megachurch as the “wave of the future” and preachers from churches of Christ have visited it only to return and sing its praises! McDade has noted the following about members of churches of Christ and the megachurch fad:

“Change agents” within the churches of Christ today publicly have stimulated interest in the Willow Creek model. (The term “change agents” aptly was coined by brother William Woodson in his book exposing their agenda entitled **Change Agents and Churches of Christ**, A study of Contemporary Problems with Change Agents Among Churches of Christ [Athens, Al: School of Bible Emphasis, 1994].) How prominent are these “change agents?” Gary Holloway is Director of Graduate Bible Department at David Lipscomb University, now Lipscomb University, in Nashville, Tennessee. J. E. Choate, who has performed a valuable service in utilizing his vast historical knowledge of the restoration movement to provide both accuracy and truthfulness in articles which challenge the perilous putrefactions of the “change Agents,” wrote in the **Yokefellow**, September 16, 1996, about a paper Holloway

read in May of 1995 before the Disciples of Christ Historical Society which later was published in **Discipliana**. He said, "Dr. Gary Holloway presented his proposals for this new denomination before an assembly of the radical Disciples of Christ whose pulpits are open to gays, liberals, etc. Does Holloway think to gain favor with DLU alumni and patrons when these facts become know (sic) to the rank and file of the churches of Christ? **The first option:** The Willow Creek Community Church model based in the Chicago area is presented as the first of three options proposed to replace the apostolic pattern. This is the "razzle dazzle **hoopla**" type of hype of high church entertainment with brass bands, special music, dramatic skits, etc."

J. E. Choate further has written, "We are familiar to some extent with the contemporary 'church growth' models which are finding their way into post modern Churches of Christ in Nashville. They are the number one choice Willow Creek Community Church..." In this same article written in April of 1998 brother Choate said, "Only the Hendersonville Community Church elects to fly aloft the "Community Church" banner first lofted by Bill Hybels. However, the worship and practices of the Woodmont Hill (sic) Family of God more closely imitate the worship speculators of Willow Creek. Other Nashville churches in the contemporary worship services also feed at the trough of Bill Hybels' Willow Creek Cult." Choate also suggested an insight into the meaning of contemporary worship and its source: The best way to

understand what goes on in the “contemporary worship services” in post modern churches is to look again toward Willow Creek. Whatever the popular evangelical theology of the Chicago based Willow Creek church is, a major emphasis is on entertainment.

The singing, dancing, and dramatic skits performed at Willow Creek have all the color and pizzazz of a Broadway show. Rubel Shelly’s church has recently employed a minister responsible for planning and presenting dramatic skits for the worship services of the Woodmont Family of God. Ruble’s (sic) church is a “bootleg” version of the Chicago denomination. His insufferable ego drives him to leave the impression that he is the “genius” who has created this new model (paradigm).

THEIR ATTITUDE IS NOT BIBLICAL

The modern community groups in Memphis, Tennessee claim to be “loosely affiliated” with the church. They **target** what they call the “younger generation of Baby-Boomers (1955-61) and the “whole of ‘Generation X’ also known as the Baby-Busters (1962-1982).” Evidently, other souls are not nearly as important even though Jesus said to go to all the world (Matt. 28:18-20). A former gospel preacher who helped begin the “Cordova Community Church” wrote to a Christian church pastor and said:

I enjoyed our lunch together on Wednesday. I am honored by the decision made by the committee to invite me to minister with you as God leads you to your new location. I sense a wonderful camaraderie of spirit and purpose with you and the church.

The committee’s “invitation” was for the “gospel” preacher

to do a feasibility study to help that Christian church denomination grow and prosper. The fee was \$3,000.00. Christians cannot encourage denominational growth, let alone be paid for it (Eph. 5:11)! Miller wrote:

A second widespread indicator of the drive toward denominationalism has been the emphasis given to evading the name "church of Christ." Manifesting itself in a variety of forms, the most striking occurrence of this change is seen when a liberal, progressive group finally leave a congregation, having failed to swing the majority to their view. They commence to advertise the new church which they have formed under new names. Sometimes the word "community" is incorporated into the new name — an obvious attempt to mimic the community church phenomenon that has spread across the country. Sometimes a term is selected that identifies the group with a particular locale and is placed before the word "church." For example, the "Southern Hills Church." Some of these churches place in smaller letters beneath the name "A Church of Christ family." This change has come directly out of denominationalism—not the Bible. It is a further attempt to seek respectability and fellowship with the religious world at large."

I would **never** want to return to the darkness of denominationalism having left such in 1964 because nothing there follows any true New Testament teaching (c.f. Heb. 6:1-8). Brethren who are enamored of the glitter of false religion are following nothing but spiritual fool's gold.

THEIR STRATEGY IS NOT BIBLICAL

One of the strategies for these community church efforts is the cell group. As defined in their mission statement this

“cell-church” structure is “where the intimate ministry of the church is conducted. This is a small group of 8-16 adults who gather weekly to share, pray, and study the Bible. The group serves both the relational and spiritual needs of its members, and it seeks to evangelize friends and acquaintances through their (sic) group meetings. This would serve as the primary point of entrance into the body, and it would be the primary environment in which Christians would care for each other.”

Given the above description of cell-groups as the **primary point of entrance** and **primary environment** for the body, it seems each cell-group will need elders for each is a church and if meeting in California would need a permit. No such groups of “loosely affiliated” Christians is mentioned anywhere in Holy Writ, and such groups are a breeding ground for doctrinal diversity. The mission statement further adds that “Every member of the church is expected to participate in a cell group for evangelism, developing relationships, and maturing in their (sic) faith.” Then, without so much as an apology for inconsistency, the mission statement adds: “God has revealed his pattern for his people in Scripture.”

SOME OF THEIR DOCTRINE IS NOT BIBLICAL

The mission statement of the Cordova Community Church, under the heading of the “Doctrine and Practice of this New Church Planting,” lists the following.

1. “Fallen humanity is oriented to evil through a sinful nature which gives rise to human sin by the exercise of human freedom. Sin is a free human decision, not a determined destiny. However, without the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives fallen humanity would miserably fail to please God.” When I was in the Presbyterian-Calvinistic denomination, I was taught the same doctrine. But, the Bible says that a Christian is **solely** responsible for not allowing sin to “reign in his mortal body” (Rom. 6:12). The teaching of the Holy Spirit is to be obeyed, but a Christian is **not** immediately and personally touched by the Spirit to enable the Christian to keep from sinning.

5. (Numbers 2, 3, 4 were biblical.) “The Holy Spirit worked powerfully in the lives of believers to produce his fruit, and while he no longer distributes miraculous gifts to the believers in the post-apostolic period (e.g. investing the gift of healing in specific individuals), he is not thereby limited from acting in miraculous ways according to God’s good pleasure.” The Bible teaches that **all** miraculous events **ceased** when revelation was completed (1 Cor. 13:8-10).

6. “The ministries of the church are open to women except for office and functions which involve headship” responsibilities in the church....We encourage a wider participation of women in the life and ministry of the church.” Since the mission statement is not specific, one is left to wonder where such leads. What “wider” ministry is not practiced by the true church?

7. “The musical worship of this **new** (bold for emphasis, K.M.) church is **a capella** (without instrumental music), not because we believe it should divide the body of Christ as a matter of salvation or because it is a fundamental gospel issue (as in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ), but because we believe it is more consistent with the historic practice of the early church and it more appropriately embodies the theological principle of worshipping God in the Spirit out of a renewed heart (Eph. 5:18-19).” To use a Bible reference to prove a “rather do it this way” than a command is hypocritical. God commanded singing and it **is** a salvation issue. (There were two more listings both of which were merely opinions and neither biblical nor non-biblical.)

The above statements, directly from their mission message, are quoted exactly and neither deception nor misrepresentation is intended. Some of those involved in the new community church plantings are known to this writer and **no** personal animosity is felt nor meant. But, to love Christ is to love His commands **and** to plead with folks to do what He said (c.f. Matt. 7:21-23; Luke 6:46). I would never want to be, nor want anyone to be, a member of a group whose doctrine is in error for such practice condemns the

soul (2 John 9-11).

WHAT THE COMMUNITY CHURCH ADVOCATES IS JUST WRONG

It should be understood here that using theological works produced by denominational scholars is never wrong. The apostle Paul quoted from secular works (e.g. Titus 1:12). And, all must use a Bible in translation that was produced by non-members of the body of Christ. What is wrong is not borrowing ideas from others (c.f. Sunday school or vacation Bible school) but putting into practice non-biblical doctrines or methods being done by the secular world. One often hears brethren remark that such and such a denominational church must be doing something "right" for look how big they are. No! They are doing it wrong (not biblically) and that is why they are so big. When one teaches the Bible and its strictness on baptism and obedience, men are not so eager to come. But, offer "come as you are" hoopla and the majority wants to be amused. What God does not authorize is sinful and never right (Col. 3:17).

The gospel of Christ needs no additions nor subtractions. The message is complete (Rom. 1:16). The power (**dunamis**, ability) of this Divine teaching is God's and points out the fact that man's greatest need is the salvation of his soul (Matt. 16:24-26). All accountable humans have sinned and will be eternally lost should they continue in iniquity (Rom. 3:23; 6:23). Those who seek a different attraction to gain numbers and amuse visitors denigrate the true drawing power--the Cross (John 12:32).

God's ways are always superior to man's (Isa. 55:8-9). God has always expected His children to follow His pattern. "Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount" (Heb. 8:5). And, for the New Covenant, the apostle Paul wrote: "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a

pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting” (1 Tim. 1:16). All Christians, in fact, are required to conform to God’s pattern: “In all things shew thyself a pattern of good works; in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity” (Titus 2:7).

The letter announcing the new Cordova Community sect, however, insists that the Bible pattern is passé and that “A new church designed for those who’ve given up on traditional church services” is being started. The letter went on to state that “Let’s face it. Many people aren’t active in church these days. Why? Too often people feel...sermons are boring...churches seem more interested in your wallet than you...members are unfriendly to visitors...churches are self-centered.” (The foregoing ideas are contained in Rick Warren’s volume, *The Purpose Driven Church* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995].) So, the community church’s “bible” is not Holy Writ!

CONCLUSION

The plantings of community churches by apostate brethren follow a non-biblical strategy, with no historical foundation in the true church (Acts 2). The attitudes and doctrines of these groups are not found in the Bible and are just wrong.

Brethren who are fond of this new fad demonstrate a lack of faith in God in that His way seems to have been subjugated to theirs (c.f. Jer. 10:23; Prov. 14:12). The aim of this new group seems to be members (without a true preaching of the gospel **and** without **personal** work) for they advertise groups and not individual effort as Christ commanded. Therefore, God’s Word is disrespected for He taught that only the **few** would find the way (Matt. 7:13-14).

Too, these community-church advocates demonstrate a failure to appreciate God’s church--the church of Christ as they attack her distinction; even planting these congregations very near existing assemblies of the Lord’s church. For this last reason alone, I would not desire to be a part of such an obviously secular, sinful, sad group.

QUESTIONS OVER CHAPTER NINE

1. Why is it important to understand the difference between “joining a denomination” and “the Lord adding the saved to His church”?
2. Discuss the significance of following a pattern, and identify which pattern the Community Church follows.
3. What connection is there between the Willow Creek Community Church (Bill Hybels’ group) and those calling themselves a Community Church – A Church of Christ”?
4. What lies at the foundation of the “contemporary worship” agenda?
5. Show why Christians cannot encourage denominational growth, let alone be paid for it, and cite book, chapter, and verse to support your contention.
6. Why is the “cell group” power move a breeding ground for doctrinal diversity?
7. How is the Calvinistic concept of the Holy Spirit directly touching a human life involved in the Cordova Community Church?
8. Why is it wrong to fall prey to the old argument: “They must be doing something right – look how they are growing?”
9. List some of the reasons given as to why CHANGE is needed to keep people coming.
10. How does this Community Church phenomenon attack the integrity of the Scriptures (note Jer. 10:23 and Prov. 14:12 in your answer).

WHY I COULD NOT BE A MEMBER OF THE ADVENTISTS

Palmer Smith

INTRODUCTION

Jesus once asked the leaders of the Jews about John's baptism with this question: "...whence was it? from heaven or from men?" (Matt. 21:25). By this divine question, Jesus provides seekers of the truth a guideline in all religious matters, for they must be from God or from men. There is a standard whereby one must measure all religious doctrine and that standard is the Word of God. In John 17:17 Jesus declared that God's "...word is truth." Through inference the inspired John also tells us in John 1:1 that Jesus is the "Word". At the transfiguration, Mark recorded God stating that Jesus: "...is my beloved Son..." that the all obedient followers today are to: "...hear ye him..." (Mark (9:7). This Word will be the basis of eternal judgement (John 12:48). Therefore, Christ is our only authority, standard, and guide in all religious matters today. Our attitude toward this truth will determine our eternal destiny. With this standard as our only guide, we make an honest inquiry into the doctrines of "Adventism" and why one cannot be a member of this religious movement and expect divine acceptance. There are many false doctrines prorogated by this movement but, the most prominent are: its origin; the Sabbath misconception; and later day prophecy. These three will be the concentration of this article. Therefore, I could never be a part of this group because of the following reasons:

BECAUSE OF ITS ORIGIN

Adventism sprang from a period of American religious history known as "The Great Second Awakening" (1800-1850). It was a period of great religious revival and consisted of a renewed hope in salvation and interest in religion. Prior to this period skepticism and atheism flourished throughout the United States. It has been estimated that less than ten percent of the American population were professing

Christians. Skepticism and atheism flourished throughout our great nation. Only two of Princeton's student body professed to be Christians in 1782, and the other schools were just as bad.² The Second Great Awakening in the opening years of the nineteenth century turned America once again toward faith. The nineteenth century was ideal for the development of a revival movement in the United States. "The Napoleonic wars greatly stimulated religious speculation concerning 'the last things'. These speculations coupled with American frontier conditions, gave rise to a sensational type of religion. People living lonely, monotonous lives welcomed the excitement, the thrills, and the social contacts furnished by the camp-meetings. Untutored and naive minds showed great receptivity for the strange, the bizarre, and the abnormal in religion."³

In the midst of this wide spread skepticism, a surge of interest in the Second Advent of Christ began to spread across the country. Many people yearned for a livelier religion. This yearning expressed itself in a variety of ways. Some sought emotionalism, much like the Pentecostals. Some sought a more strict, conservative code of holiness. With this widespread mind-set, an interest in prophecy was kindled calling for renewed interest in the Second Coming of Christ. High energy-charismatic preachers took advantage of this emotionalism by sensationalizing the doctrine of the Second Advent attracting thousands to their camp-meetings. It was this type of atmosphere that gave rise to the religious movement known as "Adventism".

The Seventh-Day Adventist church traces its roots to American preacher William Miller (1782-1849), a Baptist who predicted that the Second Coming would occur between March 21, 1843, and March 21, 1844. Because he and his followers proclaimed Christ's advent, they are known as "Adventist".

When Christ failed to appear, Miller endorsed the position of his followers known as the "seventh-month movement", who claimed Christ would return on October 22, 1844 (in the

seventh month of the Jewish calendar). When this didn't happen, his followers were devastated and broke up into a number of competing factions. Miller's second prophetic failure became known as "the great disappointment". Miller had claimed, based on his interpretation of Daniel and Revelation, that Christ would return in 1843-1844 to cleanse "the sanctuary" (Dan. 8:11-14, 9:26), which he interpreted as the earth.

After the disappointments of 1844, several of his followers proposed an alternative theory. While walking in a cornfield on the morning of October 23, 1844, the day after Christ failed to return, Hiram Edson felt he received a spiritual revelation that indicated that Miller had misidentified the sanctuary. According to Hiram, it was not the earth, but the Holy of Holies in God's heavenly temple. Instead of coming out of the heavenly temple to cleanse the sanctuary of the earth, in 1844 Christ, for the first time, went in the heavenly Holy of Holies to cleanse it instead.

Another group of Millerites was influenced by Joseph Bates, a retired sea captain, who in 1846 and 1849 issued pamphlets insisting that Christians observe the Jewish Sabbath (Saturday) instead of worshipping on Sunday. This helped feed the intense anti-Catholicism of Seventh-Day Adventism, since they blamed the Catholic Church for changing the day of worship from Saturday to Sunday.

These two streams of thought—Christ entering the heavenly sanctuary and the need to keep the Jewish Sabbath—were combined by Ellen Gould White, who claimed to have received many visions confirming these doctrines. Also, it must be noted that in a book entitled, "The Early Writings of Mrs. White," containing her acclaimed visions, on page 99 under "Spiritual Gifts," Mrs. White says that God put a false prophecy in the mouth of his prophet, William Miller, in an effort to paper-over Miller's prophetic mistake. Note how she did this: "His hand covered a mistake in the reckoning of the prophetic periods. Those who were looking for their Lord did not discover this mistake and the most learned men who

opposed the time also failed to see it. God designed that his people should meet with a disappointment" - page 99, "Early Writings," by Ellen Gould White. Together with Edson and Bates, she formed the Seventh-Day Adventist denomination, which officially received its name in 1860. What does the Bible say about such an origin?

There are several spiritually fatal mistakes associated with this origin. First, the date of its origin is much too late to be scripturally authentic. Jesus said in Matthew 16:18: "...I will build my church..." The fact that Jesus told his disciples standing in His presence that some of those standing within the range of his voice would "...not taste of death, till they see the son of Man coming in his kingdom." (Matt. 16:28), testifies to the fact that his church was established and in existence long before the acclaimed Adventist origin. One should note that the date 1844 doesn't line up with biblical teaching. Secondly, any effort to set a date for Jesus' second advent is totally foreign to biblical teaching. Paul told the Thessalonians that Christ' second coming would be: "...as a thief in the night." The thief analogy suggests an unknown time, because a thief never sends warning. Also, according to Matthew 24:36 neither man nor angel knows the day. This verse also suggests that even Christ Himself does not know. Acts 1:6-7 tell us that even appointed apostles did not know. These things must be put to the acid test of God's Word.

The Bible lists at least five tests of a true prophet, and the proof of a false prophet: 1. Deuteronomy 18:22 - When what a prophet says does not come to pass. 2. Deuteronomy 18:20 - When the prophet speaks in the name of other gods. 3. Deuteronomy 13:1-5 - When the prophet leads the people into idolatry. 4. Deuteronomy 13:1-5 - When the prophet leads people in rebellion with God. 5. Jeremiah 14:13; Ezekiel 13:10 - When the prophet speaks "peace" when there is no peace. These tests are universally applicable. They do not apply only to the Jewish dispensation but are still in effect today. When we apply these tests to the claim of divine illumination by Mr. Miller and Ellen Gould White, they very

clearly fail. In 1 John 4:1-2, the inspired writer told Christians of the first century: "Beloved, believe not every spirit [false teacher], but prove the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world." Acts 17:11 exemplifies the standard by which one is to test for false teaching: "...examining the scriptures daily, [compare and test-P.S.] whether these things [teachings-P.S.] were so."

Miller admitted his mistake and quit, but Ellen White attempted to patch up his failure by blaming God. The movement of Seventh Day Adventism was born out of sin and deceit and continues to spread its deadly influence throughout the world. I call your attention to the second reason I could never be an "Adventist."

BECAUSE OF ITS DAY OF WORSHIP

As their name suggests, Seventh-day Adventists advocate worshipping on the Sabbath instead of Sunday. This is based on a firm conviction that the ten commandments are still binding upon all mankind. Since the fourth commandment sets aside the Sabbath as a holy day, Adventists believe they are required to make this their day of worship. They believe: "That the will of God as it relates to moral conduct is comprehended in His law often commandments; that these are great moral, unchangeable precepts, binding upon all men, in every age."⁴ As further justification to support the Sabbath keeping day of worship, they argue that there were two separate laws given on Mt. Sinai; one written on the tables of stone which they call the moral law or law of God and the other was the ceremonial law or law of Moses. Note the following quote: "In order to understand this matter clearly, it is necessary the it be recognized that there are two distinct codes of law set forth in the Bible - that one law, comprising the Decalogue, or Ten Commandments, constitutes the standard of God's moral government, and that the other law deals with the rites and ceremonies pertaining to the Jewish economy, and foreshadowed the death of Christ, the Lamb of God, who was to be slain as an

atonement for sin. It was this ceremonial law, and not the Decalogue, that was *a shadow* of the cross and that had to be changed."⁵ On page 265 of the same book, the author stated: "When Jesus was crucified, one of God's laws was nailed to the cross. It came to its end there. This was the law governing the services of the earthly sanctuary, referred to in the Scriptures as "the law of Moses."⁶ In 2 Chronicles 31:3 we are told: "He appointed also the king's portion of his substance for the burnt offering, *to wit*, for the morning and evening burnt offerings, and the burnt offerings for the Sabbaths, and for the new moons, and for the set feast, as it is written in the law of the Lord."

Adventists insist that the Ten Commandments are not the law of Moses, but the law of the Lord. But 2 chronicles 31:3 mentions "burnt offerings," "new moons," and "set feast" along with "Sabbaths" as being in the "law of the Lord." Where do the 10 commandments mention these things? These are things which they say belong to "ceremonial law" but Chronicles put them in God's law. In Mark 7: 10 the divinely inspired writer said: "Moses said, honor thy father and thy mother." That is one of the Ten Commandments. Mark said it was the law of Moses. Luke 2:22-23 refers to Mary bringing the child Jesus to Jerusalem, "according to the law of Moses." Then the very next verse says: "As it is written in the law of the Lord, every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord." Where is there anything like that in the Ten Commandments? What is called "the law of Moses" in verse 22 is called "the law of the Lord" in verse 23. Similar arguments can be made for verses 24, 27, and 39 of the same chapter. These are things which they say belong to "ceremonial law" but Chronicles put them in God's law. To make such a distinction in the law is to do so without warrant, for the Word of God makes no distinction neither in the Old Testament nor the New Testament. Many other analogies could be cited in the Bible referencing the same argument.

The clarity of the Scriptures provides no room for false

doctrine. Such is true in regard to the day that Christians are to worship today. The New Testament teaches that Christians are to worship on the first day of the week. It is a misnomer to refer to this day as the Sabbath which is quite often the case. This is the day the church was established (Acts 2); that the disciples gathered to give of their means (I Cor. 16:1,2); that the disciples partook of the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7). Many other examples could be given to illustrate the day we are to worship. The Sabbath is never mentioned in the New Testament as the day Christians meet for worship. I call your attention to the third reason I could never be an Adventist:

BECAUSE OF THE GIFT OF PROPHECY

Our Adventist friends advocate that: "One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White, as the Lord's messenger, her writings are a continuing and authoritative source of truth which provide for the church comfort, guidance, instruction, and correction. They also make clear that the Bible is the standard by which all teaching and experience must be tested. (Joel 2:28, 29; Acts 2:14-21; Heb. 1:1-3; Rev. 12:17; 19:10)."⁷ This naturally raises the question: Does the *church* Bible teach that miraculous prophecy exists in the church today?

Few denominational doctrines are more pervasive today than those connected with the work of the Holy Spirit. Our Adventist- friends purport the direct operation of the Holy Spirit. They claim the Holy Spirit works directly upon certain individuals separate and apart from the written Word giving ability to declare divinely inspired prophecy. What does the Bible teach?

We need appeal to only one passage in God's Word to find the answer, I Corinthians 13:8-10. Paul in this verse 10 of this passage declares that the duration of spiritual gifts would end when "...that which is perfect is come...". Spiritual gifts began with the establishment of the church (Acts 2). Jesus foretold these gifts in Mark 16:17-18. Paul listed nine gifts in I Corinthians 12:4-11. He then explained how these gifts

functioned in the church at that time (verse 28). Then Paul stated that the gift of "...prophecies, they shall be done away..." (13:8). The phrase: "they shall be done away" is from one word in the original-katargathasontai. The root word from which it comes is katargeo. This word katargeo is defined by (Kittel's Theological Dictionary of the New Testament) as: "to condemn to inactivity," "to destroy," "to remove from the sphere of activity." So, the activity of "prophecies," not the content, will cease when "that which is perfect is come." But, what is the "perfect" thing?

To fully understand Paul's thought here, we must realize that the Greek word translated "perfect"—*teleios*—means: "brought to its end, finished; wanting nothing necessary to completeness" ("Thayer's Lexicon); "having attained the end or purpose. complete, perfect" (Arndt-Gingrich Lexicon). There is nothing in this passage to suggest this is referring to either the Second Advent of Christ or the perfect sinless state of existence in heaven. "That which is perfect" is the completion of that which is "in part" of verse 9. The immediate context contrasts "in part" with "that which is perfect." That perfect thing is the complete revelation of God that was fulfilled within the lifetime of Jesus' apostles for he himself had foretold that the Holy Spirit would guide them in "all the truth" (John 16:13). Clearly, the Adventists are leaning on a misconception of biblical teaching concerning the gift of prophecies for today.

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that many Adventists are genuinely sincere in their profession of their origin, keeping the seventh day, and gift of prophecies. But sincerity alone does not justify. They teach and practice many things that are contrary to biblical teaching that cannot be addressed in this work. There is no biblical case that can be made in defense for their origin, Sabbath-day, or gift of prophecies. The propositions have the support of neither Scripture nor apostolic precedent.

QUESTIONS OVER CHAPTER TEN

1. What one thing will determine our eternal destiny?
2. Discuss the origin of Seventh-Day Adventism (dates and people) and compare with biblical teaching.
3. List at least five tests a false prophet.
4. Discuss the futility of setting dates for the Lord's immediate return.
5. Seventh-day Adventists believe that Mrs. White was inspired and that she received visions. Discuss this claim in light of biblical teaching.
6. Does the Bible teach that God gave two laws at Sinai to Moses?
7. What two laws do Adventists say God gave at Sinai?
8. What was the day on which the early disciples met? Give scriptures.
9. When does the Bible say prophecies will end?
10. Define the word "perfect" in 1 Corinthians 13:10 and what it means in this context.

WHY I AM NOT A MEMBER OF THE QUAKER RELIGION

Chuck Carter

INTRODUCTION

I would like to express my appreciation to the elders for the invitation to be a part of the lectureship again this year. This my fourth year to be with them and each year has been better than the last one.

The topic assigned to me has been a challenging one. The Quaker religion is not as familiar to us as most of the denominational religions are, nor has there been that much information been written down concerning what they teach or how they live. What information I was able to obtain was found in the library of Oklahoma Baptist University. The local library had nothing at all on these people. I even emailed a group of Quakers in Scotland, who forwarded my request for information to London, England, but I received nothing from them. So, what I have is mostly taken from the writings of individuals who were members of the Quaker religion.

THEIR BEGINNING

This religion had its beginning in England in the 17th century. In 1648, An Englishman named George Fox (1625-1691) was given credit for the establishment of the Quaker religion. It is said that he did not find answers to his questions in any of the churches of his day. As a result of this dissatisfaction, he and those that would follow him became a part of the Reformation Movement.

They refused to recognize the Catholic and Episcopal churches and their hierarchical structure of Priests and Bishops. Fox believed and taught that no one had the right to place himself above any one else and that everyone was able to have a personal relationship with the living Jesus without having to depend on the intercessions of a Priest or Minister.. Out of his searching came the message which became popular in a large part of the country in which he lived

resulting in the formation of the Quakers. Since the beginning there have been several names by which they are referred. These are: Religious Society of Friends, Children of the light, Friends of the Truth, Seekers, Society of Friends, Shaking Quakers, Publishers of Truth, or Saints. From England, Quakerism has spread to other countries, chiefly Bolivia, Guatemala, Kenya, Peru, Cuba and the United States. They number approximately 300,000 to 350,000 worldwide according to latest figures I could find. They seem to be clannish because of their beliefs and life style. In the United States, you will find them mostly in Pennsylvania, Oregon, Idaho and North Carolina, where the Quaker influence is concentrated the most.

THEIR BELIEFS

As one attempts to find out what the Quakers believe and practice, he learns almost immediately that there is no particular or specific teaching for all. Today, it is said they can be differentiated into three distinct groups. The first and largest is called "Friends United Meeting." This organization is most conservative and considers itself the most orthodox continuation of their founder, George Fox, and his original vision. The second is "Friends General Meeting." This is a group which split off from the main body of Friends in the 1820's due to the teachings of Elias Hicks, a Quaker minister who objected to the increasing worldliness and formalism of the Quakers. Hicks placed a great deal of emphasis on the importance of the Inward Light and much less on doctrinal questions. The third is called the "Evangelical Friends Alliance," a group which was formed in 1965 in Friends meeting houses which had been influenced by Protestant evangelicals. Besides these three, there are other various Friends meetinghouses which are independent and not affiliated with any larger movement.

What amazes me is their view of the Bible. The early Friends believed that Christ, instead of the Bible, is the Word of God; for example, Robert Barclay wrote in this Apology that the scriptures "are only a declaration of the fountain, and

not the fountain itself, therefore they are not to be esteemed the principle ground of all Truth and knowledge, nor yet the adequate primary rule of faith and manners.” (www.reference.com/Quakerism) It is their belief that “the words of the Bible should not be taken as the final revelation of God.

The Books had been written by men who were acting under the power of the Holy Spirit and it was necessary to read the words in the power of the same spirit and to listen to what the Spirit then spoke in your heart.” (www.quaker.org/friends) But, since George Fox had told them that God did not dwell in temples made with hands, that each individual had a personal relationship with Christ (the Light) and God, and that God speaks to each individual who would ‘walk in the light’, they arrived at the conclusion that the Bible is subordinate to the spirit. In this way, there would be no conflict between the revelation which God was suppose to give each individual and their understanding of the Bible. George Fox also preached that all children of God, which all men are, had inherited powers from God. Each was given a measure of this power or light and in accordance with how we used it, more would be given to them. Jesus had possessed this power or light, without measure so that he became the Light and the Light within each individual is Jesus Christ., Thus, every child of God has that “Inner Voice” by which they are spoken to by God. If they waited silently God would speak to them in their hearts if He had anything to say to them.

The Quakers treat all functions of the church as a form of worship, including business, marriage, and memorial services, in addition to their regular meetings. They often referred to their worship meetings as “programmed” or “unprogrammed” meetings. The “unprogrammed” worship is the more traditional style of worship among most of the Friends in the United States. During this style of worship, Friends gather together in “expectant waiting” for divine leadings (revelation from God). Sometimes the meeting would be entirely silent, sometimes quite a few people speak.

A member will rise and share a message (they call it “give ministry”) with the gathered meeting (assembly) when they feel they are led by the Spirit. All members expect the group to discern the source of their inspiration — whether divine or self. They refer to these revelations as “Openings.” It is necessary to determine if the “leading” (revelation) comes from God, from one’s own ego, or from another power and it is the practice to test a leading or a “concerning” in a meeting with others.

When they meet for business Friends strive to obtain the “sense of the meeting,” or to determine what was intended by the “leading” or revelation received. If they believe that the “leading” was indeed from God, they also believe and recognize that the “light” is a force which creates unity among all who respond to it. They had a deep concern in reaching total unity in what they heard and a strong responsibility in recognizing its validity. “Unprogrammed” worship is deemed to start as soon as the first participant is seated, and the others enter the room in complete silence. They would remain silent unless someone received a revelation. The Meeting for worship comes to an end when one person (usually predetermined) shakes the hand of his or her neighbor. All the members of the assembly then shake hands with their neighbors, after which one member usually rises and extends greetings and makes announcements.

The “Programmed” worship was adopted in the United States in the 19th century in response to large numbers of converts to Quakerism during the national spiritual revivalism of the time. Worship at a Friends Church resembles a typical Protestant worship service in the United States. Usually, there are scripture readings, hymns, and a sermon. But, they also include a period of silence which allows for any “leading” of the Spirit that there might be. Friends in the United States are more diverse in their practices, though united by many common bonds. Along with the division of worship style comes several differences of theology, vocabulary and practice.

As to possessing a creed, George Fox dismissed theologians as “notionists,” and modern Quakers are generally less concerned with theology, and more concerned with acting in accord with the leading of the Spirit than many other faiths. Quakers have historically expressed a preference for understanding coming from God’s Spirit (the leading) over the knowledge derived from objective study of God’s Word. This lack of a single set of authoritative doctrines has resulted in the development of a broad range of doctrines and beliefs among them, ranging from that of a fundamentalist Christian to universalist, or even to nontheist. Most Quakers is said to believe a formal creed would be an obstacle – both to authentic listening and to the recognition of new insight. (www.reference.com/search/Quakerism)

The early Quakers did not believe in serving the Lord’s Supper, believing the outward rites and sacraments became creedal. They believed and taught that holiness can exist in all of the activities of one’s life – that all life is sacred. Instead of partaking the Lord’s Supper as a communion with our Lord, they felt they were communing with the Lord while gathered in their meetings of silence, expecting the revelation from God. They believed that having a meal with others can be a form of communion and therefore have no such place in their worship. Many today do not prohibit rites or ceremonies, but that they do counsel against allowing what they believe is a human invention to take the place of their direct experience and leading by God. George Fox asked his friend and Quaker Theologian Robert Barclay to write an apology of the Quaker Faith, which he did. The conservative or Wilburite Friends still hold this belief today.

These doctrines can be seen by going to the website “www.bible.ca/cr-quakers.htm.”

1. Of God: God is a Spirit (Jn 4:24). God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three in One, yet not three Gods but One. (Jn 5:7).
2. Of Christ: Christ is God (Jn 1:1). Christ Jesus was born from the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit

- (Matt. 1:18). Jesus Christ, God made flesh. (Jn 1:14). Jesus Christ died for our sins but rose again the third day according to the Scripture. (I Cor 15:3, 4). Christ is the only Mediator between man and God. (I Tim. 2:5)
3. Of the Holy Scriptures: The Holy Scriptures are inspired by God, therefore true and profitable. (2 Tim 3:15, 16, 17). But only Christ Jesus is the Word of God (Rev. 19:13-15) as the Scriptures clearly testify. Christians must study the Holy Scriptures (Jn 5:39). One must be led by the Holy Spirit in order to understand the Scriptures. If not, then there is the danger to fall into heresy (2 Pet. 3:16), the scriptures were written under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost (2 Pet. 1:20, 21)
 4. Of the Light of Christ within: Christ has enlightened every man on earth (Jn 1:9). This means that all people can, if they repent of their sins, turn to the Light Jesus Christ and be saved. (Jn 12:25) Those who deny the Light (Jesus Christ) do it because they love sin (Jn 3:20) and are already judged for denying Christ. True Christian must walk in the Light (I Jon 1:7). The Light can teach a man, which is Jesus Christ teaching through the anointing of the Holy Spirit. (I Jn 2:27)
 5. Of Salvation: We are saved through Faith, the grace of God. (Eph 2:8-10)
 6. Of Freedom from Sin: Christians are free from sin (Rom. 6:2, 7, 11, 13, 16, 23) they should aim for perfection in Christ. (Matt. 5:48)
 7. Of the Church: Christ is the Head of the Church (Col. 1:13 and 2:19). The Church is the body of Christ, the people of God.
 8. Of Worship; True worship is done in Spirit and in Truth. (Jn 4:23-24)
 9. Of Baptism and the Lord Supper: There is only one Baptism (Eph 4:5). This is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, not baptism in water. (Acts 1:4, 5). The Lord's Supper

is also Spiritual (not with the elements of bread and wine) (Jn 6:32–58 and Rev 3:20).

10. Of quaking and trembling: We must tremble at the Word of God (Isa 66L5. Jer 33:9)
11. Of pacifism: Christians should not fight with carnal weapons. (Matt. 5:39, Lk 6:27-29)
12. Of oaths: We should not swear at all. (Matt. 5:33-37)
13. Concerning End Times: Christ will return in body to judge the world. On that day, the dead will be resurrected and accordingly, some will go to Eternal Salvation and some to Eternal Damnation with Satan (Acts 24:15)

As you have probably realized by now that the various branches have widely divergent beliefs and practices with the central concept to most of them being the “inner Light,” meaning “that of God within” each of us. Accordingly, individual Quakers may develop individual religious beliefs arising from individual conscience and revelation coming from “God within.” The Quaker is obliged to live by such individual religious beliefs and inner revelations. Because of this, many Quakers feel their faith does not fit within traditional Christian categories of Catholic, Orthodox or Protestant, but is an expression of another way of experiencing God. Even though at one point in their history many of them considered themselves to be a part of a Christian movement, that’s not the case today. They now consider themselves universalist, agnostic, atheist, pagan, or nontheist, or do not accept any religious label. This phenomenon has become increasingly evident during the latter part of the 20th century and the opening years of the 21st century, and is still controversial among Friends. (www.reference.com/search/Quakerism)

From their beginning when George Fox couldn’t find his answers in the Catholic hierarchy and Protestant Reformation period with his desire to return to the Bible for his answers is a sad thing. It is equally as tragic that from the beginning of

Quakerism to the present day when those who are descendants of his religious philosophy have come to think of themselves as being a universalist, agnostic, atheist, pagan or nontheist or nothing at all. It isn't difficult to see why I am not or could not be member of the Quaker religion.

God tells each and every man, speaking of Christ at the transfiguration, "This is my beloved Son, hear ye Him." (Mark 9:7) Jesus said: "For the son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke 19:10). Again: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:44) And again, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." (John 14:6) Many passages could be given to show that Jesus is the only way to God and that we should hear Him. Jesus then tells us that "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (Jn 14:15) Again, "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." (John 14:23) Also, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him; the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." (John 12:48) To those twelve men Christ chose to be Apostles, Jesus gave the great commission to "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you....."(Matt. 28:19,20) In Acts 2:14-36, fifty days after the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave, ten days following his ascension back to the Father, Peter preached the first gospel sermon to those Jews who were guilty of murdering the Son of God. Being convicted of their sin they asked Peter "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" and Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and ye shall receive the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts 2:38 "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about

3000 souls.” Acts 2:41. “And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” Acts 2:47 This was the beginning of the Lord’s church which God spoke of through His Old Testament prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah and others and Christ promised to build in Matt. 16:18. It is in existence today and has the same message as it did when Paul and the other preachers of the first century preached it. We don’t wait on God to reveal something new from day to day. All we will ever receive from God has been revealed through Christ and those inspired men who wrote the New Testament. Paul said “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, and for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” 2 Tim. 3:16, 17. If God’s word is sufficient to make a man perfect or complete, thoroughly furnished....then there is no need for anything else. What one needs to do is heed the words of God’s Book, the Bible, and be obedient to those words which are written there, and I have Christ’s promise, which cannot be broken, that when He comes again, I will be able to return with him to that heavenly place he has prepared for those that obey Him. Heb 5:8, 9. As I read the words of my Lord and His inspired apostles, and obey them, this is why I am not a member of the Quaker religion.

QUESTIONS OVER CHAPTER ELEVEN

1. Describe the doctrine of the “inner Light” as taught by the Quaker religion!
2. What was the purpose of the worship when all men kept silent?
3. Name the founder of the Quaker church, and the reason for it coming into existence.
4. Where did the Quakers concentrate their efforts when they came from England to the United States?
5. Approximately how many members do the Quakers have today?
6. Describe how the early Quakers feel about the Bible compared to their revelations from God.
7. Which Baptism does the Quakers believe is the one baptism?
8. Explain why the Quakers do not believe in serving of the Lord’s Supper in their assemblies.
9. What are the Quakers expected to do when one of their members feels he has received a leading” or revelation from God?
10. Name as many other names the Quakers are called.

WHY I COULD NOT BE A MEMBER OF THE ASSEMBLY OF GOD CHURCH

Cliff Werhan

INTRODUCTION

“.....my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. ²For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. ³For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God” (Rom. 10: -3). Thus, the Apostle Paul expresses his love and concern for good, religious, zealous, but very mistaken family, friends and countrymen.

It is with the same prayer and similar attitude that I approach the subject of: **“Why I Could Not Be a Member of the Assembly of God Church.”** The thoughts that follow are written with good will toward all souls who seek to truly serve the God of the Bible. It is true that the AOG holds many Bible truths (such as inspiration of the Scriptures) correctly, but space will only allow me to address those issues that divide us.

While I do not question the sincerity of most of my AOG friends, I cannot say the same about some of their leaders. Sincerity is a necessity, but it never justifies resisting the Scripture. Sincere people can often be lead astray by people with ulterior motives.

The AOG traces it's beginning back to Arkansas in 1914. This is nineteen centuries too late to be the church of the New Testament, which was established in Jerusalem in 33 AD. We will try to emphasize some of the differences between the two.

Unless otherwise noted, quotes in this article are taken from the Assembly of God publication: ***Our 16 Doctrines, The Assemblies of God Statement of Fundamental Truths.*** For the sake of space, I will refer to it as **“16 Doctrines.”**

**I COULD NOT BE A MEMBER OF THE ASSEMBLY
OF GOD.....**

BECAUSE OF A MISTAKEN VIEW OF SALVATION

The most important question any believer in Christ can ask is "What must I do to be saved?" If we fail to properly answer and act on this matter, all that follows is of relatively little importance in the judgment! If one remains in a lost condition, the way he conducts his moral and religious life will not change his eternal destiny.

16 Doctrines , point #5 teaches that Salvation is "received as a person (1) repents before God for his sins.... and, (2) believes or has faith in the fact that the death and resurrectionof Jesus Christ removes and brings forgiveness for his sin." So, their answer as to what one is to do to receive the salvation that comes from the sacrifice of Christ is to **repent and believe**.

The New Testament teaches something quite different. The Lord (who has all the authority to require what He wills) gave the great commission that was to last until "the end of the age." He said: "He who believes and is baptized will be saved...." (Mark 16:16).

A few days later, following the Lord's instructions, the Apostles were asked by people who had just become **believers** "What shall we do?" The apostles answer was "**Repent**, and let every one of you be **baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ *for* the remission of sins..." The word "*for*" is from the Greek "*eis*" and means "unto, into or towards."

A few years later, a very zealous Jew known as Saul of Tarsus had the unique experience of seeing the risen Jesus. To have a full understanding of what occurred we must study all three accounts as related in Acts 9, 22 and 26. It is often ASSUMED that he was saved on the road to Damascus, but this is incorrect. The Lord appeared to him for this stated purpose: "*...to make thee a minister and a witness....*" (Acts 26:16). He did become a believer on the Damascus road. He even called Jesus "Lord" and inquired as to what he should do. Jesus instructed him to "*go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.*" For three days this penitent believer fasted and prayed, but still his sins were

NOT forgiven. The Lord sent a disciple named Ananias to tell Saul what he must do. He said *“arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”*

The difference between the Bible and AOG doctrine is obvious. If we fail to get this right, all is lost. One can be a believer, penitent, fasting, praying person and still be lost.

BECAUSE OF CONFUSION REGARDING “CHURCH ORDINANCES”

16 Doctrines #6 states that Baptism, along with “holy communion” are “ordinances of the Church.” And, it further states that baptism “symbolically declares to everyone that the old sinful life... of the baptized believer died with Christ....”

Is baptism really **only** a symbol of what has already happened, or does it have another purpose?

A careful study of these subjects reveals that the Lord’s Supper (communion) was observed every Lord’s Day by the New Testament Church, in memory of body and blood of Jesus. However, baptism was NEVER required of Christians! It was required of those who sought to be saved. Every passage in the New Testament that has baptism and salvation in the same text, puts baptism before salvation. (Mt.16:16, Acts 2:38, Acts 22:16 etc.)

Let’s put it another way, baptism has a Biblical PURPOSE. If that purpose is wrong, then one has not obeyed the Lord. The word translated “baptize” simply means to “dip, plunge or immerse.” A person can be immersed for many reasons that have nothing to do with salvation. To illustrate: this writer enjoys “noodling” for fish (or fishing with bare hands only). I might hold a companion down (immerse him) to enable him to catch a big fish. Would anyone consider that baptism? Or, one might bathe and rinse, thus having been immersed under water to rid himself of dirt .

The apostle Peter was careful to explain the purpose of baptism and that it was NOT for the purpose cleansing the body. *“.... baptism doth also now save us (not the putting*

away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God...(1 Peter 3:21). In other words, the purpose was not a bath, but simply doing what the Lord commanded, for the purpose He designed, and having a good conscience, knowing that you have obeyed.

The purpose of baptism, was never meant as only a symbol or as some say "an outward sign of an inward grace." Let's ask the question "What was the purpose of baptism in the New Testament?"

Jesus said it was to "be saved" (Mt. 16:16). The apostle Peter said it was to have "remission of sins." Ananias, God's messenger to Saul of Tarsus, said it was to "wash away thy sins" (Acts 22:16). The Apostle Paul said that we are "baptized into his (Christ) death" and that we arise to "walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:4-6). He also said that in baptism we are "baptized into Christ" and thus have "have put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27).

THE MISINFORMATION REGARDING THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

16 Doctrines, #7 says "all believers are entitled to receive the **Baptism** of the Holy Spirit." Note: the claim is the "Baptism" of the Holy Spirit (not the Laying on of Hands Measure, nor a common measure) but the baptismal measure.

In Matt. 3:11-12 John foretold that the Lord would baptize some with the Holy Spirit and others with fire. He did NOT say who, how many or when. At the end of His personal ministry, the risen Lord met with **eleven** apostles. He told **these men** to wait in Jerusalem until **they** received the promised baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:1-11). In Jerusalem, the apostles met with other disciples (their number was about 120) and Matthias was selected to replace Judas, who had committed suicide. The final verse of chapter one said that "*he was numbered with the eleven apostles.*" One has but to follow the pronouns into chapter two, referring to the last noun "apostles," to see that it was the apostles, not the whole number of disciples who received the heavenly gift. The gifts and abilities the apostles (all

Jews) exhibited led to the conversion of 3,000 Jews on that day.

The apostles had failed to understand that the great commission included the Gentiles as well as the Jews. Thus, a few years later, the Holy Spirit was poured out on the **Gentile** house of Cornelius, thus fulfilling Joel's prophecy of "all flesh" (i.e., both Jew and Gentile). This event showed Peter and other Jews that the Gentiles were also accepted. The event was so UNUSUAL that Peter likened it to what came on the apostles "at the beginning" (Acts 11:15). He did **NOT** liken it to what was happening to all disciples.

BECAUSE OF THE MISINFORMATION REGARDING THE SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Due to limited space, we will here consider mainly the gift of "tongues." *The 16 Doctrines*, #8 says "the baptism of the Holy Spirit (which according to #7 ALL believers were entitled) is accompanied by the initial physical sign of speaking in other tongues...." In their explanation of the doctrine, we read "the Baptism (of the Holy Spirit) is always accompanied initially with the audible expression of tongues." Yet, the Apostle Paul points out in 1 Cor. 12: 28-31, that all the Christians did NOT speak in tongues (GR: glossa).

The confusion between the Bible and the AOG becomes so strong that it needs more space than is allotted here for this subject. Let us follow these thoughts:

1. There are only two accounts in the New Testament of people receiving the "outpouring from the Holy Spirit". The first on the Apostles (**all of them were Jews**) on Pentecost (Acts 2). The second at house of Cornelius (**all Gentiles**) as recorded in Acts 10 & 11. Both groups were enabled to speak in many languages or tongues, and this served as proof to those who witnessed the events.

2. Others would later be able to speak in "tongues," because of the **laying on of the Apostles' hands**. For example Paul administered water baptism to 12 men In Ephesus. After their baptism in water, "*Paul had laid his*

hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied...."(Acts 19:6). Unlike the other cases (See 1, above) a human agency was involved.

There were nine spiritual gifts that were imparted to various Christians in this manner (1 Cor. 12:7-11). Those who received these gifts from the Apostles, were not able to pass them along. For example, Phillip (the evangelist) had received the Laying on of the Apostle's hands (Acts 6:6). Later he went to Samaria where he preached and did miracles himself, but could not pass on that ability. The Apostles Peter and John went to them and "*.... prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost:(For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. And when Simon saw that through laying on of the apostles ' hands the Holy Ghost was given....*" (Acts 8;1-18).

We do not have sufficient space here to discuss fully the fact that those nine spiritual gifts (including tongues) were to cease to exist at a time when faith, hope and love would continue (1 Cor. 8-13). It is claimed by some AOG members that "*that which is perfect*" refers to Christ. However, when Christ returns faith will be turned to knowledge and hope will be fulfilled. That which is perfect or complete refers to the "*perfect law of liberty*" (Jas. 1:25) or the finished revelation that we call the New Testament.

BECAUSE OF THEIR USE OF WOMEN PREACHERS AND "PASTORS"

One of the common AOG practices that I have personally observed is the use of women preachers. This practice is specifically forbidden in 1 Cor. 14:34 "*Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak ...*" How could the Apostle have been more plain on the matter?

One woman dismissed the Scripture by saying "Paul was just an old male Chauvinist." Another said the Lord gave her a special revelation telling her to preach (contrary to what the

Holy Spirit had Paul to teach). She ought to check this with Gal. 1:6-9. Still others say Paul's prohibition was only a matter of custom. Paul said otherwise. Only three verses later, he said *"If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are **the commandments of the Lord**"* (1 Cor. 14:37).

Was Paul telling the truth? If we agree that it was the commandment of the Lord, it should be obeyed. If, on the other hand, one questions Paul's reliability here, think of the consequences. If Paul is not reliable here, he cannot not be believed elsewhere! That casts doubt on at least thirteen books of the New Testament. That is nearly half! In addition, both the Apostle Peter and the historian Luke treat Paul and his teachings as those of authority. Are their writings to be questioned also?

In a related matter, it is not unusual to read of a woman who is a "pastor" (some times it is with her husband) of an AOG church. In the New Testament, the word translated "pastors" [poimen] is usually translated "Shepherd." The work of shepherding the flock (church) was given to men known as "elders". In Acts 20: 28 it was "**elders**" (sometimes called "bishops") that were instructed to *"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."*

Those elders or pastors were to meet certain requirements before they were made overseers of the flock, by the Holy Spirit. Those requirements are recorded in Titus 1:5-9 and 1 Tim. 3:1-7. Two of those requirements cannot be met by women. No woman can be the "father" of faithful children. No woman can be the "husband of one wife."

As to **why** the Lord put restrictions on women in the matters of authority and preaching, His reasons are his own. *"Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the*

man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (1 Tim. 2:11-15). Thus the Lord's reasons are (1) the order of creation, and (2) the order of the fall in the garden. He does not ask us if we agree.

BECAUSE OF THEIR FAILURE TO RECOGNIZE THE PRESENT KINGDOM

16 doctrines, #14 presents a twisting of the Scripture (2 Peter 3:16) to concoct a 1000 year **literal** reign of Christ, on the **literal** earth, in **literal** Jerusalem. This event is to follow a time when saints have experienced a "rapture." The word "rapture" is not even in the Scripture! Some insist that it is the "catching away" of 1 Thess. 4: 13-18. But, this passage says that Christians will meet the Lord IN THE AIR "*and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*" This theory also entails two separate resurrections. Jesus said that there was only **one** for righteous and unrighteous alike (Jn. 5:28-29).

Jesus promised that the Kingdom would come in the lifetime of His Apostles. (Mk. 9:1). And, He claimed that He had received all authority nearly 2000 years ago (Mt. 28:18) to rule over His Kingdom (the Church). Mk. 16:19 declares Him seated at the right hand of the Father and (Acts 2:33) there exalted until he triumphs over all enemies (34). He rules until the last enemy, death, is destroyed (1 Cor. 15:26). Obedient people had been translated into His Kingdom in the first century (Col. 1:13). Jesus is King now! Christ had plainly declared that his Kingdom was not a physical kingdom. He said, "*My kingdom is not of this world*" (John 8:36).

OTHER MATTERS THAT MATTER

(Space will not allow us to discuss other important matter, like the following:)

1. Worship that Appeals to Feelings Instead of Conforming to God's Pattern
2. Unscriptural view that there are some Christians who are "born again" and other Christians who are not "born again."

QUESTIONS OVER CHAPTER TWELVE

1. Why is “What must I do to be saved?” more important than other issues?
2. How do we know that Saul of Tarsus was NOT saved on the road to Damascus ?
3. How do we know that water baptism was intended for people who were not yet saved?
4. How can we show that the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” came only on the apostles on Pentecost and not on the 120 disciples?
5. The “baptism of the Holy Spirit” poured out on the Gentiles at the house of Cornelius was so unusual that Peter could only think of one other event to compare it to.
6. How do we know that Christians who had received miraculous abilities by the laying on of the apostles hands, were not able to pass them on to others?
7. How can we know that Paul was not just expressing a personal opinion or a cultural taboo, when in 1 Cor. 14:34, he instructed women not to speak in the assembly?
8. What two qualifications for Pastor (or elder) cannot be met by any woman?
9. How many times is the word “Rapture” found in the New Testament?
10. When the Apostle Paul wrote to Colosse in the first century, he said that God had “*delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into* _____

WHY I COULD NOT BE A MEMBER OF THE WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD

Jess Whitlock

INTRODUCTION

The reasons that I could not belong to the Worldwide church of God are legion. Time and space will only allow a cursory examination of only a few. Formerly this group was known as the Radio church of God (guess how many times the word “radio” is found in the pages of Holy Writ)? For the purpose of our brief study we shall simply refer to it for what it really is, i.e., ARMSTRONGISM! The “Radio church of God” was launched by Herbert W. Armstrong in 1934, or 1,900 years too late to have any connection with the church that Jesus Christ built (Matt. 16:16-ff., cf. Acts 2). Many may have read their literature, i.e., The Plain Truth magazine. Many are familiar with their radio & TV programs, i.e., “The World Tomorrow.” Some are familiar with Ambassador College, located in Pasadena, CA where the Armstrong cult permeates impressionable minds!

IT IS A FAMILY CULT

Herbert W. Armstrong was in the advertising business. In the 1920's and 1930's he was associated with Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh-Day Adventists, and Mormons. Bro. Bill Cline has written, “In 1866 B. F. Snork and W. H. Brinkerhoff, ministers of the Iowa Conference of Seventh-Day Adventist, apostatized. In 1899 they moved to Missouri and called themselves ‘the church of God (Adventist).’ This is the church Mr. Armstrong joined.” Mr. Armstrong was ordained as a “minister” in 1931. Later there was an apostasy in this group and a Mr. Dugger formed the “church of God (Seventh-Day).” Mr. Armstrong then joined up with this man-made denomination. Through his exposure to Pentecostalism and Premillennialism, he was well on his way to forming his own man-made religion, i.e., the Worldwide church of God, formed and fashioned in 1934.

In Ezekiel 16:44 we read, “Behold, every one that useth

proverbs shall use this proverb against thee, saying, As is the mother, so is her daughter." Well, we can easily adapt this proverb to Herbert W. and Garner Ted as, "As is the father, so is the son."

In 1973 this cult brought in \$53,000,000. Father and son Armstrong maintained three luxurious mansions apiece! Ambassador College bought up 200 prime properties in Pasadena. They leased three super jets + fuel averaging \$1.5 million annually. You may recall that in 1971 Garner Ted had dropped out of the picture; no speaking on radio or TV, no articles written, and no appearances. Herbert W. reported that his son "was in the bonds of Satan." In April of 1972 it was reported that Garner Ted had brought forth some "heartfelt repentance" and was restored to his speaking engagements and written articles. Garner Ted had written, "I have no excuse. I sinned mightily against God, against His church and His Apostle (Herbert W. Armstrong); against the wife God gave me in my youth; against all my closest friends." Most would agree this was a penitent statement in regards to his unfaithfulness. In 1973 Herbert declared Garner Ted "heir apparent" to the Armstrong throne. However, in 1978 there was a "power struggle in Pasadena" between father and son. Once more the accusation against Garner Ted was that he was under the control of Satan, living in immorality, and trying to gain control of "the wealthy 80,000 member church based in Pasadena," as the papers put it. Garner Ted then set up the new "International church of God" with headquarters in Tyler, TX where this denomination continues today. Herbert W. Armstrong died at the age of 93. His successor was the head of church administration, Joseph K. Thach, 59 years of age. There can be no salvation in any institution founded by the Armstrong cult or any other men. Cf. Eph. 1:22-23; 5:23).

ARMSTRONGISM IS WRONG ON THE SUBJECT OF SALVATION

Armstrong stated in the Plain Truth (January, 1959, pp. 19-20), "...the vast majority of all humanity will receive its first opportunity for Salvation -- in the future." The

Armstrong's assert that salvation is attained only after this life is over and one is born again in the resurrection body. Mr. Armstrong does not believe any Old Testament worthy could be saved. We can understand why this cult has difficulty with Hebrews chapter 11. The cult members teach that only Jesus Christ attained salvation, for He is the only one who was truly RESURRECTED or BORN AGAIN! Let us hasten to point out that Jesus Christ was without sin (Heb. 4:15).

Armstrong doctrine teaches a form of election that makes the Calvinist look like a kindergartner. Mr. Armstrong taught that "God doesn't want to save my people of this age, and therefore, He is electing a very limited few." (Tomorrow's World, July, 1971, p. 15). Contrary to Armstrong, God desires all men to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9).

Notice the contradiction in Armstrong's teaching of salvation in his book, The United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy, "The Sabbath and the Law still binding ... the Ten Commandments the way to salvation." (p. 161). Shades of sheer contradiction! Which shall it be? He asserts that one cannot obtain salvation in this life. One must die in order to be truly resurrected or born again. But, in this life you must keep the commandments of Moses in order to be saved. However, no Old Testament people, including Moses, could or can be saved!!! What law did Moses and those following keep? Since they kept the Old Testament Law of Moses and were NOT SAVED (as per the doctrine of Armstrong) then what incentive does one now have to observe that law?

ARMSTRONGISM IS WRONG ABOUT HEAVEN AND HELL

Again, one cannot help but notice the self-contradictions! Herbert W. Armstrong affirmed his ministry was from HEAVEN and that the Gospel was not preached "for 18 ½ centuries" (Plain Truth About Armstrongism, p. 15). Garner Ted refers to "...deluded men preaching the ancient, PAGAN doctrine of 'going to heaven'..." and his father had written, "There is absolutely NO SCRIPTURE in all the Holy Bible that promises HEAVEN as the reward the saved shall

inherit.” (Tomorrow’s World, Nov. 1971, p. 47); (but, emphasis mine – JW). Hence, the Armstrong cult reverted to the old Adventist doctrine that the saved will inherit this literal earth!

Heaven is the home of the soul for those found faithful (John 14:1-6; Luke 10:20; 1 Cor. 15:50-ff; 2 Cor. 5:1; Heb. 11:16; 12:22; Rev. 2:7; etc.). Heaven is a place of glory and a place to be filled with righteous, Godly inhabitants (Matt. 10:22; John 5:28-29; 8:51; Phil. 1:21-23; 2 The. 1:7-9; 2 Tim. 4:7-8; Heb. 4:9-11; 5:8-9; 12:22-23; etc.). Also, heaven will last forever (Matt. 25:46; Rom. 6:23; 1 The. 4:17; etc.). So much for the baseless assumption that the Bible nowhere mentions HEAVEN! Mr. Armstrong Sr. and Jr. are proof positive of the old adage that if you tell a LIE often enough and boldly enough that you will soon have those who will believe it (2 The. 2:11-ff).

Garner Ted knows the exact location of hell and tells us he has been there and looked into it! He states it is a suburb of Jerusalem. It is his contention that during the millennial reign of Christ this valley will be kept burning perpetually and that the wicked will be “thrown into this lake of fire.” This cult whitewashes the Biblical doctrine of hell and says that the wicked will be annihilated, i.e., they simply cease to exist.

There is neither time nor space to deal with the multi-faceted false teachings of Armstrongism as pertains to the soul of man. However, we must point out that this old doctrine of soul-sleeping is false to the core! Herbert W. and Garner Ted Armstrong taught and teach that man is wholly mortal and that the dead are simply unconscious for all eternity. Christ was conscious after death; the rich man and Lazarus were conscious as well (Luke 16:19-31). At the transfiguration of Jesus we read, “And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him” (Matt. 17:3). At that time, both of these Old Testament worthies had been dead and gone from the earth for hundreds of years, but they are alive and conscious and talking with the Lord! Followers of Armstrong’s arrogant assertions would do well to study God’s Word; i.e., Matt. 22:31-32; Luke 20:34-38; 1 The.

was preached by British-Israelites before him, then obviously he had no revelation, but simply read their books and then re-vamped their teaching for his own use (compare this to the writing of Max R. King, and his doctrine of realized eschatology; he also re-vamped his error from the errors of denominational preachers who wrote in the 1700's and 1800's). Read J. H. Allen's book, Judah's Sceptre and Joseph's Birthright (1902) and then read Armstrong's book, The United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy, and with the exception of the Sabbath doctrine and false predictions, you will be reading the same material. (The Plain Truth about Armstronsim, Roger R. Chambers, pp. 19-22). Armstrong begins his false assertions by claiming the Danube River is named after the tribe of Dan!

William S. Cline has written, "The term Saxon, according to Mr. Armstrong is derived from the words 'Isaac's son'. If we simply drop the 'i' from the English Isaac and not use the vowels of the Hebrew spelling we have 'Saac's son' which, in a shortened form, is 'Saxons.' If that is not enough, please note how Armstrong gets the English word 'British.' We must take the Hebrew word for covenant, *berith*, and the Hebrew word for man, *ish*. Now drop the vowel 'e' BUT retain the vowel 'i' and drop the 'h' since Hebrew did not pronounce them and we have BRIT. Now with regard to ISH we keep al of that including the never pronounced H and we have BRITISH – proof positive that the 'lost 10 tribes' migrated to the British Isles.."

You may have heard the story about the grandmother who was reading a fairy tale to her granddaughter. The little girl quickly asked, "Grandma, do all fairy stories begin, 'once upon a time'?" The grandmother responded, "No, my dear, many times they begin, 'If elected I promise...!'" And, sometimes they begin, "The Danube River is named after the tribe of Dan..." or "Let me tell you about the lost ten tribes of Israel..."

The old British-Israel theory (from which the Armstrong's "borrowed") has the deathbed promise of Jacob favoring the younger son, Ephraim. Hence, Manasseh was to become the

lesser nation. We are told the royal throne of England is the actual throne of David and that when Christ comes again He will sit upon that throne for the so-called 1,000 year reign of Christ on earth. However, the older Armstrong quickly saw the wane of English power as compared with the United States (Manasseh), so he had to reverse the interpretation to give the favored blessing to America! However, with our nation's stance today, Garner Ted may soon have to change the prophecy one more time!

It must be nice to be able to simply change the meaning of prophecy on a whim! There have been dozens of "lost tribe" hunters. No two of them are in agreement. For example, the Mormons teach that the lost tribes are the Lamanites, ancestors of American Indians! Again, the Jews of Germany are the descendants of beautiful Jewish women of Austria. The name "Jew" is found 174 times in the New Testament, while the name "Israel" is found 75 times. Christ identified the house of Israel with the Jews in Palestine during His day (Matt. 10:5-6; cf. Matt. 15:24-26). (Plain Truth about Armstrongism, pp. 44-45).

Mr. Armstrong contends that the "land promise" made to Abraham has NOT been fulfilled and will come to pass later. The Bible affirms that the promise of Genesis 15:18 has been fulfilled: "*And the Lord gave unto Israel all the land which He sware to give unto their fathers: and they possessed it, and dwelt therein...*" (Josh. 21:43-45). Their continued possession of the land was conditional upon their being faithful to God, study Joshua chapters 23-24. Solomon reigned over all the kings from the "river" (Euphrates) unto the "border of Egypt" (2 Chron. 9:26), which is exactly the borders of the "land promise" as given by God! The land promise has been fulfilled as promised by God...

ARMSTRONGISM IS WRONG IN PERSONAL PROPHECY

It is important that all know that Armstrong Sr. and Jr. are both false prophets. "When a prophet speaketh in the name of Jehovah, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the

thing which Jehovah hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him" (Deut. 18:22). The Armstrong doctrine asserted that 90% of all Bible prophecies began to be fulfilled in 1934, the year that the Plain Truth marked the beginning of Mr. Armstrong's ministry through printed media!

Mr. Armstrong said, "I said at the beginning, emphatically I am NOT a prophet" (Tomorrow's World, Feb. 1972, p. 32). Yet, he wrote, "Mysteries of God, never before known or understood by man, are now revealed to God's true servants" (The Book of Revelation Unveiled at Last!, p. 3).

Armstrong in 1953: "It will take a few years for all of this to develop to a point where this Nazi-Facist rebirth of the ROMAN EMPIRE will be ready to STRIKE with the most tremendous power every conceived by man... could be ready to strike in five years! ONE THIRD of our people will die from starvation... this is PROPHESED AND CERTAIN... FIFTY MILLION PEOPLE (Americans - JW), will be killed by this... HYDROGEN bomb attack! ...the remaining third will be UPROOTED from their homes, ...SLAVES to EUROPE... this will continue 3 ½ years." (Good News, May 1953, p. 7).

Armstrong in 1956: "...Assistant Weather Chief I. R. Tannahill warns us to fear the 'big drought of 1975'. But this drought will be even more devastating than he foresees and it will strike sooner than 1975, probably between 1965 and 1972!" (1975 In Prophecy, p. 10). "This fanatical, unheard-of, Satan-inspired fiendish Tribulation and martyrdom will continue 3 ½ years..." (Ibid, p. 22).

However, in 1972 his prophecies were closing in on this false prophet. So he wrote, "Let me say here in regard to this booklet, the title date, '1975' had NOTHING to do with any prophecy, or fulfillment of any prophesied events whatsoever (Tomorrow's World, Feb. 1972, p. 30). Talk about damnable and devilish double-talk!

Armstrong in 1959: Just 2 nineteen year cycles before the second coming of Christ. That would be 38 years. Or, the

second coming of Christ was to occur in 1972!

Armstrong in 1963: "These terrifying world-shaking events will take place in about 15 years – in your lifetime, this very last generation is destined to live in 2 worlds" (Plain Truth, June, 1963, p. 47).

Armstrong in 1967: "Events of the next five years (do the math – JW) may prove this to be the most significant book of this century." (United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy, 1967, preface page). "The events prophesied to strike the American and British peoples in the next four to seven years are SURE! ... These colossal world events, shrinking the first two world wars into insignificance, WILL COME, on schedule, but not until the WARNING has been made AVAILABLE for those whose eyes are willing to see." (Ibid, pp. xi, xii). "The coming Great Tribulation probably will last about 2 ½ years – the Day of the Lord about 1 year – then comes the RESURRECTION and second coming of Christ!" (Ibid, p. 210).

Like Paul, "what shall I more say? For the time would fail me to tell..." (Heb. 11:32), of all the false prophecies made by Herbert W. and Garner Ted. Both are presumptuous prophets. 1972 or 1973 are come and gone. Earth is still standing and the second coming is still future at the time of this published work. Now that Armstrong Sr. is dead, he knows that he was wrong concerning numerous false doctrines!! Prior to his death he knew that he was a false prophet! Compare the introduction pages of 1967 and the 1975 edition of United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy. In 1967: "A staggering turn in world events is due to erupt in the next FOUR to SEVEN years..." In 1975: "A staggering turn in world events is due to erupt in the next SEVERAL years..."

CONCLUSION

Mr. Armstrong halted all publication of his booklet, 1975 In Prophecy, and directed all preachers and members of the Worldwide church of God to cease reading it and to destroy any copies they might find. It is somewhat ironic that Mrs.

Herbert W. Armstrong supposedly received revelations from an angel of the true way of God (Plain Truth about Armstrongism, p. 9). We cannot help but to recall Joseph Smith, founder of Mormonism, and his so-called angel, Moroni. Does not the apostle Paul deal with such in Galatians 1: 6-9? Armstrong's erroneous doctrines are myriad: (1) There is not one God, but two, (2) the Holy Spirit is not deity, (3) man can become "God", (4) the resurrected body of Christ is not the body nailed to the cross, (5) the blood of Christ cannot save, (6) man does not have an immortal soul (spirit), (7) Anglo-Saxons are lost 10 tribes of Israel, (8) the Law of Moses is to be observed today, (9) Armstrong demands 3 tithes for all, (10) selective morality is taught; drugs, smoking, lust, etc. are forbidden, while dancing and drinking are promoted and encouraged, (11) the world belongs to Satan, (12) medicines and doctors are forbidden, (13) your mate must become a member of this denomination, if not, then you must separate from him/her, (14) you cannot answer a religious question, unless the person desires to join Armstrong's cult, (15) all prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem is primarily about the future. The Roman Empire (communism – JW) will come to power in 1973 (!) and then will follow the great tribulation – Armstrongites must be prepared to follow Mr. Armstrong to Petra in Transjordan where God's church (the church that Armstrong built), will be protected until the return of Christ in 1975! (Unfortunately, Mr. Armstrong died in 1986 ~ as a false and presumptuous prophet)! Let us all hear and heed the warning of 1 John 4: 1 and 2 Peter 2:1 and Jeremiah 23:32.

QUESTIONS OVER CHAPTER THIRTEEN

1. By what name was the Worldwide church of God originally known?
2. Do the Armstrongs teach salvation by baptism into Christ Jesus?
3. Does this cult have a Biblical understanding of heaven and/or hell?
4. According to Armstrongism how many members are in the Godhead?
5. What is the supposed vital KEY to unlock the door to all prophecy?
6. In your estimation, how has this key worked for the Armstrong cult?
7. Was the Danube River named after the tribe of Dan?
8. Really, where is the throne of David located and Who is seated upon it now?
9. Is Mr. Armstrong a false prophet according to Deut. 18:20-ff.?
10. Have these questions adequately covered the errors of the Armstrongites?

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