

The Brethren Letter

By Merie Weiss

December 1974

That which we are writing on these pages will act as an introduction to the "Brethren" letter attached here to, and which was written in 1967. Originally, we sent the "Brethren" letter throughout the brotherhood to warn against the dangerous trend amongst the conservatives of an impending apostasy in their ranks. After the terrible holocaust which came as a result of the apostasy of what is now known as the liberals or institutionalists, we thought by increasing evidences made available from magazine articles, teaching and bulletins, that the conservatives should "look to yourselves" because they were in danger also of apostasy. We also sought to expose some of the very obvious signs of unsound and unscriptural teaching which would inevitably lead into a complete departure from the truth unless there was a return to the "old paths".

But there is now an even more alarming and sinister manifestation of the corroding effects of the soft waterdowned and unsound teaching and preaching of the last twenty years in the bold and arrogant actions of brethren Wilson, Banta, Fudge, Wm. E. Wallace and others who participated in a meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society's convention associating and fellowshiping with well-known denominational leaders of the world.

They advertised this meeting widely and some of their views relative to it, etc., in the Gospel Guardian of Jan. 31, 1974 as well as in other issues. This Society and those who are members of it, of course, spread their unbelief of God's word far and wide; and effect untold thousands by their books and teachings into believing their pernicious and devilish diatribes. And those of the Gospel Guardian are advertising Mr. F. F. Bruce's book or books and telling the church "may you always read with discernment and profit." Mr. Bruce, by his own admission in the Gospel Guardian, does not believe that anyone has to be baptized to be saved. He also does not believe that taking the Lord's Supper is necessary for salvation. And then we are asked by brethren who evidently are suffering under a "strong delusion" that Christians can "profit" in reading books written by those who are enemies of God.

When the church is asked and encouraged by brethren to read books written by those of the religious world who are unbelievers of the gospel of Christ, we are no longer at the crossroads, (where they might be a hope of a change) but we have taken the road that leads into apostasy. And we think that this is a manifestation evident for all to see that the warnings which we write about in the "Brethren" letter are not only too true but have been proven to be so. And in turn what we are writing now should help to awaken everyone who reads these words to the realization of the sad and unwholesome condition of the church in this generation.

Not many see or comprehend the desperate situation, many don't want to see it and others reject what we are writing for their own personal reasons. Perhaps even because they are utterly blind to it. For them there is no help. There are many other signs of impending danger and defection. Our opinion is that the identifying marks of the true church of Christ will soon be obliterated. Except of course but for the very few of us who are working to restore New Testament Christianity in this generation; and that is what we are writing about.

However, we cannot lay the blame for the sad and shameful condition of the church solely to brethren like Wilson, Banta, Wallace, Tant, Wm. E. Wallace and Fudge, and many others of like nature and belief, because the seeds of apostasy amongst the conservatives has been discernible for many years by

those who have stayed faithful to the word of God. The slow warping and corroding of the true gospel of Christ culminated in the unscriptural and unholy meeting of the thirteen conservatives with the thirteen apostatized brethren from the institutional group several years ago. It was attended by men who had the reputation of being the most faithful and reliable amongst the conservatives, and included one of the leading preachers at that time brother Cogdill.

When Christians are unable to separate truth from error then we can all know that error will prevail. God's word plainly teaches that when those in the church forsake the truth and cause division among the brethren that they are "TO BE AVOIDED", Romans 16:17, 18. Therefore, when the church was made aware that men of renown and men considered faithful to the truth could turn away from the plain commandments of God and associate and fellowship apostate brethren (for whatever excuse they might give to uphold their unscriptural actions), it should have been a warning to the brotherhood. But while a few dissented there seemed no great concern over the matter, at least not enough to curb the progressive and relentless deviation from the truth so manifest in this arrogant disregard of the plain commandments of God's word, Romans 16:17, 18 and II John 7-11.

So from this obvious defection from the gospel which was known by all the brotherhood the church continued on its undeviating course towards complete apostasy. And now we no longer see the church of Christ as the upholder of truth but a church which has turned almost completely away from the pure gospel of Christ into a way not known by God. Because of the lack of sound teaching the members of the church are ignorant and they lack spiritual perception, zeal and are no longer converted to the truth, but to a perverted gospel which has become a substitution for the truth. This has not happened

overnight, neither has it been concealed but quite the contrary, the seeds of apostasy have been evident for a very long time. Slowly and inexorably the truth has been perverted and twisted and made to fit the opinions of men rather than the true word of God and has become an accepted way of life amongst the conservatives.

Enclosed, we find a list of 69 questions printed in the Gospel Guardian which could be greatly augmented by many other questions which agitate and trouble the church at times, but about which there is nothing done. We only insert them here to prove the facts which we have written on these pages that there is no unity or knowledge upon the scriptures amongst the conservatives. And there seems to be little concern over this, but it seems to be accepted by most everyone as a matter of little importance. We here at Spring Valley and other places where the truth is taught find that our erring brethren fight that which we teach, and with more bitterness and even enmity, than do the denominationalists. After all, we haven't hidden our light under a bushel, but we have spread the truth everywhere, and we expect to continue to spread the pure gospel of Christ into every state in the United States in the future that TRUTH might not die in this generation.

Now that it is evident that the church is in the process of losing its identity, it might be well for those who might doubt what we are saying to turn to the second and third chapters of the Revelation letter. We note that approximately sixty years after the death of Christ on the cross, the church was in the throes of an apostasy. There were a few who still walked in "robes of white", but the church as a whole was filled with false teaching and perverted beliefs and practices eventually arose the "beast", the Catholic "church", and this in turn resulted in the church of Christ being hidden in the wilderness for hundreds of years. Revelation 11:13

However, in the beginning of the 19th century, the church emerged from its obscurity, and the truth was again brought to light and the gospel of Christ began again to be preached by men like Alexander Campbell, Barton Stone, Walter Scott and many others devoted to the promulgation of the word of God. But in the latter part of that century, division again reared its ugly head which resulted in a terrible apostasy about 1906 which culminated in a new denomination which called itself the "Christian church". By the 1930's, signs began to appear of another division. Within the next twenty to thirty years, again there was a devastating apostasy, which while perhaps not ended, left the church seemingly divided into two groups designated by the names of "liberal" and "conservative". The "conservatives" are those who were not led away into apostasy by the institutional societies or "liberals".

However, because the conservatives have not been led into institutionalism does not mean that they are not in danger of apostasy themselves. Because some of the conservative brethren have wandered further away from the truth by associating and fellowshiping with the denominational world, does not mean that those who disagree with them in this manifest evidence of apostasy, are not themselves in the process of departing from the truth. The history of the church from New Testament times until now is a warning to all the brotherhood

that apostasy and deviation from the truth of the gospel is an ever present danger. It is apparent that the church is blind in that they seemingly are unaware of the fact that there are signs of impending apostasy. And that is the reason for the "Brethren" letter and the lesson on the Holy Spirit.

There are many signs that foretell of the dangerous road that is being traveled by most of the church. Foremost among them is the lack of accord amongst the conservatives. The many opinions and deviations from the truth so blatantly exposed through the pages of the Gospel Guardian by many writers (most of them preachers), were manifest evidences of the poor condition spiritually of the church. This combined with the rotating of the preachers from one established church to another on salaries; the lack of zeal of the members and their apparent lack of knowledge, as well as the almost total absence of evangelism by the preachers are only some of the very apparent indications of the danger of apostasy inherent in such departures from the truth.

The political and economic condition of this world looks bleak and formidable for the future. Famine, hunger, and lack of work stalk the whole world. But it is in times such as these that the world will be ready to listen to the words of truth and perhaps hunger and thirst for words of hope and salvation. But the church as a whole seems to be utterly unaware of the irresponsibility to take the gospel to those who have never heard it; nor do they seem to recognize that the times are propitious for a great revival of Christianity; a time to stimulate and stir the poor, the fearful and those without hope, into a spiritual awareness such as that which was a part of those who lived in New Testament times.

The world has sunk into such a state of depravity, degradation, and unbelief of the word of God that only a revival of the great faith and overwhelming zeal as well as the love for the souls of the lost of this world, which was a part of the early days of Christianity, will be able to bring the world back from the brink of hell where it is tottering today.

Men and women today converted to the gospel of Christ, must be aroused and stimulated into the great activity of the early Christian era when filled with love, joy, and zeal they went everywhere taking the glad tidings to the lost. But where is that spirit today, the great zeal, the great faith, the great love of mankind which motivated the early church into going everywhere preaching and teaching and abounding in the word of the Lord? Certainly it will not come from the dead churches.

God said, "My ministers are as a flame of fire." But the fire seems to be out and the flame has died. The fire and the flame have perished beneath the pseudo type of Christianity which exists today wherein the preachers are more concerned in keeping their jobs, their salaries and their constant efforts to keep busy with the task of perpetuating the system of rotation from one church to another at a salary which they hope will continue to insure a good living for them and their families. A good portion of their time is spent in trying to keep themselves busy with exchange meetings (which pay extra money) and while they do little good as far as converting the

lost, it does help the budget; writing worthless little bulletins, which take up valuable time and could be better spent trying to convert a lost soul or studying the word of God. And many spend their time mimeographing lessons for the congregation, as if they did not have Bibles to study from, which fortunately take the place of individual study. No wonder the church is ignorant.

One of the great tragedies of this generation is the failure of the church to study on their own, as well as to be taught and encouraged to do the work of the church. And so zeal had died. The church should have been, but has not been, taught and trained to do personal work from house to house, Acts 20:20, to teach and to preach the word; to hold Bible classes every night of the week teaching and preaching the word. Of course such a system would interfere with the hours for television. And we might say here that television is one of the greatest instruments of the devil ever developed. It keeps those who should have studied and taken what they learned out to the lost to idle away their time looking at that which keeps them from their Bibles and perpetuates their ignorance. The church of Christ should be on the MOVE, motivated by love and a great zeal to save those who are lost. The church is used today by the covetous preachers as a medium through and by which they acquire a living. Under such a system the people of God die for need of spiritual nourishment; and materialism and carnality flourish.

Because the church is not motivated by knowledge, love and zeal, and have ceased to work and preach and teach to the saving of the souls of the lost, they have deteriorated into a corrupted facsimile of that which they formerly stood for. Truth, love, knowledge and zeal have disappeared in the corrupt atmosphere of covetousness, laziness, ignorance, materialism and unbelief. Yet the brethren, preachers, publishers, and writers seem completely oblivious to the manifest signs of apostasy in their midst. What little is left of the conservative portion of the church needs to read and take heed to Revelation 3:16, "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I WILL SPUE THEE OUT OF MY MOUTH."

We quote also Revelation 3:1-3, which is particularly applicable at this time in the history of the church, as we remind the brethren, it can and is happening right in our midst," And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee." (3rd verse)

So today, as 2,000 years ago, the church is dead. And those who sit idly by and continue to loll on their beds of ease shall be visited by God in His wrath. Amos 6:4-7. They are so concerned about their magazines, their salaries, the reputations in the brotherhood, their foundations and golf games they have forgotten that when they became preachers they were obligated to take the word of God to ALL the world, and NOT for

a salary; which has become their main concern not the souls of men. I Corinthians 9:15-19 read and concentrate upon verse 18, where Paul teaches that he did not charge for his preaching. If his physical needs were taken care of by the brethren he was as glad for those who contributed to his welfare as for himself. But he didn't preach for a salary because that would have made him feel that he had to be paid to preach, but he preached because he had to. New Testament evangelism died along with the deterioration of the church spiritually. But the preachers are so blind to their own defection and lack of zeal and their obligation to go into all the world and preach the gospel, they even advertise their ignorance of what evangelist means by adding the word "evangelist" to their names.

The church is so unconverted that they accept the unscriptural pattern of a perverted type of evangelism which is accomplished by the preacher who uses his time in writing up lessons for them, mimeographing bulletins, and taking time out two or three times a year to preach to a church which already has a preacher and for which he is paid (and this is evangelism?). And, of course, some do send money to those in foreign fields and at home. But this does not in anyway destroy the argument that the preachers are not evangelists.

We want to bring this discourse to an end, but before we do so we want to point out one of the vital and most important things in a Christian's life is, of course, the realization that all Christians are given the Gift of the Holy Spirit when they are cleansed by baptism. Acts 2:38, Acts 5:32, Romans 8:9-11, Romans 8:2-7. All of these verses combined with I Corinthians 6:19 and I Corinthians 3:16 attest to the scriptural fact that all those who have believed and obeyed the gospel of Christ have an indwelling of the Holy Spirit. This, of course, is denied by practically all of the church. As Stephen, before his death, said to his Jewish brethren in Acts 7:51, "Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye". In rejecting the Holy Spirit, the Israelites lost contact with God. The church today in their rejection of the Holy Spirit have lost contact with God. This accounts for their ignorance, lack of spiritual insight, lack of love and zeal. It is the reason for the apostasies; and it is the reason for the demise of the true church of Christ in this generation.

All of the scriptures on the Holy Spirit just enumerated are disbelieved by the church. However, they cannot explain what they mean unless they believe them as they are. Our lesson on the Holy Spirit attached here with will convince anyone who has ears to hear and eyes to see and a spirit to understand, that the Holy Spirit does dwell in the mortal bodies of all of God's holy children; and does do His work with and for Christians independently of the word. The church has lost its spiritual insight because they became materialistic and because they lost the Holy Spirit; and the result is that they deny and resist any spiritual implications implying the independent work of the Holy Spirit who dwells within the holy people of God. To do this, they have to pervert as well as reject all scriptures which pertain to the indwelling and work of the Holy Spirit.

For instance a number of years ago, brother White-

side wrote a commentary on the Roman letter. Because he was bereft of the Holy Spirit and did not believe God's word relative to the work and function of part of the Godhead within the bodies of God's people, he deliberately perverted the meaning of many of the verses of scripture in the Roman letter by changing the capital "S" to a small "s" thereby changing the meaning of many of the scriptures. However, he continued to do this when it was evident that in some cases the changing of the capital "S" to a small "s" did not make any sense, he still persisted in perverting the true word of God. Why?

He is not alone in his unbelief and his lack of understanding of the scriptures. The church is slowly but inevitably losing its identity as the church that Christ died for because of their rejection of the Holy Spirit. The lack of faith and the outright unbelief as well as the ignorance and lack of zeal and New Testament evangelism, can be attributed directly to the rejection of the Holy Spirit. No man can honestly prove by the Bible that the Holy Spirit has no work or function within the people of God. A brother by the name of Ezra Amick spent some time and effort in writing a lengthy booklet on the Holy Spirit, and after many pages and copious quotations he ended his dissertation with a conclusion which he did not have a scripture for, and we quote, "But it will be seen in every instance that none of them (passages of scripture) teach the direct, personal indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The fact remains that the Holy Spirit dwells in and influences the Christian only through the word of God." The church takes the same position brother Amick does, but they fail to realize that this is unbelief and not according to truth.

We have just mentioned a few scattered acts and practices as well as beliefs of the small part of the conservative church which still seems to believe that they have the truth, but within the "Brethren" letter and the lesson on the "Holy Spirit" will be found the reasons and the proof of why we believe that the church of Christ in this generation is in the same condition as that of the church at Sardis 2,000 years ago. "I know thy works, and thou hast a name that thou livest and ART DEAD."

In the year 1975, there is to be found a remnant of the true New Testament church of Christ. Our authority is of course the Bible; and our works are those of the Bible by which all mankind will be judged on the Judgment Day. The Spring Valley church is one of the few congregations of the Lord Jesus Christ which keep His commandments and believe literally in the spiritual teachings of the Bible, which most of the church has rejected. The dead church has become materialistic and relies on their carnal nature, rather than the spiritual, which has never been developed because of the rejection of the Holy Spirit. In their minds even answers to prayers have to be answered by "natural means".

However, there are a few "who still walk in robes of white", who believe in a literal indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and who keep the commandments of the law of Christ. There are four New Testament churches of Christ in California; one in Colorado, one in Iowa, one in Montana, one in Florida, and one in Virginia. Also, a member in Georgia, Oregon, and Arizona where we hope in the near future to send someone to

establish a church in each of these states. Within the next few years, we hope to have a New Testament church of Christ in every state in the union.

All the men after being converted and baptized are trained to preach within a very short time; so that in every congregation there are many preachers getting ready to go forth and establish churches where there are none. We have no paid preachers as such rotating from church to church, but all the churches will help and are helping financially and otherwise when needed to support the evangelist as he takes the word into the various locations where the word has not been known. The Spring Valley church has sent one family, a young couple with five children to Pueblo, where they originally began with one other couple about a year ago. They now have a congregation of about twenty-five to thirty members. They baptized five recently. The brother also works and helps to support his family.

Another young couple have sold their home, and they and their two children will depart soon to Iowa to carry on the work started there by a young couple who were baptized in Alameda, California about a year ago. The Pueblo church is sending a young couple to Montana to join those already there to help in the work of converting the lost. All of the established churches baptize on an average of one or two people a week. The Spring Valley church has three alien sinner classes, two being taught by women and the other by one of the young men, who will be soon departing into another state to carry on the work of saving souls. In all of these churches, ALL (both men and women) busy themselves doing personal work, teaching privately and for the alien sinner classes. The church at Spring Valley has four days of personal work and there are eight Bible classes a week.

This is a New Testament church in action. We don't need to pay a man a salary because all of our men work; they teach, do personal work at night and attend all the classes. This is what the New Testament teaches; and when the New Testament pattern is obeyed then God blesses the work and the churches grow rapidly, both in numbers, but better still spiritually. The times are ripe for a great revival and there is a rapidly growing number of people definitely addicted to spreading the gospel. The world is ready and ripe for Christianity.

The unscriptural order of leaving all the work of teaching and preaching to the preacher and elders is done away inactivating ALL of the church, both men and women, to converting the world to Christ. We note that in the Bible that women, as well as men, labored with Paul in the gospel. Usually, Paul took with him members of the church and they traveled here and there establishing churches everywhere. If the preachers of the church were really converted to Christianity, they would forget about their salaries and train the young men and women and encourage them to go out into the world and teach and baptize and establish churches. The preachers should lead the way. There are always plenty of men in the congregation who can take care of the preaching and teaching.

The world today in its depravity, its violence, its

blasphemy, its hunger and insecurity is relying upon men to solve the awful problems of environment, polluted water and air, but above all the pollution of the souls of men and women, is "white to the harvest". John 4:35. If there was ever a time for the pure gospel of Christ to be taken to a world starving for light and truth and help morally, and spiritually, it is today. But with the exception of a few of us who have not been deluded by covetousness and unbelief and have stayed true to the word of God, we believe that the church will become more covetous, materialistic, unscriptural and ignorant, and the conversion of the world to the TRUTH will have to come from small groups of those of us who are dedicated, addicted and completely converted to preaching the gospel to all the world. And with God's help and with prayers we know that we can do what has been done before.

Those of us who are dedicated to this great task of taking the pure gospel to a world dead in sin, are quite aware that suffering and sacrifice will be a part of our lives. Persecution, slander and misunderstanding by our brethren, we expect to be the consequence of preaching the truth. As Moses once said of his brethren in Egypt, Acts 7:25, "For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not." We also realize that our brethren, who also need to be revived spiritually, will misconstrue our actions and may also, as some have done, slander, and/or persecute us. But we are prepared for what may come; God is with us; and who can fail with Him as their Helper.

This is not a time in the history of the church, for the unconverted, the unbeliever, the fainthearted, the faithless, the weak or the lazy, but for those who know where they are spiritually and who can prove their faith by the gospel of Christ; and who are dedicated to giving their lives to propagating the gospel of Christ. We doubt that many or any can be saved from the "fire" or from the false and perverted gospels they have heard and the unscriptural practices which they indulge in, but if there are some, or even one, which will take to heart the things which are found in these pages, then our work will have been worthwhile. And we say to all, "Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and MAKE STRAIGHT PATHS FOR YOUR FEET, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; BUT LET IT RATHER BE HEALED." And we could hope and pray that there might come a spiritual healing amongst the brethren and that they would join us in the great fight of faith to save the world and convert them to the pure gospel of Christ. There are millions waiting all over the United States for the true gospel of Christ. Let us be about "Our Father's business." Romans 13:12 "The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light."

Please read on and study what is in the "Brethren" letter and the lesson on the Holy Spirit. If you disagree then we would think it would be your duty to prove to us by the scriptures wherein we are wrong.

*Spring Valley Church of Christ
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Dear Brethren:

This letter is being written because we feel that there is a great and pressing need for discussion, understanding and analyzing of many of the problems which confront the church at this time. The church located in Spring Valley has an honest, sincere, and brotherly interest and concern in all things which pertain to the spiritual welfare of the saints. We think that in these critical times, and at the crucial period in the history of God's people, that there is a great necessity to look to ourselves; to examine and to question and consider that which we believe, teach and practice. We are sure that we will find in an honest, unbiased and scriptural survey of the conservative part of the brotherhood, that there is much that needs to be changed and corrected if we are to survive as a people holy and righteous before God.

After the holocaust which tore the church apart, and which culminated in an almost complete apostasy in the last few years, it left a small segment of what is commonly known as the "conservatives", in a weakened, and in many instances, a confused spiritual condition. And now there are portentous and ominous signs of further division amongst this group. The church (what is left of it), is faced with a problem of monumental significance, one which may shake it to its very foundations before it is over. It is time we take heed and the necessary steps to ward off the danger which now threatens. It is not time for secret meetings with the enemy, or for evasive words or lackadaisical action.

For many months there have been noticeable signs and increasing evidence of a concerted effort on the part of some of the brethren amongst the conservative to bring about an alliance with the liberal brethren. We are being told by brother Tant, through the pages of the Gospel Guardian, that this questionable and unscriptural procedure is a "peace offensive", a "partial fellowship" (whatever that means), with the view of, "full fellowship" later. We do not want to sound like alarmists, but it is necessary to warn the church against the peril which threatens it so that they may prepare for the battle which looms ahead. The church must be made aware of the plan and aim of some of the leading as well as prominent men amongst us. The Gospel Guardian is being used as an instrument to further these plans.

The Arlington meeting which was attended by thirteen prominent conservative preachers and thirteen well known liberals were the forerunner of the unscriptural alliance which is now being undertaken to cause the church to sin by following in the footsteps of the institutional society. For it matters not what terms are used such as "partial fellowship", "find areas where we can work together as brethren", "peace offensive", or whatever persuasion or sophistry employed; nor how many books may be written (for what purpose we have not yet been able to ascertain), the overall plan and purpose of all these men is to bring about an unholy and unscriptural relationship or fellowship (whether partial or entirely) with the enemy the institutionalists.

Brother Wallace admits that he fellowships with the liberals (and will continue to do so) and he also is calling for

the conservatives to cooperate with their brethren the liberals. If the conservatives are to avoid another division in their ranks they must immediately begin to fight against this unscriptural attempt by brother Wallace and brother Tant, as well as others, to forge an unholy alliance of any kind between themselves and the institutionalists who no longer have God, and stand condemned because of their many sins.

Those who are pressing for and encouraging the conservatives into fellowshipping or cooperating with the institutionalists are breaking the law of Christ. Romans 16:17, 18 reads, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and AVOID THEM." All those who attended meetings with the liberals, as well as all who are working towards fellowship or are guilty of fellowshipping, cooperating or working with them, have transgressed the scriptures and are therefore guilty of sin.

II John 7:11 reads, "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. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed". With these two verses of scripture in mind, the church must judge as to whether or not all of these brethren who are advocating and who are fellowshipping with the institutionalists are guilty of breaking the law of Christ. All of the church is aware that the liberals with their sponsoring church activities and other practices and teaching which is unauthorized by God, no longer abide in the doctrine of Christ. They have added to the word as well as taken away, and they no longer have God. It is possible some of the brethren amongst the conservatives no longer believe the scriptures above.

Brother Cogdill was one of the most active of all in working to stem the tide of digression, which finally resulted in the great apostasy. In 1966, he wrote a very fine series of articles which were published in the Gospel Guardian under the heading of "Fellowship". He proved by the Bible that fellowship with the liberals was forbidden by the commandments of Christ and warned the church against any kind of fellowship or association with the erring and sinful brethren. Brother Tant, Wallace, Puckett, Cogdill, Thompson, Turner, Fite and eight others who were participants in the Arlington meetings, as well as hundreds of conservative brethren have preached, debated, denounced, warned and exposed the liberals for years and years. Then they must have been in error when they met with the liberals. They contradicted and disobeyed that which they had formerly taught.

The great apostasy could have never happened if the church had been healthy spiritually. Because the church today is ignorant and therefore weak, and the greater portion unaware perhaps of the divisive tactics now being employed by some of the conservatives, it was ill prepared for that which has overcome them. Therefore, all those who are in a position to teach, to warn, and to preach and expose must get to work. If we fail to recognize the poor spiritual condition of the conservatives, their lack of knowledge and wisdom; and if we fail to do something about not only this vital problem, but also to

correct some of the traditional beliefs and unscriptural practices, which are inherent in and intrinsically a part of the conservatives teaching and preaching, the battle to preserve what remains of the truth may well be lost. There are only a few who seem to be aware of what has happened to the conservative portion of the church, and because the church at Spring Valley is one of those who are still alive spiritually and are able to see what has happened to the church, we are doing our best to try and get the message to all those who will listen.

If it be one or thirty or a hundred or ten thousand, or whether it be fellowship in a partial degree or an alliance full and complete, the conservatives if they are led into an unholy cooperation with the liberals, will be transgressing the commandments of Christ. To ask the conservatives to fellowship those who for twenty years have been recognized as transgressors of the law of Christ and who have caused division amongst the people of God is to ASK THEM TO SIN. Are the conservatives to be led away into further sin and division? Let us consider our ways and LOOK TO OURSELVES. The danger is real, the church is weak, and the devil very, very active.

It is very apparent that there is a definite and well-planned stratagem to lead the conservatives into an unholy relationship (whether partial or complete it is still sinful) with the institutional societies. In doing this, there will be and is an evasion of the real issue which is -Is it lawful? Is it a transgression of the law of Christ? It is either right or it is wrong to associate, cooperate or fellowship the institutional society in their sins. There is no such thing as a partial fellowship; or "areas where we can work together". Such talk is nothing more or less than an attempt to skirt the truth. Either the institutional societies are worthy of FULL acceptance as brethren or they are an anathema. In the last 20 years the church has denounced, exposed and warned the conservatives against fellowship with those sinful people. If we were right then we are now wrong.

Fellowship as God has designed it leaves no place for association with those who have departed from the truth. When those thirteen men met with the institutionalists they sinned by breaking the law of Christ. And none, including the thirteen who met with the liberals, brother Tant or brother Wallace, will deny that the institutionalists have long ago left the truth, and have continued in their unscriptural institutional practices and strange and unlawful beliefs for the last fifteen or twenty years up until the present time.

In spite of this, however, brethren Wallace and Tant are working industriously towards cooperation and fellowship with those digressive; although they are well aware that the institutionalists do not intend to repent and turn from their sinful and digressive practices. In the Gospel Guardian, Sept.4, 1969, brother Wallace writes, "IF WE COOPERATE WITH THE LIBERALS IN A BATTLE AGAINST A COMMON ENEMY --MODERNISM-- WILL WE GAIN ANYTHING REGARDING OUR FIGHT AGAINST INSTITUTIONALISM AND SPONSORING CHURCH PROJECTS?" (Take careful note that brother Wallace does not answer the above nor does he explain how one can fight institutionalism and at one and the same time condone it by

cooperating with the institutionalists.) "I CONTENT THAT A CLOSER COMMUNICATION AND ASSOCIATION WITH 'LIBERAL' BRETHREN IS WORTH CAREFUL CONSIDERATION." (emphasis mine) Where there is contradiction there must be error.

In admitting that the conservatives are still fighting institutionalism brother Wallace reveals that there is a division between the conservatives and the institutionalists, but in spite of this he urges a closer communication and association. There is no question here, as far as brother Wallace is concerned, whether or not it is a transgression of the law of Christ or that an association would be helpful in turning the backsliders away from their unholy and divisive institutional practices; but he feels cooperation is necessary whether right or wrong.

In the above quotation we are told that we (liberals and conservatives) have a "common enemy". This is to be the reason or explanation for the unscriptural plan for fellowship with the enemy. Not whether it is according to the law of Christ, (this seems a trivial matter) but we are asked to work with the institutional brethren in an effort to stop classical liberalism. Sin is sin, whether liberalism or a worse degree of it--classical liberalism which is liberalism gone to seed. It is the end result of departing from the truth. So we must join our enemy (the institutionalists who long ago left God) to fight classical liberalism which is nothing more than tongue talking. Is this not paradoxical?

It is apparent THE LIBERALS HAVE NO INTENTION OF CHANGING THEIR UNSCRIPTURAL AND INSTITUTIONAL WAYS. For twenty years they have tenaciously and stubbornly resisted any and all efforts on the part of the conservative brethren to halt their steady decent into the depths of sin and unbelief and now, although they have apostatized from the truth, fellowship is advocated. Sin cannot successfully be fought by sinners.

It is time that the conservatives put on their fighting clothes and got ready to defend the truth, if these men persist in their unholy and unscriptural plan for an association of "a degree". Seemingly these brethren are blinded by unbelief, seeing as they do not use any scripture to uphold that which they are working for; and until they do conservatives should shy away from such an evident unholy plan. Brother Wallace and brother Tant and all those who attended the Arlington meetings, (and by so doing have themselves become transgressors of the law) should LOOK TO THEMSELVES. To continue towards bringing about a union or association with the institutionalists is to further divide the body of Christ.

We quote again from the Gospel Guardian as brother Wallace continues, "Suppose, we are asked, "modernism is completely eradicated from the 'liberal' ranks. Would not liberals continue to PROMOTE AND OPERATE CHURCH SUPPORTED INSTITUTIONS AND SPONSORING CHURCH PROJECTS?" And brother Wallace answers, "I suspect so." And then he continues, "I SUSPECT FURTHER THAT THERE WILL BE A GREAT ACCELERATION OF THE DRIVE TO GET THE COLLEGES IN THE BUDGETS OF CHURCHES BY SOME OF THE LIBERALS." (empha-

sis mine)

So it is plain to see that Brother Wallace realizes that the institutionalists have no intention of changing or desisting from their unscriptural practices. He admits they will continue in their divisive and institutional projects; and that there will be an acceleration of another of these unlawful schemes by putting the colleges into their budgets. And this is the inevitable fate of all those who depart from God. They will go further and deeper into sin. The history of the Israelites is an illustration of this point. When they departed from God, they continued to drift further and further away until they were rejected by God. The liberals were long ago rejected by God, and the conservatives are being asked to join them in their sinful and rebellious state. And if the conservatives are led into this unscriptural alliance they will soon no longer be a true church of Christ. However, now in 1974, we find a different and even more sinister trend amongst the conservatives. We have men like Gordon Wilson, William Wallace, Edward Fudge all involved in the publishing of the Gospel Guardian, as editors and writers, who are now associating with religious men of the world in meetings. They fellowship with and praise them and their open relationship with religious leaders and writers, who teach and preach contrary to the truth is the beginning of the end of the true church of Christ. There are a few fighting to preserve the truth and truth will prevail we know, but many in the brotherhood, practically all, we believe, will apostatize from the true gospel of Christ. Actually, this is more or less true already.

So that no one can make a mistake as to what the scriptures teach relative to fellowship, partial or otherwise, we will quote from the commandments of Christ regarding brethren who divide the body of Christ; and who are schismatic in their designs. This would hold true whether it be the institutionalists or brother Wallace or brother Tant, or any others amongst the conservatives who are willing to fellowship the apostatized brethren in their sins. Therefore, whether it be called a "peace offensive", a "closer communication and association," or a "partial fellowship" or "cooperation" with those who have left the truth to follow their own way, it is **STILL SIN AND A TRANSGRESSION OF THE LAW OF CHRIST.**

II Thessalonians 3:6 reads, "Now we **COMMAND** you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which ye received of us." Verse 14 reads, "And if **ANY** man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and **HAVE NO COMPANY WITH HIM**, that he might be ashamed." There are two points here which the brethren who are working assiduously towards fellowship with the liberals and are now making advances towards those in the denominational world, including those who attended the Arlington meetings, should heed. First, all those who are so desirous of fellowship with the institutional brethren admit that church supported institutions and sponsoring church projects are transgressions of the law of Christ; and secondly, that adherence to these institutional practices divided the church causing the great apostasy.

Inasmuch as the verses of scriptures just quoted command that those who do not obey the words of Paul, or those who walk disorderly by not following those things which Paul teaches, must be withdrawn from, and not to **KEEP COMPANY WITH THEM, IT IS EVIDENT THAT THE BROTHERS WHO ARE FELLOWSHIPING THE WITH INSTITUTIONALISTS ARE GUILTY OF BREAKING THE LAW OF CHRIST.** Therefore, any and all who deign to follow brethren Wallace and Tant in their endeavors to cause the church to sin by transgressing the law of Christ, should consider earnestly and prayerfully any action they may take in this regard, lest they become sinners. However, the apparent result of breaking the law of Christ by openly fellowshiping the liberals has led to an open fellowship and association with well known men amongst the denominational world.

We continue to support that which we are writing with scriptures--which is more than brethren Wallace and Tant can do. II Timothy 3:1-9 is a perfect picture of the liberals who are rebellious, unfaithful, and unrepentant. We shall quote verses 5, 8, and 9. "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; **FROM SUCH TURN AWAY.** Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, **SO DO THESE ALSO RESIST THE TRUTH: Men of CORRUPT MINDS, REPROBATE CONCERNING THE FAITH.** But they shall proceed no further; for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was."

The Bible does not teach for Christians to go to those who have departed from the truth into error, and who have refused to confess and rectify their sins, and study or fellowship them in any manner whatsoever. We are taught that brethren who teach and practice that which cannot be found in the word of God, are to be **AVOIDED** and are to be **TREATED AS HEATHENS.** Until such time as they repent and turn away from that which is an abomination to God they are sinners; and when brethren meet with the liberals and fellowship with them they partake of their sins. II John 7 to 9. Therefore, all those who attended the Arlington meetings; and all who are working towards fellowship, cooperation or peace with the accursed have transgressed all the scriptures quoted in this letter and need to repent and rectify their sins before it is too late. Galatians 1:7-9.

Sin when not repented of and rectified leads to unbelief. Actually to continue in sin and refuse to repent and turn away from it is to enter into that state so vividly portrayed in Hebrews 6:1-6. **IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO BRING THE WILLFUL AND UNREPENTANT SINNER TO REPENTANCE.** They have reached the state that Esau, in the long ago, found himself in when he sought with tears to repent but could not. Without repentance, there is no forgiveness. Therefore, it would be suicidal spiritually for the conservatives to follow brethren Wallace and Tant, and any and all others who are of the same mind as they are, in fellowshiping the liberals for any reason whatever. They cannot repent therefore they cannot be forgiven, either by God or man. Luke 17:3 and 4. Therefore, we have been commanded by God to **AVOID AND STAY AWAY FROM THEM.** Romans 16:17 and 18. "With such an one, no not to eat." I Corinthians 5:11

It would seem that some of the brethren have overlooked the fact that when the institutionalists persist in their refusal to heed the admonitions, rebuking and warnings of the conservatives in the past and now, that to continue in sin willfully, leads to the impossibility of repentance. In Jeremiah 5:23, we read, "But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and GONE." We should recognize that it is impossible for the liberals to repent. **THEY ARE GONE.** So any efforts spent in trying to bring these people into a peaceful and scriptural relationship with the conservatives, is not only a transgression of the law of Christ but it is wasted time and would be fruitless. The institutionalists have stayed so long in their sins their hearts are hardened and unbelief has set in, and they have **GONE BEYOND ANY RETURN.** Hebrews 6:1-6. They cannot be brought back to repentance. It is astounding as well as alarming that the conservatives cannot see this. The Holy Spirit has departed from the sinners never to return. "Reprobate silver shall men call them, **BECAUSE THE LORD HATH REJECTED THEM.**" Jeremiah 6:30. That is the reason the church is **COMMANDED TO AVOID THEM.**

It would be well for all the brotherhood to read the first chapter of Isaiah. Herein we are taught that the people of God may go through the motions of obeying Him although at one and the same time living in disobedience. II Timothy 3:1-9. This would seem to be the condition of **ALL** of the church at this time to a greater and lesser extent; and we will go into this later on in this letter, pointing out some of the errors and unscriptural practices of the conservatives. It is important that the church "look to themselves", examine and rectify many of the practices and a good deal of their teaching in the light of the gospel of Christ. Isaiah 1:16 "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from mine eyes; cease to do evil." Verse 19 and 20, "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the **MOUTH OF THE LORD HATH SPOKEN IT.**"

In Jeremiah 6:1-30 we will quote a few verses which are applicable to the brethren today. "They have healed also the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace; when there is no peace." "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways, and seek, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein." The institutionalists have adamantly refused to return to the scriptural law of Christ. None will deny this. Brethren Tant and Wallace admit it. The thirteen brethren who met and had fellowship with the liberals at Arlington and other places, will also admit this. But in spite of this the conservatives are being persuaded as well as led into paths, which if they follow the lead of these brethren, they will become transgressors of the law. There could not be peace or fellowship possible with the institutionalists until they **TURN FROM THEIR SINFUL WAYS AND REPENT OF THEIR SINFUL DEEDS** and this they cannot do.

Before we go into other matters pertaining to the conservative portion of the church it might be well to take note of some scriptures which are pertinent to those who are seeking and working for fellowship with those who long ago have been rejected by God. In Proverbs 17:15 we read about those

who uphold the wicked. "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are abomination to the Lord." The wicked (the liberals) are being held up as worthy of fellowship by some in the church; therefore, these verses should be heeded. Proverbs 28:4 reads, "They that forsake the law praise the wicked; but such as keep the law contend with them." Again Proverbs 24:24, "He that saith unto the wicked, Thou are righteous; him shall the people curse, nations shall abhor him."

These verses speak for themselves. Whether those who are working towards an unholy alliance with the wicked will believe or heed them is questionable. But in striving for fellowship with those who have transgressed the law of Christ and have adamantly refused to turn away from their many sins, those amongst the conservatives must uphold and justify them. If they were right with God they would contend with them as the conservatives have in the past. Have some of those amongst the conservatives forsaken the law of Christ in advocating and working towards an unholy fellowship with the liberals? Certainly they are not obeying Romans 16:17-18, II Timothy 3:1-13, II Thessalonians 3:30-15, and II John 7-11. To fellowship with the institutionalists is to condone them in their sins, seeing as they have not made a move to turn away from them. However, the church is being asked to go along with that which is in direct violation of the scriptures above.

The church is being told to reconsider its position regarding the liberals in spite of the very plain commands of God to the contrary. We quote from the pen of brother Tant wherein he is laying the ground work for fellowship with the wicked, "Surely the time is appropriate for all, ("on both sides") if you will, to concern ourselves with the communications offensive -- an effort to go **BACK NOW AND DO WHAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN DONE FIFTEEN YEARS AGO: HAVE A BROTHERLY STUDY OF THE WHOLE PROBLEM.**" (Emphasis mine) This is pure sophistry because brother Tant as well as the brotherhood knows full well that the institutionalists deliberately left the truth of God's word, and adamantly have through the years refused to cease from their many sins. To study or have any association with these reprobates is to err from the truth. Galatians 1:7-11 plainly teaches that those who leave the gospel of Christ (and none will deny this, including brother Tant) are **ACCURSED.** What about those who fellowship them? Romans 16:17-18.

The plea of brother Tant might lead some who may be ignorant of the true situation to believe that the institutionalists fifteen years ago were neglected by the conservatives. The truth is that the conservatives debated, taught, preached and prayed for them. If there was a stone left unturned, or a word left unsaid, to make the institutionalists realize their sins and the terrible division which would be the result of it, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to point it out. Therefore, it is most obvious and unmistakably clear to all that brother Tant is not ignorant of any of this and he is guilty of attempting to mislead the brethren in his desire to promote an unholy and unscriptural association between the conservatives and the institutionalists

There is sophistry in pleading for the fellowship with

the reprobates. the liberals; for he knows, as we all do, that the reason for the apostasy was not neglect by the conservatives, but willful disobedience and unbelief on the part of the liberals. The conservatives, if they value their souls, should question the motives of those who are calling for fellowship, peace and cooperation with those whom the Lord has rejected. God has commanded we AVOID, KEEP NO COMPANY WITH, AND WITH SUCH NOT TO EAT. These commandments are BEING BROKEN BY ALL THOSE WHO ARE HYPOCRITICALLY PLEADING FOR PEACE WITH THE ENEMY AND WHO ARE FELLOWSHIPING THE LIBERALS IN DIRECT DEFIANCE of the commandments of God.

Forgiveness by God and man is given when repentance and a turning away from sin has ensued. Peace and unity are NOT obtainable on any other terms. Unity and accord between brethren are dependent on and commanded by the scriptures upon obedience TO THE WORD OF GOD. The rebellious and institutionally minded liberals have shown not an iota of willingness to repent of their divisive practices; and we are reminded of the Israelites in their willful and inflexible refusal to obey the commandments of God. Jeremiah 7:22-34, we will quote verses 24, 26, and 28. "But they hearkened not nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in the imagination of their EVIL HEART, and went backward, and not forward. Yet they hearkened not unto ME, nor inclined their ear, BUT HARDENED THEIR NECK: they did worse than their fathers. But thou shalt say unto them, This is a nation that obeyeth NOT THE VOICE OF THE LORD THEIR GOD, nor receiveth correction: TRUTH IS PERISHED, AND IS CUT OFF FROM THEIR MOUTH."

Again it seems that brethren Tant and Wallace, and the thirteen who met and had fellowship with the liberals (and there are no doubt many others in sympathy with what they are doing), do not feel that the liberals are erring brethren, or that they are lost and no longer have God. And that in fellowshiping with them they do not feel that they are also transgressing the law of Christ and are therefore sinners also. Let us quote from the Gospel Guardian of August 28, 1969, brother Tant writing, "Really the matter of "peace" has been only the ultimate and final goal in sight. Far more vital and absolutely indispensable before "peace" can never be accomplished, is the problem of communications. As all of you know, the breakdown in communications has been one of the biggest stumbling-blocks in all of our efforts to achieve harmony between brethren. THIS ACTUALLY WAS PROBABLY THE MOST IMPORTANT SINGLE FACTOR IN BRINGING ABOUT THE TRAGIC ESTRANGEMENT WHICH HAS TAKEN PLACE THESE LAST TEN OR FIFTEEN YEARS." (emphasis mine)

In this statement brother Tant reveals his attitude towards the backsliders. First he admits that which has already been said in these pages, that he is trying to achieve harmony between the conservatives and the liberals. AND THIS IS BEING DONE IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT THE INSTITUTIONALISTS HAVE NO INTENTION OF DOING AWAY WITH THE SPONSORING CHURCH PROJECTS AND THEIR MANY OTHER UNSCRIPTURAL

PRACTICES. He is willing to lay aside all the labor, the debates, the preaching, AND THE PRAYERS, which have been done in the past twenty years to try and keep the liberals from dividing the church, and now accept them and their institutional sponsoring of church projects in full fellowship.

This plan, if his mission is successful, will not only lead the church into a sinful and unholy relationship with those whom God commands are to be avoided, but it will further weaken and confuse what is left of the conservative group. This to some extent has already been done. We are also made cognizant that there is sophistry or ignorance, and the latter we do not believe, in attempting to mislead the church as to the real cause of the division between the conservatives and the institutionalists. The apostasy, which has already almost wrecked the church, was NOT CAUSED BY LACK OF COMMUNICATION, BUT WAS THE NATURAL AND INEVITABLE RESULT OF THE LIBERAL BRETHREN DEPARTING FROM THE TRUTH. GOD'S WORD UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES FORBIDS ANY COMMUNICATION OR ASSOCIATION WITH THOSE WHO CAUSED THE DIVISION AND WHO PRACTICE THAT WHICH IS UNAUTHORIZED BY THE WORD OF GOD. What caused the division in the first place (disobedience and unbelief) is the same reason that we are not at peace today. The issues are the same, the transgressions still manifest, and the rebellion and refusal to turn away and repent most apparent. II Thessalonians 3:6-14.

Brother Tant is fully aware of the situation as it is today. We quote again from the same editorial, "They (the liberals) DO NOT AGREE WITH US ABOUT BENEVOLENT SOCIETIES, CENTRALIZED COOPERATIVE ARRANGEMENTS, AND SOME OF THEM (BUT BY NO MEANS ALL) THINK WE ARE WAY OUT OF LINE IN OUR OPPOSITION to church contributions to the colleges." Brother Tant is fully aware that that which the liberals believe and practice is unscriptural; he also knows that the conservative portion of the church, including himself, DOES NOT AGREE or BELIEVE in these things, NEVERTHELESS HE IS WILLING TO WORK WITH, COOPERATE WITH AND FELLOWSHIP WITH THOSE WHO LONG AGO DEPARTED FROM THE TRUTH. BROTHER TANT IS IN ERROR.

Either he no longer believes these brethren are sinners before God, and/or else he is willing to transgress the word of God, by fellowshiping the apostatized brethren IN THEIR SINS. Therefore, he becomes a partaker of their sins. II John 7 to 11. Those who follow brethren Tant and Wallace and all those who accept their plan respecting the digressive will have to accept their position also. Galatians 1:7-11. If the erring brethren really believed in hell, they would not be so anxious to disobey God. It is evident they no longer believe or fear God.

We quote brother Tant again, "These are our brethren in Christ; they worship the same God we serve; they honor the same Christ we honor; they revere the same Bible we hold dear. And however misguided (IN OUR JUDGEMENT) has been their devotion to Herald of Truth and the centralized co-

operative arrangements, we do not FOR A MOMENT DOUBT THEIR SINCERITY AND REAL DESIRE TO FOLLOW THE TEACHINGS OF CHRIST." (emphasis mine) This statement is pure sophistry and brother Tant's devious reasoning is exposed. The statement is a contradiction; how could apostatized brethren, those who have sown discord amongst the brethren, and divided the church, and who teach lies and practice error, honor God and have a real desire to follow God. Brother Tant has left the faith. Beware!

And so it is easily understood in these words written by brother Tant that his judgment is colored by his own personal viewpoint and not that of God's word. In his admission that these apostatized brethren are worthy of fellowship, he exposed his lack of belief in the scripture because he admits that they are misguided (unscriptural) in their devotion to Herald of Truth and centralized cooperative arrangements. In this admission he destroys any argument he might have for fellowshiping the institutionalists. Because in these very practices and devotion to that which is not authorized by the word of God, the institutionalists are condemned. They have transgressed the commandments of Christ and do thereby become sinners. They are accursed by God. Galatians 1:7-11. What has happened recently in Abilene is an example of what will happen to all those who have apostatized away from the gospel of Christ.

One must remember that the liberals were once conservatives before they turned to their own evil ways and corrupted themselves with their unscriptural sponsoring church projects and cooperative arrangements. At one time, they believed and obeyed the truth. So it would seem if brother Tant was not blinded by prejudice and unbelief, that he could see that these brethren neither reverence the word of God nor are they sincere in a desire to follow the teachings of Christ. As a matter of fact, they have obstinately and adamantly refused to turn away from their idols. So where is their sincerity; where is their real desire to follow the teachings of Christ? The division in the body of Christ which resulted in the great apostasy was caused by these people whom brother Tant praises.

Proverbs 28:4 is worth repeating. "They that forsake the law praise the wicked: but such as keep the law contend with them." Has brother Tant and brother Wallace forsaken the law also? Their sincerity and reverence for the Bible (as well as that of the liberals) is most questionable. Like Balaam of old, they are not content with God's word. They want more and are blind spiritually. Numbers 22:19.

Because brother Tant is biased in his judgment, he is not able to rationalize the issue of fellowshiping the institutionalists in their sins. While admitting that they transgress the word of God and do those things which are inimical to the truth, he praises them for their sincerity and their desire to follow the teachings of Christ. Reason would dictate, if separated from bias, that if the institutionalists were sincere and had a real desire (as brother Tant seems to think) to follow the Bible, why do they not leave their unscriptural practices and return to the Bible? Brother Tant says they revere the Bible, but it has been proven over and over that they care little about the true word of God and have disobeyed and continue to re-

belliously and willfully continue in their many sins in spite of the Bible teachings. And because of these contradictory and unscriptural statements, and brother Tant's attitude towards those who have left the truth, we believe that brother Tant no longer believes the word of God.

Again, we quote from an editorial by brother Tant, April 17, 1969, "Frankly, we are hoping to wage a sort of "peace offensive." We are trying to reach many thousands of brethren in the "institutional" churches with a simple plea that WE EXPLORE THE AREAS WHERE WE MIGHT WORK TOGETHER, try, as much as possible, to COMPOSE OUR DIFFERENCES, AS WE FACE A COMMON ENEMY the threat of CLASSICAL LIBERALISM." (emphasis mine)

Thus from these words we note that brother Tant is holding out the hand of fellowship to the institutional societies and asks that they might work together. Brother Tant seems not to be able to comprehend that the differences between the liberals and conservatives cannot be partially overlooked, swept under the rug, or done away with until THE APOSTATIZED BRETHREN REPENT, TURN AWAY FROM THEIR IDOLS, RECTIFY AND CONFESS THEIR SINS. And this they cannot do. Like Esau, they cannot repent. Jude 1:1-19 explains their awful spiritual condition. Some of the brethren including brother Tant are so blinded by their many sins, and their unbelief that it is evident they also have left the truth.

Brother Tant fortifies his unscriptural plea for fellowship with the enemy by suggesting that the church and the liberals have a "common enemy": the threat of classical liberalism. To some, classical liberalism seems by contrast to be much more sinful and unholy than plain liberalism. When sin is contemplated or indulged in, there is a need for justification; and brother Tant does not overlook this point in trying to get the conservatives and the liberals together.

In a letter written some time ago to brother Tant, we dealt with this question, and it would be opportune at this time to quote some passages from it. "It is plain that some of the brethren, including yourself, are attempting to justify the plan of fellowship to a "degree" with the institutional brethren, by dividing the erring ones into two camps. One is designated by the name of "Classical Liberalists", and seemingly they are an anathema. The other group, (the method used to separate them is not clear), although liberals also, seemingly have attained a certain respectability amongst certain of the brethren to the extent that the brotherhood (conservative) can be asked to fellowship them to a "degree". Be not deceived, whether classical liberalism, liberalism or institutionalism, they are all teaching and practicing that which is NOT AUTHORIZED BY THE SCRIPTURES."

"Only God can separate sinners. The liberals, with whom you desire fellowship, not only for yourself, but for the brotherhood are SINNERS. Classical liberalism and institutionalism, of whatever hue or name, is opposed to the word of God. If areas can be found by which and in which the conservatives can work with the institutional society, logic would dictate that there could be areas or degrees wherein the church

could be asked to work with or cooperate with classical liberalism. After all, classical liberalism is an outgrowth of and sprung from liberalism. If some have progressed further and faster into sinful practices and unbelief, and seem thereby to be more wicked, this does not in any way lessen the sin of the liberals, who might by contrast seem less sinful. All sin is a transgression of the law of Christ; and none will deny, including yourself, that the liberals do transgress the law of Christ." Before God, and by His law, liberals and those practicing glossolalia and the casting out of demons, are accursed and condemned.

"Furthermore, it would seem you have the cart before the horse in asking for the tolerance towards the digressive in their sins; and in pleading for the church to study and to find areas where they can work with the apostatized brethren. The father of the prodigal son did not go out to the pig sty to bring his son back to him; the son had to realize his fallen condition and turn and leave the pig sty and go back to his father. THEN HE WAS FORGIVEN AND WELCOMED BACK INTO THE FOLD. This is the Bible way." The liberals must leave the pig sty before we can associate with them. Otherwise their filth may well contaminate us.

This letter thus far has been to a great extent repetitious, but it has been done for a purpose. We have tried to close all avenues for those who might try to justify their actions respecting fellowship with the liberals. It is impossible to sin a little. It is impossible for the holy ones of God to fellowship "a little" with the unholy and not transgress the commandments of Christ. The Bible does not read two or three different ways; Christians are commanded to COME INTO AN ACCORD UPON IT. The Bible has strict commandments relative to fellowship, as has been proven. II Thessalonians 3:6-14.

The church must make the decision, a most vital one, whether to follow the lead of some of the prominent and well-known preaching brethren in their evident desire and plan to associate and fellowship the liberals, or whether to take a stand AND THEN STAND (FIGHT) against all attempts to cause the brethren to sin. May God help all of us to study this question thoroughly that we may not be led into further digression from the truth. The battle looms formidably before us; will we fight or will we succumb to that which evil and wicked men are trying to lead the church into? In the Revelation letter, the church had left the commandments of Christ and God warned that unless they repented and turned from their unscriptural ways, that He would take the candlestick out.

The church today (ALL of it) is in the same condition as that in the second and third chapters of Revelation. As we know, there was an exception. Will we at this crucial time turn, repent and stay on the old paths; or will we, as the Israelites in the long ago, be again divided by being led into sin and lose our identity? The church is in such a state spiritually that it is my belief little can be done to keep them from apostasy. Even now there is little to distinguish them from the institutionalists.

In taking note of the sinful condition of the liberals and the resulting deterioration of that condition into the depraved diabolic talking in tongues and consequent belief in the casting out of demons and other such devilish behavior, it would be well for the church to realize that the degenerate condition of the liberals is caused by devils sent by God. In Psalms 78:49, we read, "He cast upon them the fierceness of His anger, wrath and indignation, and trouble, by sending evil angels among them." This should warn all the church that God will not withhold His wrath if we do not turn from our traditions, and materialistic and carnal approach to His Word; as well as from the disobedience so prominently displayed by the rebellious and willful liberals.

Inasmuch as the liberals refuse to hearken to God's word and turn from their unholy practices, they will continue to degenerate until they too will receive the punishment of God by having evil angels sent amongst them. Those brethren who are intent upon fellowship with the liberals should be warned that the wrath of God will not be withheld from them if they persist in their unscriptural designs in this direction. Psalms 78:37-36, "For their heart was not right with Him, neither were they steadfast in His covenant. Nevertheless they did flatter Him with their mouth, and they lied unto Him with their tongues." In all sin there is hypocrisy.

The conservatives should fear God and realize He will not leave them unpunished if they are disobedient. As evil angels were sent amongst His people in the past; they can and have been sent amongst the liberals today. In the demonstration of the gibberish of tongue talking and casting out of demons we can see the evil angels again at work amongst those whom God is punishing.

However, we shall persist along this line for it is a fact that spirits and angels are a reality. They have always obeyed the commands of God and, therefore, they must be doing so now. Spirits do not die-the Bible from beginning to end is full of their activities, both angelic and evil; therefore, it is most necessary that we believe WHAT THE WORD OF GOD TEACHES. The church is greatly ignorant and unbelieving upon this subject. In I Samuel 16:14-15 we read, "But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him. And Saul's servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit from God troubleth thee." Hebrews 1:14 proves angels are active in church today to help the righteous also.

There are two things here which are interesting. First is that when the Holy Spirit departed from Saul GOD SENT AN EVIL SPIRIT to trouble him. If the liberals aren't being troubled by evil spirits then it would be interesting for some of the brethren to explain their demonic actions, such as talking in tongues, visions, and casting out of demons, etc. Another fact is that God has control (at least when He desires it) over evil spirits. Revelations 9:1-21. Also, that when one who is a child of God departs from the truth into rebellion, false teaching and disobedience the Spirit of God will depart. When this happens, he can be controlled by an evil spirit. Whether from God or the devil the result is the same. God is the same yesterday, today and forever.

We must, to understand what the Bible teaches, accept spirits both good and evil. If they were active throughout the Bible, then by what reasoning would we be led to believe that they are no longer active? In Matthew 12:42-45, we find some teaching which is relevant to events which are now taking place amongst those who were once of the household of God, but have turned away from the truth into error, and are now reaping the wages of sin. "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith (spirit), I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there; and the last state of the man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation."

Confirming these words of the entrance as well as the exit of evil spirits from man, we read again from I Samuel 16:23 these words, "And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand; so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him." We learn from this that evil spirits can and do enter in to man and can depart and return. We find in the New Testament evil spirits at work, and they were prevalent amongst the disobedient Israelites. In Revelations 9:1-21, we learn that God had power over the devil's spirits and sent them out into the world to torment mankind because of their sins and rejection of Him.

Furthermore in I Peter 5:8, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour". In Revelation 12:9-10, the word of God teaches that the devil and his angels have been cast down here to earth; which confirms what is said by Peter. If the devil is here on earth and is making war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, should we believe this or reject it, as the greater portion of the church has done. If there are evil angels, (and if we believe the Bible we must accept this) then they are busy doing that which they have always done. And in our time, their evil work is being demonstrated for all the church to see, both in the church and in the world, so that the people of God might be warned of the wrath of God which has been visited upon the rebellious and wicked brethren. And it would and will happen to the conservatives if they do not turn and believe the word of God and fear Him, and correct their traditional, materialistic, and compromising ways before it is too late.

There is a great deal more to be learned about the subject of angels, spirits, and demons; but as Paul said in Hebrews 5:11-14, the church is "dull of hearing" and the things which ought to be said are difficult for them to accept. The reason why these people could not understand the spiritual things was because the church was used to milk and not ready for meat, although they should have been. Therefore, we will leave this subject for the time being, and continue to review many other things which the church needs to have said at this time, but is ill prepared for. However, think on these things; and study that we may not be ignorant of spiritual things because of which many have lost their souls. Read Hebrews 1:14

and Hebrews 12:22-23, Revelations 2:1 and Revelations 22:9. The church has an angel; angels minister unto us and they are present with us.

The above was extraneous and does not have much bearing on other things which we would like now to go into. However, the reality of angels is one of the things which the church has rejected in this generation. We look at this time for an explanation of the terrible apostasy, the presence of devils amongst the unholy and wicked, and for answers to the many problems which now beset the conservative portion of the church.

Unfortunately because of their lack of knowledge and rejection of the Holy Spirit; weakened by division and confused by the inconsistency and wayward conduct of some of the most prominent men amongst them, the church stands small, inept, and ill prepared for that which they must face. In most respects, the church is seemingly unaware of the great danger which threatens its very foundation. We need at this time, above all things, to see ourselves as we ARE, not as we THINK we are; and face this reality in all its frightening and formidable aspects. The picture of the church today is convincingly portrayed in Revelations (chapters 2 and 3) in its varying degrees of sin, false teaching and practices. Revelation 3:17-18 must be read in an attempt to understand the inept spiritual condition of God's people. However, few who read these words will believe them. Why? Because they are blinded by unbelief and ignorance.

We quote Revelation 3:17-18. Read it, believe it, and apply it. "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked; I COUNSEL THEE to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear: and anoint thine eyes with eye salve, THAT THOU MAYEST SEE." If these things be true of the church (AS A WHOLE and THEY ARE) then we must not only anoint our eyes and take a look at ourselves but we must ACT! We must be able to see ourselves as we are before any steps can be taken to correct that which has made us poor, miserable, lukewarm, blind and naked. Because whether we face the true picture of the church or not, the above is the church today. May God help us all to see it and then correct and change before the candlestick is taken out and the identity of the church is lost in this generation. In the past five years since the above was written, the church has become even more corrupted and little is left to identify the church of Christ as a New Testament church.

The church within the last 150 years has fought a great fight of faith. It has had its ups and downs, but has always, with God's help, come out victorious. Divided, hungry, poor in money and worldly goods, but rich in faith, zeal and spiritual riches, great men arose and lead the church through its many vicissitudes and persecutions and divisions. But the church in the last 20 or 25 years has grown rich in worldly possessions. Great colleges were built and supported by individuals as well as the church. The preachers corrupted themselves by preaching for gain instead of for the souls of men.

False teaching crept in and truth flew out the window. The great men have all gone; the preachers, lovers of money and position, have kept the people ignorant of the truth and there is a terrible and fearsome famine of the word of God. Division has come and gone. And the great apostasy left only a small remnant, and that which remains is already divided by opinions and ignorance of the truth. We should remember Paul's warning in Acts 20:28-31. Quoting 30 and 31, "Also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."

In studying the Old Testament, as well as the New, we see the history of the people of God for centuries up until the end of the Revelation letter. The Israelites fought and warred with each other until both succumbed to the inevitable disintegration of a people who corrupted the law and left the old paths. Great and godly men sprung up from time to time to take the people back to the law. But there came a time when there were no more Elijahs, Nehemiahs, Ezras, Isaiahs, Jeremiahs, and Ezekiels. No great leaders like Moses, David, and Joshua. "And what shall I more say: of Gedeon, Barak, Samson, Jephthae, and Samuel and of the prophets?" Hebrews 11:32

God then left the Israelites without a prophet for several hundred years before the advent of Christ. Only a small remnant was left of the once glorious nation of the people of God, when God's plan was set in motion for the establishing of His kingdom upon this earth. And through the next 2,000 years, the church was to suffer, and be persecuted; and for a time was in the wilderness until the restoration. In Revelation, we see the church after only about 100 years, filled with false teaching, evil practices and wicked men. The worst enemies of the church have always been those WITHIN. It has always been true and so it is today.

It is time to ask questions and to look for the reasons for this sad picture of the church of our Lord and Savior in these present times. It would be well to start with the lack of knowledge amongst the people of God, both the members and the elders and preachers. Practically all are guilty of teaching and practicing that which we are writing about in this letter. Some of the preachers, however, are cognizant of the famine of the word of the Lord. Recently, one of them wrote in the Gospel Guardian, and we quote, "Our teaching program has produced a generation of people who are ignorant of God's words. It is readily admitted by everyone that ignorance is the basic reason for our present day apostasy." But ignorance comes from lack of study and sound teaching and preaching and unbelief follows.

BUT, we ask, WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE IGNORANCE WHICH HAS ENVELOPED THE CHURCH? Inasmuch as the preachers and the elders have the responsibility of feeding and edifying the church, it is manifest that they have neglected their duty towards the people of God. Without knowledge the members of the body of Christ cannot grow; and this is fatal to their spiritual life. The words of Paul in II Timothy 4:1-5 are appropriate here: "For the time will come

when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall TURN AWAY THEIR EARS FROM THE TRUTH, and SHALL BE TURNED UNTO FABLES."

And the church has turned away from the sound, pure words of truth. The preachers, many of them, have failed to preach the truth; and they also suffer from ignorance. When the preachers and elders become slack and ignorance prevails and tradition takes the place of sound teaching, the people will suffer from spiritual malnutrition and become sickly.

When the prophets and priests amongst the Israelites turned away from God, neglected His people, and followed their own ways instead of the law, God cursed and punished them. Jeremiah 32:30-34 fits the pattern of that which has happened amongst us today and we quote the 32nd and 33rd verses: "Because of all the evil of the children of Israel and of the children of Judah, which they have done to provoke me to anger, they, their kings, their princes, their priests, and their prophets, and the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And they have turned unto me the back, and not the face: THOUGH I TAUGHT THEM, RISING UP EARLY AND TEACHING THEM, yet they have not hearkened to receive instructions."

All Israel came into condemnation before God (although some of the tribes of Israel polluted and corrupted themselves more than others) but God punished all of them. We have received instruction and we have not heeded the words of truth. We are divided in Spirit and in mind; we do not all speak the same thing. I Corinthians 1:10. Therefore, the church will be punished. Those who have apostatized away from the truth do not seem as wicked as others who are being troubled by evil angels; and the conservatives by comparison may seem less sinful. Nevertheless, all will be punished unless the church turns back to the old paths and corrects the innovations and traditions which have crept into our midst, polluting the church.

Consider these words in Jeremiah 23:1-40, for they are applicable, "For both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the Lord. Wherefore, their way shall be unto them as slippery ways in the darkness: They shall be driven on, and fall therein. But if they had stood in my counsel, and had caused my people to HEAR MY WORDS, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings." The Israelites did not turn from their evil ways and they fell.

Will their fate act as an incentive for the church today to take a long, long look at themselves and 'consider their ways' and change from those things which they teach and practice back to the law of Christ before it is too late? Let the preachers meet, not to work towards a fellowship with the apostatized brethren (which is a fruitless endeavor), but to really work and pray towards a return to true evangelism. Going forth into cities and states where the word of the Lord has not been taken, and establishing congregations. Not looking for pay but laboring to find the lost and bring them to Christ. Activate all the church; preach the truth in season and out of

season; turn away from worldliness and materialism back to the spiritual faith. Let the women and the men work together as one great family to convert the world; filled with zeal and love for the lost. Moving, preaching, teaching, activated by the greatest emotion in all the world-LOVE. This of course could only be attained if there are men amongst the church who have not sold their souls for filthy lucre. I don't know if there are any.

Inasmuch as the church is decreasing instead of increasing, ignorant instead of learned; inactive, indifferent and indolent instead of zealous and full of good works; the change must begin with those who are responsible for the greater part of this--THE PREACHERS. Have the elders watched over the souls of the saints? Have the preachers edified? Cursed with worldliness and ignorance, sickly and asleep, without zeal and works, divided instead of united, it is most evident that the elders and the preachers have been careless and negligent in caring for the Lord's family. They have busied themselves with running from place to place, putting out bulletins, playing golf, taking trips and concerning themselves with arranging trips to 'the holy land' and everything, it seems, but the important one which is to save souls.

Proof of the above is found in the August 1968 Gospel Guardian. This was a special edition published on the subject of the Holy Spirit. Both ignorance and unbelief were strikingly exposed for all to see in the varying and contradictory opinions expressed by this body of men. Truth does not contradict itself; and the Bible only teaches ONE way. Wherefore, we ask.....why couldn't these preachers all come into a knowledge of the truth upon this question? And inasmuch as they didn't, why the lack of concern over such manifest and evident contradictions? The preachers should ask themselves this question.

A carnal approach to the subject of the Holy Spirit would have the effect of making those, who do not believe that the Holy Spirit dwells within our mortal bodies, deny the evident truth of God's word which teaches that He does. Lack of spirituality would also be the reason for the confusion manifest in the work of the Holy Spirit. One preacher took the position that the Holy Spirit did dwell within our bodies, but then seemed unwilling to accept the teaching upon the function or work of the Holy Spirit. He said that he did not believe that the Holy Spirit had any influence upon the lives of the holy people of God; and that the Holy Spirit did not do anything more than that which the word accomplished.

Romans 8:26 teaches that the Holy Spirit, "Maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." Could the word make intercession for us with groanings? We have a lesson attached to this letter which will be very revealing to all who will not only read it but STUDY it. In so doing, it will do away with all confusion on this subject and teach us many things which are necessary for our spiritual growth. One brother used J. D. Thomas, who long ago left the faith, to uphold him in his opinion. He should have used the Bible that is where TRUTH is found. It would be questionable whether or not J. D. Thomas would have the truth inasmuch as he left it.

The word converts us but this is not the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is given only to those who OBEY the word. When one is baptized, when he enters the water, HE DOES NOT HAVE THE HOLY SPIRIT until he is raised up from the water. Therefore, the Holy Spirit is separate and apart from the word. We should ask why there is so much confusion, unbelief and discord upon this subject?

One brother took the position that Acts 2:38 did not mean what it said when he wrote in his article that he did not believe that God gave the gift of the Holy Spirit to those who obeyed Him. However, he either did not know or did not believe Acts 5:32--"And so is the Holy Ghost, WHOM GOD HATH GIVEN TO THEM THAT OBEYED HIM" If we believe the scriptures we are forced to believe that all who obey Christ are the recipients of the Holy Spirit. Is it any more reprehensible to deny these verses than to deny that baptism saves us from our sins?

The startling thing about this was that most of the preachers did not believe that the Holy Spirit dwells IN the mortal bodies of the saints. And this in spite of the fact that I Corinthians 6:19 says: "What? Know ye not that your BODY is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is IN you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?" One would have to refuse to BELIEVE the word of God to deny that the Holy Spirit dwells in our mortal frames. II Timothy 1:14 confirms this and I Corinthians states: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth IN you." Romans 8:11 also teaches that the Holy Spirit dwells IN us. The Holy Spirit in these verses cannot possibly be construed to mean "the word." However, the church does pervert these scriptures as well as many others pertaining to the Holy Spirit by rejecting the Holy Spirit, and falsely teaching that when the Holy Spirit is mentioned He is the word.

Those who took this position upon the indwelling of the Holy Spirit seemed not to have the least understanding of His function IN our bodies. It seemed to be the consensus of opinion that the Holy Spirit does nothing more than the word. It would be interesting for these brethren to explain Ephesians 4:30----"Grieve not the Holy Spirit.: As well as "quench not the Holy Spirit." The word cannot be grieved nor quenched. Therefore, these brethren are in error. The spiritual application of the word of God is not subject to the carnal mind. Romans 8:6-7. And this, my brethren is the reason for the unbelief which pervades the church when the subject of the Holy Spirit is broached.

If the preachers are so divided upon this subject, it is not possible, more probable in fact, that they are divided and unlearned and unbelieving upon other subjects as well? We all know that there is little unity upon many, many subjects in the body of Christ; and we mean amongst the conservatives. This was proven in those articles written by fourteen different preachers. The most alarming thing about this is that no one seems particularly concerned about it. It doesn't seem to be important that the church is divided upon a question of such significance. When there is contradiction there must of necessity be error. How much TRUTH is there amongst us? We should be concerned.

The proof of the departure from the truth is manifest in the actions of some of the leading brethren amongst us, when meeting with the institutional societies and fellowshiping them in violation of the word of God. Also, in the plan in operation now calling for peace and cooperation with the liberals who have apostatized from the truth. Blindness has set in; it is a direct result of practicing that which cannot be found in the Bible.....preaching for pay, and rejection of the Holy Spirit. Because of the spiritual blindness, we find the preachers ignorant as well as are those to whom they preach.

Not only have the paid preachers been unable to agree upon the truth regarding the Holy Spirit, (this being proven by their contradictory views about it) but they are seemingly deceived into believing that the system of paid preachers (those who demand and work for a salary) is scriptural. If they do not awaken from their sleep and return to the bible plan of evangelism, they will further deteriorate spiritually. Being paid for doing that which is a necessity (preaching) is harmful spiritually. The sin is not so much taking the money but the unscriptural practice of rotating from one established congregation to another, rather than doing as the Bible teaches, going into the highways and the byways and ESTABLISHING THE CHURCH. Not building upon another man's foundation. II Corinthians 10:16 and Romans 15:20. The preachers overlook these verses; and they fail to OBEY THEM.

When a preacher of the gospel decides to take up the vocation of proclaiming the gospel, the decision should be based upon love of mankind and a great and overwhelming desire to convert and save the lost. Money should be the last consideration in this decision. However, today just the opposite is true. Today men are going to colleges that they might, because of a degree, demand or expect more pay. For what other reason would a preacher of the gospel need a college education? All that is really needed is diligent study and application of things contained in God's word; resulting in a sound education in this important subject; and then work to save his own soul by application of the word; and a firm determination to preach and convert the world. He must take into consideration that the true evangelist will have to travel and move on to another location where the GOSPEL OF CHRIST HAS NOT BEEN PREACHED. Perhaps he will be remunerated for this and perhaps not, but he will preach anyway, always trusting in God for the necessities of this life.

In I Corinthians 9:1-27, we find the teaching on the church's responsibility as well as that of the preacher. We quote verses 15 to 19: "But I have used none of these things: neither have I written these things, that it should be so done unto me: for it were better for me to die, than any man should make my glorying void. For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for NECESSITY IS LAID UPON ME: yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel: for if I do this thing willingly, I have a reward: but if against my will, a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me. What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel. For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more."

Under the system prevailing in the church today where a preacher rotates from one established church to another always being paid for his services, it is impossible for him to be free of the obligations which are a part of working for money. If pressure is put on him to preach certain things, or not to preach on some subjects, his freedom to choose for himself is endangered and usually he succumbs to the pressure. This is proven by the system itself. For if the preachers had fought it or refused to be a party to it, the system could never have become such a corrupting custom. The preacher may for a time justify his actions in not preaching all the truth, but if he continues in it he will be eventually corrupted by it.

The ninth chapter of I Corinthians has been used by most of our paid preachers to justify the system under which they operate today. This chapter does deal with the responsibility of the church in taking care of the evangelists as they work to edify the church as well as to convert the lost. However, it seems the brethren have overlooked entirely the example and the words of Paul as he teaches that the preaching of the gospel is to be done WITHOUT CHARGE. The church should, if it can, support the evangelist in the field. We fail to find in the New Testament where any preacher of the gospel was ever put on a salary. Our preachers use the church to support them in their way of living; which means that if the congregation cannot support him, he moves to an established congregation which can. This is NOT the New Testament pattern.

Christianity in any form or whatever work it may consist of is never practiced or followed because of money paid. The service of a holy child of God is given because he loves his own soul and that of the lost of this world. He loves God and desires to obey and serve Him. In this kind of service there is not money involved. The saving of souls is the mission of the church. All our worship and our work is concentrated and concerned with this holy and necessary endeavor. Our work, which is what we will be judged by when Christ returns, cannot be bought. Our dedication and desire to do the works of God springs solely from love. When a preacher demands or expects payment for his services, he not only is no longer a free man, he is breaking the law of Christ.

To be paid to preach means that the preacher is not free to preach as he believes, and he almost always is led to compromise the truth. He must try and please everyone because his livelihood depends upon it. He must not get the reputation of being a troublemaker, or a dissenter or a legalist. If he refuses to stay within bounds, he will find that he jeopardizes his job, and might well find himself without a place to preach. He becomes dependent then upon the congregation and the Establishment. Therefore, at times he is faced with the problem of preaching the truth and causing some to be offended or else avoiding that which should be preached and preaches something else which will not cause him 'any trouble'. He uses the preaching of the gospel as a means to an end via the support of himself and his family. Yet, the gospel of Christ is not to be preached for a price. A PREACHER DOES NOT CHARGE FOR HIS SERVICES.

The preaching for pay system is devastating spiritually to those who practice it. It vitiates and nullifies the evan-

gelistic pattern of promulgating the gospel of Christ. If true evangelism as set down in the New Testament were practiced today, few.....if any.....would recognize it. The preaching system has contributed to a great extent to the apostasy. It is one of the primary reasons why the preachers turned away from the truth and set up their own ways contrary to that of the New Testament. It stands as one of the leading and paramount dangers to the spiritual welfare of the church at this time; and the church is moving towards a complete apostasy from the truth for this and the rejection of the Holy Spirit.

It is evident that many of the preachers of the church of Christ (they no longer practice Bible evangelism) have corrupted themselves by allowing the paid preacher system to flourish unabatedly and have failed in going into places where the gospel has NOT been preached and establishing NEW congregations. The work of an evangelist is to MOVE, to GO INTO REGIONS BEYOND WHERE THE WORD HAS NOT BEEN TAKEN AND CONVERT THE LOST, and edify the church, train workers, set the church in order, and MOVE ON into other fields where the gospel HAS NOT BEEN TAKEN. Romans 15:20 is not believed nor is it adhered to by those who practice the paid preacher arrangement. The church SHOULD support him as he works in the hard places to convert those who are lost. BUT IF THEY DON'T...he (and those who work with him) work with their hands that they might eat. And trust in God!

If the preachers in the church of Christ are so lacking in spiritual discernment that they cannot agree upon a subject such as the Holy Spirit, which is one of the most vital and important, as well as clear and comprehensive as any in the Bible, then it should make us realize that they could be teaching improperly and/or falsely upon other subjects as well. This is one of the primary reasons why they have failed to edify and teach the church so that it could grow in grace and knowledge; and the reason for the ignorance which prevails amongst us. The members of the church should study as well as question the traditional type of teaching which is so prevalent today. However, it is my opinion from reading and observation of the church as a whole that the members have gone so far away from the truth that there is little hope of converting them back to the truth. As God said long ago to the Israelites, "Reprobate silver shall men call them because the Lord hath rejected them." Jeremiah 6:30.

While the church of Christ is supposed to stand for the truth, many other abuses of the gospel have followed, in the wake of the paid preachers system, which were and are a result of the corruption of the preachers. First and foremost of course is the lack of sound and worthwhile teaching which has left the preacher without knowledge and the church bereft of spiritual good. Without the right kind of food they have failed to grow and to do the works which are commanded by the law of Christ; and the preachers have loved it. It has made their job easier; and "the people love to have it so." Jeremiah 5:21-31.

When the preachers resort to commentaries instead of searching the deep things of God on their own for their sermons; when tracts, booklets, lessons, 'helps', and modern Bibles and books take place of Bible study (wherein we search

the scriptures that we might gain true knowledge), it is absolute proof that there is a famine of the word of God. When such nonsense as playing the scriptures over and over and over on records is advertised as a way to know and understand your Bible, we know that the church has lost its spiritual comprehension. When such things as Impac and other irrelevant material is substituted for diligent study of the word of God, we can know that all those who rely upon such man-made trivia will be bereft of knowledge and understanding of the bible; and those who falsely advertise its merits and sell such rubbish have long ago lost their souls.

Many of the traditional and Unscriptural practices of the conservative part of the church have come into use simply because of the lack of Bible knowledge. It has become a custom to not question the preacher or the elders and they are left to their own devices. Because of this the government of the church by the members of the body of Christ has been taken away from them and a preacher, elder rule has been substituted. We have heard over and over "the men run the church." We know that this is a common practice--but we should ask: Is it scriptural? Can it be proven by the word of God? The preacher, elder rule which has come into being along with the paid preacher system, is a traditional practice with no scripture to support such, and it is as unauthorized as the Herald of Truth or any other man-made innovation.

Although the position of the elder in the church today is defined as one who rules over the church and, in many cases, makes all of the decisions. We notice that the elder is not OVER the church, but is as that of the shepherd over the flock. Protecting, teaching, leading the way and watching over the souls of those whom he oversees. THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH IS IN THE HANDS OF ITS MEMBERS. The elder watches over (or oversees) the work of the church. There is not a scripture in the New Testament which allows the elder to legislate, to demand, to make the decisions, and to do the work of the members. Nor are they to overrule the congregation in scriptural matters. His authority is limited to assisting and watching and correcting the congregation as they attempt to carry out the will of the Lord doing their own works. Christ is HEAD over the church and we obey HIS rule through His law. Righteous men who are elders oversee the works of the members.

I Peter 5:1-6 reminds us that elders are servants of God and of His people. They rule the congregation, but their rule is as an OVERSEER and an EXAMPLE. To make the extent of their rule intelligible and scriptural and to realize its limitations, we quote from verses 3 and 5. "Neither as being Lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." Wherein we are taught that the members of the body are subject to the elders, but in turn the ELDERS are to be subject to the members, and the younger to the older.

The church learns, as a rule, the qualifications of an elder but rarely is he informed as to their function. Christ made it plain that the body of Christ was not to have any

princes over it. ALL are to minister to one another. Matthew 20:25-27: "But Jesus called them unto him and said, ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall NOT be so among you; but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister. And whosoever will be Chief among you, let him be your servant." No one is chief or the greatest. Elders are not to dictate or assume an authority not allowed by scripture. However, they have been guilty of transgressing the law since the belief and practice has grown up amongst us that they are to rule dictatorily over the congregation is in reality, a misconception and not borne out by scripture.

To the contrary, Acts 20:28 reads: "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." It is part of the watching over the souls of the flock to see that they are fed the proper spiritual food that they are not led astray and the "wolves" devour them. It is plain to see that the elders have failed in their responsibility in this teaching, and unscriptural practices have become a part of the church today. The primary reason for this has been because men have been appointed bishops who were not qualified for the job. Too many have been autocratic, proud, puffed up, negligent and ignorant. They have assumed an authority not given them by God. God wanted and commanded that men who were to be overseers and examples to the flock be submissive in their attitude, holy, devout, concentrated and dedicated to the job of keeping out false teaching and division. What a failure!

With or without elders the church GOVERNS ITSELF. If there are no elders, usually the men take over the government of the church (and quite often even the men are denied this privilege and a small clique takes over); however, there is no place in the Bible that gives them this presumptuous power to govern; and ALL the church should take part in making the decisions and solving problems; thereby exercising their spiritual senses. When the women are left out of everything pertaining to the church, they become indifferent, lazy, and fail to carry out their mission in this life by saving the souls of the lost. We forget to remember that everyone must work, must be involved, and must apply the commandments of Christ. This is not reserved for men alone. When there are qualified elders, their rule is to set the example before the church and OVERSEE (watch over) ALL the church as they go about doing the works which are contained in the commandments of Christ.

The church has, through the years, adhered to a sort of traditional practice and belief that it is the sole prerogative of the men only to govern the church, and solve all the problems and make all the decisions. If there are elders, they assume the government of the church. Now this is believed and practiced although there is not one verse in the New Testament that upholds this practice. Herein lies one of the causes for the ignorance and lack of zeal amongst us. God intended that His people be ACTIVE, full of good works, BUSY, and INVOLVED IN THE WORK OF THE CHURCH. This activity and work was not relegated to the men and/or elders; it was

designed in God's plan that the WHOLE CHURCH would participate and INVOLVE ITSELF in the work of the church. There is no male or female in Christ's kingdom. They all stand or fall by their obedience to His word; and His word (the gospel of Christ) must be obeyed by both men and women.

For years now, the church has denied the women their rightful place in the body of Christ. She is practically immobilized by the restrictions of the men; and she certainly is not free to carry out her God-given duties contained in the gospel of Christ. Her freedom to work and teach and participate in the business of the church has been restricted to such an extent she is practically afraid to open her mouth in a Bible class lest she be rudely reprimanded for the slightest infraction of the men's ideas of what she is supposed to say or do. This is no exaggeration; it is the rule. Ask any woman in the church today. The man is to love his wife more than himself. However, as a member of the church he violates this command over and over by his attitude towards her, and his discrimination towards her by not allowing her the scriptural right to help in judging and solving of the problems and business of the church.

Christian men and women should cooperate together in the work of the church; and the lack of zeal, the ignorance, the indifference and the dearth of conversions must be attributed to a great extent, to the discrimination practiced against the women of the church. How can any organization, religious or otherwise, be successful when the greater portion of its members are excluded from participating in the business and the affairs of the organization. Business of a worldly nature which would exclude the greater portion of its members from any involvement in this operation would fail; and the church has failed in discriminating against the women, thereby causing them to lose interest in doing the works which God has commanded them to do.

Strange as it may seem there is not a scripture which forbids Christian women participating in business meetings, meetings where disciplinary action is necessary; or gatherings to choose men for specific work; or helping to solve problems of faith or doctrine. The women have been restricted, as well as hindered, in their obedience to the word of God. The church has been kept in ignorance of the truth and has allowed this unscriptural tradition to operate along with the paid preacher system.

In I Corinthians 5:1-5, Paul commands ALL OF THE CHURCH to gather together to take care of a matter of discipline where a fornicator is to be withdrawn from. At the same time, Paul rebuked the members of the church because of their lack of concern and their ignoring of such a serious transgression of the law. If the women had not been allowed in a meeting of such significance, they would have been denied their right to use their spiritual senses in judging this matter; and furthermore, they would not have been subject to Paul's rebuke. Inasmuch as they were guilty along with the men this could have resulted in a grave oversight, involving their spiritual welfare.

Therefore, the lesson is plain. In bringing this matter

before ALL the church they were all exercised by the problem. They all were made aware of their sin and lackadaisical attitude towards a grave offense against the church; and all were made aware that sin had to be taken care of when necessary, and that it should not be allowed to continue. Furthermore, it would have the effect, by being made public before ALL, of deterring those who might have been inclined to commit the same sin. Therefore, we can see that the gospel in all of its many aspects is for all; and the women as well as the men have their part in the business and the affairs of the church as well as the exercising and application of that which they are taught.

In Acts 6:1-6 we learn that all of the church was commanded to choose seven men to do some necessary business for the church. Verse 5 reads "And the saying pleased the WHOLE MULTITUDE." the multitude means both men and women, all the church was there and had part in the decision involving the act of benevolence. In Acts 1:1-26 we find that when the decision was made to appoint Matthias as an apostle there were women numbered amongst the one hundred and twenty.

In Acts 8:1-4 the CHURCH at Jerusalem was persecuted, and the people scattered; and "they went everywhere preaching the word." In verse 3 we read, "As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and halting MEN AND WOMEN committed them to prison." Herein it is evident that both men and women were persecuted and the women suffered as did the men in being put in jail. In Acts 9:1-2 Paul is busy getting the consent of the high priest that he might bring both MEN AND WOMEN BOUND into Jerusalem. Verse 14. The women suffered the same humiliations, persecution, and confinement as did the men. Women DIED for the cause of Christ the same as the men. Acts 22:4 "And I persecuted the way unto the death, binding and delivering into prisons BOTH MEN AND WOMEN".

If the women had to stand the same vicissitudes and persecutions (as well as die) for Christ as the men, they must have been actively engaged in doing the same work as the men. They were free to work (and suffer) and participate in all that the church was doing. Yet today the brethren do not allow them even in business meetings, much less do they allow them to actively engage themselves in spreading the gospel or teaching and doing ALL the works commanded by Christ. In Acts 26:9-10, Paul punished and cast in prison (as well as persecuted) the saints by following them from city to city. Read this and then try to explain how the church in view of the work which the women did in the long ago, prohibit the women from exercising the God-given right to participate in ALL the affairs and business of the church today. If they died for the cause of Christ, surely they should be allowed to live for Him by obeying ALL the commandments of Christ the same as the men. The attitude and discrimination against the women which is practiced by the brotherhood is not found in the New Testament.

In Acts 14:24-27 there is an account of the evangelistic work of Paul and Barnabas in their travels from city to city. "And when they were come, AND HAD GATHERED THE

CHURCH TOGETHER, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles." Thus the whole church participated in the joy which accompanied the conversion of the lost. The women were not excluded from this meeting. And if the church today consents to the women attending meetings of another nature, where is the scripture which teaches such? The same scripture which allows Christian women to participate in ANY MEETING or gathering of the church for whatever purpose is the scripture that allows her to participate or have a part of ALL.

We have shown thus far that the women had a part in meeting to consider a very serious offense by the fornicator against the church; and she was held as guilty as the men in the lack of concern over the matter. We also see her participation in a meeting to choose certain men for a certain work in Acts 6. Again, she is involved in a meeting concerning the travels of Paul and Barnabas in going from city to city doing the work of evangelists. We see also that the women suffered and died for the cause of Christ the same as the men.

We read in Romans 16:1 to 3: "I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is in Cenchrea. That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you; for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also. Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus."

Was the letter to the church at Rome written to the elders only; or to the men only? Or was it to be read before ALL the church. Did Phebe state her business before the WHOLE church or was it done behind closed doors with the elders only or possibly only the preacher and/or a few men or ALL of them? When that question is answered scripturally we will begin to realize that the privileges of the gospel, the business and decisions of the church WERE FOR ALL THE CHURCH; ALL PARTICIPATED. The custom which we practice today practically isolating the women from having a part in the problems, business and the decision of the church CANNOT BE FOUND IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. Tradition has taken the place of the word of God in the matter of the women being a part of the church in ALL THINGS.

God doesn't divide the women from the men. It is an unscriptural custom of the church today to relegate the women to a non-active position. If women do not have to obey the same law as the men, it is not evident from the scriptures. Is there any distinction in the law? If not, they must be allowed to participate in the business of the church.

We read now in the fifteenth chapter of Acts, verses 1 through 36 where a very grave matter of false teaching came up BEFORE ALL OF THE CHURCH to be settled by all the church. ALL had a part in making the decision and the meeting resulted in much disputation. In the 4th verse the CHURCH (both men and women) as well as the apostles and elders received Paul and Barnabas and the others who came with them to settle the matter. In the 7th verse, there was much disputation; and in the 12th verse we quote, "Then ALL THE MULTITUDE kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had

wrought among the Gentiles by them." The multitude consisted of both men and women; and the fact that the multitude kept silence would indicate that the MULTITUDE had been vocal. Did the women speak? Inasmuch as God does not separate the women from the men there is no reason to believe that if they were allowed in a meeting that they wouldn't have the same privileges as any other member.

In the 22nd verse--after much disputation--we are told, "Then it pleased the apostles and the elders, WITH THE WHOLE CHURCH, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barnabas and Silas, chief men among the brethren." We find throughout this chapter that the men took the lead in the controversy and in the decision, but THIS DID NOT EXCLUDE THE PARTICIPATION OF THE WHOLE CHURCH IN THE MATTER. In the 30th verse of this same chapter, Judas and Silas GATHERED THE WHOLE CHURCH together, and delivered the epistle.

How different would this matter be taken care of today. The women would have NO VOICE IN IT AT ALL, and NO PARTICIPATION in the meeting, nor any part in the MAKING of the decision. All of which would be contrary to the word of the Lord and of the example set forth in these scriptures. There is not a word in all the New Testament excluding the women from participating in the business of the church. If she can at times be allowed to participate in business meetings, where is the scripture which denies her this right at any time?

I Corinthians 6:1-8 very plainly and unequivocally teaches that the CHURCH (both men and women) are to have a part in judging the matters which come before the church. "Do you not know that the SAINTS shall judge the world and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?" The 'saints' includes both men and women. And if the saints are to judge the matters of the church, where do we find that the women are excluded from this very important and vital undertaking? How can the women exercise their spiritual senses unless they have the opportunity? And how can they enter into the joys as well as the problems and the decisions, and learn the scriptural manner in which all should be done, if they are not allowed to participate in judging the problems and making decisions? Are the commandments in these verses applicable for ALL THE CHURCH, or do they apply only to the men? This is the question which should be met and solved instead of quibbling over that which is already so very obvious, if we'll only believe what the Bible says.

We are further taught in these verses that we are not to take a brother to law before the world; and matters involving the church are to be taken before the saints. How can the brethren take the position that we can make a spectacle of ourselves before the world by involving ourselves in law suits with one another when Paul plainly teaches if a brother has been wrongly or unjustly treated or defrauded by a brother he is to accept the wrong. It is better to take the wrong than to appear before the heathen world and reveal the lack of love and unity amongst us. Rather than to tarnish or discredit the

church by flaunting before the public discord and dissension in our midst, we are taught to accept whatever injury the evil brother might do to us.

However, the church not only in a great measure disagrees with these scriptures, but quite openly violates them. A preacher recently ran a series of articles in one of the magazines attempting to minimize and destroy the plain and undeniable truth of these scriptures. But no matter how some will, in ignorance or unbelief, attempt to change or modify the word of God, it stands immutable and unchangeable. It would be well for us to meekly surrender to it, rather than to pervert it and cause some to stumble over them...to the destruction of their souls. This is just another of the many contradictory teachings which we have amongst us and which should be corrected. The church, because it lacks knowledge and Spirit, cannot seem to agree, believe, or come into accord on the simplest of scriptures.

For example, it is a common belief and practice amongst us everywhere that a Christian woman cannot teach a man. That position is just as contrary to the truth as the position that she does not have the right to obey the commandments in I Corinthians 6:1-8. Usually the church resorts to I Timothy 2:11-12 to support them in this pernicious and harmful practice. We quote, "Let the women 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." To follow this to its commonly used application, (and that which the church adheres to) this would mean a woman could not teach even her own unbelieving husband; not her own father or her son.

Furthermore, it would prohibit her taking part in any discussion in any Bible class where there were men present. This would even prohibit the Christian woman from participating in an informal gathering of brothers and sisters in a home or wherever. And it would exclude her from business meetings of any kind; especially from making scriptural decisions about discipline, such as that in I Corinthians 5:1-6 where it would be necessary to use the bible for a rule in judging. If I Timothy 2:11-12 is interpreted to mean that a woman cannot teach a man--then it means she cannot, anywhere or at anytime, teach where men are present, either to correct or enlighten. However, brethren will not go this far in the application of these verses and so they try modifying or changing them to make them more palatable. This type of thing is wrestling scriptures which is forbidden by the Bible.

The church does not adhere STRICTLY to this rule though because most of the churches teach and allow the women to speak in mixed groups. If they so decide, they will occasionally allow her to participate in business meetings. But these verses do not lend themselves to two different interpretations. Either a woman can or cannot teach a man. The scriptures do not teach two different things. If we say a woman cannot teach a man; then she must not teach a man at any time or any place. We would have to take a stand one way or another. So we must look for another meaning to these verses because it is clear and understandable that the Bible does allow a woman to teach a man. The church contradicts itself by saying a woman cannot teach a man and then allows her, both

in mixed Bible classes and in the home, as well as informal gatherings of the members of the church, to express herself by scriptures. When we limit the verse (which verse 12 does not) to, "I suffer not a woman to teach a man," then we violate other scriptures which plainly command and/or allow the woman to teach a man.

Inasmuch as the church does not prohibit the women from speaking in mixed classes; nor prevent them from participating in Bible discussion when men are present--we realize that a woman CAN teach a man. Therefore, we know that verses 11-12 in I Timothy do NOT teach "that woman cannot teach a man"; for the church does allow her to do so. The church limits her teaching when they so choose and uses these verses to silence her if it pleases them to do so; therefore disclosing the fact that they use these scriptures, when they feel so inclined, for questionable purposes.

In Acts 18:26 we read, "And he (the preacher) began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, THEY took him unto THEM, and EXPOUNDED UNTO HIM THE WAY OF GOD MORE PERFECTLY." In these scriptures it is evident that a woman had a part in teaching a preacher who needed to learn that which he did not know. This man was mighty in the scriptures but a woman and her husband TAUGHT him the way of God MORE PERFECTLY. Actually he needed to be corrected in his teaching. If it is a sin for a woman to teach a man, then both Aquila and Priscilla transgressed the law of Christ; he by allowing her to teach a man, and she in doing it. The lesson in these verses is to teach and not to confuse us. Therefore, those who teach incorrectly that I Timothy 2:11-12 teaches a woman cannot teach a man hereby learn a lesson as did Apollos in the long ago, when he was corrected and taught by a woman. If a woman can teach a PREACHER, as these scriptures teach then to say that I Timothy 2:11-12 means she cannot teach a man is to be in error.

Some will try to twist these scriptures by saying that a woman can teach a man if her husband is present, but in this case this would still be a sin because verses eleven and twelve of I Timothy either teach a Christian woman CANNOT teach a man or they don't. They can't be wrested to mean two different things. The difficulty arises with verse twelve because we teach the first part of it and seemingly overlook the last part which is the key to whole meaning a woman can, if she does the work God orders, teach a man. There is one area which is reserved exclusively for the man and that is the preaching (teaching) before the church UPON the first day of the week. In this area, for her to speak or teach, would be to usurp the authority of the man. God gave the man the position of preacher and no woman dares to violate God's authority in this respect least she sin. So she is limited in her teaching in ONE AREA only: when the church gathers together for worship. I Corinthians 14:34 commands the women to be silent "in the church." This could only mean on the first day of the week when the church gathers for worship. Verse 23.

If "I suffer not a woman to teach" is not explained by "nor to usurp the authority over the man, but to be in silence", and is not properly interpreted as well as confirmed by other

scriptures, then it would be impossible for a woman ever to discuss, speak, give the exegesis of a scripture, or to teach a man who has never heard the gospel, the plan of salvation. And, perhaps because of her failure to do so, the man would die in his sins. It behooves everyone then who wants to know the truth to look for another answer to the false teaching upon this matter; and realize that women have to obey the gospel (all of it) the same as the men. They must save the souls of those with whom they come in contact or be lost upon the judgment day. God did not limit her in this because we find the Christian woman not only in the New Testament times taught men, but the church today allows her to speak, as well as give scriptures to uphold what she believes, in mixed classes. Otherwise a class would be of little value to the women if they were completely silenced when there were men present. To pervert I Timothy 2:11-12 from its true meaning and teach that a Christian woman cannot teach a man, comes into conflict with other scriptures.

It is evident that the latter part of verse 12 needs to be analyzed. There is a place where the woman in teaching could usurp the authority of the man. AND THAT WOULD BE UPON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK. The man has been given the authority by God to preach and edify the church; as well as to preach to the lost and to establish congregations. In this area a woman is forbidden to usurp the authority of the man---SHE CANNOT PREACH. When the church is gathered together for worship, we learn: "Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak..." "In the church" can only mean one thing and that "when the whole church be come together." I Corinthians 14:23-34. The church is gathered together on the FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK as God has authorized; and upon that day the woman "is to keep silence in the churches." They can only usurp the authority of the man in the place where God gave him the authority to preach...and that is when the church gathers together for worship upon the first day of the week.

In Luke 17:3-4 we are taught that when a brother sins we are to rebuke him and if he repents we are to forgive him. If a woman cannot teach a man then it would be difficult for her to rebuke a brother without breaking a law which forbids her to teach a man. It would be almost impossible to rebuke a brother without teaching him from the Bible where in he had sinned and in some cases perhaps it would be necessary to give scriptures to teach what to do in confessing publicly (if public) or it might be the brother would have to take care of a private sin before he could be forgiven. Therefore a woman could not obey this scripture if she could not teach a man.

"A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject." Titus 3:10, 14 reads, "And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful." Both of these verses apply to both men and women. If it is necessary to rebuke a man for heresy, members of the church are commanded to do so. God did not draw a distinction between the men and women in the church in this respect. If we are to maintain good works then ALL must obey the commandments of Christ. Inasmuch as our works are nothing more or less than obedience to that which the gospel commands, then both men and women would--if they maintain

good works-- obey the same things. Even as "study to show thyself approved unto God" is a command and is applicable to all the church so are all the commandments. If the women can't exercise and apply the scriptures why study to learn them? There are exceptions to this rule, such as some of the qualifications for elders and deacons, which clearly indicate that they are for the men. The authority God gave the man as elders and deacons, prohibits the woman from having authority in these two areas which God gave him which is not given to the woman.

If the church is to fulfill the scriptures in II Peter 1:1-10 then all the members of the body of Christ would have to obey ALL the commandments of Christ. Inasmuch as gaining knowledge for ourselves and then using it to help convert the lost is the work and mission of the CHURCH--both men and women--it would seem the height of folly to submit the women to this unscriptural and corrupt, as well as man-made custom. Therefore, we must conclude from the scriptures that women, if they obey the gospel, must teach. and there is no scripture which forbids them teaching men; nor confines or limits their teaching to women and children. They must not be hindered in their teaching of the gospel.

In I Corinthians 14:1-40, the apostle Paul attempts to bring order into the worship of the church. Both men and women were guilty of disorder; and both were misusing the gifts given to them by the Holy Spirit. Instead of glorifying God with their gifts they were vaunting themselves and making a show of them. We know that this was being done upon the first day of the week because we find almost the same words used in I Corinthians 5 when the church was ordered to withdraw from the fornicator when they 'came together'. Verse 23 reads, "If therefore the **WHOLE CHURCH BE COME TOGETHER INTO ONE PLACE**, and **ALL** speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned or unbelievers, will they not say ye are mad?"

In verses 27 and 28, Paul silences the men; because they had been disorderly, then teaches the women they are to be under subjection and are not **TO SPEAK IN THE CHURCH**. The men, when the body of Christ assembles, were to do the teaching (preaching) and if the women were to learn it would be from their husbands. In other words the men could talk in tongues (in orderly procession and without confusion), prophesy (preach or teach) or interpret. This would put the women in the position of having to listen to their husbands if they were to learn from the various gifts exercised; and they would not be able to use their gifts---**WHEN THE WHOLE CHURCH WAS ASSEMBLED**. These verses with others from the fourteenth chapter of first Corinthians fit perfectly with verses eleven and twelve from first Timothy, the second chapter. The teaching of Paul in first Timothy is confirmed by the teachings in the 14th chapter of I Corinthians.

The lesson learned here is that the women then and now are silenced when the church comes together upon the first day of the week. God put the preaching in the hands of the men upon the day of worship. Therefore this authority which was given to the men to teach upon that day could and would be usurped if a woman dared to speak. So the scriptures

limit the time and place where a woman must be silent. If there is any other place where her prerogative to teach is denied her, it is not found in the New Testament. To wrest I Timothy 2:11-12 to try and silence the women, and to keep them from their work of teaching is both unscriptural and injurious to her spiritual welfare. Furthermore false teaching in this respect comes into conflict with other scriptures, therefore proving that the verses in first Timothy **DO NOT TEACH THAT A WOMAN CANNOT TEACH A MAN**. The key to the scripture is that she usurps the authority of the man if she speaks in the worship of the church upon the first day of the week. God gave authority to men as elders and deacons, and the women can only usurp authority of the man if she speaks in the worship of the church upon the first day of the week. God gave authority to men as elders and deacons, and the women can only usurp authority where God gave it.

The great potential for good of the women of the church has been practically destroyed by the traditional and unscriptural custom of excluding them from practically everything that goes on in the church. The women are practically immobilized, and their great talent for teaching and for doing other good works, has been nullified to the extent that her hope of eternal life is endangered. Herein is another of the false practices and unscriptural teachings which expose the traditional teaching in the church today. The women need to be about their Father's business the same as any other member of the church. The church will suffer and continue to do so until the women are allowed the privileges which God has ordained for them; to teach, to participate in the affairs of the church, to have a part in the judgments and decisions, as well as helping in solving the problems, which is all part of learning and applying the word to our lives. The talents and abilities as well as their zeal has been quenched, if not almost entirely done away with, because of ignorant and unconverted brethren.

Under the existing pernicious and spiritually vitiating system of preaching the gospel for money practically all of the work of the church is confined to the preacher. When the church resorted to hiring preachers to preach for a salary, and the preacher began using the gospel as a means to support themselves and their families, then evangelism per se began to die. Furthermore it looked better for the preacher to be doing the work of the church inasmuch as that was what he was being paid to do. So not only evangelism faded away and slowly died from lack of usage, but the church also began to depend upon the preacher as a substitute for doing their own work and they slowly drifted into a lazy indifferent acceptance of this unscriptural inactive type of life. They were not encouraged nor were they taught to go out and teach and convert the lost. And so zeal and the work of saving souls of the lost, which all the church should be engaged in, dissolved into a system of leaving the saving of the lost in the hands of the preacher, and his efforts in this work are practically nil. We read from the writings of a preacher here in San Diego recently that in 20 years he had baptized only 72 people. This is what happens to those who preach for pay---no zeal, no love.

The disintegration of the evangelistic form of promulgating the gospel was followed by an apostasy from the

church of those who made the work of the church completely dependent upon money from the members. The members were taught and activated only by the building of big and expensive churches, holding 2 to 3 "meetings" a year, paying a visiting preacher to preach that which the local preacher could do as well, orphan homes, old people's homes, the building of hospitals and colleges, etc. All the work they had to do was dig down into their pockets to help the poor little orphans, or the old people, or support the colleges and other types of that which the church designated as "work", and they felt they had fulfilled their mission in life, and/or done their works. This was pernicious in its effect upon all who did this.

Practically all of the churches have gone into this pseudo form of Christianity. They are on the same road in more respects than one as their liberal brethren. The corrupt system of being paid for services given is part and parcel of the brotherhood today. The work of the members which is so essential to their salvation has been taken over by the preacher and he uses his time in outlining plans for trips to Europe, writing bulletins, holding meetings several times a year which profit practically no one but the visiting preacher stirring up the congregation in a short lived program of teaching children in what is commonly known as a "vacation Bible class" each summer for a period of about two weeks, and that is about the extent of the work of the church. They play and use Christianity for their own questionable motives, and millions go unsaved.

Instead of two weeks each summer, why does not the church engage itself in this same type of work of teaching children of those who are not members of the church, and go from door to door inviting and persuading the lost to attend alien sinner classes ALL THE YEAR ROUND? Why is such work, which should be the work of the church all THEIR LIVES, be confined to a period of two weeks? When that question is answered a great many others which you will find in this letter will be answered. Not only zeal but learning and knowledge died in this corrupt atmosphere, and so the church all about us is dead, inert, unlearned, and filled with all kinds of corrupt and divisive teachings. A church which is not taught so they can grow and gain knowledge that they might do the works so necessary for salvation is a church without salt. Its mission has been aborted and it is useless to the saving of souls. Why learn if they can't use that which they learn? So the people of God have turned away from Christianity into a dormant stultifying and worldly form of life which on the judgment day will take their souls to hell.

When Christianity is used as a method or means to obtain a livelihood for those who preach it, it not only corrupts those who do this but those who allow it. Our preachers need to be converted to the gospel; they should examine their lives to see if they are still in THE faith. God did not intend that man use the gospel for anything except to convert the lost, converting them, training and teaching them, and when this work is accomplished he goes on repeating the same thing until the end of his days. When those converted by his preaching, are trained then some perhaps will follow the evangelist to help him perform his labor of evangelizing.

But our people are not trained nor encouraged in this kind of work which should be a part of the life of all the people of God. That which is practiced today is quite foreign to God's plan; furthermore it will corrupt all those who use Christianity for their own purposes. The church has the responsibility of supporting the EVANGELIST in his endeavors in taking the gospel throughout all the world. But if he does not receive the support necessary then he works to support himself. He doesn't become a CHARGE TO THE CHURCH. Neither DOES HE CHARGE THE CHURCH FOR HIS SERVICES. This is the only method whereby he stays a FREE man and is not obligated to the church in any manner. By God's method he can then always teach and preach the truth regardless of what pressures may be put upon him. This way he does not corrupt himself. And the church keeps itself from sinning also. I Corinthians 8.

Today the gospel is used solely for gain of one kind or another: and is misused and manipulated to keep the preacher in good standing with the church where he is paid for his preaching, as well as with the brotherhood at large so that a living is insured at all times, and he doesn't find himself without a job. The preacher finds himself in the position whereby a good portion of his time is used in keeping the system working which provides him with his livelihood. All the work which he does is motivated to a great extent with this in mind. He cannot be a free man, not even an honest one, when the gospel of Christ is so misused, and it usually completely corrupts him.

The purpose of saving the souls of the lost; and the teaching and preaching to edify the church and cause it to grow, is lost in this abortive custom which is practiced by all the church. No wonder the church no longer works at the job of saving souls and New Testament evangelism is dead, and the gospel has been corrupted to the point that there is a "famine of the word of the Lord". Ignorance and unbelief permeate all of the church. If the church was working as it should it would be baptizing the lost by the thousands; instead there is just a sprinkling of baptisms; and this alone should be indicative of the lost condition of those who follow this corrupt and unscriptural procedure.

Once the church has fallen into ways not cast up by the Lord it is helpless in effecting a change unless they heed the warnings of God and turn away from that which is evil and begin to function as the new Testament church, going from place to place spreading the word, teaching and preaching the pure gospel of Christ. There are two things most necessary to begin a return to the plan of God, first do away with the corrupt preaching system and let the preachers go forth everywhere doing that which God has ordained that they do, converting the lost and establishing churches where there are none. Secondly, they must accept the function of the Holy Spirit in their lives that He may help and comfort them in their work. The church cannot function properly and spiritually without the Holy Spirit in their lives that He may help and comfort them in their work. And above all the church as individual members must learn that they must do the works so necessary for their own salvation; and they also must be busy teaching and preaching the word to the lost of this world.

God scattered the Israelites in His anger and cursed and punished them for their many transgressions and unbelief. But the scattering of God's people served His purpose--THEY MOVED. They took their culture and their faith in the One God into every land wherever they went. The heathen world was made aware there was a greater POWER than man. And that is the work of the church today to go everywhere spreading the gospel, living it, liking it, and turning a lost world to the glorious gospel of Christ. If we do not do this we will be punished. God has spoken. We should fear Him with whom we have to do; and work to spread the gospel everywhere. All of the church must be zealous and do their part in saving souls.

The world then as now was lawless, immoral and unmoral, degenerate, and violent. The conditions that exist today in the world, and the lack of spirituality amongst the members of the church, are similar to those with which Christians were confronted in New Testament times. The difference is that the church then was active, the people were in motion, going everywhere preaching and teaching. THEY MOVED! The gospel was taken all over the world. Today, due to the paid preaching system (and many other unscriptural and worldly practices and beliefs) the church is indolent, ignorant, unconcerned, filled with unbelief and destitute of zeal.

The church is greatly responsible for the terrible condition of the world today. By neglecting to go forth into every hamlet and city, and into the highways and byways establishing the church, converting and teaching the word of God, they have sat idly by and watched the church deteriorate spiritually until there is little resemblance left of the true church of Christ. To prove this last assertion this letter which is being written will not be received gladly; and to a great extent it will be ignored although it contains irrefutable statements, and the truth has not been distorted nor stretched. It should have the effect of awakening the church to its many problems and make them mindful of their great responsibility. This is its intent and hopefully and prayerfully we are sending it to all; though the Bible teaches and illustrates throughout the history of the people of God, that when His people have fallen into the sad spiritual condition of the church today, few heeded the warnings which God sent by his messengers and went backwards instead of forward spiritually. We do not anticipate much change; and we are sure that the church will continue on its wayward and corrupt course until it will lose that which identifies it from the religious world around them.

True Christians should involve all of their lives in living and doing the works of a Christian. There is no time for recreation, vacations, ball games, golf games, societies or worldly organizations or pursuits of any kind, no matter how worthwhile they might seem. We must of course add television as one of the curses of the age. It dulls the mind, and keeps Christians from studying their Bibles. It is an escape and takes up the time of members of the church which should be given in teaching Bible classes and personal contact (work) with the lost, study, and all other works which should be our recreation, our joy, our whole life. "Be ye not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind...." Also "If you lose your life you'll find it; and if you find your life you'll lose it." And it would seem the church had

found its life in worldly pursuits and pleasures in idleness and sin. And the mission of the church, which is for all the members of the body of Christ in the saving of souls of the lost has been aborted.

Furthermore, the church has used its money to build great edifices, unnecessary to the promulgating of the gospel. Colleges have been built by individual as well as collective contributions of the church. This is in violation of the scriptures. Colleges are not a scriptural medium for propagating the truth. God's money and prosperity of whatever kind is to be used for God's people and in the propagating of the gospel. It's that simple. But the church has used it for everything from football, colleges, recreation centers, tennis courts, records, moving pictures; senseless gimmicks to make learning the Bible easier, boxes in the vestibules, trips to the 'holy land' (is any land holy?) promotion schemes to sell books and magazines, orphan homes, expensive television and radio programs, kitchens in the church building, and expensive trips from one church to another to hold exchange meetings. (For whatever purpose it may be, it cannot be explained scripturally.) And so what should be a holy group of people addicted to spreading the gospel of Christ everywhere has degenerated into just another religious group which has lost its saving power.

Most of the money of the members of the church is spent on automobiles, homes, furniture, and vacation trips and trying to live as comfortably and worldly as the world about them. Imagine Paul using his valuable time in involving himself in persuading members of the church to make useless and expensive trips to the 'holy land'? Some preachers have buried themselves more or less in academic pursuits and in teaching in colleges instead of using their talents to involve themselves in spreading the gospel and helping the church to do the same. If the church would desist from saving all their money to support the preacher, they could support evangelists in establishing congregations all over this nation where there are no churches at the present. And where there are churches practically all of them are liberal. And what are we doing about it? Well, it is evident the church is getting closer and moving towards a union, not only with the liberals, but with the religious world at large. We are holding meetings with them. Read Gospel Guardian of August 1974 and see what we mean.

Worldliness of every kind has crept into the church and this accounts for our lack of zeal, our materialistic and carnal approach to everything of a spiritual nature; for preachers who sell the gospel for a price, the using of Christianity for their own advantage and profit and above all is more or less the reason for the disintegration of the church as a whole. The truth of the gospel has almost disappeared and that is one of the prime reasons we differ on almost every Bible question there is; and do not come into an accord upon the simplest scriptures. And also accounts for the movement, now in progress, towards a union not only with liberals but other religious groups. They are meeting now with denominational preachers of various faiths; and seemingly proud and flattered by this association with these men of the world, those who teach and practice their own way and who are enemies of God. Those who do such things have left the faith, and have departed from the truth. This is of course only one of the indica-

tions so apparent amongst us of the apostasy of the conservative portion of the church.

It is not our desire to seem harsh or over critical; but we attempt to speak the truth. That which has been said is true; and while living comfortably or well in this wicked world is no sin, it does become the substitute for the worthwhile and meaningful life of sacrifice, suffering and hard work, which is a necessity if a Christian is to enjoy the reward of heaven. Attending one or two Bible classes a week and listening to the lifeless and repetitious sermons of the paid preacher twice on the first day of the week; and perhaps visiting the sick occasionally and spending the rest of the time absorbed in our daily living, family, etc. is NOT the kind of Christ-like life which brings the rewards of heaven. But it will inevitably lead those thus engaged into a fiery hell. Remember the rich man in Luke 16.

Brother Wm. Wallace writing recently in the Gospel Guardian gave a list of sixty-nine questions upon which the conservative part of the church differs. This is most revealing because if the church was sound and knew and taught the truth most of these differences would disappear. But because we are ignorant and unlearned and bereft of the Holy Spirit (who guides us into all truth), we cannot come into agreement upon the simplest of scriptures. All of these sixty-nine differences are very easily answered if we know and BELIEVED THE TRUTH. The church doesn't know the truth, much less do they believe it. That is why they are being led into a path or way which will take them completely from the truth of the gospel.

The "hat question" is not really a hat question at all. The scriptures are teaching and proving that "it is a shame for a man to have long hair". But for years the brethren have taught that the scriptures were dealing with whether or not a woman has to cover her head when attending worship. They could not seem to find the answer to a very simple part of the Bible. There is no issue here....just plain ignorance or unbelief. This is mentioned just to prove our assertion of the divisive and unlearned condition of the church over a simple Bible teaching.

Everyone of the sixty-nine questions upon issues of the church and which the church does not agree upon are plainly answerable by the Bible. All that is needed is an intense spiritual desire to know the truth and to search the scriptures for it. If we were not dead spiritually and the Holy Spirit still functioned within our mortal frames; and we were in harmony with God in that we have taken care of our public and private sins by turning away from them and walking in the light as Christ walked in the light, then we would be in a position to know the truth. Truth does not vary and does not contradict itself. To have so many divergent opinions and viewpoints upon so many subjects shows so clearly our lack of truth and of our terrible lack of knowledge. This in itself is a positive indication of the low and sickly spiritual condition of the church, which is ready to have the candlestick taken away from it.

However, this very evident truth seems to escape the brethren today. It seems not to concern most of the preachers

or the members that we do not agree upon anything anymore; or that we are in the midst of losing our identity as the church of Christ. Except for the name there is little left of the true gospel. Although most of the preachers amongst us cannot agree upon a vital subject such as the "Holy Spirit" (as well as the sixty-nine questions presented by brother Wallace), it seems to be taken for granted that we cannot come into an accord on them; and we do nothing about this serious lack of unity upon the word of God. We quibble and oppose each other but seemingly cannot agree. There is something terribly amiss amongst us when the brethren demonstrate such a lack of knowledge and such indifference towards it. We might consider for a moment what would have happened to the truth 2,000 years ago if the apostles (12 of them) took for granted that it was not possible to come into accord upon the scriptures and all taught their own opinions. But of course they had the Holy Spirit in them, and that made all the difference. I Corinthians 2:10-11 teaches us that to know the truth we must have the Holy Spirit. The church rejects this although Acts 2:38 and Acts 5:32 teach the Holy Spirit is given to all who obey.

As an example the diverse views upon the Revelation letter is proof of the lack of understanding and knowledge amongst us. Rarely is the Revelation letter studied; and if it is there are almost as many viewpoints and opinions expressed as there are people participating in the class. Why? It is in the Bible and God expects us to know and come into an accord upon it. Therefore it is our lack of spiritual discernment, lack of the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and ignorance and unbelief which accounts for our most evident failure to agree. When we return to the old paths and give up our idols and unscriptural practices and BELIEVE and REPENT of our evident lack of faith and turn again to God, then we will be able to discern the truth. I John 4:6. But without the basic and scriptural belief upon the Holy Spirit and His function within the bodies of the holy people of God, there is no hope of returning to the truth.

This divergence of viewpoints upon so many vital and important questions of the Bible is one of the most apparent evidences of our lack of Bible truth. It accounts for all the things which have been written in this letter. If the church had stayed with the truth then the church would be in accord upon the work of God, and this letter need not have been written. The Holy Spirit is He who has been given to Christians so that they might separate error from truth. I John 4:1-6. So it is evident that God intended that we come into an agreement upon ALL scripture. Our failure to do so is the evidence of our departure from the truth in this generation. I Corinthians 2:9-16 teaches that if the Holy Spirit is functioning as He should within our mortal bodies, and is not grieved because of sin in our lives, we will know the things of God and will be enabled to come into an accord upon them. Read also I John 2:20-21, 27.

"Women teachers" has already been answered in this long letter; and there is no issue here either. Ignorance, wrong teaching, and unbelief accounts for the very ugly blot upon this church in their treatment of the women as an inferior sort of member of the body of Christ. There is no such thing as an "elder question".... It's lack of learning and wrong teaching which has confused and caused the church to err upon the kind

of rule the elder must exercise over the children of God.

When the body of Christ began to weaken spiritually; when the preachers and elders took over the government of the church; and when those who preached learned that Christianity could be used as a means to an end, (usually this was a purely selfish and personal attitude) then all kinds of innovations crept in. Eventually this caused the great apostasy. The very foundations of the church were shaken. Materialism, worldliness, hypocrisy, and false teaching and unbelief was evident throughout ALL of the church. **THE HOLY SPIRIT WAS REJECTED, GRIEVED, RESISTED AND QUENCHED.**

Thus we begin to see how so many preachers can preach upon the Holy Spirit and all come up with something different; and **NONE WITH THE TRUTH.** There was no outcry at the evident lack of unity. None seemed particularly concerned that there could be so many different answers why there was not any accord amongst those who have the responsibility of edifying the members of the church. "What is truth?" "My word is truth." There are **NO** contradictions when **TRUTH** is taught. And that includes the teaching or lack of it upon the Holy Spirit, as well as all other Bible questions.

The lack of the Holy Spirit will answer this apathetic callous indifference to error. Seemingly blindness set in when it came to being aware of the inconsistent and glaring paucity of knowledge amongst some of the leading preachers amongst the brotherhood. This same spiritual blindness was apparent when the thirteen prominent men met with the apostatized brethren and fellowshiped with them in all their sins and wickedness. Now their sins are very great and they need to repent and acknowledge their iniquity before they attempt to continue to preach to others. "Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were a cart rope. Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light and light for darkness, and put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter." And so far none of these men have turned away and repented and confessed their sins in this grave transgression of the truth. Romans 16:17-18. Inasmuch as our learning is dependent upon the help of the Holy Spirit, it is most evident that we have vexed ("grieved" Ephesians 4:30) the Holy Spirit, because our ignorance and lack of wisdom and unity is so obviously manifest. We are commanded not to quench the Holy Spirit; although it is apparent that this has been done. Division and unbelief are the result of this; and both are plainly exposed in the teaching preaching and materialistic approach to everything spiritual in the church today.

Attached to this long letter is a lesson on the Holy Spirit. It is wholly scriptural and it is truth. It is a much needed lesson simply because the church is so ignorant and unbelieving. If the church does not change and turn away from their love of money and reputation, and their many grave transgressions of the law of Christ so that the Holy Spirit may again work amongst them, they will, as the liberals, go further and further and deeper and deeper into sin. God will become their enemy as He was the enemy of the Israelites when they turned from His word. Isaiah 63:10 reads: "But they rebelled, and vexed His Holy Spirit; therefore He was turned to be their

enemy, and He fought against them." If we are wise we can know it is better to have God fighting on our side rather than against us. But so far the church has willfully and inexorably continued upon the road to ruin; and have rejected the work of the Holy Spirit in this dispensation.

In the Old Testament the Holy Spirit did not dwell **IN** the holy people of God. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit was reserved as a special and glorious **GIFT** for those who live holy and righteous lives under the dispensation in which we now live as Christians. However, it is well to note that while not **IN** the saints of old He worked **WITH** them; but He also could and did leave them when they became rebellious and refused to serve God **ACCEPTABLY.** I Samuel 16:14-23 and we quote only one verse, "But the Spirit of the Lord **DEPARTED** from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him." so we find we may have the Holy Spirit but when we reject him and refuse to believe in Him, and when we continue to disobey and no longer serve God, the **HOLY SPIRIT WILL LEAVE, NEVER TO RETURN.** Hebrews 6:1-6 - - Jude 18-20. But the church has gone further and further away from the truth on the Holy Spirit, and now has almost completely deteriorated into a total state of unbelief of the Holy Spirit. They not only reject His function and work in our mortal bodies, thereby denying that He dwells within all holy people of God. Brother Foy Wallace denies in his book practically every scriptures in the New Testament on the indwelling as well as the function of the Holy spirit. He denies and does not believe Acts 2:38, Acts 5:32, I Corinthians 6:19, I Thessalonians 4:8, and Romans 8:9-11.

The Holy Spirit has been busy doing His own work ever since the first chapter of Genesis. He spoke through the prophets of old; he was there whenever miracles were performed; and He was with Samson, Elijah, King Saul, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Moses, Abraham, Jacob and hundreds of others too numerous to mention, doing His part in the plan of God which originated in heaven. Throughout the New Testament He was prominently active in all the works so necessary in establishing the church. In Acts 13:1-2 He directs Paul and Barnabas in their work, speaking to them directly.

He was **WITH** the apostles and He was **IN** them....John 15:17. On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was given to all who obeyed the gospel. Acts 2:38 and Acts 5:32. In II Timothy 1:14 we read, "That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Spirit which dwelleth **IN** us." And I John 4:4 confirms the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. The most amazing thing is that in spite of all the cumulative evidence from Genesis to Revelation, the brotherhood as a whole denies the reality of the Holy Spirit; and rejects and refuses to believe that He dwells within the mortal bodies of all the saints. **IN VIEW OF THE EVIDENCE WHICH TEACHES THAT THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A BEING,** (part of the Godhead) and not a nonentity this is tantamount to unbelief. To confuse the work of the Holy spirit and the word is ignorance or unbelief or **BOTH.**

Inasmuch as we cannot come into accord without the Holy Spirit's help, 1st John 4:1 to 6 and 1st John 2:19-27, and 1st Corinthians. 2:10 to 14 it is not difficult to understand

what our trouble is. We have vexed and rejected the Holy Spirit and the church is left bereft of His help, which is absolutely essential if we are to stay on the straight and narrow way. Those who disbelieve never explain how we "grieve the Holy Spirit." Nor can they explain how the Holy Spirit Helps our infirmities; nor can they explain how He makes intercession for the saints with groanings which cannot be uttered. Romans 8:26 and 27 --Romans 8:11 to 14. One has to refuse to believe the scriptures to continue to insist that the Holy Spirit DOES NOTHING MORE THAN THAT WHICH THE WORD CAN AND DOES DO. So we see they are blinded to the truth because they refuse to believe that the Holy Spirit dwells IN the holy people of God. 1st Corinthians. 2:14 reads "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God" and this verse adds "that the things of God are foolish to him because he can not spiritually discern them." And he flees from the unbelievers and the disobedient who reject Him and confuse his work and the word and because of this the spiritual things are hidden.

You will find most of these scriptures on the Holy Spirit in the lesson attached to this letter, but we inserted them also here that we might make this observation viz; that it is no wonder that the church cannot agree upon hardly any subject. Not only is it difficult to understand why prominent men in the church are making overtures and fellowshiping those who long ago left the truth as well as to the religious world at large. And it is understandable that in transgressing the very plain scriptures which forbid such fellowship, that they should be blinded by their disobedience and unbelief and would desire to cause the church to follow them in their iniquity. Romans 1:32. From the study of the word of God it is plain that that which happened to King Saul (and all who reject the Holy Spirit and disobey and flaunt their sins and are not ashamed) has happened to them. The rejection of the Holy Spirit which has been caused by disobedience and unbelief, is the key to all of our troubles today.

Now that we understand the reason for the discord, the unbelief, the ignorance, the apostasy, and the inability of the conservatives to seemingly agree upon hardly anything; we will go into other teachings upon which we are divided and prove that our differences are not caused because the scriptures cannot be understood at all. Too many brethren amongst the conservatives seem to think it doesn't matter that they hold conservative as well as liberal viewpoints, or if the gospel is taught in more than one way; or that it isn't important or necessary to have the truth. They have left the old paths and turned aside into the muddy waters of unbelief. On that path there is no hope, only misery, despair, and the inevitable torment of eternal damnation. They are carnal and the Holy Spirit has departed from them - Jude 12, 13, and 19.

What about the war question? There is much controversy over this question as well as lack of Bible knowledge. There has been much false teaching about war. The answer is as simple as that it takes ignorance or unbelief not to understand and know the truth. James 4:1-4 in a few sentences dispels forever the false teaching that the holy people of God can kill and maim those whom God has created. "From whence come wars and fightings among you? Come they not hence, even of

your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not." The 4th verse reads, "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."

Romans 8:1-17 is worthy of attention respecting lust and fleshly desires; and we quote, "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity AGAINST GOD: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." Verse 13 reads, "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall DIE: But if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

Inasmuch as James teaches that war and fightings come from the lust of the flesh, it is evident that a Christian cannot indulge in killing or warring without living after the flesh. There are three principles contained in these verses. First that wars and fightings come from the lusts of the flesh (there are no exceptions). Secondly the futility of war; with the explanation from God, that to obtain the spiritual things does not come from war and fighting. And last that to lust and fight and war, is OF THE WORLD, and whosoever is a friend of the world is an enemy of God.

The same motive, lust, which would impel Christians to war and fight amongst themselves, is the same as that which would compel him to fight and war as a FRIEND OF THE WORLD. It is unnecessary to explain that to kill for the world (and/or to be killed) would necessitate being a friend of the world. And this would mean that whosoever should do so would be following the lust of the flesh. And no man goes to heaven by following the flesh; he must follow the spirit; and killing and lust are inimical to the spiritual things of God. It would be unreasonable to suppose that wars of the world are caused by a purer motive than wars in the church. Are we to believe that wars and fightings amongst the brethren are condemned, but the wars of the world have the approval of God? ALL WAR IS CONDEMNED BY GOD.

II Corinthians 10:3-4 agrees perfectly with James 4:1-4 and we quote, "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." Ephesians 6:8-17 gives us the armor that all Christians are to wear throughout all of their lives if they are to see heaven...Our weapons are NOT CARNAL--but SPIRITUAL; against which no power on earth can prevail. With God on our side we fight the great fight of faith; and if we are to overcome and be victorious we must obey the commandments of Christ. There is no time to be a friend of the world; furthermore, it would be fatal to our hope of heaven. "Who so sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed." This is axiomatic. It is an irrefutable principle given in Genesis 9:6--that if a man kills, he shall be killed.

Therefore it is evident from the scriptures that children of God cannot be friends with the world and fight their

battles, without becoming an enemy of God. When a Christian deigns to follow his lustful nature and fight and kill at the command of the government he violates the word of God. Usually Romans 13 is wrested from its true meaning because there are those in the church who are either ignorant or unbelieving (and in some cases both) who are following the dictates of the flesh instead of that of the Spirit. They are blind and cannot see spiritually.

Many, because of this are led to believe that God set up and/or upholds the governments of the world. Where is the law which governs the world? It is NOT in the Bible. It is made by man and the man-made laws of all governments from the beginning until now were instituted by MAN. Many of the laws everywhere are in direct violation of the law of Christ, such as marriage and divorce, killing, murder, war and many others. The law of man serves another purpose entirely. When they do not conflict with the law of God we are commanded to obey them. However, when they do, we are commanded to disobey them. To kill at the behest of any government is to disobey the law of Christ, and a Christian could not obey such without sinning.

Unless we can find in the New Testament, commandments to the effect that Christians can kill, we cannot war and fight. AND THERE ARE NO SCRIPTURES THAT REMOTELY TEACH that a holy child of God could KILL AND MURDER those whom God has created. God says in Romans 12:19-21 that "vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, I will repay." We are to overcome evil with good. James 3:16-18 reads, "For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace."

If we are to be blessed with the fruits of righteousness then we are forced to live a holy, righteous life. War and strife, killing and destroying do not go with peace, gentleness, mercy, love, joy, longsuffering, and faith. Galatians 5:22-23. The fruits of the Spirit, love, peace, gentleness, mercy, etc. cannot be found on the battlefield. Romans 13:1-8 is used by the warmongers in the church to uphold their claim that Christians must obey their government and kill when they are so ordered. It is impossible in these verses to find ONE WORD that remotely suggests that a Christian can go to war and kill. If there was such an exegesis possible then we would have a contradiction of the scriptures. All the scriptures which have been used on this page and the preceding ones definitely teach that God is our Avenger and that we are to live peaceable, holy, active lives in trying to save the lost. Furthermore we are taught that war and fighting comes from the lust of the flesh; and a Christian cannot live by the flesh and inherit heaven.

It would be a contradiction of all Bible teaching to believe that Romans 13 teaches that God ordained or was responsible for, or set-up or gave divine approval to the governments of man. From the beginning, God has had His own people who followed His laws. The governments of men began with Nimrod and have always originated in the mind of

man. God has His kingdom today, Christ is Head over it, and the laws which govern the church come from the Bible. The devil is prince of this world John 14:30 and John 12:31. It would be contradictory to teach that God would ordain that over which the devil is prince; and over which worldly and wicked men rule under Satan's influence and dictates.

For these reasons we would have to look for a different meaning of Romans 13:1. The word 'ordain' has many meanings. One of which is "to allow". This is what God does. He allows the wicked and man-instituted governments to flourish and rule under Satan's leadership. However, the Bible teaches that God's power is extended not only over His own kingdom, but also (when He desires) He interferes and utilizes and manipulates the devil's kingdom in carrying out His own (God's) plans. The fourth verse of the thirteenth chapter clearly confirms this exegesis.

"For he (the powers or the rulers) is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he (the ruler) or government beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the MINISTER OF GOD, A REVENGER TO EXECUTE WRATH UPON HIM THAT DOETH EVIL." First we learn that the governments of the world carry the sword: and history and present day events substantiate this statement. The world has always been at war and always will be. However, inasmuch as the governments which indulge in war for their own profit and to fulfill their lust for money and power, are in the devil's realm, God utilizes this great power to His own purposes. The world is a REVENGER to execute God's wrath against ALL WHO DO EVIL. A confirmation of this will be found all through the OLD Testament and in the Revelation letter. God has so ordained that the powers that be, serve His purposes when He so wills.

The great power of Nebuchadnezzar was broken by God. The great Pharaoh of Egypt saw and felt the power of God; and he was finally drowned along with all the chariots and men who followed with him. Also the women of Egypt constrained by God to give up their jewels, their gold and their raiment to the people of God before they left Egypt. Exodus 3:21-22. God gave Samson power over his enemies; and we could go on for pages to tell of the power of God as He utilized and interfered in the affairs of the devil's kingdom. Daniel 2:21 reads, "And He changeth the times and the seasons: He removeth kings and setteth up kings; he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding." Daniel 5:21 confirms this.

Romans thirteen also teaches that God still interferes in the affairs of the world; and he still utilizes that which is in the devil's realm for His own purposes when He so wills. We could continue along this line but this is sufficient for the purpose. The Bible does not teach that God set up the governments of the world. He did ordain that their power should be and is utilized by Him to execute His wrath upon the rebellious and the wicked. This includes also His own people if they do evil. He did not intend that this power of the world be used wherein His own people would be led into the false belief that they should be a party to the vengeance that God designed for the world in executing His wrath against the wicked. This

is proven when He said "Vengeance is mine". Therefore God's people could be free of hat and vengeance and be able to pursue their holy, dedicated, and active lives in His service in saving the world. He never designed or does the word of God teach, that Christians should go forth and take part in the killing of the wicked. This was reserved for those who are a part of the devil's kingdom, and who are already lost.

In Revelation 6:1-10 and we quote the 4th and 8th verses, "And there went out another horse that was red: and power was given to him that sat thereon to take peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another: and there was given unto him a great sword." Verse 8, "And I looked and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death; and Hell followed with him. And Power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger and with death, and with the beasts of the earth." While the rulers of the earth may make war, death, hunger and the sword follow in its wake and their sword, which is wielded by man in direct defiance to God, is used by God to EXECUTE HIS WRATH AGAINST EVIL DOERS. Christians have no part in this.

In Revelation 9 chapter 1-21 again God's power over the evil spirits is manifested by using them to carry out His commands in punishing evil men. God visited plagues upon the wicked and unrepentant and we read this in verses 20 and 21. "and the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk; Neither REPENTED THEY OF THEIR MURDERS, NOR OF THE SORCERIES, NOR OF THEIR FORNICATION, NOR OF THEIR THEFTS." In conjunction with this read chapter 13 of Revelation, it will be revealing.

In prophecy Isaiah 2:1-4 we learn for our edification that when the house of the Lord is established in the last days that God's people would no longer lift up the sword against other nations "neither shall they learn war anymore." Wherein we are taught that God's people were not to go to war anymore. If they couldn't war against the corrupt, heathen nations at the commandment of God, as once they did, surely there is no scripture to prove that they can kill their fellowman at the behest of an earthly ruler, in these last days. If the church will make an honest and diligent study of the Bible that they might come into the truth of this particular subject, it will be found that those who teach and advocate the killing of mankind by participating in wars made by these who know not God, have been teaching falsely.

Some will say that we must obey our government. Peter told the authorities when they commanded him to desist from preaching the gospel, "Shall we obey man or God"? The holy child of God will not transgress the commandments of Christ even if it means resisting those in high places. However, God has exceedingly blessed the church by allowing us to live under a benign government, one which has provided an escape from this dilemma by passing a law which allowed those who were true followers of Christ to lawfully refuse to participate in wars and fightings. This law is for those who can

prove that they conscientiously object to killing because their faith is God and His commandments would make it impossible to conscientiously partake of that which is inimical to a pure and holy life. So there is no scriptural excuse for killing individually or collectively.

A great deal of this letter has been devoted to this subject of Christians killing at the behest of the government under which they live. And rightly so because there is so much false teaching, as well as prejudice in favor of it; and it is time that the church of God came into a realization that they cannot continue in their traditional and unscriptural view points without losing their souls. If we can't understand the position of a Christian under a government which uses its sword for whatever purpose it deems right, then we are carnal and cannot see afar off. We miss the whole purpose of our lives as holy people of God. We should be busy day and night doing the works of God. The works of God do not include killing those whom we are called upon to save. The mission of the church is to save the lost not kill them.

Because this question is so greatly misunderstood, and so many do not believe the Bible but approach the subject of killing from a carnal viewpoint, it seemed most important and vital, if the church is to return to the old paths, that this problem should be once and for all taken care of. Even Christ couldn't make the unbeliever believe, and neither can that which is written here MAKE the carnal man change his thinking. Only a meek and humble and contrite spirit, one which is more concerned about going to heaven when this life here is ended, than with killing his fellow man while here on earth, will be susceptible to the message of peace and love taught in the commandments of Christ.

Christ was called the Prince of Peace. We cannot live peaceful, busy lives in the service of the Master, and take time out to involve ourselves in the bloody, inhuman act of killing those whom Christ came to save. Our duty is to teach, preach and work to save the lost. War and fightings, violence and bloodletting are not a part (and never could be) of a holy people. Peace and love are an intricate inviolate part of a Christian's life. Peace is a fruit of the Holy Spirit and cannot be found where there is war and violence. We have a battle to win while here on earth and it is the battle to save our souls. The brethren should be more concerned about their souls and leave the world to their own devices. "Entangle not yourselves in the affairs of this life..." II Timothy 2:4.

"Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's." Our lives belong to God. Our citizenship is in heaven. No man on earth has any power over us to make us do that which the commandments of God teach us not to do. We give to the government under which we live obedience in all things which pertain to our physical and material lives. Those things of a spiritual nature come before that of the earthy. So when a Christian is faced with making a choice between God and the government, he MUST CHOOSE GOD. It is very simple if we believe in God and TRUST in Him.

In looking at the church as a whole it has gone far

away from the truth. Fundamentally we have strayed away from Christ's commandments into a maze of traditional and unscriptural teachings and practices. Individually we have become an ignorant people (if not, not only the 69 differences and false teaching Which brother Wallace Mentions, but many others as well, could not have become our way of life); and because of ignorance, we could not grow and develop into adults spiritually. Therefore not only are we ignorant, we are not spiritual. There were eight souls saved when Noah entered into the ark. How many brethren today would be saved in such a divided and unbelieving state? The war question is only another subject which because of ignorance and unbelief, the church in many instances has accepted. It is just another manifestation of how far the church has deviated from the truth.

The church agrees on very little anymore. For instance, public confession has become a rarity amongst the church members. In most places, it is discouraged and many places discontinued almost entirely. We can only say a few things about this and other subjects as this letter has attained a length which is prohibitive. Originally much of what is in this letter was intended for a book but there is not time for that. Therefore, we must get ready to bring it to an end. However, there are a few things on confession which are most applicable and necessary at this time seeing that the church is full (everywhere) of those who have not confessed their public sins and therefore are in sin. Public sin must be repented of and confessed publicly.

The principle of public confession is set down in the Old Testament and is continued in the New Testament. Leviticus 5:1-19 and we quote verse 5, "And it shall be, when he shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that he hath sinned in THAT THING." Numbers 5:7 confirms the above verse and we quote, "Then THEY SHALL CONFESS THEIR SIN WHICH THEY HAVE DONE: and he shall recompense his trespass with the principle thereof..." Nehemiah 9:1-38 (but especially verses 1 to 3) show all Israel stood and confessed their sins, and the third verse reads, "And they stood up in their place, and read in the book of the law of the Lord their God one fourth part of the day; and another fourth part the CONFESSED and WORSHIPPED the Lord their God."

We find here that the sin committed was confessed when all Israel was assembled. Furthermore, public confession was followed by worship. The same principle of cleansing oneself before worship under the Christian dispensation is found in I Corinthians 11:23-34, and we quote the 28 and 29 verses, "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthy, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." So one must be clean when partaking of the Lord's Supper. Of course, this includes both private and public sins. However, if one is careless about confessing the sins which they have committed publicly, no doubt the private sins would be neglected also.

This would mean, of course, that a Christian's prayers would be hindered, and if continued in sin indefinitely, it would mean that the Holy Spirit would be grieved and God would not hear. Therefore, confessing the sin or sins which

have been committed and which are of a public nature, is an absolute necessity before one can be forgiven by either the church or God. The principle is taught in Luke 17:3 and Matthew 18:15-17. Therefore if a sin between two brethren must be taken care of between the two, and if the offender repents, he is then forgiven; then the same principle, if followed, could and would take care of more than two or three brethren. And if a sin is against the church, it would have to be taken before the whole church. the members of the church could not forgive the sinner if he did not specify his sin. It is necessary to confess "the sin which they have done."

In II Corinthians 7:7-16, there is an example of all the church confessing their lack of mercy and their absence of concern over a fornicator in their midst. They repented and all of them told all the church about it. "Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness is wrought in you, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge! IN ALL THINGS YE HAVE APPROVED YOURSELVES TO BE CLEAR IN THIS MANNER." For Paul to commend them and to KNOW they had cleared themselves of their sins, HE WOULD HAVE HAD TO KNOW WHAT THEY HAD CONFESSED. This account is similar to the account in Nehemiah 9:1-3, then all Israel confessed their sins publicly.

If more of this soul cleansing was done today, it would surely do away with a great many sins. It would be helpful in getting the church back into the old paths. God is not pleased with His children when they do not obey Him. When the church does not consistently resort to public confession, repenting, and exposing their sins that they might be cleansed and the church refreshed, their prayers might be hindered. Sins are not done away with because the sinner is sorry for the sin. Public confession is the only scriptural method whereby the one who has sinned publicly can have his sins forgiven. To neglect to confess, not only that one has sinned, but also what the sinner has done, means that the sin is not forgiven. Public sins are forgiven when the sinner has cleared himself of the sin and told the church the sin or sins committed. How could the church forgive the sinner unless he was made aware of the sin?

There are those in the church who will argue against as well as refuse to accept the scriptures in that when public confession is made, the sin must be defined or explained. However, the Bible teaches that the sinner must repent of the sin before forgiveness can be given. Luke 17:3-4. Unless the one who is confessing sin tells wherein they erred, it would be impossible to know whether or not they had repented. And there is no forgiveness without repentance. The whole church was gathered together and told about the fornicator. No one hid anything. Some of the members had trouble with their carnal natures and Paul had to rebuke them because they were reluctant to forgive the repentant brother. II Corinthians 2:1-11. Unless we knew the nature of the sin perhaps we would never know either, whether our carnal nature would prevail over our spiritual, if we weren't tested. We could not be tested

unless we knew WHAT the sinner had done, and see if we were willing to forgive him regardless of the nature of the sin.

The preachers are more or less responsible for the false as well as the lack of scriptural teaching upon this very important subject. There wouldn't be so many adulterers and adulteresses, twice and thrice married, sitting amongst the Saints if strong and sound preaching was given upon this important matter. There wouldn't be liberals who have apostatized away from the truth amongst the Saints and who have not cleared themselves by confessing their many sins and their wayward conduct if the preachers exposed them and taught they should publicly confess their sins. Therefore, the church is full of sin and many will be held responsible on the judgment day especially those who have not warned those who are sinners and taught public confession. Read Ezekiel 3:17-21.

The practice of segregation is a blight upon the church and the church will be punished for this inexcusable and unjustifiable offense against the colored brethren. We have not taken heed to the scriptures in Galatians 3:28, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: FOR YE ARE ALL ONE IN CHRIST JESUS." We do not have to look to the south to see this pernicious and unrighteous practice flourishing in all of its ungodly aspects but segregation of the black brethren is practiced practically everywhere. The colored brethren are not rejected because of any offenses they have done but because they are black. There is neither Jew nor Greek. God is not a respecter of persons.

Segregation is caused by prejudice and by false teaching and lack of love, all of which are fatal to a Christian's hope of heaven. Then, too, we find prejudice amongst the Negro brethren also. However, the Negro has been so discriminated against that one can at least sympathize and understand his prejudice although not condoning it. If the brethren as a whole had made the effort to include the colored brethren in their fellowship and had given them the brotherly love they should have and had watched and worked with them, the prejudice would have disappeared on both sides. Furthermore, the riots, the burnings, the killings and the violence so prevalent amongst these discriminated people would have been greatly minimized if the church throughout the United States had been busy working and converting them to Christ which they have not done. Instead they ignored them and practiced segregation and failed to give them love and fellowship as Christ commanded. So the poor Negro has been neglected. They have not been taught the pure gospel of love and converted to Christianity and has taken the violent way which will in the end be his destruction.

We have practiced something which is entirely foreign to the gospel and have segregated ourselves from our Negro brethren. The preachers have failed to teach the proper love for ALL the brethren and have encouraged as well as practiced segregation and discrimination against the race as a whole. For this God will punish those who have disobeyed His law. Sin and division cannot enter heaven and those who have shown lack of love and have separated themselves because of color from their black brethren are guilty of both. It is time we

got busy practicing the law of Christ and turn from the error of our ways and clear up this unchristian unbelief and practice. We are taught in Christ's law that we know we have God when we love the brethren. Our lack of love for our Negro brethren is demonstrated by our unchristian actions.

Does the church practice segregation in the south? We know they do. They will be held accountable to God on the judgment day for this. The truth of the gospel cannot be taught if love and fellowship are left out of it. Would Christ have practiced segregation if He were here on earth? In Gal. 2:9 to 14 Peter did that which most of the church of Christ lends itself to, he segregated himself (with others of the brethren) from his Gentile brethren. Whether there were Negroes amongst the Gentile brethren is not important. The point is and the lesson so designed for us is that separation from the brethren of whatever race or nationality is forbidden by God. Peter withdrew and separated himself from these brethren because of prejudice and fear (same reasons the brethren today excuse themselves for their shameful actions), and Paul rebuked them BEFORE ALL, including Peter, because they "WALKED NOT UPRIGHTLY ACCORDING TO THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL."

Will brethren who persist in this pernicious and ugly separation of brethren in direct violation of the scriptures inherit eternal life? Would Peter if he had defied Paul and persisted in his ungodly and prejudicial violation of the truth and refused to turn away from such have inherited eternal life? All sin is a transgression of the law of Christ. And we are commanded to fellowship with all those who walk in the light of Christ's teachings. 1st John 1:7. How can we hypocritically say we love the brethren and refuse to associate or fellowship with them. This execrable and detestable transgression of the law of Christ should be taken care of and the brethren taught and exhorted to turn from this evil, repent of this sin, and begin to remedy it by obeying the gospel.

To a great extent the preachers and elders are responsible for this horrendous blot of unscriptural action against their colored brethren. If they would have courageously, not only in the south but everywhere taken a stand against such a cruel demonstration of prejudice and lack of love, teaching the truth and rebuking those who segregated themselves walking not uprightly before God, they would no doubt have converted thousands of the Negro people to Christ. And today the black picture of violence, demonstrations, riots and murder might have been if not completely avoided, at least minimized. Those who set the example by practicing segregation against a brother because of the color of his skin, do not walk uprightly before God. No man shall enter heaven who divides the people of God for any reason whatever. The apostles as well as Christians gave their lives to promulgate the gospel; and if showing love to our fellowman and fellowshiping our brethren in spite of hatred and opposition, it might have, and no doubt would cause, is no excuse before God or man for refusing to stand upon the word of God and fight for the truth.

Another of the many reasons that the church walks not uprightly and according to the gospel of Christ is the lack of sound teaching and preaching. When our own preaching

and teaching in the church are practically profitless as far as growth spiritually is concerned, it is time for us to take a look at ourselves. Lack of study is indicative of lack of interest and the result is spiritual apathy and indifference. And this is the overall picture of the church. What is taught and preached lacks spirit; it does not edify and therefore the church cannot grow spiritually. When the people of God are not taught properly and are bored and restless, they will turn to worldly pursuits and interests. And they are not taught properly nor scripturally on practically every subject being considered in this letter. And they are bored with what they hear (ask them), and they are unlearned.

The church of Christ no longer has, nor does it teach TRUTH. The proof of this lies in the lack of knowledge and the division amongst the conservatives upon almost all subjects. **TRUTH CANNOT BE SUPPORTED BY ANYTHING EXCEPT TRUTH.** Which means of course that whatever we believe or teach, we must be ready and willing to uphold by the scriptures. But is the church in a position to do this? Can those who practice segregation prove such by the Bible? Can the preachers who teach that the men "run the church"; and who usually practice an elder-preacher rule, prove this type of rule by the Bible?

The members of the church have a right to question and ask for Bible answers from those who are doing the preaching. But this is considered almost tantamount to heresy by the preachers of today; and if a member persists in such he is usually slandered and called a "trouble-maker". What is even worse is that more often the church is completely indifferent to the differences and diverse and contradictory stands upon any and almost every subject which is taught in the congregations. We should know our Bible and we should be ready and willing to take a stand for the truth. We are commanded to "contend for the truth". But this can hardly be done seeing that the church is ignorant and the preachers are content to have it so. Individually and collectively we should take scriptural stands upon all subjects as well as those that are mentioned in this letter. But this is a rarity because "there is a famine of the word of the Lord"; and it is evident that the church no longer **STANDS FOR THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL.**

Are we to completely lose our identity? It is the conclusion of the church in Spring Valley that this is more or less already true, if we'll face the facts. The evident and alarming confirmation of this statement is proven by the manifest unscriptural fellowship with the institutional societies; and the many diverse viewpoints as well as superficial type of teaching upon almost all subjects. Also seemingly there is not too much opposition to fellowshipping the apostatized brethren manifested by the church. The division within the conservative ranks is already a fact, and the apostasy evidenced by the tendency of preachers in the church to associate with those in the religious world who teach and practice that which cannot be found in the Bible.

We believe God is ready to remove the candlestick if the church does not repent and turn away from the paid preacher system which has corrupted practically all those who have lent themselves to it, and return to the new Testament

plan of evangelism, as well as correct and restore the TRUTH on all that is incorrectly taught and that which has been perverted. It would seem the church, which is unlearned, weak, torn from within by false teaching as well as the divisive plans of some of the leading brethren who are working to bring a union or alliance between the institutional societies and conservatives, is ill equipped to fight such dangerous innovations. It is evident more and more churches are moving towards this unholy alliance with the apostatized brethren. Some are in the process of losing their identity and some have already lost it.

The evidence of this condition is monumental. In San Diego and environs the situation is acute. Practically all the churches have apostatized from the truth; and the condition of those calling themselves conservatives is that of most of them as represented in this letter, and there are not many of them. And they are without zeal and plagued with all the unscriptural practices and the lack of sound teaching evidenced by the conservative churches everywhere. When money is practically the sole incentive for existence; and the goal is supporting the preacher and building expensive edifices; and the work consists of little except holding "meetings" which profit little, and their only excuse for being held at all is primarily monetary, then it is time we awakened from the deep sleep which we are in and realized our forlorn and lost condition.

We read in Judges 16:20 these words, "And she said, the Philistines be upon thee Samson. And he awoke out of his sleep, and said, I will go out as at other times before, and shake myself. And he wist not THAT THE LORD WAS DEPARTED FROM HIM." It is high time that the church awakened from the deadly apathy which has enveloped it before it is too late. Or perhaps it would be well to ask **HAS THE LORD ALREADY DEPARTED,** and are we as Samson, because of our sins, not aware of it? It would seem that the tongue talking (which is being accepted by some here in San Diego), and casting out of demons and the belief in prophesying and other devilish manifestations, would be a warning to all of the body of Christ. It is an awesome evidence of the awful and devilish corruption of the church. We should awaken from our complacency. These people who have completely left the truth were once a part of what is known as the conservative church.

And we continue further to outline some of the differences amongst us by asking where can we find such organizations as "foundation supporting preachers" or "United fund drives" in the Bible. It's almost impossible to believe that such things as mini-skirts, swim suits, recreation resorts, wearing of shorts by members of the church publicly (modesty?), smoking, social drinking, working in the liquor industry, whether Christians can participate in killing their fellowman, attending movies, buying church bonds, dancing, fellowship halls, litigation against brother, the question of divorce and remarriage, as well as the many and varied and diverse views and teaching of the Revelation letter, should trouble the church. These are only a small fraction of the questions upon which we are divided.

The above is only added proof of what has been said in this letter. Everyone of these questions are answered by the Bible and are easily understood. The Bible has all the answers.

Our ignorance and unbelief is displayed in all of its inconsistent and distressing aspects by these questions and these differences. If the church was taught properly; if it had continued walking in the light of the truth, these questions would never have had to be asked; and if they were they would have been answered by the word of God. No wonder the church, divided upon practically everything, is worldly and unbelieving and has practically lost its identity as a church of Christ.

It is evident that the church has fallen upon evil days and is no longer guided by the Holy Spirit. In rejecting the Holy Spirit the church has in reality rejected God and Christ. How long will God suffer such a condition without punishing the evil doers? Because punishment is inevitable. The bible teaches over and over that when God's people reach the low spiritual state, where discord, division, complacency, worldliness, covetousness and ignorance of His world are rampant, then the candlestick is ready to be taken out. Revelation Chapters 2 and 3. Read this and see the church of today. It should frighten the church but it is doubtful that they can even believe or apply these scriptures to themselves.

When the Holy Spirit is rejected then knowledge and truth disappear, zeal lags and blindness sets in. Without the Holy Spirit we cannot separate truth from error. 1st John 4:4-6 teaches the Holy Spirit makes it possible for the church to have the truth and come into an accord upon it. But the church does not believe these scriptures. 1st John 2:20-21 reads "But ye have an unction (Holy Spirit) from the Holy One, and ye know all things. I have not written unto you because ye know NOT the TRUTH, but because ye KNOW it, and no lie is of the truth." With the aid of God's Gift we can KNOW ALL THINGS, and can separate lies from truth.

It is manifest even to those who are not spiritually alert that the church does not agree upon the truth, in fact has little accord or learning or wisdom, and is indifferent, as a whole, to the obvious and plainly discernible division amongst the conservatives. That most of the conservatives will follow those brethren who are in favor of a coalition or alliance or a "partial fellowship" with the institutional societies, who are the enemies of God, is a foregone conclusion. The proof of this is that without the Holy Spirit they cannot win the battle of faith. God is not on the side of those who have rejected and vexed and grieved and resisted His Holy Spirit. And without God as our Helper we are lost.

The Israelites lost their battles when God wasn't with them and we will lose the battle to preserve the truth and keep the identity of the church in these perilous times unless we awaken to the danger and the spiritual blindness which has enveloped practically all of the church. If we do not do this, and this we cannot do without the aid of the Holy Spirit, the prospects of keeping alive the TRUTH of the GOSPEL in this generation are slim. We must come into a knowledge of the truth, and all speak the same thing and be of the same judgment and the same mind. When this is done we won't be quibbling over practically every subject, but we will all be in accord as God has commanded.

We must turn back to the old paths, and begin taking

steps to change our materialistic and traditional teaching and preaching which prevails throughout the brotherhood. If not, the wrath of God will be aroused against the children of disobedience. Ephesians. 5:6-18. READ In Jeremiah. 23:1-40 and we quote verses 11 and 12, "For both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the Lord, Wherefore their way shall be unto them a slippery ways in the darkness: they shall be driven on, and fall therein: for I will bring evil upon them, even the year of their visitation, saith the Lord," Brethren let's turn away from the evil of our doings before it is too late. These words are words of warning to us in this generation if we will but heed them.

The Spring Valley church of Christ believes there are a few who have not defiled their garments of righteousness; "and they shall walk with Me in white; for they are worthy." Rev. 3:4 We believe as this verse teaches that only a few have kept their robes spotless and are walking in the light of Christ's commandments. The church must ask itself if (individually) they can prove that that which is practiced and taught in their particular congregation is scriptural; and that they can confirm it by the Bible. If we are to all "speak the same thing" and "be of the same mind and same judgment" we must be sure that those who do the preaching and the teaching "speak as the oracles of God." If the church is watchful and diligent in their study there won't be sixty-nine questions (each one probably having 69 answers) because the people of God having knowledge will all come into an accord as the gospel commands. 1st Cor.1:10.

"Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, LET US WALK BY THE SAME RULE, let us mind the same thing." Phil. 3:15-16. Verses 18-19 read, "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, THAT THEY ARE THE ENEMIES OF THE CROSS of Christ. Whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." The church must study and be watchful of those things which are taught. The preachers need to heed that which Paul has said above, and evaluate their motives and their lives by the scriptures. The emphasis is upon how much the salary will be; and how much the collection is each week, rather than how many souls have been added to the kingdom. The bulletin boards confirm this statement.

When men make their salary the most important concern; and who rotate from one established church to another, rather than taking the gospel into the regions and states where it has never been heard, the great purpose of God in spreading the word and converting the lost is defeated. And because of the paid preacher system amongst us evangelism is practically dead. Before the church can fulfill its mission upon this earth the paid preacher SYSTEM must be abolished: before those who preach can be free men dedicated to promulgating the gospel EVERYWHERE, evangelism (bible evangelism) must be reinstated. When this is done the pure word of God will be reinstated; and the traditional and materialistic concept which is taught in almost all congregations, will disappear. And this cannot be done until there is an acceptance of the

spiritual things of God; and a recognition of the work and function of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

In Romans 15:20 we read, "Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, NOT WHERE CHRIST WAS NAMED, lest I SHOULD BUILD UPON ANOTHER MAN'S FOUNDATION; But as it is written, To whom He was NOT SPOKEN OF, they shall see: and they THAT HAVE NOT HEARD SHALL UNDERSTAND." Paul preached and practiced New Testament evangelism, and these verses are for the preachers of the gospel then and NOW. And the preachers of the church of Christ neither heed nor obey them. II Corinthians 10:15-16 and we quote the 16th verse, "TO PREACH THE GOSPEL IN THE REGIONS BEYOND YOU, and not to boast in another man's line (province) of things made ready to our hand." Paul, nor any other evangelist goes to the congregations which have already been established; but he took it into regions where it had never been heard. Men serve their bellies instead of serving and fulfilling the purpose of God. They use the gospel to provide them with the things of this world; instead of preaching to save the souls of the lost in places where it has not been heard.

This letter is not an indictment of all preachers perhaps; but it is a clear and honest attempt to bring before the church some of the very apparent digressions, trends, and departures of the church as it is today. Many have warned before of obvious drifting away from New Testament truth. Every preacher should evaluate his life and its motives by the New Testament pattern. Every member of the church should get busy questioning, studying, and begin working at the great and glorious mission of converting the lost before it is too late. The warnings being given by others as well as the Spring Valley church of Christ, should not be dismissed as the rantings or the ravings of those who do not know what they are talking about. To do this would not be wise; furthermore, it would not be true. We are willing as a body of Christians, who are dedicated to promulgating the gospel, and who are hopeful of attaining eternal life in the hereafter, of contending for and upholding everything that has been written in this letter.

Furthermore, proof of much that has been written, especially the deterioration of some of the conservatives in their willingness to fellowship those who long ago left the faith, and who are working towards an alliance with those whom God had commanded for us to avoid and stay away from, is found in the pages of the Gospel Guardian. This danger to the church cannot and must not be minimized nor overlooked. That division of a serious nature is already here amongst the conservatives because of this is not to be denied. That the paid preaching system, which has helped to corrupt and weaken those who practice it as well as those who listen to it, will be a serious impediment in the way of solving as well as acting to prevent the almost inevitable apostasy, goes without saying. there are too many unconverted preachers and members of the church, who are earthy and worldly and whose belly is their God, to expect very much help in this great battle which threatens the foundation of the church. In fact, it is possible that not too many are aware or interested or concerned about it. If they do not awaken from their sleep their souls will be lost.

But we are concerned and therefore, we are trying in our humble way, to do that which we believe is most necessary, in attempting to get before the church, that which should be known by all. Whether there will be cooperation from the preachers who receive what is written here, we do not know, But we will be praying that there will be some who still walk in robes of white and who will be concerned and encouraged to take steps towards a change in our traditional and unscriptural practices in areas which are now a hindrance to growth of the church. Let's return to the old paths that we might better please God in demonstrating to Him that we still believe in the TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL. And before we can do this there must be a revival of faith in the teachings of Christ and a unity upon the word of God. The Holy Spirit must take His rightful place in our lives if we are to be holy and acceptable unto God.

The Church may have strayed from the truth, but if there are some who are alive spiritually, it will not be difficult to break the shackles which have bound us to tradition instead of TRUTH and caused us to err from the New Testament pattern. Study of the work of the Holy spirit and a belief in Him as a helper, an influence, a being whom God had given as a gift to all who have obeyed Him (Acts 5:32 and who dwells within our mortal bodies that we may be assured of the comfort and assistance all the days of our life IF WE STAY FAITHFUL TO THE COMMANDMENTS OF CHRIST, is attached. Let us study and believe what the scriptures teach about the Holy Spirit. This is most necessary if we are to live pure, dedicated lives, Following the spirit instead of the flesh. And furthermore Without the aid of the holy spirit our efforts to return to the New Testament pattern would be in vain. Our Faith must be renewed in the words of the apostles.

We are hopeful that many will take advantage of the opportunity to discuss and study with us the many differences and The e lack of accord amongst us. Controversy is beneficial if done in the right spirit. We ask brethren to think on these things . Remember us in your prayers and we will do the same. We believe great good can come of this both for the church as a whole; and for the sowing of the seed (the gospel) into the highways and into the byways where it has not been heard. Now is the time to speak out and to enter into the battle to persevere the truth in this generation. what are you going to do about it? let us hear from you.

In Christ's Precious Name,

The Spring Valley Church of Christ