Answers for Over 1100 Bible Questions by Dave Amos

FOREWORD

Truth for the World reaches with the Gospel of Christ into 180 nations and territories of the world with radio, TV, the internet and the printed page. All of this teaching generates thousands of Bible questions each year. These questions pertain to every possible topic in the Bible as well as hundreds of topics that pertain to denominational doctrine, world religions, human philosophies, etc. In order to answer these questions clearly and concisely, and in a way that is true to the Word of God, a great deal of Bible knowledge, wisdom and maturity is needed. We have been blessed in the past to have had great men such as the late Roy J. Hearn, founding director of the Memphis School of Preaching, and the late E.L. Whitaker, Jr, longtime evangelist for the Knight Arnold Road church in Memphis, TN, to answer these questions for us.

We continue to be blessed with the assistance of dedicated Bible students who carry on this work. Among these is Albert McDaniel of the St. Louis area. Bro. McDaniel is a sound, mature student of the Word who has many years of experience in the Lord's church as an elder and preacher. In addition to bro. McDaniel, Larry Powers, capable and faithful minister of the church in Sharon, Tennessee brings, a wealth of knowledge and experience in the Lord's church, both at home and overseas, to the task of answering questions. These two men answer most of our questions that come in through the mail.

A rapidly expanding area of our work is the internet. Because of the ever-growing response through this medium, it has become necessary to have someone to deal exclusively with internet questions. Dave Amos of Knoxville, Tennessee capably and effectively serves in this important area of our work. Bro. Amos has been a self-supporting member of the staff of Truth for the World for many years. At one time he handled all the questions which came in, both through the mail and the internet. He has many years of experience as an elder and preacher. He is especially adept at answering the multitude of questions that come from overseas

because he makes annual preaching trips to various nations in Africa and Asia to teach the Gospel.

Bro. Amos has blessed our Bible correspondence teachers and many others with his book, Bible Answers to Commonly Asked Questions. We know that this revised and expanded edition of his book will make an even greater contribution. We predict for this enlarged book a long life of usefulness. We believe it will be answering Bible questions for sincere students long after its author has quit the walks of men.

Rod Rutherford

Director of Publications
Truth for the World

David M. Amos

NOTE OF INTEREST

It was not my original intent to prepare such a book and CD. Over the past several years in answering many Bible questions received by Truth for the World from around the globe, I simply began developing a bank of questions and answers on my hard drive to aid in answering future questions. At the first, a book of about 500 questions was prepared at TFTW for distribution primarily to those who help grade Bible Correspondence Courses (which precipitates many questions) to aid them in dealing with queries from their students. Since then the book, by request, has been sent to many preachers and students around the world and has, as well, often been used to support the question and answer portion of TFTW television and radio programs. It is has also been made fully available on the TFTW web site. At least one congregation has used the book as a source material for their weekly Bible Study periods. It is our prayer that this expanded edition, along with CD's, will aid the above in even a better way.

It should be noted that my sole purpose has simply been to answer incoming questions as best I could using the Bible, of course, as the primary source material with occasional reference to different commentaries, dictionaries, brotherhood books, periodicals, etc. All or any of the material, therefore, is totally without cost and may be used freely in any positive way to further the cause of Christ.

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(Questions and answers, if using a CD, may be accessed by "finding," under "EDIT," words, phrases, names, numbers, e.g., 491 = Salvation/Baptism, or Book, Chapter, and Verse, e.g., I Corinthians 13:8)

THE CHURCH

QUESTION No. 1: Is it necessary to be a member of Christ's church in order to be saved or can one be saved in the Catholic Church, or one of the other denominations?

ANSWER: It is, indeed, necessary to be a member of the church for which Jesus died in order to be saved. He said that He would build one church (Matthew 16:18). In Acts chapter two, we read of its establishment. Paul said in Ephesians 1:22-23, that the church is His body. Later, in Ephesians 4:4, he tells us that there is only one body. It is into this one body, this church, that one "must" be baptized through the agency (the direction) of the one Spirit (I Corinthians 12:13). The direction of the Spirit comes only through the word of God, which tells us how a person enters that one church. On the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), those who "gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Vs.41). "And the Lord added daily to the church (His church) such as were being saved (Vs.47). These believing people repented, and were immersed for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), after which they were added to the church that Christ had built. (They were not added to the Catholic Church, which was established 600 years later, nor were they added to denominationalism, which had its several beginnings in the fifteenth century and later!) All of the saved people on Pentecost Day were members of the Church of Christ! Obviously, there is no difference between those who live today and the people of Acts Chapter two (Acts 2:39)! When people today, as they, gladly receive His word (when they believe and submit totally to it), repent, confess, and are immersed in water for the remission of sins, they too are added by God to that same church; the one church, the Church of Christ (Romans 16:16). Since Christ built only one church (the church of the Bible), it can only be concluded that all other religious organizations (including all Catholic and Protestant Churches) were built by man (Matthew 15:8-14). In these, there is no promise of salvation; no promise of hope; no promise of the blessings of Christ (Ephesians 1:3). These promises are to be found only in His body; the Church of Christ!

QUESTION No. 2: Is the church the house of God?

ANSWER: Yes! Please read I Timothy 3:15.

QUESTION No. 3: Who is the head of the church in the world and where is he found?

ANSWER: There is no earthly head of the church! Christ is seated at the right hand of God (Acts 2:29-35) and has been made "to be the head over all things to the church" (Ephesians 1:22). Each congregation of the Lord's church is self-governing, answerable only to Christ!

QUESTION No. 4: Are hospitals and schools part of the work of the church?

ANSWER: Hospitals exist for the purpose of healing the physical body and secular schools exist for the purposes of non-religious education. Both of these purposes are admirable and, indeed, may be engaged in by a Christian, often to the furtherance of

the kingdom of Christ. However, the works in which the church may be involved will always relate scripturally in some fashion to the great commission, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world (Matthew 28:19-20)."

QUESTION No. 5: Does the church save?

ANSWER: The saved are added to the church by the Lord (Acts 2:47). After having been added to the church, the saved in the church then are directed to go into all the world preaching the Gospel so that others can be saved (Mark 16:15-16; II Timothy 2:2). Paul says that the church makes known the manifold wisdom of God (Ephesians 3:10). By preaching the gospel then, the church makes known the wisdom of God unto salvation. In this secondary and indirect sense it can be said that the church saves, but it must be realized that there is no direct authority in the church. All authority resides solely in the word of God! Some in the denominational world, such as the Catholic Church, teach that saving authority resides in the church and not the Word of God! Faithful Christians will reject any such notion!

QUESTION No. 6: Would you inform me about the organization and the worship of the church?

ANSWER: The church of the Bible may be described as the church(es) of Christ (Romans 16:16). The Head of the church is Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:22). Each congregation is self-ruling and overseen by a plurality of elders (Acts 14:23; Acts 20:28), independent of all other congregations (I Peter 5:1-2). By this we are given to understand that there is no higher governing body on this earth. Deacons are to serve the congregation under the oversight of the elders (I Timothy 3:8-13). Evangelists are to proclaim the Word (II Timothy 4:1-5). A religious group without this prescribed organization clearly cannot be recognized or acknowledged as the church of the Bible!

Worship services on the first day of the week consist of praying, singing (without playing on instruments), partaking of the Lord's Supper (every first day), preaching, and contributing financially as prospered by God (Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Ephesians 5:19). To be pleasing to God, all of these items must be engaged in, with nothing added.

Terms of entry into the church of the Bible are: believing in Christ as the Son of God; repenting of all past sins; confessing with the mouth belief in Jesus; being immersed in water for the remission of sins (John 8:24; Acts 17:30-31; Romans 10:9-10; Acts 2:38). After having done these things, one must be faithful unto death to receive the crown of life (Revelation 2:10).

QUESTION No. 7: Would you tell me about the unity of the church?

ANSWER: In Ephesians 4:4, the Bible says that there is only "one body." In Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18 & 24, we learn that the "body" is the church. Therefore, if there is only "one body," there is clearly and logically only “one church.” This church is the church of the Bible and is the only church that is of divine origin. All others are of men and will eventually fail (Psalms 127:1). Neither is there salvation to be found in them (Acts 4:12). The only church in which one can be saved is described in the Bible as the "church of Christ" (Romans 16:16). It is the church that Christ promised to build (Matthew 16:18); the church that He died to build (Acts 20:28); and the church to which baptized believers were added on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:47). It is that body of believers, called out from this world, who look only to the word of God for their worship practices and conduct of life. It, and it alone, is the Church of Christ!

QUESTION No. 8: Why was the church of Christ divided?

ANSWER: In had been prophesied early in the history of the church that such would happen (Acts 20:28-30; I Timothy 4:1-4; II Timothy 4:3-4; II Peter 2:1-3). These passages (and others) clearly tell us "why" division occurs. It occurred in the first century and in our generation as well! When false teachers are permitted to bring in "damnable heresies" unauthorized by God's Word (most recently; worldly entertainment, instruments of music, missionary societies, etc.) and when people, having itching ears, heap these teachers to themselves, refusing rather to "try" them (I John 4:1), disciples will be drawn away and divisions will occur.

Though divisions are sure to come, we can be assured that His church; His kingdom shall have no end (Luke 1:33)!

QUESTION No. 9: When did Jesus build His church?

ANSWER: In Matthew 16:18, at the beginning of His public ministry, Jesus said, "I will build my church." So, clearly, the church had not been built at that time. Ten days after Jesus ascended back to the Father, Peter on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), for the first time, told people how to get into the church that Christ had promised to build. On that day, three thousand people followed Peter's instructions and their sins were forgiven (Acts 2:38-41). These, who were thus saved, were by that same process, the first to be added by the Lord to His church (Acts 2:47). This particular Pentecost day, then, was the birthday of the Church of Christ! Religious organizations established by man AFTER this day must never be accepted or deemed equal to the Church of Christ, for in them is there no salvation (Matthew 15:13).

QUESTION No. 10: On what date was the Church of Christ established? Some say that it was established only four years ago and that it is, therefore, not as old as the Catholic Church, Methodist Church, and others.

ANSWER: The exact date of the establishment of the church is uncertain. Most scholars, however, agree that it was established sometime during the period between 30AD and 33AD. Luke tells us in Chapter 3, Verse 23 that Jesus' public ministry began when He was about thirty years of age. The evidence in the Gospel accounts of Luke 22:15; John 2:13; John 5:1; and John 6:4 indicates that there were four yearly Passovers during Christ's public ministry. From the first to the fourth Passover (at which time He was crucified) would be three full years. It is reckoned from the events of His early ministry that a time period of approximately five months passed prior to His cleansing of the temple during the first Passover (John 2:13-17). There were fifty days between Passover and Pentecost. If we add the three full years, the five months, and the fifty days, we arrive at approximately three and one-half years. Adding this figure to Jesus' age of thirty years at the beginning of His public ministry, we have thirty-three and one-half years. Thus, it is determined that the church was established in 33AD on the first Pentecost following the crucifixion of Christ. Because a mistake of about three years was made in the Christian calendar when it replaced the Roman calendar in 526AD, some scholars hold to the 30AD date. It is certain, however, that the church of the Bible, the Church of Christ (Romans 16:16) was established no later than 33AD! So the Church of Christ was not established four years ago, but rather it was established more than two thousand years ago.

The Catholic Church was established in the year 606AD, almost 600 years AFTER the Church of Christ was established. The Methodist church did not have its beginning until 1739AD, 1700 years after the establishment of the church of Christ!

QUESTION No. 11: What name is given to the church that Jesus built?

ANSWER: Christ said in Matthew 16:18, "I will build my church." Christ died for the church (Ephesians 5:25)! Christ paid the purchase price of His blood for the church (Acts 20:28)! Christ is said to be the husband; His church is the bride (II Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:27). In I Corinthians 1:10-13, we learn that to call ourselves after other than Christ is to cause sinful division, and in I Corinthians 3:3-4, we learn that those who do so are said to be carnal, or of the earth! Paul, in Philippians 2:9, writes: “Wherefore God also hath given Him a name which is above every name.”

With the above passages in mind, we can now understand why the apostle Paul would, by inspiration, refer to the various congregations of the Lord's church as "the churches of Christ" (Romans 16:16). We must do no less!

QUESTION No. 12: Were the Campbell's inspired?

ANSWER: No! With the completion and confirmation of the word of God, the need for inspired men ceased (Mark 16:20; I Corinthians 13:8-13).

QUESTION No. 13: If an individual has never been to a congregation of the Church of Christ can he diligently study God's Word, become a Christian, and establish a congregation of the Lord's church in his area? Can a hand of fellowship and acceptance be given to such an establishment?

ANSWER: Yes to both questions! This is what the Campbell's and others did at the beginning of the Restoration Movement. Many are doing the same thing around the world today!

QUESTION No. 14: What was the Restoration Movement?

ANSWER: Following the "Dark Ages," (A period of time lasting for several hundred years through the fourteenth century), men like Martin Luther and others began the task of trying to "reform" the apostate Catholic Church. They were unsuccessful in this attempt and created an atmosphere in which denominationalism had its rise. More recently, primarily during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, men on both sides of the world began to simultaneously, through the providence of God, realize the need to restore New Testament Christianity to its original design and intent. These men had realized that the "Reformation" was a failure and, thus, began what was to become known as the "Restoration Movement." The success of this effort is seen in the many congregations of the Church of Christ (Romans 16:16), which now encircle the globe!

QUESTION No. 15: Where was the Church of Christ during the Dark Ages and how could it grow without the Bible?

ANSWER: It had been prophesied in Scripture that a great falling away would come (I Timothy 4:1-5; II Timothy 4:1-5). This apostasy, occurring over many years, was realized in its fullest sense with the development and establishment of the Roman Catholic Church in about 606AD. During these years, and for many years to follow, the Church of Christ was greatly oppressed. There are two opinions as to the state of the church during these years. The first is that the true church temporarily ceased to live and function as it did during the first century; that it only existed in "seed form." The Word of God is described as a "seed" in Luke 8:11 and it is, therefore, held that as long as the "seed" existed, it then follows that the church also would be existent, but in a dormant state. When the "seed" was eventually replanted following the "Dark Ages," it produced the original church, which began then to live and function as it did at the beginning. The second opinion, which I have adopted, is that the church as originally established, though

oppressed and driven into near obscurity, never totally ceased to live and function in accordance with the Bible, the will of God. Which opinion is the accurate one is not really important! What is important is that God's Word (which shall never pass away - Matthew 24:35), though severely suppressed, obviously continued throughout and we have it in its purity today. So no matter where we may be; no matter who we are, if we adhere to its precepts and patterns only, faithful congregations will come into existence and grow exactly as Christ intended, being totally and in every sense congregations of the Church of Christ! It is comforting for us to know with assurance that His kingdom, the church, will never be destroyed (Daniel 2:44); that it is without end (Luke 1:33) and you and I can be members of it today (Acts 2:38-47)!

QUESTION No. 16: If a Christian man marries a second wife, we know he (as a polygamist) has sinned, but what will the duties of this person be in the church?

ANSWER: The person in question should not be assigned any responsibility in the congregation until he repents! All of the people involved in the relationship described need to be taught the truth about their condition. Polygamy is sin! God has ordained that marriage is between two people, one man and one woman, until separated by death (Matthew 19:4-6; Romans 7:1-3). When a man and a woman are scripturally married and another person enters that relationship, all of those actively involved do so without the blessing of God. Further, all that knowingly participate in such a marriage are in sin as long as it continues. The above passages demand that the third party be excluded from the relationship, and that all that have participated come to repentance. Without scriptural repentance (Matthew 21:28-31; Luke 13:3; Acts 8:22; Acts 17:30), none can be saved.

After the person in question has been taught and every attempt has been made to win his soul again, if he refuses to repent scripturally, it is commanded of God that fellowship be withdrawn from him, that his soul may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus (I Corinthians 5).

QUESTION No. 17: May the person referred to in the preceding question continue to lay hands on the sick?

ANSWER: Laying on of hands in the New Testament was the practice of those who had been endowed by the Holy Spirit with miraculous ability. Since the gifts have long since passed away (I Corinthians 13:8-11), no reason exists today for the laying on of hands. This, notwithstanding, (as stated in the answer to the preceding question) the person in question should be assigned no responsibility in the church until repentance is forthcoming! In fact, in accordance with I Corinthians 5, he must be purged (removed) from the congregation lest he affect the others by his sinfulness.

QUESTION No. 18: Is it better to walk alone or worship with those who have compromised the truth?

ANSWER: We have a responsibility to teach the erring and compromising to believe and practice the truth! Failing to do so (either on our part or theirs) does not mean that we are relieved of our responsibility to engage in corporate worship (Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7; Hebrews 10:25)! If there are no faithful congregations in our area, then it becomes our responsibility, in carrying the Gospel to the lost, to congregate with those whom we convert to the truth! It only takes two people to congregate!

QUESTION No. 19: Since the Church of Christ was established in Jerusalem, why is its headquarters not there?

ANSWER: There is no authority in the Bible for an earthly headquarters. To add an earthly headquarters to the organization of the church would be to add to God's Word, resulting in sin (Revelation 22:18-19). Also, if there were an earthly headquarters, there would have to be an earthly head. Paul tells us in Ephesians 1:22 that there is only one (the) Head who is Jesus Christ! Our Head, who established the kingdom/church (Matthew 16:18-19) and paid the price for it (Acts 20:28), is enthroned at the right hand of God (Acts 2:29-36) as Lord of lords and King of kings (Revelation 17:14) over His kingdom (Daniel 7:13-14). Since our Head, our King, is in Heaven, our headquarters is also in Heaven.

QUESTION No. 20: Would you explain about the church that Jesus built; that it has no earthly headquarters?

ANSWER: In Ephesians 4:4, the Bible says that there is only "one body." In Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18 & 24, we learn that the "body" is the church. Therefore, if there is only "one body," there is clearly only one church. This church is the church of the Bible and is the only church that is of divine origin. All others are of men and will eventually fail (Psalms 127:1). Neither is there salvation to be found in them (Acts 4:12). The only church in which one can be saved is referred to in the Bible the "church of Christ" (Romans 16:16). It is the church that Christ promised to build (Matthew 16:18); the church that He died to build (Acts 20:28); and the church to which baptized believers were added on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:47). It is that body of believers, called out from this world, who look only to the word of God for their worship practices and conduct of life. It is the Church of Christ!

The head of the church (the one Body) is Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:22). Each congregation is self-ruling and overseen by a plurality of elders (Acts 14:23; Acts 20:28), independent of all other congregations (I Peter 5:1-2). By this we are given to understand that there is no higher governing body on this earth. Each congregation answers only to

Jesus Christ and His Word! Deacons are to serve the congregation under the oversight of the elders (I Timothy 3:8-13). Evangelists are to proclaim the Word (II Timothy 4:1-5). A religious group without this prescribed organization cannot be the church of the Bible! A religious group with an earthly headquarters staffed by people with unscriptural titles such as "Father, Archbishop, Cardinal, and Pope (Matthew 23:9)" cannot, therefore, be the church of the Bible!

QUESTION No. 21: As a Catholic, I would like to know about the church from a Protestant point of view. Did Jesus really establish the church through His apostles?

ANSWER: The question implies that the Church of Christ is a Protestant denomination. This is not so! The church of the Bible is neither Protestant, Catholic, nor Jewish. The church of the Bible is scripturally defined as the church(es) of Christ (Romans 16:16) and is made up only of Christians (Acts 11:26); nothing more; nothing less! All other names and classifications are of men and not of God! The Bible teaches that the one and only head of the church is Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:22). It does not make provisions for two heads over the one body (church), i.e., an earthly head and a heavenly head, as claimed by the Catholic Church! Each congregation of the Lord's church is biblically shown to be self-ruling and overseen by a plurality of elders (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; Hebrews 13:7 & 17), with each congregation being independent of all other congregations (I Peter 5:1-2). By this we can be sure that there is no higher governing body on this earth! Deacons also are to serve the congregation under the oversight of the elders (I Timothy 3:8-13). Evangelists are to proclaim the Word (II Timothy 4:1-5). Any religious group without this scriptural organizational structure is of man, not of God!

It is absolutely true that Christ established His church (not Catholicism or Protestantism) through the apostles as they were directed through the Holy Spirit. Please read carefully Acts chapter two, an account of the birthday of Christ's church!

QUESTION No. 22: Did Christ really appoint Peter and his successors as head of His church until the end of time?

ANSWER: No! The Bible does not even mention the notion or title of "Pope." Neither does it mention or authorize the ecclesiastical structures prevalent in both the Catholic and Protestant organizations of today. These ideas, having their roots solely in the teachings of men, are clearly in violation of plain scriptural teaching as outlined above. Besides this, Peter had no successor; nor can he have any today! To be qualified to be an apostle, one must be an eyewitness of the resurrected Christ (Acts 1:22) as were the twelve (Acts 1:21) and the apostle Paul (Acts 26:13-18). None living today (including the Pope and the so-called “Apostles of the Mormon Church”) have seen the resurrected

Christ! Therefore, none today can be qualified to be an apostle or the successor to an apostle! We can be sure, then, that those who claim apostleship today do not represent the Christ of the New Testament!

QUESTION No. 23: What is the work of a woman in the church?

ANSWER: The work of a woman in the church is absolutely vital! In Titus 2:3-5, we learn "that they are to be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to drunkenness, teachers of good things that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, to be keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed." She is to be hospitable as was Lydia (Acts 16:15). She is to be charitable as was Dorcas (Acts 9:36). She is to relieve the afflicted (I Timothy 5:10). Certainly, the woman has much to do and should never be found idle in her God-given responsibilities!

QUESTION No. 24: May a woman establish a church?

ANSWER: No! Christ established the church the way He wanted it a long time ago on the day of Pentecost (Acts, Chapter two). A woman may, however, teach privately and encourage men and women to "congregate" for scriptural worship. However, this does not mean that she can violate I Timothy 2:11-12; I Corinthians 11:3; and I Corinthians 14:34-35 by preaching to men, overseeing, or "running" the congregation!

QUESTION No. 25: Are we to obey church doctrines or Bible doctrines?

ANSWER: If the doctrines of your church are different from the doctrines of the Bible, then you are in the wrong church! If they are different from the Bible, it follows then that they are of man and not of God. Jesus said that the doctrines of men constitute vain (empty) worship (Matthew 15:9). Surely, we will not be judged by their (church) doctrines in that day, but, rather, by the words of Christ (John 12:48). Therefore, "we ought to obey God (the Bible) rather than men" Acts 5:29).

QUESTION No. 26: If a person is in sin; refuses to repent; is withdrawn from; divides the congregation, and starts another congregation, will it be recognized as the church of Christ?

ANSWER: Such questions are often difficult to answer without knowing all of the details. However, if a person is involved in a sin, of which he refuses to repent, and is scripturally withdrawn from, Christians everywhere who have the knowledge of that sin and the refusal to repent (regardless of prior relationships) must also withhold fellowship, not because the first congregation did, but based upon their own proven, factual knowledge of the situation! The man in question is not only guilty of the sin that

necessitated the initial withdrawal, but has also become guilty of causing division in the Lord's Body! Those members of the first congregation who are in support of the man are in error by not honoring the withdrawal action, and by participating in the sin of division. Those who may later knowingly affiliate with such a divisive group (as described above) are themselves in sin. Though these are still recognized as Christians, they are "erring" Christians. Each involved must repent of their sins to be forgiven and saved eternally.

QUESTION No. 27: Is the church supposed to be in the business of making money?

ANSWER: No! The church is in the business of making Christians (Matthew 28:18-20)! The only authorized method of giving and collecting finances to support the work that Christians are directed and authorized to do is set forth in I Corinthians 16:1-2 and II Corinthians 9:6-15.

QUESTION No. 28: Is it a sin for a church to practice "Sunday School?"

ANSWER: It is my opinion that as much as possible we need to avoid using denominational terminology or phrases, simply because they many times denote and define activities which are unscriptural! However, if by using the term "Sunday School" we mean a certain time set aside on the first day of the week during which people assemble to study the Bible, it is not sin. In fact we are commanded, both by precept and example, to study (II Timothy 2:15; Acts 17:11). Nothing in God's Word prohibits us from doing so on Sundays! Of course, "Sunday School" should not be engaged in as a substitute for the scriptural worship assembly (Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Hebrews 10:25).

QUESTION No. 29: Would you support a "Non-Sunday School Church" that engages in serious Bible correspondence courses?

ANSWER: If the "Non-Sunday School Church" decided not to have a Sunday Bible Study on the basis of opinion and did not attempt to make it a matter of doctrine to be bound on others, I could support them in teaching the Bible, provided that all other of their teaching and practices were in compliance with the will of God.

If the "Non-Sunday School Church" holds that their decision not to have a Sunday Bible Study is a matter of doctrine to be bound on others; that if others engaged in such they would be sinning, then I would not and could not support them, because such teaching is not scriptural, but is of those who "transgress and abide not in the doctrine of Christ" (II John 9-11). Therefore, any support given would of itself be sin!

QUESTION No. 30: There is in Nashville an African Christian Schools Foundation and in Searcy, Arkansas, an African Christian Hospital. These two groups regulate the money sent by American brethren to support people in Africa. Is it right to support these organizations?

ANSWER: If the work being done by these two groups is secular, i.e., it is not work for which the church is scripturally responsible, then support by individuals would be a matter of option and would not be improper.

However, if these two organizations were engaged in doing work for which the church is responsible, then support of their work would be sinful. In fact, such organizations would be sinful. No organization can assume the work of the church, in place of the church, without sinning! Any organization, other than the Lord's church, that presumes to assume the responsibilities of the church, as given to it by God, sins and scripturally forfeits its right to exist!

QUESTION No. 31: How can we convince people that Christ accepts only one church?

ANSWER: Before any can be convinced of this or any other truth they must first be caused to realize that in religious matters all authority resides solely in the Bible. Many verses can be used to teach and support this basic truth, e.g., Matthew 7:21-29; Mark 16:15-16; John 12:48; John 17:17; Romans 1:16; Galatians 1:6-9; II Timothy 2:15; II Timothy 3:15-17; Revelation 22:18-19; etc. Once this truth is accepted, the honest heart will be receptive to the truth of the one church as taught in Matthew 16:18; John 17:20-23; Acts 2:37-47; Ephesians 1:22-23; Ephesians 4:4-6; etc.

QUESTION No. 32: Can we scripturally have a Women's Organization within the church organization?

ANSWER. No! There is no authorization for such. Such sub-organizations are sinful and very often develop into divisive, isolated bodies designed to usurp the authority of husbands, elders, and/or the men of the congregation (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; I Corinthians 11:3; I Timothy 2:11-12). Such activity clearly violates the will of God!

QUESTION No. 33: Is it wrong for a congregation to have a fellowship hall (I Corinthians 11:20-22; 33-34)?

ANSWER: Generally speaking, it is not wrong! The Lord has appointed that a plurality of elders is to have the rule over their own congregation. They are to rule only in matters of option, since the Lord has already ruled in matters of faith and doctrine. Some

congregations have opted not to own a building, but to rent a facility for worship services. Some have opted to buy a building already erected, others to build a place of worship. There is no specific commandment as to "houses of worship," other than the fact that since it is commanded that we worship, a meeting "place" is clearly and of necessity implied. The "where and how" is a matter of opinion falling under the jurisdiction of the local eldership! If a need arises in a congregation for a fellowship hall in the opinion of the elders, either within or without the "place" of worship, it is their decision to make. God will judge that decision! It would be presumptuous, arrogant, and sinfully judgmental for any man (or group of men) to pronounce that all congregations that used a "fellowship hall" were sinning by so doing.

A "place" of worship is just that, nothing more; nothing less! It is not to be understood as a "holy place" that can be desecrated by using it for other purposes, such as having a common fellowship meal within it, outside of the worship service!

Without doubt, the erection and use of fellowship halls has been abused by some through misuse and excessive expenditures, to the near exclusion of the Great Commission! It is, as well, true that the same thing can be said about "meeting houses," more aptly described as "Cathedrals!" However, the misuse of "buildings" by some does not mean that having a "fellowship hall" is of itself sinful, as some would claim. Certainly, the passages you suggest (I Corinthians 11:20-22; 33-34) have nothing to do with "buildings" per se! In context, the Corinthians had turned the Lord's Supper into a banquet for the express purpose of enjoying the satisfaction of their own physical hunger and thirst, thereby thwarting the divine purpose of this act of worship. Paul is simply saying, 'when you come together to partake of the Lord's Supper, do it for the right reason (Vs.26). Satisfy the physical needs of your bodies in your own houses, not in the worship services!' Note in I Corinthians16:19 and Romans 16:5 that Paul talks about (and sanctions) the church that meets in the "house" of Aquila and Priscilla. Clearly, this righteous couple ate and drank in the same building (their house) in which the church worshiped. Apparently then, their house (in which they dined) also doubled as a place of worship and a "fellowship hall" (Acts 2:46).

QUESTION No. 34: Since I Corinthians 16:1-2 is an example for us today, is it also implied that our offerings should be given to others? If so, how will the needs of the local congregation be met?

ANSWER: I Corinthians 16:1-2 and related passages such as II Corinthians, Chapters eight and nine, give us an example only of how "needs" are to be met, not where we are to send the collection! The specific "need" in these passages related solely to the poor saints (and others) in Jerusalem. Certainly, if we would assume that this passage implies that the local congregation is to send all of their collection to others, we would

also (in order to be consistent) have to assume that all congregations would have to send all collections to the poor saints in Jerusalem. This, of course, is not the case! The example given us to meet any "need" (whether it is local or distant) is by every one of us 'laying by him in store upon the first day of every week.' If there is a scriptural need in a distant city, it is to be satisfied by using the funds collected in this way. If there is a scriptural need within the local congregation, it, too, is to be satisfied from the same funds!

QUESTION No. 35: If a group wants to erect a church building should they develop a money-raising scheme to do so?

ANSWER: The work of the church can be financed only through freewill offerings (I Corinthians 16:1-2; II Corinthians 9:6).

QUESTION No. 36: Our preacher told us that the Church of Christ will not take medicine or go to the hospital. Is this true?

ANSWER: No! It is totally false. Perhaps your preacher is confusing the church of Christ with a denomination called "Church of Christ, Scientist." It is this false organization that preaches against medicine and hospitals! Please inform your preacher of his error!

QUESTION No. 37: Our preacher told us that the Church of Christ will not cooperate with unbelievers. Is this true?

ANSWER: It is true that the church of Christ does not condone or promote the sin of the unbeliever. The unbeliever is of the world. Christians are commanded to "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (I John 2:15). James said, "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 (James 4:4)." Christians do, however, cooperate with those in the world to the extent of being good neighbors (Luke 10:30-37), loving their souls (Matthew 22:39), and preaching the Gospel to them in accordance with the Great Commission (Mark 16:15-16).

QUESTION No. 38: Our preacher told us that the Church of Christ does not allow the wearing of necklaces or earrings. Is this true?

ANSWER: It is not true! Your preacher has been misled and is misleading others! All should be certain of their facts lest they be found guilty by God (Psalms 101:7).

QUESTION No. 39: If the kingdom is the church, as you teach, and it has already come, then why did Jesus teach us to pray, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, etc.?"

ANSWER: Jesus, through His Word, does not teach people today to pray "Thy kingdom come!" In Luke 11:1, "one of His disciples said unto Him, Lord, teach 'us' to pray." Jesus was teaching His disciples of that time to pray for the kingdom to come, because it had not yet come! In fact, both He and John the Baptist were preaching at that time, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand (near)" (Matthew 3:1-2; Matthew 4:17). In Mark 9:1, Jesus said to those standing by that the kingdom would come and be established in their lifetime.

Matthew 16:18-19 clearly shows that Christ intended to build His church and give Peter the keys to that which He had built, i.e., the kingdom, or the church! That the church was established on the Day of Pentecost of Acts two cannot be denied (Acts 2:47). Neither can it be denied that Acts 2:29-36 is an account of the resurrection, ascension, and enthronement of Jesus Christ at the right hand of God! Daniel tells us in Chapter seven, Verses thirteen and fourteen, that upon the ascension of Christ and His return to the Father that He was to be given a Kingdom that would never be destroyed. Obviously then, Christ, upon His ascension, was enthroned over the kingdom that He had been given, and over which He had been given "all" authority (Matthew 28:18). Shortly after this, we see Philip preaching to the Samaritans things concerning the kingdom of God and the authority of Jesus Christ (Acts 8:12). As a result, those to whom he preached were baptized. Into what were they baptized? Obviously, into that which he was preaching about, i.e., the kingdom of God. But in Acts 2:37-47, we find that those who were baptized were (placed into) added to the church. Certainly, both the people on Pentecost and the Samaritans were baptized into the same institution! The only conclusion to be drawn is that when one is baptized, he or she is baptized into the kingdom, which is the church! This is why Paul could say in Colossians 1:13, that the Colossian Christians were "translated" into the kingdom of God. Can one be translated into something that doesn't exist? Of course not! Baptism is clearly the point of translation! We are baptized into "one body" (I Corinthians 12:13), which is the church (Ephesians 1:22-23). It is the very act, the only act, by which we are translated into the kingdom of God!

Why do we not pray for the kingdom to come? Because it came two thousand years ago! To pray for something to come that is already here would be a violation of Scripture (James 4:3; I John 5:14).

QUESTION No. 40: If we are to be true followers within the church of Acts 2:47, should we not do as they did and sell all of our possessions and hold all things in common (Acts 2:44-45)?

ANSWER: The passage in question is not proposing the idea of communism. That is, it is not to be understood that "all" followers sold "all" they possessed and then placed the proceeds into a single treasury so that every man within the church would be economically equal. The phrase "as every man had need" in Verse forty-five restricts the suggested action to the extent of the current "need." The idea is as true today. Christians, who have the resources, should be willing to supply the "needs" of poorer brethren when the occasion arises. It is in this sense that Christians have "all things common" (Vs.44).

That this was the case in the early church is evidenced by Peter's statement to Ananias (Acts 5:4), "whilst it (the property that he owned) remained, was it not thy own? And after it was sold, was it (the money received from the sale) not in thine own power?" Clearly, then, we see that the property owned by this Christian was his to use according to his own intent. His sin was not directly related to his handling of the possession, but rather related to the fact of his lie 'about' the handling of the possession!

QUESTION No. 41: What if a church has been established that is not using the name "Church of Christ," but they are scriptural in organization, work, worship, and doctrine? Is this wrong?

ANSWER: First of all, permit me to say, I know of no such church and do not believe that it exists, for the probability of a group of people being so familiar with the scripture to be right in all other things, yet wrong in "name," is very near zero! Neither do I believe that any group so familiar with scripture would want to cause division in the church by using a name different from that of the rest of the body! Therefore, I further believe that if such a learned group would establish such a congregation that, upon realizing the "name" difference, it would comply with the rest of the body to assure the unity that Christ demands of His people (John 17:21-23; I Corinthians 1:12-13).

There are, however, other biblical descriptions (besides Church of Christ – Romans 16:16) that also indicate the "ownership" and "relationship" of Christ, which if

applied to all congregations within the body would be appropriate. Some are, Church of God (I Corinthians 1:2), Body of Christ (Ephesians 4:12), Church of the Living God (I Timothy 3:15), and Church of the Firstborn Ones (Hebrews 12:23).

Nonetheless, that the Church of Christ might be undivided before the world (John 17:21) and perfectly (completely) joined together in the same mind and the same judgment (I Corinthians 1:10) it is required and necessary that every congregation within the body be designated and recognized in the same way.

Such "names" as Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Catholic, ECWA, SDA, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, Episcopal, Pentecostal, and such like, are unscriptural, divisive, and sinful! They rob Christ of the glory and honor due Him and give it to another or another thing! Besides sinning in description, none of these comply doctrinally with the Scriptures and are, therefore, to be avoided, because in none of them has Christ placed salvation. Outside of His church, the Church of Christ, all will be lost!

QUESTION No. 42: Is it right for a congregation to write a letter of disassociation to a sister congregation for any reason whatsoever? If yes, biblically prove.

ANSWER: It is *not* right for a congregation to withdraw fellowship from a sister congregation for *any* reason whatsoever! However, it is right for a congregation to withdraw fellowship from a sister congregation that has 'caused divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine of Christ' (Romans 16:17) when the cause of Christ is being detrimentally affected and souls under the oversight of the local elders are being unfavorably and sinfully impacted! Whether individually or congregationally, the principle remains valid, i.e., such dividing apostates are to be marked and avoided. The principle is valid in either case! If this biblical principle is applicable in a singular sense locally, why would it not be applicable in a collective sense in a close locale that is negatively impacting the advance of truth locally? Such brethren, whether in-house or nearby, singularly or collectively, being in sin, are engaging in the unfruitful works of darkness and, Paul, in Ephesians 5:11 says, 'have *no* fellowship with them, but rather reprove them.' Does not one remain in fellowship with those whom he refuses to disfellowship? Of course! But Paul says, "have **no** fellowship!" So not only are we directed to sever the relationship (withdraw fellowship), but we are also "commanded" to

confront them (reprove) with their sin. Whether that is done face-to-face or via other communication is a matter of option.

However, we must understand that "disfellowshipping" another congregation is not to be understood in the same sense as the totality of "congregational disciplinary action" that is to be directed to individuals within a particular congregation! Nonetheless, there are some congregations, under the guise of "church autonomy," that suggest that they can teach and practice anything that they would like, whether scriptural or not, and that the rest of the brotherhood must ignore such! Not so! As the elders of a congregation teach against denominationalism and lead their own flock not to fellowship such, they indeed have the same obligation when a congregation of the Lord's church apostatizes and becomes as a denomination! Those who maintain fellowship with sister congregations that apostatize from the truth are themselves sinning and in violation of the principles mentioned heretofore!

However, a word of caution: Though elders of a particular congregation may indeed lead the flock that is among them to no longer fellowship a congregation that has apostatized, that eldership's leading and that congregation's action is not binding upon other elderships and other congregations of the Lord's church. If such were the case, congregational autonomy would be destroyed in favor of a de facto hierarchy (as is often the case) that would determine for all others who is in the church and who is out of the church, and all would have to toe the line dictated by the de facto hierarchy! This danger is often actualized through the teachings and actions of some "significant" lectureships and some "significant" lectureship circuit rider groups. When a lectureship or a combine of preachers on the lectureship circuit denounces a congregation (or an individual) as "apostate" and others fall in line with that dictum on their say-so, they tacitly agree to a hierarchy within the body of Christ! Congregational autonomy is thereby destroyed! When such is taught, perpetuated, and actualized sin occurs!

Note, nonetheless, that there is a significant difference between disfellowshipping another congregation and "exercising church discipline" toward another congregation! In a nut shell, the elders of Congregation "A" may lead the flock among them to discontinue fellowshipping Congregation "B' that has apostatized and is teaching other than the doctrine of Christ! However, the action of the elders of Congregation "A" in this regard is not binding upon the elders of Congregation "C." If Congregation "C" is to disfellowship Congregation "B," it must be so led by its own elders! Such "disfellowshipping" must not be understood to be equal to the scriptural practice of church discipline within a

congregation! To the contrary, it must be understood that elders are to provide, feed, and care for their own flocks and for their own alone! Neither are local elderships to lead their congregations to disfellowship other congregations or persons simply upon the say-so, action, or direction of another congregation, lectureship, preacher, preacher group, or individual.

QUESTION No. 43: In our church we have women deacons. We believe Romans 16:1 allows this. Is this wrong?

ANSWER: The Greek word used for servant in this verse is the feminine form of the word *diakonos.* Indeed, the literal meaning of the word is "deaconess." However, this does not mean that Phebe held an official office of "Deaconess." It simply denotes the fact of her being a "servant" of the church," as properly indicated in the King James Version of the New Testament. In other words, the word *diakonos* is not demandingly descriptive of an office, but rather often describes the function of one who serves. The word is so used throughout the New Testament. For example, the word "minister" in Romans 13:4 is from the same Greek word as "servant" in Romans 16:1 and could have, just as well, been translated "deacon." The use of the word "deacon" would not have indicated an "office" or "title" to be held, just as the word "minister" in this context does not indicate an "office" or "title." Obviously then, Romans 13:4 is not teaching that governmental leaders hold the official title or office of "Deacon." The same is true of Phebe in Romans 16:1! This identical Greek word, *diakonos,* is translated "servant" in Matthew 23:11; Mark 9:35; and John 12:26. In Matthew 20:26 & 28; Matthew 25:44; Mark 10:43 & 45; Romans 15:8; and in many others passages, we find this same Greek word being translated "minister." In none of these passages do we assume an official "title" or "office," neither should we in Romans 16:1!

QUESTION No. 44: Are organizations like the Copperbelt Church Development Committee Scriptural?

ANSWER: No! The head of the church is Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:22). Each congregation is self-ruling and overseen by a plurality of elders, independent of all other congregations (Acts 14:23; Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:1-2). By this we are given to understand that there is no higher governing body on this earth. Deacons are to serve the congregation under the oversight of the elders (I Timothy 3:8-13) and evangelists are to proclaim the Word (II Timothy 4:1-5). A religious group without this prescribed

organization cannot be the church of the Bible! A religious group outside of biblical guidelines cannot be affiliated with the church of the Bible! Certainly, the Copperbelt Church Development Committee is an organization over and above that which the Bible authorizes. This group has its own name, its own officers, and its own treasury. It assumes the right to coordinate the outreach activities of multiple local congregations in a particular area. As such, participants and supporters have sinfully usurped the responsibilities that God has given only to the elders of each local congregation. They are guilty of presumptuous sin in establishing that which is not of Heaven (Psalms 19:13). As well, those involved have added to the Word of God and can expect to reap the harvest of that which they have sown unless they repent by disbanding and praying to God for forgiveness (Galatians 6:7-8; Revelation 22:18-19; Acts 8:22). Those involved also suggest by their actions and statements that God didn't know what He was doing when He gave the oversight to the local elders and that they know better than He about such matters and have, thus, come up with a better arrangement than He has provided. This, indeed, is presumptuous sin! They have concluded by that which they do that the church is insufficient to make known the manifold wisdom of God (Ephesians 3:10) and that they will, therefore, do what God through the church is failing to do! The very idea is based on ignorance, arrogance, and pride!

Neither can they use the council of Acts 15 for their pattern, as some would contend. The Bible was not written at this time and men did not have the fullness of the Gospel, as we have it today. Judaizing teachers (Pharisees-Verse 5), without the authority of the apostles, went down from Jerusalem to Antioch, teaching that in order to be saved one must be circumcised. Paul and Barnabas were preaching there and disputed with those who had come from Jerusalem under the apparent pretense of having the authority of the apostles and inspired elders of Jerusalem. It was necessary then to appeal to those at Jerusalem as to the truth of the matter. As a result the council was held for this purpose. Today we have the Bible, we don't need to go to Jerusalem or men living today to know the truth on any matter. Truth now is found in His Word (John 17:17). If those of the C.C.D.C. are to use Acts 15 as a pattern, to be ethical and consistent, it would also be necessary for them to claim having inspired apostles and miracle-working elders, guided into all truth (John 16:13) so they could, being led by the Holy Spirit, direct the activities of multiple congregations and establish biblical doctrine! In other words, if a part of the "pattern" is adopted, all of the "pattern" must be adopted! It would be dishonest to do otherwise! If such were a pattern for today, what need would we have of the Bible? We would have but to appeal to the C.C.D.C. in all matters related to truth, not merely relying upon them for purposes of coordination! What foolishness! The truth is that there is no pattern, precept, command, or inference in all of God's Word to authorize such an organization. It is not of God! And if not of God, it is of the evil one!

QUESTION No. 45: If the C.C.D.C. is not scriptural, can we fellowship those who are involved with it?

ANSWER: The first thing that needs to be done is to try to get those involved to repent. After all has been done in this regard that can be done, then there is no recourse but to disfellowship those involved who refuse to repent! Certainly it is right and commanded that a congregation withdraw fellowship from those who have 'caused divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine of Christ' (Romans 16:17). Whether individually or as a separate organization, these are to be marked and avoided. The principle is valid in either case! Would the action not have the same saving effect as with the brother of I Corinthians 5:5? Would such action not have the same cleansing effect as the "purging" of I Corinthians 5:7? Do we not want erring brethren to be saved? Do we not want the church of our Lord to be pure? Such brethren, whether near or far, singularly or collectively, being in sin, are engaging in the unfruitful works of darkness and, Paul, in Ephesians 5:11 says, 'have *no* fellowship with them, but rather reprove them.' Does not one remain in fellowship with those whom he refuses to disfellowship? Of course! But Paul says, "have **no** fellowship! So not only are we directed to sever the relationship (withdraw fellowship), but we are also "commanded" to confront them (reprove) with their sin. Those who refuse to take commanded scriptural action against those who apostatize from the truth are themselves sinning and in violation of the passages mentioned heretofore!

QUESTION No. 46: What is the background or context in which Paul is writing to Timothy regarding the matter of the "Woman's Place in the Church?"

ANSWER: The apostle Paul wrote both letters to Timothy who, at the time, was in Ephesus. The letters were written as instructions as to how he should deal with problems that had arisen in the church there. However, we should not assume that the instructions are limited to Ephesus, but rather that they are to be applicable to all congregations of the Lord's church for all time. Note in II Peter 3:16 that Paul's epistles were understood to be "Scripture." Note also in Paul's letter to the church at Corinth that he said, "For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my way which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church" (I Corinthians 4:17). Further, note that the epistles of Scripture were distributed and taught among the churches (Colossian 4:16). Then consider Paul's instruction of II Timothy 2:2, "And the *same* things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the *same* commit to faithful men, who shall be able

to teach others also." Paul is saying here, 'I want you to teach exactly the same thing I have taught you to faithful men everywhere who will teach the *same* thing wherever they go." He was not to teach something different, but he was to, "Hold fast the form (pattern) of sound words, which thou has heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus (II Timothy 1:13).

QUESTION No. 47: Were Paul's instructions to Timothy concerning the "woman's place in the church" a custom at that point in time or is it a universal command?

ANSWER: These instructions are for all time. In addition to the scriptures noted in the above answer, consider also in I Timothy 2:13-14 the reasons for Paul's instructions concerning women: "For Adam was first formed, then Eve, and Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." This reason for the instructions concerning women is just as true today as it was when the instructions were first given. If the reason still exists (and it does), it follows then that the instructions based on that reason still exists! The only reason why some have opted to suggest that the instructions were based on custom is that they are looking for an excuse to disobey a commandment that they don't particularly care for. Such is sinful through and through!

QUESTION No. 48: Should Churches of Christ build gymnasiums?

ANSWER: Without doubt the primary assignment given to Christ's followers is that we go into the entire world and preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15-16). Additionally, there are many countries in the world where the Church of Christ is, presently, non-existent. As well, there are faithful brethren who would go and work in these areas, but are often told that there are no funds available to send them, while at the same time these are building gymnasiums, ornate and overdone fellowship halls, and "cathedrals" in which to worship and to be entertained under the guise of improved fellowship and strengthening of the family, while ignoring the Great Commission of our Lord. Missionaries have gone into hard places with the barest of essentials, often sacrificing and doing without to preach to the lost, because of insufficient funds! There is little doubt by any that, even in many countries where the church has been established, there are faithful native brethren that are struggling to survive physically and spiritually while Americans living in the lap of luxury in the finest of personal and congregational

facilities ignore their plight. Some elderships will occasionally send a pittance into the mission field to assuage their consciences, while, at the same time, diverting huge sums that should be going to save the lost into gratifying their own member's desires to exercise and "shoot" basketballs! How can any say, in view of the fact that thousands around this world every day are going into eternity without ever hearing the saving Gospel of Christ, that we first need a gymnasium? How will one stand before God in Judgment and explain the need for such facilities when those for whom God, through love, sent His Son to die are lost eternally because of misused funds given to Christians through His blessings? God forbid that we should take the blessings that He has given us and use them for our own purposes to the exclusion of the Great Commission and those precious souls who, more than anything, need to hear the saving Gospel of our Lord!

QUESTION No. 49: If I cannot trace the beginning of my church all the way back to Pentecost, how can I know it is the true church?

ANSWER: You can't trace your church all the way back to Pentecost, because Christ only established "one" church; His church; the church of the Bible; the church of Christ (Matthew 16:18; I Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:22-23; Ephesians 4:4). As prophesied, that church was to be established in Jerusalem in the days of the Roman Empire (Isaiah 2:1-5; Daniel 2:44). Any group that does not answer to this prophecy cannot be the church that Christ died to bring into existence. The "tracing" of a religious group's origins has to do with its "name," organizational structure, its patterns of worship and service, and its doctrine. A congregation of people meeting today for the first time, in any city, with strict adherence to these matters may be said to have their source (origin, roots) in Jerusalem in the days of the Roman Empire, not that they are a new or different church, but because they, being identical in all respects, help make up the church that Christ died for and established on that day!

When a person, for example, says, "My church (the Baptist Church), was established by John Smythe in Holland, Europe, in the year 1607," and that church does not adhere to a biblical name/description; does not adhere to the biblical organization of the church of Christ; does not worship and serve according to the New Testament; and practices a doctrine that is different from what the Bible teaches, then we can know that its roots do not go back to first century Jerusalem; that its roots only go back to Holland, Europe in 1607 to a man by the name of John Smythe!

If a congregation of people had begun meeting in Holland, Europe in 1607, having been brought together by a John Smythe, and described itself as a congregation of the "church of Christ," and its patterns of worship, service, organization, and doctrine adhered to the New Testament principles that undergird the church of the Bible, it could then be said to have its beginning in Jerusalem of the first century, though this particular group began congregating in a different place at a different time. However, we know that this particular group (Baptist) has a non-authorized name/description; its organization is foreign to the Bible; its worship service is unlike the early church, and its doctrines are contradictory to truth. Therefore, we can know that its beginning was in the wrong place, at the wrong time, and cannot, therefore, be the church that Christ built and for which He died!

QUESTION No. 50: Do you believe one congregation can support another in an evangelistic effort without violating church/congregational autonomy?

ANSWER: Yes! I believe that one congregation is authorized to help another congregation on the basis of Acts 11:27-30. Relief was sent by the hand of Barnabas and Saul to the elders who were in Judea. This passage coupled with II Corinthians 8:1-5 and Romans 15:26-28 provides clear evidence of church cooperation as relates to physical needs. This should be enough to prove the matter, relative to any need. Nonetheless, we see in Acts 15:22-33 one church sending men, along with a prepared document, to render a spiritual service to another church. Can an eldership today cooperate with another eldership by sending prepared documents that they have financed to that other eldership? Obviously yes! Would you think that all right, but believe that they couldn't send the finances for the other eldership to prepare the document? There seems to be no doubt it's proper to send literature, which relieves that congregation of the financial obligation of buying the material. We have that example! Obviously then if the written material is not sent, but money instead is sent, and the other congregation in that way is relieved of the financial obligation that also adheres to the example! Does not cooperation exist in either circumstance relative to evangelization, if the written material sent deals with spiritual matters? In II Corinthians 11:8, other churches sent wages to Paul while he was at Corinth. Were they sent directly or through the local eldership? Neither of us knows. The result, though, was that Paul was supported through church cooperation in the proclamation of the Gospel, whether it was sent to Paul's Post Office Box in Corinth or to the elders' Post office Box in Corinth, who then handed it to Paul! It is also clear that no matter the route taken by the support that was given, it did not violate church autonomy, and, indeed, violated no other scripture!

This issue has been argued for years and, as a result, much time as been wasted in spreading the Gospel by those that are looking for a matter to discuss or a nit to pick. I have listened to all of the old worn arguments against cooperation for years and, frankly, tire of hearing them. I trust you are not similarly looking for a never-ending discussion, but that you are truly searching for the truth.

QUESTION No. 51: Why are there many denominations in the Church of Christ?

ANSWER: There are no denominations/divisions in the body of Christ (John 17:21-23; I Corinthians 1:10). When a group of men deviate from the teachings of God's Word, though they may refer to themselves as the Church of Christ, they are no longer recognized by God as a congregation of the Lord's church. For example: A group of Christians may decide in error to start using musical instruments in worship to God. They may call themselves a congregation of "The Church of Christ," but in their error they have removed themselves, through their sin, from the Church of Christ as it is defined in God's Word. Again, it is not wrong to use one cup during the Lord's Supper, since the Bible doesn't specify how many to use. However, when a group decides in error that the Bible teaches us to use only one cup when partaking of the Lord's Supper, and that those who don't do so are in sin, in their attempt to bind their opinion on others, they sin. The Church of Christ we read about in the Bible was not bound by this error, neither are we today. Therefore, a congregation that does such does not represent Christ's church! It becomes a denomination separate and apart from the Church of Christ, though it may refer to itself as the Church of Christ.

QUESTION No. 52: As a member of the Baptist Church, I was taught that the church started on the shores of Galilee when Jesus told Peter and the others, "come unto me and I will make you fishers of men." You teach that it was on Pentecost Day. Would you please explain?

ANSWER: The position that the church started on the shore of Galilee is invalid for many reasons. Note, first of all, that the subject statement by our Lord was made very early in His earthly ministry (Matthew 4:19). Sometime later in Matthew 16:18, Jesus said, "I will build my church." Clearly, we can see that the action He promised to take

was yet future. Obviously then, it had not already been built! Often the Baptist Church will teach that it had its beginning with John the Baptist and that John was a member of the church. Neither can this be the case, because John had been beheaded and had been buried before Jesus said, "I will (future) build my church!"

Note also in Matthew 16:18 & 19 that the "church" and the "kingdom" are one and the same, i.e., He was going to build something (the church) and He was going to give Peter the keys to that which He was going to build (kingdom/church)! In Mark 9:1, it is obvious that the kingdom/church had not yet come. We also see that when it did come, it would come "with power." When the kingdom/church came, the power would come and when the power came, the kingdom/church would come. One would not come without the other! After Jesus had been resurrected, He told the eleven (Luke 24:47-50) that, repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name (the Gospel – Mark 16:15-16) "beginning in Jerusalem." Then He told them to go and wait in the city of Jerusalem "until ye be endued **with power** from on high." The "power" that was to accompany the coming of the kingdom/church (Mark 9:1; Acts 1:3) had not yet come when Jesus spoke these words shortly before His ascension to be enthroned and to receive that kingdom (Daniel 7:13-14). Clearly, Christ did not have a kingdom until He received the kingdom. Just as clearly, none could have been a citizen of the kingdom that belonged to Christ until Christ received the kingdom! Further, if the "power" had not yet come from Christ as promised, then we can know that the kingdom/church had not yet been established. In Acts 1, we find the disciples in Jerusalem waiting for that "power" to come. In Acts 2, we find the "power" coming. On that day, when the "power" came, we find people being added to the kingdom/church for the first time (Acts 2:47), the kingdom given to Christ following His ascension. Thus, on that day, the promises of Jesus regarding the establishment of His church/kingdom were fulfilled. It was on that day that Peter first used the "keys of the kingdom of heaven," the church (Matthew 16:19). In this first Gospel sermon, Peter explained what one would have to do in order to "enter" that kingdom/church, thus using the "keys" to open her doors for the first time. When people did exactly what Peter told them to do, their sins were forgiven (Acts 2:38, 40, & 41) and they were admitted entrance into the church (Acts 2:47). What Peter told them to do has been bound in heaven (Matthew 16:19)! It is, therefore, the only way one can gain entry into the church, even today! Prior to this day, references to the church in the Bible looked forward. Subsequent to this, references to the church/kingdom looked backward.

There can be no doubt that the birthday of the church was on the first Pentecost Day after the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ!

QUESTION No. 53: What do you think of change agents in the church? Should we withdraw fellowship from them in love?

ANSWER: Change agents in the Churches of Christ (and the things that you mention that they want to bring into the church) are sinful and divisive. There is no authority in God's Word for any of these! Not only, they, but weak-willed elders, not willing to stand for the truth who allow these things to happen, will be called to account on Judgment Day. Christians who support such by their contributions and presence play a part in their ungodliness and will also be called to account! We are not permitted to bid God speed to those who bring other than the doctrine of Christ, lest we be partakers of their evil deeds (II John 9-11), nor can we have any degree of fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness (Ephesians 5:11)! After all attempts to correct such errors by teaching the truth in love, the faithful child of God will honor his Master's will by obedience to the above passages!

QUESTION No. 54: We believe that the name of the church should not be "The Church of Christ," a name that merely shows ownership. We believe that it should simply be called "The Christians" in light of Isaiah 62:2, Acts 11:26, Acts 26:28, and I Peter 4:11. Why not?

ANSWER: The passage (Acts 11:26) that you mention does indeed indicate that the disciples who made up the church were, for the first time, divinely called (chremtizo) Christians. However, your logic for determining that all of these passages authorize the use of the name of "The Christians" to define and describe the church collectively is faulty! You state in your letter that I Corinthians 11:2 implies that Paul is marrying "us" to Christ! However, we must note that Paul is not writing to an individual, but rather he is writing to the church (II Corinthians 1:1). Therefore when he in II Corinthians uses the word "you," he is referring to the church that is to be espoused to Him, as His bride and a chaste virgin of Christ. This is the precise concept of Ephesians 5:23-32 where Paul concludes the discussion by saying, "but I speak concerning Christ and the church." In other words, in both II Corinthians 11:2 and Ephesians 5:23-32, Christ is the bridegroom and the church is His bride. Individual Christians make up the church, which is His bride. In Ephesians 5:27 Paul discusses the fact that church, as His bride, is to be holy, without spot, wrinkle, or blemish. In II Corinthians 11:2, he is saying the same thing about the same institution, i.e., " a chaste (pure/holy) virgin to Christ! Clearly, it is the church that

is the bride of Christ, the church that is made up collectively of Christians. As you state, "The bride is to be called after the bridegroom." The bride, however, is the church and Christ is the bridegroom; therefore the designation "Church of Christ." You use the example that if I own a book, I can simply say "the book of Mr. Amos," but that is not the title of the book. The example uses a premise that is not valid for our purposes. If I own a house (which more correctly represents the case at hand) and I assign a name to the house, it must be assigned to the one who purchased and owns the house. In this case, the "house of Mr. Amos." In the case of Christ and the house He purchased and owns, the Church of Christ is the appropriate response (Romans 16:16). By using the name, "The Christians," you are by implication saying that "The Christians" purchased and own the church! You are saying to the world, "The Church of the Christians." You thereby are giving the glory of purchase and ownership to those who make up the church, rather than He who died for it. The fact that the name of Christ is incorporated in the name "Christians" does not negate or do away with this truth. We are Christians, which denotes that we are followers of Christ. We, as Christians, constitute collectively the church or body of Christ. We, as individual members, make up the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:12) which is His church (Ephesians 1:22-23) or the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:12), or the Church of Christ. There is not one place in all of the Bible where the church or body of Christ is called or referred to as "The Christians," or for that matter, as the "Christian Church." The church was not built by "the Christians (Matthew 16:18)!" It was not paid for by "the Christians." Christians, individually or collectively, did not die to pay the required price. Christ built it! He paid for it! He died for it! He is the Head of it! He is her Bridegroom! Therefore it should bear His name directly, not indirectly through the name that was given to individual church members, thereby giving, at the very least, partial glory to those who make up the church rather than to Him who deserves "all" of the glory (I Corinthians 10:31). We are not to glorify ourselves to any degree as being the followers of Jesus Christ, but, rather, we are to glorify the Christ whom we follow, because of the cross on which He died (Galatians 6:14).

QUESTION No. 55: If the Lord's church is the true church, why is it not spreading very fast, and why is it not recognized?

ANSWER: The size and spreading of the church is not the standard by which we measure truth or verity. The only standard by which we measure such matters is the Word of the Almighty God (John 17:17). Christ said in the sermon on the mount in Matthew 7:13-14, "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads unto destruction and there are **many** who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and **few** there be that find it." Indicated here, as

compared with the total population, there would be relatively few that would enter the church, because they would perceive the life of a Christian as being difficult. This is not to say that this is the total reason why the church is not spreading rapidly. It may very well be that it should be growing faster than it is, but cannot grow because Christians are not doing what they are supposed to be doing, i.e., taking the Gospel to their neighbors (Mark 16:15-16). The church will grow as it is supposed to grow when Christians do their part in helping it to grow. Be assured when we plant the seed and water the seed (which is the Word of God – Luke 8:11) that God will give the increase (I Corinthians 3:6). We must avoid the temptation to do little or nothing and then announce that the church is not growing, as it should!

QUESTION No. 56: Do you believe that we cannot support non-Christians out of the church treasury?

ANSWER: The matter of providing aid to those who are not Christians is settled soon into the Gospel according to Matthew. Christ in preaching that the kingdom of heaven was at hand (Matthew 4:17) was laying the groundwork for that kingdom that was yet to come, i.e., He was teaching those who would come into the kingdom how they were to conduct themselves in the kingdom, both, as individuals and collectively. In Chapter five, He often said, "Ye have heard it said of those of old time . . . , but I say unto you . . ," e.g., Matthew 5:21 & 22; 27 & 28; 31 & 32; 33 & 34 and; 38 & 39. He says the same thing in Verses 43 & 44 and, in so doing, tells us (the called out) that we are to love, bless, do good, and pray for our enemies so that we may be the children of our Father. Christ is telling us to be like our Father who does good things to both the unrighteous and the righteous; the just and the unjust. He further says, 'If you only love them that love you, what reward do you have? Even sinners do that much! And if you salute only your brethren, how do you differ from the unrighteous publican?" In the closing verse, He says that we are to be whole, complete, and mature children of God by being whole, complete, and mature, as is He. In other words as He loves, blesses, and does good to the unjust (those who are not His children), we are to do the same. None can deny that the Son who is the express image of the Father (Colossians 1:15) so conducts Himself. Therefore, in whatever fashion He, as the Head of the church, conducts Himself, so the church, which is His body and His bride, conducts herself (Ephesians 5:22-32). To do otherwise would be to put the body at odds with the Head!

Further, it is clear in II Corinthians 8 and 9 that Paul is commending various congregations for supplying the needs of the poor saints in Jerusalem. In Chapter 9, Verse

13, Paul writes, “Whiles by the experiment of this ministration (the supplying of needs) they (the recipients) glorify God for your (the church at Corinth) professed subjection unto the Gospel of Christ, and for your (the church at Corinth) liberal distribution unto them (the saints), and unto all men (other than saints).”

I realize that Albert Barnes and Matthew Henry are not the final authority in biblical interpretation, but, nonetheless, the following quotes that come from them relative to this same verse is worthy of note.

Barnes says: “There was a real and sincere submission to the Gospel of Christ, and that was manifested by their giving liberally to supply the needs of others. The doctrine is that one evidence of true subjection to the gospel; one proof that our profession is sincere and genuine, is a willingness to contribute to relieve the needs of the poor and afflicted friends of the Redeemer. And unto all people. That is, all others whom you may have the opportunity of relieving.”

Henry says: “Besides these, others also would be thankful; the poor, who were supplied in their wants, would not fail to be very thankful to God, and bless God for them; and all who wished well to the Gospel would glorify God for this experiment, or proof of subjection to the Gospel of Christ, and true love to all men, Vs. 13.”

With these men I agree, as does brother Bill Jackson in his fine commentary (Page 78) on this great book. He writes, “It is noteworthy also to see that the distribution was made, in liberality, unto “them” – the saints – and unto “all men” as they stood in need. The liberal distribution of aid manifested the subjection, or obedience, that the Corinthians had to the demands of the Gospel of Christ. It should be clear to any who have any understanding of the rule of Christ in our lives, and thus for our service in the kingdom, that benevolence is directed first toward members of the body. Yea, doing good unto all men, ‘especially unto them who are of the household of faith’ (Galatians 6:10). The connection we have together in the Christ would demand that fellow-Christians would have to first call upon the kingdom’s benevolent resources. But we dare not allow some to build a man-made doctrine restricting benevolence only to saints! “Saints” are mentioned in Vs.12, and then another category, “all men.” The work of God in any given place may occasion circumstances wherein non-members are in need, and the saints of God can meet those needs, and should meet them. Some have gone to an extreme in this,

to the extent that they hold that non-members living next door to the church building, yet attending services and studies with regularity, and who themselves give into the contribution when they attend, and who are known and appreciated by many members of the church, etc., cannot be aided by the church once the funds have entered the contribution. These do state that individual members of the church may render that aid, but forbid it 'from the treasury.' However, the funds here spoken of entered the Corinthians treasury, and from here entered, doubtless, the treasuries in the places receiving the aid (and we have seen this in Acts 11:27-30). Still, distribution of funds is seen to be unto 'saints' and unto "all men," and from the Corinthian congregation!"

I believe all three of these men have interpreted correctly!

Christ is clear in Luke 10:25-37 who our neighbor is: Our neighbor is any person in need, even if he is not as we are! Those who would teach that members of the body of Christ cannot use the "Lord's money" to do that which He taught us to do in emulation of Him, place themselves, as a congregation, without compassion in the category of the priest and the Levite who looked and passed by on the other side! These errant brethren, knowingly or unknowingly, as the case may be, effectively teach that individual Christians may conduct themselves with compassion, as did the Samaritan, but the church collectively "must" conduct herself as the priest and the Levite! Absurd!

QUESTION No. 57: When you say that Christ established His church in the last days, does this mean that the word "church" was not applied to earlier times?

ANSWER: The word church as used in the New Testament is from the Greek word "ekklesia." This word means a "called-out people" or simply a religious congregation! It is used in this sense and applied to the congregation of the children of Israel who worshiped in the wilderness under Moses (Acts 7:38). However, this congregation of the nation of Israel under the Law of Moses is not to be confused with the church of the New Testament. When Christ was on the earth, long after Moses had died, He said, "I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18). According to Old Testament prophecy (Acts 2:16-21), that action was finalized in the "last days," specifically on the Day of Pentecost following our Lord's resurrection, as shown in Acts 2:22-47. This was the beginning of the "last days," the Christian dispensation, that will continue until the end of time!

QUESTION No. 58: Could you please explain what is meant by "the church was established in the last days?

ANSWER: As we read the second chapter of Acts, we read of a prophecy spoken by the Old Testament prophet Joel (Chapter 2). In Verse 17, we learn that the events that occurred on this day of Acts 2 (the day of Pentecost) were "that which was spoken by the prophet Joel (Verse 16)." In other words the events of that day, including the establishment of the church, were the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy. The prophecy we are told, in Acts 2:17, was to "come to pass in the last days." We can then know for certain that the church was established in the "last days," since it was established at that time (Acts 2:47). The "last days" in the Bible refers to the Christian dispensation, i.e., from Pentecost until the general resurrection and judgment of all that have ever lived. Many places in the New Testament show that the "last days" included that first generation after Christ, e.g., II Timothy 3:1; Hebrews 1:2; I Peter 1:20; and I John 2:18 and must logically, therefore, include the days in which we live! There will be no days after these "last days," otherwise these would not be the "last days!" One may, therefore safely and logically conclude, on the basis of this fact, that there will not be 365,000 days (1000 years) after the "last days!"

QUESTION No. 59: Does not the Church of Christ involve itself in "legalism" and "works salvation?" Titus 3:5 says that we are not saved by works of righteousness. Ephesians 2:8-9 also says that we are not saved by works.

ANSWER: First of all, the Bible does not condemn one who is legal. Legalism has been painted by "Faith Only" people to mean something dirty and sinful, but it is not in the primary sense of the word. Christ said, "If you love me, keep my commandments (laws)" (John 14:15). When we keep His commandments (laws) we are being legal, i.e., we are law-abiding! Again in John 15:10, He says, "If you keep my commandments (laws), you shall abide in my love." In Verse 14, He says, "You are my friends, if (which carries the force of 'if and only if') you DO whatsoever I command you." Certainly Christ does not condemn the keeping of His commandments (laws), but to the contrary, He commands that we **MUST** keep His commandments! The term legalism is often associated with the Pharisees with the suggestion that if one keeps Christ's commandments today, they are being as the Pharisees. However, Christ never condemned the Pharisees or anyone else for being obedient. The Pharisees were condemned because

they themselves did not keep the laws that they bound on others, very often binding their own judgments and opinions! Of course, such often referred to as "legalism" would be wrong and sinful.

Secondly, it is certain that man cannot save himself and, further, that simply by engaging in works of righteousness he cannot be saved. Neither can any man be saved by works of the Old Law, i.e., the Law of Moses, the Old Testament. These are the works that Paul discusses, in the book of Romans and, as well, even in Ephesians 2:8-9, which is the sugar stick of the "Faith Only" people. To say that because Paul says, "we cannot be saved by the works of the Old Law," i.e., works of righteousness, that he is also saying that we don't have to keep the laws of Christ flies in the face of the passages (and many others) mentioned above! Question: Does James 2:24 contradict Paul when the Holy Spirit through him says, "You see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by "Faith Only"? The only time that the words "faith" and "only" come together in God's Word is in this passage and here it states clearly that we are NOT saved by "Faith Alone! Faith without works is dead (James 2:20; James 2:26).

The truth is that Paul and James, both being guided by the same undivided Holy Spirit do not contradict each other. Paul is discussing "works of righteousness," which cannot of themselves save us, while James is discussing "works of obedience" which are necessary for our justification. For example, "belief" itself is a WORK of obedience! Notice the question asked of Jesus in John 6:28, "What shall we DO, that we might WORK the WORKS of God?" In Verse 29, Jesus answers, "This is the WORK of God, that you BELIEVE on Him whom He has sent." So, belief is not a work of righteousness, but it is a work of obedience. The same is true of baptism, it is not a work of righteousness, but it is a work of obedience, obedience to the commandment (law) of Christ, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). In Titus 3:5, a passage that you mention, Paul says we are not saved by "works of righteousness, but through His mercy He saved us by the **washing of regeneration** (baptism) and the renewing of the Holy Spirit!" In baptism one arises to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:3-5), all sins having been washed away and the sinner having been regenerated, i.e., he has been born anew or again (John 3:3-5; II Corinthians 5:17)! Peter on Pentecost Day had instructed the believing Jews there to "repent and be baptized for the remission of sins." Was he telling them to engage in "works of righteousness" for the remission of sins? Of course not, but there was a commanded action to be taken to have the sins remitted! Thus he would say in Acts 2:40, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation." What was their response to that directive? Verse 41: "Then they that gladly heard the word (by which they were drawn – John 6:44-45 – II Thessalonians 2:14) were

baptized and the same day there were added unto them about 3000 souls," after which they were added to the church (Verse 47)! Was Peter telling them to go and engage in a work of righteousness in order to be saved? No! Were their sins remitted before baptism? No! Were they added to the others before baptism? No! Were they added to the church before baptism? No! The answers show that baptism is not a "work of righteousness" that cannot save, but rather it is a "work of obedience" necessary for the remission of sins (salvation) and addition to the church of Christ!

Salvation is not by "faith only," neither by "works only." Man is justified by faith and works (James 2:14:26), i.e., a faith that works through love (Galatians 5:6). "If you love Me, keep My commandments (John 14:15)." Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give you a crown of life" (Revelation 2:10).

QUESTION No. 60: Can the church fellowship other churches that use choirs?

ANSWER: No, it cannot! Choirs are not authorized in the New Testament and are, therefore, not of the doctrine of Christ! II John 9-11 states that if we fellowship those who bring other than His doctrine we are partakers of their evil deeds! Additionally the use of choirs, being sinful, is an unfruitful work of darkness, with which we are to have "no" fellowship (Ephesians 5:11)!

QUESTION No. 61: Is it right for those in one congregation to correct others of another congregation?

ANSWER: Yes! The principle found in James 5:19-20 is applicable to "any of you," a phrase not restricted only to those within the local congregation.

QUESTION No. 62: What should you do if you find a deacon of another congregation drinking alcoholic beverages publicly?

ANSWER: Go privately to him at the first, following the direction and steps found in Matthew 18:15-17. This man, if he would be saved, clearly needs to repent and confess his sins publicly before the congregation of which he is a member and certainly we have a responsibility to respond to any brother so affected (James 5:19-20). The brother sinned publicly and he needs to repent and confess in the same manner! If he refuses to do so after the visit with witnesses, then the church where he attends must be informed. If he will not confess and repent with the urging of the church, then fellowship should be taken from him in accordance with I Corinthians 5:1-13 and II Thessalonians 3:6-15.

QUESTION No. 63: Should we insist that a person stand before the congregation and confess when their sins are known by the entire congregation, even that of forsaking the assembly?

ANSWER: One's confession and repentance should be as public as the sin committed. However, reason should be used as to "how" it is to be done, which should be a matter for the elders to decide. They may decide that one should come before the congregation or, perhaps that one may speak from their seat, or from a standing position at their seat. In cases of bed-ridden illnesses, one may repent and confess his or her sins to another person who then will cause a public statement to be made. The important thing is that a person repents and confesses and that action is known just as publicly as was the sin!

QUESTION No. 64: Is it scriptural for the church to loan money to its members?

ANSWER: The church is not in the "banking business!" Money is collected each Lord's Day for the express purpose of furthering the cause of Christ through proclamation of His Gospel and to aid those who can't help themselves. When the elders decide that aid should be given to one in need, they have no authority to demand repayment! If a person subsequent to receiving aid responds by contributing on the first day of the week as he has been prospered, the matter is private and should not be for the purposes of repaying a "loan." Obviously, to use the church's finances so that the members may make personal purchases is to misuse the Lord's money. Those who need to make loans should be encouraged to go to lending establishments!

QUESTION No. 65: I agree with you that the church should not be in the business of loaning money. However, some suggest that the making of loans by the church to its members is authorized by Matthew 5:42ff and Luke 6:34. Is this the proper interpretation of these verses?

ANSWER: No! As stated previously, the church is not in the “banking business!” Money is collected each Lord’s Day for the express purpose of furthering the cause of Christ through proclamation of His Gospel and to aid those who can’t help themselves. Obviously, to use the church’s finances so that the members may make personal purchases is to misuse the Lord’s money. Those who desire to make loans should be, as previously stated, encouraged to go to lending establishments! Matthew 5:42 and Luke 6:34 do not deal with the loaning of money by the church out of her treasury. Without doubt, these passages deal solely with matters between individuals!

QUESTION No. 66: Is it right to dismiss some from the main assembly to partake of the Lord’s Supper on Sunday evening in a different room?

ANSWER: I certainly would not make such practices by another congregation a “test of fellowship.” However, personally, I can find no biblical authority for dividing one group into two groups with each engaging in their own particular acts of worship simultaneously. The biblical authority that I see is that the church is to gather "together" in “one place” for collective and congregational worship to God (I Corinthians 14:23; I Corinthians 14:26; I Corinthians 5:4; Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:18-20.) It is worthy of note that these passages were written to "the" church and that the key word in each verse is "together." When the congregation is divided it can not be a church that is "together," no matter the rationalization to the contrary. Some would say that those who are

separated from the main body of the congregation to partake of the Lord's Supper are able to do so more effectively in a quieter, isolated part of the building. To me that is pure assumption and rationalization! I was fortunate to attend a congregation for many, many years (and attend one now) where the main body of the congregation waits in respectful quietness while those they love complete their worship responsibilities to God. More often the real reason for the division appears to be that it shortens the service which gladdens the impatient hearts of many! As an aside, it also seems that the same hearts are gladdened when the song leader omits most of the verses of a song (especially toward the

closing of the service) and the preacher is directed to shorten his message to fit a "more appropriate time frame."

It is sad indeed to see the main body of the congregation often rush out without even noticing those who have been ushered elsewhere to commune in private! I see a significant conflict in this arrangement in light of I Corinthians 11:33, "Wherefore, my brethren when ye come together to eat, 'tarry' one for another." I see little "tarrying" taking place when some are directed to leave and complete their worship somewhere else outside of the common assembly! The word "tarry" is from 'ekdechomai' that Strong's Concordance defines as, "to await, expect, look (tarry) for, wait for." I should think that Mr. Strong, if he were alive today, would see little, if any, 'tarrying" one for another in the split assembly arrangement under discussion. As for me, I see none!

QUESTION No. 67: Why does the Church of Christ not have the office of widow as directed in I Timothy 5:9-10?

ANSWER: An "office" is a duty or a charge conferred on one by those with the authority to do so. I Timothy 5:9-10 has to do with enrolling an eligible widow without other means of support into the number to be cared for by the church. Such enrollment of widows does not constitute an "office," neither an ordaining, nor appointment, as is required with other congregational offices (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5). Such an enrolled one cannot scripturally be said to be "in office." To come to such a conclusion would not be based on Scripture, but would be in spite of Scripture!

QUESTION No. 68: If a church today is not organized like the church of the Bible, can it be the church built by Christ?

ANSWER: No! It cannot be the church that Christ built, because it rejects what His word tells us what He wants the organization of His church to be. The "church" about which you write is different from the church of Christ, because it has an earthly headquarters, a president, vice president, etc. It excludes the offices that God directs us to have (ruling elders with deacons to serve) and "adds" offices that He has not authorized. Changing or adding to God's Word is sinful (Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 22:18-19). It is not enough to be right in all other matters and to be wrong in one matter. James said, "For

whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10).

DENOMINATIONALISM/OTHER RELIGIONS

QUESTION No. 69: What is the meaning of denominationalism and denomination?

ANSWER: Denominationalism refers to the result of having divided into various denominations. To denominate is to separate a part from the whole; to assign a different name! The word “denomination” then properly refers to the various religious sects in the world today, such as, Baptist, Pentecostal, Methodist, etc. These divisions are sinful, being contrary to the word of God (See John 17:20-23; I Corinthians 1:10-13; I Corinthians 3:1-4). Christ built only one church (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 4:4; Colossians 1:18, 24); the Church of Christ (Romans 16:16)!

QUESTION No. 70: Is it right to discriminate against others churches? Would this not violate Matthew 7:1?

ANSWER: To discriminate means: "To recognize as being different." The reason for recognizing the differences in the denominational churches is because of the significant fact that they are clearly different, not only from each other, but from the church as described in the word of God. The man made differences between the denominations and the church of Christ are the reasons "why" they are referred to by man as denominations! Since they are made by man, it is clear they are not made by God. If they are not of God, it would be sinful to say that they are by describing them as "God-approved Christian Churches." If they are unlike, in any way, the church as described in His Word, they can be neither God-approved or Christian! Therefore, since God in His Word obviously discriminates (recognizes the differences), we, too, must discriminate (recognize the differences). People gaining membership in denominational organizations (churches other than the church of Christ) are not in the one God-approved of church. Since they have not been saved by translation into the kingdom of His dear Son (Colossians 1:13), they, despite their denominational membership, remain in, and are of, the world. Christ "gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us (members of His church; not the denominations) from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father" (Galatians 1:4). Discrimination toward this world and worldly denominations, with love (Matthew 19:19) and honor (I Peter 2:17) toward all men, is, therefore, consistent with the will of God! For these reasons, faithful Christians are obligated to oppose denominationalism!

Matthew 7:1-5 is often taken out of context to say that God forbids all kinds of judging and we, therefore, cannot teach against the doctrines and commandments of men (denominations). This is neither biblical nor true! This passage simply commands us not to judge unrighteously. In fact, Verses fifteen through twenty tell us "beware of false prophets" and that we "shall know them by their fruits." This kind of "judging" is, indeed,

approved of by God! It is the kind of judgment Christians are commanded to do in John 7:24: "Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment."

QUESTION No. 71: If it is proper to condemn denominational names, it would follow that it is also proper to condemn the names of the books of the Bible! Should we not call them Book No.1, Book No.2, etc.?

ANSWER: The statement is not sound! Why would it be proper to assign different numbers (which provide no description whatever) to each of the books and improper to assign different titles that scripturally denote the author or recipients of the various books?

Denominational names, on the other hand, are condemned by Christ and His followers because they are unscriptural (robbing Christ of the glory and honor due only Him, e.g., Lutheran Church, Catholic Church, New Apostles, Baptist Church, Methodist Church, Mormon Church, etc.) and because they foster division (John 17:20-23; I Corinthians 1:10-13; I Corinthians 3:3-4).

QUESTION No. 72: What Christian denomination are you affiliated with?

ANSWER: We are not associated with a denomination, but, rather, having been obedient to specific terms of entry as outlined in the Bible, we have, thereby, become members of the church of the Bible, defined in Romans 16:16 as the church of Christ. The Bible stands against division (denominationalism). Please read John 17:21; I Corinthians 1:10-13; Ephesians 4:4-6; Matthew 7:13-14 and 21-27.

QUESTION No. 73: What do the scriptures teach about the "rapture"?

ANSWER: There is nothing in God's word about the “rapture!” It is that part of the false doctrine of "premillennialism" which teaches that Christ is going to come two (sometimes three) more times; that between these comings, the church will go "somewhere" to spend seven rapturous years with Him (the rapture), while those

remaining on earth will be going through a period of great tribulation. This doctrine has no basis in God's word and will be rejected by the faithful Christian! 99% of the Premillenial argument for this theory is based on I Thessalonians 4:16-17 and what some Premillenialists perceive to be two resurrections, in concert with their errant doctrine of "two future comings," which is clearly not of the Scriptures, but simply their invention. Consider this passage a little more closely: Premillenialists claim that the "coming of Christ," as stated in I Thessalonians 3:13 and I Thessalonians 4:16, refers strictly to His "first" of two comings, at which time He will come "for" His saints (the saved). But this is not what the passages say! These passages say that He will be coming "with" His saints! The Premillenialists take two Greek words (parousia and epiphaneia) and use them to support their theory. They say that Christ will come twice, i.e., prior to the tribulation "for" His saints at His "parousia" and "with" His saints after the tribulation at His "epiphaneia." They claim that the Thessalonians passages have to do with His "first" coming or "parousia." But this "first" coming, as they believe it, clearly states, contrary to their belief, that Christ at this time will not be coming "for" His saints, but, rather, He will be coming "with" His saints, which according to their theory is supposed to occur at His "second" of two alleged future comings, or at His "ephiphaneia." Confusing? To say the least! The truth of the matter is that their theory will not hold water. Christ never even hinted at two future comings or two resurrections! In fact, the very theory of two comings, based on their "parousia' and "epiphaneia" arguments are forever destroyed by Paul in his second letter to the Thessalonians (2:8) where he says that when Christ does come that he will destroy the Wicked One with the brightness (epiphaneia) of His coming (parousia). They are both evidenced at one time, not two different times!

QUESTION No. 74: Should we believe in the "rapture?"

ANSWER: No! Undoubtedly there are always many whose religious focus seems always to be directed toward the end of time. As well, there are many false doctrines about this matter being promoted throughout the religious world today. Primarily they revolve around the unscriptural theory of "Premillenialism." Some false teachings included in this theory are: the rapture; the great tribulation; two (sometimes three) resurrections; and Christ returning to physically reign over the earth for a thousand years. None of this is biblical and certainly cannot be helpful! Many of these false prophets have repeatedly tried to predict the time of Christ's return. All have failed and will continue to do so. Jesus said in Matthew 24:36, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." It is folly to speculate about such. However, we do need to be aware of the truth that He will return someday to judge the world in righteousness (Acts 17:30-31). Therefore, we are told in Matthew 24:44, "be ye

also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." To be "ready" means to be living a faithful Christian now, and at the time of His coming! Our focus then in this life ought to be on our faithful service in His church, the Church of Christ! Undue anxiousness about the "end of time" will then leave us and, indeed, we will learn to look forward to that great day with joyous anticipation.

Perhaps it would help to list the events that will occur at His Second Coming:

1. All the dead (good and bad) will be resurrected (John 5:28-29).

2. All (good and bad) will be judged (II Corinthians 5:10).

3. The righteous will go to heaven, the wicked will go to hell (Matthew 25:31-46).

4. The earth will be destroyed by fire (II Peter 3:10).

The faithful Christian will fear none of these things!

QUESTION No. 75: Should we believe in purgatory?

ANSWER: Purgatory is not a biblical doctrine! It is a false doctrine of the apostate Church which says that Catholics, who are too good to go to hell and too bad to go to heaven, go into an intermediate place (purgatory) in order to be purged from their sins to become fit for heaven! This false doctrine rises from the sinful practice of selling indulgences to provide money into the bulging treasury of the Catholic Church. The doctrine holds that the Catholic Church knows how long each Catholic is to spend in the fires and punishment of purgatory and that the amount of time can be significantly reduced, depending upon the number of indulgences purchased. In fact, a Catholic destined for punishment in purgatory may purchase a “Plenary Indulgence,” so that he or she may totally by-pass purgatory and go straight to heaven. A Catholic, according to their Church’s teachings, may also gain specific indulgences by praying the “Rosary,” i.e., counting beads to keep track of the number of times the one praying says the “Hail, Mary” and/or “Glory be to the Father.” The sale of indulgences by the Catholic hierarchy was the primary motivation that caused Martin Luther, a one-time Catholic Priest, to leave the Catholic Church and to usher in the Protestant Reformation of the 15th century.

The Bible, in opposition to this fallacious purgatorial doctrine, teaches that "it is appointed unto man once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). There is no second chance! Luke 16:26 teaches that there is a great gulf fixed, so that none can travel from one place to the other after death!

QUESTION No. 76: Is there any scripture that says Priests and Nuns should not marry?

ANSWER: It is obvious to all that the Catholic Church forbids their Priests and Nuns to marry. That forbidding to marry is wrong can clearly be seen in I Timothy 4:1-3. Those who do so are those who have departed from the faith (Vs.1)! Nonetheless, one may make a personal decision not to marry, provided that he or she does not succumb to the temptations that often befall a single person (I Corinthians 7:8-9). The apostle Paul is an example of one who chose not to marry! But this same apostle tells us in I Corinthians 7:1, "to avoid fornication, let every man have is own wife, and let every women have her own husband." So we see that a decision to marry, or not to marry, is a choice that each person has to make and, further, that the decision should be made only with careful consideration to biblical principles. The sin of religious people and organizations relative to marriage (and many other issues) is that they make laws where God has not legislated. In other words, they proclaim a gospel that is different from the New Testament. These are to be accursed (Galatians 1:6-9)! The forbidding of priests and nuns to marry by the Catholic Church has given rise to the terrible promotion of illegal, illicit, and sinful sexual activity that has totally pervaded that group around the world, and for which millions of dollars (much of which has been collected through the sale of indulgences) have been paid to the many innocent people (mostly children) who have been sexually assaulted and raped by those Catholic Church officials who have “left the natural use of the women (Romans 1:26-32)” to seek those of the same sex, very often because they were initially kept from marriage in violation of Holy Writ.

QUESTION No. 77: What does it mean when the Bible says, "we are saved by grace through faith?"

ANSWER: The passage referred to is Ephesians 2:8. This verse says that the way of redemption ("grace") has been provided by God. It has appeared unto all men (Titus

2:11), but clearly all men will not accept it (Matthew 7:13-14). However, when men do accept God's grace through faithful obedience to the prescribed terms of pardon (Romans 10:17), the result is salvation (Titus 3:5).

QUESTION No. 78: What do you understand scripturally about the millennial (1000-year) reign of Christ on this earth?

ANSWER: There is no basis in scripture for this false doctrine. Those who teach such try unsuccessfully to find support in the last phrase of Revelation 20:4, "and they lived and reigned with Christ for a thousand years." However, this symbolic passage does not remotely refer to a one thousand-year reign of Christ. Nor is there mention made of a reign of any kind on this earth! The "reigning" in this verse refers only to the reign of the disembodied "souls who were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and the word of God." In today's language, we might say that John Doe "lived and reigned" with the King of England for "ten years." We would understand the "ten years" as referring to the duration of John Doe's reign. It would not tell us how long the King of England reigned! The same principle holds true in Revelation 20:4. It is also interesting to note that our Lord has already been reigning for almost two thousand years (I Timothy 6:15-16).

QUESTION No. 79: If the Holy Spirit is one and is truth, why are there so many Protestant denominations all believing they know the truth?

ANSWER: The question needs to include the Catholic Church, which also claims to "know the truth." The statement in the question (the Holy Spirit is not divided and is truth) is without doubt accurate and scriptural (I Corinthians 1:10; John 16:13; John 17:17), thus showing clearly that, because each of these teach and practice doctrines different from the others, all of them cannot have the truth. Such would be sensibly impossible! Since each is different, it follows logically that, at best, only one of them could have the truth; perhaps none of them! Jesus said, "Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth" (John 17:17)! It must then follow that only those people who practice and worship according to God's Word can scripturally be called His church and His people.

Many falsely claim that the Bible promotes denominationalism, because, according to them, men today cannot understand the scriptures alike! They foolishly charge God

with giving us a book to read and study that we cannot understand. Paul speaks to the contrary in Ephesians 3:3, saying that when we read the mystery of Christ (the Bible) we may understand it! Jesus said in John 17:17 that God's Word is truth. In John 8:32, He said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Denominational confusion then does not come from God or His Word (I Corinthians 14:33). In fact, the Bible clearly condemns denominationalism (John 17:20-23; I Corinthians 1:10-14).

Denominations usually originate with the presupposed doctrines and commandments of men that result in vain (empty) worship (Matthew 15:3, 6, 9). Many often attempt to force God's Word into what they want the Bible to say or what they have been taught from childhood. The differences and confusion in religion today come from man's own desires and ideas: his own manuals; his creeds; his church laws, e.g., the Catholic Catechism, Baptist Manual, Methodist Manual of Discipline, Presbyterian confession of Faith, Book of Mormon, Rules of Faith and Practice, Church Bylaws, etc.

Only one thing can erase the differences and confusion in the religious world today and that is the rejection of the commandments of men while at the same time receiving with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save our souls (James 1:21); the perfect law of liberty (James 1:25). Jesus said in John 12:48 that His words will judge us. The creeds that we have mentioned above (and others like them) will not stand in Judgment Day; nor will they who follow them!

QUESTION No. 80: Would you tell me more about the Anglican Church?

ANSWER: The Anglican Church of today developed from the Church of England, which had its beginning in about 1539. The Anglicans primarily include the Church of England, the Anglican Church of Canada, and the Episcopal Church in the United States. They do not believe that the Bible is the sole authority in all religious matters, but rely heavily upon the Book of Common Prayer, tradition, and logic as relates to perceived "current" social needs. As a result, their theology is ever changing. There is little difference between Anglican and Catholic doctrines, traditions and worship formalities. The primary difference is that Catholics look to the Pope of Rome as their head, while the Queen of England is designated as the head of the Anglican community, with the Archbishop of Canterbury being the highest ranking spiritual leader. This group is, perhaps, the most liberal of all religious bodies today, even to the acceptance and

ordination of homosexuals as priests within their fellowship! Because the Anglicans have little, if any, resemblance to the church of the New Testament, its teachings will be carefully avoided by the faithful child of God!

QUESTION No. 81: Do all different churches (denominations) make up the church of Christ?

ANSWER: No! In Ephesians 4:4, the Bible says that there is only "one body." In Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18, 24, we learn that the "body" is the church. Therefore, if there is only "one body," there is clearly only one church. This church is the church of the Bible and is the only church that is of divine origin. All others are of men and will eventually fail (Psalms 127:1; Matthew 15:13). Neither is there salvation to be found in any of them (Acts 4:12).

Different groups cannot walk together except they be agreed (Amos 3:3). Additionally, God's people are to be of the same mind and in the same judgment (I Corinthians 1:10). Since clearly and certainly, there are great differences and disagreements between today's denominations, it only follows that the thinking that all of these make up the church of Christ has absolutely no foundation in His Word, and that it is impossible for them to walk together in one body!

The only church in which one can be saved is referred to in the Bible as the "church of Christ" (Romans 16:16). It is the church that Christ promised to build (Matthew 16:18); the church that He died to build (Acts 20:28); and the church to which immersed believers were added on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:47). It is that body of believers, called out from this world, who look only to the word of God for their worship practices and conduct of life. This alone is the Church of Christ!

QUESTION No. 82: Can the Christadelphians be called Christians?

ANSWER: Not scripturally! John Thomas began this organization in 1848. They hold many doctrines contrary to God's Word and cannot, therefore, be referred to as "true" Christians. For example: They deny the biblical doctrine of three persons in the

Godhead, teaching that the Holy Spirit is not a person (John 14:26), but an influence; they teach the false doctrine of Premillenialism (the kingdom has already been established- Mark 9:1; Colossians 1:13); that man is totally mortal (I Thessalonians 5:23); that only "believers" become immortal; that there is no eternal hell; that the unbeliever will simply be destroyed at the end of time (Matthew 25:41-46)!

Christadelphians simply constitute another denomination, all of which have their roots in the doctrines and commandments of men (Matthew 15:9, 13, 14)!

QUESTION No. 83: Must we pass through the great tribulation described by Jesus in Matthew 24:21? I ask this because Jesus said the tribulation must come before He returns in Matthew 24:29-30.

ANSWER: No! This passage is dealing with the symbolic coming of Jesus in the destruction of Jerusalem, which was fulfilled in the year 70AD. Notice carefully in Verse thirty-four of this chapter what Jesus said: "Verily, I say unto you, this generation will not pass away, till all these things be fulfilled." Everything before this verse was fulfilled during the lives of the people who lived during that generation! Jesus then begins a discussion of His Second Coming in Verse thirty-six, continuing through Verse forty-six of Chapter twenty-five.

Sometimes, because of the use of symbols in Verses twenty-nine through thirty-one, there is a tendency by some to assign this language to Christ's Second Coming. However, Isaiah used this same language in Chapter 13:6-11 to describe the symbolic coming of the day of the Lord at the destruction of Babylon. Just as the language of Isaiah does not refer to Christ's Second Coming, similarly, neither does the language of Matthew 24:29-33. Christ's language here deals with the destruction of Jerusalem, just as Isaiah's language dealt with the destruction of Babylon. The Jews of the first century, being familiar with Old Testament writings, would have readily understood the symbolism used by Christ in this particular passage. It is recommended that beside reading Isaiah, Chapter thirteen about the prophecies concerning the destruction of Babylon, that Chapters seventeen, eighteen, and nineteen also be reviewed to consider the language used in those prophecies concerning the destruction of Damascus, Ethiopia, and Egypt, respectively.

QUESTION No. 84: What is the "Tribulation Period?"

ANSWER: The so-called “Tribulation Period” is a false doctrine within a larger false doctrine known as Premillennialism. This man-developed theory says that Jesus failed in His first attempt to establish His kingdom. They teach that when Jesus comes the second time He will accomplish what He failed to do the first time; that He will reign over an earthly kingdom for a thousand-year period from a literal throne in the city of Jerusalem. Immediately before this, they claim there will be a seven-year period, divided into two three and one-half year periods; the first called "The Tribulation;" the second called "The Great Tribulation." They also falsely teach that immediately before the seven-year period that Christ will come to "rapture" the faithful, both the living and the dead; take them into the clouds so that they might escape these tribulations. After the seven-years, He is to return again to rule for a thousand years, following which is to be a supposed second resurrection, and then the "The Great White Throne Judgment."

This doctrine is totally false! It is based upon the false premise that Christ failed to establish His kingdom when He was here the first time. If it can scripturally be shown that Christ did, in fact, set up His kingdom, then it will have been shown that the entire doctrine of Premillenialism is false!

Throughout the Bible we read about the establishment of the kingdom. In Daniel 2:28-45, he prophesied that the kingdom would be established in the days of the fourth world kingdom from that time, that is, the Roman Empire. In Verse forty-four, he tells us that once the kingdom was set up, it would never be destroyed. It was in the days of the Roman Empire (Luke 3:1) that John the Immerser began preaching, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mark 1:14-15). Later in Matthew 16:13-19, Jesus said, "I will build my church" (Vs.18), which He also called the kingdom of heaven (Vs.19). It is highly significant that the Son of God said, "I will!" He did not say perhaps or maybe! He said, “I WILL build my church." In Mark 9:1, He said, "Verily I say unto you, that there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." When Jesus, after His resurrection, ascended back to the Father, He was given "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall never be destroyed" (Daniel 7:13-14).

Ten days after Christ ascended, Peter on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2) proclaimed that He had been raised up to be enthroned (Vs.30) at the right hand of God (Vs.34), and had been made both Lord and Christ (Vs.36). The prophecies and promises of the coming kingdom were all fulfilled in a mighty way and, on this great day, Peter used the keys to the kingdom promised to him by Jesus (Matthew 16:19) to open wide its door. He presented the terms of entry, and for the first time men and women were ushered in as citizens of the kingdom that would never be destroyed. "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). From this time on, references to the kingdom in the Bible prove it to be in existence. (See Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 12:28; Revelation 1:9).

Nowhere in all of God's Word was it promised that Christ would return a second time in order to establish an earthly kingdom. The truth is that the establishment of an earthly kingdom was never the intent of our Lord. In John 18:36, He told Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world." The Pharisees too believed in an earthly kingdom and demanded to know of Jesus when it should come. Jesus responded to them, and to any today who so believe, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, lo here! or lo, there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is among you" (Luke 17:20-21). The Jews wanted to make Jesus a king of an earthly kingdom, but He departed from them (John 6:15). It is clear then, that Jesus came to establish a spiritual kingdom. He did not fail! In John 17:4, He said, "I have glorified thee on earth: I have finished (accomplished) the work which thou gavest me to do."

Since it has been shown that Jesus did not fail; that the kingdom of God was fully established some two thousand years ago, Premillenialism and all of its sub-theories are evidently utterly and totally false! Those who continue to proclaim such are false teachers and should be marked and avoided (Romans 16:17-18).

QUESTION No. 85: What are some beliefs of Lutherans?

ANSWER: They falsely teach that man is saved by "faith alone" without works of obedience (James 2:24); that forgiveness of sins is imparted at the partaking of the Lord's supper, while the Bible teaches that it is a memorial (I Corinthians 11:24-26); that infants are to be baptized because of inherited sin (Ezekiel 18:20); and that one may be sprinkled/poured as a substitute for scripturally authorized baptism, i.e., immersion/burial

(Acts 8:35-39; Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12). This religious organization is unscriptural in both practice and name (Acts 11:26; Romans 16:16), having been established by the man, Martin Luther, in the 16th century.

QUESTION No. 86: What are some beliefs of the Animists?

ANSWER: This group superstitiously believes that everything has, or contains, a spirit(s) and that these spirits are in control of all that happens; that when a person dies his or her spirit may inhabit inanimate objects, animals, or other persons. The Bible in contrast teaches that when a person dies there is an immediate departure of the soul (Ecclesiastes 12:7; Hebrews 9:27; Luke 16:19-31).

QUESTION No. 87: What are some beliefs of the Calvinists?

ANSWER: They falsely teach that all are born with sin that has been inherited from Adam, which they call Total Hereditary Depravity (See Ezekiel 18:20); that it has been predetermined by God exactly who and how many are to be save; that the number cannot be changed; that if one is elected to salvation, he or she can do nothing to be lost; that if one had been elected to be lost, he or she can do nothing to be saved. (See this foolishness clearly refuted in Matthew 11:28-30 and Revelation 22:17).

QUESTION No. 88: Is the teaching of Catholicism about celibacy scripturally accurate?

ANSWER: No! "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication let every man have his own wife . . ." (I Corinthians 7:2). "Marriage is honourable in all . . ." (Hebrews 13:4). Those who forbid others to marry are those who have departed from the faith (I Timothy 4:1-4)!

QUESTION No. 89: Why do most people not honor Mary, since God Himself honored her?

ANSWER: Certainly we are to honor those to whom honor is due (Romans 13:7). Therefore Mary is to be honored, as are all, but neither she nor any beyond that which is scripturally due. In Luke 1:47, we read, "all generations shall call me (Mary) blessed." But in Luke 11:27-28, we learn that those who hear the word of God and keep it (Christians) are more blessed than she! The scriptures do not make Mary deity; neither do they teach that any should pray to, or through, Mary. There is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus (I Timothy 2:5).

The perpetual virginity of Mary (Matthew 1:24-25; Matthew 13:55-56), her bodily assumption into heaven, her elevation to the position of mediator between God and man are false teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church. They are not to be found in scripture and are, therefore, sinful additions to what God would have us believe (Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 22:18-19).

QUESTION No. 90: Are the Mormons like the Baptists and the Catholics?

ANSWER: They are alike only in that all three groups teach false and heretical doctrines. However, there are great differences in their doctrines, and of all the foolish theologies in this world, the Mormons are certainly second to none. This group was begun in 1830 by Joe Smith, a man who was a troublemaker and an eccentric treasure hunter. Mormons teach that all men, if they become Mormons, can become just like God, eventually ruling over their own planet somewhere out in the universe. They teach that God is a physical being with many physical wives engaged in the practice of sexually producing the souls that inhabit our earthly bodies. They teach that marriages contracted on earth will continue in Heaven (Matthew 22:30). They have created their own Bible on the basis of a fictional story written by an American by the name of Solomon Spaulding. This alleged "Another Testament of Jesus Christ" is filled with errors of all kinds, i.e., geographic, historic, scientific, and theological. Literally thousands of correctional changes have been made over the years, but many such errors still remain. Much more could be said about this cult, but this should suffice to warn of its dangers.

QUESTION No. 91: What effect does certain food and drink, i.e., tea, coffee, pork, etc., have on a person in relation to Christian life? Will one be kept out of heaven because of food?

ANSWER: Many false religions today impose food restrictions on their members. Those who do so have departed from the faith (II Timothy 4:1-3). Verse four of this same chapter reads, "For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving." Note also Colossians 2:16, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or drink, . . ."

QUESTION No. 92: Is it true that the Islamic religion arose through the family of Ishmael?

ANSWER: Ishmael lived about 2000 years before Christ. Most agree that Abraham was the progenitor of the Arabic race through him. Muhammad, an Arab, was born about 2570 years later and during the A.D. 600's began the Islamic religion.

QUESTION No. 93: Is Allah of the Koran different from the God of the Bible?

ANSWER: Yes! There is but "one" God; the God of the Bible (Isaiah 43:10-11; Isaiah 44: 6; Isaiah 45:21; Ephesians 4:6). The differences between God and Allah (?) become very evident, as we compare God's Bible with Allah's (?) Koran.

1. The Bible teaches that the one God consists of three personalities; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (Matthew 28:19-20). The Koran teaches that Allah is God and Mohammed is his prophet.

2. The Bible teaches that grace through obedient faith saves us (Ephesians 2:8-10 & James 2:24). The Koran teaches that salvation is wholly by works.

3. The Bible is truth (John 17:17). The Koran teaches that it is all and final truth. Both cannot be right!

4. The Bible says that God tempts no man (James 1:13). The Koran teaches that Allah leads people astray.

5. The Bible teaches that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God (John 3:16). The Koran denies that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God.

6. The Bible teaches that Christ did no sin (I Peter 2:22). The prophet of Allah admitted he was a sinner.

7. The Bible teaches that Christ was crucified for our sins (Acts 2:23 & Philippians 2:8). The Koran says that Jesus was not crucified.

We could note many other differences, but these should be enough to show that Allah is not the God of the Bible! That there is no salvation in Allah (?), his prophet, or his book (the Koran) is made clear by the inspired Peter as he speaks of Jesus in Acts 4:12; "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

QUESTION No. 94: What will happen to Moslems when Jesus comes?

ANSWER: Only those who believe that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God and who are faithfully obedient to His teachings will be saved on judgment day! All others will be lost eternally! See John 8:24; John 12:48.

QUESTION No. 95: Are all Moslems going to hell?

ANSWER: That there is no salvation in the Koran, or it's prophet, is made clear by the inspired Peter as he speaks of Jesus in Acts 4:12; "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

QUESTION No. 96: What are mystics all about in black magic as per African wizards?

ANSWER: These people and their followers are involved in sinful practices. Such, according to the will of God, must be avoided. The so-called magic practiced by these "wizards" is said to be an abomination before Him (Deuteronomy 18:10-12). Those who continue to reject Him by their involvement in these things will not inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:19-21), but will eventually, if continuing in such, be lost eternally in hell (Revelation 21:8).

QUESTION No. 97: What are some teachings of the Jehovah's Witnesses?

ANSWER: This organization, previously known by many names, had its beginning in the later 1800's under the direction of one Charles Taze Russell. He died in 1916 after falsely prophesying that Jesus was to return in 1914. Joseph "Judge" Rutherford then became head of the group. He, too, immediately began to falsely prophesy about Christ's return; this time He was to come in 1925 (Matthew 24:36). After a period of doctrinal development, accompanied by much false teaching and prophesying (which has become a trademark of the “Watch Tower” people), they officially, in the early 1930's, adopted the name of "Jehovah's Witnesses."

This organization blindly rejects the biblical doctrine of the "Trinity;" the "Godhead" (Acts 17:29; Romans 1:20). They reject Christ as God (John 1:1-3) and contend that He is a created being (Micah 5:2). They falsely teach that the kingdom of Christ was established in 1914 (Mark 9:1); that man does not possess a spirit or soul (Matthew 10:28; I Thessalonians 5:23); that there is no hell (Matthew 25:41, 46); and that the earth will not be destroyed at the Second Coming (II Peter 3:10), but (according to their vain and foolish imaginations) will be renovated as a home for faithful JW's who are not quite good enough to be among a select 144,000 (maximum number) chosen to inherit heaven!

There are many other false doctrines taught by this group, but these should suffice to show that it is of men and not of God.

QUESTION No. 98: On the basis of Matthew 5:5, the Jehovah's Witnesses teach that we will be on the earth forever. Is this true?

ANSWER: No! The phrase "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" has absolutely nothing to do with how long the earth will stand. It simply means that the "meek" (those who humbly accept the teachings of Christ) will inherit great blessings. The word translated "earth" here would have been more appropriately translated "land." Thus, the reading would be "for they shall inherit the land." Since one of the greatest blessings to Jewish people was that they "inherited the land" of Canaan, this phrase came to denote any great blessing that might be forthcoming. So it is in Matthew 5:5!

The Jehovah's Witnesses also misapply the phrase "new heavens and new earth" in this way. They say that this phrase teaches that the earth will be rebuilt and we will live here forever. But God's Word teaches differently! In II Peter 3:10, we find that the "heavens and earth, which are now, are by the same word (God's Word) kept in store, reserved unto fire . . ." In this same verse, Peter tells us that these heavens and earth will pass away. Then, in Verse thirteen, he says that Christians are not to forget the Lord's promise of the "new heavens and the new earth."

Man could not live without the atmosphere (heavens) that helps provide the air that we breathe and the earth that provides our food. He could not be sustained without either. So, in this passage, Peter simply says that Jesus has promised us a new place, where we will be sustained eternally, after the old passes away. Symbolically, he calls it a "new heavens and new earth," as compared with the old! It is that place referred to in John 14:1-3, where Jesus promised, "I go to prepare a place for you." This place is the "new heavens and the new earth." It is the future abode of the faithful Christian, following Judgment!

QUESTION No. 99: My brother is a Jehovah's Witness who says that Mark 12:25 is applicable only to the people who were there at that time. Is this true?

ANSWER: No! Your brother is attempting to avoid the truth in favor of a foolish man made doctrine developed by an irrational religious cult! He is in reality saying that

God is a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34); that God will prohibit some from having wives in heaven, but He is going to allow the Jehovah's witnesses to keep their wives! This is absurd! Jesus is speaking of the general resurrection of the dead (Vs.23; John 5:28-29); of all the dead! As relates to marriage, all that rise will be "as the angels, which are in heaven." Since the angels "neither marry, nor are given in marriage," such will be the case with all that rise!

QUESTION No. 100: In Revelation 21:1-2, what is the significance of the "New Jerusalem" coming down from heaven?

ANSWER: First, the passage does not say that the "New Jerusalem" came down to this Earth! We should not read this into the passage. Remember that John was writing in signs (Revelation 1:1), or symbolic language. This passage simply teaches that the New Jerusalem originated in heaven with God! It does not teach that the "new heavens and new earth" will be physically located on a renovated planet! Those who teach such are in error!

QUESTION No. 101: Who were the 144,000? Does not the Bible teach that these will be with God in Heaven, while the "great multitude" will inherit, and live on, a renovated Earth?

ANSWER: The first part of the question is answered for us in Revelation 14:4. The 144,000 are those who were spiritually pure, redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits unto God and the Lamb. Similar language is used of those who make up the "great multitude" of Chapter seven, i.e., they are clothed with white robes (spiritually pure), having washed them, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb (Vs.9-14). These two groups make up the one group that includes all of those who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ, which would also include those who lived under the first Testament (Hebrews 9:15).

As to the second part of the question, the Bible nowhere teaches a renovated Earth. II Peter 3:10-12 tells us clearly that the material of which the heavens are made will "melt with fervent heat, the Earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." The original Greek word for "burned up" carries with it the idea of being totally

burned up. There is no hint of a reworking or a renovation of this Earth! Such an idea was developed solely in the vain imaginations of apostate man! The Scripture plainly teaches that, at the conclusion of all things, both the 144,000 and "the great multitude" will dwell together in precisely the same place. (In fact the 144,000 are a part of the great multitude!) Notice carefully the following: The 144,000 in Revelation 14:3 are said to be "before the throne." Again, in Verse five, we find this same group to be "before the throne." In Revelation 7:9, the "great multitude" is also said to be "before the throne." Both groups are to be found “before the throne!” They are in exactly the same place! Nonetheless, where is the throne to be found? Is it to be found on the Earth? No! In Revelation 7:15, we learn that the throne is in His temple, and in Revelation 11:19, we find that the temple is in Heaven! Revelation 4:2 also states that the throne is in Heaven! The only conclusion that can be drawn is that both groups (the 144,000 and the "great multitude") are in exactly the same place, i.e., both are found, as a single group, “before the throne,” which is in the temple, which is in Heaven! The allegation by the Jehovah's Witnesses that a renovated Earth is needed for the "great multitude" is very clearly negated and rendered foolish by the Word of God!

QUESTION No. 102: Specifically, who are the 144,000 of The Revelation? Is the number literal or symbolic?

ANSWER: The apostle John wrote the book in signs (Chptr.1, Vs.1), by inspiration, to the seven churches of Asia, warning them (Christians of that time and place) of the persecutions that would be placed upon them by the Roman Empire. The main thrust of the book, however, is to encourage these Christians by assuring them that they would eventually overcome these things by remaining faithful unto death (Revelation 2:10); and that they would, thereby, gain the final victory through Jesus Christ.

Some hold that the 144,000 symbolically represents only the Jews who lived under the Old Testament before Christ. That faithful Jews of that time, as well as we, were cleansed by the blood of Christ in His death cannot be denied (Hebrews 9:15). However, since John is writing specifically to Christians, it appears more likely that he, in the subject passages, is referring primarily and symbolically to Christian Jews of the twelve tribes scattered abroad (James 1:1), and the "Hebrews" to whom Paul wrote. This, of course, would not exclude Jews who lived under the Old Testament from this number, but certainly it should not be limited to them! In Chapter seven, (Vs.1-8), John assigns the equal number of 12,000 (showing the impartial nature of God) to each of the twelve

tribes. In Verse nine he sees a great multitude, consisting "of all nations, and kindreds, and people." Undoubtedly the "all' in this verse is to include the "Jews" of the 144,000. "All" of these were said to be arrayed in white robes; had come out of great tribulation; and been washed in the blood of the Lamb (Vs. 9-17). In Chapter fourteen, Verse seven, we learn that these (the 144,000) were those who "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth;" that they "were redeemed from among men, being the firstfruits (James 1:18) unto God and to the Lamb." It seems clear that the reference is specifically to Christians; those who followed Christ, but at the same time is broad enough to include "all" who have been washed in the blood, including those under Moses' Law!

The context also shows without doubt that the number of 144,000 is symbolic. For example: none would argue that the four angels, four corners, four winds, sea, tree, seal of the living God, and foreheads were literal (Chptr.7, Vs.1-3). Neither would any insist that the 144,000 were all men and literal virgins (Chptr.14, Vs.4). Why would any then insist that the 144,000 be taken literally, unless to support a false doctrine? Surely, all of these matters are to be taken as symbols, including the 144,000!

QUESTION No. 103: When did the Pentecostal movement start? Did it start in the USA as some say?

ANSWER: The modern Pentecostal movement had its beginning in the USA in the early 1800's with a man by the name of Charles Finney. That it did have its beginning more than 1800 years after Christ's church was established (on Pentecost Day of Acts, Chapter two) is clear evidence that (1) it is not the church of the Bible; (2) since people were saved before its establishment, it follows that being a Pentecostal is not necessary to salvation; and (3) since salvation is only in the church of the Bible, there can be no salvation in any Pentecostal church! Further, the false teaching that Holy Spirit baptism and the "gifts" are for today is without scriptural support, proving their falsity!

QUESTION No. 104: Where does the Bible teach that Christ is the Mighty God and the Eternal Father?

ANSWER: Isaiah 9:6.

QUESTION No. 105: Where does the Bible teach that Christ was God in the flesh?

ANSWER: John 1:1; John 1:14; Philippians 2:5-8.

QUESTION No. 106: In John 1:1-3, does it mean Christ is God or a god? Is this passage mistranslated when it says, "the Word was God?"

ANSWER: The passage teaches that Christ is God! The Jehovah's Witnesses mistranslate the passage in the New World Translation, which says, "the word was a god." There is no scholar or scholarly translation that holds as do the Jehovah's Witnesses'. They have wrested the Scriptures to their own destruction (II Peter 3:16). It is a fact that of the five members of the New World Translation Committee, only one had any college education at all. This one had only two years at the University of Cincinnati in Ohio. Additionally, none of the five could even read Hebrew or Greek. One of these (R.W. Franz) admitted such under trial in Scotland on November 24, 1954. Clearly, these men were not qualified to translate Scripture. It is no wonder then that their ungodly translation is filled with error from beginning to end and is good for nothing save fuel for the fire!

QUESTION No. 107: Is Satan ever called "God" in the Scriptures?

ANSWER: In II Corinthians 4:4 he is referred to as the "god" of this world!

QUESTION No. 108: What is the battle of Armageddon?

ANSWER: Armageddon is mentioned in Revelation 16:16. As most things in The Revelation, the term is symbolic and has no reference to a literal, physical war to occur between the forces of Christ and the forces of Satan. Such an idea is totally false, having its roots in the foolishness of Premillenialism.

Armageddon has reference to Megiddo, a large valley in which many historic battles were fought by the Israelites. Because of these many battles, the word "Armageddon" came to be used very much as we today use the word "Waterloo." When using the word "waterloo," we often have reference to some defeat, either in our lives or that of others. In similar fashion, "Armageddon" came to represent various types of "struggles." In Revelation 16:16, it has direct reference to the spiritual struggle between Christians of that day and the evil with which they were confronted. Though indirectly, it also has reference, similarly, to Christians today!

QUESTION No. 109: Those who teach about the "Rapture" base their teachings on Zechariah 14:1-4, 8-11. Could you shed some light on these verses?

ANSWER: Zechariah 14 has nothing to do with the Second Coming of Christ, but rather with His First Coming, at which time He actually stood on the Mount of Olives (Matthew 26:30). Verses one through three have reference to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD by Rome, which symbolically represents "all nations" over whom she reigned (Verse two). The Lord fighting against these nations in Verse three has to do with the victory of the church over her persecutors as reflected in the theme of the Book of Revelation, i.e., the victory of God's people over evil. The latter part of Verse four should be understood in the light of the symbolism of Isaiah 40:3-5. The valley provided by Christ in the day when he was upon the earth signifies His provision of a safe way of escape for His followers.

Verse eight has to do with living waters (the efficacy of Christ's blood) that flowed backward to those under the Old Law (Hebrews 9:15) and to those after the cross under the New Law. Verse nine is explained by Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:9-11, and Daniel 7:13-14. Verse ten is to be understood in the light of Isaiah 2:2-5, which foretells the exalting of Jerusalem above the mountains, because in her the church was established and from her the New Law went forth, promoting the peace and safety (Verse eleven) that is enjoyed by those who make up the church (Philippians 4:6-7).

QUESTION No. 110: Is it right for a man to make confession to a priest, as do the Catholics?

ANSWER: No! It is not! Catholic Priests cannot, in the place of God, absolve (forgive) a person's sins, as they claim. The idea of confessing to a Priest does not come from the Bible, but rather from the apostate Catholic Church. They often try to support this ungodly practice by reference to James 5:16 which says, "Confess your faults *one to another*." The verse, however, does *not* say 'confess your faults to the Priest!' If it were the case (and it isn't) that this passage teaches that one must confess to the Priest, then it is also the case that, since we are to confess *one to another*, that the Priest must then confess to the one who has just confessed to him! The Catholics, of course, reject not only this logical conclusion, but also the passage itself! They, therefore, do not represent the church of the Bible!

QUESTION No. 111: The Baptist church can be traced historically back to John the Baptist. The church of Christ can only be traced back to 1865! Why?

ANSWER: I don't know what history book you're reading or where you're getting your information! I do know, however, that the World Book Encyclopedia accurately reports that the Baptist Church was established by a John Smythe in the Netherlands in 1607. They update the set every year. Either they don't agree with you, or your information is faulty. Certainly, "historical evidence" is not found outside of some document or statement that may have been circulated by the Baptists themselves, much as the Catholics often do!

You make the claim that you can trace the Lord's church all the way back to John the Baptist. But, there is no truth at all in such a statement. Don't you think it quite strange that in your letter you cited a date of 940AD and then had to jump all the way to 1786AD, a jump of about 846 years? If you can trace it all the way back to John, why didn't you do so? Surely, the unbaised can see this obvious discrepancy!

The Lord's church was established on the day of Pentecost in 33AD, not before then! Daniel said Christ would not be given the kingdom until after His ascension back to the Father (Daniel 7:13-14)! Luke and Peter agree with this, according to Peter's statement in Acts 2:33! According to you, John the Baptist established the church before Christ ascended back to the father. Now who is right, the Baptist Church or Daniel? Consider this very carefully: In Matthew 14:1-12, we note that John the Baptist was beheaded. Sometime later, in Matthew 16:18, Jesus said, "I WILL build my church!" In

Matthew 16:19, He referred to that church as the kingdom! Christ said that His church was not yet built, but was yet in the future, sometime after John had already died. How could John have established the Lord's church, if he was already dead before Christ said He would build it? Impossible! Dead people don't establish churches! Christ for the first time told the apostles to go into all the world and preach the Gospel, and He told them what to tell people to do to be saved immediately before He ascended back into heaven to receive the kingdom Mark 16:15-16! The first time we hear of anyone being added to the church that Christ established was 10 days after He had ascended back to the Father (Acts 1:3 and Acts 2:47). Peter for the first time, the Holy Spirit having fallen upon them with power for the first time (Acts 2:1-4), did exactly what Christ told them to do just before He ascended. Peter obeyed Christ in Acts 2:38 and when 3000 people responded they were added to the church/kingdom that Christ said, "I will build" (Acts 2:47)! It is significant that Christ had said, "I will build my church!" He did not say that 'John the Baptist, will build my church!' Clearly, any honest person will agree then that Christ's church was yet future after John had died. The Baptist Church is not the Lord's Church! It is of men (Matthew 15:9 & 13!).

You say the church of Christ first appeared in 1830! Who told you this; the Baptists? History? The Bible? You asked me for proof of what I said about the establishment of the Baptist Church. I provided that, yet you make a similar statement and provide no evidence whatsoever to support it! Your statement is as false as false can be, historically and any other way! Why and how did the apostle Paul refer to the church in Romans 16:16? My Bible says, "churches of Christ!" Were churches of Christ there at that time or not? What does yours say? In I Corinthians 12:27, the record says, "Now ye are the body of Christ." The body is the church (Ephesians 1:22-23). Therefore, 'Ye are the church of Christ." Christ said, “I will build MY church!” To whom does the church belong? It belongs to Christ! Therefore, it is the church of (that belongs to) Christ. Why call it after John the Baptist, when (1) he didn't build it; (2) it doesn't belong to Him: and (3) he was never even “in” the kingdom of God, the church (Luke7:28). Some people were calling themselves after men in I Corinthians 1:10-13. Paul said they were wrong! Neither they, nor John the Baptist, was crucified for them, neither were they baptized in a name other than Christ's! In I Corinthians 3:3-5, Paul said that men who call themselves after other than Christ are "carnal." Question: If somebody calls himself after John, the Baptist, is he "carnal" or not?

Another point: Let's say that you are getting married and the preacher says to your wife to be, "Do you take this man to be your husband " and she says, “yes, but I don't want to wear his name. I want to wear the name of another man that I dated before I met

this man." How would you feel? This is exactly what you're saying about Christ. We both agree that the church is the bride of Christ! It only follows that the bride wears the name of the one she is marrying, i.e., the name of the bridegroom. The Bible in recognition of this fact never one time refers to the Lord's church as the Baptist Church. Who are you or anyone else to use a name or description of Christ's church that is not biblical? The designation “Baptist Church” is not a biblical term, but was coined by men! I, therefore, challenge you to find the designation "Baptist Church" in the Bible! It's not there! Neither is it in anyway "of" the Bible!

Christ established "one" church; His church; the church of the Bible; the church of Christ (Matthew 16:18; I Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 1:22-23; Ephesians 4:4). As prophesied, that church was to be established in Jerusalem (not in the wilderness of Judea where John preached) in the days of the Roman Empire (Isaiah 2:1-5; Daniel 2:44). Any group that does not answer to that prophecy cannot be the church that Christ died to bring into existence. The "tracing" of a religious group’s origins has nothing to do with history, but rather it has to do with its name, organizational structure, its patterns of worship and service, and its doctrine. A congregation of people meeting today for the first time, in any city, with strict adherence to these matters may be said to have their source (origin, roots) in Jerusalem in the days of the Roman Empire, not that they are a new or different church, but because they, being identical in all respects, help make up the very same church that Christ died for and established on that day!

When a person, for example, says, "My church (the Baptist Church), was established by John Smythe in Holland, Europe, in the year 1607," and that church does not adhere to a biblical designation; does not adhere to the biblical organization of the church of Christ; does not worship and serve according to the New Testament pattern; and practices a doctrine that is different from what the Bible teaches, then we can know that its roots do not go back to first century Jerusalem; that its roots only go back to Holland, Europe in 1607 to a man by the name of John Smythe!

If a congregation of people had begun meeting in Holland, Europe in 1607, having been brought together by a John Smythe, and designated itself the "church of Christ," and its patterns of worship, service, organization, and doctrine adhered to the New Testament principles that undergird the church of the Bible, it could be said then to have had its beginning in Jerusalem of the first century, though this particular group began congregating in a different place at a different time. However, we know that the Baptist Church wears a non-biblical designation/name; its organization is foreign to the

Bible; its worship services are unlike the early church, and its doctrines are contradictory to truth. Therefore, we can know that its beginning was in the wrong place, at the wrong time, and cannot, therefore, be the church that Christ built and for which He died!

Consider this: Men stop playing baseball (a game that was first established by Abner Doubleday) for 2000 years! After 2000 years a person by the name of John Doe finds an Official Baseball Rulebook. He reads the book, understands the rules, and establishes two nine-man teams that adhere strictly to the rules. They are organized according to the rules! They call it baseball! They don't change anything, but are careful to abide by every rule! Are they playing baseball or not? Are they not baseball players? Are they not baseball teams? What is the source of their organization? Is it John Doe or is it Abner Doubleday? Obviously, it is Abner Doubleday! Now, in order to prove that Abner Doubleday established the game of baseball that John Doe and his teams are playing, is it necessary for John Doe to show that baseball was played every year for the last 2000 years in order to prove that he is playing baseball, or does he just have to go to the rulebook that he recently found? Obviously, the proof is in the rulebook!

Now, what if John Doe finds the same rulebook after 2000 years and decides to change the name of the game to baptistball. Instead of using a baseball bat, they are now going to use a wicket! Instead of six outs in an inning they are now going to have 12 outs; they are not going to run around bases, but they are rather going to climb up and down on twenty-foot poles! Let's assume for a moment that the original rulebook said in order to become a member of a baseball team, you must believe in Abner Doubleday and be immersed in water! But John Doe says, “you don't really have to be immersed in water; just believe in old Abner!” Who established this game? Abner Doubleday or John Doe? Are they playing baseball or baptistball? The answers are clearly seen!

The same is true with the Bible. Those who abide strictly by the Rulebook, it is they who have their source in Christ and who can trace their roots back to Him!

The Catholic Church also claims, as you do, that they can literally and historically trace their group all the way back to Peter and Jerusalem, even though neither of you can do so! But, let's assume that they could. Would that make them the church that Christ died to establish? Why not? For the same reason that the Baptist Church cannot do so. Neither of them adheres to the Rulebook. Neither of them can find their name,

organization, or doctrine in the Rulebook, the Bible! Therefore, neither of them can trace their roots to Christ and Jerusalem!

The designation "Baptist Church" is not from the Rulebook (Romans 16:16)! "Faith only" is not from the Rulebook (James 2:24)! "Once saved, always saved" is not from the Rulebook (Hebrews 10:26-30; II Peter 2:20-22)! Therefore, the organization known as the Baptist Church has its roots in something other than the Rulebook and the one who caused it to be written. Their roots are neither in Christ, nor Jerusalem. They are not playing by the rules that Christ established, but rather have changed the rules and are playing their own game! Christ's Rulebook promises a reward to those who faithfully adhere to His rules. Since the Baptist Church has its own set of rules, it has no claim to the rewards that Christ has promised only to those who play the game according to His rules, the Bible!

CHRIST'S RULEBOOK: "He that believeth AND is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16)! "The churches of Christ salute you (Romans 16:16)!"

BAPTIST RULE BOOK: 'He that believeth and is NOT baptized shall be saved' (Baptist Manual)! 'The Baptist churches (churches of the Baptist?) salute you' (Baptist Manual)!

Which should one accept?

QUESTION No. 112: Have you ever opened up your mind and read the Quran? Please open your mind and help people find the true God. The Bible teaches about Mohammed. You should believe it rather than trying to disprove it!

ANSWER: We agree with you that people are seeking for the true God, but that true God is not the god of the Quran! You seem to believe that those who believe in the God of the Bible have a closed mind on the matter and that they haven't read the Quran or studied its doctrines. May I respectfully suggest the possibility that it is perhaps you who has the closed mind? I say this because it is appears obvious that you have not

studied the Bible based on your claim that it speaks about Mohammed, the prophet of Allah! It does not!

Mohammed claimed to believe in the prophets of Jehovah, yet he rejected what they had to say. The Bible written by the prophets of God, as directed by the Holy Spirit, said that God in these last days has spoken to us by His Son, Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-2). They told us that the Bible was the complete and final, once for all, Word of God (Galatians 1:6-9; James 1:25; II Peter 1:1-3; Jude 3; Revelation 22:18-19). After these Bible prophets (through whom Mohammed agreed God had spoken) recorded these words, he came along some 600 hundred years after these prophets wrote these words and said that God had more to say than what these prophets had written. And so he began to prepare the Quran that contradicts what these prophets of God had written, i.e., the Bible. Mohammed records (3:3) that even Allah confirmed the Scriptures which preceded it and, additionally, recorded that Jesus was the Messiah of the Old Testament (3:45-46), being born of a virgin (3:47; 19:19)! But these scriptures (allegedly confirmed by Allah) teach the truth that the totality of God's Word had been given for all mankind 600 years previously! How can Mohammed say that Allah confirmed what the prophets had written and then say that the prophets were wrong for saying that the Word of God was complete 600 years before the Quran was written? Mohammed is contradictory in this and many additional matters and, therefore, cannot be speaking for the true God!

Read, if you will, with an open mind what Christ's New Testament teaches (the words of Christ that were, according to Mohammed, confirmed by Allah), "I marvel that you are so soon removed from Him that called you from the grace of Christ unto another Gospel: which is not another; but there be some that would trouble you, and would pervert (change) the Gospel of Christ. But though we or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you then that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man (including Mohammed) preach any other Gospel (the Quran) unto you then that ye have received (the Gospel of Christ), let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:6-9)! According to Mohammed, Allah confirmed this passage of teaching and then inconsistently rejected it, by writing 600 years later, the Quran! The passage that was allegedly confirmed by Allah clearly teaches that Mohammed and his followers stand accursed because they have taught, and continue to teach, another Gospel, rather than the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

There is but "one" God; the God of the Bible (Isaiah 43:10-11; Isaiah 44: 6; Isaiah 45:21; Ephesians 4:6). The differences between God and Allah (?) become very evident as we compare God's Bible with Allah's (?) Quran.

1. The Bible (allegedly confirmed by Allah) teaches that the one God consists of three personalities; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (Matthew 28:19-20). The Quran teaches that Allah is God and Mohammed is his prophet.

2. The Bible (allegedly confirmed by Allah) teaches that grace through obedient faith saves us (Ephesians 2:8-10 & James 2:24). The Quran teaches that salvation is wholly by works.

3. The Bible (allegedly confirmed by Allah) is truth (John 17:17). The Quran teaches that it is all and final truth. Allah then is seen to be contradictory! Both cannot be right!

4. The Bible (allegedly confirmed by Allah) says that God tempts no man (James 1:13). The Quran teaches that Allah leads people astray.

5. The Bible (allegedly confirmed by Allah) teaches that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God (John 3:16). The Quran denies that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God.

6. The Bible (allegedly confirmed by Allah) teaches that Christ did no sin (I Peter 2:22). The prophet of Allah admitted he was a sinner.

7. The Bible (allegedly confirmed by Allah) teaches that Christ was crucified for our sins (Acts 2:23 & Philippians 2:8). The Quran says that Jesus was not crucified (4:157-158).

In other words, Allah confirmed what the Bible said and then allegedly caused Mohammed to write that which was contrary to what Allah had already confirmed! Who can believe such a thing? We could note many other differences, but these should be enough to show that Allah is not the God of the Bible! That there is no salvation in Allah (?), his prophet, or his book (the Quran) is made clear by the inspired Peter as he speaks of Jesus in Acts 4:12; "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

To escape the above truths of the living Christ, the followers of the dead Mohammed claim that the Bible has been changed and altered. Such a suggestion has been disproved over and over. The Word of the Lord endureth forever (I Peter 1:25)!

There is no real difficulty in disproving the Quran, as you suggest. A casual reading clearly proves the fact that neither it, nor its prophet, is of the true God, Jehovah!

We hope the above will help you in your search for the true God!

QUESTION No. 113: What is the true name of God? The Jehovah's Witnesses say, based on Psalms 83:18, that it is Jehovah, not Lord, Almighty, or Father. Does it really matter?

ANSWER: In the original Hebrew Old Testament the designation used in reference to the Godhead was "Yhvh." This word is called a "tetragram," or a word of four letters. The word contained all consonants and no vowels. It is believed that the original pronunciation by the Jews was "Yahweh," since similar forms of "Yah" were used in other proper names such as Jehoshaphat and Joshaphat. The custom among the early Jews was to refer to the Godhead by use of the words "Adonay" (Lord) and "Elohim" (God). The word "Jehovah" as found in our English translations was of European invention in approximately 1518AD. This word was developed by inserting the vowel points of "Adonay" and "Elohim" into the tetragram "Yhvh", thus the derivation of the word "Jehovah." To suggest, as the Jehovah's Witnesses do, that "Jehovah" is the only name or title that can be applied to God is foolish. If this were the case, it would have to be assumed that there was no proper designation and no way to refer to Him before 1518AD. Moses asked God at the burning bush (Exodus 3:11-15), 'When the

children of Israel ask me what Your name is, what shall I tell them?' God responded by saying, "I AM THAT I AM. Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent you." In the next verse (15), He says, "This is my name forever." Certainly then, it would not be wrong to refer to God as the "I AM." God said, "This is my name!" Neither is it wrong to refer to God as the Father (Matthew 28:19), nor Lord (Exodus 20:2), nor Almighty (Genesis 17:1), nor Jehovah (Exodus 6:3), nor Rock, Shield, Fortress, Deliverer, Tower, Refuge, or Savior (II Samuel 22:2-3)! All of these are fitting designations for the Godhead made up of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. When we address Him by any of these biblical designations, He knows of whom we speak. One does not need the Jehovah's Witnesses to make that determination for him.

QUESTION No. 114: In Proverbs 8:27-31, who is the "I" that was the craftsman of God in creation? Combine this with Colossians 1:16 and John 1:3. Are all of these verses pointing to the same person? If yes, who is the person? If the person is Jesus, does this mean that God created Jesus, then all other things? Also look at the phrase "firstborn of all creation."

ANSWER: It is very clear that John 1:3 and Colossians 1:16 refer only to Jesus Christ and that He was a prime participant in "the" creation! However, such is not the case with Proverbs, Chapter 8 as the Jehovah's Witnesses falsely claim. This passage is simply a discussion of wisdom in poetic personification, i.e.; it is treating wisdom in the sense of a person. Note the very first verse of the chapter, "Doth not wisdom cry and understanding put forth her voice." This is the subject, not Jesus Christ. Note also the gender of the subject under discussion. It is female in gender, i.e., Verse one, the word "her," Verse two, the word "she," and in Verse three, the word "she." Since the subject is female in gender, it could not refer to Christ who is of male gender! And certainly there is no indication here or elsewhere in the Bible that Jesus Christ was a created being. Micah 5:2 speaks clearly to the eternality of Jesus Christ. The Jehovah's Witnesses also falsely contend that the phrase "the beginning of the creation of God" (Revelation 3:14) implies that Christ was a created being. This does not at all mean He was the first thing created, but rather it means that He was the originating source or the active cause of all creation (Colossians 1:16-17). The same is true of Colossians 1:15 where it is said, "He is the **firstborn of every creature.**" The word "firstborn" is from the Greek "prototokos" which literally means "preeminence" (as used in Verse Eighteen), the "origin or active cause of." In fact, Verses 16-17 explain the meaning of the phrase "firstborn of every creature." Christ was the one who created "all" things that were created and existed before "anything" was created. Since He created "all" things that were created, if He were created, then one would have to conclude ridiculously and foolishly that He created

Himself! As well, since Christ existed before "all" things that were created, if He were created, then one would also have to conclude illogically that He existed before He was created! The Jehovah's Witnesses interpretation of these passages stands opposed to all the world's scholarship and is, in error, designed to perpetuate their man made doctrines!

QUESTION No. 115: Please explain (stating the Greek words translated for each of these words) "For my Father is greater than I" (John 14:28) and "the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One (God) - - -So that God may be all-in-all" (I Corinthians 15:27-28).

ANSWER: The Greek for the phrase in John 14:28 is "hóti [for] ho [my] Pateér [Father] meízoon [greater] than moú (I) estin (is)." The direct English translation, then, reads, "For my Father Greater than I is."

To use this verse to imply that the Son is not equal to the Father is to misuse it contrary to the Spirit's intent! The intent of Jesus' words in this verse is not to compare his nature with that of the Father's, but His state and condition while on earth. The idea He is expressing to His disciples is, 'You should be happy that I am going to leave this physical world, and resume the glory and equality which I had with the Father before the world was' (John 1:1; John 17:5; Philippians 2:5-11). The purpose of the phrase is to console the disciples in view of His coming absence. This He does by saying that if He goes away, the Holy Spirit will come, and great success will result from the preaching of the Gospel (John 16:7-10). In the plan of salvation the Father is represented as sending the Son. As the one who sent Christ He may, in this sense, be represented as superior to the Son. The phrase, however, has no reference to the nature of Christ, and cannot therefore be used to prove that He is not divine. Its whole connection demands that we interpret it as relating solely to the imparting of the blessings connected with redemption, in which the Son is represented all along as having been sent, and in this respect was subordinate to the Father. The relationship between Father and Son demands an equality of nature as rightfully expressed by the Jews in John 10:30-33, both are divine, both are God and together are "one" as stated in John 10:30. (The J.W.'s New World Translation is in error here (as in many, many other places), not reflecting the actually inspired words in the Greek, i.e., it does not say, "makest thyself [a] god." The correct translation is, "makest thyself God.") The fact that you are a son of an earthly father makes you just as human as he is, i.e., both you and your father are "equally" human. So it is with God the Father and God the Son, i.e., the fact of the divinity of the Father demands divinity of the Son, i.e., both the Father and the Son are "equally" divine! You and your father, though

equally human, have different functions. The same is true of God the Father and God the Son. Both are equal in nature, but are described as Father and Son, because they, too, have different functions!

The Greek for that found in I Corinthians 15:27-28 is (Verse 27) pánta gár hupétaxen hupó toús pódas autoú Hótan dé eípee hóti pánta hupotétaktai deélon hóti ektós toú hupotáxantos autoó tá pánta. The direct English translation reads, "For all things He put in subjection under His Feet, but when He said that all things have been put in subjection, [It is] manifest that [it is] except Him who put in subjection to Him all things."

(Verse 28) Hótan dé hupotageé autoó tá pánta tóte kaí autós ho Huiós hupotageésetai toó hupotáxanti autoó tá pánta hína eé ho Theós tá pánta en pásin. The direct English translation reads, "But when shall have been put in subjection to Him all things, then also Himself the Son will be put in subjection to Him who put in subjection to Him all things, that may be God all in all."

These verses do not teach that the Christ in His divine nature would be subject to the Father in His divine nature; nor does it mean that Christ would surrender His divine nature, but it means that the Son who came into this world as a servant, the Mediator, the man that was born in the flesh (John 1:14) and that was raised from the dead, and to whom all authority had been given, should resign that individual authority, and it should then be re-assumed by the "all in all" three divine persons of the one Godhead that we find described as the One God of Isaiah 44:6; 48:12; and Revelation 1:17, i.e., the first and the last! This does not mean, however, that the effective oneness of the divine and human nature of Christ was to become of none effect, but that the authority laid down by Him would no longer be exercised in the same way. The authority at that time is to be exercised by God, as the one Triune Godhead, i.e., Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as was the case before Christ was distinctly given all authority (Matthew 28:18-20)!

QUESTION No. 116: Is Jesus Christ Michael the archangel? How can we show he is not, if He isn't?

ANSWER: No! Christ was not created as Michael the archangel as the Jehovah's Witnesses claim. First of all Christ was not created, but rather, as Deity, He is eternal (Micah 5:2). Secondly, Michael could not rebuke the devil (Jude 9), yet Jesus did rebuke the devil (Matthew 4:10)! Therefore, Jesus and Michael are not the same being!

QUESTION No. 117: The Jehovah's Witnesses claim the Father is called the Almighty God and the Son is called the Mighty God, thus there is a difference in equality. Is this true?

ANSWER: No, it is not! The phrases are used interchangeably. If calling Christ the "mighty God" makes Him less than deity, then the same thing would have to be true of the God of the Old Testament who is also called the "mighty God" in Jeremiah 32:18 and Isaiah 10:21. The J.W.'s want to have it both ways. Such is unethical and deceitful! One who can read Isaiah 9:6 where Jesus Christ is called, "Wonderful, Counseller, The mighty God, The everlasting Father (which means the Father of eternity, one who possesses the eternal nature), and The Prince of Peace and then conclude that Jesus Christ is not God is foolish and blasphemous! The same prophet said in Isaiah 7:14 that His name would be called Immanuel. This prophecy is gloriously fulfilled in Matthew 1:22-23 where that inspired writer interprets the name Immanuel as meaning "God with us!" Only the irrational cultist trying to prove the unproveable could make the senseless claim that Christ was not God, but rather a created being!

QUESTION No. 118: In John 1:1, which is correct, "The Word was God" or "The Word was a god." The New World Translation is in error!

ANSWER: The article "a" is not in the original Greek, but was added by the Jehovah's Witnesses to support their blasphemous position that Christ is not deity! The New World Translation is not worthy to be called a Bible. It is a travesty and should be consigned to the trash heap because of its prejudices and unscholarly construction. It remains and will always remain a point of ridicule by the scholars of all ages!

QUESTION No. 119: Which is correct in Luke 23:43, "I said unto you, today" or "I said unto you today?"

ANSWER: The comma follows the word "you." Of the hundreds of translations, only the ridiculous NWT places the comma after "today." What sense does it make for

someone to say that what I am telling you, I am telling you today? Does one not know when something is being told them? If I were to say to you, “I am telling you, I will go with you to the shop,” would you understand that? Would you know “when” I said it to you? Would you know that I said it to you on the day I spoke it? Or would I have to say, “I am telling you [today], that I will go with you to the shop?” Why is it necessary to tell some person that what you are saying to them is being said on the day you are saying it? The whole idea is absurd! Men of righteous character do not deal in such foolishness!

QUESTION No. 120: What are the differences between the United Church of Christ and the Church of Christ?

ANSWER: First of all, the United Church of Christ does not find its roots in the New Testament. It was formed in 1957 through a merger of the Congregational Christian Churches and the Evangelical and Reformed Churches. The first of these was formed by a merger in 1931 of Congregational Churches, the Christian Church, the Evangelical Synod, and the Reformed Church. The United Church of Christ has been on the cutting edge of ecumenical/modernistic weirdness from its inception. Consider, for example, its attitude toward homosexuality--a sin that the Bible labels an abomination before the Lord. The homosexual can be saved through repentance and baptism in obedient faith by the blood of Jesus Christ, but if he is saved he will be a new creature in Christ and will no longer continue in his sinful homosexual ways (2 Corinthians 5:17). The same is true for an adulterer or a drunkard or for any other type of sinner (1 Corinthians 6:9-11). All sin can be forgiven through Christ's atonement. From the first century until now many homosexuals have been saved by the grace of God and have been changed to the glory of Jesus Christ. The problem today is that some are claiming that homosexuality is not a sin, that it is a natural condition, that the homosexual can serve Jesus Christ even while continuing to practice his homosexuality. This is an incredible Scriptural error that the United Church of Christ has promoted vigorously. Consider the facts as they were published by the UCC's Office of Communication, March 1, 1996:

1969--The UCC's Council for Christian Social Action declared opposition to all laws criminalizing private homosexual relations between adults; also opposed the exclusion of homosexuals from the military.

1972--William Johnson became the first openly homosexual person to be ordained by a mainline denomination. He was ordained by the Golden Gate Association in Northern California.

1973--The UCC Executive Council recommended that sexual orientation should not bar candidates from ordination. The General Synod also gave official standing to the UCC Gay Caucus.

1977--In Virginia, Anne Holmes became the first openly lesbian woman ordained in the UCC.

1983--The UCC General Synod passed a resolution recommending that sexual orientation should not be grounds for denying ordination.

1984--Diane Darling became the first openly lesbian woman to pastor a UCC congregation, the College Avenue United Church of Christ, Modesto, California.

1987--The UCC General Synod declared opposition to all sodomy laws.

1991--The UCC General Synod "boldly affirms, celebrates and embraces the gifts of ministry of lesbian, gay and bisexual persons."

1993--The UCC General Synod voted by a wide margin to denounce the ban on homosexuals in the military.

1994--UCC leaders, including its president, Paul Sherry, joined the "March on Washington for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Equal Rights and Liberation."

1996--It was reported that more than 180 UCC congregations affirm homosexuality. There are three which are predominately lesbian and gay: Liberation United Church of Christ in Cleveland, Spirit of the Lakes United Church of Christ in Minneapolis and Phoenix United Church of Christ in Kalamazoo, Mich.

The United Church of Christ, as is the case with most mainline denominations today, glories in its "unity in diversity." This means there is a great variety of doctrines within this organization. There are those who deny the deity of Jesus Christ and those who affirm it; those who believe salvation is personal regeneration solely through belief in Christ and those who believe salvation simply involves redemption of the environment. Their beliefs and practices are not based upon Scripture, but upon a hodgepodge of creeds, dogmas, present-day issues, and traditions of men; beliefs and practices that change with the winds of social demands! This is true with the issue of homosexuality. Not all of its churches or all of its regional associations support ordination of homosexuals. But the fact remains that this denomination's General Synod, speaking on behalf of all its congregations, has come out in support of this unscriptural abomination, and the fact remains that all of the congregations participating in this denomination share the guilt of those in their midst who practice these things. The Bible

says the solution to sin and Scriptural error in local churches is discipline: "Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person" (1 Corinthians 5:13). The Bible commands God's people to separate from these abominations and apostasies. "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: FROM SUCH TURN AWAY" (2 Timothy 3:5). "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? ... Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Corinthians 6:14-18). The leaders of the United Church of Christ do not consider themselves unbelievers and do not therefore believe 2 Corinthians 6 should apply to them, but the fact is that they are unbelievers. The Bible says homosexuality is an abomination and they don't believe it. In fact, most of them don't even believe the Bible is the perfect Word of God. They are unbelievers who will accept into their fellowship anyone in whom they determine is Christian character, as they perceive it!

On the other hand, the church of Christ finds its roots solely in Scripture! Our Lord said that He would build one church (Matthew 16:18). In Acts chapter two, we read of its establishment. Paul said in Ephesians 1:22-23, that the church is His body. Later, in Ephesians 4:4, he tells us that there is only one body. It is into this one body, this church, that one "must" be baptized through the agency (the direction) of the one Spirit (I Corinthians 12:13). The direction of the Spirit comes only through the word of God, which tells us how a person enters that one church. On the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), those who "gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (Vs.41). "And the Lord added daily to the church (His church) such as were being saved (Vs.47). These believing people repented, and were immersed for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), after which they were added to the church that Christ had built. (They were not added to the Catholic Church, which was established 600 years later, nor were they added to Protestant denominationalism, which had its several beginnings in the fifteenth century!) All of the saved people on Pentecost Day were members of the church of Christ, the only church that existed, and the only church that Christ recognized and recognizes today! Obviously, there is no difference between those who live today and the people of Acts, Chapter two! When people today, as they, gladly receive His word (when they believe and submit totally to it), repent, confess, and are immersed in water for the remission of sins, they too are added by God to that same church; the one church, the Church of Christ (Romans 16:16). Since Christ built only one church (the church of the Bible), it can only be concluded that all other religious organizations (including the United Church of Christ, all other Protestant churches, as well as the Catholic Church) were built by man (Matthew 15:8-14). In these,

there is no promise of salvation; no promise of hope; no promise of the blessings of Christ (Ephesians 1:3). These promises are to be found only in His church; the Church of Christ!

In summary, the differences in the United Church of Christ and the Church of Christ are monumental! There is very little, if any, similarity at all! What similarities may exist would not be on the basis of Scripture, but purely accidental and coincidental! The church of the Bible is called the church(es) of Christ (Romans 16:16). The basis for all her doctrines lies in the infallible Word of God! The one head of the church is Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:22). Each congregation is self-ruling and overseen by a plurality of elders, independent of all other congregations (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; Hebrews 13:7 & 17; I Peter 5:1-4). By this we are given to scripturally understand that there is no higher governing body on this earth. Deacons are to serve the congregation under the oversight of the elders (I Timothy: 8-13). Evangelists are to proclaim the Word (II Timothy 4:1-5). A religious group without this God-prescribed organization cannot be the church of the Bible!

Worship services on the first day of the week must consist of (and only of) praying, singing (without instruments), partaking of the Lord's Supper (every first day), preaching, and contributing as prospered by God (Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Ephesians 5:19). To be pleasing to God, all of these items must be engaged in, with nothing added.

Terms of entry into the church of the Bible are: believing in Christ as the Son of God (John 8:24); repenting of all past sins (Acts 17:30-31); confessing with the mouth belief in Jesus (Romans 10:8-10; Matthew 10:32-33); being immersed in water for the remission of sins (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; Romans 6:2-5; Colossians 2:11-13; I Peter 3:21). After having done these things, one must be faithful unto death in that one church to receive the crown of life (Revelation 2:10).

QUESTION No. 121: If Islam was not supported by God, why didn't it fail?

ANSWER: The success of any group is not supported solely on the basis of its existence. Why is there Hinduism, Taoism, and Bhuddism today? Are we to assume by their existence that God also is supporting them? Obviously not! (In fact, the followers of Islam at this very moment are destroying huge ancient images of Bhudda in Afghanistan because they say Bhuddism promotes idolatry!) Then with what logic would one use the

argument of existence to support Islam? If the favor of God is so determined for one group, it follows that the favor of God must be determined for all groups!

There undoubtedly will be some groups in existence at the end of all things that will at that time recognize their failure (Matthew 7:21-23; Matthew 15:13; Acts 4:12; II Peter 3:9-15).

QUESTION No. 122: Do you think in Judgment, God will ask, "Of what denomination were you a member?" He will simply ask, "Have you done what I commanded you to do?" And if we believe in Christ and have been baptized in the name of the father, Son, and Holy Ghost it will be okay.

ANSWER: The subject question if asked and answered drive to the same point. Since the over 100,000 different denominations teach different doctrines that are contrary one to the other (which logically implies that, at least, 99,999 have not "done what I commanded you."), the response to the question, "Have you done what I commanded you to do?" would probably be positive. Nonetheless, such a response would most often be less than accurate, since major contradiction exists between all of the divided denominational groups! All cannot be doing different things, and yet all be doing it right! Many in that day will say, "Yes! I did what you commanded me to do," but He will "profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me you that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:21-23). The fact is that there is much more to obedience than believing in Christ and being baptized! Which denominations are obeying God? All of them? Or some of them! Which ones? How about the Mormons? How about the Jehovah's Witnesses? Have they not done what you claim is necessary in your question? Surely you are not suggesting that these and all other denominations in the proclamation of their various and variable doctrines are consistent with the idea of obedience to God? He may (or may not) not ask, "Of what denomination are you a member," but there is no doubt that He will determine our obedience to all of the New Testament, not simply to those things that you mention! When a denomination and its followers teach and practice that which is contrary to the will of God, they place themselves under the stated pronouncement of Matthew 7:23!

QUESTION No. 123: If I only sit at home and do not attend a denomination, am I doing right?

ANSWER: Certainly the faithful children of God will not attend the man made denominations. This would be wrong (II John 9:11). However, true Christianity is not a "sit-at-home" religion. It is a religion that commands us to teach others (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 8:4), to support the weak (Acts 20:35), to do good unto all men, especially those of the household of faith (Galatians 6:10), to take care of the fatherless and the widows in their affliction, while remaining unspotted from the world (James 1:27), and never to forsake the assembling in which Christians assemble to collectiverly worship the Creator (Hebrews 10:25). This all necessary to pure religion and undefiled. One cannot so conduct him/herself while just sitting at home!

QUESTION No. 124: Do you believe that the Catholic Church teaches things that are not biblical?

ANSWER: Yes! We do truly, after lengthy investigation and study, believe that many things taught by the Catholic Church are non-biblical and were not taught or practiced by the early church in apostolic times. Since these things were not taught, believed, or practiced at that time, but were established "after" the Bible was completed we have clear evidence that they cannot logically be authorized by the Bible.

For example:

1. Prayers for the dead began about 300 AD. (Three hundred years is a long, long time!)
2. Making the sign of the cross 300 AD.
3. Wax candles 320 AD.
4. Veneration of angels and dead saints, and use of images about 375 AD.
5. The Mass as a daily celebration about 394 AD.
6. The first exaltation of Mary with the term "Mother of God" first applied in 431 AD.
7. Priests began to dress differently than the worshipers 500 AD.
8. The doctrine of Purgatory established by Gregory I in 593 AD.
9. Latin Language for worship imposed by Gregory I in 600 AD.

10. Prayers directed to Mary, dead saints, and angels in 600 AD.
11. Instrumental music first introduced, but highly opposed in 600 AD.
12. Title of Pope, or Universal Bishop, first given to Boniface III by Emperor Phocas in 606 AD.
13. Kissing the Pope's foot began with Pope Constantine in 709 AD.
14. Temporal power of Popes given by Pepin, King of France in 750 AD.
15. Worship of the cross, images, and relics were first authorized in 786 AD.
16. Holy water, mixed with salt, blessed by a priest in 850 AD.
17. College of Cardinals (now 70) first established in 927 AD.
18. Canonization of dead saints by John XV in 995 AD.
19. Fasting on Fridays and during Lent first in 998 AD.
20. Celibacy of the priesthood decreed by Pope Gregory VII in 1079 AD.
21. The rosary begun by Peter the Hermit in 1090 AD.
22. Sale of indulgences in 1190 AD.
23. Transubstantiation proclaimed first by Pope Innocent III in 1215 AD.
24. Auricular Confession of sins to priest instituted by Pope Innocent III in Latern Council in 1215 AD.
25. Adoration of the wafer (host) decreed by Pope Honorius III in 1220 AD.
26. Bible forbidden to laymen – placed on the index of forbidden books by the council of Valencia in 1229 AD.
27. Pouring officially substituted for immersion in baptism in 1311 AD.
28. Cup forbidden to the people at communion by the Council of Constance in 1414 AD.
29. Purgatory proclaimed as a dogma, Council of Florence in 1438 AD.
30. Doctrine of Seven Sacraments affirmed in 1439 AD.
31. Tradition declared of equal authority with the Bible by the Council of Trent in 1546 AD.
32. Apocryphal books added to the Bible, Council of Trent in 1546 AD.

33. Immaculate Conception of Mary in 1854 AD.

34. Infallibility of the Pope, Vatican Council in 1870 AD.

35. Bodily Assumption proclaimed by Pope Pious XII in 1950 AD.

None of the above can be found in the Word of God by which you and I will one day be judged (John 12:48). These things were unheard of in biblical times and, therefore, cannot be of the Bible. If the doctrines of any church are different from the doctrines of the Bible, if they are more or less than found in the Bible, then it is the case that it is not the church of the Bible! If they are different from the Bible, it follows then that they are of man and not of God. Jesus said that the doctrines of men constitute vain (empty) worship (Matthew 15:9). Surely, we will not be judged by their (church) doctrines in that day, but, rather, by the words of Christ (John 12:48). Therefore, "we ought to obey God (the Bible) rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

QUESTION No. 125: A friend believes that it is true that all men are depraved from birth as per Calvin? He says this is so because "I have sinned."

ANSWER: The meaning of "depravity" is (World Book): "the quality or condition of being depraved; wickedness, viciousness, corruption: a monster of depravity." The issue at hand seems very clouded to some. Certainly man sins and is separated from God in that sin, but to say that all men are depraved, even from birth, is neither biblical or logical. What Scripture and/or logic holds that an infant is wicked, vicious, and a monster of depravity? Who can hold that their own little infant falls into such a category? God does not give depraved gifts (James 1:17). What Scripture or logic would indicate that Cornelius, though separated from God and in need of salvation, answered to the definition above. A devout man and one that fears God (Acts 10) hardly falls into the category of "a monster of depravity!"

The reason your friend gives for agreeing with Calvin on depravity is "because I have sinned." Certainly, he has, as have we all, but I would not judge him, or any I know, as "totally depraved" and "a monster of depravity." It may be that we are dealing here with semantics, not agreeing first on the definition of the term. By his statement, "because I have sinned," he seems to imply that depravity, as he understands it, came with his sin. I believe "depraved" would be inaccurate and too harsh of a word to define

his state upon his sin, but certainly when he first committed sin, he was lost and separated from God. On the other hand, it is more likely that he is saying that 'if I were not first depraved, I would not have sinned' or 'my depravity naturally caused me to sin.' In either case, I think he must logically conclude, on the basis of this implication, the following: (1) if he were created depraved, then, since God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34), Adam was also created depraved; (2) that Adam, who was created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26-27), had to be created depraved, otherwise Adam would not have sinned in the Garden; and (3) that God was wrong when He said His creation was "very good" (Genesis 1:31. It is the case that God created Adam and pronounced His creation was "very good." If His creation was "very good," His creation was not a "monster of depravity." If His creation of Adam was "very good' and not a "monster of depravity," then it must be the case that His creation of man today is "very good" and not a "monster of depravity," otherwise He would be a respecter of persons. The fact is that Adam sinned, because, as a free moral agent, he chose to do so, not because he was created depraved. The same is true of men today! We, as Adam and all men, are 'perfect in our ways from the day of our creation, till iniquity is found in us' (Ezekiel 28:15). As little children, we, as the little ones in the day of Moses, have "no knowledge between good and evil" and are therefore, as little children, "very good" (Deuteronomy 1:39), neither have we inherited sin from any (Ezekiel 18:20). We are sinners, because we choose to sin, not because we were created depraved!

QUESTION No. 126: Where did the Roman Catholic Church, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and other denominations originate? Also Jehovah's Witnesses?

ANSWER:

Establishment of Religious Groups

GROUP	TIME	PLACE	FOUNDER
Catholic	606	Rome	Gregory I

Lutheran	1520	Germany	Luther
Episcopalian	1534	England	Henry VIII
Presbyterian	1536	Switzerland	Calvin
Congregational	1550	England	Browne
Baptist	1607	Holland	Smythe
Methodist	1739	England	Wesley
Latter Day Saints	1830	America	Smith
Seventh Day Advent.	1830	America	Miller
Christian Science	1866	America	Eddy
Jehovah's Witnesses	1872	America	Russell
Church of Christ	33 AD	Jerusalem	Jesus Christ

QUESTION No. 127: Is there anything to suggest, besides cultural/linguistic/metaphoric phrasing, that the Buddha and Christ didn't find the same truth within themselves?

ANSWER: Buddha did not teach the truth that Christ taught! For example: (1a)

Although Buddha did not directly deny the existence of God, he did say that the question of His existence "tends not to edification;" (1b) Christ, without question, is God, as is His Father to whom He often prayed (John 1:1-14; John 17:1-26; (2a) Bhudda taught reincarnation to different forms of life and is said himself to have been reincarnated 530 different times, and one of those times as a frog; (2b) The New Testament of Jesus Christ teaches that there is one life and one death (Hebrews 9:27); and (3a) Buddhism is a striving for Nirvana, a cessation of existence as a separate entity; (3b) Christ laid out a goal of eternal life in Heaven for His faithful (John 3:16; John 14:1-6). The list of differences is endless, but these, as set forth, reject the notion of the "same truth!"

QUESTION No. 128: Is there anything that the Buddha has said which is not true when considered with a fully open mind? If so, what is it?

ANSWER: As above: Reincarnation is not true; the attainment of something called Nirvana when the soul allegedly merges with the great soul of the universe is not true; and the suggestion that the existence of God "tends not to edification" is untrue!

QUESTION No. 129: How does one master his body, emotions, and unruly desires? Wouldn’t it be better to meditate and lose unwanted clutter before looking inward?

ANSWER: Simply by following the teachings of Christ, God the Son, as He has expressed through His Spirit in Colossians 3:1-14. Adherence to this teaching has resulted in a myriad of souls attaining eternal life in prospect without paying any service whatever to the false concepts of Bhuddism. That the Bible is truth (John 17:17) and stands wholly against the teachings of Bhuddism cannot be denied, even by the casual reader, for it is through Christ and Him alone that salvation to eternal life comes (Acts 4:12; John 8:24). If "all" eternal goals are to be attained in and through only Him there can be nothing of eternality to be gained in Buddha or Buddhism!

ELDERS/DEACONS

QUESTION No. 130: I have been informed and have proof that an elder is guilty of child molestation, but he continues to deny it. Should this man continue to serve as an elder?

ANSWER: Clearly, a man proven guilty of child molestation should not hold the office of elder! He is not qualified to do so (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9). You suggest that you were "informed" of the elder's guilt. Let me caution you concerning Paul's words

to Timothy (I Timothy 5:19), "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but under two or three witnesses." This means that one is not to accept as valid an accusation against an elder, unless there are two or three witnesses to support the charge! Such would be sin and require repentance of those involved in the communication, i.e., the transmitter and the receiver! You state in your letter that you are unfaithful to the Lord. Before you can scripturally deal with the elder's situation, you must first deal with your own unfaithfulness by returning to your first love (Matthew 7:3-5; Acts 8:22). If the demands of the above passages have been satisfied and you have proof positive that the man is guilty as charged, as a faithful Christian it would be your responsibility to go to him alone with the evidence in order to gain his soul. If he will not hear you, then take two or three witnesses (to gain his soul). If he neglects to hear them, tell it to the church (to gain his soul). If he neglects to hear the church, let him be to you as a heathen man and a publican (Matthew 18:15-17) "that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (I Corinthians 5:4-5). If you were "informed" of this elder's guilt by another "Christian," he or she as well should be called upon to repent, if he or she did not first go to the erring brother. Many often carry gossip to others (sometimes for self-seeking and ulterior purposes) under the guise of seeking advice, which, of course, is sinful and soul damning!

Note: (Too many times use of the biblical principle of Matthew 18:15-17 is avoided by those who demand its application solely to situations in which one has been personally affronted. Though this is the immediate context in which the passage is found, it is undeniable that this Christ-given principle is obviously the most effective way of dealing with sins that are not public in nature, whether personal or non-personal. This biblical approach will always bring less permanent damage to the accused, about whose soul we are to be concerned and whom we are trying to reclaim. As well, it will, without doubt, result in less damage to the local congregation and to the body of Christ in general. It does absolutely no good to the accused, the congregation, or the cause of Christ to unnecessarily showcase sin! Certainly and clearly, however, additional principles and patterns are set forth, and to be used, when dealing with the public teaching of false doctrines, e.g., Romans 16:17-18; II Timothy 1:15; II Timothy 2:16-18; Titus 1:10-16).

QUESTION No. 131: May women scripturally serve as deacons and elders?

ANSWER: The qualifications for these offices are found in I Timothy 3:1-13 and in Titus 1:6-9. That these unchangeable qualifications relate only to men can clearly be seen in these passages by the use of only masculine nouns and pronouns. Additionally,

both elders and deacons are to be the husbands of one wife (I Timothy 3, Verses 2 and 12). Women, therefore, cannot fulfill this God-given qualification!

Also, women cannot scripturally become elders and deacons (deaconesses) because such would result in a violation of I Timothy 2:9-15. This scripture forbids women to usurp the authority that God has given to man. Verses nine and ten read, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence."

QUESTION No. 132: If a man has been chosen to be an elder, because of his money - doesn't visit the sick, his children don't fear the Lord, he is not careful with his tongue, his wife attends the denominations, can he be dropped? If yes, how? If no, why not?

ANSWER: Clearly, a man guilty of these things is not qualified to be an elder. It is also evident that such a person, unless he repents, will be lost in eternity. If you have proof positive that the man is guilty as charged, as a faithful Christian, it would be your responsibility to go to him alone with the evidence in order to gain his soul. If he will not hear you, then take two or three witnesses (to gain his soul). If he neglects to hear them, tell it to the church (to gain his soul). According to I Timothy 5:19-20, the man should be rebuked publicly, that others also may fear! If he neglects to hear the church, let him be to you as a heathen man and a publican (Matthew 18:15-17) "that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (I Corinthians 5:4-5). In other words, the fellowship of the church is to be withdrawn from him (II Thessalonians 3:6-15) until such time as he is brought to repentance.

If the man is willing to repent, he should be restored to full fellowship in the congregation. However, he should not under any circumstances be in the office of an elder, since it is clear, according to the question, that he lacks many of the qualifications (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9), especially that of ruling his own house well. Certainly he is not qualified to take care of the church of God (I Timothy 4-5).

QUESTION No. 133: In light of a statement in your correspondence course that "Nowhere do you read of a pastor (preacher) being head over a congregation," would you explain Ephesians 4:11?

ANSWER: The thrust of the paragraph in which this statement was made was to show that the denominational world has departed from the scriptural pattern for the organization of the church of Christ. The denominations have rejected the divine pattern by assigning the title of "pastor" to the preacher, or the evangelist, thus giving him the rule over the local congregation. First the word "pastor" is never scripturally applied to the preacher or evangelist. The words preacher and evangelist refer to the same function in the church. In other words, the evangelist is the preacher! Note that Paul told Timothy, in II Timothy 4:2, to "preach the word," and then in II Timothy 4:5, he told him to "do the work of an evangelist." Therefore, they are the same!

The word "pastor" is another word used to describe the work of an elder. It is from the Greek word “poimen,” which means to "tend” or "feed,” or to "take care of." In Acts 20:28, as Paul is talking to the Ephesian elders or overseers, he instructs these to "feed" the church of God. The word "feed" in this passage is also from the Greek word poimen (pastor). What Paul then is saying to these elders is, 'you elders are to "pastor" (feed) the church.' So then, we can see that the elders are the pastors, not the preacher (evangelist). This is, as well, made clear in the passage questioned. Notice that Paul shows a clear difference between evangelists (preachers) and "pastors." Why does he make this distinction? Simply because the word "pastor" in Ephesians 4:11 refers to elders, not to preachers (evangelists)!

The statement in the correspondence course is true. "Nowhere do you read of a preacher (erroneously called a "pastor" by the denominations) being head over a congregation." The "rule" of a congregation belongs only to a plurality of elders within the local congregation (Hebrews 13:7,17; I Peter 5:1-4). The "rule" of a congregation was not assigned to the preacher. He, as all others in the local congregation, is to be under the "rule" of the elders, and is to be obedient to them within the guidelines of God's Word!

QUESTION No. 134: Do we have spiritual leaders in the church today?

ANSWER: There is no earthly head of the church! Christ is seated at the right hand of God (Acts 2:29-35) and has been made "to be the head over all things to the church" (Ephesians 1:22). Each congregation of the Lord's church is self-governing, answerable only to Christ and is overseen by a plurality (more than one) of elders, independent of all other congregations. It is the responsibility of these men to "feed the church of God, which He has purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28). By this we have been given to understand that there is no higher governing body on this earth and to this we are limited! Deacons are to serve the congregation under the oversight of the elders (I Timothy 3:8-13). Evangelists are to proclaim the Word (II Timothy 4:1-5). In biblical terms, a man is said to be “spiritual” when He abides by the Scriptures (I Corinthians 2:15; I Corinthians 3:1; Galatians 6:1). If an elder then is abiding by the Scriptures, he may be said to be a “spiritual leader.” It must be made clear, however, that there is not an authorized office of “leader.” Often, especially in Africa, when men are not qualified to be elders, they are sometimes designated as “leaders” and in that capacity assume the responsibilities of elders. This is a violation of Scripture. If a man is not qualified to be an elder, neither is he qualified to lead.

QUESTION No. 135: If an elder's wife dies, must he step down? Does he have the right to step down?

ANSWER: No! If an elder served well during the life of his wife, he retains the qualifying family background necessary to serve after her death. Those who hold that he must step down would have to take the position that if his believing children died, he, in this case, would also have to step down. Yet, not many will go this far! If an elder has the proven ability of having had his children in subjection, even though they die, as in the case of the wife passing away, he retains the same ability.

If an elder "wants" to step down for any reason, it is his right to do so! If he no longer has the desire to serve in that office, he has disqualified himself and must step down (I Timothy 3:1).

QUESTION No. 136: How can one become an elder if his wife belongs to a denomination? If a man can't control his own house, how can he take care of the Lord's church?

ANSWER: Such a man is not qualified to be an elder! Certainly, he does not have the rule of his own house and his ability to teach appears also to be, at best, questionable. Neither would he be of "good report of them which are without." For such a one to seek or accept the position of elder is a violation of God's Word (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9), and is therefore sinful. As well, those who would appoint such a man to the eldership are in violation of the same Scriptures. These need to be encouraged to repent and this particular man needs to be approached in keeping with Paul's admonition of I Timothy 5:19-20, "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others may also fear."

QUESTION No. 137: What is the work of deacons in the church?

ANSWER: The English word deacon comes from a Greek word that means "servant." Deacons do not rule, nor have authority! They are to primarily serve the physical needs of the congregation under the oversight of the elders. This is not to say that they do not have any spiritual responsibilities, but such would be at the same level as any other member of the congregation. The same principle would be true inversely as relates to elders. Their primary responsibilities focus on the spiritual, but such does not relieve them of all physical work!

QUESTION No. 138: What do we call the person who chairs the church meetings?

ANSWER: I assume from the question that there are no elders where you worship. If there are, these men, of course, would have the authority to chair meetings. If there are no elders then one of the brethren should be appointed to chair the meeting. Having no authority, it would be his purpose to assure orderly transaction of the business at hand. Under no circumstances, should a woman chair such a meeting, unless it is in a congregation made up solely of women (I Timothy 2:11-12). To refer to a man chairing a meeting as the "chairman," because it describes the function he is doing would not be wrong. However, allow me to suggest that you avoid using any title or expression that might elevate one brother over another. Nothing good can come from it, but will often create jealousies and division within a congregation. Even the words preacher, teacher, deacon, and elder are not to be used as titles. These are to be used simply to describe the

function scripturally performed by individuals or groups. We all have given names! Let us use these!

QUESTION No. 139: Can we appoint someone as a deacon who drinks?

ANSWER: No! One who drinks cannot be a faithful Christian and only faithful Christian men can become deacons (I Timothy 8-13)! Please read Proverbs 23:29-35; Isaiah 5:11; Habakkuk 2:15; I Corinthians 6:9-11; and Galatians 5:19-21. In addition to the clear teaching of these passages, also consider the fact that the partaking of alcoholic beverages (in any amount) lowers one's resistance to temptation and, further, that those who do so, very often yield to all sorts of ungodly sins. How can one who drinks alcohol pray (as all have been commanded to do) that they will not be led into temptation (Matthew 6:13)? To do so would be to make a mockery of God and His word! The apostle Paul in I Corinthians 6:19 states that, as Christians, we are not our own; that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, belonging to Him! It follows then that to introduce any substance of harm (such as drugs, alcohol or tobacco) into that which houses the Holy Spirit would be inappropriate. As well, such activity in one's body certainly does not glorify God and would, therefore, be a violation of I Corinthians 6:20.

Some have foolishly opted to exempt deacons from the foregoing on the basis of I Timothy 3:8, which states that they are not to be "given to much wine." This passage is not authorizing the deacons (or any other) to take wine in small amounts. It simply says that in order for one to be qualified as a deacon he cannot be given to drunkenness!

QUESTION No. 140: By what authority do churches of Christ have committees composed of elders and deacons?

ANSWER: By the authority of the New Testament (I Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; Philippians 1:1; Hebrews 13:7,17; I Peter 5:1-3)!

QUESTION No. 141: Is it scriptural for an elder or deacon to be appointed by his fellow elders and deacons without input from the congregation?

ANSWER: No! Some men in the sixth chapter of Acts were to be selected to perform a particular function within the church. These were not to be elders, but, nonetheless, this scriptural selection process was at the direction of inspired men. These told the disciples in Jerusalem to "select ye out among you" the men to serve. Man can devise no better way! The congregation, under the oversight of the elders, then should make the selection with extremely careful consideration to the qualifications of elders and deacons as detailed in I Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:6-9. Certainly, however, this should not be construed to mean that the present elders who "watch for your souls" (Hebrews 13:7) do not have the right (collectively) to reject from the eldership those against whom valid charges are brought, whether as to qualifications or conduct of life!

QUESTION No. 142: If one does not meet the qualifications to be an elder is he allowed to do or carry out the duty of an elder if there are no other elders in the church?

ANSWER: A man who is not qualified to be an elder should not conduct himself as an elder. Neither should the congregation accept him as an elder. Even if the man was qualified to be an elder, he could not scripturally function as such, unless there were others also qualified and appointed. The Bible demands that there be a plurality (more than one) of elders in each congregation (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5). This does not mean that one who is not qualified to be an elder, but yet is a faithful Christian, cannot lead in worship and participate in collective decision-making relative to congregational matters on an equal basis with the other faithful men in a congregation until such time as qualified men can properly be selected to serve.

QUESTION No. 143: Are the following positions scripturally correct?

1.) If a man has but one faithful child he can not scripturally serve as an elder.

2.) If one of a man's children has become unfaithful after leaving home, the father cannot be appointed as an elder.

3.) If a man is appointed as an elder, after which one of his believing, faithful children leaves home and apostatizes, the man becomes disqualified at that point.

4.) That Proverbs 22:6 says that if we teach our children well, they will always remain faithful.

ANSWER: In I Timothy 3:1 the record says that in order for one to be an elder he must be "One who ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity." Titus 1:6 says, "having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly." Although in both instances the plural (children) is used, there is no logical or scriptural basis to conclude that the Holy Spirit is teaching that a man with but one faithful child falls short of this qualification. As we look to God's Word, we often find that the singular and plural of "children" are used interchangeably. For example: In Genesis 21:7, Sarah said, "Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given "children" (plural) suck for I have given him a son (singular) in his old age. Though having but one son, Sara indicated that she had given suck to children (plural). In Luke 14:26, Jesus said we cannot be His disciple if we don't love Him more than our children (plural). Shall we understand this to mean that one cannot be qualified to be His disciple if he has only one child (singular) to love less than Him? Of course not! Consider I Timothy 5: 9-10: Here a widow could be taken into the number "if she brought up children." Does Paul imply here that an otherwise qualified widow who had brought up only "one" child could not be taken into the number? Certainly not! How about the slave to be set free at the fifty year Jubilee (Leviticus 25:41). He was instructed to take his "children" with him. But what if he only had one child to take? Could he still be freed? Of course! The same principle is true in Timothy and Titus. And the same principle is true today. For example: If I were to stand before an audience and you, having but one child, were a part of that audience and I would announce to all, "all fathers who have children come forward and I will give each of you a thousand dollars," would you come to collect the money? I think so! I know if the situation were reversed, I would be the first down the aisle! Consider this: An elder has two children living under his roof who have been faithful, dedicated Christians for five years. The children cannot be accused of riot or being unruly. Both are in subjection to their father with all gravity. One of the children dies in an accident. The elder's ability to take care of his own house has not changed. He had the qualifications before the child's death and he retains the qualifications after the child's death. Nothing has changed! Clearly, scripture and logic support the conclusion that if a man has at least one child who is a faithful Christian, he is not, thereby, unqualified or disqualified. One who has but one faithful child is as qualified as one who has two or more faithful children.

When a man leaves home he is to "leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they two shall be one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). The man is no longer under the tutelage (guardianship, care, protection, teaching, and instruction) of the father. He has left his parents and begun a new home over which he is guardian, caretaker, protector, teacher, and instructor. What that person does after he leaves home should not be a determining factor in the subject situations, because when the child leaves his father's home to start a new home, the father's responsibility for the child terminates! He is to rule his own house well, which excludes his child's house!

Proverbs 22:6 does not teach that if our children are trained well they will never depart from the faith! Training a child "in the way he/or she could go" does not mean to train him or her as a Christian. It means to train the child according to, and in concert with, his natural abilities and talents. If we do this when the child is grown he will not depart from that for which he has been trained. To suggest that a properly trained child will never depart from the faith goes too far. In fact, such a suggestion clearly implies that it is impossible for the properly trained one to fall from grace which would be contradictory to such passages as Galatians 5:4; I Timothy 4:1; Hebrews 10:26-29, and many others.

QUESTION No. 144: Can one be appointed to the eldership who at the time of his baptism was married, but had previously been married and divorced more than once, leaving children to languish elsewhere?

ANSWER: If the man divorced his previous wives solely "for the cause of fornication" on their part (Matthew 5:32; Matthew 19:9), and he was totally innocent in the matter, then he had a right to remarry, provided that his present wife was scripturally free to marry him. If under these conditions he was fulfilling his obligation toward children from his previous marriages (I Timothy 5:8), he then could scripturally become an elder, if he fulfilled all of the other qualifications relative to elders. The subject qualification of "one wife" is not violated by one being scripturally married a second time whose first marriage was terminated either by death or fornication on the part of the first wife! However, in the case at hand, it would seem that questions should be raised about the man's ability to 'rule his own house well' (I Timothy 3:4), as it would appear doubtful that he fulfills this qualification in light of the break-up of his previous multiple marriages!

If the man divorced either one of his previous wives for other than "the cause of fornication," then it is the case that he is now living in adultery, because he has no right to his present wife (Matthew 19:9). Both he and she would be adulterers as long as they remain in the relationship. He, under this condition, cannot and must not be appointed to the eldership. If he has already been appointed, such was done unscripturally and the man needs to be removed! Both he and she need to repent of their sin and dissolve the marriage. So, not only can he not be an elder, but neither can he or she become a Christian and be saved as long as they stay together! The bottom line is, if this be the case, God does not recognize these as His children and, certainly, one who is not a child of God is not qualified to be an elder!

QUESTION No. 145: If a married man cannot provide evidence that his prior divorce was for adultery, can he be appointed to the eldership?

ANSWER: Before a man is appointed to the eldership of a congregation the members must be willing to accept and follow him. If there is doubt as to the man's integrity or whether the man's present marriage is scriptural, then the congregation should not accept him as an elder. A man suspected of dishonesty in any matter should not be appointed to the eldership! Christians are to "provide all things honest in the sight of men" (Romans 12:17). This means that our character and conduct before all men everywhere is to be without question. A man of questionable character and conduct fails to qualify for the eldership since, in order to be qualified, he "must be of good report of them which are without" also (I Timothy 3:7).

QUESTION No. 146: Can one be appointed to the eldership that does not have believing children, i.e., children who have become Christians?

ANSWER: No! The answer is clear in I Timothy 3:4-5 and Titus 1:6? One who has not proven his ability of overseeing his own house by leading his own children to obedient belief in the Lord has not qualified to lead another's children! Men who have been appointed as elders without a believing child should be removed by the congregation that selected them!

QUESTION No. 147: What are the specific roles of an elder, a preacher, and a deacon, and a teacher in the church?

ANSWER: Those men who are qualified (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-11) and appointed as elders have the responsibility of shepherding their own congregation by seeing to it that all in that congregation teach and practice the truth as contained in the Word of God. As well, they are to protect the congregation from those who would preach and teach false doctrine (Titus 1:9). They do not have the right to change the scriptures in any way! In matters of opinion (such as how the money is to be spent, when the church will meet, where the church will meet, etc.), elders have the final say, after having considered the will of the people. All within the congregation are under the rule and oversight of the elders (not one elder, but all of the elders). A single elder is as responsible to the eldership as all others in the congregation. The preacher, too, is under the elders!

The work of a preacher/evangelist is the same no matter where he may work, either within the congregation or on the mission field. To learn about the work of an evangelist, it is recommended that I & II Timothy and Titus be studied diligently. However, generally their work is summed up in II Timothy 4:2, "Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season (this means to preach the Word when it's convenient and when it's not) reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." They must not shun to declare the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:26-27), holding fast the pattern of sound words (I Timothy 1:13). As noted above the preacher is to work under the oversight of the elders. He does not “run” the congregation. Elders will often suggest certain topics for the preacher to discuss, as they see the need, and will always assure that the truth is taught!

The English word “deacon” comes from a Greek word that means "servant." Deacons do not rule, nor have authority! They are to serve the congregation under the oversight of the elders. Qualifications for this very important office are found in I Timothy 3:8-13.

Teachers are those individuals who are knowledgeable in the Word of God and appointed by the elders to specific teaching situations; such as in the various Bible

classes. However, it should be understood that all members of the Church of Christ have the responsibility to teach as opportunities arise (Mark 16:15).

QUESTION No. 148: During Sunday worship, whose duty is it to minister to the congregation? Is it the elders, the preacher, or the deacons?

ANSWER: This is a matter that is under the oversight of the elders! If a congregation does not have men who are qualified to be elders, then the men of the congregation are responsible for an orderly, scriptural approach to worship. Generally, the elders organize the worship service, giving particular assignments to the faithful men (never a woman) of the congregation to lead in the various items of worship, such as, leading the singing, taking up the offering, officiating at the Lord's table, distributing the unleavened bread and fruit of the vine, and leading in prayer. Most often, the elders (or someone they appoint) will open and close a worship period with some appropriate remarks. Usually, the preacher delivers the sermon from God's Word. It may be the case that the elders occasionally find it necessary that one of them delivers the sermon. All of these decisions remain in the hands of the elders! There should never be argument over such matters!

QUESTION No. 149: If a church has no elders, how can such a church be governed?

ANSWER: If a congregation has no elders, it must do everything possible to scripturally qualify men for this vital office in the Lord's church. Until at least two man are qualified and installed, all of the faithful men of the congregation have an equal say and responsibility toward the church affairs in matters of opinion and to assure that only the truth is taught and practiced! Very often, preachers attempt to become the "Pastor" in such arrangements and attempt to be the final word in church matters. Such is not scriptural! Neither is it scriptural for the women to rule by attending and participating in the business meetings that are to be restricted to the faithful men of the congregation in the absence of elders (I Timothy 2:11-12)!

QUESTION No. 150: Does a church without a preacher have a right to ordain elders and deacons?

ANSWER: Yes! A congregation with elders and deacons may exist without a preacher and a congregation with a preacher may exist without elders and deacons, if it is the case that none in that congregation are qualified to fill these offices. If men are qualified to be elders and deacons, God expects that these be appointed to those offices (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5-9; I Timothy 3:1-13). There is nothing in the scriptural qualifications for the appointment of a man to either of these offices that is dependent upon the presence of a preacher. To so assume would be to demand that qualified elders and deacons leave office upon the departure of the preacher, whether his departure were permanent or temporary.

Neither is it necessary that a preacher be present when a man is being appointed to one of these offices. The term “ordain” as used in the Bible (Acts 14:23) does not imply a formal ceremony that is presided over by a preacher. The thrust of the word in the original Greek indicates an election or an appointment. Though Paul and Barnabas were present and clearly played a part in the installation of men to the office of elder in this particular area, we should not assume that they did so without participation of the local congregation. The word “ordained” in the original language occurs only one other place in the New Testament, i.e., II Corinthians 8:19. Here it is applied to Luke as one who was “chosen” (or ordained) of the churches to travel with Paul. The word properly means to “stretch out the hand”, as was the usual practice in voting by a show of hands to indicate approval. It is in this sense the word is used to mean, election, appointment, or designation to office, not solely by the preacher, but by the congregation over whom rule is to be exercised, including the preacher! The announcement of the fact of congregational selection and acceptance of one qualified to be an elder or a deacon may indeed be stated by a preacher, but as well by another elder/deacon, or one of the other men of the congregation. The critical issues are: (1) Does the man meet every one of the qualifications? (2) Has the congregation shown acceptance of the one to be appointed through a selection process that does not violate any biblical principle?

QUESTION No. 151 (Follow-up to the above): I am thankful for your answer! However I do have a further question. In his letter to Titus 1:5, Paul writes, "For this cause left I thee in Crete that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and appoint elders in every city." From this scripture, it seems as though Paul is assigning that duty, appointing elders..." to Titus. While I know that it is true that there are congregations without preachers that have elders, to my understanding, there is nothing that says that elders must step down from their offices if the preacher departs for some reason, I must receive some clarification on this point. Does Paul give this assignment to any other person in the local

congregation? Are there any scriptures that give this particular duty to any other? I have taught that this is the job of the preacher once the congregation has determined that there are men that fit the qualifications and desire the office.

ANSWER: You suggest that Titus 1:5 teaches that only preachers may do the "job" of appointing elders. Based on this passage, what is that "job?" What does the preacher "do?" What ceremony does he follow? Is it simply that he announces the decision of the congregation? Must he state that, "I, the evangelist, officially appoint you, at this time, as an elder over this congregation?" Does such a statement make one an elder? Your suggestion, by implication, teaches such! Or is one made an elder by the Holy Ghost through His Word (Acts 20:28)? Your suggestion would mean that the Holy Ghost could not "make" an elder and there could, therefore, be no elders without a preacher or without the action of a preacher! Carry the thought over to I Timothy 5:20. Paul is directing the young preacher, Timothy, to 'rebuke the elders who sin before all (the congregation). According to your rationale, if "all" elders, on the basis of Titus 1:5, must be appointed by a preacher and none can be appointed by a congregation without a preacher, then it is the case that "all" sinful elders, on the basis of I Timothy 5:20, must be rebuked by a preacher and a congregation cannot rebuke an elder without a preacher! Then it would be the case that congregations without a preacher must work under sinful elders until a preacher can be found to come and rebuke him, an action, by the way, that (in either case) smacks of a hierarchy and the acknowledgement and recognition of a laity and clergy system! May I now ask your questions? Does Paul give this assignment, i.e., rebuking of an elder, to any other person than the preacher in the local congregation? Are there any scriptures that give this particular duty to another? If so, where? Certainly, the preacher may and should, if present as a member of the local congregation, participate in that rebuking, but that does not mean an elder cannot be rebuked by a congregation without a preacher! Similarly, neither does Titus 1:5 teach that an elder cannot be appointed without a preacher!

It is the case that the Holy Spirit directs that qualified men be appointed to the office of elder. Paul was telling Titus, by His direction, to see to it that such would be accomplished in the congregations of Crete. This was the thrust of Paul's direction in Titus 1:5. He was not here limiting the appointment of elders to the preacher, just as he was not limiting the rebuking of elders to the preacher in I Timothy 5:20! It is worthy of note that Paul did not tell Titus what ceremony to follow or what action he must take in appointing elders! Clearly, the emphasis and thrust of the passage is not toward the sole appointment of elders by a preacher! It was toward the necessity of having godly elders in each and every congregation of the Lord's church! What part Titus was to play in the appointment of elders in Crete is not known, nor was any specifically mandated. Preachers should encourage the local congregation to select elders that are qualified to

rule. And the local preacher may participate in that process, even to the announcement of the decision made, but the appointment of elders does not depend upon the presence of a preacher!

The Holy Spirit mandates that each congregation must strive toward the appointment of qualified elders. If a congregation goes year after year without qualifying men of that congregation to become elders, it, and the preacher, is failing to do what the Bible teaches. Congregations in such situations, though often in denial, many times fall after the denominational practice of the "Pastor System" and "Evangelistic Oversight." Indeed, some preachers love to have it so! In fact, on occasion, preachers have been known to manipulatively campaign to assure that certain men are appointed to the eldership; often weak-willed men (and often unqualified) who will easily relent and bow to the wishes and direction of the preacher/pastor, so that even with “elders” there is many times a de facto “Pastor” who has total control of the congregation through “Evangelistic Oversight.” A preacher/pastor that will work manipulatively behind the scenes in order to assert his opinions and will is not worthy of his hire and needs to be rooted out and encouraged to repent.

QUESTION No. 152: At what age is a man qualified to be an elder or deacon?

ANSWER: The word “elder” as used in the Bible refers to a man of age and dignity. In New Testament times a man was considered a child until the age of eighteen; from eighteen to forty, he was considered a youth; and after forty, he was considered an older or elder man. Clearly, a youth or young man is not qualified to be an elder, but must be one with believing children, a man of age and experience in the Scriptures and the work of the Lord. A deacon must be old enough to have children and, as well, to be knowledgeable in the Scriptures, i.e., “holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience” (I Timothy 3:8). One of the worse mistakes a congregation can make is to appoint someone who is immature and unknowledgeable in the Scriptures to any office! Such will destroy a congregation!

QUESTION No. 153: Which verses in the Bible teach of more that one elder over a congregation?

ANSWER: The mention of the office in the New Testament is always found in the plural indicating more than one. For example: Acts 11:30 and Acts 14:23 (note: elders in every church). In referring to those holding the office in Jerusalem, it speaks in the plural (Acts 15:2, 4, 6, 22, & 23). When the men were called to meet Paul from the church at Ephesus to Miletus, he called the "elders" of "the" church, not the elder! Throughout this type of language is used, always showing a plurality, e.g., Titus 1:5, "Ordain elders in every city;" James 5:14, "Let him call for the elders of the church;" and I Peter 5:1, "The elders that are among you." The fact of a multiplicity of elders in the early church has been fully established both by the New Testament and history.

QUESTION No. 154: If it is rumored that an elder has been jailed in a foreign country for being involved with drugs, but denies such before the church, ought that person be allowed to be, or remain, an elder?

ANSWER: Certainly the guilty should not be supported in any way, including holding church office. They, of course, should be encouraged to repent. At the same time, we have an obligation to defend the innocent, but none can be judged innocent or guilty until all of the facts are known. If such rumors are prevalent, the man should not desire the office of elder until the matter is fully cleared up, lest he be in violation of I Timothy 3:7. As well, if such rumors are persistent, the congregation should not accept a man into the eldership for the same reason. In this particular case, it appears that the truth is not known about the man in question. Until the matter is cleared up by gaining knowledge of the facts involved and to avoid probable hurt to the church and the cause of Christ the man should not be installed as an elder. If irrefutable evidence is uncovered either way, only then should decisive action be taken!

QUESTION No. 155: From I Timothy 4:14 do we learn that the laying on of the elder's hands elders caused Timothy to receive the spiritual gifts? Does it mean that apart from the apostles the elders also laid hands on people (in those days) for the reception of the spiritual gifts? Compare with Romans 1:11.

ANSWER: ONLY the apostles could lay hands on others in order to impart gifts of the Holy Spirit. This is clearly seen in Acts 8:18 where we find it was necessary for Peter and John to journey (a long trip in those days) from Jerusalem to Samaria to lay hands on those that Philip had baptized into Christ. This is also evident in Romans 1:11.

The apostle Paul desired to go to Rome so that he might "impart some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established." As well, it was the apostle Paul who imparted "the gift of God" to Timothy. This fact is established in II Timothy 1:6. Remember that it was the custom of that day for those in authority to lay hands on those that were being given or assigned a particular task This was the case in Acts 13:2 where certain prophets and teachers of the church at Antioch laid hands on Barnabas and Paul for a particular work to be undertaken, praying for that work and asking the Lord to bless the effort. The same is true of the elders who laid hands on Timothy, charging him with the work of an evangelist. There are two key words found in I Timothy 4:14 and II Timothy 1:6 that will help our understanding of the above. In I Timothy 4:14, the gift given Timothy was "with" (Greek – "meta") the hands of Paul, but in II Timothy 1:6 Paul tells Timothy to "stir up the gift that is in thee "by" (KJV) or "through" (NKJV) (Greek – "dia") the putting on of my hands." Obviously then, the elders and Paul laid their hands on Timothy at the same time. The elder's purpose was to charge Timothy with a work and to ask God's blessing upon him, while the apostle's purpose was to impart "some spiritual gift."

QUESTION No. 156: May a preacher appoint deacons in a congregation where there are no elders?

ANSWER: The function of "deacons" is to serve the congregation and that under the oversight of the elders. If deacons are appointed without elders, who then directs the deacons? Under whose rule do they function (Hebrews 13:7 & 17)? Will it be the preacher? Or is it a "Board of Deacons" that directs itself? We have no authority for a ruling preacher (evangelistic oversight), neither a ruling Board of Deacons! But there is little doubt that without elders, that either one or both of these unscriptural arrangements will arise, simply because they are the only two situations that are probable and likely to arise.

The notion that the seven men of Acts, Chapter six were the first "deacons" is pure speculation and opinion. We do know that they were assigned a specific function or service, but that alone does not require, indicate, or prove the appointment to an "office." Even if the opinion were correct, it must be recognized that that there were inspired apostles present at the congregation in Jerusalem who approved of and appointed these seven to that particular work. Surely that situation does not exist today, rendering such an opinion as being improper and irrelevant.

It must also be understood that the initial selection of the seven men was conducted, not by a preacher, but rather by the church congregated who were instructed to "look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost, whom we (the apostles) may appoint over this business." One should not be selectively opinionated in considering what one perceives to be an approved example!

The Scriptural arrangement is a plurality of deacons serving under a plurality of elders. To this we are limited!

GENERAL BIBLICALLY RELATED TOPICS

QUESTION No. 157: Is it scriptural to celebrate Christmas and Easter?

ANSWER: The word "Christmas" is not found in the Bible, neither was it celebrated by the early church. The first observance of the birth of Christ occurred late in the second century. About two hundred years later, religious people, without biblical authority, agreed on the date of December 25 as the day on which they would celebrate His birth. The word Christmas, however, was not used until much later, probably in the eleventh century. The word is of Catholic origin and comes from two words: Christ's + Mass.

Easter was originally a heathen spring festival in honor of Estra, the Teutonic goddess of light and spring. The name "Easter" was transferred during the eighth century by the Anglo-Saxons to a non-scriptural festival designed by man to celebrate the resurrection of Christ.

Because there is no command to celebrate Christmas and Easter as religious holy days, it would obviously be sinful to do so! Though the word Christmas is never used in the Bible, the word Easter **is** found in the King James translation in Acts 12:4, but is recognized by all as being in error. The New King James and the American Standard Versions show the original word to be correctly translated as "Passover." The early church celebrated neither Christmas nor Easter.

To observe and bind either of these days (or any other day) as a religious holy day would clearly violate scripture and, therefore, be sinful. To some, however, these days have lost their original religious significance and are only understood to be times when family and friends come together to enjoy each other's company. To participate in this way would not be sinful.

QUESTION No. 158: Do we know when Jesus was born?

ANSWER: No one knows the precise date of Jesus' birth! Some believe that His birth occurred during the warmer months of the year, since the shepherds, to whom the angel appeared, were abiding in the field, tending their flock by night (Luke 2:8). Since all agree that the originator of the Christian calendar was in error by three years, it does appear likely then that Christ was born in the spring or early summer of 4BC. Knowing the date of His birth, however, is not of great significance to Christians. Otherwise, we would have been told of it in God's Word.

QUESTION No.159: Should Christians fast today?

ANSWER: Those who lived under the Old Testament were commanded to fast at certain times and under certain conditions (Leviticus 16:29-34; Numbers 30:13-16). It is also true that they fasted voluntarily (II Samuel 12:16; I Kings 19:8). Jesus, living under the Old Testament, kept it perfectly, being without sin (I Peter 2:22). He also fasted voluntarily (Matthew 4:2).

There is no commandment in the New Testament for Christians to engage in public fasting. Indeed, Jesus told the Pharisees not to fast publicly, but rather to do so privately, avoiding the praise of men (Matthew 6:16-18). Jesus also said that after His return to heaven His disciples would then fast (Matthew 9:14-15). Clearly then, Jesus not only fasted as our example, but, as well, authorizes His followers to do the same today.

The purpose of fasting is to strengthen us during periods of great trials in our lives; to help us through times of deep sorrow (Matthew 9:14-15). It is also a means by which we can more readily change our focus from earthly things to spiritual matters, thus making our service to God, including our prayer lives, more meaningful and effective.

Specific times and occasions have not been given as to when we should fast. They are decisions to be made by each individual. It follows, too, that one person's decisions in these matters are not to be bound, or forced, upon another.

QUESTION No. 160: What is the best way to let your friend know that you have committed sin?

ANSWER: If a Christian has sinned in a public way and has repented his or her confession needs to be as public as the sin. This type of confession may be expediently dealt with when the congregation is assembled. If one has sinned privately, the requirement is simply to repent and pray God (I John 1:9). How to deal with matters of personal trespass is clearly presented in Matthew 18:15-20. Certainly, all confessions of sin should be made with remorsefulness and humility, whether private or public.

QUESTION No. 161: Is there any biblical reason to decorate church buildings today?

ANSWER: I understand the question to have reference to decorations used during such holidays as Christmas.

Since the Bible does not authorize the religious observance of any holiday, there would similarly be no biblical authorization to decorate a worship service meeting place in order to recognize such. Recognition of holidays does not reflect religious significance to the Christian and should, therefore, be restricted to non-religious settings.

QUESTION No. 162: Why does the Bible not indicate all of the disciple's activities?

ANSWER: In what God has provided, He "hath given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (II Peter 1:3). If “all” has been provided, then nothing more is needed! We must be careful not to be overly concerned about that which has not been revealed, lest it take our focus from that which has been revealed. There clearly are some secret things that belong only to the Lord, our God (Deuteronomy 29:29).

QUESTION No. 163: Some of our brethren use words such as liberalism, conservatism, anti(ism), millennial, and premillennialism. What do these words mean?

ANSWER: These words often mean different things to different people, depending upon in which category they place themselves. For example, a person who believes he is a "liberal" will often refer to one who is "conservative" as an "anti," while an "anti" will often refer to a "conservative" as a "liberal." However, generally speaking, a "liberal" is one who ignores the authority of Scripture by loosening (undoing) those things that God has bound (enjoined) upon us. For example: they loosen (undo) God's commands to sing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16) by using instrumental music in worship instead of (or in addition to) vocal music. This amounts to changing the Gospel of Christ, which is sinful (Galatians 1:6-9)! An "anti" is one who does the opposite, i.e., he binds (enjoins) things upon others which God has not bound (enjoined). For example: some of these demand the use of only one cup (the same cup) by everyone in the congregation when partaking of the fruit of the vine, while forbidding the use of multiple cups. This too, changes (perverts) the Gospel that Paul preached!

The word "conservative", as applied to an individual, describes one who "preserves established institutions and methods, and one who resists and opposes any

changes to these" (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary). When the word "conservative" is used in this way it may scripturally apply to one who is walking in the light of God's Word (I John 1:7), and one who earnestly contends for the established institutions, patterns, and methods set forth therein, i.e., the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints (Jude 3).

The word "premillennialism" is defined as follows: "pre" means "before;" "millennial" means "a thousand years;" "ism" refers to a system of belief. This particular system of belief holds that Christ will return "before" the establishment of His Kingdom, over which He will physically and literally reign for "a thousand years." Since the Kingdom was established on the first Pentecost Day after the death of Christ (Acts 2), this premillenial doctrine, therefore, is entirely false and has no foundation in the Word of God. Because it derives from the doctrines and commandments of men (Matthew 15:9), it must be totally rejected by the faithful child of God!

QUESTION No. 164: How can one identify those who promote various "isms"?

ANSWER: Each must diligently study God's Word (II Timothy 2:15; Hebrews 5:12-14) and then by using His Word, try/test the "spirits whether they be of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1). Very often (and for many reasons) men learn to rely upon what other men say and teach. The Holy Spirit tells us that it is less than noble to do so. Each of us must search the scriptures daily to determine whether the things we hear and are taught are so (Acts 17:11). All that is not of God must then be rejected in view of the coming Judgment (John 12:48).

QUESTION No. 165: What is the meaning of 606AD and 33AD?

ANSWER: AD comes from the first letters of the two Latin words, “anno domini.” These words mean "in the year of our Lord." 606AD means 606 years after the year in which our Lord was born! This is the year during which the Catholic Church, as we know it today, came into existence. 33AD, likewise, means 33 years after the year in which our Lord was born! This is the year during which it is believed that the church of Christ was established on the day of Pentecost.

If the letters BC were to appear after 606 or 33 (606BC; 33BC), it would mean 606 years or 33 years "before Christ" was born.

QUESTION No. 166: Does 33AD mean 50 days after Christ's death or does it mean 33 years after Christ's death?

ANSWER: It means neither! AD is not an abbreviation for "after death." AD is an abbreviation for two Latin words, “anno domini.” These words mean "in the year of our Lord" or "in the year since the birth of Christ". 33AD means 33 years since the birth of Christ! 1996AD means 1,996 years since the birth of Christ.

QUESTION No. 167: What do the numbers 4, 7, 12, 14, and 40 signify?

ANSWER: The numbers 14 and 40 are to be taken literally, specifying, generally, periods of time. Other numbers, as well, may often be taken literally, except when the context demands a figurative interpretation. In such instances, the following may usually be signified:

No. 1 = Unity

No. 2 = Confirmation (witnessing)

No. 3 = God number (Godhead/Trinity)

No. 4 = Earth (four winds/four corners)

No. 5 = Short, definite period of time

No. 6 = Sinister (devil)

No. 7 = Completion/perfection

No.10 = Human completion

No.12 = Organized religion

QUESTION No. 168: Will all pagans go to hell?

ANSWER: Jesus said in John 8:24, "Except (if and only if) ye believe that I am He, ye shall die in your sins." In II Thessalonians 1:7-9, Paul said that 'Christ will take vengeance, in flaming fire, on those who obey not the Gospel of Christ, and that they will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.'

QUESTION No. 169: Which book in the Bible does not mention the name of God?

ANSWER: Esther and Song of Solomon!

QUESTION No. 170: What was the original name of the apostle called Barnabas?

ANSWER: Barnabas was not an apostle in the sense that Paul and the twelve were. The word "apostle" literally means "one sent out." It is in this sense that Barnabas is referred to as an apostle in Acts 14:14. In Acts 4:36, we see him identified by the name Joses and surnamed Barnabas (The son of consolation) by the apostles.

QUESTION No. 171: What man's name has the same meaning as Jesus?

ANSWER: The names of Jesus and Joshua are identical in the Greek language.

QUESTION No. 172: Is it good for Christians to be soldiers?

ANSWER: A man can be a soldier and remain a faithful Christian! Some have thought otherwise on the basis of the sixth commandment which says, "Thou shall not kill." This commandment had to do, however, with the individual and did not apply to governments. It was simply a prohibition against premeditated murder. Every man has the right of self-protection and self-defense (Exodus 22:2), as the protector of home and family. The same principle would be true in defense of one's homeland. However, to engage in any capacity in wars of hatred and conquest for purposes of territorial expansion, liquidation of peoples, and/or confiscation of another's wealth is wrong. In such activities a Christian may not engage, though he may be so directed by his government. God's law in this case supersedes governmental law. When such occurs, we are to obey God, rather than man (Acts 5:29)!

QUESTION No. 173: Is it good for Christians to be "footballers."

ANSWER: A Christian may engage in sports activities without sinning, unless that activity or fellowship causes him to compromise his Christianity in any way. One should not become so involved in sports or anything else to the degree that he or she takes away from their Christian responsibilities, either in time or effort.

QUESTION No. 174: What is a brute?

ANSWER: This word describes an animal without power to reason. For this reason it is sometimes applied to men who are irrational, unthinking, or stupid. It is often said of a cruel or coarse person who sometimes exhibits the characteristics of a beast of the field.

QUESTION No. 175: When a person dies, does his spirit stay in the grave or does it go to heaven (Ecclesiastes 12:7)?

ANSWER: When a person dies, the spirit goes neither to the grave or heaven! It goes by God's direction to Hades (one of the words translated as "hell" in the King James Bible), which denotes the "place of disembodied spirits." This is where Lazarus and the rich man of Luke sixteen went upon their deaths. (This is also where Christ and the "thief

on the cross" went when they died. Christ did not ascend to the Father and heaven until forty days after His resurrection - John 17:20 & Acts 1:3. In Acts 2:34, we learn that David is still not ascended into the heavens, because he, too, remains in Hades). Lazarus was carried by angels into that part of Hades referred to as paradise or Abraham's bosom, while the rich man awoke in that part of Hades referred to as a place of torments! Each of these will remain where they are until the general resurrection of the dead (John 5:28-29). The same is true of David and the "thief on the cross." In the resurrection, their spirits (and all the dead) will leave the Hadean world and rejoin their changed bodies (I Corinthians 15:51) to stand before Christ in judgment (II Corinthians 5:10). The righteous (those obedient to Christ) will then go to Heaven (Matthew 25:24). The unrighteous (the disobedient) shall be cast into the lake of eternal fire and brimstone (Matthew 25:41 & Revelation 20:14-15)!

QUESTION No. 176: Are there male and female devils?

ANSWER: The Bible always refers to the devil and demons by use of masculine nouns and pronouns. For example; Mark 3:22; John 8:44; John 12:31; Mark 5:9-10.

QUESTION No. 177: In the first lesson of the correspondence course it says that the Bible has a theme, a plot, a conflict, a climax, and a conclusion. What does this mean?

ANSWER: In the lesson where these words are found the writer is showing that the Bible consists of sixty-six books written over a period of 1600 years by about forty different authors. When all of these were put together (by direction of the Holy Spirit) it made up one complete and thorough volume, the inspired Word of God. Each of these books was necessary to reveal the total will of God to us. If one of them were missing, we would have an incomplete volume and Bible. Further, it was necessary that all of the sixty-six be included to reveal all the characteristics of a well-written, complete book, that is; a theme, a plot, a conflict, a climax, and a conclusion. The "theme" of the Bible is God's plan of salvation for man through His Son; the "plot" is Satan's plan and activities to bring about the destruction of man; the "conflict" is the warfare between good and evil; the "climax" is seen in the establishment of the church of Christ for which He died, and wherein evil can be overcome; the "conclusion" is that the faithfully obedient follower of Christ will win the victory over this world and enjoy heaven in eternity!

QUESTION No. 178: Will the madman be saved?

ANSWER: An idiot or insane person from birth never progressing beyond the mental stage of an infant or one so young as to be incapable of understanding would fall in the category of those mentioned in Matthew 18:3. These are not lost!

If one became insane after reaching the age of accountability (thus having had at one time the mental capacity to obey the gospel of Christ) and had not been obedient, he or she shall be lost. (Roman 3:23; Mark 16:16; II Thessalonians 1:7-9).

QUESTION No. 179: What is the work of a missionary (preacher/evangelist) in a foreign country?

ANSWER: The work of a preacher/evangelist is the same no matter where he may work. To learn about the work of an evangelist, it is recommended that I & II Timothy and Titus be studied diligently. However, generally their work is summed up in II Timothy 4:2, "Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season (this means to preach the Word when it's convenient and when it's not) reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." Just as the deacon, the evangelist also serves under the oversight of elders.

QUESTION No. 180: How does one become one of your local preachers here (Africa)?

ANSWER: Before one can preach the gospel of Christ he must first become a Christian after the New Testament order. After having done that, he must worship with a faithful congregation of the Church of Christ and study the Bible diligently to know the work of an evangelist and to know what it is that God wants him to preach. This can be done personally or by association and study with a man who is already a faithful preacher. Although not absolutely necessary, some African men prepare to preach the

Gospel by attending the Zambian School of Biblical studies. This would be the recommended approach.

QUESTION No. 181: What is the significance in showing favor to a particular child as Jacob did to Joseph in our families today?

ANSWER: Each child in a family should be loved, supported and developed in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). Expressions of favoritism are often very destructive!

QUESTION No. 182: Why was the Bible written?

ANSWER: That we might understand the will of God (Ephesians 3:2-6), believe it, and be eternally saved (John 20:30-31).

QUESTION No. 183: How were the books of the Bible gathered into one volume?

ANSWER: All Scripture was given by inspiration of God (II Timothy 3:16). Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (II Peter 1:21). These inspired revelations were recorded by inspired men to reveal God's will, so that man could understand the mystery of Christ (Ephesians 3:2-5). As these inspired documents were written, they were often distributed among God's people (Colossians 4:16). The exact details of the gathering of these documents are not known. However, that these documents were assembled by man under the direction of God cannot be denied! Though the Bible was written by about forty men over a period of sixteen hundred years, it is without contradiction. It is historically, geographically, and scientifically accurate. Its prophecies are amazingly fulfilled in every detail. It is a Book of books, the message within containing "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (II Peter 1:3)!

QUESTION No. 184: How is the Bible translated into the many languages today?

ANSWER: Many different groups and organizations endeavor to prepare translations today. Some do so for religious purposes, some for financial gain. As well, many different approaches are taken. The primary concern of each of us today should be whether or not a translation accurately reflects the original God-inspired words! If the words in the translation have been accurately translated, they are just as inspired as the original words! If they are not accurately translated they are not inspired, as were the originals! Inaccurate translations or commentaries about the original words do not represent Inspiration! Therefore, since they do not, they are not of God (but of men) and must be avoided under all circumstances!

QUESTION No. 185: Who is Diana, queen of heaven in Jeremiah 7:18 and Acts 19:35?

ANSWER: In both of these passages reference is to a mythological female deity worshipped by the various heathen cultures of those days in their idolatrous practices. The Greeks knew her as Diana; the Persians as Mylitta.

QUESTION No. 186: What is the difference between a preacher, priest, teacher, elder, and evangelist?

ANSWER: A priest of the New Testament is simply a Christian (I Peter 2:9). Elders are those who have been given the oversight of individual congregations (Acts 20:28; I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9; I Peter 5:1-4). Teachers are generally thought of as those who teach others in either a semi-formal setting or in a formal classroom group setting. However, all Christians are to be teachers in the broader sense of the term (Hebrews 5:12). There is little difference between an evangelist and a preacher. Paul told Timothy to do the work of an evangelist (II Timothy 2:5); to preach the word (II Timothy 4:2); and to teach (I Timothy 4:11). Therefore, Timothy was all of these things! The term of evangelist today carries with it the idea of one who preaches as he travels from place-to-place. All preachers, elders, teachers, and evangelists must be priests (Christians)! All Christians (priests) are to evangelize by teaching (Matthew 28:18-20)!

It is important to realize that the above terms are not officially assigned titles in which one may glory. They are simply descriptive terms that define the activity in which, at some particular time, a person may be engaged!

QUESTION No. 187: Where does a preacher preach? Where does a teacher teach? Where does an elder teach?

ANSWER: All preacher, teachers, elders, and, in fact, all Christians are to proclaim the gospel to every creature in all the world (Mark 16:15-16). Wherever, there is an open ear; one-on-one, formally or informally, we all are to teach. This, of course, would not soften those responsibilities individually accepted and committed to the local congregation, especially in the case of elders (I Peter 5:2).

QUESTION No. 188: Does an evangelist evangelize those already converted, or those yet unreached with the gospel?

ANSWER: Both! Timothy as an evangelist (II Timothy 4:2) was told by Paul to instruct the sinner (those who oppose themselves) that they might acknowledge the truth and recover from the snares of the devil (II Timothy 2:25-26; I Timothy 6:17). He also was told to teach the brethren (I Timothy 4:6).

QUESTION No. 189: Who are ministers? Are they servants?

ANSWER: Yes! However, most often today the term of "minister" is used to identify the "preacher," but in the Bible it is applied to all who serve. For example: Christ was a minister (Matthew 20:28)! The apostles were ministers (Romans 15:16)! Preachers are ministers (I Thessalonians 3:2; I Peter 4:11)! His followers are ministers (Mark 10:43)!

QUESTION No. 190: Why should we examine the Bible?

ANSWER: Because we are commanded to do so (II Timothy 2:15). Because it can make us complete (II Timothy 3:16). Because in it are all things that pertain unto life and godliness (II Peter 1:2-3). Because we will be judged by it (John 12:48).

QUESTION No. 191: How old is the Bible?

ANSWER: The Old Testament in written form is about 3,500 years old. The New Testament in written form is about 2,000 years old.

QUESTION No. 192: How many ancient manuscripts of the Bible exist compared with ancient secular writings?

ANSWER: Briefly, for comparative purposes, Homer wrote his Iliad about nine hundred years before Christ. Today there are 650 manuscripts of the Iliad in existence. In contrast, there are 5,358 manuscripts (whole and fragments) of the New Testament in existence today!

QUESTION No. 193: How widely has the Bible been distributed?

ANSWER: It has been distributed into all the world in written form, and by radio and television. It has also been translated into more than 1,000 different languages.

QUESTION No. 194: How accurate is the Bible in matters of science?

ANSWER: It is completely accurate in matters of true science. However, it often disagrees with the many unproven theories of man. But, when a matter of science has been proven to be true through appropriate experimentation and observation, and if the Bible has already spoken on the matter, the Bible and Science have been shown to be in total agreement.

QUESTION No. 195: What does the Bible say about the earth and its support?

ANSWER: In Job 26:7, the Bible says that God (at the creation) “hangeth the earth upon nothing” and in Colossians 1:17-18, we learn that "by Him all things consist." Put together, these verses teach that the earth was created and put in place by the power of God, and by that same power it remains in place!

QUESTION No. 196: Why doesn't the Bible say anything about the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD?

ANSWER: The Bible deals at length with the destruction of Jerusalem (Matthew 23:37 through 24:35; Mark 13:1-31; Luke 21:5-33). Although the year of 70AD is not specifically mentioned, Jesus said that it would occur during the generation that lived at that time (Matthew 24:34). A generation is understood to be about 40 years. Given the time when Jesus preached and was crucified (30AD to 33AD), added to the 40 years, we see a time period totally in agreement with that attested to by historians down through the ages, even those who lived during the destruction, such as Josephus!

QUESTION No. 197: If the Bible was written after 70AD, why didn't God's people talk about it?

ANSWER: Most scholars agree that all of the books of the New Testament were in written form prior to 70AD, with the exception of the books of Jude and Revelation. Most also agree that Jude was written within a few years of 70AD. The book of Revelation, according to other Christian writings, was completed in the latter part of John's life, and toward the end of the reign of Domitian. His reign ended in 96AD. God’s people did (and do) talk about the Bible (John 20:30-31; Ephesians 3:3-4; Colossians 4:16; II Peter 3:16; et al, to say nothing of the early “church fathers” who wrote prolifically about the Bible.

QUESTION No. 198: Why is there so much suffering in the world? How can those who suffer be assured that God is with them? How can they be helped or led out of their problems?

ANSWER: Some would blame God for the suffering that is in the world. Certainly, this is not the case, since God is love (I John 4:8) and He loves the world (John 3:16). This love was shown in the creation and by the fact that He created us with the freedom to make our own choices. The reason for suffering in the world today is because man has made the wrong choices. When we make the choice to engage in sin, we must personally suffer the consequences. Many times the consequences of sin affect others not directly involved in the sin. Though not held accountable for the sin they, nonetheless, feel and suffer the consequences of that sin. For example, a drunken father spends the family's livelihood on alcohol: the wife and children, though not guilty of the sin, will suffer because of the sin. This same principle also affects nations and peoples. There are dire consequences when God is rejected! God warned that such would be the case (Exodus 20:5-6). Clearly, the reason for much of the suffering in the world today is either because of our sins, or the sins of those who lived before us.

The only way people can be assured that God is with them is through obedient acceptance of His Word. Though we must often suffer in this life, we can, in that suffering, have the "peace of God, which passeth all understanding" (Philippians 4:6-8) realizing that we are only sojourners in this world, and that we (as faithful Christians) have a future in "a city which hath foundation, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10). The greatest thing we can do for anyone is to prepare him or her for this city by teaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It goes without saying that each of us, as well, have the responsibility of providing physical relief to the suffering within our capability and in accordance with God's will (Galatians 6:10).

QUESTION No. 199: How many books are there in heaven?

ANSWER: Heaven is a spiritual place, which would exclude the possibility of physical or literal books being there. However, in a figurative sense "books" and "writing are said to be in heaven (Exodus 32-32-33; Luke 10:20; Hebrews 12:23; Revelation 20:12). Though in some instances we read of a plurality of figurative "books" in heaven, they have not been figuratively numbered for us.

QUESTION No. 200: I recently attended a "Ladies Day" unlike any Ladies Bible Study I have ever seen! They were handing out prizes such as cookbooks! When did "Ladies Days" begin? Are they right?

ANSWER: "Ladies Days" have been going on for many years. In some instances, they are simply days set aside for the ladies of a congregation to study the Bible; to hear scriptural presentations; and to fellowship. This, in and of itself, is not sinful.

For ladies of the church to meet in the church building for socials, baby and wedding showers, etc., during which door prizes are awarded, likewise, would not be sinful, provided that the prizes are not the result of gambling; nor purchased out of the church treasury.

These events over the years, have in some places, gotten out of hand. Periods of study and worship have been intermingled with dramatic and musical presentations followed by shouting and applause, clearly in violation of God's Word. As well, many times, "Ladies Days" have developed into a power base designed to usurp authority in violation of I Timothy 2:11-12. Not infrequently do we see men sometimes attending these events in which one or more of the ladies have assumed a congregational leadership role. This too is wrong!

Nonetheless, "Ladies Days" are not inherently sinful! However, these events like many others may easily drift into areas that are in violation of God's will. Certainly, every caution needs to be taken that such drifting does not occur and that 'whatever is done in word or deed, is always done by His authority' (Colossians 3:17).

QUESTION No. 201: Does God appoint a specific time for each of us to die?

ANSWER: No! There is no such implication in the Bible. A person may very well shorten his or her own life through abuse of the body, i.e., tobacco, alcohol, sexual permissiveness, etc., but to attribute such deaths to God by saying "it was his or her time

to go" would certainly cast blame and doubt on His wisdom and goodness. In Psalms 90:10, we learn that our lives may be extended "by reason of strength." Paul tells us (Ephesians 6:2-3) that, by honoring our parents, we "may live long upon the earth." Surely then, since we may either shorten or lengthen our lives, God does not appoint a specific time for each to die!

QUESTION No. 202: Why did they use scrolls?

ANSWER: Books, as we know them today, had not yet been developed. Scrolls were made up of rolls of papyrus, parchments, or animal skins and wrapped around rods of wood, ivory, or bronze. It was the best way developed to that time of maintaining and storing written material and works of art. Books, as you and I know them, were first used in China about 1000 years ago and about 500 years ago in Europe.

QUESTION No. 203: What are Cherubim?

ANSWER: They are heavenly beings and servants of God. See Exodus 25:18-20 and Ezekiel 10:1-22).

QUESTION No. 204: What does "glory" mean?

ANSWER: Glory is praise and honor given to God (Revelation 14:6). It is also, throughout the Bible, referred to as that which belongs to God, i.e., might, magnificence, splendor, and all the attributes of Deity (Exodus 16:7)! Sometimes it refers to heaven itself, and is often so used today (I Timothy 3:16).

QUESTION No. 205: Is it possible that some people will not taste of death before Judgment Day?

ANSWER: It is a certainty! Please read carefully I Thessalonians 4:13-18. Note that Verse seventeen speaks of those "which are alive and remain."

QUESTION No. 206: When a person dies, how long does it take the soul to leave the body?

ANSWER: A person does not die until the soul leaves the body! As long as the soul inhabits the body, a person is alive. When the separation of soul and body occurs, death then takes place (James 2:26).

QUESTION No. 207: What is Systematic Theology?

ANSWER: Theology is a study of God, religion, and religious beliefs. Most studies of these matters, using the Bible as a textbook, involve some sort of logical approach. A specific definition of Systematic Theology is nearly impossible since there are nearly as many definitions as there are studies. Basically, however, it can generally be defined as an approach to the study of scripture that strives to understand all of the logical and historical relationships that might exist within the context of a particular passage or passages, and then to make application of the conclusions reached to today's situations. Such study usually begins with the creation and then builds upon that foundation by progressing logically and systematically to other major categories such as the Fall of Man, the Great Flood, the Patriarchal Age, etc.

QUESTION No. 208: What is the difference between a "reverend" and a "preacher?"

ANSWER: The title of "reverend" is not given by God, but, rather, by men to honor men. The word "preacher," as well, should never be used as a title, but only to describe the function of the one who preaches. In Matthew 23:1-12, Jesus condemns the use of religious titles that create respect of persons (Acts 10:34). Therefore, to use such titles in this way results in sin! In Scripture, the word "reverend" is used only in reference to our God (Psalms 111:9). This word then, used as a title and applied to man is in violation of the three scriptures mentioned heretofore, as well as many others. There is no

room for a "clergy/laity" system in the Lord's church, because we are all one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:26-29).

QUESTION No. 209: Some say the Bible is full of lies (contradictions). Is this true?

ANSWER: No! His word is truth (John 17:17) and it is impossible for God to lie (Titus 1:2). There are no untruths, contradictions, or inconsistencies in the Bible, in spite of the fact that about forty different inspired men wrote it over a period of one thousand six-hundred years; one of the many proofs of its inspiration. Men have made such foolish charges from the beginning, but none have been able to provide proof of their false allegations.

QUESTION No. 210: What do most people say about the purpose of life?

ANSWER: Contrary to Christ's command to "seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:33) and Paul's admonition to "set your affection on things above" (Colossians 3:2), I suppose that most have adopted the thinking of the man in Luke 12:16-21 whose focus was on the material things of this life. Undoubtedly, unless repentance occurs, these will be included in the "many" of Matthew 7:13.

QUESTION No. 211: Are the Israelites God's chosen people today?

ANSWER: No! Please refer to Romans 2:28-29; Romans 9:6-9; and Galatians 3:28-29. These passages, along with Galatians 6:16, teach that the church has become the Israel of God. Those men and women (Christians) who make up the house of God are they who are God's chosen people, in the sense that you use it (I Peter 2:5-9. See also Ephesians 1:3-4).

QUESTION No. 212: What grand prophecies are now being fulfilled?

ANSWER: Prophecies concerning the kingdom of God, the Church of Christ! For example: I Corinthians 2:9, a fulfillment of Isaiah 64:4. Refer also to Ephesians 3:9-11; Ephesians 3:21, and I Peter 1:9-12.

QUESTION No. 213: Are we near the end of the world?

ANSWER: "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Matthew 24:36).

QUESTION No. 214: Is it wrong for a Christian to vote?

ANSWER: No! Governments are ordained by God (Romans 13:1-7). It is therefore right for Christians to participate in the selection process with regard to related biblical principles. Support for governmental activities, however, must always be limited to those matters that are not contrary to God's will (Acts 5:29). For example, I fail to see how a faithful child of God can register a vote for a person or party that supports and promotes abortion, the killing of untold thousands of innocents.

QUESTION No. 215: Is it wrong for a Christian to attend festivals?

ANSWER: Some "festivals" may be right; some may be wrong! Any kind of activity that could potentially cause one to compromise his or her Christianity is to be avoided by the faithful child of God (II Corinthians 6:14-18).

QUESTION No. 216: Does God prohibit men wearing women's garments and women wearing men's garments? Is it a sin for a woman to wear jeans?

ANSWER: In the beginning "God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them" (Genesis 1:27; Matthew 19:4). Clearly, God demands, as an eternal principle, that a definite distinction be made between

man and woman. Thus in Deuteronomy 22:5, He commands the children of Israel to honor this distinction: "The women shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord." To wear clothes of the opposite sex would be to erase the distinction between man and woman that God has demanded from the beginning. It is therefore sinful to do so!

This does not mean, however, that a woman cannot wear modest slacks or jeans that are designed appropriately for women. Certainly, there are circumstances during which these would be more modest than a skirt or dress. In fact, often skirts and dresses are worn by some that are more revealing and immodest than an appropriately designed and worn pair of jeans. The key in women's clothing (as with men), is that they dress modestly as those professing godliness (I Timothy 2:9-10). If there were any doubt whatsoever as to the "modesty" of wearing certain "jeans" (or even other garments), regardless of the circumstances, an outer garment to assure modesty would be both wise and scriptural.

QUESTION No. 217: In the early centuries before Christianity came to Africa our ancestors prayed to idols. Will they be lost?

ANSWER: There was a time many, many years ago when all people knew about Jehovah God. Many of our ancestors rejected God and turned to idols (Romans 1:21), teaching their children to do the same thing. In so doing they changed the truth of God into a lie (Romans 1:25). "For this cause God gave them up unto their vile affections" (Romans 1:26). "And because "they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient" (Romans 1:28). Romans 1:32 says that these "are worthy of death!" It is clear then, that all who reject God and worship idols will be lost!

QUESTION No. 218: How does one become a preacher?

ANSWER: By having a desire within him that won't permit him to do anything else and by studying and knowing that which God wants him to preach, i.e., the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Mark 16:15-16)!

QUESTION No. 219: What is the difference between Judaism and Christianity? Can one rightly practice Judaism today?

ANSWER: Judaism today claims adherence only to the Old Testament while rejecting the New Testament and Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah. One cannot rightly practice Judaism today since God's children today are no longer under the Old Testament! The Old Testament (Judaism) was taken out of the way and replaced by the New Testament of Jesus Christ about two thousand years ago. Please read carefully the following passages: Romans 7:4-7; II Corinthians 3:13-14; Galatians 3:24-25; Ephesians 2:13-16; Hebrews 7:12 / 8:7. As well, in Colossians 2:14, we see that the 'handwriting of ordinances (Old Testament) was blotted out; that it was against us and contrary to us. Therefore, He took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross!'

For a Christian to go back and serve the Old Testament (Judaism) is for that individual to fall from God's grace (Galatians 5:4). Certainly without Christ and His Word, the New Testament, there can be no salvation (John 12:48; Acts 4:12)!

QUESTION No. 220: Would you define the following terms: Illumination, Salvation, Restoration, Rewards, Chastening, and Sanctification? Are they related?

ANSWER: If one has been illumined by the light of God's Word, accepts it, and continues to walk in that "Illumination," he or she experiences "Salvation" from sin (I John 1:7), "Restoration/Reconciliation" to God (II Corinthians 5:20), and "Sanctification," i.e., set apart from this world of sin (John 17:17; I Corinthians 6:11). Having thus become a child of a loving Father, one will then be "Chastened" by Him to become a partaker of His holiness (Hebrews 12:6-11), and to be the recipient of "Rewards," according to his works (Matthew 16:27). Certainly, all of these terms are related. However, the closer kinship is between the words "Illumination, Salvation, Restoration, and Sanctification," all of which are considered to be synonymous with becoming a child of God, while "Rewards and Chastening" occur subsequently.

We need to realize in chastening us that God does not send evil, suffering or sickness upon the children whom He loves, as some teach. However, neither does God protect us from the consequences of our sins, but rather permits us to be chastened

thereby that we might not engage further in the sin, causing us to be partakers of His holiness (Hebrews 12:10-11).

QUESTION No. 221. How did the Bible have its beginning?

ANSWER: The Bible had it's beginning in the mind of God (II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:21). Through inspiration of the Holy Spirit, inspired men were guided into all truth (John 16:13; John 17:17). All truth as written by these inspired men makes up the Gospel of Christ, or the power of God (Romans 1:16), through which "He hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (II Peter 1:3). If we have been given all things that pertain unto life and godliness, it follows then, that which we have been given is complete. James 1:25 refers to the law of Christ (New Testament) as the perfect or complete law of liberty; a law to which none may add or subtract (I Corinthians 4:6; Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 22:18-19) without the curse of God!

When the last inspired writer of the New Testament laid aside his pen for the last time, the Bible was complete, final, and everlasting!

QUESTION No. 222: Can you make clear to me what people are saying about the earth being destroyed in the year 2000 by collision with the greatest star in heaven?

ANSWER: I don't know all that these people are saying about it! I do know, however, that they don't know what they're talking about and that they are ignorant of God's Word that says, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Matthew 24:36).

QUESTION No. 223: What is the meaning of "Alleluia?"

ANSWER: It means, "Praise the Lord" or "Praise Jehovah."

QUESTION No. 224: Can people today expect to live as long as Abraham and Sarah?

ANSWER: No! Sarah was 127 years old when she died (Genesis 23:1); Abraham was 175 (Genesis 25:7). At the first, people lived to be very old by today's standards. The oldest man, Methuselah, lived to be 969 years of age. We can only guess why the life span of man has been reduced to today's levels. The Bible does not tell us why, but it does confirm the duration of man's life span today, the certainty of death, and the judgment to follow. "The days of our years are threescore and ten (seventy); and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years (eighty), yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away" (Psalms 90:10). In Hebrews 9:27, "And as it is appointed unto man once to die, but after this the judgment." From these passages we can expect to live seventy or eighty years, generally. After this, at the resurrection (John 5:28-29), each will face the Lord in judgment (II Corinthians 5:10). For this we must be prepared! How long one lives is not really the important issue of life. How one lives while in this life is all that will matter in that great day!

QUESTION No. 225: Adam died at the age of 930 years. Why does modern man die so early? Why has his life span been reduced so much?

ANSWER: To write on this matter with total certainty, I believe is beyond the knowledge of man. However, the following two possibilities are offered: 1) The long lives of the Patriarchs may have simply been in the providential will of God to populate the Earth and/or to better preserve His truths in the family heads through whom He operated; 2) The average age of the Patriarchs decreased gradually over a long period of time, which lends support to the thought that the reduction of life span came about as a direct result of sin. Man had been placed in the garden in a perfect state. When man, because of sin, was driven from the garden he no longer had access to the tree of life and perfection. He, from this time, would also be forced to accept the physical effect of the sin of the world in which he lived. The disease and death that resulted from these sins would naturally then bring about a decrease in the average life span.

The two suggestions above, as reasonable as they may appear, should not be taken as biblical or historical fact. We have not been given the answer! Though it does no harm to speculate on these matters, to spend much time in so doing would certainly not be

advisable. It would, perhaps, be good to consider Deuteronomy 29:29, "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law."

QUESTION No. 226: Why do people have natural hatred for others?

ANSWER: People do not have natural hatred for each other! Hatred of one another, of course, is sinful and the result of sin (Titus 3:3). The scriptures tell us that children do not have sin (Ezekiel 18:20); nor the knowledge of it (Deuteronomy 1:39). Therefore, children cannot naturally hate! Before anyone can hate, they must first learn how! This comes only after having been taught to do so, either by hateful parents or others around us. However, when we become Christians, we put away (malice) hatred (I Peter 2:1), we teach our children not to hate, and they, with us, begin living in the footsteps of the God who is love (I John 4:8).

QUESTION No. 227: There are many problems on the earth such as poverty, crime, prostitution, robbery, etc. Will the nations find a solution to these problems?

ANSWER: Some nations, having the required resources, may favorably affect one or more of these problem areas for a time. However, the reason for the existence of all of these is sin! As long as man continues in sin, the consequences of sin will continue to plague him. A casual look at the world around us shows that sin and the problems it brings is multiplying rapidly. Further, it will continue to multiply! "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away" (II Timothy 3:1-5). Speaking of these men in Verse thirteen, Paul says, "But evil men shall wax worse and worse!" This is only one of the reasons that Christians are but sojourners in this world, and that they look "for a city which hath foundation, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10).

QUESTION No. 228: We are not told when or where the apostles, Paul, John, and Peter died, nor where they are buried. Can you give me information on this?

ANSWER: The Bible does not provide us with this information! The wisdom of God is seen in the silence of the Scripture on this matter. For, without doubt, were all of these things known, great memorials would be built so that mankind would honor them, rather than He for whom they lived and died.

Legend tells us that Peter suffered martyrdom by crucifixion in 68AD; that Paul was executed by sword at Rome in 67AD; and that John died naturally in Ephesus in 97/98AD at about the age of one hundred years. The accuracy of these legends is questionable.

QUESTION No. 229: I have been told it takes about eighty-five years for one to really understand the Bible. Is this true?

ANSWER: The more years one spends in study generally results in greater knowledge, no matter what the subject or material being studied. All books and material, however, can be fully understood and exhausted with the exception of God's Word. It is inexhaustible! "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been His counseller?" (Romans 11:33-34).

QUESTION No. 230: My husband and I have donated our bodies to U.K. Medical center to help others. Do you find anything in the scriptures wrong with this?

ANSWER: No! The attitude that motivated your action is very commendable and is supported by many passages of scripture, e.g., Matthew 7:12; Galatians 6:10; I Peter 2:17. Often when questions of this nature arise, there is concern over what impact such action may have on our resurrection bodies. Those who wish to be cremated sometimes express the same concern. Neither medical research on our bodies, donation of organs, cremation, nor common burials will affect our resurrection bodies. In each case the body

will eventually disintegrate and return to the dust (elements) from where it came (Genesis 3:19). Upon death the spirit leaves the body (James 2:26) and enters the Hadean world (Luke 16:19-31). At the resurrection, He will reassemble those separated elements (no matter where they may be) into our new bodies (II Corinthians 4:1-4). We will hear His voice (John 5:28-29) and, being joined with our new bodies, will come forth to stand before Him in judgment (II Corinthians 5:10).

QUESTION No. 231: What Bible verses would you recommend for me concerning my failing health that has affected my marriage?

ANSWER: Many passages would be helpful to you, but some of my favorites are: Deuteronomy 33:27; Psalms 1, 4, 8, 11, 18, 23, 27, 32, 34:15-18; 40:1-3; 46; Matthew 11:28-30; John 14:1-6; Romans 8:35-39; Hebrews 10:17; Hebrews 13:5; Revelation 21:3-7; Revelation 22:14.

QUESTION No. 232: Is the New International Version too dangerous to be used in our classrooms?

ANSWER: Yes! It is filled with mortal error, i.e., it teaches and supports false doctrine that can result in loss of the soul. It does this by avoiding the English equivalent of the original Greek words. Those responsible for the book simply substituted words and phrases (sometimes in the text, at other times in the marginal readings) to propagate Calvinism, including the ungodly doctrine of salvation by faith alone! In Romans 10:9-10, they teach that one is saved simply by believing and saying, "Jesus is Lord." It uses the phrase "sinful nature" (twenty-five times) for the Greek word ‘sarx,’ which in the King James Version is accurately translated as "flesh" (For example, see Romans 8:1). This is another obvious attempt to further the "fatal doctrine" of original sin. It also implies that man sins by nature; that he cannot refrain from sinning! Psalms 51:5, as well, is a travesty in translation and clearly shows the denominational bias involved. In this place they transfer the sin of the world to the child to promote their error!

(Time will not permit a review of the many other errors involved in the ungodly NIV. For a more in depth study of this and other versions, I would recommend contacting

brother Robert Taylor who preaches for the church in Ripley, Tennessee. His work in this field is scholarly, yet easy to follow and understand).

Be cautious of those who use the argument in support of the NIV that the ASV, KJV, and NKJV also contain error. It is true that there are a few mistranslations and copyists' errors. However, these are insignificant and do not teach "fatal error."

To conclude: an eldership blunders greatly in promoting the use of any inaccurate translation either in the classroom or the pulpit. Most often they are brought in under the guise of "needing" a modern language translation. Why not use an accurate modern language translation, such as the NKJV? Why jeopardize the souls of the flock by feeding them fatal error? It makes no sense at all, unless (1) the eldership does not care enough to investigate the matter or (2) they are sympathetic toward the false doctrine taught. In either case, their right to serve is, at best, questionable!

QUESTION No. 233: Which is the better version, the King James or the Revised Standard Version?

ANSWER: The Revised Standard Version contains error that is fatal to one's soul should it be believed. In Romans 11:20, the word “only” is added to teach "but you stand fast only through faith." This addition changes the Word of God (Revelation 22:18-19) and promotes the false doctrine of salvation by "Faith only" (James 2:24). The RSV also uses the pronouns "Thine" and "Thou" when referring to the Father, but "you" when referring to Jesus. This practice appears to be an attempt to cast doubt on the divinity of Christ (John 5:23). One of the more blatant intentional errors in this version is the translation of the Hebrew word "Almah" in Isaiah 7:14 as "young woman," which would cause one to believe that the passage was not in reference to Christ, as is clearly taught in Matthew 1:23. As well, the RSV contains many other errors, any one of which would provide evidence that it cannot properly be referred to as the Word of God.

The King James Version, The New King James Version, and The American Standard Version contain no fatal errors. It is therefore recommended that one of these be used in your studies.

QUESTION No. 234: What is the difference between the mind, body, soul, and spirit?

ANSWER: The mind is the intellectual part of man and, of course, the body is the flesh and blood in which lives the spirit of man. The greater difficulty is trying to understand the difference between the soul and the spirit of man. In the Old Testament Hebrew, the word for soul is "nephesh." In the New Testament Greek, the word is "psykhe" or "psuche." In both cases (Old and New Testaments) where these words appear the meaning must be determined solely on the basis of context. For example:

1. These words can refer to the total person: (Ezekiel 18:20; Acts 4:41-43; Romans 2:9; James 5:20; I Peter 3:20).

2. They can refer to the life force within the body: (Genesis 1:30; Matthew 2:20; Luke 12:22; Acts 20:10; I Corinthians 15:45; Revelation 8:9; Revelation 12:11).

3. They often refer to the immaterial, invisible part of man: (Matthew 10:28; Acts 2:25-27; Luke 21:19; I Peter 2:11; III John, Verse two).

4. They are sometimes used in reference to the disembodied: (II Corinthians 5:3-4; Revelation 6:9; Revelation 20:4).

The Hebrew word for spirit is “ruwach” and is so used in Ecclesiastes 12:7 as that part of man that returns to God after its separation in death from the body (James 2:26). In the New Testament the Greek word for spirit is “pneuma” and is so used in Acts 7:19, when Stephen said, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.” Though the spirit is the real life of the body (because it is the spirit of man that quickeneth or makes alive - John 6:63), it is also clear that man possesses both spirit and soul, both of which are apparently necessary to animate the body (Hebrews 4:12; I Thessalonians 5:23).

It is interesting to note also that God who is a Spirit (John 4:24) also has a Soul (Leviticus 26:11, 30; Isaiah 1:14; Matthew 12:18; Hebrews 10:38).

QUESTION No. 235: Where will the proceedings of Judgment take place? On the Earth, or Heaven? I believe that Christ will not set foot on the Earth and that we will meet Him in the air.

ANSWER: Certainly you are correct that Christ will not set foot on the Earth when He returns and that we will meet Him in the air (I Thessalonians 4:16-18). Neither will the "proceedings" take place in Heaven, since the righteous will not enter heaven until after the Judgment (Matthew 25:31-46), The Bible does not speak of a specific place where we will be judged! Surely, we cannot determine such on the basis of our present world and material existence, since all of this will likely have passed. The best we can know is that it will take place in the presence of the Great Judge, Jesus Christ.

QUESTION No. 236: Where will Paradise be following the Judgment?

ANSWER: Since Paradise is that part of the Hadean World in which departed righteous souls are at rest awaiting the Resurrection and Judgment (Luke 16:19-31; Luke 23:43; John 20:17), after which they will enter heaven, there is no apparent need for Paradise to exist following the Judgment and our entry into Heaven. The same would be true of that part of Hades, described as a place of "torments" (Luke 16:22-23) in which departed unrighteous souls are held in reserve awaiting the final Resurrection and Judgment (II Peter 2:4).

QUESTION No. 237: Should Christians practice weddings? Should it be done in the church assembly hall?

ANSWER: Yes! In fact all who would marry (Christians and non-Christians) should practice weddings, because marriage is ordained of God (Genesis 2:18, 24; Matthew 19:3-9; I Corinthians 7:2, 9, 28, 36; I Timothy 4:3; I Timothy 5:14). As well, marriages must be performed in keeping with the laws of the land in which the participants dwell (Romans 13:1).

"Where" a marriage takes place is a matter of option! It is not unwise to marry within the church assembly hall in a ceremony that is separate and distinct from the regular worship services. However, care should always be taken in everything that we do that the activity does not reflect poorly upon Christ, His teachings, His church, or the work of the church in any way!

QUESTION No. 238: Why do those in Muslim countries not suffer from "aids" as much as those in Christian countries? Is it because Christians have refused to follow the laws of God that He has decided to bring this killer disease upon them?

ANSWER: The reason there is less "aids" in Muslim countries is that they do not, usually under the threat of death, engage in unlawful sexual activity as frequently as do those in other countries! Certainly however, it is true that "aids" is running rampant in many countries as a result of the refusal to follow Scriptural prohibitions against unlawful, homosexual, and adulterous sexual activity. If these illicit activities were non-existent, certainly there would be no epidemic of such. Nonetheless, we should not suggest that God initiated and brought the killer disease upon people, especially the innocent. He set certain laws (both spiritual and physical) in motion from the beginning. When man violates these laws, he brings consequences of his violation upon himself. So it is with the epidemic of "aids."

QUESTION No. 239: Is the Devil different from Satan and demons? Who is Lucifer?

ANSWER: Revelation 12:9 tells us that the Devil and Satan are one and the same.

Since the third century some have applied the name of Lucifer to Satan, which is based upon the unfounded idea that the name Lucifer as found in Isaiah 14:12 refers not only to the King of Babylon, but also to the fallen angel of Luke 10:18 and Revelation 12:7-10. That reference is solely to the falling of the King(dom) of Babylon can be seen not only in Isaiah 14:4, but also in Isaiah 13:6-11 where the fall of the Babylonian rulers is clearly represented (Vs.10) as heavenly bodies which were to fail! The same symbolic language is used in reference to the falling of governments with the destruction of the

Roman Empire (Matthew 24:29). Lucifer, then, scripturally refers to the King of Babylon!

QUESTION No. 240: Is it okay for a Christian to be involved in politics? Can a Christian serve as a president, governor or member of a council?

ANSWER: If a man or woman can serve God in government, regardless of office, without compromising faithfulness to Christ, there would be no violation of Scripture. On the other hand, any affiliation that would cause compromise is sinful and is not, therefore, okay (II Corinthians 6:14-18). There is little doubt that very often political office tends toward personal corruption of various sorts. Because of this the discerning Christian will weigh heavily all of the factors involved before entering such areas of employment.

QUESTION No. 241: Is it advisable for a Christian to salute or honor a national flag? If yes, explain Daniel 3:8-25.

ANSWER: Yes! There is no parallel between Daniel 3:8-25 and saluting or honoring a flag. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were not directed to salute or honor a flag. They were commanded (Vs.6 & 11) to bow down and worship the image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up (Vs.3). There is a great deal of difference between honor and worship! There is little doubt that Daniel and the other men honored the king by being obedient to him and being participants in governmental functions (Daniel 2:48-49). Their disobedience came only when the king's laws were in conflict with the laws of God, as should be the case with all men (Acts 5:29), thus, their refusal to worship.

We certainly are to worship only the God of heaven (Revelation 22:9), but just as certainly we are told to "honor the king" (I Peter 2:17), to "be subject to the higher powers" (Romans 13:1), and to "render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21). A salute reflects honor, not worship!

QUESTION No. 242: What about homosexuals?

ANSWER: The Bible is clear that homosexuality in all its forms is sinful and those who continue to be involved in it will not inherit the kingdom of God (Leviticus 18:22; Leviticus 20:13; Romans 1:24:28; I Corinthians 6:9-11; I Timothy 1:9-10). Yet, many homosexuals contend, through rationalization and the wresting of plain passages of Scripture, that God has created them the way they are; that they have been genetically programmed by Him to righteously practice that which He condemns in all others! Such "illogic," when fully developed, demands the irrational conclusion that a "genetic" homosexual would be sinning against heaven (would be separated from God / would be fallen from grace) if he were to violate his "divine" genetic make-up by taking a wife in accordance with God's laws of marriage, i.e., "Have ye not read, that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female . . . For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they (male and female) shall be one flesh" (Matthew 19:4-5). In other words, the faulty logic of the homosexual demands the conclusion that if a heterosexual violates his or her "divine" genetic program by engaging in a homosexual act (and sins by so doing), then it must also follow, and is true, that if a homosexual violates his or her "divine" genetic program by engaging in scriptural marital sex, he or she also sins! How foolish! And yet, how revealing!

Can the homosexual scripturally or logically suggest why a just Father would genetically program His children to engage in inappropriate sexual activity that is clearly not compatible with their God-created anatomical design? I think not! If God is to be charged with such a "genetic" program, He must also then be charged with developing a plan involving opposing and contradictory design; a plan of confusion and disorderliness; a plan wherein (His) "genetic" design is incompatible with the (His) "anatomical" design of man and woman! Who, but the ungodly, would so foolishly charge their Creator (I Corinthians 14:33)?

This heretical rationalization (that genes dictate and change that which God has condemned into righteousness) has been advanced in print by many homosexual and lesbian groups: none of which can be reputably supported, scripturally, scientifically, or medically. It is interesting to note that many similar genetic studies and claims have also been advanced by worldly heterosexuals in order to justify their own involvement in adultery, divorce, thievery, drunkenness, lying, and spousal abuse! Where does it end? Is there no such thing as sin? Does our genetic make-up absolve us of all unrighteousness? What need of such passages as Galatians five and I Corinthians 6? What need of the blood of Christ? What logic or biblical passage justifies the claims and sin of the homosexual, while he or she condemns the claims of the heterosexual? The truth is that both are wrong! Both are seeking imaginary loopholes in God's Word and proposing rationalization designed to ease consciences in order to whitewash sinful activities that satisfy unlawful lusts!

Further foolishness promoted by homosexuals holds that the Bible does not condemn the physical act itself, but only the act in connection with pagan ceremonial worship involving religious prostitution! Nowhere in scripture (including the original language) does God limit prohibition of homosexual conduct in anyway for any reason! The passages that explicitly condemn such, e.g., Leviticus 18; Leviticus 20; Romans 1; I Corinthians 6; et al, also catalog other kinds of sin, non-sexual and sexual, i.e., fornication, adultery, incest, bestiality, etc. The rationalization of the homosexual points to the insane conclusion that these sexual sins, as well, are only prohibited by God when engaged in during pagan religious ceremonies! What nonsense!

Some homosexuals have now further taken the position that as long as they remain true to one partner of the same sex and avoid "debauchery" as justified in other's genetic studies, i.e., adultery (multiple partners), drunkenness, thievery, lying, etc., that they are accepted and approved of God in their practices. This is rationalization and loophole seeking to the nth degree! What perverted rationale does the homosexual use to justify his or her activity, while condemning ungodliness in others which has been allegedly justified on the same genetic basis? The truth is that all of these activities are sinful and, unless repented of, will cause the participants (whether homosexual or heterosexual) to be lost eternally! I Corinthians 6:11 presents clearly the "only" way of justification and redemption, "And such 'were' some of you: but ye have been washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." Acts 18:8 tell us exactly when and how these Corinthians were washed, "and many of the Corinthians hearing. believed and were baptized." It is highly significant that the Holy Spirit did not direct the apostle Paul to isolate the homosexual and justify his ungodliness on the basis of genetic design! The Corinthian homosexual needed washing, sanctification, and justification just as much as the Corinthian fornicator, idolater, adulterer, thief, covetous, drunkard, reviler, and extortioner. Just as that washing was needed then, it is needed now! There is no difference! Certainly, we all sin and, at least, occasionally experience certain unlawful desires. Nonetheless, all (homosexuals and heterosexuals) are expected to overcome those desires, to truly repent upon falling, and to live righteously (in accordance with His will) before Him! Pardon the expression, but whatever "hand is dealt" us in this life, we are expected to play with, according to the rules. A baby may be born with alcoholic tendencies because his or her mother was a practicing alcoholic during pregnancy. This certainly does not justify drunkenness in the offspring later in life! The offspring is not justified in saying, "but I was born this way!" He or she must play the hand dealt (as unfair as it may seem to be) and overcome the desire for alcohol or be in violation of God's will. So it is with the homosexual! No matter what speculative or causative factors are presumed to exist in either homosexual or heterosexual, and no matter what the sin, none can or will be justified upon continual violation of God's Word. All must repent! All must be washed! God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34). If homosexual practice is sin for one, it is sin for all! Whatever is required of one is required of all!

How sad it is that many practicing homosexuals have opted to forsake the truths of the Gospel of Christ to continue in their ungodliness, and then, sometimes, to turn to the denominations for approval and justification. And how easy it then becomes for such a one to further rationalize and, in turn, accept and practice the perverted wisdom and doctrines of apostate man, denying the very Lord who bought them (II Peter 2:1)! In so doing, clearly, the wisdom and will of God is rejected (I Corinthians 1:25-31).

It is true that many sins, including homosexuality, are difficult to overcome, but that it can be done and must be done is without doubt (I Corinthians 6:11). For some to overcome it may even be necessary to give serious consideration to the "principle" of celibacy in Matthew 19:12, "and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake." But whatever is required of any to overcome (no matter what or how great the sin), it is certain and sure that God forgives (though man may not) and that heaven will surely be worth it all!

Just as is the case with all sinners, a practicing homosexual must repent (be sorry for, and stop practicing homosexuality) and be washed in baptism in order to enter the church (Acts 2:37-47). One who begins practicing homosexuality after having become a member of the church has fallen from grace and likewise needs to repent (Acts 8:22).

QUESTION No. 243: Is Satan a fallen angel?

ANSWER: It is true that Satan is a fallen angel. In fact he was the apparent leader of all other fallen angels who had, because of pride, rebelled against God. Refer to: II Peter 2:4; Jude 6; and Revelation 12:7-9.

Having fallen, it is his design to lead astray and cause to sin those who would be in a right relationship with God, thereby seeking to destroy the glory and honor that should otherwise belong to Him.

Satan's power over humans today has been restricted only to evil and ungodly influences. Those who succumb to such influences will experience the same destiny that has been prepared for Satan at the end of time (Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10).

QUESTION No. 244: What about the "Good News Bible?" Is it a good translation?

ANSWER: No! There are very few so-called Bibles that are worse than this one. It cannot even be accurately referred to as a "translation," since it does not express the English word or words that are equivalent to the Greek words of the original. It is a paraphrase expressed in terms that reflect what its authors believe the inspired writers meant to say. Therefore, it is not God's word, but rather has its source in the minds of men. That this is the case is clearly indicated in the preface of the misnamed Good News Bible: "Consequently there has been no attempt to reproduce in English the parts of speech, sentence structure, word order, and grammatical devices of the original languages." Since the Bible teaches verbal (word for word) inspiration (Ephesians 3:3-4), we can only logically conclude, based on the above quote, that the Good News Bible is not, nor does it represent, the inspired Word of God. In gross error, it, among many other errors, attempts to eradicate many of the references to the "blood" of Christ (Acts 20:28; Romans 3:25; Romans 5:9; Ephesians 1:7; Ephesians 2:13; and others). It wrongfully changes the day of worship from the first day of the week to Saturday (Acts 20:7). It employs the use of vulgar and earthy language in Acts 8:20. It contradicts the Bible by teaching the false doctrine of salvation by faith only (Romans 1:17). These are just a few of many reasons why copies of this book should be reserved for the trash pile or, better yet, as fuel for the fire!

QUESTION No. 245: What is zeal and how does it affect our lives?

ANSWER: To have "zeal" or to be "zealous" means to be eager or earnestly enthusiastic about or toward a particular effort. Paul used the word "zeal' when speaking of Israel in Romans 10:2: "For I bear them record that they have a "zeal" of God, but not according to knowledge." In Titus 2:14, we are told that the reason Christ gave Himself for us was "that He might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto Himself a peculiar (different) people, "zealous" of good works. That the Christian is directed to be "zealous" (eager, enthusiastic, boiling over) about the work of Christ is here made very clear. In so doing, not only is one's own life positively affected (now and in eternity), but the lives of others with whom he has contact as well. The wise man, Solomon, said in Ecclesiastes 9:10, *"Whatsoever"* thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." In other words, when this life is over all opportunities will be gone. Therefore, with all "zeal," take advantage of every opportunity while you live! Zealousness, then, will be a

characteristic of the faithful Christian in all aspects of life, i.e., family life, business life, and in the church! Without it, none of these will thrive as they ought!

QUESTION No. 246: What is the meaning of Good Friday?

ANSWER: It is a religious holiday initiated in the fourth century and "kept" by the Catholic Church and the Protestant denominations in memory of Christ's death on the cross. It is neither scriptural nor appropriate for the child of God to so do. Faithful Christians are authorized and commanded to remember the death of their Lord on the first day of every week as they partake of the elements that represent His shed blood and broken body, i.e., the Lord's Supper (Matthew 26:26-30; Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:23-29).

QUESTION No. 247: What of seven heavens?

ANSWER: The Jews and Moslems speak of seven heavens, but the Bible does not. Paul says he was caught up into the third heaven (II Corinthians 11:2). The third heaven clearly refers to the highest heaven where God dwells (11:4). The second heaven then would be those heavens in which are the sun, moon, and stars; the area which is often referred to as "outer space." The first heaven would include the atmosphere in which we now live up to "outer space."

QUESTION No. 248: I think we need to stay out of legalism and live in freedom. Agree?

ANSWER: How does one live in freedom? Clearly, through the gospel of Jesus Christ. By "knowing" it (John 8:32) and by "doing" it (Matthew 7:24-27). You talk about staying out of legalism and living in "freedom," as those the two were mutually exclusive. They are not! Many have ascribed a misunderstanding of "legalism" to those who are recognized as being conservative and also charge that these are being "pharisaical." The sense in which these two terms (legalist and Pharisee) are being applied today as synonyms is totally wrong. Nowhere in Scripture did Christ ever condemn a Pharisee (or anyone else for the matter) for being legal or keeping the Law. They were expected, as we, to honor and obey God's Word! The reason Christ condemned the Pharisees was because they were binding traditions and their own commandments as though they were a part of God's Law (Matthew 15:1-9; Matthew 23)! Consider the following passages: Matthew 7:21; John 12:48; John 14:15; John 15:10; Romans 1:5; Romans 6:16-18; II Thessalonians 1:7-9; Galatians 6:2; James 2:24. Certainly from these (and a multitude of other passages) we can see the necessity of adhering to the Law/Commandments of Jesus Christ; of being law-keepers; thus being legal or legalist, without being Pharisaical. Biblically, then, the terms "legalist" and "Pharisee" are mutually exclusive, because the Pharisee went far beyond just being legal. It is the case then that one cannot be "free" until he or she becomes "legal," i.e., one cannot be made free unless they are first willing to humbly and obediently submit to the Gospel of the Lord!

QUESTION No. 249: Will we know each other in heaven?

ANSWER: Yes! Many passages so indicate.

II Samuel 12:23: David said of his son who had died, "I shall go to him, but he will not return to me."

Luke 16:19-31: In verse 23, it is clear that Lazarus was recognizable!

Matthew 17:1-6: Moses and Elijah both of whom had been dead for many centuries were recognized on the mount of transfiguration!

I John 3:1-2: Clearly, we will see the Lord as He is!

Matthew 8:11: Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will be recognizable!

There is every reason to belief that we shall know each other in heaven and none to believe that we won't!

QUESTION No. 250: Does the phrase "it shall leave them neither root not branch" in Malachi 4:1 indicate that hell is not eternal? The phrase "ashes under the sole of your feet" in Malachi 4:3? The phrase "everlasting destruction" in II Thessalonians 1:8?

ANSWER: No to all three! Hell is just as eternal as heaven. The duration of both is described by the same Greek word (*aionios*) in Matthew 25:46: everlasting (*aionios*) punishment and life eternal (*aionios*). Both are without end!

The phrase of Malachi 4:1 simply implies that in hell all hope for life is gone, that there is no chance of revival! Malachi 4:3 indicates that in that day the wicked will be humbled under the foot of the righteous! II Thessalonians does not indicate an immediate and total destruction of the soul, but rather that the purposes of the soul in life will be destroyed by means of the eternal punishment that will come to the disobedient!

QUESTION No. 251: How can I win my friends to Christ?

ANSWER: First of all, your friends must see Christ living in you. This means that your words, actions, and attitude must be consistently in harmony with the will of Christ. One cannot teach someone something that they are unwilling to do and practice. You

must study the Bible so you will know what to practice and teach. Knowing what to teach, and practicing what you teach, does not mean that everyone you approach will listen or have a desire to study with you. There are different ways to approach people depending upon one's talents. Some may successfully use a direct approach with people that they contact daily by asking Bible questions, inviting them to church services, or by forthrightly asking them to study the bible. Some begin by passing out Bible tracts or other literature that causes interest to develop. I have found it the case that each must determine the best approach for them through trial and error. It is often best to plan to approach others by pre-selecting names of individuals that you are concerned about and feel that they would be good prospects. Pray about these and then follow up on your prayer by doing the best you can until you discover the approach most suitable for you. Most often the reason we are unsuccessful is because our approach is haphazard or we quit trying when first we fail. Be patient and consistent, both in setting up and conducting Bible studies, remembering that Christ did not ask you to do something that you couldn't do (Mark 16:15-16).

QUESTION No. 252: Should the books between the Old and New Testament be considered a part of God's Word?

ANSWER: The group of books to which you refer is properly called the "Apocrypha." This word means "hidden" or "concealed." It is so called because the books are of doubtful and spurious origin. The inspired writers of the New Testament did not recognize these books as scripture, nor did the religious and historical writers who lived for hundreds of years after the completion of the New Testament! There are literally hundreds of quotations by the Lord and the writers of the New Testament from the Old Testament, yet there are none from these books. It is significant, too, that the Jews never recognized them as a part of the Old Testament. They are throughout self-contradictory and contradictory to obvious truths found in the other inspired writings. These and many others reasons attest to the fact that they do not constitute a part in God's Word.

QUESTION No. 253: I am having difficulty with what appears to be contradictions in the Bible. Can you help?

ANSWER: Surely, there are things in the Bible that are difficult for us to understand and just as surely we need to be careful not to "wrest" those things to our own

destruction (II Peter 3:16). Without doubt, the Bible is inspired of God (II Timothy 3:16-17). As such, there can be no contradiction or error, though admittedly there are difficulties. However, with the right attitude and respect for the inspiration of scripture, these difficulties, with thoughtful study, are easily removed.

As you study these difficulties, approach them with the following thoughts:

1. Very often the same English word will have two different meanings. For example. "cleave" may mean to "separate," or it may mean to "stick to." The context will determine the author's intent! Paul tells us in Galatians 2:16 that we are not justified by works. James says in 2:24 that we are justified by works. Obviously, the two inspired writers are each talking about different types of works; the meaning of "works" then is to be determined by deeper study of the context of each passage under consideration.

2. We also need to harmonize accounts of statements and actions that may, at the first appear contradictory. Example: Matthew 27:5: Judas hung himself; Acts 1:18: Judas fell headlong and burst asunder and all his bowels gushed out. There is no contradiction. What is said in one passage does not exclude what happened in the other. The fact is that both passages, when studied together and harmonized, relate to us a more full account of what actually befell Judas.

3. Sometimes individuals will assume that two different accounts refer to a single action because of similarities that exist between the two. This is not always the case. Example: Luke says Jesus fed 5000 (9:14). Mark says Jesus fed 4000 (8:9). Contradiction? No! By studying further, we learn from Matthew 16:9-10 that there were two different occurrences.

4. Often different names are used to describe the same thing. Example: Matthew 15:32 refers to a woman who was a Canaanite. Mark says in 7:26 that she is a Syro-phoenician. No contradiction. She was both!

5. We must also realize that some statements in the New Testament were made to people who lived under the Old Testament and some were made to those who lived (and are living) under the New Testament. Example: Statements made by Christ on the cross to the penitent thief who lived under the Old Law can not be properly used to refute the New Testament doctrine of the necessity of baptism unto salvation.

6. Different purposes of the various writers also must be considered in accounts of the same action, because their emphasis is often different. Example: In discussing

salvation in Romans 5:1, Paul is emphasizing "faith." However, in Chapter 6, he is emphasizing "baptism." Different, but complimentary! When Matthew speaks of two demoniacs (8:28) and Mark speaks of one (5:2), there is no contradiction. Mark simply focuses on the most prominent of the two. You may say a policeman gave me a speeding ticket, yet there may have been two policemen in the patrol car. When your wife relates the account to her friend, she may say two policemen gave us a ticket. No contradiction, only two different accounts!

7. Symbolism is sometimes confusing as well. Example: John, the baptizer, was not actually "Elijah" (Matthew 11:14), but symbolically he was Elijah, because he came in the spirit of Elijah (Like 1:17)!

8. Some today will also try to understand spiritual things in the context of physical things or will try to understand events of the first century in the context of current events. Example: Trying to understand the Godhead and eternality in a physical context is impossible, or trying to understand the biblical concept of baptism in the light of modern day (denominational) thinking and practice will result in error.

9. Also to be considered is the different ways of keeping time. The Jews often took a part of a day as standing for the whole. Without this knowledge, it would be impossible to see that Jesus was in the grave three days. It would appear contradictory, but certainly, as the Jews reckoned time in the first century, the account is shown to be true and accurate.

10. Note as well that not all of the inspired writers presented biblical accounts chronologically, which accounts for assumed contradictions in sequential arrangement.

11. Misunderstanding relative to "when" certain events took place sometimes causes confusion. Example: (I Peter 3:19) Some have foolishly presumed that this passage teaches that Christ while in the Hadean world, at that time preached the gospel to those who were also there. Such is totally improper! The passage is saying that the eternal Christ (See also Verse 18) went through Noah and preached by him, prior to the flood, to the spirits that are "now" in prison!

Hope this will help in your studies. If you have some specific passage that is giving you trouble, please feel free to communicate and we'll do our best to be of help.

QUESTION No. 254: What is the role of the husband and father in the home?

ANSWER: He is the head of the family in the same way that Christ is the head of the church. Therefore, its government is especially assigned to him (I Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:22-24). However, this is not to be taken to mean that he is to be a hard taskmaster or dictator. He is to be kind and loving in his rule of the home, loving the wife with tenderness and much concern for her welfare and betterment (Ephesians 5:25, 28; Colossians 3:19; I Peter 3:7). As well, he is to bring up his children to be followers of Christ with care and concern not only for their spiritual well-being, but also for their physical sustenance (Ephesians 6:4; I Timothy 5:8). A great responsibility is placed upon the father as head of the house to guide the home through teaching, example, and practice! To fail in these matters is to fail wife, children, and God!

QUESTION No. 255: What is women's place in the world according to the Bible?

ANSWER: First let's talk about her role in the church. Her role in the church is absolutely vital to the success of the church! In Titus 2:3-5, we learn "that they are to be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to drunkenness, teachers of good things that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, to be keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed." She is to be hospitable as was Lydia (Acts 16:15). She is to be charitable as was Dorcas (Acts 9:36). She is to relieve the afflicted (I Timothy 5:10). Certainly, the woman has much to do and should never be found idle in her God-given responsibilities!

As to position within the church: I Timothy 2:11-12 forbids the woman to usurp authority that God has given to the man: "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." The reason given in verses 13-14 is: "For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression."

This does not mean, however, that the woman is inferior to the man. God has assigned different roles to each, and each must function within his or her assigned roles to be pleasing to God. The significant roles assigned to women are expressed in I Timothy 5 and Titus 2. Christian women will have no desire to violate or go beyond the bounds of what God has prescribed for them!

As far as the woman in the world is concerned, there appears to be no difference than that of the man. Can she be involved in business? Since Lydia, a faithful Christian, was involved in business there seems little doubt that the same would be proper today (Acts 16:13-15). As a Christian, however, none (man or woman) can be so involved with the world that it compromises either truth or responsibility of commitment to God (II Corinthians 6:14-18; James 4:4). For example: The Bible teaches that women are to be "keepers at home" (Titus 2:5). If responsibilities in the world prohibit one from fulfilling this home responsibility, then truth and right action has been compromised in sin and must be corrected. One may gain significant responsibilities, respect, and authority in worldly activities or positions. However, the faithful Christian, man or woman, will not allow such to detrimentally affect his or her attitude or principles, either on the job, or toward others in the home or the church.

QUESTION No. 256: Why didn't the New Testament condemn slavery as a crime, but it encouraged slaves and masters to be fair with each other?

ANSWER: Because the systems of government that existed at that time, as is the case today, were ordained of God as legal institutions. There's not a significant difference today in the way countries and businesses are operated. There is a working class that engages in manual labor, for the most part, and a managerial class that does the planning and organization, being in control of the manual laborers. This has always been the case. We just don't call it "slavery" today in our legal systems! In fact, many so-called slaves under the old systems of "slavery" lived much less rigorous and more comfortable lives than do some of the manual laborers of today! The problem with any government or business, whether in existence at that time, or today, is not necessarily the form of government, but, more often than not, the abuses by government and business. The New Testament addressed the problem at hand at that time and for all time in Paul's instructions to both slave and master; to laborer and manager (Philemon). Undoubtedly this biblical legislation had much to do with reducing the misuse and abuse of the working class that existed earlier, but now, for the most part, has eased considerably. Though men may often recognize a difference or inequality in classes or castes, we can be sure that God does not (Acts 10:34)! Whether a "slave" of yesterday or a manual laborer of today; whether a "master" of yesterday or an employer of today, the New Testament legislates clearly how one is to treat the other!

However, no matter the form of government we may be thrust under, Christians are instructed in all situations to lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty (I Timothy 2:2), with the realization that all men, then and today, were and are equal before Him.

QUESTION No. 257: How could Paul be a Roman Citizen and an Israelite at the same time?

ANSWER: He was born an Israelite, circumcised the eighth day, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law, a Pharisee (Philippians 3:5)! There were certain cities within the Roman Empire at that time which were, because of past services rendered to the Emperor of Rome, granted the designation of being a "free city." This designation included the privilege and rights of Roman citizenship to those who lived within the "free" cities. The city of Tarsus in which Paul was born was a "free city." He, therefore, held dual citizenship, both, as an Israelite and as a Roman.

QUESTION No. 258: Is it right for a Christian to have crucifixes and to wear religious objects?

ANSWER: Certainly, there is no inherent sin in an object such as a picture or an ornament worn around the neck. Nonetheless, there is a degree of danger in surrounding ourselves with religious objects because of the possibility of our coming to venerate the object rather than that for which it supposedly stands. To do so, would effectively result in idol worship, which would, of course, be sinful (Matthew 4:10). This kind of thing happens frequently especially when some accept the erroneous notion that a religious leader can pronounce God's blessing through himself upon an object and it, thereby, becomes more to that person than it ought. As well, though one may not personally carry it to the point of veneration, it sometimes lends false hope and support to those who do rely on beads, crosses, crucifixes, and icons! Certainly, all people everywhere should be walking by faith in Him through His Word; not by sight (II Corinthians 5:7).

It is clear that Christ has given us the Lord's Supper as the way He wants us to memorialize Him on the first day of every week (Acts 20:7). Should we assume that this is inadequate and provide other means of commemorating His suffering and death, while

often forsaking participation in that which He has authorized? Obedience to God's Word in study, service, and worship (which includes the memorial Supper) will keep Him, and what He did for us, always in the front. To one faithful in these things, there appears to be no real need for substitutes!

Certainly, we are to let our light shine before men, so that the Father may be glorified (Matthew 5:16), yet none are to do so in order to be seen of men ((Matthew 6:1-7; Matthew 6:17-18; Matthew 23:5-11). Wearing of religious objects, counting beads, and caressing crucifixes is, in many cases, tantamount to 'broadening of phylacteries and enlarging the borders of garments" and is often so perceived! Such an attitude should be avoided by the child of God (Matthew 23:12).

QUESTION No. 259: Do the Israelites still have a chance to get back to the land of Canaan to re-institute Old Testament worship with God's approval as before?

ANSWER: No, they do not! Carefully consider the parable of Christ in Luke 20:9-19. Then go back and read Verse 15 and16 slowly again, "So they (the Jews) cast Him out of the vineyard, and killed Him (Christ). What therefore shall the Lord of the vineyard do unto them (the Jews)? He shall come and destroy these husbandmen (the Jews), and shall give the vineyard to others." Jeremiah of old was prophesying about the complete and final destruction of the Israelite nation, resulting from their rejection of Christ, and said of them in Jeremiah 19:11, "Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Even so will I break this city, as one breaketh a potter's vessel, that ***cannot*** be mad whole again . . ."

Then in Verse 15, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will bring upon this city (Jerusalem) and upon all her towns (land of Israel) all the evil that I have pronounced against it, because they have hardened their necks, that they might no hear my words."

God kept His words, completely destroying the Israelite nation in 70AD through the Roman Empire as was prophesied by Christ in Matthew 24. The destruction was sure and complete "as one breaketh a potter's vessel, that ***cannot*** be made whole again."

No longer God's chosen people, the kingdom was taken from them forever and given to another! Please refer to Romans 2:28-29; Romans 9:6-9; and Galatians 3:28-29. These passages, along with Galatians 6:16, teach that the church has become the Israel of God. Those men and women (Christians) who make up the house of God are they who are God's chosen people, in the sense that you use it (I Peter 2:5-9. See also Ephesians 1:3-4).

QUESTION No. 260: If there is awareness after death, how can you explain (1) Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6, & 10; (2) Job 17:11, 16; (3) Isaiah 38:11; and (4) Psalms 115:17?

ANSWER:

(1) Solomon, having experienced and tasted all facets of life, is here discussing "things that are done under the sun" (Verse 6, 9) and is simply saying, "Take advantage of these things while you live, because you will not be able to do these things after you die and are buried. He said, *"Whatsoever"* thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." In other words, when this life is over all opportunities will be gone. Therefore, with all "zeal," take advantage of every opportunity while you live, because there is no earthly action in the grave! The passage does not deal with consciousness after death!

(2) Job is not saying that there is no awareness after death. He is saying (17:11), 'My plans and schemes of life are now over, even the thoughts (the possessions and treasures) of my heart. In fact the Hebrew word for "thoughts" here is the word "possession." The idea is, "the things that mean the most to me" are now gone and over!

(3) Isaiah is recording the words of King Hezekiah contemplating his death who says (verse 11), "I said, I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord, in the land of the living: I shall behold no man with the inhabitants of this world." The King is saying that he will be blessed no more by God "in the land of the living,' when I die. Neither shall I behold the inhabitants of this world." Nothing to do with after death consciousness!

(4) David is saying here that we ought to praise God while we are alive and have the opportunity to do so!

None of these passages disprove the biblical fact that we will be conscious after death! II Samuel 12:23; Matthew 17:3; Luke 16:19-31, and Revelation 6:6-9 are sufficient to prove that we will be conscious after death!

QUESTION No. 261: I do not believe in annihilation, but I do believe in extermination and believe that the following passages so teach. Do you agree?

ANSWER: In reading your document in regards to hell, you say that you do not believe in "annihilation," as do some others. Yet you say you do believe in "extermination." I'm not sure what you are really saying since the words are synonymous and are defined as being the same. Webster says of "annihilation," that it means, "to destroy entirely; demolish, make wholly ineffective." Of "extermination," he says, that it means, "to destroy entirely; wipe out, annihilate."

Nonetheless, you then list certain passages of scripture, as follows, that you allege support the idea of "extermination," as opposed to eternal punishment. Clearly, both ideas cannot be true. If this were the case we would then have a contradiction and if we have a contradiction we cannot have truth!

(1) Matthew 3:12, followed by your comment: "Note that the chaff is burned up, not burned forever."

Response: The chaff represents those professors of religion who have no solid religious principles or character based on truth. Of these He says, (a) they shall "burn up" and (b) with "unquenchable fire." The passage is in reality teaching the opposite of what you claim. The 'burning up' is in reference to the utter destruction of all that constitutes one's true life, while the idea of "unquenchable fire" refers to the consciousness of existence in that fire. Clearly, the idea of "unquenchable fire" denotes the eternality of that fire! It is a fire that cannot be extinguished!

(2) Matthew 13:40-42, followed by your comment: “Note that the tares are burned up, not burned forever.”

Response: The passage says that ‘the tares shall be burned in the fire; that they shall be cast into a furnace of fire: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. With the above also consider that within the furnace of fire there will be “weeping and gnashing of teeth.” This is not indicative of extermination in the sense that you propose, but rather portrays the pain and suffering that will exist and be experienced therein!

(3) Matthew 10:28, followed by your comment: “Again the wicked are to be got rid of, just as bad fish are to be thrown away to decay and disappear, as Jesus taught in Matthew 13:47-50.”

Response: First of all, you carry the parable beyond the intent of the passage. Christ here is talking of a separation of the good from the bad, with the future of the bad not being compared to rotting fish, but rather to the experience of wailing and gnashing of teeth within the furnace of fire, which also expresses the despair of a hopeless situation; a situation that cannot be changed!

The word “destroy” is not given to mean only one thing. It, in the Greek, is from the word “apollumi” that according to Thayer’s Greek-English lexicon (p.64) means: to devote or give over to eternal misery,” as used in Matthew 10:28. A form of the same word is used in Matthew 10:26 when Jesus told the twelve to go to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” The word here is translated “lost.” The destruction that the lost will experience is eternal destruction, being cut off, from the presence of the Lord!

II Peter 2:12 & II Thessalonians 1:9, followed by no comment.

Response: Destroy and destruction are used in the sense noted above.

Jude 7, followed by your comment: “Please note that Sodom and Gomorrah are not burning today, though their destruction is spoken of as an example of eternal fire."

Response: The fire of this passage is a type of the fire that will be inflicted in the next world. The indication is not that it will be exact in every detail. When one considers the “types” of the Old Testament which foreshadowed things in the New Testament (For example the baptism of the children of Israel – I Corinthians 10:1-2 versus New Testament baptism – Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:38) it is obvious that detailed consideration is not the criterion expected of God. Clearly the fires which consumed Sodom and Gomorrah were not eternal. The idea is that the punishment that befell their inhabitants was so utterly complete and permanent that the nearest thing to it will be seen in the destruction of those who will suffer eternal fire!

That the Bible teaches that punishment is to be eternal in an eternal hell is without doubt. Consider the following:

(1) Hell is just as eternal as heaven. The duration of both is described by the same Greek word (*aionios*) in Matthew 25:46: everlasting (*aionios*) punishment and life eternal (*aionios*). Both are without end!

(2) Those in hell will be experiencing the weeping and gnashing of teeth (Matthew 13:28, 50; Luke 13:28).

(3) They shall be weeping in outer darkness (Matthew 8:12).

(4) They shall be in agony with the hypocrites (Matthew 24:51).

(5) They shall be delivered to their tormentors (Matthew 18:34).

(6) Their worm shall not die, neither the fire quenched (Mark 9:43-48).

(7) They will experience punishment worse then being put to put to death (Hebrews 10:28-29).

(8) They shall experience the same as the rich man (Luke 16:24).

(9) Their torment shall be with fire and brimstone (Revelation 14:10).

(10) The smoke of their torment will ascend up forever (Revelation 14:11).

(11) They will have no rest day nor night (Revelation 14:11).

QUESTION No. 262: Does Christianity abolish everything about one's culture?

ANSWER: No! It does not. However, when any cultural practice violates scripture, then that cultural practice must be abolished in order to comply with the will of God. For example, many people in Africa engage in the cultural practice of polygamy. Such a practice constitutes adultery, which is in total violation of God's Word. From the beginning it was God's law that there be one man and wife, and that the two would become one flesh (Genesis 2:22-25; Matthew 19:3-9)! These two would be bound only to each other until separated by death (Romans 7:1-3). There is no room in the God ordained marriage for more than two people! During the Old Testament dispensation, God suffered (permitted) temporary changes to His original plan, because of the hardness of the hearts of the Jews. Because of this, Moses suffered them to put away their wives (Matthew 19:8). Jesus tells those of us under the New Testament dispensation that "from the beginning it was not so" (Matthew 19:8). In Verse nine, Jesus says, "But I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." Jesus effectively tells people under the New Testament that we are not permitted to adopt the cultural marriage practices of those who lived previously, but rather we are to go back to God's original plan from the very beginning, that is, one man, one woman, for life! Culture does not overrule the word of God!

Also certain cultural practices are not sinful when practiced outside of the church, but may be sinful when practiced during the worship services. For example, it is not wrong to play drums outside of the worship service. However, to use them in the worship service to God would be a sinful violation of scripture, because He does not authorize their use as an element of worship to Him.

QUESTION No. 263: The Bible says that God hears the prayers of His people, i.e., only those who hear and believe. Why do parents tell their children to say the prayer at the time of meals? Does God hear the prayer of those children who have not become Christians?

ANSWER: The Bible, in saying that God “hears” the righteous (I Peter 3:12) and that He doesn’t “hear” sinners *(Isaiah 59:1-2; John 9:31) does not mean that God is not aware of the prayer or the one praying. It simply means that God will be responsive to His children’s prayer and will not be responsive similarly to the person who has not become a child of God. For example: As a child of God, I can pray for forgiveness and God has promised to grant His forgiveness to me. A person who is not a child of God and who prays for forgiveness, cannot be forgiven until he becomes a child of God. In this sense, God does not hear his prayer and grant forgiveness that is otherwise conditional! God may hear the prayer of one who has not accepted Christ and is praying that he might be so led. For example: Cornelius was not a Christian, yet he was not a rebellious sinner, but, rather, a devout man willing to obey the God whom he “feared”, so his prayers went up before Him. Had Cornelius been a rebellious sinner, not willing to obey God, his prayer would not have been heard or answered. In fact, he likely would not have been praying at all! As a result of his being a devout man who feared God ,Cornelius was led to the truth, becoming a Christian (Acts 10:48). His prayer had been heard, but not answered until that obedient immersion “into Christ” occurred! The point is that one who is not a child of God will not be directly granted through prayer the blessings that are promised only to the faithful; those “in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3). Cornelius' prayer was not directly a prayer for forgiveness of some sin he had committed. Undoubtedly, he knew from the Old Testament Scriptures that “all flesh”, Jew and Gentile, (Joel 2:28) would, both, one day be recipients of the spiritual blessings that would come through the one and same Holy Spirit. His prayer was directed to God simply as a reminder (a memorial) of that truth! Consider Saul of Tarsus. God was aware that he was praying (Acts 9:11), but God would not and could not wash away his sins by virtue of that prayer. In this sense He did not hear Saul. Nonetheless, he sent a preacher to him so that his sins could be removed, not by prayer, but by heaven’s conditions for forgiveness (Acts 22:16)! In all cases, prayer must be according to the will of God (James 4:3; I John 5:14). If it is not, God will be aware of the prayer (Proverbs 28:9), since He s omnipresent and omniscient, but He will not be responsive positively to it! In this sense, He does not “hear” prayer!

*Jehovah will not answer (the wicked) (1 Samuel 8:18). God will not hear the cry of the godless (Job 27:9). I will not answer the wicked (Proverbs 1:28). He who turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination (Proverbs 28:9). When ye make prayers, I will not hear (Isaiah 1:15). Your sins have hid his face from you, so that he will not hear (Isaiah 59.2).

Undoubtedly one of the reasons why parents tell their little children to pray at mealtime and at bedtime is to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). Christians parents saying the prayer along with the child (as Christians do with the prayer leader in worship), and saying "Amen" to it, evokes the requested blessings even if it were the case that God was not aware of the prayer of the child. However, I believe it in error to assume that an all-knowing God is not aware of the prayer of the little child who has not yet sinned, especially as the parents are coming before Him with the same words. There is no passage that permits such a belief. The child may not understand what he or she is saying, but certainly God is aware of the action and the words being spoken, as the parents understand them. Such a little child may pray "forgive our sins." God being aware that the child has no sins obviously cannot render forgiveness toward the child and in this sense does not hear the child. However, the parents praying the same, but silently, will, with the request, be forgiven in accordance with God's will.

QUESTION No. 264: Do you agree that there are many preachers who are afraid to step on people's toes? Do you agree that there are those in the church who are focused too much on the unknown gods (Acts 17:22-31) of materialism? Do you agree that there are many who have made food their god? How should we eat? For taste or nourishment?

ANSWER: As you state, indeed there are those who claim to be faithful Gospel preachers who do not preach the whole counsel of God because of their fear of "stepping on toes." Many do so of their own accord, while others fall in weakness to unqualified elderships who, in futile attempts to avoid scriptural controversy, insist, not on balanced preaching, but rather "positive" sermons designed to entertain and tickle the ear! This is, of course, sinful! These men do a disservice to God and the church and will have to deal with the matter in Judgment, if they do not repent.

At the same time, one must not have the attitude that says, "I am going out there to preach in order to step on toes." Sadly, there is also a group within the brotherhood who has developed such an arrogant philosophy, holding that they, and the particular lectureship circuit they represent, are the final word relative to any issue, whether it be a matter of doctrine or opinion! Most often these, in ungodly attempts to bring dissenters into the party line, are excessively "hard toe-steppers" on some, but just as often, are inconsistently and unscripturally benevolent to those within their own group and circuit!

This attitude and approach will also be called into account in Judgment, I believe to the dismay of many.

A faithful Gospel preacher, considering his own weaknesses, will preach all of the Gospel (the whole counsel of God) without allegiance to, fear of, or favor for, any man or group of men (Acts 20:26-27). This he will do, speaking the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15) for the Godhead, the church, and the lost souls of men and women! All else is to fail!

As to your comments on Acts 17:22-31: Certainly there are those wayward Christians who are individually worshiping materialism as a god! Very often this is also being done today under the false cloak of spirituality in the church by the erection of "cathedrals, gymnasiums, and overdone family life centers," while the proclamation of the Gospel, especially in foreign fields, is left to a struggling few! The faithful Christian will be careful in this regard and will set his affections on things above, not on things of this earth (Colossians 3:1-2), realizing that spiritual treasures are eternal (Matthew 6:19-21), but those of this earth are temporary and will one day be destroyed (II Peter 3:10).

As to your question, "How should we eat?" The sense of taste is a blessing that has been given us by our Creator! We also are told that of the food God has provided, we are free to eat, if it is received with thanksgiving (I Timothy 4:1-4). In receiving the food He has provided, taste, nutrition, and quantity are logical and reasonable considerations! Certainly, gluttony is sin and is rightfully associated with such things as greed, avarice, and lust. Paul, in Philippians 3:19, discusses those whose god is their belly! Though the phrase is not restricted simply to gluttony, surely it is included in the principle set forth. Gluttony is a misdirected attempt to gratify an animal-like, seemingly uncontrollable and unlawful passion, to eat all you can as often as you can. Such stands in stark and sinful contrast to the Christian whose body is the Lord's, in which He is to be glorified (I Corinthians 6:19-20), and in which we are to be temperate in "all" things (I Corinthians 9:25)! Gluttony should be relegated to the hog pen!

QUESTION No. 265: Where did each of the apostles die and how were they killed?

ANSWER: We do know that James was killed with the sword, very likely in Jerusalem (Acts 12:2) in about 44AD. However, the Bible does not provide us with all of the information that you are seeking! Surely, the wisdom of God is seen in the silence of the Scripture on this matter. For, without doubt, were all of these things known, great memorials would be built so that mankind would honor them, rather than He for whom they lived and died.

Christ told Peter (John 21:18-19) that he was going to die a martyr's death, but did not say how or where. Legend records that Peter did suffer martyrdom by crucifixion in 68AD; that Paul was executed by sword at Rome in 67AD; that Andrew was crucified in Scythia; that Philip died a martyr's death in Phyrgia; that Bartholomew died the death of a martyr in India; that Thomas also died as a martyr in India in AD 68; and that John died naturally in Ephesus in 97/98AD at about the age of one hundred years. All indications are (Matthew 20:22) that all of the apostles died as martyrs with the exception of John who undoubtedly suffered much throughout his life for the cause of Christ, at one time being exiled to the Isle of Patmos. Beyond this, we have little knowledge!

QUESTION No. 266: Is the modern state of Israel the fulfillment of God's promise to Israel?

ANSWER: No! The modern state of Israel has nothing to do with the promise that God made to Abraham. The promise made was, "For all the land which thou seest, to thee and thy seed will I give it, and to thy seed forever" (Genesis 13:15; Genesis 16:7-8). The extent of the land to be given was from the Nile River to the great river, the Euphrates (Genesis 15:18).

God, however, did not make this promise without conditions. He said in Deuteronomy 30:17-18, "But if thine heart turn away, so thou wilt not hear, but shall be drawn away and worship other gods, and serve them, I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, and that ye shall not prolong your days upon the land, wither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it."

Today's Premillenialist focuses on the "forever," but not the conditions of the promise. It is clearly evident that the children of Israel did not keep their part of the

covenant. Jeremiah records the words of the Lord in Chapter 19: "Hear ye the words of the Lord, O kings of Judah, and inhabitants of Jerusalem; Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Behold I will bring evil upon this place (Verse 3), because they have forsaken me, and have estranged this place. And have burned incense in it unto other gods, whom neither they nor their fathers have known (Verse 4) . . . Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I will bring evil upon this city and upon all her towns all the evil that I have pronounced against it, because they have hardened their necks, that they might not hear my words" (Verse 15). Jeremiah in this same chapter was told by God to take a potter's earthen bottle and some of the older people and older priests to the east gate of the city and to "proclaim there the words that I shall tell thee" (Verses 1 & 2). "Then shall thou break the bottle in the sight of the men that go with thee, and shall say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Even so will I break this people and this city, as one breaketh a potter's vessel, that CANNOT BE MADE WHOLE AGAIN" (Verses 10 & 11). The point is that just as the broken vessel could never be made whole again, so Israel once broken would never be made whole again. Not at that time, neither any other time, and certainly not in 1948AD! Amos recited the same thing in Chapter 8, Verse 2, "The end is come upon my people Israel; I will not again pass by them anymore." Zechariah also said in Chapter 11, Verse 10, "that I might break my covenant which I had made with the people." The "forever" of the promise was conditional upon the obedience of the children of Israel to the voice of God. They rejected Him and turned their backs on Him again and again, When they had gone too far, God broke His "forever" covenant with them. They "CANNOT be made whole again." The Jews had rejected and killed the prophets of old and finally they rejected and killed the Messiah (Matthew 21:33-46) who had been sent to them (Matthew 15:24). Because of that final rejection, we find Christ saying in Matthew 23:37, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." Because they would not, Jesus in Matthew 24:1-34 prophesied the total destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish economy. That destruction came upon Jerusalem in 70AD at the hands of the Roman Empire. They could and would not from that point forward be recognized as God's Israel. They could never be made whole again in this way!

The Premillenialists also often contend that God did not fulfill all of His land promise, that it is yet to be fulfilled in the future. Neither is this the case. Joshua says in Chapter 21, Verses 43 & 45, that God kept His part of the bargain and that He "gave unto Israel "all" the land which He sware to give unto their fathers, and they possessed it, and dwelt in it. There failed not ought of any good thing which the Lord had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass." God kept His promise, as He always does, including the promise that if the children of Israel rejected Him, He would reject them. This He did!

Additionally, God had told the children of Israel that they were to appoint a total of six cities of refuge to which one that accidentally killed another could flee for safety from those who might try to take revenge (Numbers 35:9-34). They were first directed to appoint three of these cities (Deuteronomy 19:7) and then, "if the Lord thy God enlarge thy coast, as He hath sworn to thy fathers, and give thee all the land which He promised to give unto thy fathers . . . . then thou shalt add three cities more for thee, besides these three." When all six cities were appointed it would be when the children of Israel possessed all of the Promised Land. In Joshua 20:7-9, we see that all of the six had been appointed, i.e., Kadesh, Shechem, Hebron, Bezer, Ramoth, and Golan. Therefore, we can know that God fulfilled His promise!

That the children of Israel occupied all of the Promised Land to the Euphrates is made clear in II Samuel 8:3; I Kings 4:21; II Chronicles 9:26. The Premillenial theory is false through and through!

The Israelites are not God's chosen people any longer, as some would suggest. Please refer to Romans 2:28-29; Romans 9:6-9; Galatians 3:28-29; and Galatians 5:6. These passages, along with Galatians 6:15-16, teach that the church of Christ has become the Israel of God. Those men and women (Christians) who make up the house of God are they who are God's chosen people, in the sense that the term is used today (I Peter 2:5-9. See also Ephesians 1:3-4).

QUESTION No. 267: The word "Bible" is also not found in God's Word. Why do we call it the Bible?

ANSWER: The word "Bible" is derived from the Greek. Ancient books were written on the Byblus or Papyrus reed. From this word "Byblos" came the Greek word for "book," which is "biblos." In fact in Matthew 1:1, the Greek word for "book" here is "biblos." As the books were written, Christians began to refer to them as "The Books," or "The Biblia." This designation was later usually qualified by an adjective, such as holy or divine, since "The Biblia" was made up of divinely, inspired Scripture and is, in fact, often referred to as "The Scriptures." Thus, we see the development of the phrase, "The Holy Bible." By past and current definition, the Bible is said to be the book of sacred writings of the Christian religion, containing the Old and New Testaments.

QUESTION No. 268: I believe that King James Bible was based on the poor Vulgate Bible and that it is, therefore, a poor translation. I also believe that the NIV and the NASB are better translations than the KJV. Comments?

ANSWER: The King James translators did not rely solely upon the Vulgate, as you suggest. There were 47/50 of the best Greek scholars of the day selected to prepare this translation. This translation was based on all available Greek manuscripts, with the Erasmus, Stephanus, and Beza texts that were partially based on the Vulgate (These three texts came to be called the Textus Receptus). As well, other translations that were available were also used. In my 56 years as a Christian, you are the first person I ever heard to even imply that the KJV is a poor translation. Indeed, it is not, but, rather is recognized by the scholarship of this world as a highly accurate and reliable Bible, based on, as best as was possible, a word (English)-for-word (Greek) concept! This is not to say that it or any other translation is perfect. However, it is safe to say that it contains no fatal error; error that would cause one to be lost!

To suggest that the NIV is a "good" translation is to call your research on the matter into question. There is absolutely no comparison between the two. In the preface to the NIV it is said of the "translators," "they have striven for MORE than a word-for-word translation." In other words, instead of accurately translating the Greek word into the equivalent English word, they are going to tell us what they think the author meant to say! Such is not a translation, but, rather, a commentary, based on what the fallible, human "translator" thinks. The preface also says, "The first concern of the translators has been the accuracy of the translation and its fidelity to the THOUGHT of the biblical writers. How can these men be sure they know the thought of the biblical writers? Surely, they do not claim inspiration! How can the reader know that their preconceived and pre-adopted theology did not creep into the text? The fact of the matter is that they can't and, indeed, their theology is found to be present! The book is filled with mortal error, i.e., it teaches and supports false doctrine that can result in loss of the soul. As noted, it does this by avoiding the English equivalent of the original Greek words. Those responsible for the book simply substituted words and phrases (sometimes in the text, at other times in the marginal readings) to propagate Calvinism, including the ungodly doctrine of salvation by faith alone (James 2:14-26)! In Romans 10:9-10, they teach that one is saved simply by believing and saying, "Jesus is Lord." It uses the phrase "sinful nature" (twenty-five times) for the Greek word 'sarx,' which in the King James Version is accurately translated as "flesh" (For example, see Romans 8:1). In fact they "translate" the word 'sarx' in over

forty different ways! Why? By what authority? This is another obvious attempt to further the "fatal doctrine" of original sin. It also implies that man sins by nature; that he cannot refrain from sinning! Psalms 51:5, as well, is a travesty in translation and clearly shows the denominational bias involved. In this place they transfer the sin of others to the child to promote their error! The word “idou,’ translated, Lo, Behold, Look, See, appears 213 times in the New Testament, but 107 of those time it is simply left out of the NIV. Why? Did they feel this was not a word provided by inspiration? Did they stand in the place of God to remove that which the Holy Ghost provided through inspired men? Apparently, God needed the word, but the NIV “translators” did not! In Matthew 18:22, the NIV says “seventy-seven times.” The KJV, NKJV, NASB, and the Interlinear all say, “seventy times seven.” In Mark 14:6, the same versions translate the Greek to “good work” or “good deed,” but the NIV says, “beautiful thing.” Why? This is not what inspiration says! In Matthew 5:17, Christ did not come to “abolish” the Law. Yet in Ephesians 2:13-15 it says that Christ “abolished in His flesh (death) the law.” Which one is in error? Why the necessity of these “translators” to change Luke 12:25, “And which of you by taking thought can add to his stature one cubit?” to read “Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?” Why didn’t they just translate it word-for word as stated by inspiration? Why the necessity of telling us what inspiration “meant” to say? How did they know? Prove if you would, how they knew to change the above! No, friend, the NIV is not a translation. It is a very poor commentary designed to teach the doctrines of its commentators! These are but a few of the errors contained in the NIV. The list is nearly endless!

There is no doubt that the NASB is a much better version than the NIV. I’m surprised that any would even count them comparable. Nonetheless, even this translation is slanted theologically, pointing to Premillenialism, e.g., In Isaiah 2:4 and Micah 4:1, the translation reads: “established as the chief of mountains,” rather than “on” the chief of mountains. In the margin, they say it literal means “on.” Why not use the literal meaning? Why change it? The cross-reference to Revelation 5:2, “This is the first resurrection,” directs the reader to I Thessalonians 4:16, thus, without warrant, supporting the “rapture” within Premillenialism! This translation also contradicts itself in Matthew 5:17 and Ephesians 2:14-15. The Greek in these two passages is different. Why translate them with the same word and make them contradictory? Acts 10:43 states, ‘through His name every one who believes in Him has received forgiveness of sins.” It should have, ‘will or shall receive’ forgiveness of sins. To be fair, this correction was made in the 1977 edition!

Many other difficulties could be shown in both of these translations, difficulties that do not appear in the King James, the New King James, and the American Standard

Versions. There can be no doubt that these three versions far excel mostly over the NIV, but also to a lesser degree over the NASB.

QUESTION No. 269: Did the “last days” begin with the establishment of the church?

ANSWER: Yes! Many times in the Old Testament, the phrase, "In the last days" or "latter times” is used by the prophets to denote that period of time (the last dispensation) when the Messiah would come. This phrase is so used in Isaiah 2:2; Joel 2:28; and Micah 4:1 and always pointed forward. When we come to the time of the Messiah and the going forth of the law and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:3), we find for the first time the fulfillment of these prophecies. In Acts 2:17, Peter refers specifically to Joel's prophecy and says in Verse 16, "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel." Joel said something would occur in the last days and Peter says this is that which was to occur at that time. This is the first time in the Bible we are told specifically that the "last days" had arrived as the Old Testament prophets had foretold. None of the events prophesied in the Old Testament that were to occur "in the last days" had begun to come to pass until this time. Therefore, this day, the Day of Pentecost, upon which the church/kingdom was established, was the beginning of the "last days." Paul tells us in Hebrews 1:2 that God, "hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." John says in I John 2:18, "Little children, it is the last time." At the end of this "last time," our Lord will return to receive the faithful of the kingdom for deliverance to the Father (I Corinthians 15:24).

QUESTION No. 270: What is the difference between backsliding and apostasy?

ANSWER: Generally, apostasy involves a complete forsaking of one’s religious faith, while backsliding is often applied to one who does not intend to completely forsake his faith, but nonetheless slides back into some of his old sinful habits and practices. Indeed, one may backslide into total apostasy. In fact, this is often the rule, rather than the exception.

QUESTION No. 271: Will there be happiness in this life? We are told to follow Jesus Christ who didn’t have much enjoyment in this life.

ANSWER: Whether there will be happiness in this life depends on us. Christ has done His part, because He has given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness (II Peter 1:3). He said we can have the abundant life (John 10:10) and we can have the peace that passes all understanding (Philippians 4:7), as we rejoice in the Lord (Philippians 4:4; I Thessalonians 5:16). When we truly trust Christ and His Word, we can have all the happiness we can handle, even as Paul and Silas who in the depths of their suffering for Christ, while locked in prison chains, could sing praises to God (Acts 16:25)! If we are not happy in this life, it is because we fail to realize the joy of our salvation (Psalms 51:12) and the reward that awaits the faithful (II Corinthians 4:17-18).

QUESTION No. 272: In ancient times God spoke through men. Why doesn't He do that today?

ANSWER: God did not only reveal His will in ancient times by speaking to and through men. In Hebrews 1:1, we are told that He communicated with men at various times and in various or different ways. One of the purposes of the book of Hebrews is to compare the things under the Mosaic dispensation with things under the Christian dispensation in order to show how much better the new system of faith is over the old system of works. The words of Hebrews 1:1-2 are, similarly, intended to point out the imperfect and incomplete state of divine revelation under the Old Testament, as it pointed to the final state of perfect and complete revelation through Jesus Christ, i.e., the New Testament, in which are all things that pertain unto life and godliness (II Peter 1:3) and which was given once for all (Jude 3). Under the Old Testament, God's revelation was made at various times, by various persons, in various laws and forms of teaching, with various degrees of clearness, under various shadows, types, and figures, and with various modes of revelation, such as by angels, visions, dreams, etc. But under the New Testament all was done, simply, by one person, i.e. Jesus, who has fulfilled the prophets, and completed prophecy; who is the one way, the one truth, and the one life; and the founder, mediator, and governor of his own kingdom. God has given us a better way through the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

QUESTION No. 273: What are types and shadows as related to the Bible?

ANSWER: A type or shadow, as related to the Bible, is best defined as a person, object, or event of the Old Testament that is regarded as a symbol, a foreshadowing, or a prefigurement of a corresponding reality in the New Testament. The reality is referred to as the antitype. For example in Hebrews 10:1, Paul writes, “For the law having a shadow of things to come, and not the very image of those things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.” The idea is that the Old Testament was a shadow or type of things to come. The word "shadow" has to do with an obscure sketch that does not fully reveal that of which it is a symbol. This is to say that the shadow is not the “very image” of that which is to come. The “very image” of the foreshadowing symbol is more than an obscure sketch. It is that which is complete in every detail. The "good things to come" here refer to future blessings that man would realize through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. The Old Testament, then, is the shadow or type that prefigured the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the New Testament, which is the antitype. In this verse, we learn that in the Old Testament sacrifice there was an imperfect representation that prefigured something better or more complete that was to come. In Verse twelve, we see that which had been symbolized by the Old Testament sacrifices, i.e., the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. So then, the Old Testament animal sacrifice is the type or shadow of the sacrifice (the antitype) of Christ. As well, the Old Testament is the type or shadow of the New Testament, which is the antitype.

Another example would be, the perfect lamb that was offered for the sins of the people under the Old Testament (Leviticus 22:17-25) prefigured the perfect Lamb of God that was offered for our sins (John 1:29; I Peter 1:19). The perfect lamb of the Old Testament, then, is the type or shadow. Jesus Christ, as the Lamb of God, is the antitype.

QUESTION No. 274: What is the difference between a disciple and an apostle?

ANSWER: A disciple is a believer, a learner, and a follower in the thought and teaching of a leader. Thus, all faithful Christians may be referred to as disciples. The word "apostle" literally means, "one sent out." The twelve who were baptized in the Holy Ghost on Pentecost Day of Acts, Chapters 1 and 2 were called “apostles” in a special way, having been thus baptized and “sent out” by Christ to perform a special function in the early church. Although the baptism of Paul in the Holy Spirit is not mentioned in the Bible, it is quite evident that he falls into this same category since he exercised the same miraculous gifts as did the others (Acts 20:10; Romans 1:11) and, as well, the fact of his

claim, as directed by the Holy Spirit, that he was “not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles (II Corinthians 11:5)” also attests to his apostleship.

Barnabas (Acts 14:14), Andronicus, and Junias (Romans 16:7) were also called apostles, but not in the same sense as the thirteen (the twelve plus Paul). They were simply Christians or disciples who were ‘sent out” to perform a specific task, not having been baptized in the Holy Spirit and, therefore, incapable of performing the totality of the function assigned to the thirteen!

QUESTION No. 275: When the Bible says we have different gifts or talents, can a Christian give an excuse not to sing by saying, “I can preach, but I am not gifted to sing?” Can any say, “I can pray, but I can’t teach, because I am not gifted?”

ANSWER: One cannot refrain from singing in worship to God by saying, “ I am not gifted to sing,” because all are commanded to sing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). Fortunately for many of us, God did not say we had to sing well or perfectly, but he did say that each of us have to sing! As far as teaching is concerned, all have the responsibility of carrying the Gospel to others within their ability (Mark 16:15-16). However, we must be careful not to attempt to exceed our ability as teachers lest we cause, through our inability, one to be taught that which is harmful. This is the thrust of James 3:1. Certainly it is the will of God that a time is to come in each of our lives when we “ought to be teachers” (Hebrews 5:12-14). However, we are to teach for the right reasons when we are able and prepared to teach, but we must never teach that which we are not scripturally prepared to teach!

QUESTION No. 276: Is a Christian free to make tattoos?

ANSWER: No! They are not! Such things are but vanity, designed to draw attention to ones’ self. The principle opposing such things is found in Matthew 23:5; I Timothy 2:9-10; and I Peter 3:3! The notion is at direct odds with Christian character and purpose!

Although we are no longer under the Old Testament, it is worthy of note that the children of Israel were forbidden to wear such marks upon the body (Leviticus 19:28). It appears that the principles attested to in this passage have to do with the following: (1) they were not to decorate their bodies as did the surrounding heathen; and (2) they were not to honor other deities, idols, heavenly objects, or earthly practices by tattooing as did the peoples of that day. Certainly these guiding principles remain valid today!

QUESTION No. 277: Do Christians today have "Guardian Angels?"

ANSWER: There are many different opinions as to "Guardian Angels." Some would suppose on the basis of Matthew 18:10 and Hebrews 1:13 that each individual on becoming a Christian is assigned an angel to accompany, protect, and care for him or her. However, a careful study of these verses does not support the notion. Note that the angels discussed here are "their" angels and that they are not said to be present with an individual, but rather are "in" heaven. "All" are ministering spirits sent forth to minister "for," not "to all" who shall be heirs of salvation. Undoubtedly angels play a part in God's plan of salvation and may in someway be used to effect the providence of God, but certainly individual "Guardian Angels" is not suggested in these passages.

There are at least two good reasons why the notion of individual "Guardian Angels" is not valid today: (1) A direct operation by a heavenly being would necessarily involve the miraculous which was "done away" with the completion of the New Testament (I Corinthians 13:8-10) and (2) many faithful, God-fearing Christians today suffer all sorts of extremely painful sicknesses and accidents. Such surely would not be the case if "Guardians Angels" were present and "on the job!"

QUESTION No. 278: The Israelites were called Hebrews in their early history, but later we find them called Jews. What is the difference between Hebrews and Jews? Where did the name "Jews" come from?

ANSWER: We find the first biblical reference to "Jews" in II Kings 16:6 which at that time identified one belonging to the tribe of Judah. Later the meaning was extended, and the word was applied to any one of the Hebrew race who had returned from the captivity; and finally it came to include anyone of that race throughout the world and is so used in Matthew 2:2.

QUESTION No. 279: Is it good for a Christian to work on the farm on Sundays before going to worship?

ANSWER: Although we, as Christians under the New Testament, do not keep the seventh day holy, the actions of Christ who lived under the Old Testament bear significantly on your question. So then, allow me to answer your question by asking you a question based on a Christ-authorized principle found in Matthew 12:11-13. Since it was "lawful (for Christ) to do well on the sabbath days," would it not be good for us 'to do well on the first day (Sunday)?' Or any other day for that matter?

QUESTION No. 280: Is it right for a Christian to forgive another that did wrong?

ANSWER: Yes! A Christian is bound to forgive (Matthew 6:12; Matthew 18:21-22; Ephesians 4:31-32, Luke 17:3-4). However, before one can forgive another, there must first be repentance by the one who has done the wrong (Luke 17:3)! One who continues in the wrong has not repented and, therefore, cannot be forgiven by man or God!

QUESTION No. 281: What is a person's cross?

ANSWER: In Matthew 10:38, Jesus said, "And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me." A person's cross then is following Jesus, as He would have us to do, no matter the persecution and suffering that one may reap. It means doing what He says in the way that He says to do it. In other words, it is worshipping and living according to the words of the New Testament! When one follows man and denominationalism, though he might be laboring, he is not taking up and carrying the cross that Christ would have them bear! Christ's cross and His Word are inseparable!

QUESTION No. 282: Have you ever heard of "Kairos?"

ANSWER: Yes! It is a well-intentioned organization that has been established to aid and encourage those who have been incarcerated to adopt varying forms and teachings of denominational Christianity. Even though some good is accomplished by this organization, one should realize that the "Christianity" it teaches takes many different paths, depending upon the background of the individual (or individuals) with whom one becomes involved. Denominationalism cannot be a part of true Christianity because of the varying doctrines held by each. It is the case that the denominations are simply groups that have agreed to disagree. In their disagreement it is evident that they must also, for the most part, disagree with God's Word, which is the only complete "truth" (John 17:17). Logically, if there is but one standard of truth (in this case the Bible), then it clearly follows that denominationalism in their disagreement with one another must also disagree with the standard of truth. At best, one must logically conclude that only "one" could possibly agree with the "truth," and perhaps none! The "truth" that saves cannot be found in divisive groups that have agreed to disagree! It can be found only in God's Word!

QUESTION No. 283: Following is a response to a brother who believes that "only" the KJV is God's Word. He takes issue with the logo that appears on the NKJV and pronounces it to be wrong because the words are "harder" and differ in some instances from the KJV. He also denounced the ASV and all "other" modern versions, but only deals with the NKJV versus the KJV.

ANSWER:

Dear brother,

We have received the information sent by you regarding the various translations and in large part are in agreement. However, not totally! We certainly stand opposed to the modern versions you discuss, and many others, because they are no more than denominational commentaries designed to promote a particular doctrine or theory. They are not word-for-word translations. However, we do believe that the KJV (which I use primarily), the NKJV, and the ASV are word-for-word translations, thus we recommend the three.

Some positions you have taken appear to be somewhat radical, e.g., the logo of the NKJV. This logo has nothing at all to do with the content of the translation or its authenticity. Your subjective beliefs about the logo are not evidence of the intent of the translators or the printers! Secondly, your statement that the KJV is a result of God's promises to keep His word true forever implies that before 1611 none had access to God's Word. If they at that time had no access to God's Word then it must be the case that God's Word was not kept forever. May I, respectfully, suggest to you that the Greek New Testament is also God's Word and that it clearly existed prior to 1611? When that Greek New Testament is accurately translated into English, no matter the name of the translation, then it is the case that we have God's Word in English.

Your "hard word" versus "easy word" analysis is, as well, quite subjective. It is the opinion of most scholars that the NKJV is much easier understood, in large due to the updating of many antiquated words in the KJV that have lost their original meaning, e.g., "conversation" meaning lifestyle as opposed to communication. All versions have some irregularities, e.g., the KJV's use of the word "easter" (Acts 12:4). However, though irregularities also exist in the NKJV and the ASV, there are no fatal errors contained in them as in many of the modern versions.

It is also significant that your comparisons assume that the KJV is the standard upon which to evaluate all other translations when in reality it is the Greek New Testament that is the standard. Changes in words, omission of words, or addition of words as compared to the KJV really authenticates very little. Neither are general statements as to numbers of omissions and/or additions, as compared to the KJV, the issue. The question is, "Does the translation accurately reflect the Greek words in English words?" You fail to deal with this question in your communication. You also fail to deal with this question as relates to the ASV.

Your allegations that the NKJV demotes Jesus Christ and the Trinity while supporting New Age ideas are purely speculative and assumptive and, I suppose, understandable given your strong feelings about the KJV. My own preference is, indeed, the KJV! However, after some degree of research, I cannot in good conscience hold or subscribe to your position. I believe you to be in error on the matter.

In Christ,

David M. Amos

QUESTION No. 284: How can one overcome the flesh (devil) in the inward battle?

ANSWER: The answer is not as complex as would seem at the first. John provides it for us in I John 5:4-5; "This is the victory that overcomes the world, *even our faith*." Since *faith* comes by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:17), it is evident then that we overcome this world and the god of this world (II Corinthians 4:4) by knowing, believing, and following the Spirit's directives, as set forth in the Word of the Almighty God! Some want to overcome the world without a deep, abiding faith (which includes obedience) in the Scriptures. It cannot be done!

QUESTION No. 285: How can the outcome of this inward battle affect the manifestations of the flesh and the gift of the Spirit?

ANSWER: The manifestations (works) of the flesh and the gifts (blessings) of the Spirit are fully determined by whether or not one overcomes the world through obedient faith. One must, through obedient faith, abstain from the works of the flesh and exhibit the fruits of the Spirit in order to inherit the kingdom of God. If one does not do so, he or she will have lost the inward battle!

QUESTION No. 286: How can the outcome of this inward battle affect fellowship with the saints?

ANSWER: One who has lost the inward battle and is not overcoming the world is walking in darkness (John 8:12) in step with the "rulers of darkness of this world" (Ephesians 6:12). The saints are directed to "have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness" (Ephesians 5:11). The word "no" means "not any" or "absolutely none!" One cannot fellowship those in darkness without being a partaker of their evil deeds (II

John 9-11). One, therefore, who rejects this directive and falls into fellowship with those in darkness is himself in darkness!

QUESTION No. 287: When giving gifts to the needy is it good to boast about it over the Television and Radio?

ANSWER: Certainly we are to let our lights shine so that we may glorify our heavenly Father (Matthew 5:16). However, we are not to boast about it in order to elevate or justify ourselves (Matthew 6:1-4). In other words, we are to give alms (help the needy), which men will naturally see and, thereby, glorify God. We are not to boast about it, as though we were sounding a trumpet, in order to have the glory of men! Matthew 6:3-4 is quite clear, “But when thou doest alms (help the needy), let not they left hand know what thy right hand doeth. That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret Himself shall reward thee openly.”

QUESTION No. 288: What type of wedding did Jesus attend in Cana?

ANSWER: The bridegroom wore an ornamental turban; Isaiah 61:10, a magnificent headdress like that of the high priest, or as was appropriate to the "kingdom of priests" (Exodus 19:6); the bride wore "jewels" or "ornaments" as a part of her wedding garments. The bride took a preparatory bath (Ezekiel 23:40). This is the allusion given in Ephesians 5:26-27: "Christ loved ... gave Himself for the church, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church not having spot." The veil was her distinctive dress, covering the whole person, so that the trick played on Jacob was very possible (Genesis 24:65; 29:23). It was the symbol of her subjection to her husband's power, therefore called "power on her head" (1 Corinthians 11:10). The word "nuptials" is derived from “nubo;” defined as "to veil one's self." She also wore girdles for the breasts (Jeremiah 2:32). Also a gilded or gold "crown" or chaplet, a white robe sometimes embroidered with gold thread (Revelation 19:8; Psalms 45:13-14) and jewels (Isaiah 61:10). Late in the evening the bridegroom came with his groomsmen ("companions," Judges 14:11, singers, and torch or lamp bearers leading the way - Jeremiah 25:10). The bride meantime with her maidens eagerly awaited his coming. Then he led the bride and her party in procession to their home with gladness to the marriage supper (Matt 25:6; 22:1-11; John 2:2; Ps 45:15). The women of the place flocked out to gaze. The nuptial song was sung; hence in Psalms

78:63 "their maidens were not praised" in nuptial song (Hebrew) is used for "were not given in marriage." The bridegroom having now received the bride, his "friend's joy (namely, in bringing them together) was fulfilled" in hearing the bridegroom's voice (John 3:29). The feast lasted for seven or even 14 days, and was enlivened by riddles, etc. (Judges 14:12). Wedding garments were provided to the guests by the host. Not to wear the wedding garment was an insult to him. Large water pots for washing the hands and for "purifying" purposes were provided (Mark 7:3). These are those which had to be "filled" before Jesus changed the water into wine.

QUESTION No. 289: Since flesh and blood cannot enter heaven, are we to understand that our physical bodies will be changed before we enter into heaven? Who was Alexander the Great? How will we know when the Gospel has been preached in all the world?

ANSWER: Yes! Our bodies will be changed (I Corinthians 15:50-54; Philippians 3:20-21; I John 3:2).

Alexander the Great was the king of Macedonia, or the Grecian Empire, that was referred to as the third kingdom of Daniel 2:39 and as represented by that part of the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream made of brass (Daniel 2:32, 39). He lived from 356BC to 323BC, a total of 33 years, during which time, as one of the greatest generals in history, he conquered much of what was then known as the civilized world. After his death, the kingdom that he established was divided (in 311BC) into many successor states by his quarreling army officers. These states continued to exist in a number of very loose alliances until conquered by Rome in 197BC. In 146BC, Greece, because of her rebellious nature toward Rome, was reduced to a mere Roman province known as Achaia.

Christ said the Gospel would be preached in all the world before the destruction of Jerusalem (Matthew 24:14) in 70AD and, according to the apostle Paul (Colossians 1:5, 23), it was! It was done in their generation and is being done in our generation by faithful efforts such as that put forth by Truth for the World. It is now available to nearly all around the globe via radio, television, printed page, and on-site missionaries, but not all people have accessed it or received it! The task given us is to continue to make it personally available to those coming of age and to future generations. In this sense, it is a task that will not be fully completed until the end of the world (Matthew 28:18-20). The

faithful are to always serve as continuing transmitters and connectors, proclaiming it to all that will listen! This is the ongoing assignment that He has given His people!

QUESTION No. 290: What caused the division between the Catholic and Orthodox churches in 1057AD?

ANSWER: The two churches (Eastern and Western) had been drifting apart even before this date, but there were two major reasons for the division. (1) This issue concerned a phrase in the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed called the "filioque." This is a Latin word meaning "and from the Son" and asserts the doctrine that the Holy Spirit proceeds not only from the Father, as the Eastern church believes, but rather both the Father and the Son, as the Western church believes. (2) Another issue was the Pope's claim to authority over the Eastern church. Both issues caused a significant dispute and rift in the 800's between Photius (Patriarch of Constantinople) and Pope Nicholas I of Rome. The matters worsened until finally in 1054, delegates of Pope Leo IX excommunicated the Patriarch of Constantinople. The Patriarch then assembled a council that excommunicated the papal delegates, completing the division that still exists, even though the excommunications were removed in 1965. The positions that caused the rift remain today!

GOD/CHRIST

QUESTION No. 291: What is God like?

ANSWER: We believe none can answer this question fully! There is neither human knowledge, time, nor space that would permit it. Though we may know some things about Him, we can never fully comprehend such concepts as limitless, eternal, and infinite concerning His being and will.

Some attributes of God often ascribed to Him are: self-existent, unchangeable, infinite knowledge, total independence, all-powerful, all-present, righteous, holy, and good. Toward us as sinners, He is full of mercy, "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9). In I John 4:8, we are told that He is love! One of the most beautiful pictures of God in the Bible is found in Luke 15:11-32. Here we see our God lovingly concerned about His children and willing to forgive to the uttermost.

However, we also see Him described as a God of goodness and severity; goodness toward those who continue in Him, but severity toward the disobedient. He will one day judge each of us by Christ (Acts 17:31) according to our deeds (Revelation 20:12).

The nearest one can come to knowing God is through a deep, thoughtful study of His Word. This we recommend to you!

QUESTION No. 292: How do we see (know) God in our everyday living?

ANSWER: We can partially see (know) God through His creative handiwork (Psalms 19:1-4 & Romans 1:20) and come to know Him more perfectly through learning (biblical studies) and obedience to His will (I John 4:6). But humankind cannot see (know) Him in the fullest sense; "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts higher than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8-9).

QUESTION No. 293: Why do we praise God?

ANSWER: To praise God is to express heartily our admiration and thankfulness in prayer and song for what He is; what He has done; what He is doing; and what He has promised to do! We do it, because He is most deserving of it! Also many passages teach that it is the right thing to do. See Psalm 148; Luke 19:37; Romans 15:10-11; Hebrews 2:12.

QUESTION No. 294: Did God plan to insert sin into His creation?

ANSWER: No! James 1:13; "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man." Since God clearly loves His creation so greatly (John 3:16), the insertion of evil into it would be against His very nature!

QUESTION No. 295: Why did God not immediately destroy Satan so that we would not sin?

ANSWER: God does not cause man to be tempted to sin (James 1:12-15). Neither did He create man so he would not have the opportunity to express through his actions the likeness of the God in whose image he was made. Indeed, there would be no spiritual or moral value at all in our lives, if we did not have the choice of right or wrong. Even in this, our loving God through His Son graciously provided the church. He did so that we could be made free from sin by the blood of Christ even when we sometimes choose the wrong way. This provision was according to His eternal purpose (Ephesians 3:9-11).

God will deal with Satan at the appropriate time according to His schedule (Revelation 20:10).

QUESTION No. 296: Because God allowed Satan to mislead His people, does this mean that God was powerless to do anything about it?

ANSWER: No! God is all-powerful. If He were not, He could not be God! Please refer to our response to the question above.

QUESTION No. 297: If God is the head of Christ, would it not be more proper and honorable to ascribe the headship of the church to God the Father?

ANSWER: This question reflects the reasoning of man rather than the will of God! "And what is the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And (God the Father) hath put all things under His (Christ's) feet, and gave Him (Christ) to be the head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1:19-23).

Since the Father Himself ascribed the headship of the church to His son, Jesus Christ, it would only be proper and honorable to submit to His wisdom and authority by doing the same! To do otherwise would be to sinfully reject His will in the matter!

QUESTION No. 298: Since God cast Satan out of heaven into this world, does not God become liable for the sin of this world?

ANSWER: No! Satan is in this world by permission, with his power controlled and restrained within certain limits by God. His power, limited to deceit and temptation, is permitted exercise by God in order to try (test) and prove men in this life for one of two possible destinies, heaven or hell (James 1:12; I Peter 1:7)!

QUESTION No. 299: A student asked, "who created God?" What are your views on this? How can I make it clear?

ANSWER: The Bible is clear! "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the

earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God" (Psalms 90:1-2). God has always existed!

QUESTION No. 300: Does God know when a baby is in the womb?

ANSWER: Yes! David wrote in Psalms 139:13-15, "For thou hast possessed my reins (created my inward parts): thou hast covered (protected) me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth greatly. My substance (body) was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously fashioned in the lowest parts of the earth (in a place away from man's observation). God told Jeremiah (1:5), "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations."

If God knew David and Jeremiah in the womb, it is certain that He knows all who are in the womb today!

QUESTION No. 301: When God comes to stay in your heart what will you feel?

ANSWER: The heart that is talked about in the Bible refers to our mind or our understanding. When we receive God's Word, the Bible, into our minds (our Bible hearts) and we come to believe and obey it, then God dwells in our hearts (minds). He does not actually live in the flesh and bones of our bodies. He is said to dwell in us, only because we let His words (the Bible) dwell in us (Colossians 3:16). When one obeys the Bible he or she feels (and is) free (John 8:32) and happy (Acts 8:39), because in obedience all past sins are taken away and one becomes a true child of God. These feelings come only because our mind knows that we have been pleasing to God!

QUESTION No. 302: Is God the cause of human suffering in certain classes of society?

ANSWER: No! Clearly the Bible teaches that God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34). However, we must also understand that God lovingly created man with the ability to exercise his own free will (Genesis 2:16-17; John 7:17; Revelation 22:17). It is evident as well, that God has continued to love man (John 3:16). Man suffers today because of unwise or sinful choices made in the past, by either himself (I Peter 4:15) or others, including his ancestors (Exodus 34:7; I Kings 21:29).

QUESTION No. 303: Why doesn't God provide food for His people today?

ANSWER: God will do His part, if we do our part! Paul tells us in I Thessalonians 4:11 to "study to be quiet, and do your own business, and to work with your own hands." In II Thessalonians 3:10, "For even when we were with you we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat." When man fell in the beginning, God ordained from that time forward that "In the sweat of thy face shall thou eat bread" (Genesis 3:19). If we do our part according to God's will, while seeking first the kingdom of heaven and His righteousness, the necessities of life will be added to us (Matthew 6:25-33). See also Psalms 37:25.

QUESTION No. 304: If we all trusted God, would racism end?

ANSWER: If all would learn and practice Godliness (Godlikeness) racism would end, because the God we are to imitate is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34; Galatians 3:28). If any would be like God, he or she must reject racism in all its forms!

QUESTION No. 305: Was God slack concerning His promises because Jacob received the blessing instead of Esau?

ANSWER: God is not slack concerning His promises (II Peter 3:9). When Esau, described in Hebrews 12:16-17 as a fornicator and profane person, sold his birthright he also sold the accompanying blessing. The blessing was then justly given to Jacob to whom the birthright had been sold! God does no wrong (Job 34:12; Revelation 16:7).

QUESTION No. 306: Can those who sincerely want to know God find Him?

ANSWER: In Revelation 22:17, we read that whosoever will may come! In Hebrews 11:6, it is stated that, "he who cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." Without this faith, however, the writer says, "it is impossible to please Him." The faith that pleases God comes through hearing His Word (Romans 10:17). Therefore, if people sincerely want to know God and prayerfully search for Him, they can find Him, but only in His Word (Matthew 7:24-27; John 12:48). He cannot be found in the religions, books, doctrines, and commandments of men (Matthew 15:9).

QUESTION No. 307: In Genesis 1:27, God created man in His own image. Then in John 4:24, we see that God is a spirit. Now, what kind of man did God create, spiritual or man in the flesh? Are we really like God?

ANSWER: God created the physical body and the spirit of man. "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul" (Genesis 2:7). Man is a living soul (the total being) only when the body and the spirit are joined together. When a body exists without the spirit, there is death, not life (James 2:26). Clearly, since God is a spirit, it must then follow that the spirit of man was created in His image! We have physical bodies. God does not. Therefore, the spirit of man is in His image, but the total man is not! Faithful Christians will not be like Him in the fullest sense until Christ comes again. "Beloved, now we are the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (I John 3:2).

QUESTION No. 308: A man said that if Christ was God He would have known when He was going to return (Matthew 24:36). Is Christ God? If God is the Father and Christ is the Son, who is the Mother?

ANSWER: Yes! Christ is God! (John 1:1; John 5:18; John 20:28; Philippians 2:5-6). It is sometimes difficult for man, largely because of false teaching, to accept the fact of three personalities in one God or one Godhead! The scriptures reveal quite forcefully

that there is only one God (Isaiah 44:6). However, with equal force, this one God reveals Himself to us in scripture as God the Father (Ephesians 4:6), God the Son (Matthew 1:23), and God the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3-4)! These three separate and distinct personalities make up the Godhead or God (Matthew 28:19; Acts 17:29; Colossians 2:9)! Each of these personalities, being all-present, all-knowing, and all-powerful, possesses all the attributes of Deity. They are coequal and coeternal! They are individually and collectively, God!

We learn from the Bible that "God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1), but it was not the Father alone who participated in the creation. In Genesis 1:26, "God said, Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness." To whom was God speaking? Undoubtedly, to the other two personalities in the Godhead! We find in Genesis 1:2 that the Holy Spirit was present at the creation and in Colossians 1:16-17, we find that the Son was also present. They were not only there, but were actively involved with the Father in the creation process! Undeniably then, there is only "one" God or Godhead (Isaiah 42:8; 43:10; 45:21), made up of three distinct personalities (Matthew 3:16; 28:19; II Corinthians 13:14).

It is very difficult for physical man to accept the biblical concept of the Godhead, simply because he tries to understand it from an earthly or physical viewpoint. It cannot be done! It is for this reason that atheists, unbelievers, and skeptics continually reject the miracles of the Bible! The result of this viewpoint is self-defeating, because when man tries to force the spiritual things of God into his own physical limitations, he dethrones God in his own mind to the human level. As long as one fails to comprehend the fact of an enormous difference between physical man and spiritual Deity, he will never be able to accept the truths of the Bible necessary to his salvation. All men everywhere need always to contemplate and understand the following: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8-9).

The fact of Jesus not knowing (when He spoke the words in Matthew 24:36) of the time of His Second Coming does not, in any way, disprove His Deity. The statement that "He would have known, had He been God" implies that He wanted to know and the Father wouldn't tell Him. This is foolishness! Deity (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost) is all-knowing. This does not necessarily mean that each of them knows everything all the time. It means that each of them can know whatever they want to know whenever they

want to know it. At this particular time, the Father only possessed that specific knowledge. When Christ ascended back to the Father (Daniel 7:13-14; Matthew 28:18-20), He was given a kingdom, dominion, glory, and all authority. It may be the case that He at that time, or since that time, has opted to know the time of His Second Coming. We cannot know! Whether He has decided to know it should not be of great importance to us. What is important is that we be ready to meet Him when He does come!

The words "Father" and "Son" are not to be understood in the physical sense; nor are we to infer that Christ had a spirit mother because the first person in the Godhead is referred to as His "Father!" The words "Father" and "Son" are used solely to describe the functional and spiritual relationship that exists between the first and second persons of the Godhead. Jesus Christ, as God, is eternal, without beginning and without end (Micah 5:2; Hebrews 7:1-3). Obviously then, He had no need of a father and mother to bring Him into existence!

QUESTION No. 309: Why did Jesus die?

ANSWER: Jesus came into this world to save sinners (I Timothy 1:15; John 1:29). Though "He knew no sin, He was made to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (II Corinthians 5:21). The blood of animals could not take away our sin (Hebrews 10:4), so Christ became the only perfect sacrifice, by which we could be sanctified (Hebrews 10:10-12) through His blood, which was shed for many for the remission of sins (Matthew 26:28). Because of our sin (which God hates), we deserved the prescribed penalty of death and eternal separation from God (Isaiah 59:1-2). Either we had to pay the penalty for our sins or a perfect, sinless sacrifice had to be found to pay the penalty for us. Paul tells us (Romans 5:8-9) that God demonstrated “His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him." Christ paid the penalty for you and me in His death (I John 2:2).

QUESTION No. 310: Why couldn't Jesus have destroyed the disease of sin that has plagued our spiritual lives?

ANSWER: Jesus is God (John 1:1) and is, therefore, all-powerful! He does not, however, exercise His power according to man's timetable. When the father of sin (Satan) is finally destroyed at the end of all things (Revelation 20:10), then sin too, will have been destroyed. The coming of that day will be determined only by the God of heaven (Matthew 24:36). God created each of us as free moral agents with the choice of serving Him or serving sin (Romans 6:16). He temporarily allows sin to exist so that you and I may prove our love to Him by the proper exercise of the choice He has given us. The fact of the existence of sin in this life does not mean that it will or should plague our lives! We can overcome it by destroying the "body of sin" in our scriptural obedience to Him (Romans 6:1-18).

QUESTION No. 311: Where was Jesus' spirit while His body was in the grave?

ANSWER: He was in Paradise. "And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). We note that after He had arisen, He appeared to Mary and said, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father" (John 20:17). Clearly then, He was not in heaven during the three days. Neither was He in the place of eternal torment. The Greek word "hades" in the King James Version is most often translated as "hell" and very often does not refer to the final place of eternal torment. For example, Acts 2:27, in reference to Jesus, the passage says, "Because thou will not leave my soul in "hell" (hades). . ." So with consideration to each of these passages, we learn that Jesus was in Paradise and Hades! Hades is the place of departed spirits. The righteous then, upon death, go to a place in Hades called Paradise or Abraham's bosom (Luke 16:22). The unrighteous go to a different place in Hades; a place of torments (Luke 16:19-31). Note in Luke 16:23 that the wicked rich man lifted up his eyes being in “hell.” The Greek word translated “hell” in this passage is also “hades.” Clearly then we can see that both Jesus and the wicked rich man went to “hades,” but not to the same place within “hades.” Jesus went to that part of “hades” known as paradise, while the wicked rich man went to that part of “hades” known as “torments.” The place of torments is also called “hell” in II Peter 2:4 and the Greek word for “hell” in this passage is Tartarus. Both the spirits of the righteous and the unrighteous dead will remain in the Hadean world (in either Paradise or Tartarus) to await the resurrection and final Judgment. After Judgment, the righteous will go to Heaven and the unrighteous will go to “hell,” the place of eternal punishment (Matthew 25:46). The Greek word translated “hell” that designates the final place of the wicked is Gehenna, as seen in Matthew 5:22, 29; and Matthew 10:28.

QUESTION No. 312: Was Jesus in the grave for three days and three nights?

ANSWER: Yes, as the Jews reckoned time! Today, three days and three nights means seventy-two hours. This was not necessarily true in the first century. The Jews often spoke in round numbers, taking a part for the whole! Christ's body was in the earth part of the day Friday, which the Jews reckoned as a whole day; that is, a day and a night (First). His body was in the earth all day Saturday (the Sabbath), a day and a night (Second). It was in the earth part of the day Sunday, which the Jews reckoned as a whole day; that is a night and a day (Third). Thus, according to the reckoning of that time, Jesus' body was in the heart of the earth three days and three nights!

QUESTION No. 313: In what way is Christ the "firstborn (first fruits)" from the dead?

ANSWER: Christ was the first raised from the dead to die no more. Faithful Christians will follow at the Second Coming of Christ (I Corinthians 15:17-23).

QUESTION No. 314: Are all of the teachings of Christ to be found in the Bible?

ANSWER: Yes! Further, to add words to the Bible is sinful (Revelation 22:18); to take words away from it is sinful (Revelation 22:19); and to change it in any way is sinful! Those who do so are to be accursed (Galatians 1:6-9)! Anything outside of God's Word, even if it be at the direction of today's Pastors, Priests, Bishops, Archbishops, Cardinals, and Popes, is nothing but the doctrines and commandments of fallible men, and when obeyed will result in sin through vain and empty worship. Such organizations are to be rooted up in the last day! (Matthew 15:3-14).

QUESTION No. 315: Jesus was not a sinner. Why was He baptized?

ANSWER: When Jesus came to the Jordan River to be baptized (Matthew 3), John at the first refused to baptize Him saying, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and

comest thou to me?" What John implied by this was, 'You (Jesus) are without sin and, therefore, do not need to be baptized for the remission of sins, but, I am, indeed, a sinner and have need to be baptized of thee!' Jesus did not argue with the truth of John's statement. In fact, He agreed with it in saying, "Suffer (permit) it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." Jesus knew the design and purpose of John's baptism (Luke 3:3), and He approved of it, but by saying "Permit it to be so now," He is telling John that they, in this one case, must make an exception to this purpose, because He was without sin. Nonetheless, Christ insisted that He be baptized in order to "fulfill all righteousness." In other words, God commanded all men everywhere to be baptized and because Christ was, at that time, in the flesh (as a man), in order to satisfy the will of the Father, He, too, needed to be baptized in order to fulfill His will, or all righteousness!

Some people today who reject the scriptural teaching of baptism "for the remission of sins," (Acts 2:38) say, that since Jesus was not baptized for this purpose, neither do they have to be baptized "for the remission of sins." They, too, want to be baptized (as Christ was) to "fulfill all righteousness." This could be the case, if they were (as Christ was) sinless, or without sin. But it is the case that they are not without sin, for Paul said in Romans 3:23 that, "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. The logical and scriptural conclusion is that since "all men have sinned," they (all men) cannot be baptized (as Christ was) solely to fulfill all righteousness, but must be baptized for the express scriptural purpose of "remission of sins," which, in man's case, results in the fulfillment of righteousness, or God's will. Christ was the only one not to be baptized "for the remission of sins," simply because He did no sin (I Peter 2:22). There are no other exceptions, because all other men have sinned! Every man must, therefore, be baptized "for the remission of sins" in order to be saved (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:15-16)!

QUESTION No. 316: During the temptation of Christ, did he actually fast for forty days or is this just estimation?

ANSWER: Christ actually fasted for forty days and forty nights! There is no scriptural reason to think otherwise. Note that Moses (Exodus 34:28) and Elijah (I Kings 19:8) also fasted for forty days.

QUESTION No. 317: Where was Jesus residing during the forty days before He went to heaven?

ANSWER: During the period of His public ministry, Jesus did not enjoy a residing place as such. He said in Matthew 8:20, "the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." There is no reason to think that in the forty days after His resurrection it was any different. He did "shew Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them (the apostles) forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." Paul tells us in I Corinthians 15:5-8 of some of Christ's appearances, being "seen of above five-hundred brethren at once." However, we have no account of a residing place.

QUESTION No. 318: What things did the disciples not understand about Jesus?

ANSWER: There were many things that, at the first, they did not understand. They did not understand when He spoke of His death (Luke 9:43-45; Luke 18:31-34); when He spoke of the Father (John 8:27); when He spoke in parables (John 10:6); nor when He spoke of the establishment of His spiritual kingdom, the church (Luke 18:20-37; Acts 1:6-7). They would not understand or remember these things fully until Jesus was glorified (John 12:16), that is, until He was resurrected and enthroned at the right hand of God. The Holy Spirit, who would guide them into all truth (John 16:13) and bring all things to their remembrance (John 14:26) was not promised or could be given to them until after Jesus was glorified (John 7:39). After this was accomplished, the Holy Spirit was given to the twelve in a great way in Acts 2:1-4, after which they understood and remembered all things "whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26; John 15:26; John 16:13).

QUESTION No. 319: Why did Moses and Elijah appear with Christ at the transfiguration?

ANSWER: The purpose of the transfiguration is very significant to us today! Moses represented the "law" and Elijah represented the "prophets." When God said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him" (Matthew 17:5), He was saying that, under the New Testament dispensation, we are not to hear and obey Moses and Elijah (the Old Testament, i.e., the law and the prophets), but, rather, we are to hear and obey Jesus Christ, God's beloved Son! The Old Testament (represented by

Moses and Elijah) would be fulfilled with the death of Christ and taken out of the way (Colossians 2:14).

QUESTION No. 320: What does Christ promise if we love and obey Him?

ANSWER: Among many others, he promises forgiveness (I John 1:7-9), the peace that passeth all understanding (Philippians 4:7), eternal life (Matthew 25:46) in a prepared place (John 14:1-3), and that we might be partakers of the divine nature (II Peter 1:4)!

QUESTION No. 321: How can we abide in Christ and Christ in us (John 15:4)?

ANSWER: To abide in Christ carries the idea of "remaining faithful." Faith comes by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17). We abide in Him by our obedience to His word. (John 15:3,10). He abides in us when we humbly let His words abide in us (John 15:7)

QUESTION No. 322: Why did Christ rise on the third day?

ANSWER: It was in fulfillment of His prophecy in Matthew 12:40, that as Jonah was three days and three nights in the great fish's belly, so would He be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. Undoubtedly, there is a relationship between His resurrection on the third day (the first day of the week-Luke 24:1) and the fact that His disciples throughout all the ages were to worship on the same day of the week!

QUESTION No. 323: Were parables used by Christ to make matters clear or to leave His audiences with a question?

ANSWER: The use of parables was a method of teaching by which Jesus, the Master Teacher, illustrated and clarified spiritual truths from a comparison of physical things or common experience. Some in His audiences, desiring to be His disciples, would diligently search out and accept these spiritual truths. To these the teachings were understandable and clear. Others did not have the will to search out and accept the truths being taught. Therefore, they would neither see, nor understand the parable (Luke 8:10). Jesus said, "if any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the doctrine" (John 7:17)!

QUESTION No. 324: Was Jesus a white-skinned man?

ANSWER: The exact tone of Jesus' skin is neither certain or known. However, being a Semitic Jew from the area of Palestine, it would appear likely that He exhibited the physical characteristics of that people, i.e., olive-skinned.

QUESTION No. 325: Why do many people say that Christ will be coming back after 2000 years?

ANSWER: Man continually and foolishly tries to predict the time of Christ's Second Coming. These predictions seem to increase at the close of each decade (every ten-year period) and more especially at the turn of the century (every one hundred years). It follows then at the conclusion of a thousand, or two thousand, year period that such thinking would be even more common, since this time would also include another decade and another century! Such predictions are sinful, showing a complete disregard for God's Word which clearly records the words of Jesus, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only" (Matthew 24:36).

QUESTION No. 326: Will Jesus literally return with the clouds of heaven or will He return as He came the first time, i.e., through a miraculous birth?

ANSWER: Jesus will literally return with the clouds of heaven! "And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel: which also said, ye men of Galilee, why

stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:9-11). "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him . . ." (Revelation 1:7).

QUESTION No. 327: Will the heavens and earth literally be destroyed at His Second Coming? Will we literally meet Him in the air?

ANSWER: Yes! All of these things are to be taken literally! Note that in II Peter, Chapter three, Verses 10-12, where the destruction of the heavens and the earth is foretold, that Peter compared it with what literally occurred when the earth was once destroyed by water. Both are instances of literal destruction!

Those who obey and serve God faithfully in this life will literally meet the Lord in the air at His Second Coming (I Thessalonians 4:13-18). There is no reason to infer a symbolic interpretation of this passage!

QUESTION No. 328: Is Jesus God? Would it be blasphemous to say so?

ANSWER: Yes! Jesus is God (John 1:1; Philippians 2:6). It would be blasphemous to say otherwise (I Corinthians 12:3).

QUESTION No. 329: Are there other messiahs today besides Christ?

ANSWER: No! "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). See also John 3:16; Ephesians 4:4-6; Hebrews 10:10. Those who claim to be messiahs and apostles today do so without biblical support and are leading the unlearned to destruction (Matthew 15:9-14).

QUESTION No. 330: Would you provide evidence that Christ used the Greek language? Was Greek the only language He knew? What language did Jesus use in Matthew 4:17 and Luke 2:46-49?

ANSWER: Jesus while on this earth undoubtedly spoke most often in His native tongue. The language used most commonly in Palestine at that time was a mixture of Hebrew, Chaldaic, and Syriac, called Syro-Chaldaic or Aramaic. This is evidenced further by use of phrases in this language by the inspired writers in Mark 7:34 and Matthew 27:46.

However, since the Bible is verbally (word for word) inspired (I Corinthians 2:13), we can be assured that Christ spoke (Hebrews 1:2) in concert with the Holy Spirit, giving the writers of the New Testament the exact Greek words that He wanted them to use and record in the original manuscripts. In fact, in Matthew 16:18, Christ is understood to be actually speaking in the Greek tongue as He uses a play on the two Greek words Petros (Peter-masculine) and petra (rock-feminine), showing that the church was not built upon Petros, but rather upon petra, i.e., the confession that Peter had made in Verse sixteen. The usage of the Greek genders in this passage was critical to the understanding of the apostles as He spoke directly to them and just as critical for us today. The Aramaic would not have provided the necessary distinction!

Undoubtedly, Jesus, being God, can speak any language He so desires. In the passages in question (Matthew 4:17 and Luke 1:46-49), Jesus, without doubt, spoke in the language of His hearers (Palestinians) at the time of the speaking. The words that He spoke through the Holy Spirit to the apostles, and which were divinely recorded for you and me, were, with rare exception (e.g., Mark 7:34; Matthew 27:46), in the Greek tongue!

QUESTION No. 331: In answer to a question in the Bible Correspondence Course, I answered that Jesus had an earthly father named Joseph. You marked it wrong. Why?

ANSWER: The Correspondence Course is teaching that Jesus was not physically fathered by a human being. This means that Joseph was not a participant in the conception of Jesus (Matthew 1:18). Matthew tells us that which was conceived in Mary

was "of the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 1:20). Therefore, we may look at Joseph as Jesus' stepfather, but His true and real Father is the very God of heaven. Thus we refer to Him as the Son of God!

QUESTION No. 332: Can man today live without food for forty days, as did Christ (Matthew 4:2)?

ANSWER: It is not likely that many, if any, could survive such an ordeal! It seems possible, but not necessarily so, that this particular fasting of Christ may have been miraculously supported.

QUESTION No. 333: Did Jesus drink alcoholic beverages?

ANSWER: No! That Christ stands opposed to the use of alcoholic beverages is made clear in Proverbs 23:29-35 and Isaiah 5:11. Note that these two passages show a connection between "wine" and "strong drink." Then consider Habakkuk 2:15, "Woe unto them that givest his neighbour drink, that puttest the bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness." Certainly, this does not suggest that our Lord who was without sin, having kept the Old Law perfectly, including this passage, gave His neighbour (the twelve and those at the wedding in Cana) to drink and "put the bottle to them." Neither does it suggest that He Himself drank alcoholic beverages. Clearly the opposite is taught!

QUESTION No. 334: Did Christ resurrect in body? If yes, explain I Peter 3:18 and I Corinthians 15:42-44, 50.

ANSWER: Yes! Christ was bodily resurrected (Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:36-43; John 20:24-29), as we shall be (John 5:28-29; II Corinthians 5:1-10).

I Peter 3:18 simply teaches that Christ was quickened (made alive/resurrected) through the power and agency of the Holy Spirit, the same power by which our bodies shall one day be resurrected (Romans 8:11)!

I Corinthians 15:42-44 emphasizes the fact that the bodies that will come forth from the grave in the general resurrection (all are to be raised at the same time) will be incorruptible, unlike our present corruptible bodies. Being different from our present "natural" bodies, they are referred to in Verse forty four as "spiritual" bodies, not as "spirits without bodies" (II Corinthians 5:2-3)! The flesh of which the spiritual (heavenly/celestial-Vs.40) body is to be made will be unlike anything that now exists on earth. It will not be as the flesh of present man; as beasts, fishes, or birds (I Corinthians 15:35-39), but, rather, God will provide a body that pleases Him (Vs.38). These facts are also evidenced and implied in Verse fifty where we are told that our present flesh and blood bodies, which are corruptible, cannot enter the kingdom of heaven (which is incorruptible). Therefore, we will be clothed (II Corinthians 5:1-3) in the resurrection with incorruptible, spiritual bodies unlike our present fleshly, corruptible, natural bodies. Note very carefully what Paul is saying in Verse fifty. He does not say that incorruptible "flesh and bones" cannot enter heaven! He is saying that corruptible "flesh and blood" cannot enter heaven! Note also in Luke 24:39 that Jesus' resurrected body consisted of "flesh and bones." That His resurrected body had been "changed" is further seen by the placing of Thomas' fingers "into the print of the nails" and the thrusting of his hand "into His side," indicating an absence of blood as we know it! This is the incorruptible, glorious, "flesh and bones" body that the disciples saw taken up into heaven and the same incorruptible, glorious, "flesh and bones" body that all shall see returning from heaven one day (Acts 1:9-11; Revelation 1:7). In that great day He has promised to 'change our vile (corruptible) bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto His glorious (resurrected) body, . . .' (Philippians 3:21) and then "we shall be like Him" (I John 4:2)! Note, as well, that the corruptible bodies of those who are alive when the resurrection occurs will also be "changed" into incorruptible bodies (spiritual bodies) fit for an eternity in heaven (I Corinthians 15:51-52)!

QUESTION No. 335: Did Jesus become a sinner when He died on the cross for our sins?

ANSWER: No! II Corinthians 5:21 says that Christ "knew no sin." It was because of this that He could be "made to be sin for us." This passage does not teach that He became a sinner or even that He literally became sin. It is teaching that He suffered as though He were the sinner; that He only, because of His sinlessness, could do such and be the one perfect sacrifice (sin-offering) whereby "we might be made the righteousness of God in Him!" Those who teach that Christ became a sinner at the cross are in error!

QUESTION No. 336: Would you please explain Matthew 27:46-47?

ANSWER: In the first part of Verse forty-six, Jesus from the cross, 'cried with a loud voice, saying, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani.'" The second part of the verse tells the meaning of the first part, i.e., Jesus had said, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Verse forty-eight says that those who stood nearby misunderstood, thinking that Jesus was calling for Elias!

There are many opinions as to what Jesus meant when He said, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Clearly, it is the case that Jesus, as Deity, knew what was before Him as He went to Calvary (John 12:27). And as Deity, He also knew that whatever He would have to face His Father would never totally forsake Him (John 16:32). It follows and appears then that, in keeping with the divine plan; in order for Jesus to experience the fullness of suffering and the total weight of the sins of mankind, that Deity (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost) withheld the slightest of support and allowed the human side of Jesus to woefully recite the words from Psalms 22:1, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

QUESTION No. 337: Some people say they have seen Jesus Christ. How is this possible if Jesus is a spirit?

ANSWER: Those today who say they have literally seen Jesus Christ are either lying or suffering from mental instability!

Peter says in I Peter 1:8 that we "see Him not," and though we "see Him not" we can still love and believe in Him. As a result, we can then "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Christ says of His followers in John 20:29, "blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

The apostle John tells us in I John 3:2 that we "know" when Christ appears we shall be like Him. He also says, "it doth not yet appear what we shall be." Since the Bible

says that we don't yet know what we shall be like, it follows then that we have not yet seen Christ; nor know what He is like! If we now knew what He was like, that is, if we had seen Him, then we would already know what we would be like! The fact that "it doth not yet appear what we shall be" is evidence of the fact that none today have seen Him!

The answer to the question is summed up in Paul's statement of II Corinthians 5:7 that Christians (all Christians) "walk by faith and not by sight!" If one today had really seen Jesus then he or she would be walking by sight and not by faith, thereby negating and contradicting how God said Christians are to walk!

Those who claim that God literally appeared to them or that God talked directly to them do so in direct opposition to His Word. If these cannot be shown the error in which they engage, they need to be avoided as false teachers who "serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the heart of the simple" (Romans 16:17-18).

QUESTION No. 338: What was the reason and what was really happening on the Cross, when Jesus said, My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

ANSWER: The phrase was a quote from the book of Psalms 22:1 indicative of one that was in deep suffering. The citing of this passage showed that He alone bore our sins to that cross (Isaiah 53:4-5) and that indeed what He was undergoing was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Certainly, it teaches us also the hatred that our Father has for sin; in that, while with the sins of the world upon His Son, apparently, God temporarily, turned away, rejecting Him in that moment, because of the great love that He had for you and me (John 3:16). Did Jesus have foreknowledge of the events of that day? Of course He did (Luke 18:31-34), but the human side of our Lord could not contain and uttered in much agony the phrase, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani!

QUESTION No. 339: Is Christ's Second Coming to be physical or only spiritual?

ANSWER: Christ will not appear the second time with a physical body as we know it, but we do know that He shall literally appear and we shall physically hear and see His coming (I Thessalonians 4:16; Revelation 1:7). After the dead are resurrected with new bodies (not with flesh and blood as we know it, but yet visible – I Corinthians 15:35-58), the bodies of those alive at that time will be changed in the twinkling of an eye (I Corinthians 15:51-52) and "we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is" (I John 3:2).

QUESTION No. 340: If Jesus' mission was to the lost sheep of Israel, why was it confined to Palestine where only two of the original tribes had settled? Did that mean that Jesus had failed in his mission?

ANSWER: Jesus did not fail in His mission. He clearly states in John 17:4 in prayer to the Father, "I have finished (ASV= accomplished) the work which thou gavest me to do." He mightily fulfilled the intent of Heaven in all that He did. Certainly, neither the Jews outside of Palestine or the Gentiles were to be excluded from the Divine plan for the salvation of all. Note (1) that in Acts 2:5, at the preaching of the first Gospel sermon, there were devout Jews out of every nation under heaven; (2) that Matthew's Gospel was written primarily to the Jews; (3) the book of Hebrews was written primarily to the Jews; and (4) that James writes to the "twelve tribes scattered abroad.' Certainly, "all," both in and out of Palestine were reached by Jesus Christ, through Him and the men He had chosen. As to the Gentiles, Jesus recognized their need as well, when He discussed the "other sheep I have which are not of this fold' (John 10:16) to be incorporated into "one fold." He, through inspired men, accomplished this deed in a wonderful way, as described in Ephesians 2:13-22. Nonetheless, it was proper that He go first to the Jews; they had been God's chosen people and they were the ones who had long looked for the Messiah. Thus, in accordance with Old Testament prophecy that "out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:3), the promise was first for the Jews and their children (all Jews, from Palestine and every nation under heaven), then to "all that are afar off" (the Gentiles), "even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:39)! In about thirty years from the proclamation of this first Gospel sermon, the apostle Paul could state that it had been preached "in all the world" that all might know of "the grace of God in truth" (Colossians 1:5-6). All that was done was in a fashion as prescribed by Heaven and directed by the Holy Spirit!

QUESTION No. 341: Why should Jesus specifically forbid, on the one hand, preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles (Matthew 7:6,15:24,26) and yet on the other, tell the disciples to teach all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost (Matthew 28:19)?

ANSWER: Because it was necessary to the divine plan that the Gospel should first be proclaimed to the Jews (See the answer to Question No.340).

QUESTION No. 342: Why did Jesus prohibit the Gospel from being preached to the Gentiles during his ministry (Matthew 10:5, 7:6,15:24-26) but after his 'resurrection' tell them to preach the Gospel to the whole world (Mark 16:15)?

ANSWER: (See answers to the preceding two questions.)

QUESTION No. 343: If Jesus really had made the latter statement, i.e., 'preach the Gospel to the whole world,' why was there such a fierce debate within the early church (and particularly between Peter and Paul) as to whether the Gospel should be preached to the Gentiles (Acts 15:6-30)?

ANSWER: The discussion of Acts 15 was not whether the Gospel should be preached to the Gentiles. That decision was made by Heaven in the long ago. Isaiah, hundreds of years before said "all" nations would flow unto the church, and that He would judge "all nations" (Verse four). Jesus earlier taught about the "other" sheep not of this fold (John 10:16) that would unite with the Jews into one flock. Peter had been caused to believe earlier that "God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him" (Acts 10:34-35). The discussion in Acts 15 was related solely to the act of circumcision!

QUESTION No. 344: Out of all the signs that Jesus could have given about himself, he chose to give the sign of Jonah: "This generation is an evil generation; it seeks a sign but no sign shall be given to it except the sign of Jonah (Luke 11:29, Matthew 12:39, Matthew 16). Jonah was swallowed alive by a whale and remained in its belly alive for three days. For Jesus to have properly fulfilled the prophecy, he would need to enter the tomb alive and come out alive. Why should Jesus give this, of all signs, if he was to die and be resurrected?

ANSWER: You're reading more into the "sign" than was intended and, effectively, adding to that intent. Jesus used the part of the account of Jonah's that was to serve as the "sign," i.e., as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whales belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matthew 12:34). To this part of the event "the sign of the prophet Jonas" is limited (Verse 39). According to your logic of extending the "sign of Jonas," we would also have to conclude that Jesus would first have to be on a ship and thrown overboard into water to calm a troubled sea in order to properly fulfill the prophecy! We need to leave it where Jesus put it!

QUESTION No. 345: If Jesus' message was for the whole of mankind, why did he forbid his disciples to preach to the Gentiles (Matthew 10:5-6)?

ANSWER: (See the answers to above questions.)

QUESTION No. 346: When Jesus was asked what the only way was to true salvation, he replied: "keep the Commandments (Matthew 19:17)." The first of the Commandments was to believe in the Oneness of God (Exodus 20:3). Why did Jesus answer so if he believed in and was part of the Trinity? Why did he not refer to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost?

ANSWER: Though Jesus did not refer to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in this place because it was not necessary to the context, it remains a fact that Jesus did so as the context demanded so elsewhere (Matthew 28:19; I John 5:7). It is sometimes difficult for man, largely because of false teaching, to accept the fact of three personalities in one God, or Godhead! The scriptures reveal quite forcefully that there is only one God (Isaiah 44:6). However, with equal force, this one God reveals Himself to us in scripture as God the Father (Ephesians 4:6), God the Son (Matthew 1:23), and God the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3-4)! These three separate and distinct personalities make up the Godhead, or God (Matthew 28:19; Acts 17:29; Colossians 2:9)! Each of these personalities, being all-present, all-knowing, and all-powerful, possesses all the attributes of Deity. They are coequal and co-eternal! They are individually and collectively, God!

We learn from the Bible that "God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1), but it was not the Father alone who participated in the creation. In Genesis 1:26, "God said, Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness." To whom was God speaking? Undoubtedly, to the other two personalities in the Godhead! We find in Genesis 1:2 that the Holy Spirit was present at the creation and in Colossians 1:16-17, we find that the Son was also present. They were not only there, but were actively involved with the Father in the creation process! Undeniably then, there is only "one" God or Godhead (Isaiah 42:8; 43:10; 45:21), made up of three distinct personalities (Matthew 3:16; 28:19; II Corinthians 13:14).

It is very difficult for physical man to accept the biblical concept of the Godhead, simply because he tries to understand it from an earthly or physical viewpoint. It cannot be done! It is for this reason that atheists, unbelievers, and skeptics continually reject the miracles of the Bible! The result of this viewpoint is self-defeating, because when man tries to force the spiritual things of God into his own physical limitations, he dethrones God in his own mind to the human level. As long as one fails to comprehend the fact of an enormous difference between physical man and spiritual Deity, he will never be able to accept the truths of the Bible necessary to his salvation. All men everywhere need always to contemplate and understand the following: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8-9).

QUESTION No. 347: Jesus said that he had not come to change the Law of Moses (Matthew 5:17). The Law of Moses teaches that there is one God (Exodus 20:3). If Jesus was introducing the concept of Trinity, why did he not say that he was changing the Law of Moses or introducing a different concept?

ANSWER: Jesus, in the New Testament, did not introduce the concept of the Trinity. That concept was introduced to man, as shown in our response to the above question, in the account of the creation (Genesis 1), long before the Law of Moses was introduced! The concept of the Trinity, therefore, is not limited to a particular time period. It is an eternal concept!

QUESTION No. 348: Jesus prophesied that men of His generation would not pass away without witnessing his Second Coming and the falling of stars (Mark 9:1, 13:30). Why was this prophecy unfulfilled? Why was it that Jesus did not return within the lifetime of His generation?

ANSWER: The coming of the kingdom/church (Matthew 16:18-19) of God in Mark 9:1 has to do with the coming and establishment of the church on the day of Pentecost. There is not the slightest hint in this passage of His Second Coming! Mark 13, as well, does not refer to His Second Coming. The reference is solely to His symbolic coming in the destruction of Jerusalem that occurred in 70AD. The "falling stars" represent the falling of those in high governmental offices as the Jewish economy collapsed with the destruction of the city. The same figurative language was employed by Isaiah of the Old Testament in describing the fall of Babylon (Isaiah 13:10). Those living at that time (and now), being familiar with the Old Testament, would have understood what Jesus was saying!

QUESTION No. 349: Why did Jesus forbid the disciples from calling people fools yet called the Jewish leaders names like vipers and children of adultery? Is it conceivable that a Divine Being would behave in this way?

ANSWER: For men to so do would be improper, because we cannot look into the hearts of men, as could Jesus (Matthew 9:4). He knew that their fathers had killed the prophets of old and He knew that they were underhandedly, as is the character of serpents and vipers, setting about to take His life (Matthew 23:1-39). He knew what they were. He knew what evil and persecution they were bringing upon the souls of men and women and He but assigned them names befitting of their ungodly character, thus making men aware of that ungodliness and the necessity of avoiding their destructive venom (Matthew 15:10-14)!

QUESTION No. 350: According to Luke, when the Jews tried Jesus they asked him, "Are you the Son of God?" Jesus replied, "you say that I am (Luke 22:70)," which could mean: 'you say that I am, but I am not.' If his divinity was something he came to tell the world, why did he not plainly say, 'yes,' instead of couching his answer in ambiguous terms?

ANSWER: Jesus' answer was in the affirmative. The phrase is a Jewish idiom that answered the question in the affirmative. It is equal to "thou hast said" (Matthew 26:64) and "I am" (Mark 14:62.) Certainly, there was no doubt in the mind of those who stood by, "And they said, what need have we of further witness? For we have heard of His own mouth" (Luke 22:71). Since they apparently had no doubt, why should anyone today?

QUESTION No. 351: In the Old Testament, the term "Son of God" was applied to David (Psalms 89:27), the nation of Israel (Exodus 4:22), the children of Israel (Psalms 82:6), and Solomon (1 Chronicles 22:10). Jesus also used it for the peacemakers (Matthew 5:9). If Jesus was referring to himself as the Son of God in the literal sense, why did he not make it clear that he was differentiating between a symbolic reference and a literal meaning of the term?

ANSWER: Jesus made it manifestly clear that he was literally the Son of God! So clear, in fact, that some were ready to kill Him for so stating (Luke 22:71; John 5:18; John 8:58-59; John 10:30-31). Not only did He make it clear that He was/and is the Son of God, but so did the Father Matthew 3:16-17; Matthew 17:5) and the Holy Spirit (Philippians 2:5-11).

QUESTION No. 352: Jesus was the Messiah, the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies. He frequently made reference to himself as the suffering servant foretold in the Book of Isaiah (Matthew 8:17 & Isaiah 53:4; Luke 2:30 & Isaiah 52:10; Luke 22:37 & Isaiah 53:12). The Messiah of the Old Testament was, however, promised by God that he would not be killed (Psalms 34:19; Isaiah 53:10). How was it, therefore, that the Jews had succeeded in killing the Messiah, if Jesus died on the cross?

ANSWER: Psalms 34:19 is simply saying that God guards and protects the righteous. Neither this passage or Isaiah 53:10 teaches that Christ would not be killed. Isaiah is teaching that the seed of Christ would be realized in His followers/Christians, that true Christianity would prevail to the end, and that the pleasure of the Lord (the will of God) would prosper in its effectiveness. Verse eight of this very chapter prophesies that He would be "cut off out of the land of the living." Surely one could not claim that the writer refutes the clear message of Verse eight, two verses later, in Verse ten!

QUESTION No. 353: If Jesus knew that Judas was going to betray him, why did he continue to permit him to be a disciple? Why did he not tell the other disciples so that Judas could be excluded from His closest circle of followers?

ANSWER: Mere man would have so done. But Christ was more than man. Being the Son of God, He would do nothing to thwart the prophetic will of God (John 10:11-18).

QUESTION No. 354: If Jesus knew that one of his disciples would betray him, why should he say that all twelve disciples would sit upon twelve thrones (Matthew 19:28)?

ANSWER: Certainly, this passage is symbolic and teaches that the judging would come through the word that the apostles would be given. As well, it is certain that with Judas' betrayal the number of twelve (symbolically or otherwise) would be in no way diminished. It had been prophesied (Psalms 109:8) and fulfilled in Acts 1:20-26.

QUESTION No. 355: If Jesus knew that he was to die on the cross, why did he spend all night praying in the Garden of Gethsemane seeking deliverance: "Father if it is possible may this cup be taken from me (Matthew 26:39)?

ANSWER: His human nature was deeply affected by the ordeal that He faced. If there was any other way that man could be redeemed surely Jesus, the man, would have desired that, as would we all. But the divine side, Jesus, the Son of God, bowing to the will of the father acceding to the will of the Father, humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Philippians 2:8) as a sacrifice for your sins and mine (Hebrews 9:26-28; Hebrews 10: 10-12).

QUESTION No. 356: Jesus had taught that man's prayers are not answered in the Garden of Gethsemane. What effect would this incident have on the faith of his disciples and followers to see that a prayer had not been answered, contrary to what Jesus had taught?

ANSWER: To say that the prayer was not answered is inappropriate. The prayer was answered, but the answer was, no! And this because of the great love that God has for mankind (John 3:16). In Christ's death, the Father demonstrated that love so that we might be justified by His blood (Romans 5:8-9) and have the opportunity of eternal life.

QUESTION No. 357: If Jesus believed that his prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane would not be heard, why did he tell his disciples earlier that prayers are answered? "Would any of you who are fathers give your son a stone when he asked for bread (Matthew 7:9-10)," which means that God hears the prayers of man more than a father answers the wishes of his children, and "Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and it will be opened to you." "And whatever you ask in your prayers, you will receive, if you have faith" (Matthew 21:22; John 11:41-42).

ANSWER: An affirmative answer to prayer will only result if such is in accordance with the will of God (I John 5:14; James 4:3). Otherwise, the answer will be in the negative.

QUESTION No. 358: If Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane was not to be heard, why was it something that he wanted the disciples to witness? If the prayer was not to be heard, what useful purpose does this story serve?

ANSWER: It serves to demonstrate the great love that God has for us (Romans 5:6-9).

QUESTION No. 359: Why should Matthew, Mark and Luke all report (Matthew 26:39, Mark 14:36, Luke 22:42) that Jesus asked for the cup of suffering to be passed if possible yet John (John 18:11) reports that Jesus hastened for the crucifixion saying, "shall I not drink the cup the Father hath given me?"

ANSWER: The events of John 18 followed the events of Matthew 26, et al. He arose from prayer ready and willing to accomplish the father's will!

QUESTION No. 360: Why did Pontius Pilate just simply ignore his wife's plea to have nothing to do with Jesus on account of her bad dream (Matthew 27:19)? If the very mission of Jesus was to suffer death, why should God Almighty show a dream to Pilate's wife which would cause her to try and persuade her husband to release Jesus? Would not that appear to counter God's own plan?

ANSWER: You're reading more into the text than is there. Nothing even hints at the idea that God "showed her a dream." Without doubt, the events preceding and surrounding the trial and crucifixion of Christ were on her mind and she was troubled being convinced of the evidence that Christ should not be put to death. Accordingly, she so warned her husband, perhaps in fear of the possible results of putting an innocent one to death!

QUESTION No. 361: If Pilate really wanted Jesus to die on the cross, why would he fix the crucifixion on a Friday evening knowing that the Jews would have to take him down before Sabbath and that such a little time on the cross was insufficient for him to die?

ANSWER: Again, you are either reading things into the Scriptures or you are listening to someone who doesn't know what they're talking about! The crucifixion did not take place on Friday evening. Christ was already on the cross at the sixth hour (12 o'clock noon) when darkness fell over all the earth until the ninth hour (3:00 P.M.) shortly after which, He died! Pilate knew that even if Christ would have survived until the Sabbath (which was very unlikely in view of the terrible whippings and brutality that He withstood – you need to do some research on this!), the soldiers would have broken His legs to assure death before the body was removed from the cross (John 19:31-34).

QUESTION No. 362: If Jesus was about to die, how was he able to say in a clear, loud, and audible voice that he was thirsty (John 19:28)?

ANSWER: Once again you assume that something happened for which you have no basis. The passage does not say that He said, "I thirst" with a clear, loud, audible voice. It may be that you believe that Christ was on a cross at a height of twenty or so feet off of the ground, as often pictured by artists. Not so! Most often the victims were but a few feet from the ground and even their breathing could be heard. It is certain, however, that Jesus at the moment of death cried with a loud voice and gave up the Ghost (Matthew 27:50). This is to be expected. Victims of accidents and those dying in battle often do so!

QUESTION No. 363: Could it be that Jesus' helpless cry left such a vivid impression of a man seemingly bereft of hope that anyone who heard them would remember the exact words?

ANSWER: No! It was the case that those standing by actually misunderstood what He said (Matthew 27:47). What reason would there be for the Gospel writers to have included a statement that implied that the dying Savior had lost all hope? It would defeat the purpose of the entire account. Those attempting to falsify an account would have done what is suggested, i.e., they would have left out of the report anything that might have been so misunderstood. The fact of its inclusion is additional proof of the authenticity of the Scriptures!

QUESTION No. 364: Vinegar is often considered to have a stimulating effect, rather similar to smelling salts. Why, in Jesus' case, did it suddenly lead to his death (John 19:29)?

ANSWER: Again a misleading conclusion! Simply because the event occurred immediately prior to His death does not mean it contributed to His death. This is pure assumption. It appears that you are searching for inadequacies and errors in what has been recorded. I hope that your questions come from a truth-seeking effort, rather than a search for error. Your time will have been wasted if such is the case!

QUESTION No. 365: How could an onlooker tell the difference between a man on the cross who had died and a man who had fainted (Mark 15:39) particularly when it is reported that it was dark at that time (Mark 15:33, Matthew 27:45, Luke 23:44)?

ANSWER: The Roman soldiers would have broken His legs had He not been dead to assure that death had occurred. These men were highly trained in such matters under the proviso that should one escape alive they would stand to take his place, i.e., they would suffer the consequences that had fallen to the victim! They would be put to death!

QUESTION No. 366: If Jesus was dead when he was removed from the cross, why did his body release blood and water, since blood does not flow at all from a dead body (John 19:34)?

ANSWER: My friend, you don't know of what you speak! A hanging body having been opened with a cutting device will indeed bleed! Gravity demands it! I just returned from deer hunting and have had first hand experience of the phenomena on four occasions!

QUESTION No. 367: Why did Jesus die before the other two who were crucified with him even though the legs of the other two were broken to hasten death (John 19:32)?

ANSWER: Apparently, Pilate, being convinced of Jesus' innocence believed that a scourging would satisfy the Jews and ordered such (John 19:1). But, of course, it did not satisfy them. The scourge was a whip with leather thongs, to the ends of which, were attached sharp spikes or pieces of bone designed to rip open the flesh. Usually the skin was opened with the first lash with following strokes designed to shred and tear and bring one close to death. Possibly, this was one of the reasons why Christ was unable to bear His own cross. Very often, those subjected to such beatings would not survive, due to shock and loss of blood. But, even after this particular scourging, Christ was further mishandled and beaten, a crown of thorns placed on His head, made to bear His cross to the extent He could; be spiked to that cross, which was then dropped, undoubtedly with excruciating pain, into a hole in the ground. The fact that He survived as long as He did is a marvel!

QUESTION No. 368: It is reported that dead saints came out of their graves and made themselves known to many (Matthew 27:52). When the Jews saw this, why did they not immediately profess faith in Jesus? Where did these saints go? Who did they see? Why is there no account of this story elsewhere other than in Matthew's Gospel?

ANSWER: The Bible does not tell us the names of these or who they were, other than the fact that they were saved people or "saints." Upon their resurrection they went into the city of Jerusalem and appeared before many. Though the purpose of their appearance is not given, it seems reasonable to suggest that it was done to convince people (of that time and today) of the power and divinity of Christ. Whether the people to whom they appeared were believers or non-believers, we are not told. Your question assumes that none of the Jews professed faith in Christ as a result of this resurrection. We don't know the total affect there may have been since we have not been told. Nor have we been told where they went, but it is reasonable to believe that they eventually died. Certainly, there is no reason to expect that their resurrection would have caused all of the Jews to accept Christ (Luke 16:31). The various accounts of the Gospel of Christ were not intended to be identical, otherwise there would be need for only one account.

QUESTION No. 369: If the above story of saints rising from the dead is not based on an actual historical event, what other statements are there in the Gospels which are not based on actual historical facts?

ANSWER: Secular history and archeology have proven beyond doubt the accuracy of the Bible, which is used as a source book in these disciplines. There is no account in history or archeology that disproves any biblical assertion. In fact, the Bible is itself an historical account of the events of that time!

QUESTION No. 370: Jesus said that the killing of prophets ended with the killing of Zacharias (Matthew 23:35-36). How was it, therefore, that the Jews had succeeded in killing another prophet?

ANSWER: As is your manner, you are reading something into the passage that is not there! Jesus is discussing those who had been killed by the fathers of those to whom He was speaking. In Verse thirty-four, He foretells of those, whom they would put to death, following in the footsteps of their fathers. In fact, in Verse thirty-two, "Fill up then the measure of your fathers," He is in reality saying, 'Make it complete when you do to me what your fathers did to the prophets of old.'

QUESTION No. 371: Crucifixion was meant to be an accursed death (Deuteronomy 21:23). If Jesus was crucified did that mean he also suffered an accursed death?

ANSWER: Yes (Galatians 3:13-14)! He was "made a curse for us," for whatever was offered as atonement for sin was considered as bearing the punishment due the sin. The one who suffered for the transgressions was considered as bearing the curse in the body. Christ bore our sins to the cross and was, thus, made a curse in our stead.

QUESTION No. 372: Why was it that a Roman soldier was so readily prepared to allow Joseph (a subjected citizen) to take down Jesus' body from the cross without checking and without Joseph having any apparent lawful authority?

ANSWER: The legal authority to do so was granted at Pilate's command (Matthew 27:58).

QUESTION No. 373: Why is there no direct account by Joseph of Arimathea or Nicodemus that Jesus was dead when the account would have settled the matter beyond dispute?

ANSWER: There is no dispute, except in the mind of the skeptic and those unbelievers who refuse to accept the clear biblical accounts of the crucifixion. The Roman soldiers, whose duty it was, ascertained that Christ was dead. Pilate, on this basis, released the body for burial (Mark 15:43-45)!

QUESTION No. 374: Why should Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus take so much trouble to recover the body of Jesus when this would have been the duty of the nearest relative?

ANSWER: Both of these men were disciples of Christ and public officials of the highest court of the land, the Sanhedrin. Their access to the body, on behalf of the family, would be more readily given. Additionally, Joseph was a rich man (Matthew 27:57) in whose grave the body would be laid in fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah 53:9 that 'He would make His grave with the rich in His death.'

QUESTION No. 375: Why did Pilate agree to release the 'body' to Joseph of Arimathea (a known Jew and follower of Jesus) if he was not sympathetic to Jesus?

ANSWER: Pilate, as Governor, had done what he believed to be his duty. Christ was dead! It was over! The release of the body, upon ascertaining death, to another government official does not indicate sympathy to the Gospel of Christ. However, it may be that he would be inclined to surrender the body of Christ more readily because of his (and his wife's) conviction that "I find in Him no fault at all." The matter, however, is speculative.

QUESTION No. 376: Crucifixion was a slow death. It usually lasted several days. Death followed from exhaustion, inability to respire properly as a result of being in an upright position or attacks by wild animals. Why did Jesus, who was a fit and healthy man, used to walking the countryside for long distances, die so quickly in only a matter of a few hours?

ANSWER: See the answer to Question No. 367.

QUESTION No. 377: If Jesus really was expected to die in such a short time, why did Pilate express surprise at Jesus' death (Mark 15:42-44)?

ANSWER: The Greek word for "marvel" is "thaumazo" which means admire, have in admiration, marvel, wonder. The sense in context is that Pilate wondered "if" Jesus was really dead, so he cautiously assured that He was, through discussion with the Centurion overseeing the crucifixion.

QUESTION No. 378: Why would the Jews bribe the soldiers to say that Jesus' disciples had stolen the corpse whilst they (the soldiers) were asleep? If the soldiers had truly related this story, they might have been asked how they knew that the disciples had stolen the corpse, if they were asleep?

ANSWER: The reason that they did so is stated in Matthew 27:62-66. They were really in a dilemma that necessitated a meeting of the Sanhedrin in order to cover up the truth! They did not want the people to believe the prophecies and truth about the resurrection of Christ because "the last error (they admitted here they had wrongfully crucified Him) shall be worse than the first." You are exactly right in your last question. The soldiers couldn't really know that the body had been stolen if they had been asleep, but neither could they admit that the body wasn't stolen. To do so would be an indication that (1) they had failed in their responsibilities to put Him to death (in which case they would have been killed by law), or (2) that He was truly put to death, but had resurrected, as was prophesied. Either of these admissions would have been detrimental to their (and the Jewish) cause and future. Having been given a large sum of money (Matthew 28:12) and with assurances of the highest of governmental protection (Matthew 28:14-15), they had little choice. Had they disagreed, the fault and consequences of Christ not being dead would have fallen upon them.

QUESTION No. 379: Why did the Jews not go and check the tomb themselves? They had put much effort into getting Jesus crucified. A friend of Jesus had been allowed to take the body away. Why did they not visit the tomb before Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus did?

ANSWER: Friends of Jesus buried the body. The tomb was sealed by the soldiers and a guard set. The guards saw the angel that rolled back the stone from the door, but were immobilized (became as dead men, i.e., thrown prostrate and did not see the subsequent events). The women then came, saw what had occurred, and departed to tell the others what had happened and to report what the angel had said about Christ's resurrection. When they were on their way to the others, during that same time, some of the guards were on their way "to the city and showed the chief priests all things that were done" (Matthew 28:11). The Jews had no reason to visit the tomb before the women, believing that it had been secured by the Roman guard!

QUESTION No. 380: Why did Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus not stay with Jesus in the tomb after taking down his body from the cross to witness the resurrection? Jesus had apparently told his followers that he would die and rise after three days. (Matthew 16:21, 17:23, 20:17-19) This report had even reached the Jews (Matthew 27:63). Why did not Joseph and Nicodemus remain with Jesus to witness the event?

ANSWER: Certainly there was doubt on the part of the disciples of Christ as to the reality of what was going to happen and, even after the resurrection, as to what had happened. They did not fully understand what they had been previously taught by Christ or the prophetic utterances of the Old Testament regarding Him. Even when they saw Him, they were doubtful and afraid, believing they were seeing a spirit (Luke 24:37-38). They were instructed to touch and handle Him to assure that He was not just a spirit, but bodily resurrected (Luke 24:39-43). He then opened their minds so they could fully understand the scriptures regarding Him (Luke 24:44-53). It is significant to know that all of His disciples, based on the evidences they had seen, with the exception of John, died (beheaded and crucified) as martyrs because they knew (without doubt) that their Lord had died and resurrected. Had their been any doubt in their minds, surely they would not have so died for what they suspected to be a farce!

QUESTION No. 381: Did the Jews really believe that Jesus had died? If so, why did they ask the Romans for a guard to be placed outside the sepulcher? Matthew says the Jews explained this by saying that Jesus' disciples could spread false rumors about him rising from the dead. However, if the Jews really believed this to be the reason for the request, why could they not have asked the disciples to produce the risen Christ as proof? If the disciples had then done so, the Jews could then presumably re-arrest Jesus.

ANSWER: We don't have any way of knowing what the Jews may or may not have asked of the Lord's disciples. Answers to all such questions are speculative. Even if we assume that the question was asked of the disciples (and it may have been. Who can tell?), they had no authority to respond to such a request. Even if they could have honored such a request, what faithful disciple would want to turn their resurrected Lord over to someone who had just killed Him? The decision to appear to these Jewish leaders, in any case, would have been totally up to Christ. The fact that He didn't present Himself to the Jewish leaders is evidence that it was not His will to so do. Because one may think that Jesus should have so done, supplies no proof at all against the fact of His death and resurrection.

QUESTION No. 382: Why were the Roman authorities so disinterested about the apparent removal of the body, if this is what the Jews were claiming?

ANSWER: The Romans had obeyed the law and fulfilled their responsibilities regarding the matter. To them Christ was a dead Jew among many dead Jews. The Lord's dead body meant no more to them then did the bodies of those who were crucified with Him!

QUESTION No. 383: Why was the stone moved from the tomb (Matthew 28:2) if it was a supernatural rising?

ANSWER: The stone was rolled away, not to let Jesus out of the tomb, but to let others see He had risen. To assume that it was necessary to move the stone for Jesus to leave the tomb is refuted by the events recorded in John 20:19.

QUESTION No. 384: When Mary Magdalene and Mary, the Mother of Jesus, saw him, he was wearing gardener's clothing (John 20:15). Where did Jesus get these clothes? His own clothes had been taken by the soldiers who had divided them by drawing lots (John 19:23). It was not through Joseph of Arimathea or Nicodemus, because they are only reported of having taken in herbs, aloes, and a linen shroud (John 19:39, 40). What was the significance of Jesus wearing gardener's clothing (as opposed to normal clothing)? Was it meant to be a disguise? If so, for what purpose?

ANSWER: The passage you mention does not say that Jesus was wearing gardener's clothing, or any kind of a disguise. It was still dark (John 20:1) when Mary came to the tomb and it would be natural that she might not recognize Him. The Bible does not tell us where Jesus got the clothes. However, the miraculous provision of clothing, if required, would certainly present no obstacle for one who had the power to resurrect from the dead. So it might be wise to conclude that He got His clothes from the same place the angels got theirs!

QUESTION No. 385: Why were the women who visited the tomb terrified, if Jesus was dead (Mark 16:8)? Of what did they have to be terrified, if the Jews had succeeded in killing Jesus?

ANSWER: They weren't terrified because Jesus was dead! They were terrified (Mark 16:5-6) because they saw the stone rolled away, the body gone, and an angel telling them, "He is risen!" Imagine yourself going to the cemetery to visit the grave of a loved one, seeing the grave opened, the body gone, and an angel sitting in the grave. I don't know about you, but I would be a candidate for a heart attack!

QUESTION No. 386: If Jesus could conquer death and rise from the dead, why did he fear seeing the Jews after the crucifixion? Particularly as death had no more power over him (Romans 6:9)?

ANSWER: Your assumption that Jesus was "afraid" to see the Jews is invalid! Jesus did not fear those who could kill the body (Matthew 10:28)!

QUESTION No. 387: Why did Jesus disguise himself after the resurrection and appear only to the disciples? Surely, this was the great manifestation of his power and the fulfillment of the purpose of his creation. What was the purpose in keeping it all a secret now?

ANSWER: There is no evidence that Jesus disguised Himself, though He appeared differently. It was likely the time of day; the results of His scourging and crucifixion; and the fact that, at least during these instances, He was not expected to appear. That alone would make Him appear different until He would finally reveal Himself. A physical appearance to more than those to whom He had already appeared would prove little more, if anything at all. People today, perhaps yourself included, don't want to believe those who did see Him. What difference would it make had He appeared to other Jews and why would one believe them any more than those who have already so attested?

QUESTION No. 388: If Jesus was the risen Christ, why did he meet his disciples behind closed doors and not in the open as he used to (John 20:19)?

ANSWER: He met them behind closed doors, because that's where they were assembled. To imply that all of the witnesses to His resurrection, as listed in I Corinthians 15:5-8, occurred behind closed doors is to infer more than is implied!

QUESTION No. 389: Can God, being all knowing, be disappointed in man and what he does?

ANSWER: I believe so, for this reason. We know that God is also all-powerful. Therefore, God does not necessarily know all things all of the time, but rather only those things that He desires to know when He wants to know them. He may desire "not" to know, at this time, what we, as free moral agents, will do in the future. Did God opt to know, for example, that man, prior to the flood, was going to become so wicked He would have to destroy the earth by water? It does not so appear, because in Genesis 6:6 it says, "and it repented (regretted) the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it 'grieved' Him at His heart." It appears to say here that the past actions of those who lived before the flood 'grieved' God. Surely in this we see, at least, an element of disappointment in God over the actions of His creation. Note also that God, the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30) can be grieved by the improper actions of Christians. In this sense we see an element of disappointment also.

QUESTION No. 390: Wherein does the power of Christ's blood lie? Or what is it that gives to the blood of Jesus such power?

ANSWER: The power of Christ's blood lies in His sacrificial death! When the phrases, "blood of Christ" and "blood of the Lamb" are used they should be understood to be figurative phrases that express His death of atonement. Without the shedding of blood there could no remission of sins (Hebrews 9:22), either for Christians today and even for those who lived before the Cross under the Old Law (Hebrews 9:15). Since the blood of bulls and goats could not take away sins (Hebrews 10:4), it was necessary that God, because of His love for the world (John 3:16) send His Son, as the only available and perfect sacrifice, without blemish and without spot (sinless and perfect in all His ways) to shed His precious blood (I Peter 1:19) for the remission of sins (Matthew 26:28; John 1:29) borne by all who would, in obedience, come to Him.

QUESTION No. 391: What has the power of His blood accomplished and how can we experience its effects?

ANSWER: It has washed away the sins of the obedient ones under the Old Law (Hebrews 9:15)! It has washed (Revelation 1:5) and washes (I John 1:7) away the sins of the obedient child of God today, and will continue to do so even until the end of the world (Matthew 28:19-20)! It was the purchase price of the Church of Christ (Acts 20:28), which is His body (Ephesians 1: 22-23). Christ's blood (its power) is in His body, the church. One can experience the effects of His blood only by being baptized into that body (I Corinthians 12:13) where His saving blood is located (II Timothy 2:10). In the act of baptism, we are said to be baptized "into" His death (Romans 6:3-4), i.e., we through baptism become recipients of the blessings offered by and through His sacrificial death!

It should be seen clearly that the blood of Christ is "only" in His body and in no other place! If one would have his sins remitted and be made fit for heaven, he or she must be in, and remain in, unto death (Revelation 2:10), the "one" body (Ephesians 4:4), the Church of Christ (Colossians 1:18; Colossians 1:24). One cannot access the cleansing blood of Christ on his or her own terms, or according to other men's terms. It can not be accessed in the denominations or other religions of this world, because it was not placed in any of these! Access to His all-powerful, all-cleansing blood must be on His terms and in His "one" body, the Church of Christ!

QUESTION No. 392: Is God a person like you and me? Exodus 33:11: "And the Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh to a friend . . .?

ANSWER: No! God is not like you and me in the sense that He is not a physical being as we are, i.e., He is not made up of flesh, blood, and bones! This fact is made completely clear throughout the Bible. Firstly, God makes a definite distinction between Deity and humans in Hosea 11:9, where He says, "For I am God, and not man." Secondly, in John 4:24, we are told by our Lord that "God is a spirit." Then, in Luke 24:39, after His resurrection, we find Him saying, "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." We can, therefore, safely conclude that God does not have a physical body made up of flesh and bones, as does man! He (God) is a spirit and a spirit does not have flesh and bones! Thirdly, in John 1:1-14, we learn that Jesus Christ was in the beginning with God the Father. This is to say that He was with God in heaven at the beginning. Upon, His coming to earth to dwell among us (Verse 14), He was then "made" flesh. Obviously then, before He came to earth (when He was in heaven), He was not in the "flesh," but was "made flesh" upon His arrival. Paul tells us in Philippians 2:5-8, that Jesus, prior to coming to earth, had been "in the form of God" and that He was "equal to God." Further,

that He "made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man." We can understand then, from these passages, that when Jesus was in heaven He was "in the form of God," but when He came to earth, He took upon Himself the "form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man." In other words, His new "earthly form" (flesh and blood)) was different from His and the Father's "heavenly form" (Spirit). In each of the above passages, we clearly see the truth that heavenly beings are "spirits" and do not have bodies of flesh and blood, as do we! Indeed, "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (I Corinthians 15:50)!

The above paragraph tells us what Exodus 33:11 does not say, but what does it say? What does it mean? Well, we can see from the above that it is not teaching that God has a physical face as Moses had. If one were to conclude that God was a human being, because He is said to have a face, in order to be consistent that one would also have to say that He was a "chicken," based on Psalms 91:4, where it is stated that, "He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust." The use of such physical things, such as "face, feathers, and wings," to describe God, or an action God may take, is a figure of speech known as "anthropomorphism." The World Book dictionary defines this word as: "the act or practice of attributing human form to gods, animals, or things." It also records the following: "Today we speak of the eye of a needle, the finger of a sundial, the hands of a clock, the teeth of a comb or saw, and so on. All these expressions, which seem to be so simple and obvious, imply the use of anthropomorphic similes." To attribute a human face to God makes Him no more human than it makes a clock human when we attribute to it a face! In our subject verse when it says that the Lord spoke unto Moses face to face, it simply implies that He spoke to Moses directly, positively, and forthrightly as one would a friend! In addition to our discussion above, this conclusion is further evidenced by what the apostle John wrote in I John 4:12, "No man has seen God at any time." Also, later in our chapter of study (Exodus 33:18), we find Moses speaking to God and saying, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory." God's reply to Moses' request is found in Exodus 33:20, "Thou canst not see my face; for there shall no man see me and live." To say then, that Exodus 33:11 teaches that Moses actually and physically talked face to face with God is to fly in the face of the proving material presented above, as well as the immediate context of Exodus, Chapter thirty-three.

The teaching that God has a physical body, as does man, can be attributed to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Certainly, it can not be attributed to the Word of God, since, as shown above, we have seen it stand in direct opposition to this errant teaching. Note what is taught in their literature and then consider the contrast between

that and what the Bible teaches. From one of their books that they accept as inspired, "Doctrines and Covenants, 130:22," we read the following: "The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as a man's; the Son also, but the Holy Spirit has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of spirit." Note that this book contrasts a "body of flesh and bones" with a "personage of spirit," i.e., that they are two different things. Yet in the same book, on page 54, it says, "the Father being a personage of spirit." On one hand it is taught that the Holy Spirit does not have a body of flesh and bones because He is a "personage of spirit." On the other hand, it is taught that the Father has a body of flesh and bones in spite of the claim that He is also said to be a "personage of spirit." The logic of the book is elusive, to say the least! Clearly, this teaching is at odds with what has been shown above from the Bible and certainly appears to be at odds with itself!

To adopt, as inspiration, this errant teaching of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints is to reject the Bible and the God of the Bible! One cannot, ethically, logically, or scripturally adopt two opposing and contradictory doctrines as truth. Truth cannot contradict itself! For one to say, "I believe what is written in Doctrines and Covenants and I also believe what is written in the Bible" is an inaccurate and illogical statement. One must either support the Bible or Doctrines and Covenants, because to accept one is to reject the other!

QUESTION No. 393: How was Jesus put to death? On a cross, or a straight wooden stake?

ANSWER: Both scripture and tradition point to the cross as our Savior's instrument of death. Although the stake was used by some nations, the Romans employed the cross as the means of capital punishment.

The stake was used in two different ways: (1) the victim was tied by his hand and feet to a stake with his hands being extended over his head and (2) the victim was also impaled on a sharpened stake which passed through the length of the body coming out at the mouth. It is clear that Jesus was certainly not impaled on a stake, as some cults would have us believe. Since Jesus spoke from the cross, He could not have been impaled, as was the practice noted above!

The cross of Christ consisted of a perpendicular post with one end imbedded in the ground extending about nine feet upward with a cross member somewhat below the top of the post. Upon the portion of the post that rose above the cross member was a small tablet upon which was recorded the name and crime of the victim. It was upon this tablet that on the cross of Jesus, above His head, was written, "The king of the Jews," in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin (Matthew 27:37; John 19:19).

The claim of the Jehovah's Witnesses cult that Jesus was impaled on a stake rather than being nailed to a cross is without credible support or reason, as is the totality of their false doctrine!

QUESTION No. 394: Why is it that the word "Trinity" is not used in the Bible, but the word Godhead is used? Explain the word "Godhead."

ANSWER: Though the word "Trinity" does not appear in the Bible, the concept, nonetheless, is there. The fact that God chose not to express the "Godhead" as the Trinity does not change the fact of the Trinity. The word "Trinity" is simply defined as a group of three or the fact or state of being three. The Greek word (theios) translated Godhead in the New Testament refers to divinity, the divine nature, or essence. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit all possess all of the attributes of the divine nature. That is, they are all God and collectively all three represent the one Godhead, i.e., they are three, yet they constitute the one Godhead and may, thus, be scripturally referred to as the Trinity!

QUESTION No. 395: Where did God come from and who were the father and mother of God?

ANSWER: God does not have a mother or a father. He has always existed and will never have an end. In the Bible we are told that "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God" (Psalms 90:2). In Isaiah 57:15, we are told that God is "One that inhabiteth eternity." It is difficult for us to understand eternity, because we live in a world where everything we see has a beginning and an end, but eternity and the God of eternity is unlike anything that man has seen. Of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit who are God, there is neither beginning nor end!

QUESTION No. 396: How do we answer someone who denies the Godhead on the basis of Isaiah 9:8?

ANSWER: This passage (Isaiah 9:8) does not deal with the question asked. I am assuming you mean Isaiah 42:8. This passage, rather than disproving the Godhead, actually supports it. It is the Godhead that is speaking and saying, “I will not give my glory to another,” i.e., another who is not God! That Christ was given and had the glory of God is evidence that He is God and a part of the Godhead, e.g., John 1:14; John 17:5; I Corinthians 2:8.

QUESTION No. 397: Why was Christ called the Son of man?

ANSWER: Christ, some eighty times, uses the designation “Son of Man.” It portrays Him as the Representative Man. It designates Him as the "last Adam" in distinction to the "first man, Adam" (I Corinthians 15:45). It sets Him forth as "the second man . . . from heaven" as compared to "the first man . . . from the earth" (I Corinthians 15:47). "The Son of Man" is thus our Lord's racial name, as the "Son of David" is distinctly His Jewish name and "the Son of God" His divine name. This term is uniformly used of Christ in connection with His mission (Luke 19:10), His death and resurrection (Matt 12:40; 20:18; 26:2), and His Second Coming. It is a phrase that goes beyond purely Jewish limitations and has application to the salvation of the entire race. Thus, when Nathanael owns Christ as "King of Israel," our Lord's reply is, "You shall see greater things than these . . . the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man" (John 1:49-51). It is in this designation that universal judgment is committed to our Lord (John 5:22 & 27).

QUESTION No. 398: Since Jesus did not have a human father, in what way then was he the seed of David?

ANSWER: Genesis 3:15 is accepted as the first prophecy regarding Christ. This verse discusses the fact that Satan would bruise the heel of the “woman’s” seed and that the “woman’s” seed would bruise the head of Satan. This passage teaches many things, one of which is that the seed is said to be of “the woman.” The reason for specifying “the

woman" is that, as you suggest, He did not have a human father and could not therefore be in the physical lineage of Joseph. In Luke 1:32, we can see that God was to give Him the throne of His father David. Clearly now we can see that if David is said to be His father, then, since He did not literally have a male human parent, it follows that His mother Mary was of the tribe of Judah, as was David. Therefore, He was the seed of David through His mother, Mary!

QUESTION No. 399: If Messiah means "the anointed One," does it mean that others who were anointed could also be called Messiah?

ANSWER: Anointing was the means by which specific persons were appointed to specific tasks. Some were anointed to be kings; some to be priests, and some to a particular work. The word Messiah comes from a Hebrew term that simply means, "anointed one." Its Greek counterpart is Christos, from which the word Christ comes. Messiah in the singular was a name used throughout the Bible to describe who Jesus was as "The Anointed One," i.e., the One anointed by God the Father. None other could rightly be called Messiah in the same sense since the definite article "THE" and the singular usage of the term reflects one and only one; that ONE being Jesus of Nazareth!

QUESTION No. 400: What does the term "only begotten" mean?

ANSWER: The phrase "only begotten" means that, though we may be called the sons or children of God (I John 3:1-2), that Christ is the "unique" Son of God and that He alone, being God Himself, holds a particular and peculiar relationship to the Father. The word in the Greek that is translated "only begotten" is *monogenes*. The first part of the word, *mono*, means "only." The second part of the word, *genes*, means "begotten." Jesus Christ was begotten by God, not man, and is, therefore, God the Son, i.e., the "only begotten Son of the Father!" None else was so begotten by God. The Son is Deity, as the Father who had begotten Him, and He, therefore, alone has and holds the relationship as His "only begotten Son." None else can have that relationship with God. This phrase which expresses Deity is reserved only and eternally for Jesus Christ! That Christ was born of a virgin is clearly and expressly stated in Matthew 1:23 in detailed fulfillment of the prophetic statement of Isaiah 7:14.

QUESTION No. 401: Christ forgave sins [Matt. 9:2] outside of the authorized Levitical divinely established method [Day of Atonement; He declared Himself greater than the Temple [Matt. 12:6-John 1:14-John 2:19]; and He declared Himself the sole pathway to the Father [John 14:6]. If Christ were subject to the Law of Moses none of this could have been possible since it was only through Aaron and the Temple that God dealt with man. Would I be wrong in saying that since Christ's blood retroactively absolved him from being subject to the inferior shadow of Aaron, his priesthood, and its law?

ANSWER: Christ was God and, being God, is, and was, the Lawgiver. He gave the old Law and subjected Himself, when He was made flesh, to that law that He had given through Moses. His subjection and strict obedience to that law is evidenced by the fact that He had no sin (Hebrews 4:15). In order for Him to have sinned, He would have had to transgress the law in effect at that time and to which He was obedient in all things, i.e., the Old Law. There is no doubt that He, without sin, had subjected Himself in obedience to that law!

The purpose of Christ's shed blood was "for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28; Hebrews 9:26), not to retroactively absolve Him from being subject to the Old Law. Since the Old Law was God's law for all of Israel, of which Christ in the flesh was a citizen, had His blood retroactively absolved Him from being subject to it, it would also have retroactively absolved Him from having been subject to His Head, who is God, the Father (I Corinthians 11:3). That He was always subject to the will of the father is clear: "Not my will, but thine be done." For what purpose then would he have been retroactively absolved from subjection to God and how would His blood have effected such? Impossible! The notion is absurd! Further, one must ask, “What purpose would have been served by being retroactively absolved from keeping a law that had been kept perfectly?” Absolutely none! Yes! Your hypothesis is wrong!

QUESTION No. 402: Did God create man to be eternal before the disobedience in the garden (Ephesians 3:10-11; Genesis 1:31)?

ANSWER: God did create man to be eternal and he (the soul of man), in fact, is eternal. Only the flesh of man is corruptible (Ecclesiastes 12:7; I Corinthians 15:42 & 50). Of course the question is asking about the fleshly existence of man; did God intend man to exist eternally in the flesh? To answer, it must be recognized that if man had not sinned, man would still be in the garden. That was the arrangement God had made. He did not want man to sin and, thereby, to become susceptible to death, but man did, yet

over the wishes of God. Therefore, to say that God created man not to be eternal would be to say that He created man in order that he would die through sin, even while knowing that He would sin. This I cannot accept! It is my opinion that God being all-powerful; while at the same time being all-knowing, has, and indeed did exercise, His power and ability to limit and restrict His knowledge about the sin that would finally occur in the garden, bringing about death that would fall to all men. God wanted the best for man, but had to create him with the ability of choice. Man was not created by God to be in rebellion to God. Man made the choice to sin through the urging of Satan and, thereby, lost his eternality in the flesh, no longer having access to the tree of life that was in the garden.

INFANTS

QUESTION No. 403: Some say that according to Ezekiel 18:20, "babies are born sinless." Can you look at Job 15:14, 25 & Psalms 51:5 and tell me how these are to be comprehended? Other scriptures for consideration are Job 14:4; Psalms 58:3; John 3:6.

ANSWER:

Some in the denominational world teach that infants are born with sin and are, therefore, candidates for baptism. Before dealing with the above passages, perhaps it would be wise to answer the question, "Should infants be baptized?"

There is no reference whatever in God's Word to the baptism of infants! The purpose of baptism is to bring about the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Infants do not and cannot commit sin. Neither do they inherit sin! "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him" (Ezekiel 18:20; Also see Genesis 8:21, Deuteronomy 1:39, and Ezekiel 28:15). Since an infant neither commits, nor inherits sin, baptism would serve no scriptural purpose. Additionally, belief in Christ (John 8:24), repentance (Acts 17:30), and confession (Romans 10:10) are necessary before one's obedience in

immersion. An infant, incapable of doing these things, cannot, for this reason, be a proper candidate for baptism! Again, given that an infant cannot sin and does not inherit sin, he or she obviously has no sin and is, therefore, not separated from God (Isaiah 59:1-2). It is of these that Jesus spoke when He said, "for of such is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 19:14). For anyone to adopt and practice infant baptism and sprinkling, they must first assume that Christ either forgot to tell us about it in the Scriptures, or that He just did not realize its importance! When man assumes such and legislates in the place of God, he is guilty of presumptuous sin! This is the case with sprinkling and infant baptism!

As well, sprinkling as a substitute for scriptural baptism (immersion) is a doctrine not of the Bible, but of men! Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins was the only practice commanded and practiced during New Testament times by the early church! See Matthew 3:16; John 3:23; Acts 8:35-38; Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:12. The first recorded case of other than baptism by immersion was performed on a man by the name of Novation in 251AD (Neander, Church History I, 325). Pouring water upon the candidate's head in cases of an emergency was approved by Pope Stephen in 753AD (Edinburgh Cyclopedia III, 245-246). The council of Ravenna accepted either sprinkling or immersion in 1311AD. These men and their councils have sinned by binding their traditions on men, negating in their lives the very Word of God by which they will one day be judged! Immersion only is commanded of God. Immersion only is accepted by Him! Immersion only will put one in contact with the cleansing blood of Christ!

The verses in question:

(Job 15:14, 25): Chapter fifteen has no reference at all to infants. The phrase in Verse 14, "and he which is born of woman, that he should be righteous" is simply the way Eliphaz refers to the character of "man" generally, and to Job (a full-grown man) indirectly! Note that throughout the chapter, and especially in Verse ten, that men of age are under consideration, "With us are both the gray headed and very aged men, much elder than thy father." To single out a verse from the middle of a discourse about the character of mature men and apply it to infants would be improper. Also notice that the phrase "born of woman" is used elsewhere, e.g., Job 14:1-4; Job 25:14; Matthew 11:11; and John 7:28. Each time reference is to mature men!

The one being spoken of in Job 14:25 is not an infant, but rather the "king ready to battle" in Verse 24.

(Psalms 51:5): "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." The "sin" referred to is not something that David did or inherited. The passage says that David was born of a mature person who was a sinner. or living in a sinful atmosphere, (his mother) and that his conception and birth, therefore, was into a sinful world! Note Psalms 14:3, David does not say here that men are born "aside" and "filthy," but rather he says that they are all "gone" aside; they are "become" filthy! Clearly implied is: a moving from one state to another; that if one has "become" filthy, he must have previously been clean. So it is with all men, including David.

(Job 14:4): "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." This passage in no way implies that an infant is born in sin! In context, we find in reading Verse one of this chapter that just the opposite is true, Man that is born of woman is of few days (marginal reading: short of days) and full of trouble. Note that such was not true of man at birth, but, rather, short days (compared with all his days) after his birth!

(Psalms 58:3): "The wicked are estranged from the womb: They go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies." The second part of this verse explains the first part of the verse and means that man "goes astray" soon after birth, speaking lies! Note that he "goes" astray; not that he "was" astray! When does he "go" astray? When he speaks lies!! The person referred to in this passage is one who understands and tells lies! Such excludes infants!

(John 3:6): "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit." This passage has absolutely nothing to do with infants, but is simply contrasting flesh and spirit.

QUESTION No. 404: Would you please explain Luke 18:15-16 in relation to infant baptism?

ANSWER: Some brought their children to Christ, perhaps looking for Him to bless them in some way. The disciples rebuked the parents of these children (Verse fifteen), apparently believing that such was improper. Jesus used the situation to teach a lesson! He said (Vs.16), "Suffer (permit) the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." The lesson: Sinful man cannot enter the kingdom of God unless he becomes like a little child in disposition and character!

The passage does not teach that infants are to "come unto Christ" in order to be immersed, sprinkled, or poured. Those who so teach read into the passage that which God does not intend (Revelation 22:18-19)!

QUESTION No. 405: Does the phrase "all have sinned" in Romans 3:23 include children who have not yet come to the age of accountability?

ANSWER: No! In the context of this chapter, the word "all" refers to Jews and Gentiles, just as it does in verse nine. Of course, we realize that an infant is either Jew or Gentile, but, nonetheless, to infer that the "all" includes infants and, therefore, they are sinners is to read into the passage that which it does not teach. As well, such inference creates contradictions with other passages. For example, Ezekiel 28:15 teaches that we are perfect, or without sin, as infants; that iniquity is found in us at a later time in life. Ezekiel 18:20 teaches that we do not inherit sin. It is said of the "little ones" who left Egypt that they only (except Joshua and Caleb) would inherit Canaan, because they "in that day had no knowledge of good and evil" (Deuteronomy 1:39). So it is today. Without the mental capacity to know good and evil, one cannot sin. Infants clearly do not have the capability of knowing good and evil and, therefore, have no sin!

QUESTION No. 406: Does not the Bible teach that children can also be received into the covenant of God's grace since they can believe (Matthew 18:1-6)?

ANSWER: This passage does not teach that sinful children are received into God's grace upon the condition of "faith only" in Christ! Jesus is teaching here that sinful man cannot enter the kingdom of God unless he becomes as (like) a little child in disposition and character! Nothing more, nothing less! Anyone (adult or child) who is capable of believing may be baptized in order to be saved (Mark 16:16). Since Matthew, Chapter

eighteen is talking about "little ones" capable of believing (Vs.6). One must be careful not to use the passage to support a false doctrine relative to infants. Certainly, we can see the difference between newly born infants incapable of believing and "little ones" capable of believing!

QUESTION No. 407: Should we not baptize infants against their will, since Ephesians 6:4 teaches that adults are baptized against their will?

ANSWER: Since Ephesians 6:4 has nothing to do with baptism, it is assumed that the author of the "question" is referring to Romans 6:4. Neither of these passages, however, teaches that adults are to be baptized against their will. To the contrary, Romans 6:16-17 clearly shows that obedience from the heart requires a 'yielding of one's self,' which means to give up; to surrender. In Revelation 22:17, the Holy Spirit says, "whosoever will" may come!

QUESTION No. 408: Isn't it true that even after adults are baptized they still are not free from sin; that they are unaware of their sins, just like infants?

ANSWER: Roman 6:12-15 shows that man is aware of his sin! Romans 6:16-18 teaches that when one obeys from his heart that form of doctrine (baptism), he is then made free from sin! See also John 8:32 and Romans 6:8. At baptism one is freed from his past sins. When sin occurs after baptism, the Christian in fellowship with Christ will continue to be cleansed by the blood of Christ as he confesses his sins (I John 1:6-9). Certainly confession of specific sins demands an awareness of sins! Sins that the faithful may commit, of which they are not aware, are, as well, covered in prayerful confession of such.

QUESTION No. 409: When an infant dies, doesn't God decide where the child will go?

ANSWER: God has already decided! Since only sin can separate one from God (Isaiah 59:1-2) and since infants cannot sin (Ezekiel 18:20; Ezekiel 28:15), it follows that

these are not in need of salvation, because they have not been lost! In death they shall remain eternally in a safe relationship with a loving Father!

QUESTION No. 410: What is a good age to baptize a child?

ANSWER: When a person comes to a knowledge of good and evil and understands that he, in his sins, is separated from God; when he comprehends the purpose of the blood atonement of Christ; when he understands the purpose of baptism as it relates to forgiveness and the singular nature of the kingdom (the church); when he has a deep desire to repent of his sins and to confess faith in Christ; when he is ready to commit a life of service to his Lord, then he is ready to be immersed! He can be nine or ninety! The restriction is not in age, but in knowledge and understanding!

QUESTION No. 411: Did the infants of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:24-25), and those who perished in the flood (Genesis 7:21-23), die because of inherited sin? Did God not kill these infants in anger because of their "wrongful deeds?" Doesn't Exodus 20:5 teach that God punishes children for the sin inherited from their fathers?

ANSWER: The answer to all of the questions is, No! What "wrongful deeds" could an infant perform? Sin is a transgression of God's Law (I John 3:4). Which of God's laws can an infant transgress? Surely there are none! Without the mental capacity to know good and evil, an infant is incapable of sinning!

In Ezekiel 18:20, it is clearly shown that a person dies spiritually (is separated from God - Isaiah 59:1-2) because of their own sins. This means that the son will not die spiritually because of the father's sin; nor will the father die spiritually because of the son's sin. Since an infant cannot commit "wrongful deeds" of his own accord, and since the Bible plainly says that he does not inherit sin, it follows that an infant remains in a "safe" relationship with his loving God as long as he or she remains an infant! This, however, does not mean that the son will never physically experience the effect of his father's sin. Often this is the case. For example, a father may spend all of his living on alcoholic beverages rather than buying food for his children. Or, a child may die as a result of a father's ungodly sex life! The father is clearly guilty of the sin! Though the children are

not guilty, they certainly often suffer, and sometimes die, as a result of their father's sin. It is, therefore, the father of the children (not God) who causes the suffering. The suffering of the children is but a natural result of the father's sin. This is the meaning of such phrases as "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children" found in Exodus 20:5 and 34:7. Clearly, when God, because of the sins of parents, executes divine judgment upon a nation or a people, the children, though not guilty of their parent's sins, must naturally experience the consequences of that judgment! It was true of Sodom and Gomorrah! It was true of those who died in the great flood! It was true of the Jews carried into captivity, and, as well, of those who died in the 70AD destruction of Jerusalem!

Does this mean that God was wrong? Does it mean that in His judgment He improperly punished the infants of Sodom and Gomorrah and in the flood? Of course not! God cannot sin or do wrong! Some thoughts that would be good for consideration are these: What would the final destiny of these infants have been had they been brought to maturity in the traditions and teachings of their ungodly parents - heaven or hell? Obviously hell! If Ezekiel 18:20 is true (and it is) what will be the final destiny of these children - heaven or hell? Obviously heaven! Which course was the better of the two for the infants involved? Obviously God in His wisdom pursued the best course!

MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

QUESTION No. 412: Is it a sin to use and/or sing to the accompaniment of mechanical instruments of music in worship services?

ANSWER: Yes! It is sin to do so because there is no passage in the New Testament that authorizes the use of mechanical instruments in worship to God! In Colossians 3:17, we are told that whatever we do in word (which would include singing) or deed (which would include playing and singing), it must be done in the name of (by the authority of) the Lord Jesus. Clearly, from Ephesians 5:19, Colossians 3:16 and I Corinthians 14:15, we see that music authorized by the New Testament is vocal and congregational! We cannot, without sinning, take away from God's Word (Revelation 22:18). We cannot, without sinning, add to God's Word (Revelation 22:19). We cannot change His Word in any way (Galatians 1:6-9)! Neither can we go to the Old Testament to learn how we are to worship under the New Testament. This is true, because the Old

Testament was taken out of the way at the cross of Christ. Please read carefully the following passages: II Corinthians 3; Galatians 3:16-29; Ephesians 2:13-19; Colossians 2:13-14; Hebrews 7:12; Hebrews 8:7.

Mechanical instruments of music were first introduced into worship services in the eighth century, almost eight hundred years after the establishment of the Church of Christ in 30-33AD. In fact, they have only become widely accepted in the last one hundred fifty years as religious groups moved, and are moving, progressively away from the purity of the Gospel. Clearly then, it is certain that the use of instruments was not included in the apostles' doctrine (teaching). We have been admonished to continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine (Acts 2:42)! Would one be continuing steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine if he or she did something not included in their doctrine? Obviously not! Would he or she be violating God's Word? Surely!

QUESTION No. 413: May Christians today look to the Old Testament for authorization to use instruments of music in worship to God?

ANSWER: No! Those who have lived, are living, and will live from the cross of Christ until the end of time are to be judged only by the New Testament of Jesus Christ (John 12:48).

The Old Testament has been taken out of the way and replaced by the New Testament. Please read carefully the following passages: Romans 7:4-7; II Corinthians 3:13-14; Galatians 3:24-25; Ephesians 2:13-16; Hebrews 7:12; 8:7. In Colossians 2:14, we see that the handwriting of ordinances (Old Testament) was blotted out; that it was against us; that it was contrary to us. Therefore, He took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross! Because of this, Christians cannot look to the Old Testament for authority to offer animal sacrifices, burn incense, or worship with mechanical instruments. More important, there is no authority in the New Testament for us to engage in any such acts today. To do so is to sin and fall from grace (Galatians 5:4).

The New Testament, by which we will be judged, authorizes only congregational, vocal music with clearly enunciated words that teach and admonish (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16-17).

QUESTION No. 414: Does the use of instruments of music by David before King Saul justify the use of instruments in worship services today?

ANSWER: No! A careful study of Romans 7:1-7 reveals that if one attempts to live under the Old Law and the New Law at the same time it is equal to a person having two marriage partners at the same time. Paul says in Romans 7:3, that such a person is committing adultery! The person with two marriage partners is guilty of physical adultery, while the person who attempts to live by the Old Law and the New Law together is guilty of spiritual adultery. Both are sins that will cause one to be lost! In fact, Paul states very clearly that when one tries to be justified by the Old Law, that individual has "fallen from grace" (Galatians 5:4). In Verse four of Romans. Chapter 7, Paul says, we "are become dead to the law" and that we "should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead." In Verse five, we are told that "we are delivered from the law" and should serve it no more. In Verse seven, we are clearly told what law we are dead to, and delivered from, i.e., the law that said, "thou shalt not covet." In other words we are dead to, and delivered from, the Old Testament law. Since this is true, we may not go to the Old Testament to learn how to worship God today. We are under the New Testament of Jesus Christ. Under it alone (lest we be guilty of spiritual adultery) we must learn to live and worship, because by it alone we will one day be judged (John 12:48).

There is no authority in the New Testament of Jesus Christ for the use of mechanical instruments of music in worship. Similarly, there is no authorization in the New Testament for the use of choirs, quartets, trios, duets, solos, dramatic presentations, praise teams, hand clapping, shouting, dancing, and suchlike! The music that our God authorizes in His Word is simply vocal and congregational. We have not the authority to add to it or take away from it (Revelation 22:18-19)!

QUESTION No. 415: Is it right to use instruments of music for weddings in the church building?

ANSWER: It is improper for the simple reason that it teaches those who (in error) perceive the "meeting house" to be the "church" that it is okay to use mechanical instruments in worship to God. Since both worship and weddings occur in the place of worship, they often hold that if the instrument can be used in the wedding, (often in

accompaniment of hymns, which is as well sinful - Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16) it can, likewise, be used in the worship service. Indeed, they (because of their misperception) see the inconsistency in what the church sometimes practices. Not only sinful practices, but anything that could detrimentally affect the destiny of a soul needs to be avoided, whatever the likes or dislikes (Matthew 18:6).

QUESTION No. 416: Can we justify the use of instruments in worship on the basis that God created the materials of which they are made?

ANSWER: No! On the same basis one could argue for, and justify, the use of animal sacrifices in worship, since, clearly, God created animals! As well, one could argue that since God made fruits and grain from which alcohol comes, we could, therefore, justifiably become drunken in worship to God! Further, since God created "all" of the elements from which "all" things are made, we could, based on the theory proposed, use any or "all" things in existence in worship to God in any way we might so elect. Surely, such confusion was not in the purpose of God (I Corinthians 14:33)! Neither was it left up to man as to how he would worship (John 4:24)!

QUESTION No. 417: What is the difference between instruments and human beings? Both are His creation.

ANSWER: The difference is that human beings can worship! Instruments cannot! Neither can they satisfy the purpose of God in the music that He has authorized. In Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16, we learn that God-approved music in worship demands "singing," "making melody in our hearts," "speaking," teaching one another," and "admonishing one another." The instrument does not and cannot answer to, or fulfill, the demands of music in Christian worship! Only human beings in compliance with His will can satisfy these scriptural requirements!

QUESTION No. 418: Could it be that the reason for not using instruments in the early church was that they were not available?

ANSWER: No! They were available in New Testament times, as well as in Old Testament times. Please read Psalms 150! The reason they could not be used in New Testament times (including today) is supplied in the answers to the above questions.

QUESTION No. 419: Where in God's word did He command us not to use instruments in worship?

ANSWER: Since people today are bound only by the New Testament, the question would more appropriately be, "Where in the New Testament did God command us not to use instruments in worship?" Even more appropriately the question should be, "Where in the New Testament did God begin or start (authorize) the use of instruments in worship?" The answer is: He didn't! Certainly those who add the instrument are adding to God's Word in defiance of Revelation 22:18. These are guilty of presumptuous sin (Psalms 19:13)!

Another answer to this question could rightly be: He commanded us not to use instruments in the same place that He commanded us not to use animal sacrifices, incense burning, the lighting of lamps, etc.

The reason that there is so much confusion in the religious world today is that men have come to believe that if God did not specifically say "you can't do it," it is okay to go ahead and do it! This thinking is foreign to the Bible! When God specifically tells us how to do something, everything else is automatically excluded. One example is: God specified that Noah's ark was to be built out of "gopher wood" (Genesis 6:14). Noah did exactly what God had commanded him to do (Genesis 6:22) and thereby pleased God and became an "heir of righteousness" (Hebrews 11:7). When God commanded Noah to use "gopher" wood, He automatically excluded all other woods, such as, oak, pine, cherry, birch, etc. God was not obligated to say, "don't use oak," "don't use pine," don't use cherry," etc. Noah understood that he could not use a replacement wood or a multiplicity of woods without sinning, i.e., transgressing God's commandment (I John 3:4). The same principle remains valid today! There are two kinds of music, i.e., vocal and instrumental. God said we are to sing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; I Corinthians 14:15). When God commanded "sing," He automatically excluded the playing of instruments, just as in the case of Noah's ark. When God commanded fruit of the vine and unleavened bread to be used during the Lord's Supper, He automatically excluded all other drinks and food on

His table! If the argument is valid (and it isn't) that one can use the instrument because God did not specifically command us not to use it, the same argument could be rightly be used to place a "Big Mac" sandwich on the Lord's Table, because surely God did not command us not to use a "Big Mac" sandwich. In fact, in worship services, we could do anything we wanted to do under this argument and call it "worship." We could dance, swim, sacrifice animals, sleep, talk to our neighbor, watch a hand-held television, etc. Surely, God did not command us not to do these things! All who would worship God need to realize that we are only permitted to do what He authorizes us in scripture to do! All else is in violation of His authorization and is, therefore, sinful!

If people of today would adopt this vital and proven biblical principle, it would go a long way in answering the Lord's prayer for unity among believers (John 17:20-23).

QUESTION No. 420: In Matthew 16:19, Jesus promised Peter that whatsoever he would bind on earth would also be bound in heaven and whatsoever he would loose on earth would also be loosed in heaven. Can we not do the same today and thereby authorize the use of instruments in worship to God? It should be proper if 'whatsoever we do, we do it all in His name' (Colossians 3:17).

ANSWER: This same promise was also made to the other apostles (Matthew 18:18). But we must understand that this promise was tied into the promise that the apostles would be given the Holy Spirit who would "teach them all things" (John 14:26) and guide them "into all truth" (John 16:13). The "binding" and the "loosing" that the inspired apostles would do on this earth would not be of themselves, but rather as they were so led to do by the Holy Spirit. Otherwise, the Bible would be of men, and not of God! All of the "binding" and "loosing" that was to be done (only by inspired men) was ended with the completion of the written Word of God. Therefore, nothing can be "bound" or "loosed" today that has not already been "bound" or "loosed" in God's Word. This being the case, it is true then that all who would be pleasing to God today are "bound" to congregational singing without the instrument in keeping with Colossians 3:16 and Ephesians 5:19. To use the instrument in violation of these passages would be to "loosen" that which the Holy Spirit has "bound". The result of so doing is sin (Revelation 22:18-19)!

Further, we cannot "bind" or "loosen" in His name! The phrase "in the name of the Lord Jesus," in Colossians 3:17, means ‘by the authority of the Lord Jesus!’ Paul is saying in this passage, that everything a Christian does, he must do by the authority of Christ. His authority can be found only in that which has already been "bound" and "loosed" through inspired men at the direction of the Holy Spirit, that is, in the Word of God!

To "loosen" where God has "bound" or to "bind" where God has "loosed" is to reject the authority of Christ; to preach a false gospel; and to be accursed of God (Galatians 1:6-9)! Such is the case with those who would employ instruments in worship to Him!

QUESTION No. 421: Does not Colossians 3:17 authorize instrumental music when it says, "Whatever you do in word (singing) or deed (playing instruments), do all in the name of the Lord Jesus?"

ANSWER: This passage does not remotely support the above suggestion! The phrase "in the name of the Lord Jesus," in Colossians 3:17, means by the authority of the Lord Jesus! It does not mean that we can do whatever we like as long as we say we are doing it as Christians to glorify Christ! Paul is simply saying in this passage, that everything a Christian does must be done only by the authority of Christ as expressed in His Word. The authority of Christ relative to music in worship to God is expressed in the preceding verse (sixteen) which limits us to vocal congregational singing, thereby excluding the use of instruments. There is no authority anywhere in the New Testament for instruments of music in worship. Since there is no authority for the "deed" of playing instruments in worship, this "deed" when performed is sinful! Just by saying or thinking "we are doing it in the name of Christ" does not change the deed from sin to righteousness!

One of the things that cause so much religious division is the unscriptural position expressed in the above statement. When people begin believing that they can do anything they want in worship to God simply by affirming that they are doing it under the banner (in the name) of Christ or Christianity, then all sorts of ungodliness in worship will be permitted. Those with this unscriptural notion can, and often do, perform all kinds of entertainment for themselves and others during worship to God, simply by proclaiming that such is being done under the name of Christ. We could dance in worship, perform

tricks of magic, prepare and eat hamburgers, sleep, talk to our friends, or anything else we could imagine, if this were true. It is evident, however, from the New Testament that none of these things can be performed in worship without sinning (including playing on instruments), because none of them can be performed in the name of (by the authority of) Jesus Christ! To engage in any activity in worship for which there is no authority is to sin and be separated from God!

QUESTION No. 422: What is the meaning of "choir?"

ANSWER: A "choir" in a church is a group of people, generally consisting of both men and women, who often (1) lead the singing in a church, (2) sing “to” the church, and (3) sing “for” the church. In either or all of these cases, such is sinful! There is no authorization in God's Word for singing groups in worship services! Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 are instructions and exhortations relative to acceptable worship for all Christians for all time. In these passages, we are taught that our singing is to be corporate (collective or congregational) with vocally enunciated words by which we teach and admonish one another! No other type of music is authorized, and would, therefore, be in error! This is to say that the Bible does not authorize, and reckons as sin, the use of solos, singing groups, humming, whistling, drums, or any type of musical instrument!

QUESTION No. 423: Is it wrong to use instruments of music outside the church?

ANSWER: It is wrong to "worship" God with instruments of music inside of the church building and outside of the church building! It is not wrong to play non-religious music on instruments. The sin is not in the instrument. The sin occurs when we introduce into worship that which God has not authorized. God has not authorized the playing of instruments in worship. It is therefore sinful to do so! The same is true of quartets and singing groups used to entertain visitors and the rest of the congregation. God has not authorized this practice. It, too, is therefore sinful!

QUESTION No. 424: What will happen to those who sin by using instruments in worship to God?

ANSWER: God will not excuse or forgive any sin where there is no repentance! Therefore, unless there is true repentance, the same thing will happen to these as all others who disobey God! Paul tells us in II Thessalonians 1:7-9, "To you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of God, and from the glory of His power."

QUESTION No. 425: Where in the Bible are we allowed to make inferences in one thing, but not allowed to make inferences on other things?

ANSWER: We can only infer what the Bible implies! For example: When studied in context we understand that Hebrews 2:12 does not really imply that we may sing solos in worship to God. If we infer that it does, then we have inferred improperly and err in so doing. If we infer that Matthew 26:27 implies and authorizes the use of one container only during communion, we are wrong. We must rightly divide the Word of Truth (II Timothy 2:15). This means that we cannot draw conclusions or inferences by taking passages out of context in order to justify personal likes and desires! We must not, for any reason or under any circumstance, infer what God has not clearly implied in His Word!

QUESTION No. 426: Would you please explain Revelation 5:8 as relates to the use of instruments of music? Does this passage justify their use in Christian worship today?

ANSWER: The book of Revelation was written in symbolic language and is not, generally, to be understood literally (Revelation 1:1, the word signified means that John was shown things in "signs," that must shortly come to pass. So it is in this passage. Notice in the verses immediately preceding the symbolic language used relative to the Lamb, that it is an obvious reference to Christ. Surely none would hold that Christ has seven literal eyes, seven literal horns, and seven literal spirits. All of these things are figurative and represent something else! He tells us in the passage under consideration that the golden bowls of incense represents something else. In this case, incense figuratively represents the prayers of the saints. So it is with the word "harps." The writer is not speaking of literal harps, but rather in reference to something else. Most scholars

hold that this reference to harps has to do with "praise" to God. Remember that heaven is not a physical place with physical things. It is a spiritual place!

In addition to this, worship service to God in the church is not remotely mentioned in this passage. If we were to try to use this verse has a basis for worship in the church, in order to be consistent, we would also have to insist that each (all) worshiper(s) have a harp and a bowl of incense. Clearly, those who would seek in this passage a pattern for Christian worship are in violation of the most basic rules of biblical interpretation!

QUESTION No. 427: What do the Christian leaders of the past say about the use of mechanical instruments in Christian worship?

ANSWER: Just a few of the many state as follows:

Curt Sachs – "All ancient Christian music was vocal. (Columbia University)

James McKinnon – "More important than explicit opposition to instruments is the simple fact that they were not used during the patristic period" (through the 4th century). (A Catholic's dissertation entitled, "The Church Fathers and Musical instruments"; Columbia University, Ph.D., 1965)

Frank Humphreys – "The early Christians discouraged all outward signs of excitement, and from the very beginning, in the music they used. All the music employed in their earlier services was vocal. (Evolution of Music – Page 42)

Martin Luther – "The organ is an ensign of Baal." (Encyclopedia of Music, Vol. VII, Page 762)

John Wesley – “I have no objection to instruments of music in our chapels, provided they are neither seen nor heard.” (Founder of the Methodist Church – Clarke’s Commentary)

John Calvin – “ Musical instruments in celebrating the praise of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting of lamps, the restoration of the other shadows of the law. The papists, therefore, have foolishly borrowed this, as well as many other things from the Jews (Commentary on the 23rd Psalm – Founder of the Presbyterian Church)

Adam Clarke – “I believe that the use of instruments of music in the Christian Church, is without the sanction of God, and against the will of God; that they are subversive of the spirit of true devotion; and that they are sinful. I am an old man, and an old minister; and I here declare that I never knew them to be productive of any good in worship of God; and have reason to believe they were productive of much evil. Music as a science, I esteem and admire: but instruments of music in the house of God I abominate and abhor. This is the abuse of music.” (Methodist Minister - Commentary on Amos 6:5) From Clarke’s Commentary on II Chronicles 29:25, he writes, “. . . the whole spirit, soul, and genius of the Christian religion are against this.” “And those who know the Church of God best, and what constitutes its genuine spiritual state, know that these things (instruments) have been introduced as a substitute for the life and power of religion; and where they prevail most, there is least of the power of Christianity. Away with such portentous baubles from the worship of that infinite Spirit who requires his follower to worship him in spirit and in truth, for to no such worship are those instruments friendly.”

Charles Spurgeon – “David appears to have had a peculiarly tender remembrance of the singing of the pilgrims, and assuredly it is the most delightful part of worship and that which comes nearest to the adoration of heaven. What a degradation to supplant the intelligent song of the whole congregation by the theatrical prettiness of a quartet, the refined niceties of a choir, or the blowing off of wind from inanimate bellows and pipes. We might as well pray by machinery as praise by it.” (Noted Baptist preacher, known and respected by all Baptists, commenting on the 42nd Psalm in his series, The Treasury of David)

David Benedict – "Staunch old Baptists in former times would have as soon tolerated the pope of Rome in their pulpits as an organ in their galleries. And yet the instrument has gradually found its way among them and their successors in church management, with nothing like the jars and difficulties which arose of old concerning the bass viol and smaller instruments of music." (Noted Baptist historian, from his book, "Fifty years among the Baptists")

Alexander Campbell – " To those who have no real devotion or spirituality in them, and whose animal nature flags under the oppression of church service, I think that instrumental music would not only be a desideratum, but an essential prerequisite to fire up the souls to even animal devotion. But I presume to all spiritually-minded Christians, such aids would be as a cow bell in a concert." (Memoirs of A. Campbell, Page 366)

These positions were held by all for many hundreds of years following the establishment of the church. They are biblically accurate. However, as spirituality and God's Word were pushed more and more into the background to make way for the wants and wishes of vain man, the instrument became more and more accepted. But, it didn't stop with the organ! The man-made principle that allowed the organ also allowed the piano and, now, drums, guitars, horns, dancing, skits, dramatic presentations, praise teams, applause for the performers, shouting, yelling, and just about any kind of entertainment one can imagine, all now said to be worship to God! However, it is, clearly, not of God, being neither in spirit (the right attitude of reverence toward God), nor (according to) truth (John 4:24)!

QUESTION No. 428: Isn't a psalm a song sung with instruments?

ANSWER: No! Psalms in the context of the passage refer simply to songs that are devoted to the praise of God. The command of Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 is to "sing" psalms, not to "play" psalms, nor to sing "and" play psalms. In the singing we are to "speak," "teach," and "admonish." This, the voice can do, but the instrument cannot! If it were the case (and it isn't) that the instruction to sing in these passages included the instrument, since "all" assembled are commanded to sing, it would then follow that in

order to be pleasing to God, "all" in the assembly would then have to play an instrument! Certainly, there is no indication that one should "play" and the rest should "sing." It is also worthy of note that if playing of an instrument inheres in the word "psalms," then if the instrument is not used, those participating in the service would be sinning by transgressing that command (I John 3:4). As well, we would have to conclude that the apostles and all of those in the church prior to the first use of the instrument in Christian worship (many hundreds of years after the church was established) were sinning every time they worshiped, since they did not employ the instrument!

Additionally, if the original Greek (psalmos) included the idea of playing on an instrument, then it would be the case that the one hundred plus scholars that translated the King James and American Standard Versions of the New Testament were in error for not so translating the word, to say nothing of many other translations!

As well, it is worthy of note that the word "a cappella," that we understand to mean "without instrumental accompaniment," is literally translated from the Italian as "in the custom of the chapel." It recognizes the truth that instruments were not used, and not to be used, "in the chapel!"

QUESTION No. 429: The reason that the early Christians did not use instruments of music was only because they were afraid their persecutors would hear them. Comment?

ANSWER: Without doubt, shortly after the establishment of the church, there was no fear by Christians that they would be "heard" worshiping and, therefore, opted not to use mechanical instruments of music. Surely, instruments of music can be played just as softly as one praying or preaching, if they were afraid of being heard! To the contrary, however, Acts 4:13 speaks of the boldness of the apostles in proclaiming the Gospel. In Verse 29, they prayed to God for boldness to speak His Word. In Verse 31, they spoke that word with boldness. Chapter 5:42, "And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ." Consider the same in Acts 9:27; Acts 9:29; Acts 14:3; Acts 18:26; Acts 19:8 and the fact that "they went everywhere preaching the Word!" They taught and worshiped openly without shame (Mark 8:38), but they did it without instruments of music! Certainly, they would later suffer severe persecution, but even in the openness and growth that was being experienced in the first years of the first

century and even for hundreds of years afterwards, Christians refused to use the instruments, because they did not have the authority from God to do so!

The reason for instruments of music in worship today results from what man likes and wants, not what God has authorized! God wants to be worshiped the way He wants. Man has no right to add or to take away from God's Word (Revelation 22:18-19). Neither can they change it in anyway without being accursed (Galatians 1:6-9). Our thoughts are not His thoughts, neither are our ways His ways (Isaiah 55:8-9).

Take note in Leviticus 10:1-2 that two priests refused to worship God according to the directions given. Rather than igniting the censor as they were instructed, they used fire from a strange source. As a result God slew them! Of course, under the New Testament, He does not do so today, but clearly we can see His displeasure expressed in the death of these two! King Saul offered worship to God that He had not authorized (I Samuel 13:9-13) and as a result he lost his kingdom. To do something in worship to God that he has not authorized is to commit presumptuous sin (Psalms 19:13). This is exactly what the two priests and Saul did. They presumed that what they wanted is what God would accept! The same is true of those who employ the instrument in worship to Him!

QUESTION No. 430: Some have suggested that having many communion cups, Bible classes, speaker systems, pitch pipes, songbooks, etc. is equal to using musical instruments in worship. Would you comment?

ANSWER: The reason some will hold that the use of instruments of music in worship is equal to song books, pitch pipes, speaker systems, etc. is that they fail to understand what constitutes an approved, scriptural "expedient." Any aid or expedient action which provides a scriptural advantage to complying with a direct statement (command), implication, or approved example from God's Word is scripturally authorized for use. This would include such things as church buildings, church benches, artificial lighting, meeting to learn new songs, songbooks, and tuning forks or pitch pipes. All of these things, being subordinates (not equal to), provide a scriptural advantage to the accomplishment of the primary purpose or duty.

Instruments of music, however, do not fall in the category of authorized expedients, because they are not subordinate to the primary duty or action of making vocal music. That is, instrumental music, being totally different in kind, is, in the realm of music, equal to (not subordinate to) vocal music. In fact, in denominational worship the instrument is very often used without vocal accompaniment, thus testifying to the well known and accepted truth that instrumental music is, indeed, a "different kind" of music and, when employed, constitutes an additional, unauthorized "act" of worship! Surely, none can conclude that speaker systems, songbooks, pitch pipes, Bible classes, and multiple communion cups constitute "acts" or "actions." Neither do they stand in contrast to acts of worship that are authorized, but are clearly expedients to the accomplishing of that which Christ has authorized! Without doubt, the use of instruments in worship is not authorized as a separate act of worship, nor as an expedient, and, when so used, are in addition to God's Word, violating Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; I Corinthians 4:6 and Revelation 22:18-19.

QUESTION No. 431: I have often come across booklets and tracts dealing with the use of instrumental music in worship to God. Why do these booklets and tracts never mention such passages as Amos 5:23 and Amos 6:5?

ANSWER: In context, these passages are dealing with backsliding Israel; or those who were "at ease in Zion" (Amos 6:1). These had rejected the true and living God and were engaging in things they desired in place of being in obedient service to Him. Thus, the mention of being "upon beds of ivory and stretching themselves upon their couches" (Amos 6:4) while 'singing and using instruments of music, drinking of wines and anointing themselves with the best ointments' (Amos 6:5-6). They were doing all of this rather than grieving for the state into which Israel had fallen. As a result of their desire for these things, rather than expressing loyalty to their Creator, they would eventually be carried off into captivity (Amos 6:7).

We should never take a verse out of context to prove a biblical stance. Since the Old Testament was taken out of the way at the cross of Christ (Ephesians 2:12; Colossians 2:14), we cannot use it to support specific worship practices of those answerable to the New Testament, as is the case with all people living today! As it is right to contend that one cannot justify the use of the instrument in Christian worship today by reverting to the Old Testament, it is also right to contend that one cannot condemn the use of instruments in Christian worship by reverting to the Old Testament. This is not to say that the eternal principles of God that appear in the Old Testament as relates to worship in

general, relative to honor and obedience, are invalid today! Such are valid because those same principles, being eternal, are seen also in the New Testament! The specific use of musical instruments in Christian worship violates the general eternal principles of honor and obedience found in both Testaments.

That musical instruments may not be used in Christian worship is clearly evidenced by the fact that there is no authorization given in the New Testament for their use! This fact, coupled with the direct teaching of Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16, reveals the truth of the matter, i.e., that vocal music (clearly enunciated words that teach and admonish) sung congregationally (every worshiper in participation) is the only scriptural and justifiable response to the matter. Nothing else can, therefore, be justified, including instruments of music, choirs, quartets, trios (singing groups of any kind, including praise teams), hand clapping, shouting, and other emotional outbursts. All of these, not being scripturally justified, are therefore sinful!

QUESTION No. 432: Isn't it true that if one can use a pitch pipe in worship. He can also use a piano?

ANSWER: The implication of your question is that a pitch pipe is a musical instrument equal to pianos, organs, guitars, and such like, or that if one can use a pitch pipe, then one may use these other items. First of all, there is, in reality, little or no comparison between the two. One does not "play" music on a pitch pipe as one does a piano or organ. Neither does one "play" music on a tuning fork. Their purpose is simply to get the pitch of a song so that everything may be done decently and in order (I Corinthians 14:40). As such they are authorized expedients, i.e., they are subordinate to the function of singing and provide a scriptural advantage to the accomplishment of the command to "sing." There are, as any encyclopedia or School of Music will demonstrate, two kind or types of music, i.e., vocal music and instrumental music. Playing an instrument is not subordinate to vocal music, but rather it is coordinate with vocal music, and cannot, therefore, be considered an expedient. It would be an addition to what has been commanded. God nowhere commanded that an instrument of music be "played" in the worship service of Christ's church! In order for a pitch pipe / tuning fork to be properly compared to the use of a piano in Christian worship, it would follow that the piano could only be used to sound a "pitch," as with the pitch pipe or tuning fork, in which case no sin would be committed. The sin is not in the instrument. The sin is in the "playing" of the instrument in place of, or in addition to, the direct command to sing. May it also be noted that the command to "sing" is directed to "each" worshipper? If one

should conclude that the instrument is inherent in this command, then it would be the case that each and every worshiper would have to "play" an instrument during the worship service in order to be pleasing to God!

QUESTION No. 433: Explain and differentiate between psalms, hymns, choruses, and spiritual songs.

ANSWER: The following is excepted from the Gospel Advocate Commentary on Ephesians by brother J. W. Shepherd. "**Psalms** are songs devoted to the praise of God, extolling His name, power, character, and works. The songs of David are mainly of this character, hence were called **psalms**. **Hymns** are songs of praise, thanksgiving, and supplication, teaching our dependence on God and His willingness to hear and bless. **Spiritual songs** are those intended to inspire and cultivate feeling of spiritual devotion and to bring the spirit of man into harmony with, and under control of, the Spirit of God."

A **chorus** of a song is also referred to as the **refrain** of a song. It is a phrase or a verse repeated at intervals in a song, generally after each verse or stanza.

QUESTION No. 434: Is it wrong to listen to 'gospel' music that is accompanied by instruments?

ANSWER: It is wrong to "worship" God with instruments of music inside the church building and outside of the church building! A person can worship in a formal public assembly or in a personal private setting. If a person is alone and singing with focus on God and Heaven, "Hallelujah, Praise Jehovah," I would fail to see how that person is not worshiping and praising Jehovah. Certainly there can be no doubt that what he/she is doing (worshiping) would be acceptable and scriptural. If a person is, in focus, processing those words through his/her heart (mind) as a result of 'listening,' though not mouthing the words, it seems clear that the purpose and effect is the same, since God knows the intent of every man's heart, i.e., that person, as well, is worshiping and praising Jehovah. If, as noted, such is acceptable worship, what right would a person have to allow instruments into that praise and worship? By what authority? Further, by what authority may one use spiritual things (God, Christ, Holy Spirit, Heaven, etc.) for purposes of entertainment? There is no authority for such!

MARRIAGE, DIVORCE & REMARRIAGE

QUESTION No. 435: Is there any way a man can scripturally divorce his wife apart from adultery on her part?

ANSWER: No! "But I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matthew 19:9). The word fornication means any kind of unlawful sexual activity! The word except means if and only if!

QUESTION No. 436: A woman has been involved in an adulterous relationship with a married man. The man's wife has died. Is the woman now free to scripturally marry the widower?

ANSWER: If the widower and the woman with whom he had been involved were not previously married or married, but scripturally divorced, i.e., for the cause of forni-

cation, and both truly repent, then they may scripturally marry (Matthew 5:32; Matthew 19:1-9; Romans 7:1-3).

QUESTION No. 437: Upon being divorced from her first husband, a woman married a second man, who is now dead. She desired to return to her first husband, but couldn't since he had already remarried. Can she with God's approval marry another? Another Christian?

ANSWER. She cannot marry under either case with God's approval, unless the divorce from her first husband was for the cause of fornication, in which she was the totally innocent party (Matthew 5:32; Matthew 19:1-9).

QUESTION No. 438: Can one be forgiven while remaining in a second marriage after having committed adultery and divorcing the first spouse?

ANSWER: No! The one described above has no right to the spouse of the second marriage and continues in a state of adultery! He or she can only be forgiven if repentance is forthcoming (Luke 17:3), which would involve dissolution of the relationship. Both persons in this relationship will continue in sin as long as the relationship exists.

QUESTION No. 439: Would the person described in the preceding question have to live as a single person the rest of his or her life?

ANSWER: This person would have to remain single or return to the first spouse! A person may be married a second time upon the death of their spouse (Romans 7:1-3) or if he or she is the totally innocent party in a previous marriage having divorced his or her spouse "for the cause of fornication" (Matthew 5:32; Matthew 19:9). Except for these two reasons, "second marriages" are nothing more than adulterous relationships. All participants who continue in such will not inherit the kingdom of God (I Corinthians 6: 9-11).

QUESTION No. 440: If a married couple (professing Christians), with children, accepts the truth that their marriage is not scriptural (each having left their previous mates without scriptural cause), may they, with God's approval, remain in the marriage with the proviso that they abstain from sexual activity? Some so teach today!

ANSWER: For many, many reasons, no! Since it is a fact that marriage neither begins nor ends with the initiation or cessation of sexual activity, the relationship suggested by the querist remains an unscriptural marriage; that a man and woman are living in a marriage relationship, whether sex is involved or not! Paul tells us that in a marriage relationship (I Corinthians 7:1-5) there is to be sexual obligation one to the other. The querist's suggestion to the contrary is, 'continue the marriage relationship exactly as before, but ignore the sexual obligation and be pleasing to God!' Clearly, there has been an unapproved, unscriptural joining together of two people in which God had no part! It does not follow then, that man is not permitted to put asunder that which God hath joined together (Matthew 19:6), while, at the same time, he, as suggested, is permitted to join together (or perpetuate) that in which God has no part, simply by saying, "just stop having sex!" The inspired apostle said in I Corinthians 7:10-12, "Let not the wife depart from her husband: But and if she depart let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband!" He did not say, 'Let her enter into and/or remain in a sex-free marriage!" This ungodly marriage remains a marriage irrespective of sexual activity and, additionally, both participants remain in sin until the relationship is dissolved! Cessation of sex is not equal to "remaining unmarried," neither to dissolution, necessary to comply with the term!

Of those who hold that it is scriptural to remain in such a relationship, how many would agree that upon studying with an alien sinner in the same situation, that in addition to recommending dissolution accompanied with the scriptural options of returning to the first mate or remaining single, that a another option now be suggested, i.e., "we can baptize you into Christ and you can remain married, just stop having sex." Sounds ridiculous, but what is the difference? I personally know of an elderly Christian man and woman who wanted to marry, but were told that such was improper, because the woman involved divorced for reasons other than fornication. They accepted the truth and are now faithfully serving God. It is doubtful that, because of age, that sex would have played a part in their proposed marriage under normal circumstances. Were we wrong in not providing the proposed option, i.e., "sure, you can get married, since you're too old to have sex?" "In fact, we'll have our preacher perform the ceremony right here in the building!" Why not tell our elderly folks who are hurting for companionship to go out and marry any "moral" man you want (regardless of prior divorces and relationships), "as

long as it's solely for companionship and no sex is involved!" We all know of very notable, capable, faithful Gospel preachers whose wives have long-since forsaken them. Would the same rules apply to them? Would it be acceptable if one of these great men suddenly announced he was going to get married, but he wasn't going to engage in sex with his new bride. Would we be consistent in our suggestions? Who would believe it? How many not in the church would believe it? How many would be wondering, "Will he and his new bride really abstain?" How many elders would be inviting him to speak? How many lectureships would he be invited to speak on? Would it be different for these! If so, why?

In relationships as suggested by the querist, it is very often true that neighbors, friends, and relatives know the "facts" involved with prior marriages, but do not know that the affected couple is abstaining from sex. First of all, there is in these situations an element of sinful hypocrisy and intent to deceive (which is a lie)! Any activity or relationship that must be kept "undercover" by Christians is faulty! When neighbors and relatives are deceived (whether intentional or not) into thinking that such relationships are approved of God, what by implication and example is being taught? Does such glorify God? Surely, there are those who have been led to believe error (perhaps even fatally) by such unscriptural examples.

Some would say, however, "we feel it's best for the children." What about couples who have no children? Do the same rules apply? What rule says that the children cannot be loved and properly taken care of if the unscriptural marriage is legally and scripturally dissolved! What rule says that this unscripturally married couple may live together, pretending that their marriage is approved of God? What rationale concludes that it is "best" to permit two people who have no right to each other to live in a private, secluded, and often intimate setting? Can they really pray, "lead us not into temptation?" How does this square up with I Corinthians 7:1-5? Would not such ones, in light of this passage, be better off living alone minus the evident and apparent intimacy? It may or may not be more difficult to separate, but that is not the issue! Could it be that more emphasis is in reality directed to "saving face" with less embarrassment and the assurance of financial security? There is no doubt that there is a vital and scriptural obligation that provisions (spiritually and physically) be made for involved children. However, I fail to see how it would be "best" for children to see their parents violating scripture; playing the role of "pretenders;" and being taught that it is okay and proper for a married couple (Mom and Dad) to abstain from "sleeping" together, while every one thinks they are! The scriptures, notwithstanding, there can be little doubt that such will, to some degree (perhaps significantly) result in negative psychological impact on the children. We need to quit

worrying about "upsetting the apple cart" and just do that which is honest, open, and scriptural. Nothing could be better for the children (and Mom and Dad) than that!

QUESTION No. 441: If there are children involved in a second adulterous relationship, what is the responsibility toward them?

ANSWER: Sadly, the earthly consequences of sin often bring hurt and sorrow to many. However, children caught up in an adulterous relationship do not provide an excuse for continuation of the adultery. Nonetheless, that they are to be provided for by those who brought them into this world is without doubt (Ephesians 6:4; I Timothy 5:8).

QUESTION No. 442: Is it lawful for a man to put away his first wife for every cause and marry a second?

ANSWER: No! Please read carefully Matthew 19:3-9!

QUESTION No. 443: What is Paul saying in Hebrews 13:4? When is marriage honorable and the bed undefiled?

ANSWER: Paul is simply stating that marriage is honorable and the bed undefiled in the case of all men everywhere! Sexual activity outside the bond of marriage is dishonorable in the case of all men everywhere!

Marriage is honorable and the bed undefiled when one man and one women have been joined together by God (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5-6), i.e., when two are married in accordance with the will of God. All other marriages are sinful and dishonorable!

QUESTION No. 444: Would it be scriptural for a Christian to remarry after his wife had departed with the statement that she was just baptized, but did not believe?

ANSWER: The Scriptures are binding upon all people everywhere, whether they are Christians or not! If the divorce was not "for the cause of fornication" (Matthew 5:32; Matthew 19:9), neither the husband nor the wife can scripturally remarry. If the "cause" for the divorce was fornication, with one party being totally innocent (that is, he or she did not contribute in any way to the guilty party's sin), the innocent one is free to remarry.

QUESTION No. 445: I am now twenty-three years of age. Am I fit to marry?

ANSWER: Some people are ready to marry at a younger age; some at twenty-three, while others who don't mature properly should never marry. Although, we are not aware of all the circumstances, it would appear from your letter that you are mature enough to accept the responsibilities of marriage. However, a man who is mature and considering marriage will be sure that he will be able to support a family. More importantly, he will be sure that his marriage with the one and same woman is to last until death, and that it is consistent with the will of God in every respect! Please read (and re-read) very carefully Matthew 19:3-9!

QUESTION No. 446: If you kiss someone other than your own husband or wife, is it a sin?

ANSWER: Some kisses may be sinful. Others may not. In some countries kisses are a form of greeting or bidding another farewell! These are not motivated by unlawful desires and would not be sinful. This was the case in New Testament times. For example: Paul in Romans 16:16 said, "Salute one another with an holy kiss." Other kisses may be motivated by unlawful desires or engaged in to promote such. This type of kiss would be in violation of Colossians 3:5 (uncleanness, inordinate affection, and evil desires) and would, therefore, be sinful. The faithful child of God will avoid such and set his or her affections on things above (Colossians 3:2).

QUESTION No. 447: If a divorced man, who has a great family with a second wife, accepts the Gospel, do I have a scriptural right to baptize him?

ANSWER: If the divorce from the first wife was for the "cause of fornication" (Matthew 5:32), with the man being totally innocent, and, if the second wife had a scriptural right to marry, he may be scripturally baptized. If the divorce was not "for the cause of fornication," then the man and his second wife are living in adultery. Neither of these could scripturally be baptized without first repenting (Acts 2:38). This means that their marriage, in which God took no part, would first have to be dissolved. Even if the divorce from the first wife was "for the cause of fornication," if the second wife had no scriptural right to marry, both would still be living in adultery. This situation would also demand repentance prior to scriptural baptism.

QUESTION No. 448: Can a Christian marry an unbeliever?

ANSWER: Yes! In I Corinthians 7:12-14, we see that Christians may be married to non-Christians. Though it is not sinful for such a marriage to exist, it can clearly be seen that success in marriage is much more likely if both parties are Christians, i.e., if both are going in the same direction, having the same interests and goals in serving their common God!

QUESTION No. 449: How can there be more harmony and happiness in the home?

ANSWER: Many things have been said on this subject. In fact, volumes have been written, and still many questions appear unanswered. When all has been written, all the seminars held, and all the speeches made on this subject, only one answer will remain. Simply put, harmony and happiness in the home can and will only come when Christian families, having the same spiritual dreams and aspirations, learn to love each other as God has commanded. There is no other way! The love that God commands husband and wife to have for each other is discussed in Ephesians 5:22-31. The Greek word here for love is “agape.” It means that when we love in this way, we will put the object of our affections before ourselves in everything. This is to say, as husbands, we will put the wants, needs, and desires of our wives before our own. As wives, we will put the wants, needs, and desires of our husbands before our own. Any other system or approach will not do! Without doubt, one of the greatest reasons that God commanded us to love in this way is because of the resultant blessing of harmony and happiness in the home. God's way works!

QUESTION No. 450: I committed adultery during my first marriage of which my wife had no knowledge. She pursued a divorce that I did not contest. I married another woman with whom I had a child. Does my adultery during the first marriage mean that I cannot be married to my present wife?

ANSWER: The reason that you cannot be scripturally married to the second woman is because it is an adulterous relationship! Although you were guilty of adultery during the first marriage, your wife (not knowing) did not put you away for "the cause of fornication" (Matthew 5:32). Matthew19:9 tells us that the second marriage in both instances, hers (if she remarried) and yours, are adulterous. Had she put you away because of adultery, she then, as the innocent party, would have had the right of remarriage. You, as the guilty party, would not have had the right of remarriage. Your options in order to be right with God are: (1) repent and, if possible, return to your first wife, while making provisions for the child born to the second women, or (2) repent and live a righteous, celibate life, while arranging for the child(ren). All adult parties involved need, as well, to repent! Please read carefully Matthew 19:3-12.

Certainly, the consequences of sin in this life are difficult for all of us, but just as certain is the fact that bending of the will to His, in this and all matters, will be well worth it all in eternity when this short life is over! Know, too, that God stands willing to forgive all things of which we repent!

QUESTION No. 451: Since most of God's Kings in the Old Testament engaged in polygamy, why is it forbidden today?

ANSWER: From the beginning it was God's law that there be one man and wife, and that the two would become one flesh (Genesis 2:22-25; Matthew 19:3-9)! These two would be bound only to each other until separated by death (Romans 7:1-3). There is no room in the God ordained marriage for more than two people! During the Old Testament dispensation, God suffered (permitted) temporary changes to His original plan, because of the hardness of the hearts of the Jews. Because of this, Moses suffered them to put away their wives (Matthew 19:8). Jesus tells those of us under the New Testament dispensation that "from the beginning it was not so" (Matthew 19:8). In Verse nine, Jesus says, "But I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication,

and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." Jesus effectively tells people under the New Testament that we are not permitted to adopt the marriage practices of those who lived previously, but rather we are to go back to God's original plan from the very beginning, that is, one man, one woman, for life!

QUESTION No. 452: A man was never married, but lived with two different women at different times, both of whom were eventually put away. He was married to a third who bore him two children, but who left him, because he could not pay the bride price. He later apologized and she desires to go back with him. A) Is she in her right marital home? B) Must they be joined, since both are unbelievers? C) Is one of the first two women his rightful wife?

ANSWER: A) If the man was not legally and scripturally married to either of the first two women, he was living in an adulterous situation. It goes without saying that both he and the two women need to repent of this sin! If the third woman was not previously married or if she were previously married, but divorced because her husband committed fornication (Matthew 5:32), she may scripturally return to the man in question, if he had not married anytime previously. If he had been married previously, the only way he could marry would be if that wife had committed fornication. It would appear from your letter that no matter what the case may be, extreme caution needs to be exercised by both individuals! Sexual relations are only to be engaged in by a couple (husband and wife) who have been legally and scripturally joined. All sexual relations outside the marriage relationship are sinful. Those who engage in such will not inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:19-21). B) All people everywhere (believers and unbelievers) are answerable to the New Testament by which all men will be judged (II Corinthians 5:10; John 12:48). None may live together as husband and wife without legal and scriptural marriage! All who attempt to do so commit fornication/adultery. C) Not being legally and scripturally married to either of the first two women, neither would be his lawful wife.

QUESTION No. 453: I have committed adultery. Do I have to go to the husband of the wife with whom I committed adultery to say, "forgive me?" Or should I only pray for forgiveness?

ANSWER: Without doubt, both parties in this adulterous relationship need to repent and confess.

QUESTION No. 454: If one cannot live with his wife, can he still worship? No adultery or sin was committed on the part of the wife.

ANSWER: I take the phrase "cannot live with his wife" to mean that the husband does not want to live with his wife and has put her away without scriptural grounds, i.e., for the cause of fornication (Matthew 5:32). It is also assumed that the marriage is scriptural. If this be the case, then the man has sinned and needs to repent by being sorry for his sin and making proper restitution by returning to his wife (See Malachi 2:15-16). Christ has made it very clear that man is not to put asunder what God hath joined together (Matthew 19:6). To do so is to sin! Matthew 19:9 is violated as well! Until proper repentance and restitution is made, the sin will not and cannot be forgiven (Luke 17:3). One who persists in such rebellion cannot worship God acceptably (Matthew 5:23-24)!

In order for a marriage to thrive there must be a concerted effort on the part of both husband and wife to collectively put God first in all things, following which they need to learn to put the other before their own likes and dislikes. Then, and only then, will a marriage be right and acceptable in the eyes of our Father!

QUESTION No. 455: If a woman divorces her husband for the cause of fornication and marries again, what advice would you give the second husband?

ANSWER: "Fear God and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes 12:13)!

QUESTION No. 456: If a Christian sister is the second wife to a certain man and the first wife dies, what is the stand of the Christian sister?

ANSWER: Polygamy is sin! God has ordained that marriage is between only two people, one man and one woman, until separated by death (Matthew 19:4-6; Romans 7:1-

3). When a man and a woman are scripturally married and another person enters that relationship, all of those actively involved do so without the blessing of God. Further, all that knowingly participate in such a marriage are in sin as long as it continues. The above passages demand that all additional parties be excluded from the relationship, and that all who have participated come to repentance. Without obedient repentance (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30), none can be saved or added to the Lord's church (Acts 2:38; Acts 2:47). All who participate in any polygamous relationship are guilty of adultery! It does not follow then, because a first wife dies, that the second marriage becomes acceptable to God. The relationship between the second wife and the man remains adulterous, because God did not join them together in marriage as polygamists in the first place! If the second women became involved in the adulterous relationship after she became a Christian, she needs to repent (sever/cut-off/get out) of the relationship and pray God, if perhaps the thought of her heart may be forgiven (Acts 8:22). If she was baptized after becoming involved as the "second wife," while remaining impenitent in the relationship, the baptism was invalid. She would have to, if this were the case, repent of all past sins, including the present relationship (Luke 13:3), confess Christ (Romans 10:9-10), and then be scripturally immersed (Acts 2:38). After having been obedient to God's Word in whatever way is demanded she would then be free to scripturally marry. Extreme care, however, should be taken to assure that similar adulterous situations would not develop in the future. The man involved also needs to repent of polygamy and adultery, with no intent of ever being involved in such again. He too, then, would be free to marry!

QUESTION No. 457: A man has divorced his wife and married another woman. Can the man leave his second wife and return to his first wife, when the first wife now has a friend?

ANSWER: If the man divorced his first wife for the cause of fornication and was scripturally joined in marriage to the second wife, he cannot! If he did, he would be sinning by divorcing the second wife (to whom he was joined by God) without scriptural cause and by committing adultery with his ex-wife (Matthew19:3-9)! If he divorced his first wife without scriptural cause, he sinned, and then compounded the sin by committing adultery with his second partner in a marriage not approved of by God. In this case, Scripture demands that he repent by leaving the second partner and returning to the first. If it is the case that the first wife has "a friend" (I assume this means that unlawful sex is taking place), she and the "friend" are committing the sin of adultery. The first wife and the "friend" need to repent and discontinue the relationship or they are both going to be lost eternally. If there was not scriptural cause for the original divorce, the first wife and

the husband need to reunite. If circumstances prohibit a reunion, then both the husband and the wife must remain single and celibate (Matthew 19:9).

QUESTION No. 458: If a man and woman are married for many years and the wife does many things to hurt and kill the husband, is he free to divorce her or must they continue to live together until separated by death?

ANSWER: There is only one scriptural reason for divorce, i.e., "for the cause of fornication" (Matthew 5:32; Matthew 19:3-9). Certainly then, without this scriptural reason, there can be no divorce. This does not mean, however, that God expects one to live in a life-threatening situation. Anyone whose life is in danger has a scriptural right to appeal to law for "protection" (Romans 13:1-6). In some cases "protection" may possibly necessitate separate living arrangements until the danger has passed. Nevertheless, such a necessity in no way constitutes a divorce; neither does it relieve either of the parties of their responsibilities to the other, and certainly it does not justify unscriptural relationships outside the marriage.

QUESTION No. 459: A man divorces his wife for unscriptural reasons and marries a woman from another place who is already married (her first husband knows nothing of it). The woman becomes a Christian. The man divorces her and is finally reconciled to his first wife. Is he right to do that?

ANSWER: God did not join the man and the second woman together (Matthew 19:6-9). This arrangement was clearly adulterous. Therefore, both participants needed to truly repent and return to their first mates. A question left to ponder is, ‘Did the man truly repent or did he return to his first wife simply because the second woman became a "Christian" and rejected him?’ The action of this man in returning to his first wife is scripturally correct, but to be right with God he must also be sorrowfully penitent for his ungodliness! Another question for consideration is, ‘Did the second woman become a "Christian" while living impenitently in the adulterous situation?’ If so, her baptism was invalid, because true scriptural repentance must precede scriptural baptism. In other words, the second woman did not become a New Testament Christian unless, prior to her baptism, she first repented of (sorrowfully turned away from) her adultery!

QUESTION No. 460: Can one scripturally marry the divorced wife of a polygamist?

ANSWER: Polygamy (plural marriages) is sin! God has ordained from the beginning that marriage is between only two people, one man and one woman, until separated by death (Matthew 19:4-6; Romans 7:1-3). When a man and woman are scripturally married and other people enter that relationship, all of those who are actively involved do so without the blessing of God. All who knowingly participate in such a marriage are in sin as long as it continues. The above passages demand that those others who have entered that relationship be excluded from it, and that all who have participated come to repentance. Whether or not the divorced wife (of the first marriage) can be remarried must be determined by scripture. If the wife divorced the husband because of his adulterous relationship with the other women, then she is free to marry again. However, if she divorced him for any other reason, she would not be free to remarry. Though the wife may be the innocent one, if her husband divorces her for his own reasons, she still does not have the right of remarriage (Matthew 19:3-12). She does, however, have the right to remarry her husband if, at the time of remarriage, they, otherwise, have a scriptural right to do so.

Hopefully, the first marriage in the relationship under discussion was entered according to biblical teaching. It is certain that God did not approve the following "marriages," though perhaps approved by local and state government. This is to say that though God may have joined the first wife and the husband together (Matthew 19:6), He certainly did not join the following wives to this one husband! All of the following marriages are, therefore, nothing more than adulterous relationships, which must be dissolved and repented of, if those involved are to become heirs to the kingdom of God (I Corinthians 6:9-11).

God's commandment that a divorced person cannot marry another is directed only to those whom "God hath joined together" and whom "man has put asunder" (Matthew 19:6-9). In other words, this commandment does not apply to those involved in adulterous relationships or "marriages" in which God had no part in the "joining together." Therefore, a person involved in an unscriptural physical union, with or without state approval, (whether as married or unmarried) and who, with penitent action, severs that relationship to the pleasing of God, he or she may marry another, if both, otherwise, have a scriptural to marry.

QUESTION No. 461: If one divorces and remarries without scriptural authority (that is, for the cause of fornication) can that person continue in fellowship with the church because he or she happens to attend services regularly or he or she has more money than most others?

ANSWER: No! The person you describe is committing adultery and the one he or she is living with is committing adultery (Matthew 19:9)! No matter how often (or how long) one may attend services; no matter how much money one may have (or how much one may give), that person is living in sin (Colossians 3:5-7), and will continue to do so, until he or she repents. This involves being sorry for the sin committed; getting out of the ungodly relationship; confessing the sin before God and the brethren; and praying for forgiveness (Acts 8:22). The one who caused the divorce needs to return to his or her first mate, if the first mate is willing to forgive! If not, this person can no longer scripturally remarry, but must remain single! If the person refuses to repent, after every attempt is made to win his or her soul again, it is commanded of God that fellowship of the brethren be withdrawn, so that the guilty one's soul might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus (I Corinthians 5).

QUESTION No. 462: If a Christian man divorces his wife and impregnates a second woman, should the church stop him from doing church duties?

ANSWER: If the Christian man divorced his wife for any cause other than fornication on her part, he has sinned! He also sinned, having committed fornication, when he impregnated the second woman. This man needs to respond as shown in the above answer. If he refuses to respond scripturally, he also needs to be disciplined; that is, fellowship needs to be taken from him. Until he responds according to God's Word, he should not be involved in any way with the congregation he has shamed! To permit such would be to bring even greater shame to the church and the Lord who died for him (Hebrews 10:26-29). If he scripturally repents, which will involve returning to his wife, he is to be restored to full fellowship (II Corinthians 2:6-8; Ephesians 4:32).

QUESTION No. 463: If a Christian man divorces his wife and impregnates a second woman, can he continue with the second woman in order to keep her and the child from suffering?

ANSWER: No! The man (and the woman) would be continuing in adultery! In addition to his sinful action, he causes his wife to suffer! Why would it be right to cause one to suffer in order to keep another from suffering? Paul says in Galatians 5:19-21, that those who do "such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." It appears that the idea of "keeping the woman and the child from suffering" is just an attempt to make sin beautiful! If this man is truly concerned about the woman, he will sever (cut off) the relationship with her, lest she (and he) live an eternity suffering in hell! That this one cannot scripturally continue with the woman, however, does not mean that the sinner has no responsibility to the woman and the child he fathered! Indeed, he does! In I Timothy 5:8, we learn that one who does not provide for his own "hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel!"

QUESTION No. 464: If the situation described in the above question is not solved after a long time, and if the divorced man continues with the impregnated woman, but wants to continue worshiping, should the local church just forget about it?

ANSWER: No! If the church "just forgets about it," they would, thereby, be sinning (being in danger of judgment), because they would be violating God's Word that commands that it not be forgotten, but rather that it must be dealt with (I Corinthians 5)! Remember always: I Corinthians 5 is not merely a suggestion. It is a commandment to which we must all be obedient! It is a way given of God so that souls can be saved!

QUESTION No. 465: Can a married couple (previously faithful) who now lives together, but has no marriage certificate of any sort, separate, remarry each other, confess sin publicly, and be accepted by the local church?

ANSWER: If the man and woman are not scripturally and legally married they are not living in a God ordained marriage, but are in a sinful relationship! They, indeed, need to sever the relationship, repent of their wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thoughts of their hearts may be forgiven (Acts 8:22). At this point, they should be accepted in full fellowship as brother and sister in Christ, since they will have done what God demands. If each is then scripturally free to marry, and do so, then they should be accepted as husband and wife!

QUESTION No. 466: Some argue that since a person can confess, be baptized and receive a baptismal certificate (which shows one is married to Christ), that they can, likewise, confess sexual sin publicly and receive a marriage certificate that will sanctify their relationship. Is this true?

ANSWER: No! This is not true. The comparison in the question is neither accurate nor complete! A baptismal certificate is nothing but a piece of paper that witnesses to the fact of one's baptism. A marriage certificate is nothing but a piece of paper that witnesses to the fact of a legal marriage (not necessarily scriptural) between a man and a woman. The baptismal certificate does not sanctify the sinner, nor does the marriage certificate sanctify the marriage. Before one is married to Christ at baptism, he must first repent of his sins. This means he must, in godly sorrow, turn away from those sins; he must get out of them; he must leave them behind! This includes sexual sin! A marriage certificate cannot be granted with the approval of God, or His church, to any persons who continue in adulterous marriages / relationships. Solely confessing a sexual sin does not sanctify it! Just as surely, a certificate does not sanctify it! The only way for a Christian to get rid of his sin is not only to admit he has sinned, but to, as well, scripturally repent (stop doing it) and pray God (Acts 8:22). A thousand admissions of sin; a thousand certificates would do nothing to set aside an unscriptural marriage / relationship!

In considering the many issues of marriage, divorce, and remarriage that are plaguing the Lord's church today, it is well to remember that God has ordained that there be one husband and one wife for life; that marriage can only be terminated by death (Romans 7:1-3) or in the case, and for the cause, of fornication. The innocent party (the one who has remained pure and not contributed in anyway to their mate's sin) may (with God's approval) divorce and marry another. However, the innocent party may choose to be forgiving (upon their mate's repentance) and continue in the marriage with God's approval.

Know for sure that what God has joined together man cannot scripturally put asunder (Matthew 19:6)! Though man may try to dissolve marriages for reasons other than death or fornication; though man may announce that a divorce for other reasons is granted; though husband and wife may agree to a divorce for other reasons, the marriage remains intact before God, because man can never scripturally separate that which God has joined together!

Just as sure is the fact that man cannot scripturally join together what God does not join together! Any joining together of man and woman, in which God is not a participant, results in an adulterous, sinful relationship! When Christians look the other way and refuse to deal with these relationships according to the will of God, they become partakers of their evil deeds (II John 9)!

QUESTION No. 467: The following situation occurs: A man and woman are married. Neither are Christians. The man obeys the gospel and, because of this, the woman asks for a divorce. No adultery has taken place at this point. An agreement is reached to enter a trial period wherein neither would marry and attempts at reconciliation would be made. During the trial period the woman commits adultery. The divorce takes place and the man remarries.

The specific questions: 1. Does God approve of a divorce without Bible reason?

2. Does He approve of the six weeks that Lawyers sometimes give?

3. Is the man committing adultery in his second marriage?

ANSWERS: 1. No! Matthew 5:32; Matthew 19:9. "except (if, and only if) it be for the cause of fornication."

2. There is one reason given in God's Word whereby a scripturally married couple may forego the sexual responsibility that each has to the other, i.e., for spiritual reasons: "for a time that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer" (I Corinthians 7:5). The reason for not going beyond this is that one may, in any other case or for any other reason, be tempted by Satan to sin, as may be the instance in the situation at hand.

3. Matthew 19:9. "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery . . ."

There are necessary questions of vital concern to the man in question:

(First): Did he truly divorce his wife for the "cause" of fornication? Was he totally the innocent party or did he someway contribute to his wife's infidelity? If the man in no way contributed to his wife's sin and divorced her for the specific "cause" of her fornication, then (and only then) would he be free to marry another. However, he could only marry another who had not been married before, or one who had been previously married and who had divorced her first husband for the "cause" of fornication, she being totally innocent and a non-contributor to his unfaithfulness, otherwise the second marriage would be adulterous.

(Second): If the man in question did not truly divorce his wife for the "cause" of fornication or if he in some way contributed to his wife's unfaithfulness, he would not be free to remarry another. If he did marry another under this condition, he would be an adulterer, and she whom he married an adulteress, as long as they remained in the second marriage! The scriptural choices under this second condition are: (a) remain single or (b) be reconciled to the first partner.

QUESTION No. 468: I have a habit of committing fornication, and although I know it is wrong, I can't seem to stop. What can I do?

ANSWER: "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife" (I Corinthians 7:2). Please also read I Corinthians 6:15-20; Colossians 3:1-6; Philippians 4:8.

QUESTION No. 469: If one has devoted his life to Christ, and is living in the spirit, and not the flesh, is he wrong if he doesn't marry? Is it wrong for him to serve as an elder? Why?

ANSWER: One does not have to marry in order to be a faithful Christian. It is clear that Paul was not married and that some of the apostles were. Apparently, the Lord's

brothers were also married (I Corinthians 9:5). In I Corinthians 7:8, Paul was speaking about a time when great distress (Vs.26) was being placed upon Christians. He wrote, "I say therefore to the unmarried and the widows, it is good for them (during this period) to remain even as I (unmarried). But if they cannot contain (control their desires) let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn." The matter of one marrying or not marrying then is a matter of personal opinion with careful consideration toward one's ability to do so without experiencing unlawful desires which could lead to fornication. That one is not commanded to marry or remain single is clear from this particular chapter. However, it is also clear from Scripture that none may impose their opinion on another, that is, none are permitted to command another to marry or remain single (I Timothy 4:1-5). Those who do so have departed from the faith!

A man cannot become an elder who is not scripturally married, however. In the list of qualifications given by God (I Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:6-9) an elder must be the husband of one wife! These passages forever exclude the single man from becoming an elder! It is worthy of note that in the qualifications given for deacons in I Timothy 3:8-13, they, too, must be married!

QUESTION No. 470: Does the innocent party of Matthew 19:9 have the right of remarriage? If so, would this not constitute adultery and polygamy?

ANSWER: Yes! The innocent party is given the right of remarriage on the basis of the exception clause of Matthew 19:9: “except for fornication.” The exception clause means that a person is not subject to that from which he has been excepted! For example, an official in a Road Construction organization may say, “All employees who do not take and pass our new continuing education course in Road Design and Repair, except for those who can show evidence of having completed the course elsewhere, are those employees who will not realize an increase in salary this year.” What this means is that all employees must complete and pass the organization’s new course in Road Design and Repair in order to realize an increase in salary. However, it also means that there are certain employees who do not have to take the new course in order to realize an increase in salary. So then, we understand that these employees, on the basis of the exception clause, are excepted from taking the new course.

Applying the same thinking to Matthew 19:9, we have: “One who puts away a mate and marries another commits adultery. However, those who put away their mate for fornication are an exception and, therefore, these do not commit adultery upon remarriage.” The intent of the exception clause in this verse may perhaps be seen more clearly in the following phrase, which is identical in thrust: “Whosoever puts away a mate for fornication and marries another does not commit adultery.” In either case the result and meaning is the same!

Further, if such a one is not committing adultery upon remarriage, then it is the case that such a one is not a polygamist, which also evidences the fact that divorce for the cause of fornication is equal to a severance of the marriage bond.

We need to be very careful that we do not bind that which the scriptures do no bind (Matthew 15:1-9; Revelation 22:18-19)!

QUESTION No. 471: How is a Christian to be assured that he or she is not marrying one who is bent toward sin?

ANSWER: First of all, be a faithful Christian yourself; secondly, don’t marry hastily; thirdly, don’t marry solely for beauty or physical reasons; and fourthly, marry another “faithful” Christian who will place your needs and wants second to what God wants!

QUESTION No. 472: In addition to the exception of Matthew 19:9, does the apostle Paul in I Corinthians 7:15 allow a second exception in I Corinthians 7:15-16?

ANSWER: "But I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matthew 19:9). The word fornication means any kind of unlawful sexual activity! The phrase, “except it be for fornication” demands the following understanding: “If and only if” fornication has been committed by

the one being put away, then the other party, being totally innocent in the matter, "may" scripturally marry another who is also scripturally marriageable.

I Corinthians 7:15-16 does "not" provide or allow the privilege of a second exception! That is to say that Paul does not here overrule the single exception cited by Jesus in Matthew 19:9 by adding a second exception. The word "bondage" in the phrase "not under bondage" in Verse fifteen does not refer to the marriage bond. The Greek word used by Paul for "bondage" here is "douloo" which is a word, in context, indicating "one in slavery." Elsewhere when Paul refers to the marriage bond, which he does three times (I Corinthians 7:27, 39, and Romans 7:2) he always employs the word "deo." Had he meant the marriage bond in Verse fifteen, it follows that he would have likewise used the word "deo" here. He didn't!

Paul, in the subject passage, is saying this: 'If the unbeliever no longer desires to live with the one who has been converted to Christ (the Christian), he or she (the Christian) is under no obligation or commandment, as would be the case with a slave, to maintain, or to keep, the home atmosphere, neither must they insist (under any condition) that the non-Christian not depart." In fact, the Christian, Paul says, has been called to peace by God. In other words, if an unbeliever insists on leaving, the Christian is not to make a fight of it, but is to allow the unbeliever to depart in peace!

Therefore, when Paul says in Verse fifteen that the Christian is "not under bondage in such cases," he is simply stating that a Christian is not obligated/commanded to make sure that the unbeliever does not depart in order to maintain the home atmosphere, i.e., he or she is not "bound" to continue with the unbeliever. He is "not" saying (and this is important) that the Christian and the unbeliever are free from the marriage bond and that they are now allowed to marry another. Such teaching would be false and contrary to the teaching of Christ who said clearly (Matthew 5:32 and Matthew 19:9) that there is only one (1) reason for divorce and remarriage and that being "for the cause of fornication."

When an unbeliever departs and the believer (Christian) peacefully allows the unbeliever to depart, they still remain married for life, even unto death (Romans 7:1-3), unless one of the parties commits fornication. The innocent party, even under this

condition (fornication), “may’ scripturally divorce and remarry, but is not under commandment to do so!

QUESTION No. 473: Can a man scripturally remarry if his ex-spouse has remarried twice since the divorce? I have read Matthew 19:9 and understand the passage to mean that if they were divorced for reasons other than sexual immorality and he remarries both the man and the woman that he took as his wife (2nd & 3rd) would be guilty of adultery.

ANSWER: I assume that the divorce was mutual, i.e., both wanted it and both agreed to it! If so, your analysis of the verse is correct! "But I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matthew 19:9). “But I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery” (Matthew 5:32). The word “cause” refers to a person, thing, or event that makes something happen. The word “fornication” means any kind of unlawful sexual activity! The word “except” means if and only if! Therefore, no other “cause” exists for God-approved divorce and remarriage. “The cause” must precede that which is a consequence or effect of “the cause.” It is in error to conclude that the action of a divorce and remarriage “caused” by something other than fornication, can scripturally be assigned a new or replacement cause (in this case “the cause of fornication”) at a later date, though fornication may occur after the “putting away.” The principle is as applicable to the innocent party as it is to the guilty one, i.e., “ . . . causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is (has been) divorced (without the “cause” of fornication, but by some other “cause”) committeth adultery! Fornication that may occur subsequent to the initial “cause” of a divorce does not free the innocent party from the scriptural consequence of an unscriptural divorce!

QUESTION No. 474: If a man lives with a woman and does not pay the necessary dowry, what does he need to do in order to be baptized? Is he living in fornication? Should he be required to make his marriage legal before baptism?

ANSWER: If the payment of a dowry is a government legality necessary to satisfy the law under which the person lives, then it would be the case that the man and

woman are not married. This being the case they are both in fornication. Therefore, both would need to repent prior to baptism as noted above! If the dowry is not a necessary legality to follow, but merely a custom, and all necessary legalities are met, then it is the case that the two are married and not living in fornication. However, if under this condition, the man had agreed to pay a dowry or led people to believe he would pay the dowry, then, before God, he has, if he has not paid the dowry, sinned by lying about the matter. Of this he needs to repent and pray for forgiveness. He is also obligated in his repentance to do what he said he was going to do in the first place, that is, he needs in his repentance to pay the dowry! Baptism without repentance avails nothing!

QUESTION No. 475: Must a man wed his chosen in the church building?

ANSWER: No! No matter the location, when a man and a woman who are scripturally free to marry purpose and promise wholeheartedly to unite as husband and wife, with satisfaction of all governing legalities under which they live, they then become married.

QUESTION No. 476: When a man and woman are divorced, but not for fornication, are they still married in God's eyes?

ANSWER: When a man and a woman who are scripturally free to marry and then do so, they are joined together by God (Matthew 19:5). In Verse six of this passage, Christ said, "What therefore God has joined together let not man put asunder." Though God has commanded that men not do such, it is obvious that men do disobey God and cause such to happen on earth. God, being all knowing, is surely aware that a divorce, as described in the question, has sinfully occurred. However, God did not approve of that divorce and the result of a subsequent marriage would be the same as the woman of Romans 7:1-3 who had two living husbands at the same time! When either the man or the woman, as set forth in the question, marries another, he or she becomes guilty of adultery, as was the case with the woman of Romans 7:1-3 who was twice married. In Verse three, though the woman is said to be "married" to a second man without God's blessing, we note that the first man is still referred to as her husband! Clearly, God did not sanction the second marriage, but did recognize and sanction the first marriage for life. She had two husbands and, therefore, two marriages. God sanctioned the first husband and the first marriage, but did and would not sanction the second husband and the second marriage as

long as the first husband lived! God, as the joiner of man and woman, participated in the first marriage, but not the second! In the case of those referred to in the question, God has joined the two together for life (Romans 7:1). If either of these two marry another, he or she will become an adulterer. Why? Because God joined this couple in marriage for life and man cannot change the facts in heaven through his disobedience on earth! The only way God will dissolve a marriage and recognize the divorce is "for the cause of fornication!" If not for fornication or death, the marriage goes on in the eyes of God! Neither of the two in the situation described above may marry again with heaven's approval, unless they were to marry each other for the second time!

QUESTION No. 477: May someone that has remarried become a preacher, elder (pastor), or deacon?

ANSWER: Yes, if the second marriage is scriptural! This is to say, if the man's first wife has died (Romans 7:1-3) or he has divorced his first wife because she committed adultery and he was totally innocent in the matter. Jesus said, "But I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matthew 19:9). The word fornication means any kind of unlawful sexual activity! The word except means if and only if! If the man was divorced for any other reason than adultery on the part of his first wife and has married a second wife, both he and the second woman are living in adultery as sinners. In this state, the man cannot become a preacher, elder (pastor), or a deacon. In fact, the man cannot even become a Christian until he repents and gets out of the adulterous relationship. The same is true of the woman! As long as they live together under this condition, they are in sin and have no hope of heaven!

QUESTION No. 478: If a man married a divorced woman, not knowing she was divorced, is he sinning?

ANSWER: Certainly, people should not get married without knowing the background of their future marriage partner. Failure of one to know about such a serious matter often comes as a result of not looking into such beforehand because they have put the physical before the spiritual! Why should one not be held accountable for entering a marriage relationship so lightly and without consideration of God's Word? Surely God will hold a person such as this liable! Further, if one has been assured that a future partner

has not been married previously, lied to and misled about the matter, and honestly believed that their mate had not been previously married, when the matter does come to light, that marriage must be dissolved upon that discovery!

It should also be recognized that a person previously divorced because of having put away an unfaithful mate guilty of fornication is scripturally free to marry under the proviso that he or she was totally innocent in the matter! In other words, a divorced person may be scripturally free to marry a second time if the divorce was "for the cause of fornication (Matthew 5:32).

QUESTION No. 479: When I was in the world, I got my girl friend pregnant. What is now my responsibility to her and the baby?

ANSWER: You ought to make a decision to love and marry the girl, and to provide for her and the child, if she will have you! When she was but your girlfriend you engaged in sexual relations that God has reserved only for those who are married. By those actions you knowingly or unknowingly assumed the responsibility of a married person and have no right to walk away from and ignore that which you caused. Without doubt you say the child is your own. Paul, by inspiration, says that 'if a man does not provide for his own he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel' (I Timothy 5:8)!

QUESTION No. 480: Situation: (1) A man and woman were scripturally married; (2) The man wanted a divorce without scriptural grounds, i.e., fornication; (3) The man separated himself from a totally innocent woman who in no way contributed to, or caused, the separation, and who, during the period of separation, remained true to her marriage vows; (4) The totally innocent woman fought the divorce as hard as she possibly could; (5) The courts granted the divorce for unscriptural reasons; (6) The husband married another and, because of not having scriptural grounds for leaving his first wife, entered an adulterous relationship. Is the wife free to remarry now that her husband has committed fornication?

ANSWER: God had joined the man and woman together for life (Matthew 19:6; Romans 7:1-3). One of two things can scripturally dissolve that union according to God, i.e., fornication or death. The man committed fornication through entrance into an unholy

and adulterous marriage relationship that was not sanctioned by God. I believe the answer to the question lies with, and in, the veracity of items (3) and (4) above. If the woman is "totally innocent" in the matter; did not contribute to, or cause, the separation; did not want the separation or the divorce; fought both with all her being; and kept herself totally faithful to her marriage vows throughout, I have come to believe that, under these unique circumstances, such an innocent one may remarry another provided that the one she becomes joined to is also scripturally free to remarry.

It must be noted, on the other hand, that one may not, in any way (including the withholding of oneself sexually, I Corinthians 7:1-5), contribute to a separation or divorce; may not have an attitude of not caring one way or the other; may not secretly want the divorce; may not arrange to out-wait a partner to see who will be the first to commit fornication, and then claim the right of scriptural remarriage. In such cases, one would not be free to scripturally remarry!

QUESTION No. 481: I always lovingly consider my wife's opinion before making a decision. However, a situation regarding a trade show has arisen in which my wife has taken the position if her opinion is not adopted to avoid the show that she will leave me. I truly believe her opinion (which I often adopt) is wrong and will be harmful to the family. What should I do?

ANSWER: There is little doubt as to what the Bible says about the relationship of husband and wife. In a nutshell, the wife is to be in subjection to her husband who is her head (Ephesians 5:22-23; I Corinthians 11:3). This subjection is to parallel the subjection of the body of Christ to her Head. As well, the love that a man has for his wife is to parallel the love that Christ has for the church. Both are necessary for a healthy relationship. A relationship is not healthy if one or the other is absent. In fact, if one or the other is absent there is an unhealthy relationship between that couple and God, because one or both is/are in violation of the aforementioned scriptures. If a woman adopts the position that her husband "must" do it her way, under the threat of penalty, she is in direct violation of these (and other) passages. In so doing she transgresses God's laws governing relationships between husband and wife and, therefore, sins (I John 3:4). Thus, her relationship with God is destroyed! She, in that sin, is separated from God (Isaiah 59:1-2).

There is another side to the coin! If a man allows the wife to usurp the headship and authority that God has given to him, he sins as well by not being obedient to the above passages. In other words, a wife sins by not being in subjection to her husband and a husband sins by not acting with the authority (as the head of the woman) that God has given him! It is clear then that if a husband would be obedient to God, rather than his wife, he would and ought to function as the head! This, of course, would never mean dictatorial action, but after loving and careful consideration of the wife's opinion, the final decision in all matters relating to the family falls to the God-given responsibility and rule of the husband (The man is to rule his house – I Timothy 3:4). A woman is bound by any decision so made, provided that the consequence does not cause her to violate God's Law in any way!

It seems, then, that a decision must be made as follows: Do I obey God? Or do I obey my wife? I would encourage you to opt for God! In so doing you would show your love for God "and" for your wife who, according to what you have written, is in sin before Him! The relationship that now exists between you and your wife must change if you would have a proper relationship with God. It is up to you, as head of the house, to initiate and perpetuate such a relationship!

There is little to be gained from the results of a trade show as compared to the gains that can be realized by the development of scriptural relationships between husband and wife and God! Here your focus and heart must lie! The trade show must be secondary!

QUESTION No. 482: If two people are in a second marriage and later find out that it is not scriptural for them to be married because one of the original divorces was not for fornication, can they ask forgiveness and remain married to each other in the second marriage?

ANSWER: Forgiveness cannot be granted unless there is first repentance (Luke 17:3). Repentance is more than just saying, "I'm sorry!" It involves a cessation of the sin in which one is engaged. A second marriage as you describe it is, simply put, an adulterous relationship, according to our Lord's statement in Matthew 19:9 and Paul's statement in Romans 7:1-3. The relationship of which you inquire is unscriptural (as you note and suggest), and, therefore, sinful! As the thief must stop stealing in repentance

(Ephesians 4:28), all sinners must stop sinning (I Corinthians 6:11) in repentance, just so the adulterer, in repentance, must stop sinning. Those who have been risen with Christ from the baptismal waters (Colossians 2:12; Colossians 3:1) are instructed to mortify or put to death the sins (Colossians 3:5) in which they once "lived." It is noted that one of the sins of Verse five in which some had lived was "fornication" or "sexual immorality." Persons having lived in "sexual immorality" were and are told here to put that activity to death. In other words, "stop doing it," "die to it," "separate from it." That adultery is also "fornication" or "sexual immorality," falling under and within that general heading and instruction, can be seen in the definition of the Greek word "porneia," translated "fornication" or "sexual immorality" (fornication, harlotry, adultery, incest – Strong's Number 4202). It also can be seen quite clearly in the sexually immoral "act" in which the woman of John 8:1-11 had been engaged, i.e., the "act" of adultery (Verse four). Adultery is clearly sinful! It cannot continue to be engaged in today because one says he is sorry he engaged in it yesterday! Such is not repentance. It is only acknowledgment. It was sin before the realization and acknowledgment and will continue to be sin, if engaged in, after the realization and acknowledgment. Forgiveness will be granted when, and only when, the sin is penitently put to death!

QUESTION No. 483: Is sex to be engaged in, as the animals, only for reproductive purposes?

ANSWER: Sexual relations between a male and a female who are married to each other is not solely for reproduction purposes. For example, it is also necessary for the avoidance of fornication (I Corinthians 7:1-5). If sexual relations were only for reproductive purposes, then it would be sinful to have sexual relations in which one of the partners was made to be barren through physical maladies, including older age beyond the time of fertility and productivity! Such would then expose both parties to the likelihood of fornication. This likelihood, according to Paul's instructions, is to be avoided through normal, necessary, and continuing sexual relations, but only between a husband and a wife (Verse two)!

QUESTION No. 484: Is a woman considered to be a divorced woman if she had a child before she was legally married?

ANSWER: No! A legal and scriptural marriage is one in which a man and a woman (1) agree to marry, (2) are joined together by God on the basis of their promises of faithfulness to one another, and (3) have satisfied fully all of the legal requirements of

the country, state, and/or province in which they live. None of these three are present in the situation you describe. Such a person is not, therefore, married in any sense of the term. The action that caused the birth of a child out of wedlock is accurately described as "fornication," a sinful act that cries for repentance because those who remain guilty of such activity cannot inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 5:19-21). Forgiveness by God will be granted only upon one's compliance with His Word (I Corinthians 6:9-11).

It should also be understood that both the man and the woman who produced the child through fornication are scripturally responsible for the child's welfare. Paul, by inspiration, says that 'if a man does not provide for his own he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel' (I Timothy 5:8)!

QUESTION No. 485: What can be done with those who are in the church with unscriptural marriages?

ANSWER: In order for one to be truly added by the Lord to His church, they must repent of "all" sins by being filled with godly sorry (II Corinthians 7:10) coupled with secession of those sins, i.e., they cannot continue to live in their sin. Otherwise, repentance, which is vital to salvation, has not taken place. Without biblical repentance, immersion in water is not acceptable as biblical baptism, which is necessary "for the remission of sins" and entry into the Lord's church (Acts 2:38-47). Nonetheless, some are often times unscripturally immersed and placed on congregational registers after which it is discovered that they are in adulterous relationships. It appears that this is the case of which you inquire. To continue to recognize these as "members" of the Lord's church is to permit the teaching of false doctrine through the example they portray which clearly violates II John 9-11. Further, their adulterous relationships are works of darkness with which we can have no fellowship (Ephesians 5:11). Therefore, any such fellowship, though it may have been initiated in ignorance, must be discontinued after attempting to cause the guilty ones to truly repent and to be scripturally baptized. This failing, there is little choice in the matter, but to adopt and practice the teaching and principles set forth in I Corinthians 5:1-13.

QUESTION No. 486: Could you please differentiate between Matthew 19:5-6 and I Corinthians 6:16?

ANSWER: Yes! The difference is that the "joining" in Matthew 19:5-6 is an action of God, while the "joined" in I Corinthians 6:16 is an action of man that is not approved by God, and described in Verse 18 as the sin of fornication.

QUESTION No. 487: What is it that God joins together in marriage (Matthew 19:6)? When I couple this verse together with I Corinthians 7:36-38 that says if a man sleeps with a virgin he does good if he marries her, I then understand that the reference in Matthew 19:6 is to the virginity of the woman and that man cannot pay back the lost virginity.

ANSWER: First of all, your suggestion that I Corinthians 7:36-38 teaches that a man may properly and scripturally have sexual relations with a virgin without sin, provided that he afterwards marries her, is an improper interpretation. The masculine words in these verses (man, his, him) refer to the "father" of a virgin daughter, not a fornicator! Paul is saying that because of the present distress (Verse 26) and the coming persecutions it would be better if the "father" did not give his virgin daughter in marriage, but, nonetheless, the option remained with him. The word "he" in Verse 38 is the same "he" as in Verse 36: "So then he (the father) that giveth "her" (the virgin daughter) in marriage doeth well; but he (the father) that giveth her (the virgin daughter) in marriage doeth better."

Sexual relations outside of marriage (no matter the circumstance) is fornication and will cause the soul to be lost! Your interpretation of the passage is in error for many reasons, not the least of which is that it implies that God approves of the sin of fornication!

In the context of Matthew 19, clearly, the joining together by God is that of the man and the woman as husband and wife, thereby making of the two into one flesh, that is to say that they both, as one, shall be animated by one soul and one desire. The Bible here is not speaking of the joining together in the sex act, as you seem to suggest in your letter. This is even more evidenced by the fact that, according to Verse six, man is not to put asunder that which God hath joined together. The Bible here is obviously not referring to one's virginity and certainly is not saying that other persons are not to effect a dissolution of the sex act! Reference is to breaking apart the marriage union, thereby

causing dissolution of the marriage, wherein two had been joined together with God's approval.

QUESTION No. 488: The situation: (1) A married couple agrees to a divorce and each are living separate lives; (2) One gets remarried and, thereby, enters an adulterous relationship. May the other, on the basis of this adulterous relationship, scripturally remarry?

ANSWER: No! The other may not scripturally do so! Why would it be proper to call the marriage of the first partner "adulterous" and not call the marriage of the other partner "adulterous?" If it's adultery for one, it's adultery for both. The fact that the divorce was "agreed to" points to the fact that the separation was not "for the cause of fornication" and that both are equally guilty of "putting asunder that which God hath joined together!" There is no innocent party in the matter! God does not reward sin!

QUESTION No. 489: After reading I Timothy 5:3-16, I have the following question: If the husband of a young woman dies and leaves her with three children, may she leave the three children and marry another man, while leaving her children in the care of her brother?

ANSWER: Since death absolved the marriage (Romans 7:1-3), she would be free to marry another who is also scripturally free to marry. However, she may not scripturally leave and/or forsake her children, even though the African custom is to transfer the responsibility of the children's care from the dead man to his brother. It is, of course, good for a living brother to accept the responsibility of caring for his dead brother's children, but the Bible does not in such cases erase the responsibilities of the mother to her own! Men and women are to, indeed, provide for their own (Verse 8) and engage in good works, one of which is bringing up children (Verse 10). The younger widow discussed in this passage is to marry, bear children, and guide the house, which involves rearing the children (Verse 14). The passage does not imply that she may leave her first children in order to marry again to make way for a second set of children. If children come from the second marriage, they should be added to the children of the first marriage that would constitute the house she is to "guide." The living brother may under this condition fulfill his customary obligation of contributing to the support of his nephews and nieces. However, children are not to be discarded as livestock, and mothers are not

relieved of their responsibility in raising the children they bore for any reason, including entry into second marriages!

QUESTION No. 490: A woman guilty of multiple accounts of adultery left her husband. After a year's separation she decided to formally divorce her husband. She then married the man with whom she was committing adultery. While married to this man, her first husband died. She has been told that since her first husband died, she can scripturally remain with her second mate. Is this true? I thought she had forfeited her right to remarriage!

ANSWER: A person divorced for some reason other than for the cause of fornication in which they are totally innocent and then marries another commits adultery! The force of the latter part of Matthew 19:9 is that such a one "keeps on" committing adultery as long as they are in that relationship. I fail to see how the death of a previous mate can turn an adulterous relationship into a sacred God-approved relationship! Can the death of an unscripturally divorced mate turn an evil activity into a righteous activity? Of course not! Consider: (a) On the first night of an illicit marriage not recognized by God (since He was not a participant), the man and woman in the adulterous relationship sin by engaging in sexual activity; (b) The first innocent mate having been unscripturally put away and no longer involved in any way with one of the guilty adulterers dies on the second night! (c) On the third night, the adulterers do the same thing that they did the first night, but this time it's not a sin? Absurd! If it was a sin on the first night, it is also a sin on the third night. Same activity, same sin! Death will dissolve a marriage (Romans 7:1 3), but the first marriage of which you speak was already unscripturally dissolved by an adulteress "before" the death of her innocent husband occurred! The subsequent death of her first mate did not dissolve the first marriage! Her sin did it! His death cannot be retroactively applied to that ungodly dissolution, neither can it turn their adulterous relationship into a holy, pure, God-approved marriage! She remains an adulteress and will remain so as long she continues her unscriptural relationship. The same is true of the one with whom she beds!

SALVATION/BAPTISM

QUESTION No. 491: What is faith?

ANSWER: Faith in Christ is not simply belief or mental assent that He exists and is the Son of God! Saving faith is belief in Christ, conjoined with obedience to Him! This obedient faith is described, by example, throughout Hebrews, Chapter eleven, which we encourage you to study. Without this kind of faith, "it is impossible to please Him" (Hebrews 11:6). James tells us that without obedient works, faith is dead, a faith that cannot save (James 2:14-26).

QUESTION No. 492: How do we get faith?

ANSWER: "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). Since faith comes from hearing the word of God, we need to study always (II Timothy 2:15) and we need to be obedient (righteously active) to that which we learn. We need to be constant in prayer (I Thessalonians 5:17) and we need to diligently add to our faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love. If we do these things we will make our calling and election sure, and we will never fall (II Peter 1:5-11).

QUESTION No. 493: Is water baptism necessary to salvation? Please send supporting scriptures.

ANSWER: Yes! Baptism is essential to salvation! The following scriptures clearly support this statement.

(Mark 16:16) He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved! Both belief and baptism come before and are necessary to salvation. God's formula is B+B=S! Man would often insert his own formula as B=S+B! To do so is to reject the will of God!

(Acts 2:38) Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Christ for the remission of sins. In this verse, we see that both repentance and baptism are necessary to the remission of sins. Some try to say that "for" in this passage means "because of." This is unscholarly and foolish. The word "for" in this passage means the same as the word "for" in Matthew 26:28! Conclusion: Whatever Christ's blood is "for," repentance and baptism are "for."

(Acts 22:16) And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord. Again, we learn that baptism precedes washing away of sins! In this passage, Saul had been on his knees in prayer for three days and three nights, after which he was told to arise and be baptized to get rid of his sins. Question: Why didn't the seventy-two hours of prayer (with fasting) get the job done? Why did Ananias tell the believing Saul to quit waiting? Why did he tell him to go get baptized to wash away his sins? Simply, because Paul had to obey the Lord's command of Mark 16:16 & Acts 2:38 (above).

(Romans 6:3) Baptism is that which puts one into Christ! Only in Him is there salvation (II Timothy 2:10; Acts 4:12). In order to get to that salvation, we must obey that which puts us into Him!

(Galatians 3:27) When one is baptized into Christ, he or she puts Christ on! Christ is not put on before baptism!

(I Peter 3:21) Baptism doth also now save us! Just as the water of the flood separated Noah from a sinful world; just as the water of the flood cleansed a world of sin, even so baptism is that which separates and cleanses today, because it is at this point of obedience (baptism) that the blood of Christ is applied (Revelation 1:5; Romans 6:1-5; Hebrews 9:22). Baptism washes away sin (Acts 22:16); His blood washes away sin (Revelation 1:5)! How can both be true? One way! They occur at the same time!

For the first 1500 years of Christian history the unanimous view of Bible scholars was that it was at the point of baptism that man received remission of sins and salvation.

For example: (From material compiled by Dan Chambers)

Justin Martyr (100-165 AD), wrote, "Then they are brought to us where there is water, and are regenerated . . . They then receive the washing with the water." After quoting John 3:5, he says, "we have learned from the apostles this reason 'for baptism,' in order that we . . .may obtain in the water the remission of sins."

Tertullian (145-220 AD), wrote, "Happy is our sacrament of water, in that, by washing away of the sins of our early blindness, we are set free and admitted into eternal life." "The act of baptism itself is carnal (physical) in that we are plunged in water," but the effect, he says, is "spiritual, in that we are freed from our sins."

Cyril (315-386 AD), wrote, "Great is the baptism that lies before you: a ransom to captives; a remission of offenses; a death of sin; a new birth of the soul; a garment of light; a holy indissoluble seal; a chariot to heaven; the delight of Paradise; a welcome into the kingdom; the gift of adoption."

Augustine (354-430), wrote, "The salvation of man is effected in baptism;" We

are “joined to Christ by baptism;” and “without baptism . . . it is impossible for any man to attain salvation and everlasting life.”

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), wrote, “The grace of the Holy Ghost and the fullness of virtues are given in baptism;” “By baptism a man is incorporated in the Passion and death of Christ;” and “without baptism there is no salvation for man.”

Martin Luther (1483-1546), wrote, “In baptism, God forgives sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives everlasting salvation to all who believe what He has promised.” He also wrote, “As we have once obtained forgiveness of sins in baptism, so forgiveness remains day by day as long as we live.” Luther’s concept of salvation by “faith alone” was that baptism was an inseparable part of faith, i.e., the faith that saves includes baptism! Again, Luther wrote, “Through baptism he (the sinner) is bathed in the blood of Christ and is cleansed from sins.” Finally, he wrote, “Holy baptism has been purchased for us through this same blood, which He shed for us and with which He paid for sin. This blood and its merit and power He put into baptism, in order that in baptism we might receive it. For whenever a person receives baptism in faith, this is the same as if he were visibly washed and cleansed of sin with the blood of Christ.”

None of these men believed that the water itself produced salvation, as is the case with the Catholic concept of ‘baptismal regeneration.” They, to a man, believed, as the Bible teaches, that baptism in water is the only place where the cleansing blood of Christ is applied to a penitent believer. All were in agreement for over 1500 years about this truth until Zwingli came along in 1523 AD and concluded that all of these men were wrong, that they “have been in error from the time of the apostles,” and he alone has now discovered the truth that all of them knew nothing about! Zwingli falsely accused these men of teaching that the water itself effects a cleansing and salvation. This same charge is often, in error, knowingly and unknowingly, brought against the truth today. These men, however, did not assign any power or cleansing action to the water, but simply to the blood of Christ that was/is applied when being immersed in water, just as noted by the Scriptures above. Zwingli’s newly developed unsound theory was adopted and promoted by John Calvin throughout the denominations that came from the Reformation Movement. Sadly, this unsound doctrine continues in many of them today.

QUESTION No. 494: Can a person save himself?

ANSWER: A person cannot devise his own plan of salvation; nor is he saved by "works of righteousness" (Titus 3:5). However, without "works of obedience" one cannot be saved (James 2:14-26). These are the "works" Peter referred to in Acts 2:40 when he told those (and us) on Pentecost day, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation." What were these "works" they were told to do? Verse thirty-eight answers, " (You believers) Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins . . ." Verse forty-one, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." Thus, they are said to have saved themselves in their obedience to God's saving plan! Titus 3:5: 'not by works of righteousness, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration/renewing (baptism),' which is described as the new birth in John 3:3-5!

QUESTION No. 495: Can a person have his sins remitted (be saved) before or without baptism? Can one go to heaven if he or she has not been baptized?

ANSWER: The answer to both questions is "No!" Baptism precedes and is essential to salvation. Without scriptural baptism none can enter heaven! Scriptural baptism is an immersion in water "for" (in order to) the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) and that which puts one into the "one" body (church) of Christ (I Corinthians 12:13). Please additionally read Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:27 & I Peter 3:21. Note in these passages that baptism comes before salvation; that baptism puts one into Christ; and that "baptism" doth also now save us!

A true Christian is not one who merely says, "I am a Christian," but one whose life conforms to the will of our Lord. In Matthew 7:21, Jesus said, "Not everyone that sayeth unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." In Verses 22/23, we learn that in Judgment Day many will claim to be Christians, but He will say to them, "I never knew you: depart from me ye that work iniquity." One then must become, and remain, a Christian according to the Bible. No other way will do, nor stand in the Judgment (John 12:48).

To become a New Testament Christian, one must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (John 8:24); repent (turn away from) of sins (Luke 13:3); confess with the mouth the Lord Jesus (Romans 10:9-10); and be immersed in water (Acts 8:35-39) for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) into the one body (I Corinthians 12:13) of Christ, which is

the church (Ephesians 1:22-23). This church is His church and is, therefore, to be called by His name, the Church of Christ (Romans 16:16). It is to this church that one is added by God after being obedient to the above scriptures. Then, and only then, can it be said that one is a true New Testament Christian! Any other way will not do! Any other church will not do!

QUESTION No. 496: If one is baptized by immersion into a denomination, does one need to be baptized again?

ANSWER: The Church of Christ is the one and only body of Christ (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18 & 24). It is the church that Christ promised to build (Matthew 16:18); the church for which He died (Acts 20:28); and the church to which people were added on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:47). All denominations have their origin in the doctrines and commandments of men (Matthew 15:9) and are, therefore, impostors that will one day be rooted up (Matthew 15:13). To be immersed, poured, or sprinkled into a denomination avails absolutely nothing, since such lacks biblical authority. When one enters a denomination, he or she does not change their relationship with the world. They remain in the world, since denominationalism is of the world and not of God. Notice carefully in Acts 19:1-5 that certain Ephesians had been immersed in water for the wrong reason, that is, unto John's baptism! After Paul preached to them, they were then baptized properly, that is, by the authority of (in the name of) the Lord Jesus. Scriptural baptism is an immersion in water (Romans 6:1-5) for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) into the one body (I Corinthians 12:13), the Church of Christ (Romans 16:16). This action and its purpose must be understood by the person being baptized. Otherwise, it is of no effect at all! Any person, whether in a denomination or not, must be scripturally baptized to be added by God to the church of the Bible, the Church of Christ.

QUESTION No. 497: Why isn't it necessary for a Christian who falls away to be re-baptized to be restored to one's salvation?

ANSWER: Usually when this question is asked, it is an effort to prove on the basis of one's own logic (exclusive of scripture) that baptism is not necessary to one's salvation. So first let's look at just a few verses related to this issue. Jesus said in Mark 16:16, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." There are two divine formulas given in this passage. One is the formula that

results in one's salvation. The other is the formula that results in one being damned. In other words, the passage tells us how to be saved and it tells us how to be lost. The formula for salvation is clear. It is B+B+S (Belief+Baptism=Salvation). It is the same idea as in mathematics; 2+2=4. The formula for damnation is also clear: UB=D (unbelief=Damnation). That the formula for salvation is proper cannot successfully be denied, since both belief and baptism evidently precede salvation! Some have attempted to change God's formula for salvation in this way: B=S+B (Belief=Salvation+Baptism). Clearly, those who do so are violating God's Word (Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 22:18-19). Sometimes the immature argument comes back, "Well, God did not say, 'he that believeth not and is not baptized shall be damned'." This statement is illogical and reflects poorly upon the wisdom of the Holy Spirit. Undoubtedly, He was (and is) aware of the fact that unbelieving people do not ask (or want) to be baptized! To command that people not do something that they have no intention of doing would be foolish and redundant!

On the day of Pentecost, sinners asked Peter the question, "what shall we do?" He said, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Christ for the remission of sins . . ." (Acts 2:38). So we see that baptism is for (to bring about) the remission of sins! Some will argue that the word "for" means "because of." This is not true! Peter used the Greek word "eis," which means "unto" or "with a view toward." Had he wanted to convey the idea of "because," he would have been consistent and used the same Greek word he used earlier in the chapter. For example, in verse twenty-five, we read the word "for" and in verse twenty-seven, we read the word "because." The Greek word used by Peter in these two verses is the word "gar," which means "because" or "because of." He did not use the word "gar" in Acts 2:38, but rather he used the word "eis." Jesus, in Matthew 26:28, used the identical expression, "for the remission of sins," as did Peter in Acts 2:38. He said that His blood was shed "for the remission of sins." Whatever the phrase means in one place, it must also mean in the other place. Surely one would not argue that Christ shed His blood "because of" the remission of our sins! Clearly, He shed is blood "in order to" bring about the remission of our sins. Therefore, we can only rightly conclude that whatever Jesus' blood was "for" in Matthew 26:28, that is what repentance and baptism are "for" in Acts 2:38! Consistency and ethical honesty demand this truth!

Repeatedly, throughout the New Testament, we read that baptism washes away sin (Acts 22:16); that baptism puts one "into" Christ (Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:27) where salvation is found (II Timothy 2:10); and that baptism doth also now save us (I Peter 3:21). So baptism for the remission of sins is not a man-made doctrine, it is of God!

Now to the question, why does not a Christian have to be rebaptized after falling from grace? (By the way, those who contend that one cannot fall from grace need to consider such passages as Galatians 5:4; I Timothy 4:1; Hebrews 6:4-6; Hebrews 10:26-29; II Peter 2:20-22; and a host of others.) The reason is simply this: God gave two laws of pardon! One is for the alien sinner (one who has never known Christ). This first law of pardon is, (1) Hear-John 6:44-45; Romans 10:17; (2) Believe-John 8:24; Mark 16:16; (3) Repent-Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30; (4) Confess-Romans 10:9-10; Be baptized-Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38. After doing these things, God will add one to His church (Acts 2:47). He must then be faithful unto death (Revelation 2:10).

The second law of pardon is for the Christian who has turned his back on God. We see this clearly set forth in Acts, the eighth chapter. In Verse twelve, Philip baptized both men and women in the name of Jesus Christ! This is to say that he baptized them for the same reason that Peter had baptized in Acts 2:38; that is, for the remission of sins! Upon their baptism (just as He did in Acts 2:47), God added them to His church. In Verse thirteen, we also see that Simon believed and was baptized, which resulted (according to Christ's promise) in his salvation (Mark 16:16-B+B=S). In Verses eighteen through twenty, we learn that Simon (now a Christian) sinned; his heart was not right with God! Peter then told this erring Christian what he must do: God's second law of pardon: (1) Repent; and (2) Pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. John says the same thing as he writes to Christians in I John. To them only (not to alien sinners) he writes in Chapter one, Verse nine, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." The reason then why Christians do not have to be baptized every time they commit a sin is because God has given two laws of pardon; one for the alien sinner; the other for the erring Christian!

The only account in the Bible of people being rebaptized is found in Acts 18:24-19:5. These were immersed the second time, because they did it for the wrong reason the first time. For example, if one today would be baptized as an outward sign of an inward grace (to show that they had already been saved), it would be for the wrong reason. This baptism would be both defective and ineffective! To be approved of God, the individual would then have to be rebaptized according to His purpose and design (Matthew 7:21-29); that is, for (in order to) the remission of sins!

QUESTION No. 498: If none can be saved outside the church without baptism, how is it that Jesus saved many without the church or baptism when He was on the earth?

ANSWER: During Jesus' earthly ministry, the Great Commission of Mark 16:15-16 had not yet been given; the church had not yet been established. It did not come into existence until fifty days after His death. Therefore, the people saved by Jesus during His public ministry, having lived under the Old Testament Law (including the thief on the cross) were saved neither in the church, nor out of the church! Jesus physically healed and forgave sins while on this earth in order to prove His divinity (Matthew 9:1-6), not to set a pattern by which men for all time could receive remission of sins. This one authorized pattern was set forth for the first time on the birthday of the church, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). It is binding upon all men everywhere, even unto the end of the world (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:39). Those who gladly receive and obey this one pattern will be added by the Lord to His church (Acts 2:41-47). There is no other pattern; no other way!

QUESTION No. 499: Is there a difference between being "born again" and being "baptized?" Can one be sanctified without baptism or without being born again?

ANSWER: No! To become a New Testament Christian, one must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (John 8:24); repent (turn away from) of sins (Luke 3:3); confess with the mouth the Lord Jesus (Romans 10:9-10); and be immersed in water (Acts 8:35-39) for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) into the one body (I Corinthians 12:13) of Christ, which is the church (Ephesians 1:22-23). This church is His church (Matthew 16:18) and is, therefore, to be called by His name, the Church of Christ (Romans 16:16). It is to this church that one is added after being obedient to the above scriptures. Then, and only then, can one be said to be "born again." If one has been "born again" (baptized), he or she is then a true Christian.

When one is baptized into Christ (becomes a Christian), the old man, dead in sin, is buried in water, and a new man is born, being raised to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:1-5). There is a coming forth from the water (as a baby coming forth from the womb). A new birth into Christ has occurred! It is only at this point (baptism) that one

can be said to be "born again!" Therefore if any man is "baptized into Christ" (Romans 6:3; Galatians 3:27), he is a new creature, having been born again, "old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17b).

The word "sanctified" simply means to be "set apart." When one is "born again" in obedience to baptism, he or she has been sanctified, that is, he or she has been set apart from this world! Therefore, the answer to the second part of the question is, “no!” One cannot be sanctified without being scripturally baptized. Neither can one be scripturally baptized (born again) without being sanctified!

QUESTION No. 500: What action must a Christian take when he sins in order to continue in the faith?

ANSWER: John provides the answer in I John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." This confession involves accompanying sorrow and a departure from sin. An example is seen in Acts 8:22 where Peter told an erring Christian, "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee."

Continuing in the faith demands a continual walk in the light (of His Word), "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:9).

QUESTION No. 501: Does the New Testament authorize the practice of sprinkling and pouring as baptism?

ANSWER: Sprinkling and pouring in the place of immersion (a burial) was not generally practiced until early in the thirteenth century. The word "baptism" in the New Testament comes from the Greek word "baptizo." This word means to dip, immerse, submerge, plunge, sink, or overwhelm. In Mark 16:16 our Lord literally specified and authorized only the following: "He that believeth and is immersed (baptismos) shall be saved." The command to be buried in water relates to a single specific action, which excludes all other actions. Pouring (from the Greek word “cheo”) and sprinkling (from the

Greek word “rhantizo”) are totally unrelated actions. Had our Lord authorized either of these, He would have used the words describing these actions. He did not! Those who teach and practice sprinkling and pouring in the place of a burial are guilty of presumptuous sin (Psalms 19:13; II Peter 2:10) and are, therefore, without God (Isaiah 59:1-2). The people upon whom they sprinkle or pour water are still in their sins, because they have not obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which frees from sin (Romans 6:16-18).

Every account of water baptism in the New Testament was an immersion (burial) in water for the remission of sins, and into the one body of our Lord; that is, the church of Christ! There is no other baptism that will save!

QUESTION No. 502: Is it necessary to be a member of the Catholic Church, Pentecostal Church, or any other church in order to be saved?

ANSWER: It is not necessary to belong to either the Catholic Church, the Pentecostal Church, nor any of today's denominations! However, it is necessary to be a member of the church for which Jesus died. He said that He would build one church (Matthew 16:18). In Acts, Chapter two, we read of its establishment. Paul said in Ephesians 1:22-23, that the church is His body. Later, in Ephesians 4:4, he tells us that there is only one body. It is into this one body, this church, that one "must" be baptized through the agency (the direction) of the one Spirit (I Corinthians 12:13). The direction of the Spirit comes only through the word of God, which tells us how a person enters that one church. On the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), those who "gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" (vs.41). "And the Lord added daily to the church (His church) such as were being saved (vs.47). These believing people repented, and were baptized for the remission of sins, after which they were added to the church that Christ had built. (They were not added to the Catholic Church, which was established much later in 606AD; they were not added to the Pentecostal Church, which began around the beginning of this century; nor were they added to denominationalism, which had it's many beginnings since the fifteenth century!) All of the saved people on Pentecost Day were members of the Church of Christ! Obviously, there is no difference between those who live today and the people of Acts chapter two! When people today, as they, gladly receive His word (when they believe and submit totally to it), repent, and are immersed in water for the remission of sins, they too are added by God to the same church; the one church, the Church of Christ (Romans 16:16). Since Christ built only one church (the church of the Bible), it can only be con-

cluded that all other religious organizations (including the Catholic and Pentecostal Churches) were built by man (Matthew 15:8-14). In these, there is no promise of salvation; no promise of hope; no promise of the blessings of Christ (Ephesians 1:3). These promises are to be found only in His church; the Church of Christ!

QUESTION No. 503: Is the purpose of water baptism to lead us to a "good conscience," or is it "for the remission of sins?"

ANSWER: I Peter 3:21 teaches that "baptism doth also now save us" and that it is the answer of a "good conscience" toward God! Therefore, this passage teaches that obedience to God in baptism results from one previously having had a "good conscience."

Mark 16:16 teaches that those who believe and are baptized shall be saved. Acts 2:38 teaches that baptism is "for (in order to) the remission of sins." Acts 22:16 teaches that it "washes away sins." I Peter 3:21 teaches that it "doth also now save us." Those who would teach that one is saved before and without baptism wrest these (and other) passages to their own destruction. In spite of this, there are those who teach the exact opposite by adding one word to each of these passages; the word "not." For example some falsely teach that: "those who believe and are [not] baptized shall be saved;" "baptism is [not] for the remission of sins;" "baptism does [not] wash away sin;" "baptism doth [not] also now save us." By adding the word "not," those who do so, follow in the steps of the Devil. God said that if Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden tree they would "surely die" (Genesis 2:17). The devil added one word; the word "not." He said they would "[not] surely die" (Genesis 3:4). Adam and Eve sinned and were separated from God, because of the addition of this one word. If we today listen to, and accept, this one word [not] as a part of these passages, we, too, will sin and be separated from God! Any who accepts this false teaching does despite unto the Spirit of grace (Hebrews 10:29), contradicting the words of our Lord; the very words by which they will one day be judged (John 12:48).

We must be extremely careful that we allow the Bible to form our religious beliefs! We must never use the Bible to force, cause, or twist it to comply and conform to our preconceptions and desires. "God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar" (Romans 3:4)!

Every account of water baptism in the New Testament, including that of Cornelius and the Phillipian jailer, was an immersion for the remission of sins, and into the one body of our Lord; that is, the Church of Christ! There is no other baptism that will save!

QUESTION No. 504: Is the baptism of Acts 2:38 water baptism or Holy Spirit baptism?

ANSWER: It is an immersion in water! The baptism of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11; John 14:15-26; John 15:26; John 16:7-14; Luke 24:49; Acts 2:1-4) was a promise made to the apostles (not a commandment) and fulfilled in Acts 2:1-4. A promise is not something to which a person can render obedience as demanded in the great commission of Matthew 28:18-20. Understanding this principle can help us to see which baptism is under discussion by an inspired writer as we study. Passages dealing with commandments to be baptized can always be taken to mean water baptism. For example, in Acts 2:36, the people to whom Peter was preaching asked, "what shall we do?" Peter commanded them. "Repent and be baptized" (Vs.38). We can know then, without doubt, that this does not refer to Holy Spirit baptism, because it is something people were commanded to do in order to gain the remission of sins (salvation). If the baptism here had signified Holy Spirit baptism, there would have been nothing for anyone to do! They would simply have received the promise!

QUESTION No. 505: What is meant by, "We are saved by faith, but not faith alone?"

ANSWER: Some falsely teach that a person is saved by "faith only" when they first believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; that there are no acts or works of obedience required in order to become a New Testament Christian. This false doctrine is clearly refuted in James 2:14-26! Note especially Verse twenty-four, "Ye see then how that by works (of obedience) a man is justified, and not by faith only."

To become a New Testament Christian, certain actions are commanded to which one must be obedient in order to be saved! One must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (John 8:24): repent (turn away from) of sins (Luke 3:3); confess with the mouth

the Lord Jesus (Romans 10:9-10): and be immersed (baptized) in water (Acts 8:35-39) for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) into the one body (I Corinthians 12:13) of Christ, which is the church (Ephesians 1:22-23).

The doctrine of "Faith Only" is of man, and not of God!

QUESTION No. 506: Why is baptism necessary in our lives?

ANSWER: Because it is a commandment of God (Acts 2:38), which when obeyed from the heart results in freedom from sin (Romans 6:16-18) and puts us "into" Christ (Romans 6:3) wherein salvation is to be found (II Timothy 2:10). It is the final act of obedience which results in our salvation (Mark 16:16), and by which we are added to the church of the Bible (Acts 2:47). Without obedience to baptism (an immersion in water), none of these blessings would be ours!

QUESTION No. 507: What is the baptism of Matthew 28:18-20?

ANSWER: It can only be "water baptism!" Obviously, the baptism in this passage is one of commandment. This means that everyone is commanded to be baptized. Holy Spirit baptism was never commanded, but, rather, it was a promise to be fulfilled (Acts 1:4-5). Since at the time of the writing of Ephesians 4:4 by the apostle Paul, there was clearly only "one baptism" and since the baptism of Matthew 28:18-20 was to be effective until the "end of the world," it can only be concluded that the promise of Holy Spirit baptism was fulfilled prior to the writing of the book of Ephesians in 63/65AD. Also in 65AD, Peter wrote about water baptism being the baptism that "doth also now save us" (I Peter 3:20-21). So then, Paul said in 63/65AD, there is only "one baptism!" Peter says at the same time that this one baptism is "water baptism." We know clearly that the baptism of Matthew 28:18-20 is the only baptism that would continue until the "end of the world." Therefore, the baptism spoken of in this passage can only be "water baptism."

QUESTION No. 508: Which baptism in the New Testament is right, Matthew 28:19 or Acts 2:38?

ANSWER: Both are right, because they are one and the same. There is no difference! Jesus in Matthew twenty-eight was speaking to the eleven disciples and gave them the Great Commission, "All power (authority) is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." This passage is a commandment Jesus gave directly to His disciples and was first carried out by them in Acts, the second chapter. The question that needs to be considered at this point is, “Were Peter and the others obedient or disobedient in Acts two to the Lord's command of Matthew 28?” If they baptized in a way different from that commanded, then they were disobedient! If they were baptized in the same way that Christ commanded, then it follows that they were obedient! Since three thousand souls were saved that day, and added by the Lord to His church, it is evident, and without doubt, that He was satisfied that Peter and the others had been obedient to Him. Since it is clear that they were obedient and pleasing to the Lord, it can only be concluded that there is no difference in the baptism of Matthew 28:19 and that of Acts 2:38!

QUESTION No. 509: Who will enter eternal life?

ANSWER: It is true that not all will enter eternal life! Jesus tells us in Matthew 7:13-14, "Enter ye in at the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in that way. Because narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." In Matthew 7:21-23, He tells us that even some religious people will not enter eternal life, because the religious things they do are not done according to the will of God! Then in Verses twenty-four and twenty-five, He tells us who will enter eternal life! They are the ones who hear the sayings of Jesus and do them! Jesus says these people are wise! He also says, in Verse twenty-six, that people who do not do what He says are foolish! Jesus' sayings (His words) are only in His New Testament, and in it are all things that pertain unto life and godliness (II Peter 1:3). These are the words by which we can have eternal life and by which all of us will one day be judged (John 12:48).

QUESTION No. 510: Where in the Bible does it say that baptism forgives sins? The KJV says that Christ's blood forgives sin.

ANSWER: You are exactly right about Christ's blood! It was shed for many "for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28), and it is also said to "wash us from our sins" (Revelation 1:5). These quotations are very easy for us to understand. On the other hand, in Acts 2:38, the Bible also says that baptism is "for the remission of sins." In Acts 22:16, Saul was told to "be baptized, and wash away thy sins . . ." To be honest and consistent then, one can only conclude that the Bible teaches that whatever Christ's blood was shed "for," baptism is "for" the same thing! It would be quite unethical for one to say that it does not mean the same thing in both places! It, therefore, cannot be successfully and honestly denied that both (Christ's blood & baptism) are "for the same thing, i.e., the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28 & Acts 2:38)! We also see from the above that the Bible says that Christ's blood washes away sin and, likewise, that baptism washes away sin (Rev.1:5 & Acts 22:16)! How can these things be? If the Bible is true (and it is), there can certainly be no contradictions. The only logical, scriptural answer is that they both must occur at the same time! This is what the Bible teaches! It is in baptism that one contacts the blood of Christ that washes away sin! Baptism saves us because it is in this act of obedience that we are baptized into His death (Romans 6:4) where his cleansing blood was shed. This is why Peter in I Peter 3:20-21 could say that just as "water" saved (Vs.20) Noah and his family (by separating them from this sinful world) that baptism in the same way (like figure) "doth also now save us" (by separating or cleansing us from our sins - Vs.21)!

Some religious folks try to put the blood of Christ (salvation) at the point of belief before and without baptism. Such is a wresting of scripture (II Peter 3:16). The Bible is clear. In Mark 16:16, Jesus said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." The words "shall be" are clearly future. Therefore, both belief and baptism precede salvation. Jesus said, 'if you will believe and are baptized, I will promise you salvation.' The logic in this statement is easily understood in other settings. For example, if I said to you, 'if you wash my car and mow my lawn, I promise you two-hundred dollars." What would you have to do to get the two-hundred dollars?" Would I owe you two-hundred-dollars if you only washed my car? Of course not! I didn't promise you two hundred dollars for washing my car! But this is exactly the logic used by those who claim that Jesus said He promised salvation at the point of belief. It is the same as if they were saying; 'You promised me two-hundred dollars for washing your car!' All would normally understand what was required to gain the two hundred dollars. Yet, not all will apply the same logic fairly and honestly in considering the requirements of Mark 16:16? You see, the divine formula given by Christ in this verse is without doubt B+B=S (Belief plus Baptism equals Salvation). Those who would remove baptism from God's plan of salvation teach a different formula, i.e., B=S+B (Belief equals salvation plus baptism). The question then

becomes not "what does the Bible say?" It is obvious! The question now is, "Will I obey God or man? Will I obey Christ's divine formula or will I obey man's formula?"

QUESTION No. 511: Why do some not see the importance of baptism?

ANSWER: Some fail to see because they do not study the scriptures as commanded (Acts 17:11; II Timothy 2:15). These and others are often led into error by false teachers (II Peter 2:1; I John 4:1). These teachers, through the god of this world, hide the truth of the gospel from those who are lost, so that "the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should not shine unto them" (II Corinthians 4:4). This is the reason why we always need to be careful not to "believe every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1).

QUESTION No. 512: If one has to be baptized to be saved, why did Jesus not say in the latter part of Mark 16:16 "But he that believeth not and is baptized not shall be condemned?"

ANSWER: Mark 16:16 tells us how to do two things. (1) It tells us how to be saved: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;" (2) It tells us how to be lost: "He that believeth not shall be damned." Jesus did not add the words "and is baptized not" in the last part of the verse, because He knew that unbelieving people would not request, nor submit to baptism! The additional words would have been redundant and meaningless! Even if an unbeliever would be foolish enough to request baptism and could find someone foolish enough to baptize him, it would serve no purpose, because "he that believeth not is condemned already" (John 3:18).

QUESTION No. 513: What about the thief on the cross?

ANSWER: The New Testament law under which we live today did not become effective until Pentecost day; fifty days after Jesus (and the thief) died on the cross (Acts 2; Hebrews 9:16-17). The thief neither lived nor died under the New Testament, as we today. The Great Commission of Christ in Matthew 28:18-20 and Mark 16:15-16 was

first proclaimed in Acts, Chapter two, after the thief died! On this day Peter presented the terms of salvation to believing Jews in Verse thirty-eight: "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins." These same terms of salvation are applicable to everyone from that day until the end of the world (Matthew 28:20; Acts 2:39). The thief on the cross was not answerable to these terms of salvation, because he died before they were proclaimed! Examples then of how one is saved today should not be based on those (like the thief) who lived under a different Law and different circumstances, but rather they should be based on those in the book of Acts who also lived under the New Testament. All of the people in these examples, without fail, were saved when they believed, repented, confessed, and were baptized! We can do no less if salvation would be ours!

QUESTION No. 514: John 1:12 says that those who receive Christ have been given the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name. Does this mean that our sins still remain before we are baptized?

ANSWER: Yes! Our sins remain until we are baptized! John 1:12 does not teach that those who believe are saved. This passage teaches that those who believe have the power (the right or privilege) to “become” the sons of God. Notice carefully: He did not say that believers “are” the sons of God. He said, believers have the right to “become” the sons of God! "Become" speaks to the future, not the present! They do not “become” the sons of God, i.e., they are not saved until following their belief and after they have obeyed Him! (Hebrews 5:8-9; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-5; Romans 6:16-18). This is what is being taught in James, Chapter two: Faith (belief) without works of obedience is dead (Vs. 14,17, 20, 24, & 26). To support this truth, James says in Verse nineteen that the disobedient devils also believe, and tremble. It is obvious that the devils are lost and that their belief in Christ does not save them. And the same is true of humans who only believe and do not obey. They, too, are lost, because "faith (belief) without works is dead" (Vs. 20). Consider carefully Verse twenty-four, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith (belief) only." This passage (and John1:12) teaches that justification (forgiveness & salvation) is not ours by belief (faith) only (alone). It is true that one must believe in order to be saved, but clearly, belief only is not enough.

QUESTION No. 515: What things must a sinner admit?

ANSWER: He must admit that he is a sinner (Romans 3:23) and that he wants (and needs) to be saved from his sins. Having admitted such, he must then turn in obedient belief to God's Word that his soul might indeed be saved (James 1:21).

QUESTION No. 516: What does it mean to believe?

ANSWER: It does not mean that one gives only mental assent that Christ is God's Son. It is much more than that, since even the devils do that much (James 2:19). It means that one must put his total trust and confidence in Jesus Christ by becoming fully obedient to His commandments. It means becoming a true Christian, not by denominational standards and teachings, but solely on the basis of New Testament teachings.

QUESTION No. 517: Is not the statement, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit for the remission of sins" a prayer? If it is, how can God hear a heathen's prayer?

ANSWER: The statement cited in the question is not a prayer, but rather is an affirmation by the one doing the baptizing that such is being done by the authority of (in the name of) the Godhead!

QUESTION No. 518: Some teach that to baptize "in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost" is wrong; that we must baptize "in the name of Jesus only." They further teach that this phrase must be stated as one is being baptized. Is this right?

ANSWER: No! It is not right! "In the name of" simply means "by the authority of." When one baptizes "in the name" of Jesus, he is baptizing "by His authority!" In Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus had been given all authority. With this authority, He commands us in this passage to baptize "in (or into) the name of" the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, even unto the end of the world."

In Acts 2:38, baptism was said to be "in the name of Jesus Christ"; in Acts 8:16, "in the name of the Lord Jesus"; in Acts 10:48, in the name of the Lord." Since all three of these are different, should one have to decide which of the three is the "divine" formula? Or may we select one of the three? The truth is that any of the three would be scriptural! To baptize in the name of Jesus Christ is simply to baptize by His authority! What did He authorize? He authorized baptism in (into) the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost for all time! Therefore, when one baptizes in the name (by the authority of) Jesus Christ he is baptizing in (into) the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost!

Must one recite a specific formula when immersing another in water? It is, indeed, the wise and expedient thing to do! This would be especially true if nonbelievers were present. However, none of the passages referred to above teach (neither do any others) that we are commanded to "say" (formulate) the words "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Neither is there any passage that commands us to "say" (formulate) the words "in the name of Jesus Christ." When people insist on this unscriptural position, they add to God's word, binding the commandments of men (Revelation 22:18-19; Matthew 15:9). None of the passages, normally used to support this unscriptural doctrine, teach what one is to "say" as he baptizes another! Every one of these passages simply teaches what he is to "do," and by whose authority it is to be done! There is no biblical record of anyone having said anything during an immersion. However, that it is wise to do so, as stated above, cannot be denied. This writer has never failed to do so, and plans to do so in the future. Nevertheless, we must never bind on others what God has not bound!

To show the inconsistency of those who bind this false doctrine on others, we need to look at Colossians 3:17, which uses the same language, i.e., "in the name of." This passage reads, "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all ‘in the name of’ the Lord Jesus . . ." Acts 2:38 reads, "Repent and be baptized every one of you ‘in the name of’ Jesus Christ . . ." Consistency and honesty demand, since identical words are used, that both passages be interpreted the same way! In other words, if Acts 2:38 teaches that when we baptize someone we must "say" the formula, "I now baptize you in the name of Jesus Christ," then Colossians 3:17 teaches that whatever we do in word or deed, we must also "say" the formula, "I now speak this word or do this deed in the name of the Lord Jesus." Those who hold to the false doctrine that we must recite a divine formula when baptizing a person are inconsistent, because they fail to practice what they preach about Acts 2:38 when it comes to Colossians 3:17. The plain truth is that neither passage demands the recitation of any kind of formula.

It can only be concluded that whatever may be said during a baptism, whether in the name of Jesus; in the name of the Lord; in the name of the Lord Jesus; or in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, it is not wrong - no sin has been committed - no scripture has been violated! Since all three personalities are one in thought, will and doctrine, and constitute the "One God," to baptize by the authority of (in the name of) any, is to baptize by the authority of (in the name of) all three. Conversely, to baptize by the authority (in the name of) all three, is to baptize (in the name of) each!

QUESTION No. 519: If a Christian is not available, and one has learned the Gospel and wishes to be baptized, can a non-believer (male or female) baptize him?

ANSWER: Though undoubtedly wise and expedient for a Christian brother to be the "baptizer," there is no principle in scripture that would prohibit another from doing so in the absence of male Christians. Neither are there any personal characteristics required of one in order to be the "baptizer." Importance at a baptism relates only to the one being baptized. If he or she is a true, penitent believer, having confessed faith in Jesus Christ, and is immersed for the remission of sins, all scriptural requirements have been fulfilled (Mark 16:16; Romans 10:9-10; Acts 2:38). Salvation is then granted, whatever the sex or spiritual condition of the "baptizer."

QUESTION No. 520: It is true that Judas Iscariot baptized people, but this was before he betrayed Jesus, and it was while the Law of Moses was in force. Is this not the same as Jesus forgiving the thief on the cross? In other words, we can't use this example today, because we are under the Law of Christ.

ANSWER: I understand the question to be: "Is the reason we do not use the baptism performed by Judas (John 4:2) as an example today because he lived under the Law of Moses?" The answer would be "No!" This would be the case, because the baptism performed by the disciples before the Day of Pentecost was not a part of the Mosaical Law! It had it's beginning with John, the son of Zacharias (Luke 3:2-3), in about 29AD.

If this question is related to the two preceding questions, i.e., if it is being suggested that non-Christians or sinful people today would have been scripturally approved to baptize others today, had it been the case that Judas performed his baptizing after he sinned by betraying Christ, the answer would still be "No!"

The reason for not using the baptism performed by the disciples before the Day of Pentecost as an example today is because this baptism was effective only until the Day of Pentecost. It was called "John's baptism" (Acts 19:3). On Pentecost Day, the baptism of Christ became effective (Acts 2:38) and it alone will remain in effect until the end of the world (Matthew 28:18-20). In Acts 18:24 through Acts 19:5, we read of Ephesians who had been improperly baptized with "John's baptism" after the Day of Pentecost. These were instructed by the apostle Paul to be baptized with "Christ's baptism," clear evidence that John's baptism had become ineffective! This is the reason why we cannot use the baptizing performed by Judas as an example today! The only approved examples of baptism for people today are to be found in the book of Acts, from Pentecost day forward!

We cannot use the baptism of John (as performed by Judas) for our example because it is not a part of the Law of Christ binding upon all men today!

QUESTION No. 521: Is a person lost or saved by the deeds of others?

ANSWER: No! The Bible is explicitly clear on this matter! In Ezekiel 18:20, we read the following: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." Clearly, every man is innocent or guilty before God on the basis of his own actions; not the actions of another!

QUESTION No. 522: There are children of Methodist parents whom we have taught and who have come to the knowledge of the truth. They have requested baptism. If the children are baptized, their parents, who hold positions in the Methodist Church, may send them out of their homes and discontinue school support. What should we do?

ANSWER: It seems that the first thing to do is to approach the parents in an effort to teach them the truth or, at the very least, explain the situation. Apparently, the parents are influential people. The conversion of these could very well open more doors for the Lord. If the parents reject the truth and terminate school support, there is no choice, considering the value of a soul, but to immerse those who have requested it! Though such may result in further hardship on those involved, no matter the outcome, all must trust and obey God rather than man (Acts 5:29). Nothing is more important!

QUESTION No. 523: Does Ephesians 4:5 teach that there is only one baptism or does it mean that the baptism we get is one in Jesus alone? What about the baptism of Holy Spirit and fire?

ANSWER: First we need to consider in Ephesians 4:4-6 what the word "one" means! Clearly, in the account of Matthew's gospel, we read of water baptism (Matthew 28:29); of Holy Spirit baptism (Matthew 3:11); and, in the same passage, the baptism of fire. It cannot be successfully denied that these are "three" different and distinct baptisms. Neither can it be successfully argued that the word "one" in Ephesians 4:4-6 means "three." Whatever it means when it speaks of 'one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, and one God,' it must also mean when it speaks of ‘one baptism!’ In other words, if this passage teaches that there is "one" Lord, then it must also teach that there is "one" baptism. If there is "one" there cannot be "three." It is impossible! If the Holy Spirit wanted us to understand that there were "three" different baptisms at the time of this writing, He would have used the word "three," not the word "one!"

The Holy Spirit had been promised (Acts 1:5) and His coming was fulfilled (satisfied) in Acts 2,10 & 11. Since the purposes for which the Holy Spirit came were totally satisfied, this baptism, and the need for it, no longer exists! The baptism of fire is not for today, because it is yet future! Matthew 3:12 clearly shows that this baptism has reference to the unquenchable fires of hell!

There is, therefore, only "one" baptism today! It is the baptism of water, which "doth also now save us" (I Peter 3:21).

QUESTION No. 524: Is it proper to wear a bathing cap when being baptized to preserve a hair-do or permanent?

ANSWER: Personally, it is difficult for me to understand one's concern over such insignificant and trivial matters when the most profound and important act of his or her life is about to occur. Nonetheless, since an immersion; an overwhelming; a burial would be taking place, assuming prior scriptural belief, repentance, and confession, there is no reason to suggest that the baptism would be invalid, provided that it be "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38) and into the "one body" (I Corinthians 12:13) of Christ.

QUESTION No. 525: How can we immerse during the dry seasons when the rivers are dried up? Must we travel to far away rivers? Must we wait for the rainy season?

ANSWER: Since immersion is the only baptism that will save, it is imperative that the person to be baptized is taken to sufficient water as quickly as possible. God, who has commanded it, has not given us something to do that is impossible! So the question is not "can it be done," but "how committed are we to keeping His commandments and getting it done?" During a recent stay in Zambia during the dry season, we found it necessary to dig a hole in an otherwise dry river bed to gain sufficient water for immersion. Whatever is required to be in compliance with God's Word, must be done! There is no choice in the matter!

QUESTION No. 526: Does Acts 19:5 refer to baptism in the Holy Spirit?

ANSWER: No! This is clearly indicated because of what happened in Verse six. Had the Ephesians been baptized in the Holy Spirit in Verse five, there would have been no reason for Paul to have laid hands on them in Verse six to impart the spiritual gifts of speaking in other languages and prophesying. The gifts would have come with the baptism of the Holy Spirit had it actually occurred (Acts 2:1-4 & Acts 10:44-48). The baptism of this passage must, then, refer to water baptism by the authority of the Lord Jesus. These had previously been baptized in water "unto John's baptism" after his baptism had become ineffective at Pentecost, at which time the Lord's baptism in water

became effective for all men everywhere, "even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:37-47).

QUESTION No. 527: How can I, as a Christian, know when I repent and pray that I have truly been forgiven?

ANSWER: We must put our trust in the Word of God as little children! John said in I John 2:1, "My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not. And if any man sin we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." An advocate is one who pleads the case of another. This is what Jesus Christ does for us in the presence of the Father. Just before this verse, in Chapter one, John assures us that if we walk in the light (the light of God's Word) that the "blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (Vs.7). In Verse eight, we are told that all people sin, but "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (Vs.9). This verse clearly tells us that Christ will not fail us (He is faithful). This simply means that when we confess our sins, turn from them in repentance, and pray to the Father through the Son, that forgiveness is guaranteed and granted in full measure! The sins are gone completely and God will remember them no more (Hebrews 10:17). At this point, we need to follow the example of the apostle Paul. He said, " . . . forgetting those things that are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13-14). So then, we need to forget and press on! To press on means to continue to walk in the light! It means to serve our Lord with all of our strength. If we do this, our thoughts will be turned from sin and will be focused on our Lord and what we can do for others in His service. There will be found no place for the Devil (Ephesians 4:27)!

In your letter, you express fear of attending worship services because of distress over your sins. God wants all of us never to forsake the assemblings of the church. This would also be sin (Hebrews 10:25). It is during these assemblings that we gain strength and are edified (built up). It is a time when brethren are to provoke one another unto love and good works (Hebrews 10:24). It is a time when we are spiritually fed the Word of God, without which one would die spiritually. Please always attend all of the services of the church!

Please also be assured that no matter what your past has been, if you, as a child of God, have turned from your sin and prayed to God through Christ for forgiveness, it is done! Be assured, too, that He has said, "I will never leave thee or forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5) and that nothing can separate you from His love (Romans 8:37-39).

QUESTION No. 528: If a man embezzled billions in government money and used it to build houses and factories, purchase automobiles, and to marry, how can he make restitution when he becomes a Christian (Luke 19:1-8)?

ANSWER: Not knowing the details (including the laws of your country) involved in this situation makes it impossible to give specific (step-by-step) answers to the question. However, that restitution must be made is without doubt. The very nature of true repentance demands that all wrongs be set aright, where possible. Clearly, there are cases in which a person has truly repented, but restitution is impossible, e.g., a man may repent of murder, but obviously he cannot bring one back from the dead. However, whatever one can do, he must do! In the case in question, the man would obviously have to report himself to the Government's authorities, give up all that he has illegally gained to them, and suffer the penalties demanded by the law. Otherwise, true repentance has not occurred, without which one cannot become a Christian!

QUESTION No. 529: Can a woman be saved who is involved in witchcraft?

ANSWER: She can only be saved by belief in Christ (John 8:24), repenting of (turning from) all sins (including the sin of witchcraft), confessing her belief in Christ (Romans 10:10) and being immersed in water for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). Those who continue in activities such as witchcraft will not inherit the kingdom of God (Galatians 19-21).

QUESTION No. 530: (Part 1): A Greek scholar said that the Greek word “eis” is a transitional word, which in Acts 2:38 means "going from outside of Christ into Christ." I agree, but when he talked about Romans 10:10, he said, "the NIV erred in their interpretation of this verse." He made a statement something like this, "I don't know why anyone would interpret it like that." He offered no explanation

as to why he made this statement, since the NIV translates “eis” as a transitional word! Please explain!

(Part 2): How is “eis” to be used? Are we to understand that “eis” can be translated using the word "unto?" Is "unto" also to be understood as a transitional word?

(Part 3): Why does the ASV, KJV, and NKJV translate “eis” in Romans 10:10 as "unto" and many of the other versions do not?

ANSWER (Part 1): The unnamed person you are quoting in your query is absolutely correct. Look at the differences between the two:

KJV: For with the heart man believeth "unto" (eis) righteousness and with the mouth confession is made "unto" (eis) salvation.

NIV: For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

The NIV does not as much as translate or even acknowledge the Greek word “eis!” In fact, there is no translation involved. This ungodly version simply takes the opportunity to insert the heretical view of John Calvin that at the moment of belief one is immediately saved. In so doing, the NIV cannot be classified as the pure Word of God! It is no longer inspired, because its words are men's words and not God's! It is not a word-for-word translation, but is rather a commentary by those who will risk damnation (theirs and others: Revelation 22:18-19; Galatians 1:6-9; Matthew 15:14) to perpetuate their own heretical beliefs! The KJV accurately and painstakingly translates the Greek words into their English equivalents. Thus the King James remains inspired as the pure Word of God!

(Part 2): The Greek word “eis” may be properly translated as: "for," "unto," "in order to," "with a view to;" all of which are transitional, as indicated by the

original. Note that there is nothing transitional in Romans 10:10 of the NIV. The false doctrine of this "version" erringly concludes that the transition is not "unto," but that it has already taken place! Clearly then, the authors of the NIV have changed God's intent in the matter!

(Part 3): The foregoing answer largely responds to Part 3. The other versions have not actually translated the original Greek words! The authors of these books simply imply that the common man cannot understand what the inspired writer's words mean; that God did not inspire men to write in words that we could understand; and that they, therefore, will not supply His words, but since they are wiser than God and His inspired writers, they will tell us in their own words what they think God meant to say! How foolish of man to buy into every book that comes along simply because on the cover it says, "Holy Bible!" Certainly, most of them are not "Bibles," and just as certain, there is nothing "Holy" about them!

There are two (2) major reasons for all of the different modern translations: (1) love of money; since the "Bible" is the best selling book of all time and (2) the establishment and/or perpetuation of a false doctrine that cannot be sustained by accurate and scholarly translations free of mortal error, such as the ASV, KJV, and NKJV.

QUESTION No. 531: Would you please explain John 3:16 as relates to our salvation? Does it not teach that we are saved at the point of belief?

ANSWER: No! It does not! Saving faith in Christ is not simply belief or mental assent that He exists and is the Son of God! Saving faith is belief in Christ, conjoined with obedience to Him! This obedient faith is described, by example, throughout Hebrews, Chapter eleven, which we encourage you to study. Without this kind of faith, "it is impossible to please Him" (Hebrews 11:6).

There are those who falsely teach that a person is saved by "faith only" when they first believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; that there are no acts or works of obedience required in order to become a New Testament Christian. This false doctrine is clearly refuted in James 2:14-26! Note especially Verse twenty-four, "Ye see then how that by works (of obedience) a man is justified, and not by faith only." It needs also to be

stated that a man is "not" saved by works of merit or righteousness. Note Titus 3:5; "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us by (through) the 'washing of regeneration' (baptism), and renewing of the Holy Spirit." This coincides with what Peter told believing people to do on the Day of Pentecost: "Repent, and be baptized . . . (not by works of righteousness, but by works of obedience) for the remission of sins."

To become a New Testament Christian, certain actions are commanded to which one must be obedient in order to be saved! One must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (John 8:24): repent (turn away from) of sins (Luke 3:3); confess with the mouth the Lord Jesus (Romans 10:9-10): and be immersed (baptized) in water (Acts 8:35-39) for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) into the one body (I Corinthians 12:13) of Christ, which is the church (Ephesians 1:22-23). It is at the point of baptism that the blood of Christ is applied and from which we rise to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:1-6), having been born again of water and of (at the direction of) the Spirit.

The doctrine of "Faith Only" is of man, and not of God!

QUESTION No. 532: Does not John 10:27-29 tell us that one cannot fall from grace?

ANSWER: It does not! The doctrine of "once saved, always saved" is as foreign to the Bible as salvation by "faith alone." One is truly grasping at straws to support this false teaching by using this passage! Note that in order for the sheep (Christians) to receive "eternal life" and to "never perish" Christ requires two things that His sheep must "actively do." Not simply two things they must believe, but, rather, two things they must "do!" First, the sheep must "hear" (which involves obedience). Secondly, the sheep must "follow" (which involves continuing obedience). Question No.1 for you to consider: Is the granting of eternal life by Christ to His sheep dependent upon their "hearing and following?" Question No.2 for you to consider: If "hearing and following" are prerequisites to gaining eternal life (and clearly they are), what happens to those who don't "hear?" Question No.3 for you to consider: What happens to those who hear, but don't "follow?" The answers are obvious!

It is true that "no man" can pluck the sheep who hears and follows Christ out of His Father's hand, but this passage does not even hint that a man cannot himself quit hearing and following Christ. This same disciple said in the fifteenth Chapter of this Gospel account that a man must abide (keep His commandments / remain faithful) in Him (Vs. 4, 5, 6, 7, 10). He also said that if one does "not" abide in Him (keep His commandments / remain faithful) he is "taken away" (Vs.2); he is "cast forth" (Vs.6); he is gathered with others who do not "abide" (Vs.6); he is cast into the fire (Vs.6); and he is burned (Vs. 6). Certainly, it is not indicated that these were "plucked" out of the Father's hand by some man or power (they weren't), but it is clearly and irrefutably indicated that they "chose" not to "abide" (remain faithful) and, therefore, have been "taken away" and "cast forth" (fallen from grace); to one day "be cast into the fire and burned."

Neither this passage, nor any other teaches that one cannot fall from grace!

QUESTION No. 533: Since none can enter heaven without New Testament baptism, will those who lived before the New Testament be able to enter in? What was the importance of Christ's death to those who lived before the New Testament?

ANSWER: Those who lived faithfully under the Old Testament while it was in existence, i.e., before the cross of Christ and before Christ's baptism, will be judged by that particular law. Those who were faithful to that law will be saved eternally. From the Day of Pentecost of Acts Two, when Christ's baptism became effective, until the end of time, all who would enter into heaven will and must have been baptized and must also remain faithful to Him, as commanded throughout the New Testament (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Revelation 2:10, and others).

Christ's death is important to those who lived under the Old Testament, as well as to we who live under the New Testament. In Hebrews 10:1-4, the writer says that sacrifices were made yearly under the Old Testament for the sins of the people, but that those sacrifices could not make them complete. In Verse four, he says the reason they could not be made complete was that the blood of the bulls and goats that were sacrificed under that old system could not take away their sins. It, therefore, was necessary that Christ shed His blood, not only for people today, but also for those who lived faithfully under the Old Testament (Hebrews 9:15; 10:1-18).

By His blood must all enter heaven; those under the Old Testament and those under the New Testament. Access to the blood of Christ by those under the Old Testament came only through their obedience to that Law. Access to the blood of Christ by those under the New Testament (all men today) can come only through obedience to its teachings! To be covered by the blood of Christ today then; to become a New Testament Christian, one must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (John 8:24); repent (turn away from) of sins (Luke 3:3); confess with the mouth the Lord Jesus (Romans 10:9-10); and be immersed in water (Acts 8:35-39) for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) into the one body (I Corinthians 12:13) of Christ, which is the church (Ephesians 1:22-23). The blood of Christ is applied in this final act (baptism) which is "into His death" (Romans 6:4) where His blood was shed!

QUESTION No. 534: What kind of baptism did Paul and Silas use to baptize the Jailer and all his family (Acts 16:30-33)?

ANSWER: The Roman Jailer was immersed in water for the remission of sins, just as were those on the Day of Pentecost in Acts Two. Peter had told those to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. This is exactly what (after hearing the Word of the Lord) the Roman Jailer did. He washed their stripes (an indication of his repentance) and was baptized. The result was the same for him as it was for those on Pentecost. In Verse thirty, the Jailer had asked, "What must I do to be saved?" Paul's response was: "Believe on (surrender completely to) the Lord Jesus Christ." The Roman Jailer did not have "faith in Christ" at that point, neither was he saved at that point! We can know this because the same apostle says that "faith" comes by hearing (accepting and obeying) the Word of God (Romans 10:17). Therefore, the Jailer could not have had "saving faith" until after he had heard the Word of the Lord. In other words, he could not have had "saving faith" without obedience to that which he had been taught (James 2:14-24). It is not enough simply to believe in Christ (to give mental assent to His Deity), because even the devils do that (James 2:19.) Additionally, Peter tells us that "God is no respecter of persons." This means that however one is saved, all must be saved! How were the people on Pentecost saved? The Roman Jailer was saved in exactly the same way! It is significant, too, that it is said of the Roman Jailer (just as the Ethiopian eunuch of Acts 8:26-40) that he rejoiced in his salvation after his baptism (not before). The American Standard Version says in Verse thirty-four that he "rejoiced greatly, with all his house, HAVING BELIEVED in God." Clearly then the Jailer is said to have "believed" in God (in response to Paul's directive of Verse thirty-one) after he had been baptized (not before)! The point is that belief in this passage is shown to involve “obedient faith.”

QUESTION No. 535: What can I do to help another friend who believes she will be saved by her good deeds alone?

ANSWER: Certainly it is necessary that Christians engage in doing good works (Matthew 25:31-41). However, it is just as certain that one cannot be saved without obedience to the totality of the New Testament, the Law of Christ (Matthew 7:21-29; Romans 6:16-18; Romans 8:1-2; Ephesians 2:8-10; I Peter 1:22; I Peter 4:17; II Thessalonians 1:7-9). It is by the Law of Christ that all will be judged (John 12:48), not simply by the good deeds we may do. Consider Cornelius in Acts, Chapter ten. In Verse two, we find he was a man of many good works, yet he needed to hear "words" by which he could be saved (Acts 11:14). His "works" did not save him! Peter spoke "words" to him (as recorded in Acts 10:34-43) so that he could receive remission of sins (Vs.43). In Verse forty-eight, Cornelius was there given a commandment, which if "obeyed," would result in the promised remission of sins. This was the very thing that Peter had commanded those on the Day of Pentecost to do (Acts 2:38). None can be saved in any other way, because God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34).

QUESTION No. 536: How can our inner man be changed?

ANSWER: The inner man is changed and strengthened by the Spirit through the Word of God (Ephesians 3:16). As we study, accept, and apply biblical principles to our lives in everything that we do, the inner man and the outer man will be changed in thought and conduct as followers and children of God (Ephesians 5:1).

QUESTION No. 537: Now that I have believed, repented, and confessed, how can I get baptized considering the fact that there is not a true church in this area?

ANSWER: First of all, there is no doubt that you need to be immersed in water for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38). In the absence of a faithful church in your area, you can have a friend baptize you by completely dipping you under the water. It doesn’t matter what he may say when he does this for you. All that matters is that you understand that you are being baptized in order to symbolically contact the blood of Christ which will, at that time, wash your sins away and add you to the body of Christ. After having

done this you will then be a Christian, a child of God, who must worship God in spirit (with the right attitude) and (according to) truth (John 4:24). In your studies you have learned what the various items of worship are. On the first day of the week you must pray, sing, give to help others and to spread the gospel of Christ, remember the Lord's death by partaking of unleavened bread and grape juice, and learning from God's Word by teaching, preaching, or (if alone) studying God's Word. As you continue in this, you will teach others to do the same. As they join with you, a new congregation of the church of Christ will have been started. As the church grows, you can then begin to assemble at other times, such as Sunday evening and, perhaps on Wednesday evening, to study God's Word, to pray and sing praises to Him. We will be glad to guide you in this procedure as questions arise. It would be a great thing for you to do!

QUESTION No. 538: If a person accepts Christ, repents, confesses Christ as His personal Savior and intends to be baptized, but dies before he can be baptized, is he saved or not?

ANSWER: This type of question is often asked by some that want to avoid what the Bible teaches about baptism and its purpose. If one would ask this kind of question about baptism, would it not be fair for that one to also ask the following questions? (1) If a person intends to accept Christ, but dies before he actually does it, is he saved or not? (2) If a person accepts Christ, but dies before he repents of his sins, is he saved or not? (3) If a person accepts Christ, repents of his sins and intends to confess Christ, but dies before doing so, is he saved or lost? Why single out the act of baptism? Why not address all of the required steps leading to salvation, because what is true of one is true of all! If not, why not? All of the steps of salvation are necessary unto salvation. God has given all of us, who are of age and sound mind, sufficient time to do what He requires. If we do not take advantage of the time given, the fault lies with us, not with God!

Some denominational organizations reject the biblical approach to immediate baptism for the remission of sins, i.e., Acts 2:41, "the same day;" Acts 8:36, "as they went on their way;" Acts 16:33, "the same hour of the night;" Acts 22:16, "arise and be baptized." Certainly, when this biblical approach is ignored and people are "saved up" until Easter or some other occasion, the possibility increases immensely that one will die with the intent to be baptized. However, in the great majority of these cases candidates are not baptized for the right reason anyhow and, therefore, the baptism is invalid as a result, even when, and if, it does occur! The question, nonetheless, is purely hypothetical. How many people have you known to have believed, repented of sins, publicly confessed

Christ before men, and then died as they went "immediately" on their way to the water, as was the practice in the New Testament? Violate the "pattern" and the possibility increases! Stay with the biblical pattern and the possibility is likely "nil."

What we do know is that Christ our Lord spoke the words by which we will one day be judged (John 12:48) "He that believeth "and" is baptized *shall be* saved!" The word "and" is a coordinating conjunction that grammatically connects two values of equal import, both of which are necessary to the result of the indicated compound command, i.e., salvation! Who has the right to say that only one or the other is necessary, or that only one is necessary under certain conditions? To do so is to abrogate the words of our Lord! It is to assume that we have the right to override His authoritative command based on human rationale. God forbid that we should be so found guilty!

QUESTION No. 539: How can I repent and confess? What must I do to be saved? What is salvation?

ANSWER: To be saved, one must (1) hear the good news of Jesus Christ, (2) believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (John 8:24); (3) repent of (turn away from) sins (Luke 3:3); (4) confess with the mouth the Lord Jesus (Romans 10:9-10); and be baptized in water (Acts 8:35-39) for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) into the one body (I Corinthians 12:13) of Christ, which is the church (Ephesians 1:22-23). This church is His church and is, therefore, to be called by His name, the church of Christ (Romans 16:16). It is to this church that God adds one after being obedient to the above scriptures. Then, and only then, can it be said that one is saved! Any other way will not do! Any other church will not do!

(1) To "hear" the good news means that one must have heard that Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God; that He came from heaven into this world to save sinners; that He died for our sins; was buried in the earth; that He arose the third day, after which He ascended back to heaven and is now seated at the right hand of the Father.

(2) To "believe" that Jesus Christ is the Son of God means that one must not only accept those things stated above, but that he or she must be willing to surrender completely to Him; to do the things that He wants us to do and to stop doing those things that He does not want us to do.

(3) To "repent" means that we must be sorry for the sins that we have committed because we have been offensive to our God; it is a changing of the mind about how we have been living that will bring about a change of action; that we will begin living for Christ according to His Word.

(4) To "confess" means that we must openly state with the mouth before men our belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

(5) To be "baptized" means that one must be completely immersed under water with the understanding that in that act he or she will symbolically contact the blood of Christ that will wash away all past sins; that by that act one is saved and becomes a child of God, a New Testament Christian and is added, by God, to the Church of Christ.

Salvation simply means that when one does all of these things, he or she is "saved" from the consequences of their sins (Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23); that God has forgiven them of all past sins. If one remains "faithful unto death" (Revelation 2:10) in the Church of Christ he or she, then, will be saved eternally in heaven from destruction in hell.

QUESTION No. 540: I am still not crystal clear about baptism. Is it necessary for a person who is not baptized to preach to others, the baptized and those not baptized? If you say it is, read Matthew 28:18-20.

ANSWER: A person who does not accept the scriptural command to be baptized for the remission (forgiveness) of sins should not be teaching others that which he has failed to do. One's preaching must be consistent with his actions (Romans 2:21-22)! One is not counted righteous until his sins have been forgiven, and without baptism one is still in his sins and is counted as being unrighteous. What you are suggesting is what the Scribes and Pharisees were doing whom Jesus condemned: "Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye are like unto whited tombs which indeed appear beautiful, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity [sin] (Matthew 23:27-28). They were teaching others to do that which they would not do (Matthew 23:1-12). The man who teaches another to be baptized when he himself is not baptized is as the Scribes and Pharisees, i.e., a sinful hypocrite!

QUESTION No. 541: When I was baptized, I was buried in water three times. Is this the correct way to be baptized? How many times does one have to be dipped, in order to be properly baptized?

ANSWER: Just once, provided that the baptism is understood and for the right reasons. The idea of three (Triune) baptisms comes from a misunderstanding of what is being said by Christ in Matthew 28:18-20 when he refers to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Christ is not saying, 'dip once for each personality mentioned.' He is simply saying that scriptural baptism places one into a relationship with the Three; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The Bible in no place indicates the necessity of more than one dipping, but clearly to the contrary. For example, we learn from Romans 6:3-5 that we are buried as Christ was buried. Our baptism is a pattern or form of His death, burial, and resurrection (I Corinthians 15:4; Romans 6:17-18). He died once, was buried once, and arose once! Following the pattern, we do the same!

Your latter question reads: "How many times does one have to be dipped in order to be properly baptized." Since baptism is a burial, we could ask the question this way, "How many time does one have to be dipped to be buried?" Is a person buried the first time dipped? I think so! Or would one suggest that the first dip puts a person in a relationship with only the Father? Then I would ask, how is it possible to be in the Father without being in the Son, since they are one in each other (John 17:21). It isn't!

One more question: How many times do we put a dead person under the earth before we say, "He's buried!" Just once! How many times was Christ buried? Just once! How many times should we be buried? Just once!

Scriptural baptism is a single immersion in water (Romans 6:1-5) for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) into the one body (I Corinthians 12:13), the Church of Christ (Romans 16:16). The action of a burial, and its purpose, must be understood by the person being baptized. Otherwise, it is of no effect at all! Any person, whether having been dipped into a denomination or not, must be properly and scripturally baptized to be added by God to the church of the Bible, the Church of Christ. Triune (triple) baptizing is not authorized by the Word of God and, therefore, avails nothing!

QUESTION No. 542: Will the heathen of Borneo who has never heard of Christ be saved or will he go to hell?

ANSWER: Consider the commission of Christ to His followers in Mark 16:15-16: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. He that believeth not shall be damned." Note that this is said of "every creature" in "all the world," Borneo included!

The question must be asked, "What is the condition of every creature in the world, including those in Borneo, before they hear the gospel, believe it, and are baptized? Are they saved or are they lost? Obviously they are in a lost condition! You cannot save somebody who is already saved! If they were already saved, there would be no reason to do what Christ said to do! The reason He gives us for going is so that the lost can be saved!

What about the person in this country whose parents never taught him or her about Christ? They never believe and are not baptized! Are they lost or saved? If they are lost, do they have to do something to be saved? What do they have to do? They have to do the same thing everyone has to do! The point is that there is no difference in an unbeliever in this country and one in another country. God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34). This means that however one is saved, all must be saved.

By asking the subject question, it is being suggested that any person who has not heard the Gospel of Christ is saved whether in Borneo or in this country. By this suggestion, it follows then that none can be lost unless they first hear the Gospel! If this is the case, we, in obedience to Christ, would be doing others (in Borneo and the USA) a great disservice by preaching the Gospel to them, because whereas it is suggested that they are, and will be, saved without obedience to the Gospel, we then would place their souls in jeopardy by preaching it to them! However, this is not the case, since clearly the purpose of going into all the world is to "seek and save the lost" (Luke 19:10) through the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Mark 16:15-16)!

Will every soul be rewarded and punished equally? No! Luke 12:47-48: "And that servant, which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to

His will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him will they ask the more." Jesus also said of the hypocritical scribes: "the same shall receive greater damnation" (Luke 20:47) (See also Matthew 11:24). Clearly, there will be varying degrees of punishment! The same is true of rewards (Matthew 10:41-42).

We do not see and understand such matters as does God and, certainly, we should not try to force His spiritual concepts into our own physical concepts. We simply need to be obedient believers, relying upon His Word, leaving that which we do not fully comprehend up to Him! "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are my ways your ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isaiah 55:8-9)!

QUESTION No. 543: Are we required to teach the whole truth prior to baptism? Now the "loaded" question: Do we need to be concerned about a person's sins? Do we need to pry into their personal lives about marriage, substance abuse, homosexuality, etc.? What does the term "making disciples" mean? Are we commanded to follow Matthew 28:18-20 the way it is written? I am one who believes we can agree to disagree for the sake of unity in the body.

ANSWER: No! We are not required to teach the "whole" truth prior to baptism. We are instructed, however, to teach that which is necessary in order to scripturally baptize for the remission of sins into the church of Christ. After baptism, we are further instructed to further teach to "observe all things" that Christ has commanded (Matthew 28:20). Certainly, however, one can and must teach the entire truth relative to salvation and entrance into the church of Christ if the person is going to be scripturally baptized.

The term "making disciples" involves leading a person, through teaching of the Gospel, to become a follower of Christ. Having done so, we are then commanded to baptize them and then to teach them additionally that which is necessary to assure growth into a mature Christian.

Yes! We are commanded to follow Matthew 28:18-20 in the way it was written, otherwise the command is perverted!

As to your "loaded" question: Yes! We should be concerned about a person's sins as we teach them. The purpose of teaching the alien sinner is to save him or her from their sins in order that they might be saved eternally. How can one teach another about salvation without teaching about that from which they need to be saved? One does not have to inquire or pry into another's personal life in discussing sin during a Bible study. However, it can and should be discussed as a subject with the student making the application to his or her own life so that in responding to Christ's invitation the necessary and vital step of repentance can be taken prior to baptism. Without repentance, one's baptism would be invalid!

The notion that "making disciples" means dipping a person in water and that "teaching them to observe all things" means to notify them of their sins at some later date is contrary to the scriptural process of salvation! You state, and rightly so, that (unscriptural) marriages, substance abuse, homosexual behavior, improper language, and improper attire are things in which the world engages. You also hold that we should not discuss these things with the student prior to baptism. Questions: If a student does not repent of these sins before baptism, continuing to engage therein, is that student, in his or her sinful actions, still in the world and of the world, or is he or she out of the world and in the church? A homosexual is told about and agrees to be baptized, but continues to practice homosexuality for another year, is that person still a homosexual in sin or does an immersion in water permit the homosexual to engage in such within the church without sinning? Is it not still the same sin with the same consequences? Does not that sin, before or after baptism, separate the individual from God (Isaiah 59:1-2; I John 3:4)? The answers are obvious!

An eldership that allows a person to affiliate with the flock without repentance makes a grave mistake. One of their responsibilities is to keep the church pure by the ejection of sin of which one refuses to repent. To allow one to enter a fellowship that has not repented is to accept sin and impurity within that fellowship. Such unlawful permission flies in sinful opposition to I Corinthians 5:7! An eldership that allows one to affiliate with the flock without teaching that person the truths of God's Word as relates to sin has compromised its office! To knowingly allow sin to enter into the camp is to promote sin in the camp.

You also state that you are one who believes that there is room to agree to disagree if the body is to be united. Your statement is accurate if applied only to matters of true opinion. If you are applying your belief to matters of faith, you are in error! To suggest that there can be unity of faith while being divided on matters of faith is scripturally illogical and impossible (I Corinthians 1:10)! Agreed to union while being divided does not equate to scriptural unity!

QUESTION No. 544: Does a Christian fall from grace each time they sin? Such as when they take something home from work that doesn't belong to them?

ANSWER: No! A Christian does not fall in and out of grace "every time" he or she sins. Nonetheless, should one reject (turn away from) Jesus by sinning willfully, thus walking in darkness (I John 1:6), then that person will be separated from God (Isaiah 59:1-2), i.e., they will have fallen from grace (Hebrews 6:4-6). However, a Christian may also sin unwillingly and unintentionally while walking in the light (I John 1:7), as you suggest, perhaps by taking something that doesn't belong to them home from work. Such a person is not perfect, but neither is he being unfaithful to God! While walking in the light, such a person, as a Christian, confesses to the truth that he or she has done wrong and, in repentance (returning the item taken) asks forgiveness, which God graciously, without fail, performs (I John 1:9). As we walk in the light, being faithful, His blood continues to cleanse us (I John 1:7). When we quit walking in the light, His cleansing blood is no longer applied and we, thus, are separated from Him!

In order to be walking in the light it is not required that a person be perfect, i.e., that he or she be sinless. The passage demands faithfulness (walking in the light); not sinless perfection! For example, if you were to ask my wife if I were perfect, she would tell you "no!" If you were to ask her if I am faithful, she would tell you "yes!" There is a significant difference between the two. I do not have to be perfect to be in her good graces, but to be in her good graces, I must be faithful! So it is with God!

QUESTION No. 545: If a man wants to be baptized, but he is living in adultery, should I baptize him or wait until he has married the woman he lives with?

ANSWER: As long as the man and woman are unmarried and living together, they are both guilty of the sin of fornication! These cannot be scripturally baptized until they first repent and stop what they are doing. For them to truly repent means that they must be moved by godly sorrow for their sins and then turn away from (cut off) those sins. Repentance must come before (prior to) baptism (Acts 2:38). Both repentance and baptism were necessary for those on Pentecost to have remission of sins. There is no difference between them and people today (Acts 10:34; Acts 15:9). God will not forgive sins in baptism of one who has not first repented. It is a fact that even man cannot forgive one who has not repented (Luke 17:3). To baptize a man before he repents would be to change God's progressive plan for man's salvation, i.e., hear, believe, repent, confess, and be baptized. These commands must be obeyed in the order God has given them. Man cannot change God's plan in any way (Galatians 1:6-9)! One who is immersed without repentance is a dry sinner before baptism and a wet sinner after baptism! His state before God has not changed! In His disobedience he will be lost (II Thessalonians 1:7-8).

QUESTION No. 546: Since the Old Testament was done away with on the cross does this mean people are free to steal and commit adultery?

ANSWER: No! It does not, because the New Testament under which all people live today tells us that it is wrong to steal (Ephesians 4:28) and that it is wrong to commit adultery (Matthew 5:27-28; Galatians 5:19-21).

QUESTION No. 547: Since the Scriptures say that we are saved by grace, not by keeping the Law, does this mean that we should not keep or observe the Laws that are written in the Bible?

ANSWER: No! It does not mean this! When the Bible says that keeping the Law does not save us, it most often refers to the works of the Old Law, the Old Testament. We can not be saved by doing the works of an Old Law that was abolished at the death of Christ (Ephesians 2:13-16)! These are the works that are being discussed in Ephesians 2:8. But see what Paul says in Verse nine, "For we (Christians) are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." We are told that we must fulfill the Law of Christ (Galatians 6:2) and that if we love Him, we will keep His commandments (John 14:15). Those who will enter the

kingdom of God are those who "do" the will of the Father (Matthew 7:21). People are not saved by grace alone, but rather by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8). The faith that is under discussion in this verse is the same faith talked about in James 2:14-26, a faith that includes works of obedience! To not obey what we are told to do in the Gospel is equal to disobedience. All that disobey the Gospel will be lost eternally on Judgment Day (II Thessalonians 1:7-9)!

QUESTION No. 548: Do you accept one into your fellowship who disagrees with you only on one or two points?

ANSWER: The answer would be, "It depends on what the one or two points are." For example: We believe that the Holy Spirit does not literally indwell the Christian; that He indwells representatively only through the Spirit-filled Word of God. We fellowship those who hold to a literal indwelling, but who keep it to that, believing as we do that the Holy Spirit does not work separately and apart from the Word. So, there is disagreement, but fellowship. On the other hand, if one were to hold the unscriptural doctrine of salvation by faith only, we could not fellowship them, because they are not in fellowship with Christ who said, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16) and through His brother James who said, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified and not by faith only" (James 2:24). Certainly, a discussion of the points of disagreement would be appropriate and this we would suggest.

All need to be aware, however, that no human being or group of human beings adds anyone to the Lord's church. When a person obediently responds to Peter's commands of Acts 2, as did the people on the day of Pentecost, God will add them to His church in the same fashion (Acts 2:47). In other words, God does the adding! Nonetheless, one responding must have a scriptural understanding of the kingdom (Acts 8:12) into which he or she desires to enter. God will not honor an attempt to enter that which is perceived and understood as being different from the church of the New Testament. If it were different, it would not be the church of the Bible. He adds people only to His church, as described and defined in His Word, when they respond to His invitation as described and defined in His Word!

QUESTION No. 549: Must we confess before we are baptized? (Matthew 3:6).

ANSWER: Yes! It is necessary to confess our sins and belief in Jesus Christ before baptism. Though the baptism of John is not the baptism of Christ, Matthew 3:6 does not teach nor imply that confession follows baptism in either case. The language structure in both the Greek and English indicate that John baptized people upon their confession, i.e., after they had confessed. Romans 10:9-10, applicable to all who will be saved through the baptism of Christ, clearly teaches also that confession of Christ with the mouth is necessary before (unto) salvation, which is realized upon one's obedience in baptism (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38).

QUESTION No. 550: If a church preaches the Gospel in public meetings and many souls are baptized, what should we do if we learn later that some of these have two or more wives? According to Mark 16:15-16, they are saved. Please comment.

ANSWER: Those of whom you speak have <u>not</u> been saved according to Mark 16:15-16 or any other passage of Scripture. In this passage Christ is speaking of an "obedient immersion" in water that "must" be preceded by a true repentance or turning away from the sins of this (Luke 13:3: Acts 17:30-31) life, motivated by godly sorrow (II Corinthians 7:10). An immersion in water without repentance is not the baptism that saves. One who is immersed without repenting of all past sins gets wet, but not saved. The baptism of those referred to in the question was, therefore, invalid! It was no baptism at all! The men of whom you speak need to repent of their adulterous relationship by (1) being sorry before God for having taken additional wives and (2) by keeping only the first one. After having done so they may then, and only then, be scripturally baptized! The same is also true for the women involved!

QUESTION No. 551: If it is the case that one can fall from grace, should this be taken to mean that one can become more saved by working? Or more righteous? Can I lose my salvation?

ANSWER: The answer to your question as to whether one can become more saved or more righteous is "no," not in the sense that you are speaking! However, it is certain that one can mature in Christ and exhibit more godliness or righteousness in that growth (Matthew 25:14-30; Hebrews 5:8-14). As well, we learn from Revelation 2:10 that in order to receive the crown of life, we must be faithful until death! If one is not

faithful unto death, but is like the servant of Matthew 25:14-30 who did no "works," but rather hid his talents, then it would be the case that he would receive the same judgment that fell to that "wicked and slothful servant (Matthew 25:26), i.e., "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." In Matthew 25, Jesus is giving examples of the conduct He expects of His servants in the kingdom of heaven or His church (Matthew 25:1; Matthew 25:14). It is worthy of note that the one-talent servant in His kingdom was cast into outer darkness, i.e., the one-talent man had been accepted as a servant in His Kingdom, but was subsequently lost in hell which brings us to, and answers, your last question, "Can I lose my salvation?" Obviously, the answer is yes! Not only does Matthew 25:14-30 teach that one saved can subsequently be lost, but clearly the following passages teach the same: Matthew 7:19; Matthew 13:41-42; Luke 8:4-15; John 15:2-6; I Corinthians 8:11; I Corinthians 9:27; I Corinthians 10:12; I Corinthians 15:2; II Corinthians 6:1; Galatians 5:4; Galatians 6:7-9; Colossians 1:23; I Timothy 4:1-3; Hebrews 3:12; Hebrews 6:4-6; Hebrews 10:26-29; James 5:19-20; II Peter 1: 1-10; II Peter 2:20-22; Revelation 3:16, to name a few!

QUESTION No. 552: On Baptism: I understand that New Testament baptism is a burial in water. However, I would like to know whether the following passages indicate that sprinkling is also a form to be used; Hebrews 9:13-15; 10:19-23; John 13:15-17; Isaiah 52:15: Ezekiel 36:24-27.

ANSWER: All but two of these passages have to do with "sprinklings" under the Old Testament, many years before the baptism of the New Testament was authorized and commanded. Clearly these could have nothing to do with the mode of baptism under the New Testament. The other two passages in using the word "sprinkling" or "washing" likewise do not refer remotely to water baptism. John 13:15-17 involves the washing of the disciple's feet by Jesus in order that He might teach them a lesson in humility. It has nothing at all to do with baptism. Neither is the word "sprinkling" in Hebrews 10:22 a reference to water baptism. The word "hearts" in Verse 22 refers to the "mind" of man. "Having our hearts (minds) sprinkled from an evil conscience relates to a changing of the mind or the act of repentance. The word "sprinkling" stands over against the "sprinkling" of the Old Testament. Our consciences are changed when we understand what the blood of Christ provides. In this sense our hearts are "sprinkled." That reference is not to baptism is evidenced by the fact that the latter part of the verse does discuss baptism, i.e., "and our bodies (sins of the body) washed in pure water." The writer is discussing repentance and baptism! He is not suggesting that both of the two different actions (sprinkling of the heart and washing of the body) refer to baptism. Clearly only the latter

does, i.e., the washing of the body, which is the washing of regeneration of Titus 3:5 and the new birth of John 3:3-5!

QUESTION No. 553: Will those who cannot go out and preach the Gospel be lost?

ANSWER: God has never asked anyone to do something he cannot absolutely do! However, He does expect all of us to use the talents He has given us as best we can (Matthew 25:14-30). If all a man can do is to invite another to worship, then this he must do! If all a man can do is to study the Bible with another, this he must do! If a man is capable of preaching, this he must do. We must use and develop the talents we have in order to be pleasing to God and it is certain that to the degree we are talented or become talented, to that degree we must preach Christ and Him crucified! We must never lead ourselves to say, "we can't," when we really mean, "we won't!" The least we can say is, "I'll try my best!"

QUESTION No. 554: Does "calls on" and "believe" mean the same things?

ANSWER: Some would suggest that "calls on" simply means to call on Christ to save through prayer. However, that this is not the case is clearly seen as we read Matthew 7:21. This passage says that those who will enter the kingdom of heaven are not those who merely "say," Lord, Lord, but indeed are those who "do" the will of God. We can see this truth presented forcefully in the account of those who were saved in Acts, Chapter two. Note in Peter's sermon that he says (Acts 2:16) that which was happening on that day was a fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel, as stated in Joel 2:28-32. Part of that prophecy included the words, "And whosoever shall 'call upon' the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21). It follows then that if we can determine what these folks on Pentecost Day did to be saved, we can then know and understand what the phrase "calling on the name of the Lord" means. What were they told to do? And what did they do? In Acts 2:38, we find Peter telling those who expressed their belief in what he had preached by asking, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter answered, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Christ for the remission of sins." This is what they were told to do! In Acts 2:41, we find out what they did: "Then they that gladly received the word were baptized and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls" and "the Lord added to the church daily such as were

being saved? (Acts 2:47). The question then becomes, “Were these three thousand saved by “calling upon the name of the Lord?” The conclusion must be “yes,” since they were obviously saved, and the prophecy said that those who would be saved would be those who would “call upon the name of the Lord.” Therefore, “calling upon the name of the Lord” is the same as “calling upon Him in belief and obedience.” This is why Christ said in Mark 16:16, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.” In other words, in order to be saved, one must come calling upon the Lord through submission to His will. This is exactly what is being said in reference to Paul in Acts 22:16. It is evident that Paul had already believed in Christ whom he had met three days before (Acts 22:10) since he had been in prayer for three days (Acts 9:9-11). Even though he had been in prayer for these three days, he had not yet “called upon the name of the Lord.” When the preacher Ananias came to Paul to tell him what to do for the remission of sins, he said, “And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized and wash away your sins, “calling upon the name of the Lord.” From both of these cases (Acts 2 & Acts 22), we see that “calling upon the name of the Lord” is finally accomplished when he who comes “calling,” submissively and obediently subjects his will to the Lord’s will in baptism. Until one is baptized, he has not “called upon the name of the Lord.”

QUESTION No. 555: If baptism is necessary to salvation, how could the thief on the cross be saved? The household of Cornelius was saved before baptism when the Holy Ghost fell on them. By the way, I am not a Baptist as you believe.

ANSWER: The terms of pardon and salvation under the New Testament were not made known until Pentecost Day of Acts 2 by Peter. It was he who used the keys to the kingdom promised to him by Christ in Matthew 16. He opened the doors to that kingdom by preaching the first Gospel sermon under the New Testament. It was on this day that the Great Commission of Christ began and was first proclaimed. The thief lived under the Old Law, not the New Law, and he will be judged by that Old Law. To suggest that this man was amenable to a law that he did not live under is ludicrous! This fact cannot be rationalized away!

As to Cornelius, I believe you have assumed something that did not occur. Speaking in tongues by that household was not evidence of salvation that “had” come, but rather of salvation that “was” to come. The Jews rejected the notion of the Gentiles being saved on an equal basis, believing them to not be worthy of salvation. The Gentiles on that day spoke in tongues by the power of the Holy Spirit simply to prove to the Jews (Peter and the six witnesses - Acts 11:12 - he brought with him) that "God hath also

granted unto the Gentiles repentance unto life." Peter in Acts 11 is defending his actions at the house of Cornelius before those back in Jerusalem, thus the need for the six witnesses. That one being moved to speak by the Holy Spirit is not evidence of salvation is clearly seen in that Caiphas (who was a participant in the crucifixion) was so moved (John 11:49-50), to say nothing of Balaam's ass (Numbers 22:28). Surely you would not claim that they were saved when they so spoke!

There are two accounts of what happened at Cornelius' house, the first in Acts, Chapter 10 and the second with Peter's defense before the Jews in Jerusalem in Acts, Chapter 11. Please notice the reason that the Holy Ghost sent Peter to Cornelius: (Acts 10:6, "He (Peter) shall tell thee (Cornelius) what thou oughtest to do;" Acts 10:22, "And to hear words of thee;" Acts 10:32, "Who (Peter) when he cometh, shall speak unto thee (Cornelius); and " Acts 10:33, "Now therefore are we all here present (Cornelius' household) before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God."

Note next that Peter's defense in Acts 11 was expounded to those in Jerusalem "by order," i.e., he related the events that occurred at Cornelius' house by the exact order in which they happened. Then note a continuation of the verses presented out of Acts 10 as shown in the preceding paragraph. In Verse 14 of Chapter 11, we read again, "Who (Peter) shall tell thee words whereby thou (Cornelius) and all thy house shall be saved." It is very evident to the unbiased that Peter had been sent to Cornelius to tell him “words” whereby he and his house could be saved. This is obviously necessary, because one cannot have saving faith without the words of the Gospel, since "Faith comes by hearing the Word of God" (Romans 10:17). Now carefully notice that they had not yet heard the words by which they could be saved when the Holy Ghost fell on them; Acts 11:15, "And as I BEGAN TO SPEAK (the words by which they could be saved - Verse 14) the Holy Ghost fell on them and the Jews were astonished because they heard the Gentiles speak with tongues (Acts 10:44:45). The point is that Cornelius had not yet heard the words by which he could be saved when the Holy Ghost fell. Clearly if he had not heard the words by which he could be saved, he could not, therefore, be saved when the Holy Ghost fell before he heard the words by which he could be saved! (According to you, Cornelius was saved before he heard from Peter the words by which he could be saved). At that point they began to speak in tongues as evidence of the falling of the Holy Spirit, testifying to all (including those back in Jerusalem) that they (the Jews) should not forbid water, that these (Gentiles) should not be baptized as were the Jews. Then Peter told them the words by which they could be saved (Exactly as Jesus said in Mark 16:16 and as Peter said in Acts 2:38): "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." Upon

their response to the words spoken by Peter, they were then saved as Jesus had said in Mark 16:16 and as Peter had said in Acts 2:38!

The notion that the falling of the Holy Ghost evidenced salvation that had already come is without logic, Scripture, or scholarship!

You may not be a Baptist, but you certainly espouse Baptist doctrine. As well, you haven't yet dealt with Mark 16:15-16 and Acts 2:38. I might add that you must also deal with Acts 22:16; Romans 6:3-5; Galatians 3:26-27; I Peter 3:21, et al. Trying to find passages that contradict these, as was the attempt in referring to the house of Cornelius, will be of no avail, since the Bible does not contradict itself. If it does, it isn't truth!

QUESTION No. 556: I agree that man is not saved by "faith only,' but will you agree that man is saved by "grace only" through God's personal intervention at which time man is made by Him a poor and contrite spirit who trembles at His Word?

ANSWER: Certainly, man is not saved by "faith only," but neither is he saved by "grace only," as you suggest! Without either, man would be lost! There can be no doubt that obedient faith is required and necessary for our justification (Romans 5:1; James 2:24). Just as certainly, we are also saved by grace (Ephesians 2:8). But note here that man is saved by "grace" THROUGH "faith." Therefore, both are necessary and critical to the redemption of fallen man. "Grace" is what God has done and "faith" is what man must do to access that "grace." Paul wrote to Titus in 2:11 that "the grace of God hath appeared unto all men." God graciously made a way for us to be saved in sending His Son as the one and only means by whom, and through whom, man could be saved. All men, therefore, may, through "faith," access that "grace." Some will and some won't (Matthew 7:13-27; Matthew 25:31-46). You suggest that a man is saved when God has supernaturally intervened to make that one a "poor and contrite spirit who trembles at His Word." You imply that this is God's "grace." However, it is very clear that God intervened supernaturally some two-thousand years ago in providing "saving grace" that appeared unto all men (Titus 2:11). This "grace" teaches us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:12-13). That point is that God does not

today supernaturally intervene to make man what he "should" be. He intervened supernaturally long, long ago in making provisions for what man "could" be in the giving of His Son through whom man, if obediently faithful, could access His free gift of "grace." In summary, the gift of grace has been given to all men, and man through his obedient faith may thereby access that gift! In Titus 3:5, Paul states "how" men accesses that grace: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy (the grace He provided) He saved us, by the washing of regeneration (baptism – through obedient faith), and renewing of the Holy Spirit. Having been thus born anew of water and the Spirit, being made a new creature in Him, then and only then can one rightfully claim to have accessed His free gift of "grace."

QUESTION No. 557: I am now a faithful and committed member of the Church of Christ. I sinned publicly a long time ago, repented, confessed publicly, and prayed to God for forgiveness. My problem is that, although, most of my brethren "say" they have forgiven me, the continuing mistreatment and rejection by many of them (even after some years) is, at times, almost more than I can bear and occasionally makes me wonder if God has truly and really forgiven me. This obvious and very pointed non-acceptance by brethren (?) of a forgiven child of God has often made it difficult for me to remain faithful. Can you help me? And help me understand why?

ANSWER: I believe there are, at least, three reasons that cause otherwise good brethren to act differently toward those who have repented of sin. The first of these is simply that some do not fully understand the source of forgiveness; the need for forgiveness; the method of forgiveness, neither the results of forgiveness. Secondly, some forget that they, too, are sinners and have needs to repent, if they would be restored and forgiven. Thirdly, the categorization of sins, for the wrong purpose and use, is more often than not developed by those who appear to be, and often are, unforgiving.

Certainly, God is the primary source of forgiveness and either an individual or a group of individuals (perhaps the local congregation) is the secondary source of forgiveness. The secondary source of forgiveness (man), if they would be forgiven, <u>must</u> forgive "as" the primary source (God) forgives. According to the model prayer (Matthew 6:12), all are to pray that we be forgiven "as" (an adverb of manner) we forgive our debtors. (When God answers and honors this prayerful request, I would suspect it to be the case that many would remain without forgiveness!) We are also instructed in Ephesians 4:32, that we are to "be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one

another, even “as” God for Christ’s sake has forgiven us.” Therefore, all need to understand “how” God forgives and then “go, and do likewise.”

Just “how” does God forgive? Well, He is faithful and just to “always” forgive the penitent, confessing sinner (I John 1:9), no matter the sin; no matter the number of times the sin was committed; and no matter what man, or group of men, that the sin may also (in addition to God) have been against! Man is, as well, directed to “always” forgive, e.g., Mark 11:25, “And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses, but if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses;” Luke 17:3-4, “Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you saying, ‘I repent,’ forgive him.” Forgiveness then cannot be scripturally refused to a penitent one! It is also worthy of note that when God forgives, He forgets (Hebrews 10:17) and though, being in the flesh, man cannot totally forget, he must conduct himself toward the forgiven as though he actually did forget! That is “how” God forgives and that is, therefore, “how” man is instructed to forgive, if he would be forgiven of God.

It must be understood by “all” that “all” are sinners (even one’s self) and stand in need of continual forgiveness. To refuse to forgive a brother “as” God forgives is to prevent forgiveness of one’s own sins. Further, it is not enough to just say, “I forgive” and then treat a brother in an unkind and non-brotherly way. The forgiveness must be genuine in all aspects of the term, including the restoration of the penitent one to full, not partial, fellowship. Since God “upbraideth not (James 1:5), i.e., He does not chide or throw our sins in our faces, we cannot upbraid a penitent brother or sister!

It, in my opinion, is the categorization of sins that causes one not to fully forgive. For example, men will often categorize sin in this fashion: The greatest sin is murder; next, adultery; then fornication; then child abuse, etc., etc. Toward the bottom of the list the following sins will appear: “forsaking an assembling, going to ungodly movies, watching filthy soap operas on television, gossiping, etc.” (In fact, some of these kinds of sin have been, of recent years, taken completely off the list.) There is nothing wrong with categorizing sin, as relates to punishment and/or consequences. This, the Scriptures teach. However, we are not permitted, if we are to forgive “as” God forgives, to apply that categorization to “degrees” of forgiveness! “All” sin, “any” sin, is forgiven by God on the same basis, i.e., it (no matter the sin) is, upon confession, totally forgiven and forgotten!

The same must be true of each of us, no matter the sin! However, what very often is the case, is that one who commits a perceived "minor" sin (forsaking the assembling), according to man's categorization and faulty perception, is totally forgiven by all and the sin completely forgotten within a few days, as it should be! However, this is not always true when one has engaged in a "major" sin that is high on someone's listed category of sins. Though one committing a perceived "major" sin is just as penitent as the one committing what man calls a "minor" sin, that person is often not forgiven on an equal basis, "as" God forgives. And, therefore, to make a distinction in "how" (to what degree) we forgive, based on our perception of what's "major" and what's "minor," is sinful in and of itself. Certainly, one does not expect God to forgive by degree and, therefore, man cannot forgive by degree! It must be total and complete!

Further it must be total and complete when (at the time) a man "says" he repents (Luke 17:4), which obviously must be accompanied with a forsaking of the sin. It, too, must be recognized that neither man, nor congregation, nor school, nor lectureship clique can judge the heart sufficiently to reject another's repentance and confession statement. Neither may they develop and impose a set of criteria to be met by the penitent one in order for him or her to be totally forgiven. Often, brethren will do so, suggesting that before complete forgiveness can be granted, the sinner must "bring forth fruit meet for repentance (Matthew 3:8). " Some, wresting this passage, would even hold that God will not forgive the sinner until the man, congregation, school, or clique first forgives, which is, in turn, dependent upon the sinner meeting man imposed control criteria, usually involving a show of subjection to those establishing the criteria! In such cases, I submit that God forgives the penitent one, while, at the same time, credits the account of the one(s) imposing the criteria, with the sin of not forgiving "as" He forgives. It is not man's responsibility or privilege to apply third degree grilling to the penitent one, nor to ascertain the validity of his repentance, nor to impose personally determined future rules of conduct and activity, without which the forgiveness sought will be withheld or withdrawn. It is plain and simple, i.e., when a sinner says, "I repent," we are to forgive (totally), "as" God for Christ's sake has forgiven us and, as He has directed, 'Stop, cease, and desist from punishing the penitent one, tenderheartedly comfort the penitent one, and kindly confirm/demonstrate the love of a brother for and to the penitent one (II Corinthians 2:6-11).

We hope the above will help in your understanding of this problem. Please do not allow an unforgiving brother or sister to rob you of your salvation. The problem lies not with you, but with the unforgiving! Remain faithful in all things, knowing that, upon your sincere repentance and confession, God has completely forgiven you and that you stand

second to no man. Pray for the unforgiving ones (Matthew 5:44) and do your best to teach them the truth in accordance with Matthew 18:15-17 to bring about their repentance and salvation. He'll bless you for it!

QUESTION No. 558: I believe everyone needs to be baptized by immersion / buried in the water. But there is a verse that puzzles me, maybe you can help, Luke 7:50.

ANSWER: The verse reads, "And He said to the woman, thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

The faith that the woman had was not simply the mental acknowledgement that Christ could heal her. Her "faith" moved her to an "action" that demonstrated her faith. Upon her completion and demonstration of faith (Luke 7:38), Christ said, "thy faith hath saved thee." This is what James, the Lord's brother, writes about in James 2:20, "faith without works is dead." In Verse 24, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified and not by faith only." And in Verse 26, "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

Additionally, this and similar passages relating events that occurred under the Old Testament Law (such as the thief on the cross) before Christ's baptism became effective should not be used to approve or disapprove the necessity of baptism. Christ's baptism under the New Testament did not become effective until after Christ died, resurrected, and ascended back to Heaven; Acts, Chapter two. The woman that Christ healed lived before the command (under the New Testament) to be baptized was issued.

QUESTION No. 559: Would you define repentance?

ANSWER: (Grk. metanoia, a "change" of mind). It is a thorough change in the heart of man away from sin and toward God. Repentance is inseparable from faith, since without it no one can truly repent, and repentance cannot occur until the sinner fully realizes that he cannot be saved by any other means than by the God against whom he has sinned. And there can be no saving faith without true repentance (Acts 2:38). Repentance

involves the following components, (1) a genuine sorrow toward God on account of sin (II Corinthians 7:9-10; Matthew 5:3-4; Psalms 51:1); (2) a disgust toward sin, necessarily followed by the actual forsaking of it (Matthew 3:8; Acts 26:20). Repentance has not occurred, if that for which one has been sorrowful toward God is allowed to continue, i.e., without a cessation of that for which one has been sorrowful, there is no forgiveness or salvation, i.e., being and saying I am sorry for a sin does not turn a sinful act into a righteous act. If it was sin before sorrow appeared, it remains sin after sorrow appears; and (3) humble self-surrender to the will and service of God (Acts 9:6; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16).

QUESTION No. 560: Please, how may a dumb one who is not educated confess and be baptized?

ANSWER: The word "dumb" carries at least three different meanings. It may mean (1) "not having the power of speech" or (2) it can refer to one who has limited intelligence or (3) to one who is uneducated.

If it is the first (not having the power of speech) then that one so affected will have to confess within his or her physical capability that Jesus Christ is the risen Son of God. If it is the second (limited intelligence), wherein one's intelligence is so limited that he or she cannot understand (having the mind of a child), then it is the case that no action of that child is required. An infant, or one with the mind of an infant, is not culpable (blameworthy) before God, i.e., they don't understand the difference between right and wrong and remain continually in a "safe" state before God and have no need, therefore, to be saved! If it is the third (one that is not educated and unable to read, but with the intelligence to comprehend), that one most be saved through the preaching of others while carefully discerning the Biblical proof texts presented.

NEW TESTAMENT QUESTIONS

QUESTION No. 561: Did Satan work through Judas, as he did the serpent?

ANSWER: Judas permitted himself to be influenced by the devil (Luke 22:3), whereas the serpent, having no ability to choose, acted at the direction and power that Satan enjoyed at that time!

QUESTION No. 562: Will Judas go to heaven or hell?

ANSWER: He will go to hell! Please read Matthew 26:24; Matthew 27:3-10; John 17:12; and Acts 1:16-25. He was referred to as the son of "perdition" (John 17:12). This word carries with it the idea of damnation, ruin, destruction, and perishing. As the "son" of perdition, he would (because of the ungodly character that resulted in his transgression) inherit perdition and all it means.

This does not mean that Judas had no choice in what he did. He was not personally coerced by God to betray Jesus. In Acts 1:25, we see that Judas "fell" by his own transgression. God does not cause any to sin! Man sins when he is drawn away of his own lusts and when lust has conceived it brings forth sin (James 1:13-15). Such was the case with Judas! Such was the case with Herod and Pilate! Neither were these men personally coerced by God to participate in the death of Christ; nor the ones who bruised Him; nor the one who pierced His side. There is no difference between these and Judas. All of these (including Judas) participated in the fulfillment of prophecy! Shall we therefore conclude that these others will not stand to be judged? No! All of them (including Judas) sinned of their own free will, and all of them (including Judas) will be judged on the basis of their own free will actions! God does not predetermine or cause particular individuals to be lost or saved, nor to engage in specific unlawful acts that would affect their eternal destiny! "For we must all (each and every individual, including Judas) appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one (including Judas) may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

The transgression of Judas (caused by his ungodly character) against Christ could have been forgiven, as were those on Pentecost (Acts 2:23; Acts 2:36-47), so long as Judas lived, had he been willing to bend his will to the Lord's. The transgression of Judas in taking his own life (caused by his ungodly character that rejected the will of God) could not be forgiven, because there is no provision or opportunity to become saved after death occurs (Hebrews 9:27). Thus he has gone "to his own place," the place of perdition!

QUESTION No. 563: How did the apostles convert to Christ?

ANSWER: They were converted by obeying Him, i.e., by "following Him" according to His will! (Matthew 4:22; Mark 1:18; Luke 5:11, 28). Today, we must do the same. There is no other way! The question is sometimes asked, "were the men who be-

came apostles of necessity immersed in water for the remission of their sins?" The answer is yes! In Romans 6:3-4, the apostle Paul said, "Know ye not that so many of 'us' as were baptized . . . Therefore, 'we' are buried with Him by baptism . . ." Also in Titus 3:5, "He saved 'us' by the washing of regeneration, . . ." Peter said in I Peter 3:21, "Baptism doth also now save 'us'." Certainly the personal pronouns "us" and "we" include the apostles themselves. Baptism was as necessary to their obedience and salvation as is ours today!

QUESTION No. 564: What is truth?

ANSWER: Jesus Himself answered this question in John 17:17, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." This means that all of the truth that pertains unto life and godliness can be found only in the Bible (II Peter 1:3); that there are no additional truths to be found in any man or in any religious organization! It is by this Book, that all will one day be judged (John 12:48).

QUESTION No. 565: In Matthew 5:3-12, it says that those who possess certain characteristics will be saved outside the church. Would you explain this?

ANSWER: When Jesus spoke these things the kingdom (church) had not yet been established. In Matthew 16:18-19, we see clearly that the church (kingdom) was yet in the future. Jesus, at the beginning of His earthly ministry, "came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand" (it is not yet here, but it is near). In Matthew 5 (before the kingdom came), Jesus is simply saying that participants in the coming kingdom (which was established on the first Pentecost after His death-Mark 9:1; Acts 2:22-47) will be those who possess the characteristics described in Matthew 5:3-12. There is absolutely no indication in this or any other passage that anyone can be saved outside of the church!

QUESTION No. 566: Would you explain Matthew 5:17-18?

ANSWER: Jesus is saying that He did not come for the purpose of destroying the law and the prophets (Old Testament). His purpose was to fulfill it! He further stated that nothing would pass from the law (Old Testament) until that time when all of it would be

fulfilled. That time came when He died on the cross. At that time all of the Old Testament was fulfilled or filled full. Upon its fulfillment, it had served its purpose of bringing man unto Christ (Galatians 3:24-25). Because it had served its purpose, it was, at that time, taken out of the way (Colossians 2:14). It was nailed to the cross in His death (Colossians 2:14)! When Christ (the Testator) died, His New Testament became effective (Hebrews 9:16-17), "a better covenant, which was established upon better promises, for if that first covenant (Old Testament) had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second" (New Testament) - (Hebrews 8:7-8).

QUESTION No. 567: In light of Matthew 5:34-37 and James 5:12, would it be wrong to "swear to tell the truth, so help you God" as a witness in court?

ANSWER: No! Taking such an oath would not be wrong. In the Old Testament we find that the Jews were commanded to "swear" by the "Lord thy God" (Deuteronomy 6:13). However, it had become the practice of the Jews in the first century to profane the name of God by taking His name irreverently and in vain (Exodus 20:7) through the misuse of "oaths" often designed to shade or cover up the truth. It is to such oaths that these passages refer. The truth of this is made clear by James, "but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay" (Vs.12). The thrust of this passage teaches that Christians are to be known for their truthfulness rather than their need of taking profane oaths to support insignificant matters. That not all oaths are wrong is seen in the fact that the inspired apostle Paul often used them, e.g., Romans 1:9; Galatians 1:20. It is also significant that even God Himself "sware" (Hebrews 6:13-20). So, clearly, not all oaths are sinful.

QUESTION No. 568: What did Jesus mean when He said "new" wine should not be put in "old" bags (Matthew 9:17)?

ANSWER: Notice that this particular passage is a continuation of the discussion about fasting in Verses fourteen and fifteen. Jesus was telling His disciples in Verse seventeen, that just as it was not fitting to put "new" wine in "old" bags (bottles), because both the wine and the bags would be destroyed, it was also not fitting or proper that they should fast after the hypocritical way of the Pharisees. In other words just as "new" wine and "old" bags do not go together, neither does Christ’s teaching about fasting agree with the Pharisee's doctrine of fasting!

QUESTION No. 569: Jesus said in Matthew 13 that the "tares" should be left in the garden. Do the tares represent those in the denominations who cannot be convinced of the truth?

ANSWER: All who are not in the church of Christ are in the world (Matthew 12:30). The word "tares" in this passage, therefore, includes, but is not limited to those in the denominations.

QUESTION No. 570: What is Jesus teaching us in Matthew 15:22-28?

ANSWER: In this passage a Gentile woman came to Jesus to plead with Him to heal her daughter. Jesus' response to the woman's request (Verse 26), "It is not proper to take the children's (Jews) bread, and to cast it to dogs (Gentiles)," was made to test her faith. Her reply in Verse twenty-seven, "Truth Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table" showed her confident faith that Christ could and would heal her daughter. This account teaches us that we should exhibit the same degree of faith in our lives.

QUESTION No. 571: Would you explain Matthew 20:16? Who are the first and the last?

ANSWER: The last (in order of time) to begin laboring in the kingdom of God may receive greater reward than those who first (in order of time) began laboring in the kingdom. It will not be the responsibility of humankind to decide the justice of rewards given in the Judgment, but rather to Him whose judgment is just (John 5:30). In the last phrase of the verse (many are called, but "few" are chosen), we learn that there will be "many" who will receive no reward at all, but, rather, punishment! This is clearly the application of the same phrase in Matthew 22:13-14! For further contrast and comparison of the "few" and the "many," please also read Matthew 7:13, 14, 21 & 22.

QUESTION No. 572: To whom does the "Son of Man" refer in Matthew 24:37? To Jesus or to the Father?

ANSWER: In Verse thirty-six of this chapter, Jesus begins to answer a question asked of Him in the latter part of Verse three, "Tell us . . .what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?" His disciples wanted to know when HE would return! He referred to HIS return as the "coming of the Son of Man" in Verse thirty-seven. Jesus Christ is, therefore, the Son of Man!

QUESTION No. 573: Would you explain what appears to be a discrepancy between Luke 23:39-43 and Matthew 27:38-44; Mark 15:32? Did one or two of the insurgents rail on Jesus? I know that all scripture is inspired of God and truthful!

ANSWER: Since there can be no discrepancies in God's inspired Word, there appears to be two possibilities: (1) At the first, both railed on Jesus (of which Matthew and Mark speak), one later repented, while the second continued to mock (of which Luke speaks) or (2), what one said was attributed to the group, in this case two! This practice was common. For example: Mark 7:17 says, "His disciples asked Him concerning the parable." Matthew 15:15 tells us that specifically it was Peter who spoke. Compare also Mark 5:31 / Luke 8:45 and Luke 9:13 / John 6:8-9. Today if a lone police officer gave me a ticket for speeding, I might tell my friends that the "Police pulled me over" or that the "Police gave me a ticket." Certainly, there is no discrepancy between what actually happened and what I reported. The important fact I am trying to relay is not how many policemen were involved in giving me the ticket, but rather the fact that I got a ticket.

QUESTION No. 574: Would you please explain Luke 17:20-21?

ANSWER: The Jews believed that the promised Messiah of the Old Testament would come with great outward show and establish an earthly kingdom from which the world would be ruled. Jesus, the promised Messiah, told the Pharisees in this passage that He did not come to establish an earthly, physical kingdom as they thought; one that people could observe visually. He, to the contrary, taught that the promised kingdom He came to build (Matthew 16:16-19) was to be a spiritual kingdom; one to be perceived by the heart, rather than with the eye!

QUESTION No. 575: John 1:12 says that those who believe have been given the power to be saved. In other words they will be saved. Then why aren't the devils who believe also saved (James 2:19).

ANSWER: John 1:12 does not teach that those who believe are saved. This passage teaches that those who believe have the power (the right or privilege) to "become" the sons of God. They do not "become" the sons of God; they are not saved until after their belief and after they have obeyed Him! (Hebrews 5:8-9; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-5; Romans 6:16-18). This is what is being taught in James, Chapter two: Faith (belief) without works of obedience is dead (Vs. 14, 17, 20, 24, & 26). To support this truth, James says in Verse nineteen that the disobedient devils also believe, and tremble. It is obvious that the devils are lost and that their belief in Christ does not save them. And the same is true of humans who only believe and do not obey. They, too, are lost, because "faith (belief) without works is dead" (Vs.20). Consider carefully Verse twenty-four, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith (belief) only." This passage (and John1:12) teaches that justification (forgiveness & salvation) is not ours by belief (faith) only (alone). It is true that one must believe in order to be saved, but clearly, belief only is not enough. Those cast out of Heaven mutinied against God in disobedience, even though they believed in, and knew, God. The evidence then is clear that (1) belief alone does not save, i.e., if belief is not conjoined with submissive obedience, it cannot save, and (2) to not obey is to disobey!

QUESTION No. 576: Please comment on I Corinthians 3:12-15. a) In what way will the fire try our works? b) How can one's work be burned and he be saved? c) To what work is Paul referring?

ANSWER: In Verse twelve, we see that a man's work is classified in two ways: 1) gold, silver, and precious stones; 2) wood, hay, and stubble. The first, being tested by fire, is purified; the second, being tested by fire, is destroyed. Men build upon the foundation of Christ (Vs.10-11) by converting people to Him (I Peter 2:4-6). Some of these converts (the gold, silver, and precious stones) will remain faithful and stand the testing (fire) of Judgment. Some (the wood, hay, and stubble) will not. The Christian will be rewarded by knowing his work (the faithful convert) was saved. When he knows his work (the unfaithful convert) has not stood the testing (fire) of Judgment, he will suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved. The phrase, "yet so as by fire" simply indicates one's salvation will not be determined by how many of his converts remain faithful, but will be

determined by his own faithfulness to God. In other words, he, as well as his converts, will go through the testing (fire) of Judgment (II Corinthians 5:10).

QUESTION No. 577: Who is the man Paul saw in his vision of II Corinthians 12:1-4?

ANSWER: That Paul is speaking of himself is established in Verse six of this chapter. He begins to speak of himself in Verse four as "a man in Christ" in order to avoid in this chapter what could possibly have been seen as excessive boasting because of what he said in the preceding chapter. In Chapter eleven, he stated that he was not one whit behind the very chiefest apostles (Vs.5) and then speaks at length about his accomplishments and sufferings in the cause of Christ. He did not do this for personal glory, but rather to counter the charges brought against him by Judaizing teachers. It is clear from Chapter eleven that Paul found this kind of argument personally distasteful, but, nonetheless, necessary. In Verse one he had asked the Corinthians to bear with him a little in what might seem to be the folly of boasting. After having done so, Paul begins Chapter twelve by stating that it was not well (expedient) for him to carry this type of discussion further. He, therefore, changed subjects and began discussing "visions and revelations of the Lord." In order to avoid what might appear to be excessive boasting, he does not refer directly to himself, but rather indirectly as "a man in Christ."

QUESTION No. 578: Does the establishment of our faith in the four gospels assure us of the promises of Jesus?

ANSWER: Inspired writers often use the word "faith" to refer to that "system of faith," "which was once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3), i.e., the New Testament. The books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John are a part of this "system of faith" and they, along with the other books of the New Testament, contain the precious promises of Jesus (II Peter 1:1-4).

QUESTION No. 579: Would you explain Matthew 21:44?

ANSWER: Jesus in this chapter is talking to the chief priests and elders of the Jews. Beginning in Verse thirty-three, He presents a parable designed to show that, because they had rejected Him (Vs.42; see also Psalms 118:22-23; Acts 4:11-12), the kingdom of God would be taken from them and given to the Gentiles. In Verse forty-four the "Stone" is a clear reference to Christ. Whosoever (including, but not limited to the Jews) shall stumble at this "Stone" (Christ) will be broken to pieces, but not totally destroyed, i.e., there remains an opportunity for repentance. However, if penitence is not forthcoming and the "Stone" (Christ) falls (comes in judgment) upon whosoever, they will be destroyed.

These verses have primary reference to the destruction of Jerusalem, which occurred in 70AD. However, by use of the word "whosoever," we are given to understand the direct applicability of this passage to all men everywhere!

QUESTION No. 580: Does Acts 15:20 prohibit Christians today from eating blood?

ANSWER: Yes! The reason given in Leviticus 17:10-14 for not eating blood is "Because the life of the flesh is in the blood." The fact that "the life is in the blood" was true when James spoke and it is, as well, true today. Thus, the commandment by the Holy Spirit through James that Gentiles, then and now, should (as did the Jews) abstain from such. Further, there is no justification for restricting this commandment solely to the eating of blood sacrificed to idols, as some do!

QUESTION No. 581: Why did the wise men bring gifts to Christ?

ANSWER: It was customary in the east at that time to show respect for those of high office by presenting gifts. Their bringing gifts to Christ was quite appropriate since the wise men believed Him to be "born King of the Jews" (Matthew 2:2).

QUESTION No. 582: What is meant in I Timothy 2:15 . . ."she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety?"

ANSWER: First of all, the passage does not teach that childbearing is the act by which a woman is saved, that is, this act does not constitute a plan (or a way) of salvation. Neither is there an implication that all women who do not bear children are going to be lost! If we consider this verse in context with preceding verses (Vs.8-14), we see a contrast or comparison between the responsibilities and proper relationship between Christian men and Christian women. In Verses eleven and twelve, Paul shows that women are to be in submission to the man (see also I Corinthians 11:3); that they are not to teach, nor usurp authority over the man. In Verses thirteen and fourteen, he tells us why this is the case. Then, in Verse fifteen, he says, 'the preceding notwithstanding, she will be saved, not in participating in the authoritative role of the man, but, rather, in (not by) the role that God assigned the woman in this life (Genesis 1:16), i.e., in (not by) childbearing and all it involves.' Nonetheless, Paul continues, "if (if and only if) they continue in the faith and charity and holiness with sobriety." In other words, though women are not permitted to assume the role of the man, she can certainly be saved in the role of the woman, if in that role, "she continue(s) in the faith and charity and holiness with sobriety!"

QUESTION No. 583: Would you please explain I Timothy 5:23-25?

ANSWER: The twenty-third verse is an account of Paul prescribing the use of wine only as a medicine to treat Timothy's stomach ailment and other infirmities. Had Timothy been in the habit of drinking wine, it would not have been necessary for Paul to tell him what to do for his illness. Clearly then, this passage does not authorize the use of wine under other than medical conditions. Such would be sinful! Please read Proverbs 23:29-35; Isaiah 5:11; Habakkuk 4:2; I Corinthians 6:9-11; and Galatians 5:19-21.

Verses twenty-four and twenty-five deal with the sins of man and the good works of man. Some men's ungodly actions are, by nature, apparent to all, and may, therefore, be righteously judged as sinful (John 7:24) in this life by others. Some sins are engaged in deceptively, and though they may remain hidden in this life, will eventually be revealed at the final Judgment (II Corinthians 5:10). The same is true of the good works of man. They cannot be concealed or hidden forever. Many of them will be made known in this life to the glory of God (Matthew 5:16). Those not seen in this life will, as the sins of man, be made known at the Judgment.

QUESTION No. 584: Would you explain Colossians 2:16?

ANSWER: Notice in Verse fourteen of this chapter, that the apostle Paul is discussing the fact that the Old Testament Law had been blotted out by Christ, because it was against us and contrary to us. Had it not been blotted out, it would have conflicted with the New Testament Law, which became effective upon the death of Christ (Hebrews 9:15-17). Therefore, He took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross. See also Romans 7:1-7; II Corinthians 3:1-18; Galatians 3:19-29; Ephesians 2:11--18; Hebrews 7:12; and Hebrews 8:6-10. In Verse sixteen, Paul discusses the "holy days" and "sabbaths" that were a part of the Old Testament Law. He is saying, "in view of the fact that you are no longer under that Law, you are not bound to keep these 'days.'" Therefore, don't let any man judge you (or pronounce sentence upon you) regarding them. There were Jewish teachers at that time who were trying to force Christians to go back under the Old Law for justification by keeping the "days" in question. Paul is saying, 'don't let it happen.' In fact, in Galatians 5:1, he says to "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage (the Old Testament Law). In Verse four, he warns that those who go back under that Old Law have "fallen from grace."

QUESTION No. 585: Would you explain Colossians 3:2 and 3:5?

ANSWER: The phrase "If ye be risen with Christ" is understood in light of Colossians 2:11-13. In Verse eleven, Paul discusses the circumcision of Christ by which the body of the sins of the flesh are put off. In Verse twelve, he tells us when those sins are put off: It is when ye are "buried with Him in baptism, where in also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses." It becomes clear then that the phrase in Chapter three, Verse one, "If ye be risen with Christ" alludes to a spiritual resurrection at baptism, during which one, having been dead in sin, puts off sin and consequently is risen or made alive in Christ. Since this is the case with one who has been baptized; one who has been made alive, he or she is to "seek those things which are above" (Vs.2) and to mortify (put to death) in our bodies the sins of the earth, such as fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil desires, and covetousness, which is idolatry (Vs.5).

QUESTION No. 586: Does Colossians 4:11 have reference to Jesus Christ?

ANSWER: No! The name "Jesus" was relatively common among the Jews in New Testament times. Jesus, Joshua or Jehoshua was the Jewish designation of one of Paul's companions and fellowworkers named in this passage. He was known by the name "Justus" among the Gentiles.

QUESTION No. 587: What is Peter teaching in I Peter 5:6?

ANSWER: Verse five of this chapter tells us that if we are to be recipients of the grace of God, we must be humble. Verse six teaches that a Christian must never be guilty of exalting himself. We are to leave that to God who will exalt the humble Christian, either in this life or in the Judgment to come. I suspect that many who expect, promote, and receive the exaltation of others in this life will be disappointedly surprised at that time.

QUESTION No. 588: Most of the apostles were uneducated. How did they manage to do Gospel work?

ANSWER: The apostles were guided into all truth by the Holy Spirit (John 16:13). He taught them all things, and brought all things to their remembrance, whatsoever Christ had said unto them (John 15:26). The Spirit, however, did not come to make uneducated men educated. Neither does He so do today! It is not necessary that one be highly educated to do God's work! Many faithful Christians without significant formal education have often accomplished great things in the service of God. Whatever talent has been given, one is required to use it to His glory (Matthew 25:14-30)!

QUESTION No. 589: Why did the apostles decide to use assistants?

ANSWER: The men who went with the apostles to proclaim the Gospel were not assistants in a formal sense. They, too, were those involved in preaching the Gospel ac-

cording to the great commission of Mark 16:15-16. The task before them was great and, undoubtedly, the apostles alone could not have accomplished the feat of taking the Gospel into all the world as was done by the time Paul wrote the book of Colossians (Colossians 1:6 & 23). That the Holy Spirit was also involved in such decisions relating to “assistants” can be seen in Acts 13:2.

QUESTION No. 590: How many were chosen to go with the apostles?

ANSWER: We are not told! However, many of these "helpers" are identified in Romans 16; I Corinthians 16; Colossians 4; II Timothy 4; Titus 3; and many other passages.

QUESTION No. 591: What kinds of men were chosen to go with the apostles?

ANSWER: The character of one of these is seen in a description of Barnabas, a companion of the apostle Paul, "a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and faith."

QUESTION No. 592: How did the apostles want to spend most of their time?

ANSWER: As they did, proclaiming the unsearchable riches of Christ! Please read II Corinthians 11:21-33; II Timothy 4:6-8.

QUESTION No. 593: Was Theophilus a Christian and very rich?

ANSWER: It appears from the phrase "those things wherein thou hast been instructed" (Luke 1:4) that he likely was a Christian. The phrase "most excellent Theophilus" (Vs.3) indicates that he was a man of means and high office. To what degree, however, we are not told.

QUESTION No. 594: In Luke 22:36, does Jesus encourage self-defense?

ANSWER: In this passage, Jesus instructed his disciples to carry a sword. A sword may be used either offensively or defensively. Clearly, Christ did not instruct them to use the sword to hurt or make war (Matthew 5:38-48; Matthew 10:16), but rather defensively, because the country into which they were being sent was very dangerous; filled with wild beasts and robbers. Those who hold that Christians may not defend themselves do so without scriptural support!

QUESTION No. 595: Why did Paul often use diatribe in His writings?

ANSWER: The word "diatribe" is defined as abusive language. I do not believe that this definition is descriptive of Paul's writings! We must remember that the apostle simply wrote "words" as directed by the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 2:13). The "words" as given by the Holy Spirit were those necessary to communicate the will of God in the most effective manner. At times, especially when dealing with sin (I Corinthians 4:18-21), the words were filled with indignation. At other times they were filled with love and tenderness (II Corinthians 2:4). Always were they designed and proclaimed to the betterment of men's souls!

QUESTION No. 596: Would you please explain Hebrews 10:28?

ANSWER: Throughout the book of Hebrews, the writer contrasts or compares Moses' Law (the Old Testament) with Christ's Law (the New Testament). Please see 7:12; 8:7-13; & 10:9.

In Chapter ten, Verses twenty-eight and twenty-nine, a comparison is made of punishment under Moses' Law versus punishment under Christ's Law. If a person despised (rejected) Moses' Law, he or she was put to death by stoning at the mouth of two or three witnesses (Deuteronomy 17:1-7). If we (all people everywhere) who live today during the Christian age, despise and reject Christ's Law, we will receive "sorer (worse) punishment" (Verse 29) than those who lived during the Mosaical age and under Moses' Law. There remains today, for anyone who rejects the last and final sacrifice of Jesus

Christ (Verses 12 & 26), a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation (Vs.27)! See also II Thessalonians 1:7-9.

QUESTION No. 597: Why are Paul's writings referred to as epistles and letters?

ANSWER: An epistle is the same thing as a letter. The words are equal in meaning. The apostle's writings are so-called, because (at the direction of the Holy Spirit) they were, and indeed are, letters of communication (or messages of authority) written for distribution to others (Colossians 4:16), including all people today!

QUESTION No. 598: In Acts 1:9-11, Christ enters heaven with flesh and blood, and it was written that flesh and blood cannot enter into heaven. What is your stand on this?

ANSWER: Acts 1:9-11 does not say, nor imply, that at the ascension Christ's body consisted of flesh and blood. Neither does Luke 24:39 say that His resurrected body was of flesh and blood. It simply says that His body was flesh and bones! What kind of flesh? We do not know (I Corinthians 15:35-44), but we do know that it was not flesh and blood as we know it, for, as stated, such cannot inherit the kingdom of God (I Corinthians 15:50). We also know that at our resurrection we too, as Christ, shall have a body (II Corinthians 5:1-4) and that it will be "fashioned like unto His glorious body" (Philippians 3:20-21; I John 3:2).

QUESTION No. 599: Luke 14:26 says I must hate my brother. I John 4:20 says if I hate my brother, I am a liar. Please explain?

ANSWER: The word "hate" in Luke 14:26 simply means to love less! Please read a parallel passage in Matthew 10:37, which teaches this same principle!

QUESTION No. 600: In Romans 8:16, what is the difference between the spirit which is in man and the Spirit Himself?

ANSWER: This passage teaches that the Holy Spirit (the third person of the Godhead - Matthew 28:19) bears witness with the Christian's spirit that he or she is a child of God. This witness comes only through the Word of God! When a person accepts and is obedient to the truth given (John 16:13), his or her spirit can then witness in agreement with the Holy Spirit that he or she is a child of God; a Christian!

QUESTION No. 601: Why did the blind man in Mark 10:50 cast away his garment?

ANSWER: The man desperately wanted to be healed and believed that Jesus could make him see again! When Jesus called for him, he, not wanting any delay, cast aside his garment. The garment was undoubtedly his outer garment, which was a large piece of cloth that might have kept him from responding quickly!

QUESTION No. 602: What does it mean when some say, "All will be judged alike?"

ANSWER: In referring to the Judgment Day (See Matthew 25:31-46), John said in Revelation 20:12, "And I saw the dead small and great stand before God; and the books were opened." The words "small and great" convey the idea that no matter what position is held in this life; no matter how great; no matter how educated; no matter how much money, we all (presidents, kings, religious leaders, farmers, housewives, and laborers) will be judged in exactly the same way. Certainly, this is the case, because "God is no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34). All people will be judged solely by the words (New Testament) of Christ (John 12:48) with consideration to the things they have done in the body (while in this life), whether it be good or bad (II Corinthians 5:10). Those who disobeyed the New Testament while in the body "shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous (obedient) into life eternal" (Matthew 25:46).

QUESTION No. 603: Would you kindly show me how the Samaritans were baptized, since they did not receive it of Christ or His apostles?

ANSWER: Please read John, Chapter four. In Verse forty-one we see that Jesus taught the Samaritans and, in Verse forty-two, they came to believe that He "is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world." That their belief in Christ resulted in baptism cannot be denied (John 3:26; John 4:1-2). Also in Acts 8:5-6, we see Philip preaching to the people of Samaria. Then in Verse twelve, we find them being baptized. In Verses fourteen and twenty-five, Luke tells us that the apostles, Peter and John, also preached to the Samaritans, undoubtedly in fulfillment of the prophecy of Christ in Acts 1:8, "ye (the apostles) shall be witnesses of me in all Judea, and in Samaria, and to the uttermost part of the earth."

QUESTION No. 604: What was Paul's thorn in the flesh?

ANSWER: Though we cannot be absolutely certain. it appears likely that Paul was afflicted with some sort of vision impairment. Please refer to the following passages: Acts 9:1-9 & 18; Galatians 4:13-15; Galatians 6:11.

QUESTION No. 605: Would you please provide a general comment on the book of Revelation and explain the symbols "seven, six hundred sixty-six, one thousand, beast, pit, Babylon, and rod of iron?"

ANSWER: The Revelation was written at a time when Christians were suffering extreme persecution at the hands of the Roman Empire. It was written in symbolic language that Christians, being familiar with similar language of the Old Testament, would be able to understand. Their persecutors would not be able to understand. The message of the book is that the church would (and will) overcome any and all persecution, and one day be victorious.

Scholars are not always in agreement as to the symbolism of Revelation. However, it appears that most are in general agreement with the following: The word "seven" denotes that which is perfect or complete. The word "six" denotes that which is sinister. Therefore, a multiple of this number (666) would denote that which is extremely sinister." "One thousand" years is not literal, but refers to a long, definite period of time. The word "beast" as used in Revelation 11:7 refers to the power of Satan manifested in the Roman government. The word "beast(s)" used in Revelation 4:6-11 is more correctly translated

as "living creatures." The "pit" is a reference to hell. "Babylon" represents Rome. The "rod of iron" denotes a rule of power and firmness.

QUESTION No. 606: What do the "seven Spirits of God" in Revelation 4:5 represent?

ANSWER: Reference to the "seven Spirits of God" is also made in Chapter one, Verse four. Please note in Verses four and five, John invokes the blessing of grace upon the seven churches of Asia from three personalities, that is, 'from Him (the Father), "the seven Spirits," and (the Son) Jesus Christ. These three personalities are obviously those who make up the Godhead. Clearly then, "the seven Spirits of God" would be symbolic of the Holy Spirit.

But why the number seven? This number throughout the Bible symbolically represents completeness or fullness. The phrase in question then, would symbolize the completeness, fullness, and finality of the work of the Holy Spirit in carrying out the will of the Father.

QUESTION No. 607: What is the holy city, New Jerusalem, of Revelation 21:2? Is it the "new heavens and the new earth" of Verse one?

ANSWER: Yes! This passage teaches that the source of the "new heavens and the new earth" (New Jerusalem) is God (See also II Peter 3:10-13)!

QUESTION No. 608: What does Revelation 11:11-12 mean?

ANSWER: The book of Revelation was written in symbolic language and is not to be understood literally (Revelation 1:1, the word signified means that John was shown things in "signs," which must shortly come to pass). So it is in this passage. It, too, was written in signs or symbolic language. Verses eleven and twelve refer back to those Christians (Vs.9-10) who had suffered great persecution at the hands of the "beast," or the Roman Empire (Vs.7). After three and one-half days (a symbolic number representing a

period of time designated by God), these ones were to overcome their persecution by the power of the Spirit of God; and to be raised spiritually victorious in this life, as well, as in the life to come!

QUESTION No. 609: If we understand that the mark of the beast in the forehead (Revelation 14:9) is a type of baptism, does this mean that we can sprinkle water on the face or head instead of immersion (burial in water) for baptism?

ANSWER: No! As we have already studied, the "beast" is symbolic of the Roman Empire. Since the "beast" is the one who gives the mark (Revelation 13:16), it could not possibly mean baptism. Certainly, the "beast" (the Roman Empire) did not command that we be baptized. Christ proclaimed the doctrine of immersion! It is of (came from) Christ! The mark is of (came from) the "beast." Revelation 13:16 says that the "mark" is received in the "right hand" and the forehead. If one were to adopt the suggestion in the question, he would also erringly have to adopt the position that one could sprinkle the "right hand" in place of immersing the entire body in water! The fact is that the passages in question have nothing whatever to do with baptism!

QUESTION No. 610: What does "no gatherings" mean in I Corinthians 16:2?

ANSWER: "Gatherings" is another word for "collections." Paul was coming to visit the church at Corinth to receive from them what had previously been "gathered" on the first day of each week. These particular "gatherings" were to be taken to Jerusalem to relieve and help the poor Christians and others in that city. Paul ordered the Corinthians to be diligent in their giving, so that no "gatherings or collections" for this purpose would be necessary upon his arrival.

QUESTION No. 611: Is it true that Elijah went into heaven (II kings 2:9-11)? If so, how is it that Jesus said. "no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven?"

ANSWER: Yes! "Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven" (II Kings 2:11). The quotation in the second part of the question is to be found in John 3:13. To understand it, we must consider the context in which Jesus is speaking to Nicodemus, especially Verse twelve! He is simply stating that He was the only one who could speak of heavenly things, because He had been there before coming to this earth. So then, we understand the phrase "no man hath ascended into heaven" to mean that no man has ever gone there to learn about heavenly things so that he might return and speak of those things to others!

QUESTION No. 612: What is the meaning of the "foolishnesss of God?"

ANSWER: This biblical phrase does not mean that God is foolish or that He does foolish things. It simply refers to those things that God appoints or commands that appear foolish to men. For example, in I Corinthians 1:21, we are not to understand that preaching is foolishness, but rather that sinful man by worldly wisdom perceives (falsely) that preaching is foolishness. Please read carefully I Corinthians 1:18-31.

QUESTION No. 613: Why was Stephen taken out of Jerusalem to be stoned to death?

ANSWER: It was the custom and law of the Jews (See Leviticus 24:16 & 23; Numbers 15:35-36; I kings 21:13; and Hebrews 13:12-13)

QUESTION No. 614: In Acts 15:21 there were those who preached Moses in the synagogues every Sabbath. Why did they not preach Christ?

ANSWER: James is not talking about Christians in this verse, but is talking about those unconverted Jews who were still keeping the Law of Moses. To preach Christ (Philippians 1:15-16) is to preach the Law of Christ; the New Testament! When the Jews preached Moses, they preached the Law of Moses; the Old Testament.

QUESTION No. 615: Why did Jesus command His disciples at the first not to go to the Gentiles?

ANSWER: The passage under consideration is Matthew, Chapter ten. Here we find what is called "The Limited Commission." The disciples were told to go only to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Vs.6). Jesus said, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matthew 15:24). Though His personal ministry was to be only to the Jews, He, as God, evidently purposed from eternity that the Gentiles should (at a time which He would determine) become fellow heirs with the Jews (Ephesians 3:1-11). That the Gentiles would be called by His name only after the tabernacle of David was rebuilt (the church, on Pentecost) was prophesied in Amos 9:11-14. We read about its fulfillment in Acts 15:15-17.

Though we haven't been told the reasons why the gospel should first go to the Jews, it seems quite appropriate that God should cause such to happen, since they were chosen from the beginning as those people through whom the promised Messiah was to come.

QUESTION No. 616: Is Pentecost a Jewish feast or was it begun by Christ for the purpose of giving the Holy Spirit?

ANSWER: There were three major Feasts of the Jews that occurred once every year: Passover, Tabernacles, and Pentecost. The Feast of Pentecost came fifty days after Passover on the first day of the week. It was known by three other names; Feast of Harvest (Exodus 23:16); Feast of the First fruits (Leviticus 23:17); and Feast of Weeks (Exodus 34:22). It is clear then that the feast of Pentecost was established and kept thousands of years before Christ.

Jews on this day would come to Jerusalem from every nation under heaven (Acts 2:5) to worship. It is believed that there were more people in Jerusalem during this time than any other; an appropriate day on which to first proclaim the saving power of the Gospel of Christ. It was toward this particular Pentecost Day of Acts, Chapter two, that many prophecies concerning the establishment of His kingdom had pointed (Isaiah 2, Daniel 2, and Joel 2). All of these found their fulfillment in the birthday of the Church of Christ on the Pentecost Day of 33AD.

QUESTION No. 617: Would you please tell me about the synoptic Gospels: the date of each and their problems?

ANSWER: The first three accounts of the Gospel, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, are often called the synoptic Gospels (from the Greek word "sunopsis," a seeing together). This is because they have much in common and, generally, present the Lord's life and ministry in Galilee in much the same way. There is much speculation as to the dates of each and the order in which they were written. However, most scholars agree that all three were written before 70AD, most likely between 40AD and 63AD. Since specific dates cannot be accurately assigned, guessing which of the three was written first would not be wise.

Problems alleged to exist between the synoptic gospels are only in the minds of those who reject the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Bible (I Corinthians 2:12:13; II Timothy 3:16). There are no problems with the inspired Word of God. It is truth!

QUESTION No. 618: Who wrote the book of Hebrews?

ANSWER: Most of the 1st and 2nd century churches, and also the early church fathers, received the epistle as written by the apostle Paul. Much internal evidence also offers proof that it is his writing, e.g., Hebrews 10:34, 13:23. As well, the structure and arrangement of the book is very similar to the other writings of Paul, especially his epistles to Rome and Galatia. By far, the greater weight of evidence and scholarship supports this reasoning.

QUESTION No. 619: In Revelation 7, why is the tribe of Dan omitted?

ANSWER: The Bible does not reveal the reason. Some hold that it was because of the continuous idolatry of the tribe of Dan, as described in Judges 18:30-31. However, this, and all other suggestions, are nothing but speculation. Though there is no harm in wondering about such matters, undue consideration should not be given to the things God has not revealed, but rather to those things He has revealed (Deuteronomy 29:29).

QUESTION No. 620: In I John 5:16-17, what is the "sin unto death?"

ANSWER: God will forgive any or all sins that we confess and turn away from (I John 1:7-10). The "sin unto death" then is a sin that one will not confess and turn away from!

QUESTION No. 621: Should Mark 16:9-20 be included in the Scriptures?

ANSWER: Yes! The reason some would like to see it omitted is because it is devastating to the doctrine of salvation by "faith only." Clearly, from Verse sixteen, in order to be saved one must believe and be baptized. Rather than admit the truth of this biblical fact, it seems easier for some to attempt to remove it entirely! They attempt to do this on the basis that two of the three earliest manuscripts (the Vatican and Siniatic) do not include the passage. However, the Alexandrian does. As well, there is a blank space in the fourth century Vatican manuscript where this passage should have been, which simply indicates that the copyist had not yet completed his work! Also, Verse eight of Mark sixteen obviously was never intended as a concluding remark.

It is significant to note also that the Vatican manuscript omits many other large passages, which the detractors include as scripture. Honesty in translation would demand that if one omitted passage is to be excluded, then all such passages should as well be excluded! To do otherwise would be to compromise one's integrity, which, clearly, some in this matter have done. What these men also fail to properly report is that there are 1,400 other manuscripts and versions in which the passage does appear!

Additionally, the early church fathers quoted from the last verse of Mark long before any of the three earliest manuscripts were written. For example: A few years after the first century ended, Irenaeus (a disciple of Polycarp, who was a personal acquaintance of the apostle John) quoted Mark 16:19, when he said, "But Mark in the end of his gospel says, 'And the Lord Jesus, after that He had spoken to them, was received up into heaven, and sat at the right hand of God.'"

Without doubt, Mark 16:9-20 is a passage within God's Word. In fact, His Word would be incomplete without it! (See Question No.774 for more details).

QUESTION No. 622: Romans 1:24-32 says men have changed from the natural use of women to men which is against nature. Has the manner of dress brought this about?

ANSWER: In the passage under consideration, the disgusting sin of homosexuality (and its consequences) is being discussed. The manner of dress exhibited by those who engage in this sin cannot properly be identified as the root cause of homosexuality. The cause of homosexuality is basically that men have rejected God! Professing themselves to be wiser than He, they turned to idols, worshipping the creature rather than the Creator. As a result, God gave them up unto reprobate minds, vile affections, and uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts (Romans 1:18-32).

It is certain, nonetheless, that a deviate manner of dress is often a part of homosexuality and a contributing factor to this and many other sins as well. God has always desired that mankind dress appropriately: "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array, (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works" (I Timothy 2:9-10); "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God (Deuteronomy 22:5).

QUESTION No. 623: II Timothy 3:1-17 warns us of God's judgment upon wicked men. Part 1: Does Verse ten apply to believers? Part 2: Shall we be saved if we believe in the Gospel?

ANSWER: Part 1: All men everywhere from the cross until the end of time will be judged by all of the New Testament (John 12:48). In this sense, all scripture applies to everyone, because it alone is necessary to salvation. However, in Verses ten and eleven of this chapter, Paul is talking about the persecutions that had befallen him as a result of his doctrine and manner of life in Christ. And then in Verse twelve, we find him applying the same principle to all godly believers in Christ: "Yea, and all that live godly in Christ Jesus

shall suffer persecution." Though Verses ten and eleven refer directly to Paul himself, he, through applying the principle contained therein to "all who live godly" in Verse twelve, assures that Verse ten does apply to believers, though indirectly!

Part 2: We shall be saved if we believe the Gospel, if we understand that "believing the Gospel" means to trust it, have confidence in it, and to obey it! We must not only hear the Gospel, but we must also do what it says (Matthew 7:21-29)! To only agree that the Gospel is God's Word is not enough. The devils do that much (James 2:19).

QUESTION No. 624: How are Christians chastised?

ANSWER: First, we must realize that God does not chastise by sending evil, suffering or sickness upon the children whom He loves. However, neither does God protect us (as individuals or congregations) from the consequences of our sins, but rather permits us to be chastened thereby that we might not engage further in the sin, causing us to be partakers of His holiness and producers of the peaceable fruit of righteousness (Hebrews 12:10-11).

QUESTION No. 625: Is the place Jesus gone to prepare (John 14:1-3) for both the righteous and the sinner?

ANSWER: No! Only the righteous will go to the prepared place of John fourteen. In Matthew 25:34, we learn that on the great Judgment day Jesus will say to them, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Another, or a different place, is prepared for sinners. In Judgment day, Jesus will say to them, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels."

QUESTION No. 626: In John 19:23-24, the soldiers took Christ's clothes. In the fortieth verse, Nicodemus and Joseph wound Jesus' body in linen clothes for His burial. In John 20:7, we see that, after the resurrection, the linen clothes were left in the tomb. Where then did Christ get clothes in which to make public appearances before His ascension?

ANSWER: The Bible does not provide this information. However, the miraculous provision of clothing, if required, would certainly present no obstacle for the One who created all things (Colossians 1:16-17)!

QUESTION No. 627: Are people possessed by "demons" today?

ANSWER: No! However, the fact of "demons" during the time of Christ cannot be denied (Matthew 4:24). But their presence at that time was for a specific purpose, i.e., in order for Christ to prove His divinity, by showing His power over Satan. Jesus clearly taught in Matthew 12:22-30 that he had come to bind Satan. He mightily accomplished that deed, as seen in Revelation 20:1-3. This binding of Satan and his servants resulted in their power being limited only to evil influences. Today, when the faithful child of God resists these influences in obedience to the Word of God, the devil will flee from him (James 4:7). People today are not possessed by demons, as were some in the first century!

QUESTION No. 628: Is it right to withdraw fellowship from sinners who will not repent?

ANSWER: It is commanded, but must be done in accordance with God's will. Please read Romans 16:17-18; I Corinthians 5; II Thessalonians 3; I Timothy 1:19-20; and Titus 3:10-11.

QUESTION No. 629: After the death of Jesus, how many sons did Mary bear? Name them all.

ANSWER: Most scholars agree that since there is no account of Joseph appearing at the crucifixion that he had, by this time, died. This being true, and given the fact that Mary would now be very nearly fifty years of age, it would be highly unlikely that she had additional sons following the death of Christ. However, from Matthew 13:55, we learn that, during the life and ministry of Christ on this earth, He had four brothers whose

names were James, Joses, Simon, and Judas. In the following verse, we are told that He also had sisters. How many, or their names, is not revealed.

QUESTION No. 630: Is the grave Hell?

ANSWER: In the Old Testament the Hebrew word “Sheol” was often translated as "hell." Other times it was translated as "grave." This does not mean that Hell is the grave; neither does it mean that the grave is Hell, in the sense that the question is asked! Sheol is the place of disembodied spirits, not a hole in the ground. The equivalent of Sheol in the New Testament is Hades. This Greek word in the King James Version is most often translated as Hell, but is also translated as the grave (I Corinthians 15:55). It often does not refer to the place of eternal torment! For example (Acts 2:27): In reference to Jesus, the passage says, "Because thou will not leave my soul in hell (Hades) . . ." Jesus did not go to the place of eternal torment, but rather He went to a place called Paradise (Luke 23:43).

Sheol/Hades is the place where all spirits go when death occurs. The righteous go to a place within Hades called Paradise or Abraham's Bosom (Luke 16:22); the unrighteous go to a different place in Hades; a place of torments (Luke 16:19-31). In II Peter 2:4, this place of torments is also called hell. The Greek word for hell in this passage is Tartarus. Both the righteous and the unrighteous will remain in the Hadean world (in either Paradise or Tartarus) to await the resurrection and final Judgment. After Judgment, the righteous will go to heaven (the new heavens and new earth-II Peter 3:13) and the unrighteous will go to hell, the place of eternal punishment (Matthew 25:46). The Greek word translated "hell" that denotes this final place of the wicked is Gehenna!

When the words Sheol/Hades are translated as "grave," the root meaning remains the same. It is the place of all departed spirits! It is nowhere suggested in God's Word that the piece of earth into which our bodies are placed upon death is the "hell" to which we refer above! This is to say that the grave is neither Tartarus, nor Gehenna!

QUESTION No. 631: If the lost are going to suffer an eternal burning, will it be in heaven or on earth?

ANSWER: It will be neither in heaven, nor on the earth. Peter tells us that this earth will be totally destroyed (II Peter 3:10). Only the righteous will go to heaven (Matthew 25:34). A different place has been prepared for the sinner; a place of everlasting fire (Matthew 25:41) and everlasting punishment (Matthew 25:46). In Matthew 5:29-30, this place of everlasting punishment in the English language is called "hell." In the Greek language, the word is “gehenna.”

QUESTION No. 632: Is it true that there is no place of eternal punishment (hell)?

ANSWER: No! It is not true! Just as surely as the Bible teaches that there is a heaven, it also teaches that there is a hell! Please read the following passages: Matthew 25:30, 41,46; Revelation 14:10-11; II Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 20: 10-15.

QUESTION No. 633: What will burn in hell? The soul? The flesh? Or both?

ANSWER: At the resurrection all will be bodily raised; the good and the bad (John 5:28-29). All will be judged (Matthew 25:31-46). The righteous will go into life eternal, the bad into everlasting punishment (Vs.46). Both the resurrected body and the soul of the wicked will be cast into hell (Matthew10:28)!

QUESTION No. 634: In Luke 16:23 and II Peter 2:4, it seems like there are two hells. If one hell is before Judgment Day, what is the purpose of Judgment?

ANSWER: When a person dies, the spirit goes by God's direction to Hades (one of the words translated as "hell" in the King James Bible), which denotes the "place of disembodied spirits." This is where Lazarus and the rich man of Luke sixteen went upon their deaths. (This is also where Christ and the "thief on the cross" went when they died. Christ did not ascend to the Father and heaven until forty days after His resurrection - John 20:17 & Acts 1:3. In Acts 2:34, we learn that David is still not ascended into the heavens, because he, too, remains in Hades). Lazarus was carried by angels into the part of Hades referred to as paradise or Abraham's bosom, while the rich man awoke in the part of Hades referred to as a place of torments! Each of these will remain where they are

until the general resurrection of the dead (John 5:28-29). The same is true of David and the "thief on the cross." In the resurrection, their spirits (and all the dead, righteous and unrighteousness) will leave the Hadean world and rejoin their changed bodies (I Corinthians 15:51) to stand before Christ in judgment (II Corinthians 5:10). The righteous (those obedient to Christ) will then go to Heaven (Matthew 25:24). The unrighteous (the disobedient) shall be cast into the lake of eternal fire and brimstone (Matthew 25:41 & Revelation 20:14-15)!

The passages in the question refer to the same place. The word "hell" in II Peter 2:4 is from the Greek word "tartarus" and is described as a place of reservation "unto judgment." The rich man of Luke 16 remains in the same place, i.e., the place of torments, also reserved "unto judgment." The final destination for the ungodly following judgment is from the Greek word "gehenna," also translated "hell" in the English (Matthew 10:28).

There is going to be a Judgment Day, because God has appointed it (Acts 17:31) so that: every knee shall bow and every tongue confess (Romans 14:11); everyone shall give account of himself (Romans 14:12); everyone may receive the end result of that which was done in the body (II Corinthians 5:10); everyone will know exactly the “why” of their end result (Matthew 25:31-46); and to hear final sentences pronounced (Matthew 25:34; Matthew 25:41).

QUESTION No. 635: Is it in order to say that the saints have been resurrected with Christ - Matthew 27:52-53? Who were these people? What were their names?

ANSWER: It is in order to say that many of the saints were resurrected from the dead at that time. (Of course, this is not to be confused with the general resurrection of the dead at the end of time in which "all" of the dead will be raised.) The Bible does not tell us the names of these or who they were, other than the fact that they were saved people or "saints." Upon their resurrection they went into the city of Jerusalem and appeared to many. Though the purpose of their appearance is not given, it seems reasonable to assume that it was done to convince the Jews of the power and divinity of Christ.

QUESTION No. 636: Was the resurrection of Matthew 27:51-53 the first resurrection? Are there not two resurrections indicated in I Thessalonians 4:13-17 and John 5:28-29?

ANSWER: No to both questions! Those mentioned in Matthew 27:51-53 were certain followers of Christ who, apparently, had recently died and were known of those to whom they appeared in Jerusalem. Further reason for their resurrection is not stated. However, that it attests, along with the resurrection of Christ, to our future resurrection cannot be denied. Another blessed assurance for the faithful child of God!

The "first" resurrection spoken of in Revelation 20:5-6 is symbolic and involves only those previously described in Revelation 20:4, i.e., the disembodied souls who had been slain for the cause of Christ. In Revelation 6:9, these same souls are seen as being under the altar. They are symbolically resurrected (the first resurrection) from under the altar to enthronement in order to reign in figurative judgement with Christ for a "thousand years," a period of time typical of an indefinite, but complete period of time. This "first resurrection" has no reference to you and me. Note in verse four; "And 'they' (those slain for His cause) lived and reigned . . ."

I Thessalonians 4:13-17 reads as follows: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." This passage needs to be read in context. The idea of two resurrections, one for the righteous and one for the wicked, is not under discussion. The two groups of people under discussion are those who are dead in Christ and those who are alive in Christ before the promised meeting with the Lord in the air! The Thessalonians apparently believed that only the righteous living would benefit from Christ's return. Paul corrects this misunderstanding by saying that the dead in Christ will rise first (before the meeting with Christ in the air), then, after having been resurrected, they will join those who are alive in Christ. Both groups then will ascend as one group to meet the Lord in the air at the same time.

In John 5:28-29, we read, "marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, And they shall come forth; they that have

done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation." This passage speaks of a single hour (the hour) when all (doers of good and doers of evil) that are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth. They that have done evil will be resurrected to damnation; they who have done good will be resurrected to life This passage clearly teaches the truth of one general resurrection!

QUESTION No. 637: Would you explain Revelation, Chapter seventeen?

ANSWER: A thorough explanation of this chapter would require volumes. However, a general understanding of this passage can be attained by realizing that most of the symbols used (great whore-vs.2, woman on a scarlet coloured beast-vs.3, Babylon the great-vs.5, beast-vs.8, seven heads and ten horns-vss.7-12) refer to Rome, the Roman Empire, Roman rulers, and those nations under the influence of Rome. The chapter teaches that the Roman Empire and its influences would make war (Vs.14) with the Lamb (Christ) and His called, chosen, and faithful (Christians), but that the Lamb would overcome and be victorious. History clearly shows that Christ and His church did gain the victory over Rome, surviving even the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD. The reign of Christ over His church existed in 70AD, it exists today, and it will always exist (Daniel 7:14; Revelation 11:15)! The Roman Empire, to the contrary, ceased to exist over fifteen hundred years ago!

QUESTION No. 638: Why are Christians forbidden to cry and mourn for the dead as Jesus did (John 11:35)?

ANSWER: Christians are not forbidden to weep for loved ones that have passed from this life! It was natural for Jesus to weep for Lazarus whom He loved (John 11:36) and it is, likewise, natural for us to do the same. However, we do not sorrow, as those in the world do, when a loved one dies, because faithful Christians have the glorious hope of meeting and living together again in the eternal world to come (I Thessalonians 4:13-18).

QUESTION No. 639: In my letter I have stated my thoughts on the subject of taking a brother to law (I Corinthians 6:7-8). Do you agree? What can you offer?

ANSWER: Some of the things you suggest in your letter relative to legal matters constitute compliance with Roman 13:1-7 and would not, therefore, be wrong, i.e., to settle an estate among Christians, or to use the courts to clear a deed or title. This would also be true of the faithful, innocent party divorcing their mate (in accordance with Matthew 5:32,19:9) “for the cause of fornication.”

Indeed, as clearly stated in your letter, it is not wrong, but truly right, for an eldership to protect the church property from unscrupulous apostates who would steal it away. In Acts 25:10-11, Paul was practicing what he taught in Romans 13:1-7. This is, that earthly rulers are put in place for our good, i.e., to protect us, our name, our person, and our property; to guard our liberty; and to protect our rights under the law. If God has put them in place for our protection and defense, we not only have the right to use them, but the responsibility of doing so, especially when charges are brought against us as individuals or congregations that reflect poorly upon our Lord. Neither is it wrong to defend our Christian lives and character according to the law under which we live!

In I Corinthians, Chapter six, Paul is saying that we are not to initiate or pursue an action designed to cause the appearance of brethren before worldly Judges. He does not say, as some would have us believe, that we are not to defend and protect ourselves (whether individually or congregationally) through the "powers" He has ordained!

I do not believe that any of the items suggested in your letter would be a violation of Scripture. Certainly, as faithful Christians, we should not take a brother to law, nor should we initiate anything that would result in such. To the contrary, we are to suffer wrong, even to the point of loss, but this, as stated above, does not mean than when forced into a legal situation that reflects detrimentally upon our character as Christians, or upon the Lord and His church, that it would be sinful to call upon those ordained of God to aright the inequity. I imagine that many property-usurping apostates would have the faithful believe otherwise!

QUESTION No. 640: Is it right to "judge."

ANSWER: We are commanded not to judge unrighteously (Matthew 7:1-5). However, we are commanded to judge righteous judgment (John 7:24)!

QUESTION No. 641: Is it right for a Christian to judge his enemy by praying that God will do bad things to him?

ANSWER: No! "Ye have heard that it hath been said, thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good unto them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven . . ." (Matthew 5:43-45).

QUESTION No. 642: In Colossians 3:5, what is the meaning of uncleanness? Of inordinate affection? Of evil concupiscence?

ANSWER: Uncleanness is that which we think or do which has its source in a spirit rebellious to God. Words with similar meanings include filthy, evil and impure! Inordinate affection means unnatural passions of the flesh. This may include passions for sodomy, bestiality and other unlawful sexual activity. Evil concupiscence means evil desires and is similar to inordinate affections, but is used in a broader sense to include a deep longing and yearning for the unnatural and sinful activities of the flesh.

QUESTION No. 643: Romans 10:9-10, what does it mean? Why do some say this is all one has to do to be saved? How can one show that belief (mental assent) is not enough for salvation?

ANSWER: Some in the religious world today hold that all one must do to be saved is to believe (understand and accept) that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. They many times refer to this passage in support of their false doctrine. However, often they fail to comprehend that "belief" in Jesus Christ is more than just mental assent. As used in the Bible, e.g., John 3:16; Acts 16:30-31, the meaning of "believe" is "trust in Christ, conjoined with obedience to Him." So it is in the verses in question! This particular passage says nothing of repentance. Are we, then, to conclude that we are not required to repent for the remission of sins? Surely not, because in Acts 2:38 & 17:30-31, we are commanded to repent! Similarly, this particular passage says nothing of baptism. Are we to conclude that we are not required to be baptized for the remission of sins? Surely not,

because in Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38, and I Peter 3:21, we see that baptism precedes and is necessary to salvation! When a man "with the heart believeth unto righteousness" (Romans 10:10), he is calling upon the name of the Lord (Vs.13); he is faithfully obeying the Gospel (Vs.16); and he is hearing the word of God (Vs.17). The phrases are synonymous! Each of these verses implicitly includes belief, repentance, confession and baptism as works of obedience (not works of righteousness) necessary and prior to salvation.

Extreme care must be taken in studying the Bible not to take a passage out of context in order to support a preconception (as do the proponents of "faith only"), nor to base a doctrine upon a particular verse without consideration to similarly related verses. This is a misuse of Holy Scripture!

The doctrine of "faith only" is easily shown to be false in a reading of James 2:14-26. Note the following:

Vs.14: Faith without works cannot save!

Vs.17: Faith by itself is dead!

Vs.18: Faith is shown by works!

Vs.19: The (unsaved) devils have faith only!

Vs.20: Faith without works is dead!

Vs.21: Abraham was justified by his works!

Vs.22: Faith is made perfect by works!

Vs.23: Abraham was said to believe God when he became obedient!

Vs.24: A man is justified by works and not by "faith only!"

Vs.25: Likewise, Rahab was justified by works and not by "faith only!"

Vs.26: Faith without works is dead!

QUESTION No. 644: In the Bible, it says to try the different faiths or spirits to see if they be of God, and if they confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, they are of God. Would you please explain this passage (I John 4:1-3).

ANSWER: The spirit of anti-Christ was manifested specifically at the time of this writing by a group known as the "Gnostics." These claimed that Jesus did not really come in the flesh; that He only "appeared" to be human. John is simply telling Christians how to distinguish them from true Christians, i.e., if they confess that Christ came in the flesh, they are of God. If they do not confess that Jesus came in the flesh, they are not of God, but rather anti-Christ.

As these Gnostics, there are those today who teach this and other false doctrines. We are to "try" (test) all of them by the Word of God, whether they are of Him!

QUESTION No. 645: Does not Ephesians 4:11-13 teach that there are apostles today?

ANSWER: No! Here stated is the simple fact that Christ gave some to be apostles. Because there were apostles at that time does not mean there are apostles today. Clearly these being discussed in this passage were those of Acts 1:26, in addition to Paul (Romans 11:13). In order for these to be apostles they had to have been eyewitnesses of the resurrected Christ (Acts 1:22). None today have seen the resurrected Christ and cannot, therefore, be qualified to be apostles today! Those who claim apostleship today are false prophets, wresting the scriptures to their own destruction. Surely a prudent person will see that those who claim to be apostles today cannot do the works performed by the apostles of Jesus Christ. They cannot speak in foreign languages that they have not studied; they cannot heal the sick; they cannot heal themselves and their own families; and they cannot raise the dead. All of which proves the falsity and foolishness of their anti-scriptural claims.

QUESTION No. 646: What does it mean in Revelation 13:17-18 that none might buy or sell unless he had the mark of the beast?

ANSWER: The book of Revelation was written to Christians who were being persecuted at the hands of the Roman Empire to assure them that they would eventually be victorious. The "beast" in this passage has reference to the Roman Empire. It is teaching that only those who lived at that time with allegiance to the Roman Empire would in

some way be so identified and, thus, be able to buy and sell. Christians to whom John was writing, and who were opposed to Rome, would not be able to buy and sell. They would, therefore, be caused to suffer temporarily as a result. The passage is not teaching that there is to be a future "great tribulation" during which Christians will live in a "cashless society!"

QUESTION No. 647: What is being taught in I Peter 3:3?

ANSWER: The apostle is telling Christian women, in Verses one and two of this chapter, that they can win their husbands to the Lord, if their manner of life is appropriate. In Verses three and four, he is contrasting an inappropriate lifestyle for women of that time with an appropriate lifestyle. Some women in that time conducted themselves sinfully by being vain and proud, having a desire to dress and arrange their hair in such a way as to draw the attention of others to their persons (often for purposes of immorality), rather than dressing in such a way to show that they were in subjection only to their own husbands. So Peter tells them not to dress and arrange their hair as the immoral, haughty, and proud women of that day, but rather to dress in such a way that a life of subjection, meekness, and quietness would be portrayed, as holy women who trust in God! The lesson for women today is that they need also to dress modestly as those professing godliness; dressing as those in subjection to their own husbands, and not dressing in such a way as to entice and attract the view of others!

QUESTION No. 648: In Matthew 20:20-23, the baptism of suffering is applied to the believer who is physically suffering from fever or disease. After these were anointed, did he or she become saved immediately?

ANSWER: This passage has nothing to do with fever, diseases or salvation from sin. Jesus is only saying that His disciples would "suffer" much pain and many trials with Him as they worked for the kingdom of God. This "suffering" was referred to as a "baptism" because they were to be "immersed" in it; it was to be an "overwhelming." All faithful Christians, even today, will similarly suffer! "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus (the saved) shall suffer persecution" (II Timothy 3:12). Clearly, one does not suffer as they enter the kingdom (church). He or she enters the kingdom (church) in order to suffer (with Him who suffered and died for us)!

Only one submissive act will effect our salvation and, thereby, place us in the one body (kingdom/church) of Christ; that is, an immersion in water for the remission of sins.

QUESTION No. 649: John 1:1 says that God created the universe with words. Can you tell me how these words were made?

ANSWER: In John 1:1-5, "The Word" refers to Jesus Christ, not the "words" by which the worlds were created. Certainly the worlds were spoken into existence (Psalms 33:9) and the fact of Christ's participation in the creation is clearly without doubt (John 1:3; Colossians 1:16-17). Based on these passages then, the words by which the worlds were made were those commandments "spoken" by God ordering all creation into existence! "The Word" spoken of in John 1:1 (Jesus Christ, God the Son) was not "made," since His "goings forth have been from old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2). He is eternal, "having neither beginning of days, nor end of life" (Hebrews 7:17; Hebrews 7:3).

QUESTION No. 650: Would you please explain what John 1:1 means?

ANSWER: The verse reads, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." A) "In the beginning" means in the beginning of time or before the world was created. B) "Was the Word," means that the Word, Jesus Christ, (John 1:14) was already in existence at the beginning of the creation. Paul tells us the same in Colossians 1:17, "He is before all things." Micah 5:2, likewise, teaches that Jesus Christ (the Word) existed before all things, because He is eternal. He is called the Word because through Him the nature and purpose of Deity would be revealed and communicated to the world (C) "and the Word was with God" means that Christ was in total and complete fellowship with the Father, and implies that He was a participant in the creation process (Colossians 1:16). (D) "and the Word was God" means that Christ possesses all the attributes of Deity, and is, therefore, God, and equal to the Father (John 10:36; Philippians 2:6).

QUESTION No. 651: What are the "greater works" discussed by Jesus in John 14:12?

ANSWER: The passage, directed to the apostles, does not teach that they (or Christians today) would be able to exercise more or "greater" power than Jesus did when He walked on the water (Matthew 14:25), calmed the sea (Mark 4:39), and raised the dead (John 11:43-44). There could be no "greater" power than this and we see none being demonstrated. The "greater works" then of John 14:12 does not refer solely to miracles, but to all of things that the apostles did (as directed by the Holy Spirit) to further the cause of Christ! Christ's earthly ministry was limited to the area around Judea, but the "great commission" that He gave to the apostles and the faithful of today in Mark 16:15-16 was to go into "all the world." Therefore, the works that were to be done by the apostles would be "greater" in width of accomplishment. After Christ's death, burial, resurrection, ascension, and enthronement, His followers would be able to proclaim for the first time these "greater" historical facts, heretofore fully unknown. The "greater works" of John 14:12 then refers to the magnitude and impact of the proclamation of the Gospel!

QUESTION No. 652: Does I Corinthians, Chapter eleven, teach that women should wear a head covering today in worship to God? Are we to understand that hair is the covering to which this passage refers?

ANSWER: Women were obligated to wear a "veil" in the worship services of the church at Corinth. It was the custom of that time for women to show submission to their husbands by covering their heads. If a woman of Corinth worshiped without this "covering," it indicated that she was in rebellion to the rule of her husband and, therefore, in violation of God's will (Genesis 3:16). Paul, by supporting this custom at Corinth, is teaching the eternal principle that women are not to do anything that would show rebellion to their husbands, i.e., their "heads" (I Corinthians 11:3). However, wearing of a "veil" (or not wearing a "veil") in other times and places was not a custom that indicated rebellion. Certainly, this is not the custom in most places today! Where this is no such custom there can be no issue of submission and, therefore, in such places, the wearing of a "covering" is not scripturally binding!

That the "covering" under discussion by the apostle is an artificial covering, and not the hair, is made clear by his reference to both in I Corinthians 11:6.

QUESTION No. 653: Would you explain Hebrews 4:1-13?

ANSWER: In the latter part of the preceding chapter, the apostle Paul discusses the fact that, because of the hardness of their hearts in unbelief, many of the Israelites who left Egypt did not enter into God's promised "rest," i.e., the land of Canaan. In Verse one of the chapter in question, he shows that for Christians the promise of a rest (heaven) still remains, but that we should fear lest any of us come short of it, as the Israelites did Canaan. In Verse two, he says that they had heard the will of God preached, but they did not believe it! We need to be careful that we do not do the same and miss our promised rest! In Verses three through six, Paul proves that there is a "rest" for the faithful Christian. He argues that, from the creation, this “rest” had always been available to the faithful of God and, that even He, on the seventh day, rested from His labors. Paul also shows from Psalms 95:7-8 that David also warned against not being able to enter the "rest" of God because of a hardened heart (Vs.7). In Verse eight, the name Jesus is a mistranslation in the King James Version. It should correctly be translated as Joshua! Paul is saying here that Joshua had not satisfied and finalized God's promise of a "rest" by entrance of Israel into Canaan. The promise was much more than this, otherwise David would not have mentioned it years later. The writer makes a concluding statement in Verse nine, based on the above, "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." Verse ten shows that the person who enters heaven will rest from his or her labors much as God rested from His labors. Therefore (Vs.11), we should "strive" to enter in, lest we fall in disobedience as did the Israelites in the wilderness. Verses twelve and thirteen speak of the power of God's word in revealing the inner man, and that God knows everything that we do, even the thoughts and intents of the heart. If our actions, thoughts and intents in this life are guided by God's Word, we will be permitted to enter into the "rest" He has provided for His people. If God’s Word does not guide us, we cannot enter in, but will be lost eternally!

Certainly, the above is not an exhaustive study of this passage, but it is hoped that a basis for further study and understanding has been provided.

QUESTION No. 654: Does I Corinthians 7:39 teach that a Christian widow can only marry another Christian?

ANSWER: Throughout the seventh chapter, Paul is giving inspired "advice" to those in marriage relationships and those seeking marriage partners. For example, in Verse twenty-seven, he states that a man should "not seek a wife," and in the next verse

he says, "But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned." So Paul is not commanding men not to marry, but rather he is simply giving them inspired "advice" or "judgement" (Vs.25) because of the "distress" (persecution) they were experiencing at that time (Vs.26). This inspired "advice" would then apply only to those at that time who were suffering that "distress" (persecution) and should not, therefore, be applied to men (or women) today! The same is true of Verse thirty-nine! Because of the "present distress," Paul is giving inspired "advice" or "judgment" (Vs.40-"after my judgement") to the widows who lived then, telling them that if they were to marry, it should be "only in the Lord," that is, they should marry another Christian. A husband who was not a Christian during this time would likely not be able to understand, encourage, and help his Christian wife endure the persecution, as would an understanding Christian husband.

Certainly, it is always best for a Christian to marry another Christian in any circumstance, but we must not bind where God's Word has not bound. At the same time, we need to understand that any relationship into which a Christian enters with the knowledge that it will cause him or her to compromise his or her Christianity is wrong (Matthew 6:33).

QUESTION No. 655: Will those who have not heard the Gospel be lost in Judgment Day? What about Romans 7:7-8?

ANSWER: Yes! They are lost (Mark 16:15-16) and if they do not hear the Gospel, which is God's only saving power (Romans 1:16), they can never believe and be saved (Romans 10:14). All of the nations of the world have, at one time in the past, heard the Gospel of Christ (Colossians 1:5-6; Colossians 1:23), but have since rejected and forgotten God. David said of these, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Psalms 9:17). The fact of the unbeliever (within a nation that forgot God) being lost, because he did not hear the Gospel, is, therefore, not to be attributed to God, but, rather, to his ancestors who once knew God, but refused to glorify Him as God (Romans 1: 20-31). Romans 1:32 says of these, "Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them." These nations at one time had the knowledge of the coming judgment of God and, in spite of this knowledge, rejected the righteousness of God (Romans 1:17) in favor of a life of wickedness for themselves and their children! Nonetheless, it is also true that the subsequent generations in far places who truly never had the opportunity to hear the Gospel (though they will be lost), will not be punished as severely as those who had opportunity (Luke 12:46-48).

Romans 7:7-8 does not teach that alien sinners who never heard the gospel are not lost! Paul is discussing the Law of Moses and simply says that, before the Law of Christ, he would not have known that covetousness was sin, except the Law of Moses had said, "thou shalt not covet." This does not mean that the people who had never heard this law were in a safe or saved condition before God, because he already said (Romans 3:9) that both Jews and Gentiles were "all under sin;" that "all (Jew and Gentile)" have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). Paul is simply teaching in this passage (as in Galatians Chapter three) that the old law has been taken out of the way; that we are dead to it (Romans 7:4); that we have been delivered from it (Romans 7:6); and that one cannot transgress (sin against) a law that has not been given (as in the case of Abraham-Romans 4), or a law that has been taken out of the way (as in the case of Christians-Romans 7:1-6). In other words, those who lived before and after the Law of Moses cannot be condemned by it (Romans 4:15), neither can any be justified by it (Romans 5:1)!

QUESTION No. 656: What does it mean in II Thessalonians 1:8, "them that know not God?"

ANSWER: The phrase includes the heathen who worships other than the true God and all of those that refuse to acknowledge Him (Romans 1:18-32).

QUESTION No. 657: What is baptism for the dead in I Corinthians 15:29?

ANSWER: Though there are many interpretations of this passage, it is certain that it does not mean that the living are baptized for the dead, i.e., so that one may be saved after death (Hebrews 9:27). The passage reads, "Else what shall they do which are baptized for "the dead," if "the dead" rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for "the dead?" The chapter is written to prove that Christians who had already died, and those who were yet to die, have the hope of a resurrection because Christ first resurrected. It is my opinion that "the dead" refers to how the Corinthians perceived those who were already dead, i.e., with no hope of a resurrection. The word "for" in this passage is from a Greek word "huper," which means "in view of." Therefore, the passage may be interpreted "Else what will become of you who are baptized 'in view of' the dead whom you believe rise not at all? Why are you then baptized 'in view of' those who have no

hope of a resurrection?" In other words, "in view of" your belief that the dead have no hope of a resurrection, why are you then baptized?

QUESTION No. 658: What does it mean in Hebrews 7:1-3 that Melchisedec was "without father; without mother; without descent?"

ANSWER: Under the Old Law, only the men of the tribe of Levi were to be appointed as priests (Vs.5). Yet, that Levitical priesthood was to change under the New Law with Christ, who was from the tribe of Judah (Vs.14), becoming the High Priest (Vs.17, 26). He had no physical priestly lineage in the tribe of Levi. The same was true of Melchisedec. He, likewise, had no physical priestly lineage in the tribe of Levi (Vs.6), but nonetheless, he became a priest of the most high God (Vs.1) to whom Abraham gave a tenth of his spoils (Vs.3). When it says that Melchisedec was without father, mother, and descent, reference is made solely to the fact that his ancestors (his descent); his father and mother were not listed in the genealogy of the priesthood, because they were not of the tribe of Levi. Being of the tribe of Judah, the same was true of Christ! He, therefore, became a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec (Vs.17)!

The passage does not imply that Melchisedec never had an earthly father and mother, neither that he was eternal!

QUESTION No. 659: Regarding Revelation 14:2-3, why this revelation? Who are the four living creatures?

ANSWER: The main thrust of the book of Revelation is to show that, in spite of many trials and tribulations, the Church of Christ would one day be victorious! Those bought from the earth represent Christians who have been purchased with the blood of the Lamb (Revelation 12:12). Indeed, this passage shows in a very beautiful way the victory of the saints; being pictured as singing praises to God before His heavenly throne!

The four living creatures are those heavenly beings described more fully in Revelation 4:6-11, who give glory and honor and thanks to Him who occupies the throne. They tirelessly do so, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is,

and is to come." Man has written much concerning these beings, little of which is certain. Perhaps in heaven, God will cause us to understand these creatures more fully!

QUESTION No. 660: Would you give a summary review of each chapter of The Revelation?

ANSWER: To honor this request totally would require more time than is available. However, perhaps the following will be of help to you. The main thrust of the book of Revelation is to show that, in spite of many trials and tribulations, the Church of Christ would one day be victorious; that Christians who lived at that time would overcome the persecutions being pressed upon them by the Roman Empire that held the nation of Israel captive. The first chapter, of course, is the introduction that includes a reference to Christ's presence among the churches. Chapters two and three are letters of commendation and correction, dictated by Christ, to be sent to the seven churches of Asia. Chapter 4 continues to use symbolic terms in reference to the throne of God and to those beings that attended it. Chapter five discusses the book that none but Jesus Christ, the Lamb, could open, a book which told symbolically of the suffering that Christians would have to endure at the hand of the Roman Empire. The latter part of the chapter assures salvation to those who overcome the pending tribulation and the glory that is given to God in heaven because of the provision of salvation. Chapter six discusses symbolically in more detail the persecutions that would befall the church! Chapter 7 discusses those who would be saved and the blessings that await the faithful! To whom the symbolic number of 144,000 refers is set forth in Revelation 14:1-4! Chapters 8 and 9 refer to the destruction of those who persecuted the church, i.e., Rome! Chapters 10 through Chapter 11, Verse 14 is a symbolic prophetic account of the church being revived, having withstood the Roman persecution. Generally, the remaining chapters also have to do with the church (the woman of Chapter twelve); her afflictions and persecutions by Rome (the beast and his followers-Chapter thirteen); a view of the heavenly Jerusalem prepared for the faithful, which stands in contrast to the destruction of earthly Jerusalem (Chapter fourteen); the wrath of God poured out upon the persecutors of God's people (Chapters fifteen through eighteen); a description of the one (Christ) by whom the judgment on Rome was to come (Chapter nineteen); the binding and loosing of Satan, the final end of Satan, and the final judgment of all (Chapter twenty); and the church triumphant (Chapters 21 & 22). This is a rather sparse outline of The Revelation, but perhaps it will aid in your studies.

QUESTION No. 661: Please explain in I Peter 3:18-20 and I Peter 4:6. Who did the preaching? To whom? What was the result?

ANSWER: The spirits in prison (II Peter 2:4) referred to in 3:19 are, in principle, in the same state as the dead referred to in 4:6. The dead were not dead at the time the preaching took place! They were dead at the time Peter was writing and they remain dead today! Preaching to the dead while they were dead would have served absolutely no purpose (Luke 16:26-31; Hebrews 9:27). These passages simply teach that Christ in the Spirit (3:18-19) preached through the person of Noah (II Peter 2:5) to those that lived before the flood. The result of Christ's preaching in the Spirit through Noah was that all the disobedient (3:20) were lost in the flood (for eternity) and that eight souls were saved by water (3:20) which separated them from the sinful pre-flood world; a figure or example of our salvation and separation from this sinful world through the waters of baptism (3:21).

QUESTION No. 662: Is the resurrection meant only for those who partake of the Lord's Supper? If yes, explain why, but if no, explain John 6:53-54.

ANSWER: No! There is to be a single resurrection in which "all" of the dead will participate! "All" that are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth; some to eternal life; some to eternal death (John 5:28-29)! "All" must appear before the judgment seat of Christ (II Corinthians 5:10! "Every" knee shall bow, and "every" tongue shall confess (Romans 14:11)!

John 6:53-54 has nothing to do with the Lord's Supper! This passage is teaching that Christ is the bread of life (Vs.48) and we are to eat of this bread (Christ) in order to live forever! Consider three verses in this passage together! Verse forty-seven tells us who "hath eternal life," i.e., those who believe on Him. Verse fifty-four also tells us who "hath eternal life," i.e., those who (symbolically) eat His flesh and drink His blood. Therefore, those who believe on Him are those who (symbolically) eat His flesh and blood. Verse sixty-three explains "how" we (symbolically) eat of His flesh and blood and gain life, i.e., through the "words" that He speaks unto us, because they are spirit and they are life! It is His Word then that gives us life. Therefore, when we partake of His word we are partaking (symbolically) of His flesh and blood; we are partaking (symbolically) of Him, the bread of life that came down from heaven (Vs.51)!

QUESTION No. 663: What baptism did John the Baptist receive? Where was he baptized?

ANSWER: The Bible does not reveal the answers to these questions. However, it is certain that if he was baptized or not baptized, it was according to the will of God. But whether he was or not has no bearing on Christ's command that under His New Testament, all (without exception) must believe and be baptized (immersed for the remission of sins) in order to be saved (Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38).

QUESTION No. 664: Do such passages as Philippians 3:12 and Hebrews 12:14 teach that men can attain to a degree of "sanctification" so that they can no longer sin?

ANSWER: In I John 1:6, the inspired writer says to Christians, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us."

Sanctification in the Bible simply means a "setting apart." When one becomes a Christian, that person becomes a "saint" (Romans 1:7; Romans 16:2; I Corinthians 1:2), because he or she has been "sanctified," i.e., set apart from the world (Romans 6:18; James 4:4)! In Philippians 3:12, Paul is not talking about sanctification. The word "perfect" as used in this passage does not mean sinlessness. It properly means "complete," "fulfilled," "matured," or "finished." Therefore, Paul is not saying that he had not yet reached a state of sinlessness, but rather he is saying he had not yet completed or fulfilled his hopes and goals. In Verse fifteen, he says "Let us therefore, as many as be "perfect" . . . He did not say in Verse twelve that he was not perfect and then contradict himself in Verse fifteen. The idea is "as many as would be perfect!" Why was he not yet "perfect?" Because (Vs.14), he had not yet reached the mark, he was still "pressing" toward it!

The word "holiness" in Hebrews 12:14 (from the Greek hagiasmos) also means "sanctified" or "set apart," and could have been so translated. The idea here is that Christians are to follow a path that is set apart from the world, "without which no man shall see the Lord." The same idea is taught in Romans 6:20-22; I Thessalonians 4:7.

QUESTION No. 665: One is teaching that a man may sleep with his girlfriend without sinning provided that he later marries her. He quotes I Corinthians 7:36 as a proof text. Is this true?

ANSWER: No! The man is effectively teaching that fornication is blessed and sanctioned by God. This is blasphemy! There can be no sexual relationships outside of the marriage bed! Such sinfulness is condemned throughout the Bible (I Corinthians 6:9-11 & 17; I Corinthians 7:2; Galatians 5:19-21).

In I Corinthians 7:36-38, Paul is discussing a father and his virgin daughter. He is not speaking of a boyfriend and his girlfriend, and he is not speaking of two people who are engaged to be married. Paul is telling the father that in view of the present distress (persecution that was upon them) it may be wiser not to betroth or permit his daughter to marry. But if the time passes when she would otherwise have been married, if the decision is made (for various reasons) to permit the marriage, it is okay. Neither the father nor the daughter has sinned! So if one gives is daughter in marriage, Paul says in Verse thirty-eight, he doeth well. If one does not give his daughter in marriage (because of the present distress) he doeth better.

The man who is teaching that fornication (sexual relations outside of marriage) is approved of God needs to repent of his false doctrine and return to Christ lest he and others be eternally lost!

QUESTION No. 666: Would you please explain Revelation 14:4? Who are they that were not defiled by women? And who were these women?

ANSWER: As always in studying the book of Revelation it is necessary to remember that it was written in signs or symbols (Revelation 1:1). John, in this passage is providing his readers a view of the heavenly Jerusalem and the character of its inhabitants. These are they who have been redeemed from among men (Vs.4); they who have been bought by the blood of Christ out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation (Revelation 5:9); they who have remained faithful unto death (Revelation 2:10). "They who are virgins" also is symbolic and simply implies that the redeemed of

heaven are "spiritually pure." The "women" symbolically represent the influences and doctrines of man which when followed will cause one to be spiritually impure and, therefore, undeserving of heaven. Specifically, reference is to the influences of the Roman Empire as represented by the "woman" described in Revelation 17:1-6; the "great whore" (Vs.1); the "mother of harlots."

QUESTION No. 667: Would you please explain Revelation, Chapter 20?

ANSWER: Literally volumes have been written about this book and, especially this chapter. Certainly, there is not sufficient time to deal with all of it. However, perhaps an outline of the chapter will aid in your further study and understanding.

The book of Revelation was written in symbolic language and is not to be understood literally (Revelation 1:1, the word signified means that John was shown things in "signs," which (must shortly come to pass). So it is in this passage. It, too, was written in signs or symbolic language. This means that something else is represented by such words and phrases as "key," "bottomless pit," "thousand years," "seal," "etc."

It appears that Verses one through three refer to a time specified by God (prior to Judgment) during which Satan is, or was, to be restrained after which he is, or was, to be loosed for a "little season." (Certainly, Satan has been restrained by the resurrection and the Gospel of Christ, even over the last two thousand years!) None, however, knows with certainty the termination of Satan's restraint and whether past or future! What all is, or was, involved and the duration of the "little season" is all conjecture and guesswork. Some hold that all of this was accomplished during the days of the Roman Empire, others that it is yet future. The only thing we can know for sure is that it will happen, or that it did happen!

Verses four through six do not have reference to a physical reign on this earth by Christ and/or His saints. This section is also symbolic! It simply teaches that those who, for the cause of Christ, were beheaded/martyred (this excludes all others, you and me for example), would sit in judgment (by their past godly lives) on those who are still alive. These martyred ones are the only participants in the symbolic "first resurrection." In Revelation 6:9-10, we see these under the altar. In Revelation 20:4, they have been raised

(resurrected) to sit on judgment seats. "Blessed and holy" are these because the second death (Vs.6), as described in Verses fourteen and fifteen, "hath no power" over them!

Verses seven through nine relate that following the "loosening" of Satan for the "little season" there will (or will have been) be a great spiritual conflict between his forces and the church. This is not to be understood as a literal, physical war!

The final Judgment of all mankind and the ultimate disposition of Satan and his followers is discussed throughout the remainder of the chapter.

The Revelation was written at a time when Christians were suffering extreme persecution at the hands of the Roman Empire. It was written in symbolic language because Christians, being familiar with similar language of the Old Testament, would be able to understand, while their persecutors would not! The primary message of the book to Christians at that time, and to us today, is that the Church of Christ has, and will, overcome any and all persecution, and one day be victorious.

QUESTION No. 668: People say 666 will come after Christ comes. Is this true? Who is 666 (Revelation 13:18)?

ANSWER: Chapter thirteen of Revelation is a discussion of the activities of the beast and his followers, which has reference to the Roman Empire and its persecution of the church at that time. The number six in prophetic literature indicates that which is sinister. A multiple of this number (666) would indicate the extremely sinister. This "number" or "mark" (Vs.16-18) is symbolic and should not be taken literally. It simply represents some distinguishing practice or activity that would identify certain ones at that time as being under the influence of Rome and in opposition to the church. Certainly, it has no reference to some individual who will come one day to bring havoc and persecution to the church. Such suggestions are foolishly and sinfully propagated by the false teaching of the Premillenialists.

QUESTION No. 669: Does Matthew 24:1-14 tell us what signs will appear before Christ's second coming?

ANSWER: No! In Verse three of this chapter, Christ's disciples had asked Him two questions: (1) When will Jerusalem be destroyed? (2) What shall be the sign of thy coming, and the end of the world? In Verses 4-35, Jesus is dealing with, and answering, only the first question. Note carefully in Verse thirty-four that Christ said all of the things He had discussed in the preceding verses would be fulfilled (come to pass) before the generation that lived at that time would pass away. A generation is understood to consume about forty years, and it was about forty years after Christ spoke these words (70AD) that Jerusalem was destroyed. It came to pass exactly as Christ had foretold!

There are many similarities between Christ's symbolic coming in the destruction of Jerusalem and His promised Second Coming. Many misapply the symbols of Matthew twenty-four (scripturally applicable only to the destruction of Jerusalem) to Christ's Second Coming. Verse thirty-four does not permit such a misapplication! The symbols of Matthew twenty-four are easier to understand if one is aware that the same type of symbolic language was used in the Old Testament when God came symbolically in judgment upon Babylon, Damascus, Ethiopia and Egypt. Certainly, the Jews of Christ's day would have understood. Please refer to Isaiah, Chapters thirteen-eighteen, especially Isaiah 13:6-11!

In Verse thirty-six, Jesus begins to answer His disciple's second question, "What shall be the sign of thy coming?" In this verse Christ said that only the Father knew the answer. In Verses thirty-seven through Matthew 25:46, He discusses His Second Coming and, in summary, He says that there will be no signs given; that business will be going on as usual when He returns! Because this is true, He says, "Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come" (Vs.42). All of the verses from Verse forty-two through fifty-one (especially Verses forty-four and fifty) show that Christ will come unexpectedly. How could this be true if one were given signs leading up to (and pointing to) His Second Coming? Obviously, it couldn't!

All of the "signs" of Matthew twenty-four preceded the destruction of Jerusalem in 70AD. None of these signs have been given to point to the Second Coming of Christ! He will return unexpectedly; without warning! "Therefore, be ye also ready" (Vs.44).

QUESTION No. 670: Does Mark 9:43-48 teach that we must literally cut off our hands if they offend or cause us to stumble?

ANSWER: No! Christ is simply teaching that whatever the personal cost, suffering, loss, or difficulty, His followers are to cut off those sins that come through temptations which are often caused by, or result from, the use of the hand, foot, or eye. Christians have been bought with a price (the blood of Christ). Therefore, our souls and bodies (and all of its parts), which belong to Him, are to be used to His glory; not in the sins of this world (I Corinthians 6:20)!

QUESTION No. 671: In John 9:1-7, Jesus healed a blind man by spitting on the ground and mixing the saliva with dirt and putting the mud on the man's eyes. If a man did that today in Africa, they would say he was a Witch Doctor. What is the difference?

ANSWER: Undoubtedly Jesus did not need to use spittle in healing the blind man. He could have spoken it done, as He did in Matthew 9:27-31. His purpose then lies in one of three reasons, perhaps all. (1) He wanted to test the man's faith by requiring an action which would show his faith, i.e., going and washing; (2) As an example to following generations that God grants blessings upon those who are believe and obey; and (3) Since the Pharisees wrongly held that it was wrong to use medicine or to heal on the Sabbath, Jesus proved the foolishness of their position by applying the mud and directing the man to go and wash, resulting in his healing, thereby, showing the true will of God regarding the Sabbath.

The difference between what Jesus did and what a Witch Doctor does should be obvious from the above. The Witch Doctor has no real or unselfish purpose in applying anything to a blind man's eyes, because he, as well as others, knows that not he or anything he uses will, or could, bring about a restoration of sight.

QUESTION No. 672: Please explain Mark 11:22-24.

ANSWER: Jesus is not here saying that a man with sufficient faith could or would literally move mountains. Reference to so doing in Verse twenty-three is a proverbial form of speech (which the Jews would have easily understood) and simply means that one with proper and sound faith in God would be able to overcome all earthly trials and obstacles no matter what, or how difficult, they may be.

QUESTION No. 673: According to Hebrews 4:15, Jesus was tempted. How could He be tempted if He was God in human flesh?

ANSWER: There is no doubt that Jesus submitted Himself to the influence of the Holy Spirit, permitting His own temptation as a man (Matthew 4:1). It was because He was in the flesh (John 1:14), that He could both be so tempted and die a physical, sacrificial death. He could have done neither had He not been made in the "likeness of man" (Philippians 2:5-8). As well, in order for Him to be the Savior (I John 4:14) and Advocate (I John 2:1) of those who are tempted, it was necessary for Him, if He would be "touched with the feelings of our infirmities," to be "tempted like as we are" (Hebrews 4:15).

QUESTION No. 674: Does Hebrews 6:1-2 teach that we should place no emphasis on repentance, baptisms, etc.?

ANSWER: No! Chapter six continues the thought of the closing verses of Chapter five: Christians are not to continue taking only the milk of the Gospel, thereby remaining babes in Christ, i.e., understanding only the first principles, but rather are to grow to maturity by also partaking of the meat of the Gospel (those things beyond first principles) that they might have the ability, based on mature knowledge, to discern between good and evil. and to impart that knowledge as teachers!

QUESTION No. 675: Relative to the word "elements" in II Peter 3:10, I believe that the vast majority of biblical scholarship misunderstands the usage of the word. Further, based on Strong's Number 4747, I believe that the word "means" the "Law." Would you comment?

ANSWER: I, too, agree with Strong's definition of the word as follows: neut. of a presumed der. of the base of 4748; something orderly in arrangement, i.e., (by impl.) a serial (basal, fundamental, initial) constituent (lit.) proposition (fig.): - element, principle, rudiment.

There is absolutely nothing in this definition that would cause any, except those who had been preconditioned, to suggest that the word "element" means "Law." Most often this preconditioning comes, either directly or indirectly, through those people or splinter groups who have been influenced by the Jehovah's Witnesses that, in turn, are proponents of the position you advocate. May I, without malice, suggest that this foolishness stands on a par with many other of their heretical beliefs.

The meaning and usage of the word under discussion is defined by the context in which it is found. Certainly in Galatians 4:3, 9 we understand a direct reference to the Old Law. However, it is the context and not the definition alone that causes us to understand the reference. There is nothing in the context of II Peter three that would demand or suggest that the word is to be similarly understood as "the Law." Indeed, the context demands reference solely to those base elements of which our heavens (cosmos) and earth were made. The word "earth" in Verse ten is defined by Strong's number 1093 as "the solid part or the whole of the terrene globe: - country, earth, ground, land, world." The context and the definition of this word stands, as well, in opposition to your suggestion. The material world to be destroyed at the day of the Lord answers to the material world that perished in the flood, that and that alone!

In II Peter 3:10 the heavens means the heavens (cosmos); the elements means the elements (not Law); the earth means the earth; the works means the works. There is no reason, scripturally, theologically, grammatically, or otherwise to adopt the position you espouse.

QUESTION No. 676: Does Hebrews 13:8 teach, since Jesus does not change, that the gifts continue today?

ANSWER: No! Hebrews 13:8 does not teach that there will always be Holy Spirit baptism and/or the gifts of the Spirit! This passage is teaching that the Gospel of Jesus

Christ is always constant; that it does not change, as men would have it do! It also teaches that the character of Christ does not change. It does not teach that He does not employ different methods that are in accord with His constant word! For example: He changed the law of circumcision (Genesis 17:13 versus Romans 2:28-29); He changed the law of the Passover (Exodus 12:14 versus Hebrews 9:12); He changed the Law and the priesthood (Hebrews 7:12); and He no longer makes man from the dust of the earth, nor woman from the rib of a man. Did Christ violate Hebrews 13:8 when He made these changes? Obviously not! The point of the verse is simply that the attributes and character of Christ are the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. That different methods are employed by Christ at different times in the history of His people is clearly demonstrated by the above passages, in addition to many others!

QUESTION No. 677: Will you explain Romans 14:5-6?

ANSWER: This particular chapter in overview teaches that we should not judge another in matters of opinion and that we should not bind our opinions on another. In the verses of study (5 & 6), Paul is saying that if a person wants to set aside a particular or certain day to honor God, it is okay as long as he is convinced in his own mind. Do not judge him or restrict him from doing so! (The Lord's Day [Sunday] is not at issue here. All Christians are commanded to worship on this day). The same is true about eating habits. If a person has a conscience against eating certain foods, don't insist that he violate his conscience by eating what you eat. Neither are we to insist that a person refrain from eating certain foods (I Timothy 4:1-4). These things are matters of opinion in which all Christians have liberty. In these and similar matters we are not to place a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in our brother's way (Verse 13) by forcing our opinions on him! Verse 23 teaches that if a person in such matters violates their conscience, he or she sins. As a result of that sin, a person can be destroyed (Verse 15). Therefore, Paul instructs us: Don't do anything to cause a brother to be lost. Not only don't force another to accept your opinion, but give in to your brother's opinion, if it doesn't violate your own conscience (Verse 21).

It is important that we understand that only opinions are under discussion in this chapter. In matters of commandment, whether by direct instruction, approved example, or implication, all Christians must be obedient. Our opinions do not come before, or offset, God's directives to us!

QUESTION No. 678: What does the phrase “”For all nations have drunk of the wine of her wrath” in Revelation 18:3 mean?

ANSWER: The “her” in this verse refers back to Verse eighteen of the previous chapter and Verse two of the subject chapter. “Her” refers to a “city” (Chptr.17, Vs.18). That “city” is called Babylon (Chptr.18, Vs.2). Babylon who once besieged and held the Jews captive (Daniel 1:1-2) was symbolic of Rome who, at the time of The Revelation, was persecuting the Jews, as did Babylon seven hundred years previously. The phrase “For all nations have drunk of the wine of her wrath” refers to all of the other nations who had been subjected to Rome by way of conquest and had been corrupted by her rule and influences.

QUESTION No. 679: In Philippians 2:10 what does the phrase “under the earth” mean?

ANSWER: The passage in context is saying that every knee should bow at the name of Jesus, i.e., things in heaven (heavenly beings), things in the earth (human beings), things under the earth (those who have departed this life and very possibly the fallen angels – Jude 6).

QUESTION No. 680: Since “Peter, means “rock,” why do Churches of Christ teach that Matthew 16:18 does not say that the church was built upon Peter? It was on this occasion that Jesus gave him the name Peter or Rock!

ANSWER: In reference to Peter, the original Greek word employed is *petros.* This word is of masculine gender and means a fragment or piece of rock; a stone. The rock upon which Christ was to (and did) build His church is from the Greek word *petra* which is feminine in gender and means a bedrock or solid foundation and cannot be properly used to refer to that which is masculine; in this case, Peter! These Greek words are of different meaning and of different gender! With these facts in hand, the passage can be properly understood only as follows: ‘And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter (masculine - a small fragment) and upon this rock (feminine - bedrock; foundation – the confession that I am the Christ, the Son of the living God), I will build my church.’ There can be no other foundation than Jesus Christ (I Corinthians 3:11), because He is the

"chief cornerstone" of the church. Without a "cornerstone;" a "keystone" that ties together and anchors a building, there is no foundation! However, with Him as the "chief cornerstone," we, indeed, are given to understand (Ephesians 2:19-22) that the apostles and prophets constitute the remainder of the church's foundation on an equal basis. None is placed above the other! In other words, the apostles and prophets who wrote and testified about the church are equals in her foundation, with none, including Peter, having a preeminent place. Christ only has the "preeminence," as the "keystone" or "cornerstone," "In whom *all* the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:21-22).

The reason that Christ called Simon by a different name at this particular time was simply because Peter had just called Jesus by a name expressive of His true character (the Christ) and He, reciprocating, called Simon, son of Jona (a dove), a name expressive of his true character (a stone), undoubtedly a reference to the firm stand that Peter would take one day in the cause of Christ (John 21:18-19).

QUESTION No. 681: What is the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit as discussed in Matthew 12:31-32?

ANSWER: In the context of this chapter we see the Pharisees blasphemously attacking and rejecting the divine nature and power of Jesus Christ who possessed the Holy Spirit without measure (John 3:34). In Verse thirty-two, Jesus is saying whosoever speaks a word against the Son of man (His physical nature as a man of Nazareth), it shall be forgiven him, but whosoever, speaketh against the Holy Ghost (His Divine Nature, as Deity) it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor in the world to come. Blaspheming of the Holy Ghost, then, entails a continual speaking against; a continual rejection of the Divine Nature of Jesus Christ. As long as this is the case in one's life, he or she cannot be forgiven.

QUESTION No. 682: What does it mean a man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup (I Corinthians 11:28)?

ANSWER: Apparently, the Corinthians had turned the Lord's Supper into a feast designed to satisfy their own appetites, rather than the purpose for which it was intended. So in Verses 23-26, Paul reminds them of the Supper's purpose. In Verse 27, he uses the word "unworthily" which is an adverb of manner. Effectively, he is saying that to partake of the Supper in an improper manner, as were the Corinthians, is to sin and thus be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. In other words, how we treat the elements that symbolize our Lord's death is how we treat that which they represent. Verse 28 is simply saying that we must examine ourselves to be sure that we are partaking of the Lord's Supper in the right manner (worthily) and for the right purpose! To do otherwise is to sin!

QUESTION No. 683: Please tell me something about "anti-Christ" for proper understanding.

ANSWER: First of all allow me to assure you that the premillennial idea that "the (one) Antichrist" is going to come before the end of time to wreak havoc upon mankind does not come from Scripture, but rather from the imaginations of men. The apostle John is the only one in Scripture to use the term "antichrist," both in I John 2:18,22; 4:3 and II John 7. In I John 2:18, we note that "many" antichrists had already (at that time) come. So the idea of one Antichrist is not biblical! The term "anti" simply means "against." John uses the term antichrist to refer to certain men at that time who were "against" Christ, because of the false doctrine that they taught. These men were called "Gnostics," a group who believed that they had knowledge that was superior to all others. This group taught that Jesus did not come the first time in the flesh; and that which was seen as Christ was only an appearance or manifestation. John said that these men in so teaching were "against" Christ or "antichrist." In I John 4:3, he tells Christians how they were to distinguish the Gnostics from true Christians, i.e., if they confess that Christ came in the flesh, they are of God. If they do not confess that Jesus came in the flesh, they are not of God, but rather anti-Christ.

As these Gnostics, there are those today who teach this and other false doctrines and may as well be referred to as "antichrist" in the general sense of the term since these, too, are "against" Christ. We are to "try" or "test" what is being taught us by the word of God to determine whether or not the teacher is of God (I John 4:1)! If not, they are "antichrist."

QUESTION No. 684: Does II Thessalonians 2:10-12 teach that God makes people lie? What does "damned" and "truth" mean in Verse 12?

ANSWER: No! God does not "make" people believe a lie. The idea behind God "sending a strong delusion" is that He, because of their rejection of the truth, "allows" them to suffer the consequences of their own actions. God, as Controller of the universe, has set certain events in motion. When the controlling laws that He has established (both spiritual and physical) are violated by man, He allows the natural results of those violations to occur. The blame does not fall to God, but to man who violated His laws (Verse 10). The delusion is said to be sent by God, because he set forth the laws and consequent events that were violated! The meaning of "being damned" in this verse (as in Mark 16:16) is directed to those who reject God by violating His laws, i.e., they will be lost (See Chapter 1, Verse 8). The truth being spoken of is the "Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ (Also Chapter 1, Verse 8).

QUESTION No. 685: Does the New Testament bind circumcision on people of today? Would it be sinful to participate in a celebration of circumcision during which there is killing and eating of animals in the traditional way?

ANSWER: Circumcision was an Old Testament law, bound on the people who lived under that law (Leviticus 12:3). However, the Old Testament was fulfilled and taken out of the way by Jesus Christ at the cross (II Corinthians 3:1-18; Galatians 3:19-29; Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 2:14; Hebrews 7:12). The New Testament of Jesus Christ that became effective at the cross (Hebrews 9:16-17) does not bind circumcision on any: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is of the heart, in the spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Romans 2:28-29). "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but a new creature (Galatians 6:15).

In order to properly answer the second part of the question, we need reference to at least four passages of Scripture: Romans 14:1-23; Acts 15:19-20; II Corinthians 6:14-18 & II John 9-11.

Romans 14:1-23 teaches that it may or may not be sinful to eat meat offered to idols, i.e., meat used in religious rituals There is nothing inherently (in and of itself) sinful in eating meats that have been so used (Verse 14). However, such becomes sinful if, in the eating of meat used in religious rituals, it causes a weaker brother (one who has a conscience against eating such meats) to stumble. If the weaker brother is encouraged to eat such meats in violation of his conscience, he has sinned and the one who has caused him to sin by eating the meat has, consequently, also sinned (Verses 13, 15, 20, & 21). If anyone doubts as to the sinfulness of a particular activity (in this case, eating of meat used in religious rituals) and goes ahead and does it, they have sinned (Verse 23). So then, to eat such meat is not sinful, except when our conscience is doubtful or when we cause another to eat such meat when their conscience is doubtful.

Acts 15:19-20 causes us to consider the matter further, for here we learn that it is sinful to eat meat with the blood in it! The reason given in Leviticus 17:10-14 for not eating blood is "Because the life of the flesh is in the blood." The fact that "the life is in the blood" was true when James spoke and it is true today. Thus, the commandment by the Holy Spirit, through James, that Gentiles, then and now, should (as did the Jews) abstain from such. Further, there is no justification for restricting this commandment solely to the eating of blood sacrificed to idols, as some would do!

II Corinthians 6:14-18 & II John 9-11 demand two further considerations: (1) Any activity or relationship that would cause one to compromise his or her Christian principles would be sinful and (2); Any activity that would cause one to promote a doctrine in opposition to the doctrine of Christ would, as well, be sinful. In short, to participate in any kind of celebration that would compromise the doctrine of Christ or promote teaching contrary to the doctrine of Christ is wrong and sinful!

QUESTION No. 686: Does Matthew teach everlasting punishment for the lost? Romans 6:23 teaches that the wicked will die in hell after a period of time. The wicked will not have eternal life in hell. It is only for the saints. God would not be just to let one who sinned for twenty years to suffer forever.

ANSWER: The Bible teaches, in Matthew 25, that one who is consigned to hell will suffer eternally! In an account of the Judgment scene, Jesus said of the lost (Verse 41), “Depart from me, ye cursed into *everlasting* fire, prepared for the devil and his

angels." (Verse 46) "And these shall go away into *everlasting* punishment: but the righteous into life *eternal*." The words *everlasting* and *eternal* are from the same Greek word (*aoinios)*. Therefore, it can safely be concluded that *everlasting* punishment is just as long as *eternal* life! It would be out of context, unethical, and unscriptural to force dual meanings from this same word, as used in Matthew 25. It is also worthy of note that the word *punishment* (Verse 46) is from the Greek word *kolasin* that means to "chastise/torment." The same Greek word is used in Luke 16:23-25 (in torments, in flames), Revelation 20:10 (tormented day and night for ever and ever), and Revelation 14:10-11 (the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day or night). See also Matthew 3:12 and Mark 9:43-48.

Romans 6:23 does not suggest that one will die in hell after a period of suffering, nor does any other passage so teach. Neither is an existence in hell ever referred to as "life" in the Bible. The word "death" carries with it the idea of separation, e.g., James 2:26, When the soul separates from the body death occurs. There is a physical death and there is a spiritual death, When one is separated from God by sin he or she has experienced spiritual death (Isaiah 59:1-2). This was the case with the Ephesians "who were dead in trespasses and sins," but were made alive (quickened) in Christ (Ephesians 2:1). Certainly all death (physical and spiritual) comes as a result of sin, but what is being discussed in Romans 6:23 in context is not physical death, but rather that which is contrasted with eternal life, namely, eternal death or eternal separation from God.

The suggestion that God would be unjust if He sent one to hell for an eternity is based on man's thinking, not God's. It is not up to you and me to decide such matters (Isaiah 55:8-11). We do not think as God does! In order for you to properly suggest that God would be unjust if one suffered eternally, you would first have to know to what degree God hates sin, or how He views the crime? You don't know that, nor do I. Without doubt, our God is a perfect God and has justly prepared a punishment to fit the crime, not as you and I might see it, but as He sees and knows it to be. The fact of the eternality of hell as shown above is a significant indicator as to the terrible nature of sin in the eyes of our God.

QUESTION No. 687: Does the Greek in Hebrews 10:4 imply that "the blood of bulls and goats *no longer* take away sin? Did not these sacrifices forgive sin?

ANSWER: The Greek does not use, nor does it imply, the words "no longer." The Greek reads as follows: *Impossible for blood of bulls and goats to take away sin!* The Greek word, translated in the KJV "impossible," is *adunatos,* which is defined as: impossible, could not do, impotent, not possible, weak. The Greek word for the three English words "to take away" is *aphaireo, which* is defined as: to remove, cut off, take away. There is no hint of anything else being included in these words or this passage.

The blood of bulls and goats could *not* take away sins. The sins were simply "passed over." God devised a plan in this action that would temporarily preclude accountability for the sins committed under the Old Law. In that action, there was made a remembrance of those sins year by year through knowledge of the fact that those sins were only "passed over," but not remitted! Thus did they have a conscience (a continual awareness) of those sins (Hebrews 10:1-2). Had they been completely forgiven through those sacrifices, they would have had "no more conscience of sins" (Hebrews 10:2). Final and complete absolution for those sins would only come by the shedding of the blood of the perfect sacrifice (Hebrews 9:15; Hebrews 9:25-28; Hebrews 10:12). The sins "passed over" were not finally and completely absolved until then.

QUESTION No. 688: If the kingdom was established on Pentecost Day, would you please explain Matthew 11:12?

ANSWER: The kingdom/church was established on Pentecost Day (Acts 2:47). In Matthew 11:12, Jesus is saying that from the time it was first preached men were continuing to press into it in order to gain the benefits therein. At the time Jesus spoke the words of Matthew 11:12, the kingdom was still in the preparation stage. John was preaching, as was Christ, about this coming kingdom, which was very near/at hand (Matthew 3:2; Matthew 4:17) and they were preparing a people for it when it would come fully into existence in about three year's time. Though in the process of "coming," it was yet future (Matthew 16:18-19; Mark 9:1).

QUESTION No. 689: Would you please clarify John 1:1-5 and John 1:10-18?

ANSWER: John1:1-5 teaches that before the world was, the Word (Jesus Christ) was with God and was God; that He was a participant with the Father and the Holy Spirit

(Genesis 1:1-2) in the Creation (Colossians 1:16-17); that in Him was the power to create physical life and to give eternal life; that He was the light of knowledge to make those in darkness understand the life that He would offer, and not all would receive what He taught.

Verse ten states that Christ came to the world that He created to bring light and understanding, yet many of those in the world would not approve of Him.

Verse eleven says that He came to His own (the Jews) and they would not receive Him (Matthew 23:37).

Verse twelve does not teach, as some would claim, that those who believe are saved at the point of belief! This passage teaches that those who believe have the power (the right or privilege) to “become” the sons of God. They do not become the sons of God; they are not saved until following their belief and after they have obeyed Him! (Hebrews 5:8-9; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-5; Romans 6:16-18). This is what is being taught in James, Chapter two: Faith (belief) without works of obedience is dead (Vs.14, 17, 20, 24, 26). To support this truth, James says in Verse nineteen that the disobedient devils also believe, and tremble. It is obvious that the devils are lost and that their belief in Christ does not save them. And the same is true of humans who only believe and do not obey. They, too, are lost, because "faith (belief) without works is dead" (Vs.20). Consider carefully Verse twenty-four, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith (belief) only." This passage (and John1:12) teaches that justification (forgiveness and salvation) is not ours by belief (faith) only (alone). It is true that one must believe in order to be saved, but clearly, belief only is not enough.

Verse thirteen refers to the children of God who became His children not through physical birth, but rather through a spiritual birth (John 3:3-5).

Verse fourteen states that the Word (Christ) became flesh (Philippians 2:5-10) and lived among men who examined the glory of the only begotten of the Father (John 3:16) and that He came filled with grace (favor toward man that he did not deserve) and truth (John 17:17).

Verse fifteen states the John the Baptist bore witness of Christ that He would be more honored than he (John) and that Christ pre-existed (in heaven) before he (John) was born.

Verse sixteen teaches that the children of God have received an abundance of grace from Christ's fullness of grace and truth.

Verse seventeen tells us that the Old Law came through Moses, but a New Law of ultimate grace and ultimate truth came through Jesus Christ. The passage does not teach that there was no grace or truth under Moses' Law, but, rather, that it came in a fuller and more perfect sense through Jesus Christ.

Verse eighteen states that only Jesus Christ in His pre-existent state has seen God and that He has declared (made known) Him to man. Man has never actually seen God. They have seen manifestations of Him, but not the essence of God, nor have they fully known Him. Jesus, however, had full knowledge of the Father.

QUESTION No. 690: Would you please clarify John 14:4-9?

ANSWER: In Verse four, Jesus is telling His disciples that they knew where He was going (to the Father) and that they knew the "way" to the father (through Him).

Verse five tells us that Thomas said, 'we don't know where you are going, how can we know the way to get there?' Thomas did not understand what Christ had said in Verses 1-4.

In Verse six, Jesus says that the way to the Father is through Him. He is the way, the truth, and the life and is, therefore, the only One through whom man can come to His Father.

In Verse seven, Jesus states that 'if you knew me, you would also know the Father." He further says that as you accompany me and get to know me, you, through that knowledge, will also come to know of the father.

In Verse eight, Philip asks Jesus to show them the father, either by some divine appearance or perhaps by performing a miracle.

In Verse nine, Jesus says to Philip, 'How can you say, show me the Father after you have been with me so long." He goes on to say in Verse ten, 'don't you believe that the Father and I are one and that the words that I speak to you come from Him?' In Verse eleven, Christ then says to Philip, 'believe what I say about the matter or else believe me on account of the works (miraculous and non-miraculous) which I do.'

QUESTION No. 691: Please explain Mark 9:38-41. Where did the man casting out devils get the power to do so?

ANSWER: In understanding this passage we need to understand the phrase "in my name," as used in verses 38, 39, and 41. This phrase means, "by my authority." Today a police official might say to one who is committing a crime, "Stop *in the name* of the law." What he is telling the criminal is, "Stop *by the authority of* the law." This is the meaning of the phrase throughout the Bible. For example, see Acts 2:38 and Colossians 3:17. The man who was casting out devils was doing so "in thy name" or "by thy authority" (Verse 38). In other words his authority for doing so had come from, and had been given by, Christ. The miracle performed by the man was *"in my name / by my authority"* (Verse 39). The twelve were not the only ones to whom Christ gave power to cast out devils. For example in Luke 10:1, we see that He appointed another seventy to go two-by-two preaching about the coming kingdom, the church (Verse 9). They were also given the power to heal (Verse 9) and to cast out devils (Verse 17). However, they did not accompany Jesus, as did the twelve. This is what Mark tells us in Verse 38, "He followeth not us." The Bible does not tell exactly who this man was and at what time he was given the power to cast out devils. However, that he was doing so by the authority of Christ, as were the twelve and the seventy, cannot be denied. Note also in Mark 9:41 that the cup of water was, and is, to be given *"in the name of / by the authority of"* Christ, *"because ye belong to Christ."* Those who do things "*in the name of / by the authority of"* are those who *"belong to Christ."* The same was true of the twelve, the seventy, and the one seen

casting out devils in Mark 9:38. They all belonged to Christ and they all could perform the miracle of casting out devils by His authority. Note, as well, in the verses (33-37) preceding the account of this one casting out devils, that the disciples were arguing among themselves "who should be the greatest." It was following this discussion that John recounted the event of having "seen one casting out devils in thy name and we forbade him, because he followeth not us." It appears that there was some jealousy on John's part in the making of this statement, especially in light of the previous discussion, feeling, perhaps, that only the twelve should have this power and, therefore, be recognized as being the greater of Christ's disciples!

QUESTION No. 692: How can we show that Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are a part of the New Testament?

ANSWER: As follows: (1) The Law of Christ is seen in the Gospel accounts to be contrary to the Law of Moses. For example: Matthew 5:21, "Ye have heard it was said by them of old time . ." In Matthew 5:22, Jesus would say, "But I say unto you . ." See the same contrasts in Matthew 5:27 vs. Matthew 5:28; Matthew 5:33 vs. Matthew 5:34; Matthew 5:38 vs. Matthew 5:39; Matthew 5:43 vs. Matthew 5:44; and Matthew 19:7 & 8 vs. Matthew 19:9. (2) The Gospel of Jesus Christ was to be preached in all of the world, bringing salvation to all who would believe and obey Him (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:46-47). The Law of Moses was only for the House of Israel (Exodus 19:3; Deuteronomy 5:1-3). (3) What His followers were to preach, as they went into all of the world, was not what Moses or Elijah (the First Covenant/Old Testament) had taught, but rather what Christ (the Second Covenant/New Testament) had taught while He was with them (Matthew 17:1-5; John 14:26). (4) Surely, none would suggest that the Lord's Supper was a part of the Old Testament (Matthew 26:26-29).

QUESTION No. 693: Was the first covenant faulty or was the fault with the people?

ANSWER: Both! Hebrews 8:7 says clearly the first covenant was not faultless. None can argue that point! The fault of it was that it could not fully redeem fallen man, as would the second covenant. It was not faulty in the sense of a construction error! It was constructed by a perfect God to serve its intended purpose, i.e., to "bring us unto Christ" (Galatians 3:24). Hebrews 8:8 says that fault was also found with the people. The fault of

the Old Testament was also that faulty people could not keep it perfectly. Only Christ did that (Hebrews 4:15).

QUESTION: No. 694: Does Hebrews 10:9 refer to the entire Law of Moses or just to the offerings and sacrifices of Verse six?

ANSWER: Consistent with Paul's teaching elsewhere in this book (and other books), it can only refer to the entire old covenant. Paul does "not" say, "He taketh away *a part* of the first." He says, "He taketh away *the* first." If we were to assume that only a "part" was taken away, then it seems reasonable that we would also assume that only a "part" of the second was established. If so, where is the rest of it? Neither of these propositions is true. Who can logically deny that the covenant that was taken out of the way was the covenant that God made with their fathers in the day that He took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt (Hebrews 8:9)? What law was given them at that time? Obviously, the handwriting contained in ordinances (laws) at Sinai! To suggest that Hebrews 10:6 limits Hebrews 10:9 to offerings and sacrifices is error and contextually unsound. Verses 5 & 6 are simply contrasting the sacrificial offerings under the Old Testament with the sacrifice of Christ's body under the New Testament. Nothing more, nothing less!

QUESTION No. 695: Does Colossians 2:14 refer to the Law of Moses or only about certain ordinances within the Law?

ANSWER: There is no scriptural reason to assume that the passage is limited only to certain laws or ordinances. Paul says that which was abolished was the "law of commandments" *contained* in ordinances. Writing the same thing to the Colossians (2:14), he refers to that which was blotted out as the handwriting of ordinances (laws), an obvious reference to the handwriting of God on the tables of stone, the same as in II Corinthians 3:7! Such allegations are usually stated to avoid the reality that the Ten Commandments were also taken out of the way. That they were cannot be denied except by the biased. Paul tells us very clearly in, Romans 7:1-7, that we are no longer under the Ten Commandments. He states that the Christians are "dead to the law" (vs.4) and that they are "delivered (discharged) from the law" (Vs.6). In Verse seven, he tells us that the law we are "dead to" and "delivered from" is the law that says, "Thou shalt not covet!" The law that says, "Thou shalt not covet" clearly refers to the Ten Commandments! In

fact, "Thou shalt not covet" *is* the tenth Commandment (Exodus 20:17)! Therefore, it follows that one cannot "die" to the law that says, "Thou shalt not covet" without also dying to the law that says, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," because both are contained in the same, identical Ten Commandment law! Further, we must recognize that neither the "Ten Commandment Law," nor any other "Law" was reinstated under the New Testament. The New Testament is a totally "new" law, having replaced totally the "old" law (Hebrews 7:12)! Nonetheless, it is true that the New Testament encompasses and includes the moral principles inherent in "nine" of the "Ten" Commandments. However, these principles are applicable to Christians today because they are a part of the New Testament; not because they were a part of the Old Testament! It is very significant that the fourth of the Ten Commandments, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," is strikingly omitted from the New Testament!

Galatians 3:10-13 and Galatians 3:21-23 teach the same thing as Romans 10:4-6, i.e., that man could not be justified through the Old Law, because man could not fulfill "all things which are written in the book of Law" (Verse 10). This fact was that the curse of the Old Law resulted in all men under that Law being cursed. In order to remove that curse, so that man might be redeemed and justified, Christ become a "curse for us: for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree" (Verse 13). The Law that is specifically being discussed here is that Law which was given 430 years after the promise (Galatians 3:14) was made to Abraham by God (Galatians 3:17). We learn from Exodus 12:40-41 that the 430 years refers to that time spent by the children of Israel in Egypt. The Law that was given at the end of the 430 years ("when God took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt" – Hebrews 8:9) was the Ten Commandments. If the Ten Commandments were not a part of that which was taken out of the way by the death of Christ on the cross, then it is the case that we are still under the curse of the Law and that Christ's death did not fulfill its purpose! But there is no doubt that the Law (including Sabbath-keeping) was added only till (until) the Seed (Christ – Verse 16) should come (Verse 19).

In Galatians 3:21, Paul is only saying that the promise first given to Abraham (Verse 14) was still valid (Verse 29), even though the Old Law was fulfilled and taken out of the way; that the doing away with that Law in no way affected the promise of God, since it was not given under that Law, but 430 years before it was added. In the latter part of the verse Paul implies that there would have been no need for a New Law if the righteousness of faith could have come by the Old Law. In Verse 24, we learn that it was not the purpose of the Old Law to do so. It was simply a "schoolmaster to bring us unto

Christ, that we might be justified by (His system of) faith. But after that (system of) faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster, i.e., the Old Law.

QUESTION No. 696: Can we worship God on Sundays only?

ANSWER: No! We may worship God on any day of the week (Acts 2:46). However, the worship acts of partaking of the Lord's Supper and giving are restricted to the first day (Sunday) only (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2).

QUESTION No. 697: Please explain about the kingdom and the church.

ANSWER: Throughout the Bible we read about the establishment of the kingdom. In Daniel 2:28-45, he prophesied that the kingdom would be established in the days of the fourth world kingdom from that time, that is, the Roman Empire. In Verse forty-four, he tells us that once the kingdom was set up, it would never be destroyed. It was in the days of the Roman Empire (Luke 3:1) that John the Immerser began preaching, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mark 1:14-15). Later in Matthew 16:13-19, Jesus said, "I will build my church" (Vs.18), which He also called the kingdom of heaven (Vs.19). It is highly significant that the Son of God said, "I will!" He did not say perhaps or maybe! He said, "I will build my church." In Mark 9:1, He said, "Verily I say unto you, that there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." When Jesus, after His resurrection, ascended back to the Father, He was given "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall never be destroyed" (Daniel 7:13-14).

Ten days after Christ ascended, Peter on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2) proclaimed that He had been raised up to be enthroned (Vs.30) at the right hand of God (Vs.34), and had been made both Lord and Christ (Vs.36). The prophecies and promises of the coming kingdom were all fulfilled in a mighty way and, on this great day, Peter used the keys to the kingdom promised to him by Jesus (Matthew 16:19) to open wide its door. He presented the terms of entry, and for the first time men and women were ushered in as citizens of the kingdom that would never be destroyed. "And the Lord added to the church

daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). From this time on, references to the kingdom in the Bible prove it to be in existence. (See Colossians 1:13; Hebrews 12:28; Revelation 1:9).

Consider also what Jesus said in the establishment of the Lord's Supper before His death. He said, "I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you *in my Father's kingdom* (Matthew 26:29)! Luke records it as follows: "I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God should come" (Luke 22:18). When Christians are assembled, Christ is in their midst (Matthew 18:20). When we partake of the Lord's Supper, we are communing with each other and with Christ (Matthew 26:29). Where does that communion take place? In the church (Acts 20:7) and in the kingdom (Matthew 26:29)! They are one and the same!

QUESTION No. 698: If there was no church before Acts 2, who were the people in Acts 1:15? Was not the church of Christ in existence in the Old Testament?

ANSWER: The church was not in existence during Old Testament times. It was yet in the future when Christ was on the earth. He said in Matthew 16:18, "I will build my church." It was not built at the time He spoke these words. This was about three years before the Day of Pentecost of Acts 2. The purpose of His and John's earthly ministries was to prepare a people for the kingdom/church (above) that He was going to build. Those baptized with John's baptism prior to Pentecost Day were those who were being prepared for the coming kingdom/church. They were not in that church as yet, because it had not yet been built or established. The people of Acts 1:15 were some of those who had been prepared for the coming kingdom/church. When Peter used the keys of the kingdom (Matthew 16:19), that is, when he opened the doors of the church by telling people how to be saved and how to enter that church/kingdom, the people who had been prepared and baptized with John's baptism were, at that time, translated into the kingdom/church. They were not in that church/kingdom until Peter opened the doors! The additional 3000 who were baptized with Christ's baptism on that day were added to them (Acts 2:41) and these two groups constituted the one newly born kingdom/church of Christ. After the church/kingdom was established on that day, God added to that church/kingdom daily those who were being saved (Acts 2:47). They were being translated daily into the kingdom/church of God's dear Son (Colossians 1:13)! The same is true of people today!

QUESTION No. 699: Why is baptism not mentioned in Romans 10:9-13?

ANSWER: Some in the religious world today hold that all one must do to be saved is to believe (understand and accept) that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. They many times refer to this passage in support of their false doctrine. However, often they fail to comprehend that "belief" in Jesus Christ is more than just mental assent. As used in the Bible, e.g., John 3:16; Acts 16:30-31, the meaning of "believe" is "trust in Christ, conjoined with obedience to Him" (Thayer). So it is in the verses in question! This particular passage says nothing of repentance. Are we to conclude that we are not required to repent for the remission of sins? Surely not, because in Acts 2:38 & 17:30-31, we are commanded to repent! Similarly, this particular passage says nothing of baptism. Are we to conclude that we are not required to be baptized for the remission of sins? Surely not, because in Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; & I Peter 3:21, we see that baptism precedes and is necessary to salvation! When a man "with the heart believeth unto righteousness" (Romans 10:10), he is calling upon the name of the Lord (Vs.13); he is faithfully obeying the gospel (Vs.16); and he is hearing the word of God (Vs.17). The phrases are synonymous! Each of these verses implicitly includes belief, repentance, confession and baptism as works of obedience (not works of righteousness) necessary and prior to salvation. There are those who would hold that if someone calls out the name of the Lord in prayer that they will be saved. This is false teaching through and through (Matthew 7:21). Consider the following when determining then what is meant by "calling on the name of the Lord." We see in Matthew 7:21, it is not saying "Lord, Lord." Then what is it? Note in Acts 2:17-21 that this was the day of which it had been prophesied that "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Question: How were they saved? Acts 2:38 tells us how they were saved. Conclusion: what was done in Acts 2:38 is equal to "calling on the name of the Lord!" Can't be denied! Any other cases? Yes! Acts 22:16, the conversion of the apostle Paul; Be baptized and wash away thy sins, "calling on the name of the Lord." In fact the Greek here is: "be baptized and wash away thy sins, having called on the name of the Lord." Paul is not being told to shout out the name of Jesus while he was being baptized! And certainly, he was not being told to pray, since he had been, while being blind, praying for three days (Acts 9:9-11) prior to being told what to do. In fact the idea of Ananias saying in Acts 22:16, "And now why tarriest thou" indicates that that which Paul was doing (praying) was not getting the job done. In order to get the job done, he had to "call upon the name of the Lord" by being obedient to Him in baptism! We see exactly the same thing in Romans 10. Don't stop with Verse thirteen. Here it says, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Read Verses 14 and 15 very carefully, and then focus on Verse 16 as it relates to Verse 13; "But they have not all obeyed the gospel" or, in other words, they have not all

“called upon the name of the Lord!” Conclusion (as in the other two cases): Calling upon the name of the Lord is equal to our obedience to Him in baptism!

Extreme care must be taken in studying the Bible not to take a passage out of context in order to support a preconception (as do the proponents of "faith only"), nor to base a doctrine upon a particular verse without consideration to similarly related verses. This is a misuse of Holy Scripture!

QUESTION No. 700: Is James 5:14-15 applicable today, or was it limited to the miraculous age?

ANSWER: That the action of the elders in this passage was miraculous is evidenced by the very fact that the ill Christians were directed to “call for the elders of the church.” Why call for them if they could not heal? Why not call a physician? If the elders did not have miraculous ability, why call for them? If they could heal, where did they get the power to do so? The answer is, the same place that Philip got his power to heal (Acts 8:6-7). Through the laying on of the apostles hands (Acts 6:5-6; Acts 8:18). Anointing with oil was a healing agent of Bible times and was often used symbolically. Such is not the custom today. Additionally, the anointing in this passage was to be accompanied by miraculous gifts that had been bestowed upon the elders through the laying on of the apostles' hands, as noted above. When the elders exercised their miraculous ability, the result was sure, i.e., "And the prayer of faith *shall* (no doubt) save the sick, and the Lord *shall (no doubt)* raise him up" (Vs.15). That such is not the case today is obvious, because if such did happen today, then it would then be the case that Christians today would ever die, i.e., they would be healed every time they got sick and would be ‘raised up’ without fail. Since Christians today do die, it is evident that miracles do not occur today, that they have ceased (I Corinthians 13:8)! As well, since all today are not ‘raised up,’ it must be acknowledged that the practices of James 5:14 (including the anointing with oil) were temporary for that time only, i.e., the miraculous age that was terminated by the will of God with the completion of the New Testament (I Corinthians 13:8-12).

QUESTION No. 701: Please explain I Corinthians 14:34-35 for me. Does this passage speak only about married women or does it refer to all the ladies? Does it teach that women cannot read in a Bible Class, or teaching, or worship? Should

women close their mouths not to read the Bible during Sunday worship? Since Verse thirty-five tells the woman to ask her husband at home, what can one do that has no husband? Would you also explain Verse thirty-six?

ANSWER: The verse in question reads as follows: “Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.” Relative to the same matter, Paul also writes the following in I Timothy 2:11-12: "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." The reason given in Verses 13-14 is: "For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression."

From these passages we answer as follows:

1. These passages are not limited to the married women only, but are applicable to all women. Note that the last phrase of I Corinthians 14:35 clearly does not limit the word “women” to only the married. The same is true in I Timothy 2:11-12.

2. In the context of I Corinthians fourteen, reference is to the events within a worship service. The Bible Study period is not being discussed. Therefore, it is in the worship service only that the woman is not to speak. However, we must also realize, as we study I Timothy 2:11-12, that though a women may speak in a Bible Class, she is in neither circumstance (Worship or Bible Class) to usurp or take away the authority that is given only to the man! She may not in either instance teach over the man!

3. Since the woman is commanded to be in silence during the worship service, she may not read the Bible aloud! Any position or activity, then, of a woman in the worship service that takes away the authority of the man is sinful! Within the intent of the passages under discussion, she is permitted only to vocally engage in congregational singing (Ephesians 5:19) and to say "Amen"

with those occupying the room at the giving of thanks (I Corinthians 14:16), doing such decently and in order (I Corinthians 14:40) as she worships in spirit and truth (John 4:24). To this she is limited by the Holy Spirit!

4. Though a woman may not have a husband, she must still abide within the teaching and intent of these scriptures. An unmarried woman, having a question, may approach one of the elders or men of the congregation outside of the worship assembly for an answer. Further, there is no reason why a woman, married or unmarried, cannot ask a question within the Bible Study period, provided that such is done in a way that does not usurp the authority of the male teacher.

5. In Verse thirty-six, Paul is in effect saying the following: 'The church at Corinth is not the source of truth on these matters. You are permitting things to happen in worship that are not according to the truth; things that do not happen in the other churches. All of the churches are to follow the commandments of the Lord as I have written unto you (Verse 37)! Therefore, stop what you're doing and let all things be done decently and in order' (Verse 40).

QUESTION No. 702: What does the phrase "experienced a hardening in part" mean in Romans 11:25? Verse twenty-six says all Israel will be saved. Who were/are the Gentiles?

ANSWER: Earlier in this chapter, Paul is speaking about an olive tree to illustrate his message. The natural branches represent the Jews and the branches that were "graffed" (or grafted) into the tree represent the Gentiles. In Verse seventeen, we see that part of the natural branches (Jews) were broken off from the tree. Then in Verse twenty, we are told why they were broken off, i.e., "because of unbelief." Next we learn (Verses 22-23) that the Jews who were broken off could be "graffed" (or grafted) back into the tree also. In other words, they could be attached again to the tree just as were the Gentiles.

The phrase "experienced a hardening in part" refers to that part of the Jews who were broken off of the tree through unbelief. You have read too much into Verse twenty-six. It does not say that all Jews who lived then were going to be saved. Neither does it say that all Jews will be saved at the end of time. The word "so" is very important in understanding this passage. "So" is an adverb of manner! It means "in this way" or "under the circumstances described." Therefore, with this understanding and within the context of the chapter, Paul is saying, "all of unbelieving Israel who will be saved will be saved just as the Gentiles are saved," i.e., they, too, must be "graffed" (or grafted) into the tree. The same point is made by Paul in the tenth Chapter, Verse twelve: "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek (Gentile): for the same Lord over all is rich unto them that call upon Him."

QUESTION No. 703: In Revelation 12:5, who is the male child? And what is the rod of iron?

ANSWER: The book of Revelation is written in symbolic figures and should not be taken literally in most instances. In the verse in question, the passage does not refer to a literal male person who will one day rule the world. Most agree that the male child represents Christians in the church. The church, collectively, is represented by the "woman," and the rod of iron refers to the Word of God, the Bible!

QUESTION No. 704: Is Gog and Magog still in existence (Revelation 20:8)?

ANSWER: No! Gog was prince of the land of Magog (Ezekiel 38:2). Reference here is to a people from the North, located between the Cimmerians and the Medes. They were involved in the last great physical oppression of God's people in the Old Testament dispensation and in Revelation 20:8 are mentioned to symbolize the last great spiritual oppression that is to occur under the New Testament dispensation.

QUESTION No. 705: Why is the wages of sin death? If for instance, I will be wondering why is it that not only sinners undergo death. All people die, both the righteous and the unrighteous.

ANSWER: Romans 6:23 is clear that the wages of sin is death. The "death" being discussed here is not physical death, but rather spiritual and eternal death. Death itself means to "separate," or "a separation." In physical death the soul separates from the body (James 2:26). When one sins in this life he or she is said to be spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:1; Colossians 2:13), in that he or she has been separated from God (Isaiah 59:1-2). This is spiritual death. If one does not rid himself of these separating sins in this life through obedience to the Gospel of Christ, he will be forever separated from God in the life to come in the lake of fire and brimstone, which is the second death Revelation 20:14-15). "All" people who are old enough and sane enough to be accountable to God commit sin and, therefore, experience spiritual death. However, not "all" will experience eternal death! Some who would be righteous through obedience to the Gospel are "quickened" (made alive), having experienced the new birth (John 3:3-5) and are reconciled to God (II Corinthians 5:17-21) and return to be in fellowship with Him (I John 1:3-7). These will enter into eternal life (Matthew 25:34, 46). Those who would be unrighteous, through continuing disobedience to the Gospel, will experience eternal death by being "punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power" (I Thessalonians 1:7-9; Matthew 25:41, 46).

QUESTION No. 706: According to Ephesians 1:22-23 the church, the body of Christ, is referred to as the "fullness of him that filleth all in all." What is the fullness that makes the Church of Christ the Church of Christ. And with what is He filling us that we are receiving?

ANSWER: Several other passages play on this one. Most directly related, I believe, are: (1) Colossians 2:9-10, "For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:" (2) John 1:16, "And of his fullness (grace and truth, Verse 14) have we all received, and grace for grace (an abundance of grace)." (3) I Corinthians 1:30, "But of Him (God) are ye in Christ, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:"

With consideration to all of these passages, we see that in Christ is the "fullness' of the Godhead and in the church is the "fullness" of Christ. Christ, filled with the Godhead, in turn, fills his church with the "fullness" of His blessings, i.e., wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Since we gain wisdom through Christ's Word (the New Testament) unto righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, we consequently further understand that the "filling" that comes from Christ to the church is

"through that Word" and not by any direct means separate and apart from the Word. Thus, the importance of 'letting the word of Christ dwell in us richly in all wisdom' (Colossians 3:16), for it is in this sense that the Godhead indwells and abundantly blesses (fills) those who make up the body of Christ (I John 4:15; Ephesians 3:17; Romans 8:11).

QUESTION No. 707: Is there any difference between the "antichrist: (I John 1:2:22) and one who blasphemes the Holy Spirit (Mark 3:28-29)?

ANSWER: John clearly tells us who an "antichrist" is, i.e., he that "denieth the Father and the Son." Jesus states that those of Mark 3:28-29 are those who "blaspheme against the Holy Ghost." Both passages refer to those who deny, reject, and speak against (blaspheme) the deity of the divine persons of the Godhead (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost). All who do so will remain in a lost condition until they through faith, repentance, confession, and baptism, accept and obey the divine message that comes from the Godhead, i.e., the New Testament of Jesus Christ. There is no difference between the two!

QUESTION No. 708: Are Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John a part of the New Covenant?

ANSWER: Clearly, there are but two Covenants (Galatians 4:24), a first and a second, a new and an old (Hebrews 8:7), a glorious one and a more glorious one (II Corinthians 3:7-8)! Since there were only two Covenants given, all scripture must necessarily be contained in one or the other.

In Matthew 5:21, Jesus quoted from the Old Covenant (Exodus 20:13) and then in Verse 22 said something new and different that was not in that Old Covenant. The same is true of Matthew 5:27, 33, 38, and 43. He quoted from Exodus 20:14, Leviticus 19:21, Exodus 21:24, and Leviticus 19:18, respectively. In each case Jesus said something new and different that was not in the Old Covenant. Since what Jesus said (including Matthew 19:1-9) is understood to be scripture, by which all who live under the New Covenant will one day be judged (John 12:48), and since it is scripture that is new and different from that of the Old Covenant, there being but two Covenants, it logically follows that what Jesus said "must" be contained in that New Covenant.

Further, since the Old Covenant was taken out of the way at the Cross (Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 2:14), it is evident that those who lived under the Old Covenant will be judged by the words of that Old Covenant and not by the new and different things spoken by Jesus. This being true, we must then again logically conclude that the new and different things that Jesus spoke in Matthew 5 are not included in, nor a part of the Old Covenant by which they will be judged. Again, if the things He spoke are not a part of the Old Covenant, since there are only two Covenants, what He said "must" then be a part of the New Covenant!

Each account of the Gospel of Christ, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John make up the first four books of the New Covenant. These, coupled with the Book of Acts through The Revelation, constitute the totality of the New Covenant of Jesus Christ!

QUESTION No. 709: Please explain Matthew 7:21-27.

ANSWER: This passage is the conclusion to Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. In Verse twenty-one, He is saying that not every one that claims to be a Christian will go to heaven, but only those who do the will of the Father. Many today claim to be faithful Christians, but they are living according to the standards of men and the rules of denominationalism, rather than what the Bible says! It is very important then that we don't put our trust in men or in man-made creeds, but only in the words of the New Testament, for by these and these alone will men of today be judged (John 12:48).

Verses twenty-two and twenty-three tell us what will happen in judgment to those who have been led by men to think and believe they are Christians, but have not lived and worshipped according to the New Testament. They will be lost in eternity!

In Verses twenty-four through twenty-seven, based on what Christ said in Verse thirteen through twenty-three, He concludes first with who is a wise man, i.e., one who rejects the will and doctrines of men and wholly, "hears these sayings of mine and obeys them." This man will be able to stand through Judgment! Secondly, He tells us who is a foolish man, i.e., one who accepts the will and doctrines of men; one who "hears these sayings of mine and does not obey them." This man will fall in Judgment!

To claim Christianity as taught in the denominations will count for nothing on Judgment Day. One must be a faithful Christian in the church for which Christ died, i.e., the Church of Christ!

QUESTION No. 710: Please explain Revelation 3:12-14.

ANSWER: Verses twelve and thirteen are the concluding remarks in the letter to the church at Philadelphia (Verse seven). The Revelation was written mostly in signs or symbolic language (Chapter 1, Verse one – signified). Verse twelve may be understood as follows: Christ will make the faithful (he who overcomes) a strong support (pillar), a permanent support (he shall go no more out) in His temple (the church). The faithful will be designated as the children of God (and I will write upon the faithful the name of my God – Revelation 14:1 & 22:4); as the Church of Christ (The city of God, New Jerusalem) which originated in heaven (cometh down from heaven and God): And the faithful will wear the new name of "Christian."

In Verse thirteen, we are told to pay heed to that which has been said previously.

Verse fourteen contains an instruction to write to the church of Laodicea and a description of Him from whom the message comes. Obviously the description is of Christ who is the "Amen, the faithful and true witness" (That which He affirms and witnesses is always faithful and true). He is "the beginning of the creation of God." This does not mean He was the first thing created, but rather that He was the originating source or the active cause of all creation (Colossians 1:16-17). The same is true of Colossians 1:15 where it is said He is the "firstborn of every creature." The word "firstborn" is from the Greek "prototokos" which literally means "preeminence" (as used in Verse eighteen), the "origin or active cause of." In fact, Verses 16-17, explain the meaning of the phrase "firstborn of every creature." Christ was the one who created "all" things that were created and existed before "anything" was created. Since He created "all" things that were created, if He were created, then one would have to conclude ridiculously and foolishly that He created Himself! As well, since Christ existed before "all" things that were created, if He were created, then one would also have to conclude illogically that He existed before He was created!

QUESTION No. 711: Does Romans 8:28 and Ephesians 1:4-12 teach that God chooses some to be lost and some to be saved and there is nothing they can do about it?

ANSWER: Neither passage, nor none other, teaches this false doctrine. Romans 8:28 is simply teaching that though the faithful of God must suffer many things in this life, these trials will be the purifying furnace by which Christians are made better for Him and more fit for heaven. The Ephesians passage is not teaching that individuals are predestinated. It is teaching that all who are in a certain realm have been predestinated. That realm is "in" Christ, His body, the church of Christ (Ephesians 1:3). Christ is the Savior of the body, the church (Ephesians 5:23). Those who have been baptized into that body at the direction of the Holy Spirit through the Word are those, then, who have been predestinated! (I Corinthians 12:13). It has been predestinated that those who do the will of the Father will be saved and those who don't do the will of the Father will be lost (Matthew 7:13-27). Matthew 25, in foretelling the events of the Judgment Day yet to come, teach the same message. But according to the Calvinist, our final destinies have already been determined! If so, what need then of a future Judgment? What foolishness! Revelation 22:17 very simply destroys forever the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination. Inspiration here says, "*Whosoever will*, let him take of the water of life freely." *Whosoever* means everybody and anybody, not some elite group predestined for salvation!

QUESTION No. 712: How can II Corinthians 6:14 be applied in a place whereby Christians are surrounded by many denominations that are also believers?

ANSWER: Clearly, denominationalism is not of God (John 17:20-23; I Corinthians 1:10-13). Certainly with these and the world we can not be unequally yoked together. An "unequal yoke" is a yoke that would cause one to compromise truth and thereby be lost. It does not mean that there is to be no contact at all with the world or the denominations, since contact is necessary for their conversion. Certainly, we cannot, in our contact with them, encourage them in their sin. This passage can be more clearly understood by noting what Paul said about being yoked with sexually immoral people within the church in I Corinthians 5: 9-10 (NKJV), "I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. Yet I did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolators, since then you would need to go out of the world." Cavorting with the denominations and the world in which we encourage their activities is wrong according to II Corinthians 6:14. It is also wrong to totally isolate ourselves from the world since our commission is to contact them for purposes of conversion. Indeed, there is nothing at all wrong in dealing

with those of the world for business purposes and providing for our families (Matthew 22:21; John 4:8).

QUESTION No. 713: What is separation from the world?

ANSWER: This question is mostly answered above. We are to be in the world, but not of the world. We are not to participate in the sins of the world, neither are we to love the things that are in the world (I John 2:15-17). A person functioning as one in the world cannot be a faithful Christian, because the things that are in the world stand opposed to things spiritual. The Christian's focus will always be toward things that are above, not on the things of this earth (Colossians 3:1-5).

QUESTION No. 714: Who was the best loved of Jesus' disciples?

ANSWER: It was John! The three most close to Jesus were Peter, James and John. They alone were with Him on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1), at the raising of Jairus' daughter (Luke 8:51), and shortly before His betrayal as He prayed to the Father (Matthew 26:37). Peter was not the one most loved by Christ because it was he who asked the one that Jesus most loved who was to be the betrayer (John 13:23-24). It was not James because Herod caused him to be killed with the sword before the book of John was written (Acts 12:1-2). It could then, of the three, be only John!

QUESTION No. 715: Matthew 18:18-20 does not seem to fit into the context of Matthew 18:15-35, which deals with forgiveness. Can you explain?

ANSWER: Matthew 18:15-35 indeed does deal with forgiveness. Verses 15-17 reveal how a brother is to deal with another brother who has personally sinned against him. It is not dealing primarily with public sins or false teachers. The last step in the process to be taken is found in Verse seventeen: "And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be to thee as a heathen man and a publican."

The immediate application of Verses 18-20 is that whatever the disciples rightfully decide in the matter brought before the church, that decision will be bound or loosed in heaven. In the immediate context, "binding" would equate to "withdrawal," while "loosing" would equate to "repentance and restoration." In Verse nineteen, with the disciple's agreement on the matter, accompanied by prayer, the decision will be honored by God. That prayer, however, must, of course, be in accordance with His will (I John 5:14). The "two or three" of Verse twenty are the same "two or three" of Verse sixteen, which effectively implies that Christ will support the action taken, provided that it is taken as He has directed!

There are, however, broader applications that may also be scripturally understood, as follows: (1) Verse eighteen, that the "binding" and "loosing" may also include other decisions made by the disciples at the direction of the Holy Spirit, as suggested in Matthew 16:19; (2) Verse nineteen, that all prayer offered according to the will of God will be heard, whether it be in a miraculous sense for those of the first century, who were so endowed, or for us today in a non-miraculous way; (3) Verse twenty, that Christ will be present when "two or three" Christians are gathered together in His name or by His authority, regardless of the reason (Matthew 26:29; I Corinthians 3:16).

QUESTION No. 716: I am perturbed. Would you please explain I Timothy 3:16?

ANSWER: The verse reads, "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory." We will consider each of the above phrases separately.

A) [And without controversy] Paul, by direction of the Holy Spirit, is saying that what I am now going to say is without question, i.e., there can be no doubt about it!

B) [Great is the mystery] The mystery is something that was originally hidden from man. This is to say, something of which he had little or no knowledge, but yet something he deeply wanted to know. The mystery was said to be "great" because man was not capable of solving it without communication from Heaven.

C) [Of godliness:] "Godliness" refers to the holiness, purity, and piety of God. This entire phrase, then, tells us that the mystery had to do with the source of all "godliness" and is now revealed (no longer a mystery) in the person of Jesus Christ.

D) [God] Perfect holiness, purity, and piety are attributes that belong only to Deity or God, here expressed in the person of Jesus Christ showing that He is God, as evidenced by the following phrases.

E) [Was manifested in the flesh] Christ, as God, came in flesh as a man (John 1:1-14; Philippians 1:5-8) and so revealed the holiness, purity, and piety of Deity.

F) [Justified in the Spirit] This means that Christ was proven to be Deity by the miracles that He performed through the Holy Spirit whom He possessed without measure (John 3:34).

G) [Seen of angels] Christ was seen of angels before coming to this earth the first time and often attended by angels during His earthly ministry (Matthew 4:11; Luke 2:9-13; Luke 22:43; Luke 24:4).

H) [Preached among the Gentiles] This phrase indicates that the preaching of the Gospel of Christ was not only for the Jews, but also for all of mankind (Mark 16:15-16).

I) [Believed on in the world] The undeniable evidences presented to the world during the earthly sojourn of Christ, i.e., His life, His doctrine, His death, His burial and resurrection, and His ascension, causes those in the world to believe in Him as the Son of God.

J) [Received up in glory] At the completion of His earthly ministry (John 17:4), Jesus was received into heaven, brought before the Ancient of Days (the Father) and there was "given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him; His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (Daniel 7:13-14).

This mystery of godliness, as revealed in the person and doctrine of Jesus Christ, is to be proclaimed to every creature in the world (Mark 16:15-16) by the church of Christ, which is the pillar and ground of the truth (I Timothy 3:15).

QUESTION No. 717: John the Baptist was Elijah coming to complete his work. Is this true?

ANSWER: John the Baptist was not literally Elijah risen from the dead. John the Baptist, born of Elizabeth and Zacharias, came in the spirit and power of Elijah, i.e., in the likeness of Elijah to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children (by uniting them religiously), and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make a people prepared for the Lord" (Luke 1:17). See also Matthew 11:7-15. In these passages we have the fulfillment of prophecy, as recorded in Malachi 3:1 and Malachi 4:5-6.

QUESTION No. 718: What is the meaning of Hebrew 6:1-8?

ANSWER: The Hebrews letter was written to warn and guard against Judaizing teachers who were trying to cause Christians to forsake Christ and return to the Law of Moses! In the latter verses of the preceding chapter, he is saying that the Christians to whom he was writing were still babes in Christ and needed to be able to leave the milk of the Gospel (the first principles of truth) in order to be able to partake of the meat of the Gospel (the weightier matters of truth), in order that they might grow properly as Christians should and to being able to stand against the Judaizers.

In Hebrews 6:1-2, he explains what the first principles of truth are to which he refers:

(1) Therefore (based on what was said in Chapter 5:12-14),

(2) leaving the first principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection (to maturity in the Gospel);

(3) not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works (they had already laid this foundation, i.e., they had already repented from dead works or from things they had done in the past that caused spiritual death);

(4) and of faith toward God (faith or belief generated by God's Word is the first element or the foundation on which is based the Christian life. The writer is saying, 'it is now time to build on that foundation!');

(5) Of the doctrine of baptisms (baptism too is a foundational concept and action upon which they were being instructed to build. Here the writer refers to more than one

baptism, most likely to the baptism of John; the baptism of fire; the baptism in the Holy Spirit, and the baptism of Christ. Thus he uses the plural word "baptisms.")

(6) and of laying on of hands (in the very early church, the laying on of hands was prevalent in the endowment of gifts. Here they are instructed that such should not be of primary importance);

(7) and of the resurrection of the dead (this was a basic teaching or a matter of fact that they had already received. For them to focus and spend their time contemplating the fact was to inhibit their growth in other facets of the Gospel.);

(8) and of eternal Judgment. (the same is true of this subject as it was of the resurrection of the dead. The writer is saying the same of all these things, i.e., as babes in Christ we were taught these things, we believe these thing, now let's not make them any longer our primary focus, and remain babes, but let's move on to greater maturity in Christ!);

(9) and this we will do, if God permit. (the writer here reminds them that with the help of God, they will reach maturity in Christ!)

Now to Hebrews 6:4-7: The implication is that in order to keep from falling one must continue to mature in Christ. If they do not they will fall, as some have, leaving Christ and returning to the bondage of the Mosaic Law that Christ had taken out of the way at the cross (Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 2:14).

Verses 4–6: Here the reference is primarily to those Jews who had become Christians, but is nonetheless true of all men. They had been enlightened by the Gospel. They had seen the light of truth. They had tasted the gift of eternal life, i.e., they had that gift in prospect. They had been, by their obedience to the Gospel, made partakers of the Holy Ghost. They had tasted the Word of God in their original acceptance of those truths and they had, in the church, tasted Christianity and the Heaven that it offers! All of those who experience these blessings, if they should fall away by giving in to the teachings of the Judaizers, thereby totally rejecting Christ, then it would be impossible to renew them again unto repentance, because in putting Christ away, they "crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame." Under the law to which they would return, there would be no opportunity for true repentance and salvation. They had left their only hope, i.e., Jesus Christ! For them, under the law to which they had returned, "there remained no sacrifice for sin" (Hebrews 10:26). The same is true of all, even today, who totally reject Christ as their Savior. As long as they remain in a state of rejection of Jesus Christ, their only hope of salvation (Acts 4:12), there can be neither repentance nor salvation! When such a one, in obedience, returns to Christ, 'He is faithful and just to forgive and cleanse from all unrighteousness (I John 1:9).

Verses 7-8: In these two verses, the writer speaks figuratively of the two classes of man. In Verse seven, the man who does not reject Christ will receive His many blessings, as does the earth when it receives the rain that God sends. In Verse eight, the man that rejects Christ will himself be rejected one day, "whose end is to be burned," just as the thorns and briers of the reapers field are rejected and burned (Matthew 13:30).

QUESTION No. 719: What is the meaning of Colossians 2:20-23?

ANSWER: When a person dies with Christ in the sense of Verse 20, it means that they die to the sins of this world. The idea is explained further in Chapter three, Verses 1 through 10. Here Paul says, since you are risen with Christ (from the watery grave of baptism) (Verse 1), you are dead (Verse 3). Therefore, put to death the sins of this world (Verse 5) so that your mind might be set on Heaven, where Christ sits at the right hand of God (Verses 1-2). In Verse 20 again, he says, since you are dead from the rudiments of the world (the sin of the world as described in Chapter 3) why are you acting like you are living in the world by subjecting yourselves to ordinances. Ordinances here refer to the ordinances of Moses, especially as related to food, drink, holy days, the festival of the new moon, and sabbath days, as set forth in Verse 16. All of these things were blotted out at the Cross (Verse 14). Therefore, they were not to subject themselves to these, but to avoid them, just as they were to avoid the sins of this world. They had died in baptism into Christ not only to those sins, they had also died to those ordinances of the Law of Moses, as noted above (Romans 7:4).

In Verses 21-22, the instruction is to touch not, taste not, handle not. In other words, don't have anything to do with these ordinances since you are dead to Moses' Law. Verse 21 and the first part of Verse 22 are in parentheses and are to be taken together. The first part of Verse 22, "which all are to perish with the using," means that the ordinances and the things used in the celebration of festivals and holydays governed by those ordinances will eventually pass away, i.e., they have nothing to do now or in the future with the eternal things of Christ!

The latter part of Verse 22, following the parentheses, ties directly back to Verse 20 and so we have the reading, "Why as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, after the commandments and doctrines of men?" Here we have clear indication that within the ordinances that the Jews bound upon others were those laws that were based on the traditions, i.e., the doctrines and commandments of men, of which Jesus spoke in Matthew 15:1-9. The Christian is to have nothing to do with any of them!

In Verse 23, He says that obedience to these ordinances put on an outward show of wisdom by worshipping according to one's own will and not according to God's will. Therefore such is nothing but a pretense of wisdom and humility! In obedience to the traditions of men, some would neglect the body by long periods of fastings (going

without food), penances (showing sorrow by depriving themselves of normal living), wearing of sackcloth, covering themselves with dust and ashes, etc. In the last part of the verse he says there is no real honor in doing such things and that when such things are done the honor that one feels may satisfy him (the flesh), but it is spiritually worthless!

QUESTION No. 720: Does I Corinthians 15:51-53 teach that when some people die and are buried that their spirit remains in the grave to await for the judgment day to rise again?

ANSWER: No! It does not mean this! The spirit does not go into the grave. As noted heretofore, it will return to the God who gave it (Ecclesiastes 12:7). The passage in question is saying that the physical body (flesh and blood) cannot enter Heaven. The question then becomes, what about those who are still alive, those whose bodies and spirits remain together when Christ returns? Paul answers this question in Verses 51-54. He states in Verse 51, that not all men will die, i.e., some will be alive when Christ returns. He has already stated earlier in the chapter that those who had already died would, at the resurrection, be given new spiritual bodies (Verse 35-49). Now he is saying in Verses 51-52, that those who are alive when Christ returns will be changed in the twinkling of an eye. This means that they, too, at that time, will be given new spiritual bodies! Note in Verse 42 what he says about those who had already died and who will come forth from the grave at the resurrection: 'they will come forth with the new spiritual bodies that are incorruptible, i.e., with an eternal body!' In Verses 53-55, he is saying that the same thing is true of those who are alive when Christ returns, they will be changed in the twinkling of an eye so that they too will have incorruptible bodies. The new spiritual, incorruptible bodies will be given to all men, good and bad. The new spiritual bodies, given to those who will thereafter be judged righteous, will enjoy Heaven for an eternity of joy. The new spiritual bodies, given to those who will thereafter be judged unrighteous, will be sent to the lake of fire. Their incorruptible bodies will not be destroyed by the fires of hell, but since their new bodies are eternal, they will suffer throughout eternity!

QUESTION No. 721: What was Jesus talking about in John 5:25? Who are the people to hear the word? Where are these people? When will this happen?

ANSWER: In this verse, Jesus is talking about a spiritual resurrection of those who are dead in sin (Ephesians 2:1) to spiritual life in Christ as Christians. Those who hear the word refers to all who lived then, all who live now, and all who shall live in the

future. If any will accept and obey (hear) the words of the Son of God that "are" spirit and life (John 6:63), they will be spiritually alive as children of God. In their obedience in baptism they will have experienced the new birth of John 3:1-5. They will at that point become new creatures in Christ (II Corinthians 5:17) and, as such, they will walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4). This has happened since men began responding to the words of Christ from the beginning of the Gospel and will continue so until He returns. In Verses 28-29, Christ says, 'don't marvel about this spiritual resurrection,' for the hour is coming when there will be a physical resurrection in the which all that are in the graves will come forth to stand before Him in Judgment!' The spirits of men will come out of the Hadean world to be joined with their new incorruptible bodies, as noted in the answer to the above question!

QUESTION No. 722: Will you please explain Revelation 13:1-4?

ANSWER: The Revelation was written at a time when Christians were suffering extreme persecution at the hands of the Roman Empire. It was written in symbolic language that Christians, being familiar with similar language of the Old Testament, would be able to understand. Their persecutors would not be able to understand. The passage in question is a direct symbolic reference to the Roman Empire.

Verse 1: And I stood upon the sands of the sea (This refers to nations and governments, according to Revelation 17:15), and saw a beast rise up out of the sea (Rome becoming predominant among the nations), having seven heads (The original seven hills of Rome – Revelation 17:9, indicating seven heads of power – Revelation 17:10) and ten horns (Ten seats of subordinate power in the Empire), and upon his head ten crowns (The successive Caesar's of Rome – Daniel 7:20), and upon his heads the name of blasphemy (The beast in all his actions would deny and fight against God)

Verse 2: And the beast which I saw was like a leopard (Swift to kill), and his feet were as the feet of a bear (It possessed claws or weapons of war), and his mouth as the mouth of a lion (It had power to crush its enemies and to roar with loud blasphemies (Verse 5): and the dragon (Satan – Revelation 20:2) gave him his power, and his seat, and his authority (The persecution of Christians by the Roman Empire was caused by Satan).

Verse 3: And I saw one of his heads, as it were wounded to death (a nearly fatal blow to the dynasty of the Caesar's, perhaps a reference to Nero's suicide) and his deadly wound was healed (The dynasty recovered and went on) and all the world wondered after the beast (Perhaps a reference to the myth that had developed that Nero was reincarnated in subsequent Caesar's).

Verse 4: And they (the people of the Roman Empire) worshipped the dragon (Satan) which gave power unto the beast (Rome): and they worshipped the beast (Rome), saying, who is like the beast? Who is able to make war with him (Rome was the world power of the day and none could overcome her).

The message of the book of Revelation is that the church of Christ would overcome the persecution of Rome and be victorious. Rome has since fallen and passed away, but the eternal church of our Lord still stands! As the church in years gone by overcame persecution, so it is that each Christian must remain faithful unto death in order to victoriously receive a crown of life (Revelation 2:10).

QUESTION No. 723: I John 5:7 is included in the KJV, but is omitted from the ASV. Why?

ANSWER: The verse in question cannot be found in any of the earlier Greek manuscripts and is later found in only two of the sixteenth century, the Britannicus and the Codex Ravianus. Neither is it to be found in the versions before that time, such as the Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, Sclavonic, Ethiopic, and Arabic, nor is it quoted by the early so-called "Greek Fathers" in their discussions about the doctrine of the Trinity. As well, most of the so-called "Latin Fathers" omit it. However, it does appear in the Latin writers at the end of the fifth century.

The passage would not have appeared in the "Textus Receptus" (the basis for the older English translations) had Erasmus not promised to insert it, if it could be found in any Greek manuscript. He, as promised, inserted in when it was found by him in the Britannicus, as noted above. Scholarship does not support this action of Erasmus. In fact, all conservative scholarship holds that the verse is not a part of the writings of the apostle John and is not, therefore, inspired of God. It is believed to have been added to the text by a copyist. There is no doubt, however, by all conservative scholars that though nearly

100 percent of all New Testament verses are inspired, in this particular instance, it is attested by these same scholars that the subject verse is not inspired, but of men. It is properly omitted from the American Standard Version.

Nonetheless, we should not call into question the doctrine of the Trinity, since it is clearly taught elsewhere in both the Old and New Testaments!

QUESTION No. 724: How should we understand the phrases "shortly come to pass" (Revelation 1:1) and "the time is at hand" (Revelation 1:3)? I would suppose that the phrase "I come quickly" (Revelation 3:11; Revelation 22:7) would be seen in the same light.

ANSWER: First of all, the phrase "shortly come to pass" of Revelation 1:1 implies the certainty of John's prophecies and that they would "begin" to transpire shortly after the time John wrote. Certainly, given the context of the book, one cannot rightly assume that "all' things of which he prophesied would come to pass at the same time, or even in the immediate future. The imagery of the seals, trumpets, and vials clearly indicates a series of events over a period of time to take place one after the other. This fact coupled with the symbolic use of 1000 years in the twentieth chapter precludes the assignment of "all" of the prophecies occurring immediately or "shortly", as the word is often perceived. The word is a comparative word that may mean a few days, one year, or many years depending upon the total period under consideration.

The original Greek of Verse three expressing the phrase, "the time is at hand" essentially expresses the context of the Verse one phrase.

As far as the phrase "I come quickly" in 3:11 is concerned, it appears to me that this "coming" is symbolic. This usage is not uncommon in the Scriptures, e.g., Isaiah 34:1, re: His "coming" to destroy Egypt; also 35:4; and 40:11. Similar language is also used as relates to His "coming" in the destruction of Jerusalem (Matthew 24:27). Considering the preceding the verse, it would seem He is "coming" quickly to try them that dwell upon the earth. As to Revelation 22:7 coupled with Verses 12 and 20, it appears that reference is to His final and Second Coming. As relates to the time of these "comings", it seems that your suggestion is valid and that the concept as related heretofore would be identical with the overall extent of the total period being viewed from God's perspective.

QUESTION No. 725: Are you saying that the Old Testament is obsolete to the church after the coming of Jesus (From Zambia)?

ANSWER: The Old Testament has been taken out of the way and replaced by the New Testament of Jesus Christ. Please read again carefully the following passages: Romans 7:4-7; II Corinthians 3:13-14; Galatians 3:24-25; Ephesians 2:13-16; Hebrews 7:12 / 8:7. In Colossians 2:14, we see that the handwriting of ordinances (Old Testament) was blotted out; that it was against us and contrary to us. Therefore, He took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross! This means that its laws and commandments no longer bind us. For example, we today do not have to offer animal sacrifices; we do not have to burn incense; we do not have to go to Jerusalem to worship; and we do not have to use instruments of music. These all were Old Testament precepts. Today, all people everywhere are bound only by the New Testament. It, and it alone, is our religious guide today! It is true that some of the principles of the Old Testament can also be found in the New Testament. For example, both the Old and the New tell us that it is sin to commit murder. The sin of murder today, however, is not a result of our transgressing the law that was in the Old Testament. We today sin by transgressing the law regarding murder that is in the New Testament and by it we shall be judged (John 12:48). We today will not be judged by how we live according to the Old Testament. Those who lived before the Old Testament was taken out of the way at the cross of Christ will be judged by it!

Consider this: Under colonial law, a Zambian was not permitted to commit murder! After colonialism, a Zambian is not permitted to commit murder! Which law is binding upon Zambians today and, if he commits murder today, under which law will he be judged? Of course, he will be judged by Zambian law. But why by Zambian law? Why not by colonial law? Simply because colonial law was replaced by Zambian law! Zambian law is the only law for Zambians that is in effect today! The same is true of the Old and New Testaments!

QUESTION No. 726: II Timothy 3:16 talks about all Scripture as having been God-breathed, but in your answer you have disqualified this. Is not Psalms 150 still inspired?

ANSWER: Yes, Psalms 150 is still inspired, but, nonetheless, it is inaccurate to say that we have disqualified II Timothy 3:16. The Old Testament is just as God-breathed as is the New Testament. However, this does not mean that because those Old Testament words were inspired that they bind us today. Those words were God's Word for the people who lived before the cross! The New Testament is God's Word for the people who live after the cross! God replaced the inspired Old Testament with the inspired New Testament (Hebrews 7:12; Hebrews 8:6-7). Based on your statement, you are suggesting that because you do not offer animal sacrifices today, you are disqualifying the Old Testament as being God-breathed! You must ask yourself, "why do I not today offer animal sacrifices when the God-breathed words of the Old Testament ordered such to be done?" The reason you do not offer animal sacrifices today is because the Old Testament has been taken out of the way and because the New Testament does not authorize such sacrifices today! Both Testaments are God-breathed, but both are not binding on Christians today!

This is the reason why we are not permitted to go back to Psalms 150 to try to find justification for the use of instruments in worship today! In order for their use to be justified today, we would have to find that justification in the New Testament by which we who live today will be judged! However, there is no justification for their use to be found anywhere in the New Testament! Bottom line? There is no New Testament authorization for instruments in worship to God! Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 are New Testament instructions and exhortations relative to acceptable worship for all Christians for all time. In these passages, we are taught that our singing is to be corporate (collective or congregational) with vocally enunciated words by which we teach and admonish one another! No other type of music is authorized, and would, therefore, be sinful!

QUESTION No. 727: Did the people who rose from the grave on the day of Jesus' crucifixion have to die again? And what was God's purpose in raising these folks and them walking around?

ANSWER: The Bible does not tell us who these people were other than the fact that they were saved people or "saints." Upon their resurrection they went into the city of Jerusalem and for the purpose of appearing to many. Though the purpose of their appearance is not given, it seems reasonable to assume that it was done to convince the Jews of the power and divinity of Christ. Beyond this we have been told nothing. All else is conjecture and speculation. We may consider the following, but can draw no

conclusions! If they were raised in their natural bodies of flesh and blood, it is certain these could not enter heaven in that state (I Corinthians 15:50) and would, therefore, have to die a second time or at some point be changed from one with a flesh and blood body to one with a spiritual or resurrection body (I Corinthians 15:51-53)! If they were raised in the promised resurrection or spiritual bodies of the faithful (I Corinthians 15:35-54; II Corinthians 5:1-4) that are incorruptible, or were raised with physical bodies that were subsequently changed by God into spiritual or resurrection bodies, it would then appear at least, though uncertain, that they did not have to die the second time! In any case, however, if they were to be separated from either the natural flesh and blood body or the spiritual resurrection body, then another death would have occurred, since death is biblically defined as a separation of the spirit from the body (James 2:26)!

QUESTION No. 728: Why did Jesus tell Mary not to touch Him after the resurrection?

ANSWER: This question has caused much speculation over the years. Some believe that because Jesus said He had "not yet ascended to the Father" that she being physical was not permitted to touch Him because it would cause Him to become unclean! However, this could not be the reason since, in Matthew 28:9, Jesus permitted the disciples to hold Him by the feet in worship, and in John 20:24-29, where He told Thomas to touch His wounds. The probablilities, then, would likely be: (1) that Jesus knew that Mary wanted to verify what she thought she was seeing by touching Him. So Jesus, is simply saying, 'Mary, there'll be time for that later. I want you to go tell my brethren that I have risen and will soon be ascending to my Father;' or (2), it may be that Mary was wanting to worship Him by clinging to His feet, as did the disciples in Matthew 28:9, and Jesus, as above, not wanting any delay, simply told her, 'don't cause undue delay by holding on to me.' I want you go right away and tell my brethren that I have risen. There will be time for this during the forty days before I ascend to my Father.'

QUESTION No. 729: We don't know the day or the hour of His coming, but certain signs will tell us the season of His coming. We will not be snuck upon as a thief does, because the generation of the fig tree will not pass until these things be fulfilled! Agree? I would also like to touch upon the 'clouds' and 'air' of I Thessalonians, but I think this will be all for now!

ANSWER: No! We do not agree! Your position seems to be that we will almost know the time Christ will return, but not the instant He will come. In fact you state that, "We will not be snuck upon as a thief does." You further state that God did not leave us ignorant about the matter!

You also seem to be trying to base your thinking upon the various definitions that may be applied to the Greek word, "Hora," which Strong's defines as hour, day, instant, or season. How you suppose that this implies that we will know in what season the Lord is going to come, but not the instant, is not reasonable!

The verses that you use to support your thesis actually teach the opposite of what you are trying to prove. Matthew 24:43-46 teaches that just as we don't know when a thief is going to come, we don't know when Christ is going to come. Do you know in what "season" the thief is going to come and rob you? What are the signs given that a thief is going to come and rob you? Absolutely none! This is why He tells us to watch and be ready at all times!

You say, "We will not be snuck upon as a thief," but Peter said, by inspiration, that "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night" (II Peter 3:10). It would seem that Peter, being led and directed by the Holy Spirit, is correct! Wouldn't you agree?

Your notion about the parable of the fig tree referring to that time shortly before Christ comes is also in error. It is clearly obvious that everything mentioned before Matthew 24:34, occurred during the generation that lived at that time. To avoid the force of this fact by stating that "this generation" meant the "generation of the fig tree" is without logic or biblical support. I am surprised that you did not also refer to Strong's for this definition. He says, the Greek "genea" means an "age," "generation," "nation," "time," taken from the root "genos" that means "diversity," "generation," "kind," "nation," "offspring," or "stock." Without doubt, it refers to the generation of people who lived at that time. In fact in that generation (a period of forty years), in 70 A.D., everything prophesied by Christ in all of the preceding verses, having nothing to do with His Second Coming, came to pass, just as He said! Note that Christ, in Verse 34, is answering the question found in Verse three, "When shall THESE THINGS be." Christ tells them when in this verse: 'THESE THINGS shall be before this generation passes!' He is not saying that these things shall come to pass during the lifetime (generation) of a

fig tree! Neither is He saying that the signs of a fig tree are to precede the Second Coming, but rather as they recognized the changes that occurred in a fig tree they were told to also recognize the signs that He said would precede the destruction of Jerusalem! It all came to pass. None of these have anything to do with His Second Coming!

In Verse 36, He begins with the word "But," which is intended to show a contrast between what He has just said and what He is going to say! He has said, these are the signs given that will precede the destruction of Jerusalem He answered that question. Now He is going to answer the question about His Second Coming: "But" of that day and hour (His second Coming) knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only! There were signs given preceding the destruction of Jerusalem, "BUT" there will be no signs given preceding the Second Coming of Christ! Nobody knows when, or will know when, it is going to happen! Just as there were no signs given to those in the days of Noah, there shall be no signs given preceding the coming of the Son of man. Business will be going on as usual and He will come as a thief in the night (II Peter 3:10). Therefore, be watching and waiting. We don't know the "day" (Matthew 24:36)! We don't know the "hour" (Matthew 24:36)! We don't know the "times" (I Thessalonians 5:1)! We don't know the "seasons" (I Thessalonians 5:1)! We only know that He "so cometh as a thief in the night (I Thessalonians 5:2). A thief comes without signs and warnings. He comes unexpectedly! So it will be at the Second Coming of our Lord!

If you are saying in your letter that you are the watchman who has been assigned to tell us what you said, we have a major problem, because what you have said does not square up with what God has already said. May I respectfully suggest that you restudy these matters without preconceptions supported by denominational doctrine!

Once this is squared up on the basis of truth, we would be delighted to hear about your notions of 'clouds' and 'air' as found in I Thessalonians 4:17!

QUESTION No. 730: Acts 16:31 says that in order to be saved all we have to do is believe in Jesus, but John 3:5 say we must be born of water and the spirit. Which is true?

ANSWER: They are both true! When the Bible say that one must believe to be saved, it is not talking about mental assent. It is talking about trust in Christ conjoined with obedience, because belief or faith alone does not justify anyone. The Lord's brother said in James 2:24, "Ye see then, how that by works a man is justified and not by faith only." As well, it is not good to take a verse out of context and base a doctrine upon it! The Roman Jailer of Acts 16 was immersed in water for the remission of sins, just as were those on the Day of Pentecost in Acts two. Peter had told those to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. This is exactly what (after hearing the Word of the Lord) the Roman Jailer did. He washed their stripes (an indication of his repentance) and was baptized. The result was the same for him as it was for those on Pentecost. In Verse thirty, the Jailer had asked, "What must I do to be saved?" Paul's response was: "Believe on (surrender completely to) the Lord Jesus Christ." The Roman Jailer did not have "faith in Christ" at that point, neither was he saved at that point! We can know this because the same apostle says that "faith" comes by hearing (accepting and obeying) the Word of God (Romans 10:17). Therefore, the Jailer could not have had "saving faith" until after he had heard the Word of the Lord. In other words, he could not have had "saving faith" without obedience to that which he had been taught (James 2:14-24). It is not enough simply to believe in Christ (to give mental assent to His Deity), because even the devils do that (James 2:19.) Additionally, Peter tells us that "God is no respecter of persons." This means that however one is saved, all must be saved! How were the people on Pentecost saved? The Roman Jailer was saved in exactly the same way! It is significant, too, that it is said of the Roman Jailer (just as the Ethiopian eunuch of Acts 8:26-40) that he rejoiced in his salvation after his baptism (not before). The American Standard Version says in Verse thirty-four that he "rejoiced greatly, with all his house, HAVING BELIEVED in God." Clearly then the Jailer is said to have "believed" in God (in response to Paul's directive of verse thirty-one) after he had been baptized (not before)! The point is that belief in this passage is shown to involve "obedient faith," not simply mental agreement that Christ is the Son of God! Even the devils do as much (James 2:19)!

QUESTION No. 731: (a) What is withdrawal of fellowship? (b) What is its purpose? (c) Is it optional? (d) Can it be avoided? (e) When should it begin?

ANSWER: (a) Withdrawal of fellowship is a part of the action of disciplining Christians who habitually sin while refusing to repent! The matter can best be understood by reading and studying closely Matthew 18:15-18; Romans 16:17; I Corinthians 5:1-13; II Thessalonians 3:6-15; I Timothy 1:19-20; and Titus 3:10-11. By reading these passages, we learn that withdrawal of fellowship does not occur until every possible action to win the wayward person's soul back to God with love, kindness, and patience

has been exhausted. (b) The primary purpose of disciplining a wayward member is to win a lost soul back to Christ! Also, when there is sin in the church and one remains arrogant and unwilling to repent, the sin and the sinner must be withdrawn from in order to maintain the purity of the body of Christ, lest the sin affect the rest of the church (I Corinthians 5:6-7). (c) Church discipline, including withdrawal of fellowship is not a matter of option, but rather is a direct command to be obeyed (I Corinthians 5:4; II Thessalonians 3:6) and (d) cannot, therefore, be avoided. (e) When one is known to be in habitual sin, the action of "corrective discipline" is to begin. This is the part that involves love and patience in teaching the sinner the truth and doing all to win him or her back. This being fully exhausted, the action of withdrawal of fellowship must then be undertaken.

QUESTION No. 732: (a) Is it wrong to refuse to disfellowship? (b) Can we disfellowship someone with whom we have a personal grievance? (c) Must the whole church act together? (d) What if the disfellowshipped person still comes to church? (e) What should the church do when the sinner repents? (f) Which sins require disfellowshipping? (g) Should false teachers be disfellowshipped?

ANSWER: (a) Yes! It is wrong to refuse to disfellowship, if the need to do so is present (II Thessalonians 3:6). (b) If by personal grievance you mean someone has sinned against you, the answer is yes, but only after carefully and lovingly following the procedure as set forth in Matthew 18:15-18. (c) Yes! The whole church must act as one (I Corinthians 5:4). (d) If the disfellowshipped person continues to come to church, he is not to be counted as an enemy, but is to be admonished to repent and return as one would to a brother whom he loves. (e) We read about the sinner of I Corinthians 5 who repented and returned in II Corinthians 2:6-8. Here Paul says, 'stop punishing him, forgive him, comfort him, and confirm your love to him.' The principle of the returning prodigal son of Luke 15:11-32 is total and complete restoration! (f) Any sin of which one refuses to repent is grounds for church discipline. Matthew 18:15-18 involves sins between brethren. I Corinthians 5:11 lists specific sins, representative of all sin. Romans 16:17 refers to sins of dividing the body of Christ and false doctrine. II Thessalonians 3:6-15 includes the sins of walking disorderly, i.e., not in accordance with apostolic teaching and busybodies that refuse to work. In I Timothy 1:19-20 teaches that we should disfellowship those who have turned away from the faith and those who blaspheme. Titus 3:11 talks about a heretic in the KJV, which means a factious man (one who divides), as translated in the ASV. Any and all unrepented of sin that would cause a soul to be lost is subject to church discipline! (g) Yes! False teachers who refuse to repent are to be withdrawn from (Romans 16:17; I Timothy 1:19-20).

QUESTION No. 733: Does the New Testament teach that God selects specific individuals such as Hitler, to positions of high government?

ANSWER: As relates to Romans 13, we obviously get into a very deep subject. I believe, first of all, that God sees a picture that we don't see from the standpoint of scope and detail. He not only sees and understands what has happened, He sees what is going to happen and the effect that today has on the future! How His providence affects what He sees for tomorrow, we don't know and cannot know! We may look at a Hitler, Stalin, or even a Clinton and ask why, not being able to see tomorrow and only today, There's no way we can correctly answer that question. There is no doubt that God ordains or orders the powers that are and are to be (Romans 13:1). I find it difficult to believe, however, as your friends suggest, that God looked for an Adolf Hitler to ordain personally, but I can buy into the idea that God ordained Hitler in the sense that he permitted him to come into power as a result of sinful men conspiring and agreeing, sometimes by looking the other way, to his installation, the result of which has brought much hatred and killing. God didn't say, 'Come on Hitler, your just the guy I want to start a world war and to kill all of these people!' Men sinned across Germany in allowing his appointment to that position based on their choice. Other countries erred significantly in putting there heads in the sand to avoid dealing with what they knew was a significant problem that would likely have worldwide effects. They were all, as is always the case, free moral agents, who made the wrong choices and, thereby, caused many to suffer from the consequences of their wrong choices! Wrong choices did it, not God! God did not “cause” these people to make the wrong choices, nor did He “cause” Hitler to sin. Man, by God's order or ordination, if you please, was made free to make the wrong choices. God does not make man's choices for him. In this case, man did make the wrong choices and God permitted those choices to run their course, i.e., Hitler and his effect on society! In this sense I believe God ordains powers today. Effectively, I suppose it is to say that God ordains that there be powers and authorities, but the selection of those powers are to be by the choices of men who then must live by those choices! How God in His providential guidance will, through, and as a result of those choices, affect tomorrow, I do not know! I do not know the working of His mind, nor how His providence works and cannot, therefore, project its possible future effect. I must leave it in His hands. Nonetheless, I do believe that we are expected to obey those powers as long as they do not overrule or violate God's laws (Romans 13:1; Acts 5:29).

QUESTION No. 734: Would you please explain Acts 21:20-26? It looks like Paul is allowing the Christian Jews to do something that he did not allow the Gentiles to do. Does this hold true for Jews today? May they keep a part of the Old Law? I'm confused. Please help!

ANSWER: In order to understand what has often been a troubling passage, I believe we must first understand the situation that existed within the Jewish economy at that time. These Christian Jews, as have all Christians, were directed to keep the laws of civil government (Matthew 22:21; Romans 13:1). The laws of civil government, under which the Jews lived at that time, were based on that which was recognized as their constitution, i.e., the Law of Moses. The rites (or customs, Verse 21; Acts 6:14) that the Christians Jews engaged in at that time were in response to civil government and not as a means of salvation. Paul did not instruct the Christian Jews to forsake these rites, as dictated by civil government, as some charged, but he certainly denied their efficacy as relates to salvation. Paul, in the passage under consideration, himself engaged in these rites as a Jewish citizen living within that theocracy for the express purpose of furthering the Gospel that he proclaimed (I Corinthians 9:19-23). It was for this reason that Timothy was circumcised (Acts 16:1-3), not as a means of salvation (Romans 2:28-29).

Gentiles, not converted to Judaism, were not amenable to these rites, but all Jews, including Christian Jews, were amenable, as long as that government existed. It, of course, ceased to exist in 70 AD with the total destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish economy. From that point and forevermore none would be bound by the laws of that theocracy which brought about its own total annihilation and destruction by rejecting the promised Messiah.

Jews, as all people today, are to keep all laws as enacted by the government under which they live as long as those laws do not violate those found in the New Testament. We also may have our ethnic customs today that do not violate scriptures. However, none, Jew or gentile, may engage in a religious act as a religious act and be pleasing to God, unless that act is authorized by Jesus Christ in His New Testament (Colossians 3:17)! I may be circumcised, but not as a religious act! I may burn incense because I like its smell, but not as a religious act! I may sacrifice an animal to satisfy my own taste buds, but not as a religious act. The same is true of all men, Jew and Gentile, no matter the dictates of government!

QUESTION No. 735: According to Matthew 6:17, we are told to fast and anoint our heads with oil. What kind of oil can we use?

ANSWER: Jesus is not saying that we should anoint our heads as a religious act in this verse. The oil that he is talking about is that which was used for personal grooming. They were simply being told to groom themselves so that they would not appear to be fasting. Some want to appear religious in order to gain the praises of men! True followers of Christ will refrain from such!

QUESTION No. 736: Is Matthew 10:34-36 a fulfillment of Malachi 4:5-6? Please explain.

ANSWER: No! The fulfillment of Malachi 4:5-6 is found in Matthew 11:7-15; Matthew 17:10-13; and Luke 1:17. The coming of Elijah promised by Malachi was not to be the actual return of Elijah, but John the Baptist was to (and did) come in the spirit and power of Elijah, as explained in these passages.

In Matthew 10:34-36, Christ is not saying that it was His intent to bring division among peoples. Indeed, He did come as the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6). The division that He said was to occur was simply one of the effects of His coming. Some would accept Him as the Messiah and some would not. They would, thereby, be divided and even hostile with one another. In spite of this effect, He directs that His followers must never deny Him, but always stand ready to confess Him before all men (Verses 32-33.) This passage is not directly related to Malachi 4:5-6.

QUESTION No. 737: Where was Christ? Was He on the cross or in Pilate's house (Matthew 27:45; Mark 15:33; John 19:14)?

ANSWER: Matthew, using Jewish time, says that Jesus was on the cross at the sixth hour or twelve noon (reckoning six hours starting from 6:00 o'clock in the morning, the beginning of the Jewish day), from which there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour (Matthew 27:45) or 3:00 o'clock in the afternoon of the same day. Mark 15:33 reckoning also from Jewish time says the same thing! John, apparently using

Roman time in referring to the sixth hour refers to 6:00 o'clock in the morning of the same day, at which time He was before Pilate. Jesus was, after this, then delivered to them to be crucified, the events described in Matthew 27:26 preceding His crucifixion at twelve noon, at which time the sky was darkened in accordance with the prophecy of Amos 8:9. The Gospel accounts are not contradictory about this matter!

QUESTION No. 738: Would you please explain Matthew 21:28, 29?

ANSWER: Jesus, in this passage, is teaching a lesson by parable to show what true repentance really is. The point is that it is not enough to simply say, "I repent," as the second son did, even though forgiveness is to be granted by the one offended at that point (Luke 17:4). However, to fully show that repentance has actually occurred, one must take the action that proves the intent of the heart. If a person returns to the sin of which he has said, "I repent," he or she would then need forgiveness again. The first son took the necessary action that follows penitence. At the first, he was not going to repent, but changed his heart or his mind and did that which showed he had truly repented. This we must do, if we would be pleasing to God.

QUESTION No. 739: If we are no longer bound by the laws of the Old Testament, why do we have to abstain from eating blood (Acts 15:28)?

ANSWER: The law to abstain from eating blood was a law given through inspired men by the Holy Ghost (Acts 15:19-20; Acts 15:28-29). It was a law, both under the Old Testament and the New Testament. The same can be said about many laws. For example: Under the Old Law they were not to commit murder (Exodus 20:13). We, too, under the New Law are told if we commit murder, we will not enter heaven (Galatians 5:19-21). If I commit murder, what law will I be judged by? The New Law, of course! The same is true of eating blood! If I do so, I will not sin by transgressing the Old Law, but because I transgressed the New Law, i.e., the law that was given by the Holy Spirit in Acts 15!

QUESTION No. 740: Please comment on I Corinthians 9:17-22?

ANSWER: Paul in Verses 15-19 is discussing the preaching of the Gospel and saying that if he does so as a matter of willful choice he will be properly rewarded by God. If he were to do so for any other reason, such as for the gain of money, God would not properly reward him. Thus, to assure against the loss of God's reward, he refused to accept the reward of money from his hearers, even though he had the right of such support, as noted in Verses 1 through 14. In Verse 20, Paul does not imply that he was, as the Jews, being obedient to Old Testament law that was taken out of the way at the cross of Christ (Colossians 2:14). He is saying that as far as scripturally possible he complied with their rites and customs in order to gain their souls. In Verse 21, he implies that he conducted himself in the same fashion toward the Gentiles that he might win them also. In the first part of Verse 22, he discusses his conduct relative to the weak that were in Christ, which undoubtedly he more clearly explained in Chapter 8 and summarized in Verse 13 of that chapter. Then in the latter part of Verse 22, he includes Jew, Gentile, and Christian under the heading of "all men," to whom he was made "all things," that he might by "all means" save some. In Verse 23, we learn that he was doing so for the furtherance of the Gospel and so that he could be a partaker of the hope of salvation that he instilled within them through the Gospel. He then closes out the chapter in Verses 24-27 by saying that it is necessary for "all men," including himself, to strive and agonize to gain the incorruptible crown that awaits the faithful of God by bringing the physical man into spiritual subjection to Jesus Christ, without which one, even himself, would become a castaway, i.e., rejected of God!

QUESTION No. 741: Should a prayer spoken in an unknown language be interpreted so that all members may be able to say "Amen" (I Corinthians 14:15-17)?

ANSWER: Yes! According to the basic premise of I Corinthians, Chapter fourteen, should one in a worship service lead a prayer in a foreign language unknown to others present, interpretation would be necessary, since all present must pray with the spirit and with the understanding. Without interpretation such could not be accomplished! We should understand, however, that men cannot miraculously speak in foreign languages today, since miraculous gifts passed away with the completion of the New Testament. The purpose of miracles and signs, including speaking in foreign languages, in Bible times was to confirm the Word of God (Mark 16:20) that was being spoken, but not yet written. When the Word of God (the perfect law of liberty – James 1:25) was completed, the "gifts" were to fail, cease, and vanish away (I Corinthians 13:8-13). Since the perfect Word of God was confirmed and written about the end of the first century, it follows that at that time the miraculous, including speaking in tongues, passed away

according to the will of God. Since we today have the same completed and confirmed Bible, which provides "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (II Peter 1:3), there is clearly no need for the "gifts" today.

QUESTION No. 742: The book of Revelation is said to be difficult to understand. What kind of questions should I ask myself when reading the book?

ANSWER: Since the book was written in symbolic terms, it is important to understand those symbols, which requires an involved study of them, as used elsewhere and throughout the word of God. They must be understood consistently since truth is always consistent. Therefore, one of the most important questions to consider is, (1) "Am I being consistent in my application and understanding as relates to other portions of God's Word?" Beyond this, we must inquire as to, (2) "Who wrote the book," (3) "To whom it was written," (4) "At what time in history was it written," (5) "Under what circumstances it was written," (5) and "For what purpose it was written." We must always be extremely careful not to force future application into a passage or passages when such is not warranted. Many have tried in error to do so with the book of The Revelation in spite of the fact that the book relates primarily to those "things which must shortly come to pass" (Revelation 1:1), i.e., at, and shortly after, the turn of the first century. Certainly the latter part of the book deals with the victorious saints in heaven, but to cause all of the symbols in the book to relate to things future from this day forward is to go beyond that which is written!

QUESTION No. 743: Can a person be perfect on earth, since the Bible says, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as you Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matthew 5:48).

ANSWER: None on earth who have reached the age of reason and accountability can be without sin (I John 1:10). The word "perfect" in Matthew 5:48 is from the Greek word *teleios.* See also Colossian 1:28; James 1:4; and James 3:2 where the same word appears. The word does not mean "without sin." It means "complete," "mature," or "of full age." Jesus is simply saying, in the context of the Matthew 5:38-47, that we should respect and love all men in the way that God loves and respects all men, i.e., our love should be mature and complete toward all men, as is His.

QUESTION No. 744: What does the Bible mean when it says that Jesus is "the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:16).

ANSWER: It means that, though we may be called the sons or children of God (I John 3:1-2), that Christ is the "unique" Son of God and that He alone, as being God Himself, holds a particular and peculiar relationship to the Father. The word in the Greek that is translated "only begotten" is *monogenes*. The first part of the word, *mono*, means "only." The second part of the word, *genes*, means "begotten." Jesus Christ was begotten by God, not man, and is, therefore, God the Son, i.e., the "only begotten Son of the Father!" None else was so begotten by God. The Son is Deity, as the Father who had begotten Him, and He, therefore, alone has and holds the relationship as His "only begotten Son." None else can have that relationship with God. This phrase which expresses Deity is reserved only and eternally for Jesus Christ!

QUESTION No. 745: Jude 12: Was the love feast a common practice of the early Christians. If so, why do Christians of today not do the same?

ANSWER: Yes! The early church often gathered to have such feasts, not as a practice of worship, but most usually as a way of helping provide for those who were without the necessities of life. The church today often does the same, but does not usually refer to these periods of fellowship as "love feasts," though some still do. We must be very careful not to make such feasts binding on others, as there is no biblical directive to engage in such today. Neither must we allow such meals to creep into the worship practices of the church. In I Corinthians 11, it is evident that the Lord's Supper had been adulterated by the congregation at Corinth to include such a feast, an activity that was soundly condemned by the Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul.

QUESTION No. 746: Is there a difference between heart, mind and soul as used in Matthew 22:37?

ANSWER: The meaning of loving Him with all of the heart means that we should love him with all our might and power. We will love him more than anyone or anything!

The meaning of loving Him with all of the soul means that we should love Him with all of our life. It means that we will live for Him no matter the cost, even to the point of death.

The meaning of loving Him with all of the mind means that we should submit the totality of our will and thinking to His Word!

QUESTION No. 747: What does the biblical phrase "obey you father and mother and your days will be long upon the earth" mean?

ANSWER: This idea is found first in the Old Testament (Deuteronomy 5:16): "Honour thy father and thy mother, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." The meaning here is, that they would be more happy, useful, and virtuous if they obeyed their parents than if they disobeyed them.

In the commandment as recorded in Exodus 20:12, the promise is, "that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." This referred to the Promised Land of Canaan. The meaning is that there would be a special providence falling to those who were obedient to parents. The apostle Paul, in Ephesians 6:3, repeats that promise and says that obedience to parents was connected at all times with long life. None can doubt that obedience to parents' results generally in longer life because obedient children are kept from those things that often shorten life. None would direct his child to be a drunkard, a gambler, or a murderer. But these things that generally result from being disobedient to parents, very frequently cause premature death. No disobedient child can have any assurance that he or she will not fall into such things. Obedience to parents then will assure long life. It will cause one to know how to control ungodly desires that lead to self-destruction, e.g., the use of dope, alcohol, evil companions, etc. that often bring about early death. More especially, one who is disobedient to parents, sins thereby, and that sin will result in loss of the soul, if repentance is not forthcoming!

QUESTION No. 748: Where did Satan and the angels come from?

ANSWER: All things that were in heaven were created by God (Satan and other fallen angels - Job 1:6; Job 2:1; Jude 6) and all things that are in heaven were created by God (Psalms 148:2-5; Colossians 1:16).

QUESTION No. 749: Would you please explain Acts 14:38?

ANSWER: In context, beginning with Verse 44, we find the Jews speaking against Paul and Barnabas and the things they taught from God's Word. Effectively they were rejecting that Word and in so doing were "judging themselves unworthy of everlasting life." Because of their rejection, Paul said, "lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so has the Lord commanded us saying, I have set thee to be a light unto the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth." When the Gentiles heard this they were glad and did not act as the Jews had done toward what was being preached by Paul. They acted in just the opposite manner and glorified the Word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed. In other words, they glorified the Word of God by being brought to a determination of its truthfulness and as a result were ordained or disposed to believe what they heard. Basically, the idea is that the Jews judged themselves unworthy of eternal life by rejecting God's Word and, in contrast, the Gentiles after hearing God's Word determined that they wanted eternal life, i.e., they were disposed to accept eternal life through obedience to the truth presented.

QUESTION No. 750: Does not Jesus, in His prayer of Matthew 6:9-13, teach that when the kingdom comes, it is to be "on" earth as it is in heaven?

ANSWER: No, it does not! Jesus prayed that the Father's will would be followed on earth as it is in heaven! After this was said, He then prayed for the kingdom to come. The kingdom for which he prayed came into existence during the generation that then lived (Mark 9:1): "And He said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that there be some that stand here which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power." Surely, none of those to whom he spoke are still living after two thousand years. Therefore, we must scripturally conclude that the kingdom has already been established. This is why the apostle Paul could write in Colossians 1:13, that Christians of that day (as well as today) were (and are) translated into the kingdom of His dear Son. None can be translated into something that does not exist. Therefore, we must recognize that fact that the kingdom is not yet future, but is now in existence!

QUESTION No. 751: Would you please comment on I Corinthians 11:2-16?

ANSWER: In Verse two, Paul is simply saying, 'Keep that which the Holy Spirit has instructed you to do through me."

In Verse three, he deals with levels of authority. He shows that Christ was in submission to God; that man is to be submissive to Christ; and that the woman is to be submissive to the man. The reason for his so stating is to show the basis for what he is going to say about the woman being covered and/or uncovered.

In Verse four, he says that when man worships he is not to have his head covered by artificial means, because when he does he dishonors is Head, who is Christ.

In Verse five, he is going to contrast what the woman should be doing with what the man should be doing. Man is to be uncovered and the woman is to be covered, because it was the custom in Middle Eastern lands for a woman to show her submissiveness by wearing a "veil." For her not to so do was to show that she was not in submission to her husband. The "veil" here does not simply represent a handkerchief, a small doily, or even a hat. The "veil' used at that time was a covering that, at the very least, covered the head, neck, and shoulders, and often the entire body. Paul is not here, or anywhere else in this chapter, saying that a woman who lived in that place and at that time, bound by this particular custom, could dispense with the "veil" if she had long hair! A wife who did not wear a "veil" as described above was a dishonor to her head, her husband.

In Verse six he says that a woman who does not wear the "veil" described above at that place and time was without shame, just as was the case with women of the immoral women of that day. He is saying that a woman without a "veil" should be just as ashamed as she would be if she were shorn and made like the immoral women of that day.

In Verse seven, the man is not to be covered in worship. If he is, he shows that he is not submissive to the God in whose image he was created.

In Verse eight, he goes back to the order that was established at the creation of man and woman, showing man's authority over the woman and her submissiveness to him, The same principle is found in I Timothy 2:11-14.

In Verse nine, he shows in another way that which he was saying in Verse eight, "Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. Therefore, she must show that submissiveness and order by the wearing of a "veil," as was the custom of that day."

In Verse ten, he simply states that the woman is to show the "power" her husband has over her, just as the angels are subject to God.

In Verse eleven, he declares that both men and women, even though there is a chain of authority, have their place in the Kingdom and are necessary to fulfill the needs of each other.

In Verse twelve, he further states that since the above arrangement is of God, that such an arrangement does not make the woman inferior to the man. It is simply the will of God that dictates such an arrangement, not any superiority of man.

In Verse thirteen, he tells the Corinthians to judge the matter for themselves, 'Is it proper that a woman worship to God uncovered, thereby showing dishonor?' It is a rhetorical question for which the answer is obvious. Of course it is not proper for a woman to so do!

In Verse fourteen, Paul presents another matter concerning the man; that it is a shame for him to have long hair, i.e., such is dishonoring and disgraceful. The "nature" here refers to second nature or common sense that is noted by all that it is a shame for a man to have long hair.

In Verse fifteen, he states that it is a mark of honor for a woman to have long hair, for God gave her that covering. God has always demanded that there be distinction between male and female. That such distinction might be maintained according to His will, he commands that man is to have short hair and the woman, long hair.

In Verse sixteen, Paul addresses those in Corinth who would be contentious about the matter and basically says that it is the will of God that where such customs exist that they be maintained (wearing of a "veil") so that the Christian woman might not be shown to be other than submissive to her husband and, therefore, other than submissive to the will of God. Where such customs do not exist, the requirement to wear a "veil" is not binding! For example, in the United States, a woman wearing a "veil" similar to those worn in Corinth at that time would not indicate or show submissiveness, but would more likely fall into the category of "broader phylacteries" (Matthew 23:5).

QUESTION No. 752: According to I Timothy 2:11-12, is it scriptural to conclude that a woman is not permitted to teach a man under any and all conditions?

ANSWER: No! It is not scriptural to so conclude. First of all to so conclude would force the Scriptures into a contradiction that is not compatible with truth. In studying Acts 18:24-28, it is clear that when Aquila (a Christian man) "and" Priscilla (a Christian woman) had heard about the incorrect teaching of Apollos (also a man) relative to baptism, "they" (the nominative plural of "he" or "she," thus "both" Aquila and Priscilla), took him (Apollos) unto them (Aquila and Priscilla), and expounded (explained) the Way of God more perfectly. There can be no doubt that Priscilla participated in teaching Apollos the Way of God. This being so, there must then be a difference between Priscilla's teaching (Acts 18:26) and the teaching not permitted of women in I Timothy 2:12.

In I Timothy 2:11-12, we learn that the woman is not to teach "over the man." The phrase "over the man" relates to both the "teaching" and "usurpation of authority" under discussion. If both "teaching" and "usurpation of authority" were present then it would be the case that the women would be teaching "over the man" and in violation of this passage. For example, although Priscilla was teaching, she was clearly not usurping

authority and, therefore, was not in violation of the will of God. In a setting such as a preaching situation (as occurs during the worship period) or in a formal Bible study period (as usually occurs on Sunday morning and Wednesday evenings) a woman may not preach or teach "over the man" by directing and controlling those events. She, in such a case, would violate her subjection to man as enjoined throughout Scripture, e.g., I Timothy 2:11; I Corinthians 14:34; I Corinthians 11:3. Priscilla, in the teaching of Apollos, was not teaching "over the man," neither was she "usurping man's authority," nor did she violate the directive to be in "subjection."

Some have gone far beyond what the Scriptures teach to say that a woman cannot teach a man under any condition. The notion is absurd and certainly, if true, would place Priscilla in the role of a sinner rather than a Holy Spirit-approved teacher of God's Way. Such a notion, when logically considered, says that if a man asks a Christian woman what he must do in order to be saved, she cannot "teach" him by quoting Mark 16:16 or Acts 2:38, but must direct the person to another man who could then "teach" by reciting these passages. Further the absurdity would become more absurd, if the woman were to reply, "the scriptures do not allow me, a woman, to teach you, you must go to another man," because she would then be guilty of "teaching" a man what she, in error, thinks the Bible teaches! The absurdity would also hold that a woman could not write an article for a religious periodical, because she would be "teaching" over men. She could not correct a wrong answer on a correspondence course submitted by a man, because she would be "teaching." However, it is the case that in writing for periodicals, grading and correcting correspondence courses, or teaching in a private situation (as was the case with Priscilla and Apollos), "teaching over the man" does not occur and, therefore, is not in violation of Scripture, but to the contrary are correct and honorable responses to the command to "go" and "teach" all nations (Matthew 28:19-20).

QUESTION No. 753: Would you explain I Corinthians 10:16-17?

ANSWER: The passage begins with Paul saying, “The cup which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? In other words, is not the Lord’s Supper an activity where we have communion with God? Do we not by participating show that we are in fellowship, with him? Is it not an action whereby we hold communion with Christ, whose body was broken, and His blood shed for the remission of our sins? To partake of the Lord's Supper then professes that we belong to Him and that we have fellowship with Him and all the faithful in remembering what He did for us at Calvary. In Verse 17, he states, “The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?” As

each child of God, in memory of Him, partakes of the bread, which represents His broken body, we profess that we, in the one body, are members of that body with him and with one another. Those who truly partake of the Lord's Supper as they worship in spirit and truth have this communion with Christ, and with one another, professing in that act, that as individuals and joined collectively, we are His people and that our obligations are to Him and each other!

QUESTION No. 754: Jesus Christ said that when God's kingdom comes that God's will is going to be taking place here on earth. Is this already happening in our world today?

ANSWER: The words of your question are taken from the Lord's model prayer, but imply wrongfully (Matthew 6:9-13). Christ is simply teaching us to pray that God's will or direction will be performed by each who would be His follower in the kingdom and also that God's will would overrule the will of each. This is the example that Christ set! Christ prayed, "not my will, but thine be done." We should do the same and pray for God's providential aid in doing so! Certainly, many in the kingdom today are living with lives in subjection to the will of God, not perfectly, but surely faithfully!

QUESTION No. 755: Would you compare Daniel 2:40-43 with Revelation 17:9-11?

ANSWER: Daniel is discussing the fourth world kingdom, i.e., the Roman Empire and its composite, yet diverse structure, partly strong and partly broken, which would one day be divided. It was during the partly strong period of Rome that the kingdom of Christ would be established. We note in Luke 3:1 that it was during the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar that John the Immerser and Jesus Christ both came teaching that the "kingdom of heaven (that foretold by Daniel) is at hand" (Matthew 3:2; Matthew 4:17). Tiberius' reign began in 14 AD. The fifteenth year of his reign would put the year at about 29 AD, the beginning of Christ's ministry, at the conclusion of which (about 33 AD) the kingdom did come into existence (Acts 2:47; Mark 9:1; Colossians 1:13).

John, in the Revelation, is discussing the persecutions of the kingdom (Church) by Rome, symbolized as Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth. The verses in question are discussing the break up of that wicked empire. Rome was at the fulfillment of this prophecy and reduced to a dukedom for two plus years between the fall of Imperial Rome and the rise of the Papacy of the Roman Catholic Church! Rome fell mightily (Revelation 18:2), and in Chapter 19, we see the Christ and His followers (the kingdom/church) victorious over the broken fourth kingdom of Daniel, Chapter 2! The Kingdom of Christ, the Church of Christ, not only overcame Rome, but she will stand forever (Daniel 2:44; Daniel 7:14; Ephesians 3:10-11; I Corinthians 15:24).

QUESTION No. 756: Since we cannot have faith without hearing (Romans 10:17), how can we explain Romans 1:26?

ANSWER: In Romans 1, the discussion is about those (primarily the Gentiles) who at one time had known God, but later rejected Him and the fact of His very existence, not retaining Him in their knowledge and turning to the worship of idols. They are today, and will be in Judgment Day, without excuse in denying the existence of God. None can claim ignorance, because the existence of God is seen without the Gospel in the things that He made (Verse 20). The fact of His existence should then cause man to seek Him out. Though a man may have the faith that God exists by taking notice of the things that are created, he does not have the knowledgeable faith that comes only through the Gospel wherein lies the power of salvation (Romans 1:16). Man may believe (have faith) that there is a God, but without an obedient faith that stems from His Gospel none can be saved. Thus the command to the faithful, “Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature.” By far most people recognize through creation the fact of God, but still need to know what they must do to be saved!

QUESTION No. 757: Can the word/phrase translated “burnt up” in II Peter 3:10 be rightly translated “discovered” or “laid bare.”

ANSWER: No! It can not! The Jehovah’s Witnesses’ New World Translation of the Scriptures, which stands as a laughing stock among true scholars, uses the word “discovered,” which makes no sense at all. The word “discover” means “to learn or find something out for the first time” (World Book). In other words the NWT is suggesting that the physical things of which this world is made, i.e., the works of men, will, at the

Second Coming of Christ, be learned and found out about for the first time. Surely, both God and man already, even today, know about the works that man has erected and built on this earth. Clearly, we read of new heavens and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness (II Peter 3:13), i.e., a place being prepared where the righteous will be taken by Christ to dwell forever (John 14:1-6). Who then can deny that in II Peter 3:10, Peter is discussing two things that are to be done away with, i.e., the heavens above us and the earth below us! Just as the elements that make up the heavenly bodies are to melt with fervent heat, so it is with the earth that now stands. Christ is not coming to renew the earth! He is coming to take us to that place that He is now preparing! We, as His faithful followers, will be caught up in the clouds at the general resurrection to meet our Lord in the air, "*and so shall we ever be with the Lord*" (I Thessalonians 4:17).

The Greek words that may be translated "discover" or "discovered" are found twice in the New Testament. In Acts 21:3 for "discovered," we find the Greek word "*anaphaino*" (to show, appear or discover) and in Acts 27:39 "*katantao*." (behold, consider, discover, perceive). If the Holy Spirit meant, "discover" in II Peter 3:10, He could have directed the use of either of these two Greek words, most likely in context, the word "*anaphaino*." However, He did not use either! He directed the use of the Greek word "*katkaio*," which means, "to burn down, consume wholly, burn (up, utterly)." The New World Translation of the Jehovah's Witnesses is full of this kind of twisted error and is far separated from truth of the Gospel of Christ, as is the totality of their foolish and cultic doctrine! They and their man-written book should be avoided by all!

QUESTION No. 758: How do I deal with the verse that says, "The love of money is the root of all evil (I Timothy 6:10)?"

ANSWER: The verse in context was written to support the principle found in Verse 10, "But godliness with contentment is great gain." In other words, we are to be content with what we have (I Timothy 6:8; Hebrews 13:5) and not to seek after money in such a way as to let that desire control our conduct. When one loves money to the point that he covets it, he, by that inordinate desire, will be led into all kinds of evil. Paul said in Colossians 3:2, that we are to 'set our affections on things above.' Why? "Because a man's life does not consist of the abundance of the 'things' that he possesses" (Luke 12:15). When one's focus is on "things," he will eventually turn to covetousness that will prohibit him from entering the kingdom of God, if repentance is not forthcoming. Paul concludes the matter for the faithful child of God in Philippians 4:11 when he writes,

"For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." It is with this attitude that one can successfully deal with "things" and "the love of money."

QUESTION No. 759: In Matthew 19:28 and Revelation 21:14 we note that only twelve apostles are indicated? Does this mean that Paul was not an apostle and that there were not thirteen?

ANSWER: Though the word twelve is used in both of the passages that you mention, this is not to indicate that Paul was not an apostle, as we discussed previously and as clearly set forth in II Corinthians 1:1. The twelve has reference to the twelve who were actually with Christ from the beginning. This, of course, would not include Judas who by transgression fell. Having fallen he would in no fashion be judging the twelve tribes of Israel in Christ's kingdom. The judging of the twelve tribes following the establishment of the church would be based upon the words of Christ (John 12:48) that were carried into all the world and to every creature by His disciples (Mark 16:15-16; Colossians 1:23). The intent of these passages is not to show the exact number of apostles. In Matthew 19:28 & Luke 29-30 the number twelve is used because at that time there were twelve whom Christ had selected. It is therefore, used accomodatively to correlate with the twelve tribes of Israel. In Revelation 21:14 the number twelve is used to accommodate the squareness of the city (Revelation 21:16) of three gates in four walls, the total distance of which was 144 cubits (Revelation 21:17). These numbers are figurative and should not be taken literally. Note the truthfulness of this when we consider the twelve names of the twelve tribes that are also included in the twelve gates of the city (Revelation 22:14). How does one know which names and tribes are included? The fact is that we don't! Apparently God felt it was not a critical thing for us to know. When we consider in Revelation, Chapter seven that twelve different tribes are named with the tribe of Dan not being mentioned, should we conclude that the Holy Spirit made a mistake, because if we add the tribe of Dan, we now have thirteen? Not at all! The book of Revelation was not written to express exact, literal numbers, but rather uses them figuratively and accomodatively to support the truth being presented!

QUESTION No. 760: There appears to be a contradiction between Acts 22:9-10 and Acts 9:7-8. Can you explain?

ANSWER: The word “hear” or “heard” is often used in the sense of “understanding” and so it is in Acts 22:9. In Acts 9:7, we are told that they “heard” the voice, and in Acts 22:9, we are told that they did not “understand” what they heard the voice say. We see these words being so used in John 8:43. The same is true in God’s plan of salvation. One must “hear” the Gospel, which means more than audibly hearing the words of the preacher. It means “understanding” the Gospel sufficiently so that one may “know” what to believe and do in order to be saved.

QUESTION No. 761: What is the sign of the prophet Jonas as cited in Matthew 16:4 and Matthew 12:39?

ANSWER: The Pharisees had come to Christ (Matthew 12:38) saying, “Master, we would see a sign from thee.” In effect, they were saying, ‘Prove unto us that you are the Messiah.” He refused to perform another miracle as proof of His deity, since they had not accepted Him as Christ on the basis of miracles that He had previously performed. In fact they had, in the previous chapter, charged Him with performing miracles by “Beelzebub the prince of devils.” Why then would they believe on Him if He performed another miracle? Obviously, they wouldn’t. So Christ said in Verse 39 that the only sign to be given them as clear evidence that He was the Messiah would be His resurrection from the dead, after having been three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, just as Jonas survived being in the fish’s belly three days and three nights! Upon His resurrection from the dead, then all would have all the necessary evidence to know that He was indeed the Messiah!

QUESTION No. 762: Matthew 9:13: “I desire mercy and not sacrifice.” Jesus is calling us to learn this concept. How can one sacrifice without mercy? What can the church or a Christian learn to do about mercy other than sacrifice?

ANSWER: In the context of this passage we see that Jesus is reproving the Pharisees, while vindicating His own action of eating with publicans and sinners. In doing so Christ referred to a passage of Scripture with which they should have been acquainted: "I will have mercy, and not sacrifice" (Hosea 6:6). He is not saying that God was opposed to "sacrifices" or "offerings for sin;" since clearly He, under the Old Testament, had commanded them. This phrase was a Hebrew way of speaking, and

simply meant, "I am pleased with acts of benevolence and kindness that encourage compliance with my commandments." Mercy in this passage means benevolence or kindness toward others. The sense of what Jesus is saying is this: "You Pharisees are careful to perform the "external" duties of religion, but God desires that benevolence or mercy accompany those necessary external duties. It is proper, therefore, that I (and all who would follow me) should eat with publicans and sinners for the purpose of doing them good." Christ came to seek and save such, and it was his "proper business," therefore, to associate with them.

One surely can, as did the Pharisees, engage in outward acts of righteousness, and yet do so without love and kindness toward God and others. When this is done, the acts performed do not satisfy the commandment of God and are without personal value. Christians must learn to follow Christ's example and exhibit love and kindness (mercy) to all men (Matthew 5:43-48), while continuing to fulfill the externals that He has commanded!

QUESTION No. 763: What does the phrase "Lead us not into temptation mean (Matthew 6:13; Luke 11:4)?"

ANSWER: Certainly, the passage does not imply that God "tempts" man (James 1:13), as we commonly use the word. The passage may be interpreted in one of three ways and still remain consistent with the rest of Scripture. (1) The word "tempt" or "temptation" is sometimes used to mean "try" or "test," and such may be the case in Matthew 6:13 and Luke 11:4. It is obviously used this way in Genesis 22:1, since, in the context of the chapter, clearly God did not "tempt" Abraham, but did indeed "test" or "try" him. (2) It may also be consistently interpreted to mean, "Permit us not to be tempted," or (3) Deliver us from evil and, thereby, keep us from being "tempted." My personal view and opinion is that of the third (3) possibility. However, I would not adamantly be in opposition to those who adopt one of the other two views, believing that all three options are viable.

QUESTION No. 764: Do you have a study on John 6:44?

ANSWER: Jesus, in this verse, is saying that in order for one to be raised up at the last day unto everlasting life (Verse 47), he must be “drawn” by the Father to believe on Him whom He hath sent (Verse 47). The question then becomes, “How does the Father “draw” a person?” The answer lies in Verse 45, “Every man that hath heard and learned of the father cometh unto me.” One, therefore is “drawn” by hearing and learning. How then does one hear and learn of the Father? “The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life (Verse 63);” “So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17); “Where unto He called you by our Gospel to the obtaining of the glory of Christ” (II Thessalonians 2:14). When one hears and learns from the Word of God, he or she is “drawn” in this way and this way alone! This is precisely what happened when the first Gospel sermon was preached on Pentecost Day of Acts, Chapter Two: Upon the preaching of the Gospel by the apostle Peter, 3000 souls were “drawn” by that Gospel (The word of God) and responded to it accordingly. The evidence of their having been “drawn” was seen in their question, “Men and brethren what shall we do?” Peter answered and said unto them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of (by the authority of) Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” The next verse (39) says that this same promise is to all men every where, “even as many as the Lord our God shall “call” (draw). The 3000 responded to the “drawing” of the Gospel in Verse 41 and as a result were added to the church of Christ in Verse 47.

All must be called (drawn) exactly as were these 3000 and all must respond exactly to that calling (drawing), as did the 3000 in order to gain the promises of the Gospel. There is no other calling (Acts 10:34)! There is no other acceptable response!

QUESTION No. 765: Would you explain John 20:22-23?

ANSWER: The prophets often used some significant act to represent the nature of their message or prophecy, e.g., Jeremiah, Chapters 13 & 18. In John 20:22, the act of breathing was similarly used by Christ to represent the nature of the influence that would later come upon His disciples (on Pentecost Day), and the source of that influence. The word "spirit" in the Scriptures often denotes wind, air, breath, as well as Spirit and, therefore, the operations of the Holy Spirit are often compared to the wind, e.g., John 3:8; Acts 2:2.

His breathing on them was a pledge that they would be granted the influences of the Holy Spirit. See the fulfillment in Acts 1:4 and Acts 2:1-4. That the pledge given by Christ at that time dealt with what was yet to come is also seen in that the ability to forgive and remit sins could only come through the conditions for forgiveness, as presented in the Gospel that was first proclaimed on Pentecost Day of Acts, Chapter 2.

QUESTION No. 766: What does “transfigured” mean (Matthew 17:2)?

ANSWER: The word "transfigure" means to change the appearance or form. It does not mean a change, in this case, of the body of Christ, but only His appearance. The passages of the Gospel accounts indicate nothing more! His face simply shone as the sun, that is, with a special brightness. His physical facial features did not change in any way. Moses was described this way when he came down from the mountain (Exodus 34:29-30).

Another transformation (change) was seen in His articles of clothing. They were as white as the light. Mark says (Mark 9:3) that they were, "exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth could white them." A “fuller” was one who bleached cloth or made it white. Luke says (Luke 9:29), that His clothes were "white and glistering," that is, they were a very bright white. There is nothing in these passages that would cause one to believe that his body was transformed into a spiritual body! Only His “appearance” changed!

QUESTION No. 767: How do you explain Romans 2:14? Does it mean that if you don’t know the Word of God that you will be judged on what you know” For example, if one only knew Catholic doctrine, will that one be judged only on the basis of Catholic doctrine?

ANSWER: First of all, we need to see that Romans 2:13 through 15 is stated parenthetically to further explain what was said in Verses 11 and 12, the thought of which is continued in Verse 16. Paul in context has under discussion (Verse 10) the Jew who had the Law (of Moses) and the Gentile who did not have the Law (of Moses). Therefore, the Jew was “with” Law and the Gentile “without” Law (Verse 12). In Verse 11, Paul writes, “For there is no respect of persons with God.” In other words, just as one sins, all sin and

just as one who sins "with" the Law, so it is that one "without" the Law also sins, because "all (both Jew and Gentile) have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). In Verses 13 through 15, Paul begins by stating that not only the hearers of the Law (the Jews) are just before God, but the doers of the Law (Jew and Gentile) are correct before God in the doing of that very thing, whether they were aware of that Law or not. (For example, one who knows a speed limit and abides thereby is said to be a just man. As well, one who does not know the speed limit and functions within that limit is also said to be just man.) Verse 14 explains Verse 13; "For when the Gentiles which have not the Law, do by nature the things contained in the Law, these having not the Law are a Law unto themselves." In other words, the conscience of the Gentiles often constituted the same particular moral law, based on their own reasoning, as was prescribed to the Jew by the revealed Law of Moses. On this basis alone it can be said that they were a law unto themselves! Therefore, (Verse 15) the work, i.e., the purpose or design, of the revealed law to the Jews was also seen in the Gentile who did the same thing on the basis of conscience. The Gentile, therefore, was accused or excused on this basis as relates to that particular conscientious law or activity! Had the Gentile violated his conscience in this particular moral activity he would have sinned. Had he not violated his conscience, he was, therefore, as relates to that single, particular activity, justified in that which he did.

It must not be concluded from these verses that simply because a man, in obedience to his conscience, unknowingly complies with a particular moral directive set forth in the Gospel (though such is often the case), that he or she is going to be saved eternally, even though he or she has no knowledge of the Gospel and, therefore, does not comply with its precepts! This would be the same as a man designing his own plan of salvation, based on his own rationale and conscience, exclusive of the Word of God. Surely, if God saved one on this basis, exclusive of His plan of salvation, He would then have to be classified as a God who did respect the persons of men, contrary to Romans 2:11! Note carefully the reading without the parenthetical expression found in Verses 13-15: (Verse 12, "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my Gospel!" All have sinned (Jew and Gentile). According to the Gospel of Christ, those sins (whether committed by Jew or Gentile) can only be removed by full obedience to that Gospel (II Thessalonians 1:7-10). One cannot be saved by obedience to Catholic or other denominational doctrines that differ from the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the New Testament!

One question clears the matter! If God will save those who don't know the Word of God, why did he command us to go into all the world to give every creature

knowledge of the Word of God (Mark 16:15-16)? Clearly, the implication is that we are to go into all the world to impart the knowledge of the Gospel so that lost man can, in obedience to the laws contained therein, be saved, because "it (and it alone) is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first and also to the Gentile (Romans 1:16)! A man may unknowingly comply with a particular Biblical truth or truths, but that does not, will not, and cannot make him a believer, whether Jew or Gentile. And without faith, it is impossible to please Him (Hebrews 11:6).

QUESTION No. 768: In Matthew 6:33 are we to understand that the things promised of God are both the good and the bad (Job 2:10)?

ANSWER: No, we are not. The context directly refers to the care of God in providing the necessities of life to sustain the physical man. Our father gives only good gifts to His children (James 1:17). Note, as well, what Christ said as He continued in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 7:9-11! Surely, He gives only good things to His children! The statement by Job's wife in Job 2:10 (that the evil that befell Job was given by God) was as foolish as her suggestion in the preceding verse (11) that Job should curse God and die!

QUESTION No. 769: Is there anything like "over-righteousness, over-wiseness and over-wickedness" as far as reality in the Christian race is concerned (Ecclesiastes 7:16-17)?

ANSWER: Yes there is a danger of all three. Reference in this passage (Ecclesiastes 7:16-17) is to "extremism." An example of extremism in religion is seen in the men of Athens that Paul addressed in this fashion: "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious (KJV)." In the NKJV, we read, "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious." These were guilty of "over-righteousness," having gone to irrational religious extremes. We must avoid the same! Being "over-wise" would be to reject the wisdom of God in favor of the wisdom of men (I Corinthians 1:18-24). Being "over-wicked" would be to intentionally engage in sin, as set forth in I Corinthians 6:9-10 and Galatians 5:19-21. This type of intentional sin stands in contrast to unintentional sin in which we all engage (I John 1:8-10). The faithful of God will avoid "extremism," to the left or to the right (Deuteronomy 5:32).

QUESTION No. 770: What was Paul's thorn in the flesh?" Was it physical, spiritual, or both?

ANSWER: Paul's thorn is described as being in the flesh (II Corinthians 12:7) and, therefore, physical. Though none can be absolutely certain, it appears likely that Paul was afflicted with some sort of vision impairment. Please refer to the following passages: Acts 9:1-9 & 18; Galatians 4:13-15; Galatians 6:11.

QUESTION No. 771: What was the purpose of Paul's thorn in the flesh?

ANSWER: II Corinthians 12:7-9: Two reasons; (1) That he should not be exalted above measure and, (2) That he might comprehend the all-sufficiency of God's grace.

QUESTION No. 772: How was the purpose of Paul's thorn in the flesh accomplished?

ANSWER: That even though he bore the thorn in the flesh through life, at its end Paul could say, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith (II Timothy 4:6-7)." In spite of the thorn, and the rejection by God to remove that thorn on three occasions, Paul in the humility of a man made to suffer pain and embarrassment beyond description (II Corinthians 11:23-33) for the cause of His Lord would, at the end of his work, realize, in the reception of a crown of righteousness, the all-sufficiency of the grace of God (II Timothy 4:8).

QUESTION No. 773: Was Paul arrogant?

ANSWER: To so assume would be to recklessly accuse the Holy Spirit who provided the very words written by the humble Apostle (I Corinthians 2:12-13; Galatians 1:11-12). Paul gloried only in the cross of our Lord Jesus (Galatians 6:14; Galatians 5:26; I Corinthians 1:29-31).

QUESTION No. 774: Should the last twelve verses of Mark's account of the Gospel be included in the canon of Scripture?

ANSWER: Yes! Although the Vaticanus and the Sinaniticus are the two oldest manuscripts "now" extant (fourth century) and exclude these verses, they are not the oldest to be used. Jerome 382 AD, responsible for the Latin versions, had access to manuscripts older than these two that included these verses. The Syriac, Peshitta (150 AD), Curetonian, Latin, Gothic, Egyptian (Coptic), Sahidic, Armenian, Ethiopic, and the Georgian versions of the New Testament, all of which are older that the two MSS above, all contain the last twelve verses of Mark. There are 618 other MSS that also contain the last twelve verses of Mark. (Score 628 to 2). Nearly 100 ecclesiastical writers (before the two subject MSS were written) refer to the last twelve verses of Mark. Between 300 AD and 600 AD there are about 200 more writers, all containing the last twelve verses of Mark. Victor of Antioch refers to the very many MSS, which he had seen, that satisfied him that the last twelve verses were contained therein. Others writing before these two MSS were, Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Vincentius, etc., etc., and the list goes on and on.

It is also worthwhile to note that the Vaticanus leaves out many other passages of scripture, such as, Genesis 1-46, Psalms 105-137, Hebrews 9:14-13:25, all of I & II Timothy, Titus, Philemon, and Revelation. The Sinaiticus has its omissions, as well, but also contains "The Epistle of Barnabas" and "The Shepherd of Hermas" as part of the New Testament. Which should be accepted and which should be excluded? Why would any suggest that the last twelve verses of Mark should be excluded and the many other missing passages included? Prejudice? Obviously! If one were ethical and honest, to exclude one would demand the exclusion of all! However, if all were excluded, including the Book of Revelation, it would spell disaster to the false doctrine of Premillenialism, a doctrine generally held by the "Faith Only" folks. They want to keep the missing Book of Revelation, since they believe (falsely) that it supports their Premillenial doctrine, but want to discard the missing last twelve verses of Mark that, if not excluded, spells disaster to their (falsely held) "Faith Only" doctrine: Mark 16:16, Christ speaking, says, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

Dean John Burgeon, a scholar and author that studied intensely these two MSS at length and wrote about the last twelve verses of Mark attests to their authenticity and

further states, “I insist and am prepared to prove (which he did) that the text of these two Codexes (B and Aleph) is very near the foulest in existence and that they exhibit fabricated texts is demonstrable . . . We suspect that these two manuscripts are indebted for their preservation, solely to their ascertained evil character.” That they “exhibit the most shamefully mutilated texts which are anywhere to be met with: - have become, by whatever process (for their history is wholly unknown), the depositories of the largest amount of fabricated readings, ancient blunders, and intentional perversions of the truth —which are discoverable in any known copies of the Word of God.”

There is no doubt that the last twelve verses of Mark belong in the New Testament of Jesus Christ!

SABBATARIANISM

QUESTION No. 775: Where in the Bible does it teach that the SDA (Seventh Day Adventist) is the right church?

ANSWER: The Bible does not teach that the SDA is the right church! Clearly this religious organization does not have its foundation in the Bible, since it did not come into existence until the middle 1800's under the misguided leadership of a Mr. Miller. This man was proven to be a false prophet when he predicted twice that the end of the world would occur in 1843/1844. Upon the failure of his prophecies, Mr. Miller wisely disappeared from the religious scene.

After adding some doctrines (including that of Seventh Day-keeping) to Mr. Miller's teachings (Mr. Miller rejected the notion of Christians worshipping on the Sabbath/seventh day/Saturday), Elder James White, and his wife Ellen, became the leaders of this movement. It was formally recognized in Battle Creek, Michigan (USA) as the SDA Church in 1863. To support her theory that Christians of today are to worship on Saturday instead of Sunday, Ellen White made the absurd claim that she had a vision in which she went to heaven! While in heaven she claims that Jesus Christ personally escorted her into the Holy of Holies to open the Ark of the Covenant for her so that she could peer in and see a pot of manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the Ten Commandments on two tables of stone. She then claimed that she saw a bright halo around the fourth commandment. She guessed from this that keeping the Sabbath Day was then necessary for all people from that point forward. She and her followers since have made ridiculous and unfruitful attempts to go to the Bible to support, through wresting the scriptures (II Peter 3:16), her newly discovered assumption. Their theory, without doubt, directly contradicts the Bible that clearly teaches that we are no longer under any part of the Old Testament Law (Romans 7:1-7; II Corinthians 3:1-18; Galatians 3:24-25; Ephesians 2:13-16; Colossians 2:14; Hebrews 7:12 & 8:7). As well, the Bible is clear that Christians are to worship on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Revelation 1:10).

Seventh Day Adventists also forbid the eating of certain foods, a doctrine that violates I Timothy 4:1-5! They also deny the biblical doctrine of eternal punishment (Matthew 3:12 & 25:46; Revelation 14:11). Many other anti-scriptural positions are held and taught by this man made organization. It is interesting that the SDA chooses and uses only certain Old Testament laws. Why do they not burn incense and offer animal sacrifices? Who gives these people the right of selection? Certainly not the Bible! Note carefully the inspired words of Paul in Galatians 5:4: "Christ is become no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law (Old Testament); ye are fallen from grace."

Jesus Christ established the church of the Bible (Matthew 16:18), not Ellen G. White! The church of the Bible was established in Jerusalem (Acts 1:4 & 8), not in Battle Creek, Michigan! The church of the Bible was established in 30/33 AD (Acts 2:1), not in 1863 AD! The church of the Bible is designated "churches of Christ" (Romans 16:16), not the "SDA!" To which church then should one belong?

There were multitudes of Christians in the church of the Bible (both living and dead) during the many centuries before Ellen G. White made her ungodly claims. Obvi-

ously then, there was never a need for anything other than the Gospel to save sinners (Romans 1:16). Peter proclaimed in the first century that mankind (long before Ellen G. White lived) had already been given "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (II Peter 1:3). In the same Gospel we continue today to have "all things that pertain into life and godliness" without Ellen G. White! If God has already given "all things" necessary to life and godliness, what need does any have of Mrs. White, or any other false teacher for that matter (Matthew 15:3, 6, 9, 13, 14)? To adopt any teaching or practice beyond that which the apostles taught is to invite the condemnation of God (Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 22:18-19).

QUESTION No. 776: The SDA teaches that the fourth beast of Daniel 7:23-25 is the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church. Is this true?

ANSWER: No! It is not true! In Verse twenty-three of this chapter it says that the "fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth". In Daniel 2:36-45, Daniel is interpreting King Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Daniel 2:31-35). Daniel speaks of four kingdoms, the first of which King Nebuchadnezzar was the head (Vs.37). This was the Babylonian kingdom! Three other world kingdoms were to come into existence afterwards (Vs.39-40). Daniel 5:28 tells us that the second kingdom that came into existence was the Medo-Persian. We learn from history that the third kingdom was the Macedonian kingdom; the fourth kingdom was the Roman Empire under the Caesar's. Daniel tells us, in Chapter 2, Verse forty-four, that during the days of this fourth kingdom that "the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed." This prophecy was of the church of Christ and had its fulfillment during the days of the Roman Empire in Acts, the second chapter.

The fourth kingdom designated by the fourth beast in Daniel 7:23-25 is the same kingdom to which reference is made in Daniel 2:36-45. In both places the fourth kingdom (which is the fourth beast) means the Roman Empire, not the Pope!

The foolish SDA doctrine that those who keep the first day of the week are under the influence of the "fourth beast" declares their woeful ignorance of God's Word!

QUESTION No. 777: The SDA teaches that the "abomination of desolation" of Matthew 24:15 and the "beast" of Revelation 13:1-18 also have reference to the Pope and that he will soon go to Jerusalem to exercise his power. Is this true?

ANSWER: No! The "abomination of desolation" and the "beast" in Revelation thirteen have reference solely to the Roman Empire, just as in the book of Daniel. Through Matthew 24:36, Jesus his foretelling of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman Empire. Notice that the events foretold by Christ in these verses were to happen during the lifetime (generation) of the people who were alive at that time. All of this came to pass in 70AD, over nineteen hundred years ago. From Matthew 24:36 through Matthew 25:46, Jesus is discussing the end of the world and the final Judgment.

In Revelation thirteen, John is discussing the great persecution by the Roman Empire being brought upon Christian at that time (after the destruction of Jerusalem) and which would continue into the future. This could not have reference to the Pope, since the first Pope, as we know him today, was not seated until 606AD. Since there was no Pope at the time of the writing of the book of Revelation (about 96AD), nor was there any for the next five hundred years, the suggestion that reference in this passage is to him is without scripture or logic!

QUESTION No. 778: Does Deuteronomy 29:1 teach the Adventist idea of two old laws?

ANSWER: No! The SDA falsely concludes from this passage that there is a Law of God (Ten Commandments- still in effect) and there was a Law of Moses (ceremonial law-taken out of the way). In this passage, the "words of the covenant" and "the covenant which He made with them in Horeb" made up the "Old Covenant," which has been done away in its totality, having been replaced by the "New Covenant" (Hebrews 8:6-13)!

The Bible does not recognize the distinction between "laws" as concocted by the Adventists. For example: In Nehemiah 8:1, Ezra the scribe read from the "Book of the Law of Moses." In Nehemiah 8:18, we see that from which he read was also called the "Book of the law of God." Luke as well refers to the "Law of Moses" as the "Law of the

Lord" (Luke 2:22-23). Clearly, the Adventists are in conflict with God's Word on the matter!

QUESTION No. 779: Does the New Testament clearly state that Christians are no longer under the Ten Commandments?

ANSWER: Yes! In addition to those passages mentioned heretofore, Paul says in Romans Chapter seven, that Christians are "dead to the law" (vs.4) and that they are "delivered (discharged) from the law" (Vs.6). In Verse seven, he tells us that the law we are "dead to" and "delivered from" is the law that says, "Thou shalt not covet!" The law that says, "Thou shalt not covet" clearly refers to the Ten Commandments! In fact, "Thou shalt not covet is the tenth Commandment (Exodus 20:17)!

QUESTION No. 780: Were the Ten Commandments reinstated under the New Testament?

ANSWER: No! Neither the "Ten Commandment Law," nor any other "Law" was reinstated under the New Testament. The New Testament is a totally "new" law, having replaced totally the "old" law! It is true that the New Testament encompasses and includes the moral principles inherent in "nine" of the "ten" Commandments. However, these principles are applicable to Christians today because they are a part of the New Testament; not because they were a part of the Old Testament! It is very significant that the fourth of the Ten Commandments, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," is strikingly omitted from the New Testament!

QUESTION No. 781: What caused the Sabbath to change from the last day of the week to the first day of the week?

ANSWER: This so-called "change" has occurred only in the mind and vocabulary of man. It is not biblical to refer to the first day of the week as "the Sabbath." People today, under the New Testament, are not directed or authorized to keep the seventh day, but, rather, are directed to worship on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2). Keeping of the seventh day (the Sabbath) was a part of the Old Testament Law,

which was done away with in Christ (II Corinthians 3; Galatians 3:16-19; Ephesians 2:13-14; Hebrews 7:12; Hebrews 8:7). Christians cannot observe any part of the Old Law (including the Sabbath), because to do so is to fall from grace (Galatians 5:4)! Neither may they permit any man to judge them in respect of the Sabbath days (Colossians 2:16).

QUESTION No. 782: Why is it not allowable to work on the Sabbath as some teach?

ANSWER: The reason that Israel, under the Old Law, was not to work on the Sabbath (the seventh day of the week, i.e., Saturday) is given in Exodus 20:8-11. We today are no longer under any part of that Old Law, but rather all people from the cross until the end of time have been, are, and will be, answerable only to the New Testament. (Please read Romans 7:1-7; II Corinthians 3:1-18; Galatians 3:24-25; Ephesians 2:13-16; Colossians 2:14; Hebrews 7:12 & 8:7).

The Bible is clear that Christians are to worship on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Revelation 1:10; Colossians 2:16).

QUESTION No. 783: Should Christians pray on the seventh day (Saturday)?

ANSWER: Christians are to pray consistently (I Thessalonians 5:17), which would include the seventh day. Note that the saved in Acts 2:42 "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." In the model prayer (Matthew 6:9-13), Jesus taught us to say, "Give us this day our daily bread." Surely, Christ and His followers prayed without ceasing every day!

QUESTION No. 784: Does Hebrews 4:10 teach that we are to keep the Sabbath Day, because God rested on the seventh day?

ANSWER: No! The "rest" promised to the people of God (Vs.8-10) has reference to the eternal rest (heaven) and not to the seventh day of the week. As God rested from

His labor after the creation, faithful Christians too shall rest, according to His promise, after their labors are over.

QUESTION No. 785: Some say we are to worship on Sundays; some say Saturday. I believe we are to assemble for worship every day of our lives and that we cannot forsake the assembling on Sundays or any other day. Would you please clarify this for me?

ANSWER: Your desire to assemble for worship to God every day is commendable. However, we need to be careful not to bind things where the Bible has not bound. That the saints are to assemble to worship God on Sunday, the first day of the week, is clearly set forth in Acts 20:7 and I Corinthians 16:1-2. On this day only are we to partake of the Lord's Supper and contribute as God has prospered us. The other acts of worship (teaching, singing and praying), which occur on the Lord's Day, may, as well, be engaged in on other days of the week. The frequency of such worship assemblies may scripturally vary from congregation to congregation, depending upon many local factors, such as: the spiritual needs of a congregation; the proximity of members to a place of assembly; transportation issues; the necessity of individual employment to financially support self, family, and the work of the local congregation, etc. A wise eldership or the faithful men of the congregation, if no eldership exists, will consider all such factors before selecting times and dates of assembly. To insist that all members of a congregation must assemble for public assembly each and every day of the week, under any and all conditions, is to go beyond that which is written (I Corinthians 4:6; Revelation 22:18-19).

QUESTION No. 786: What is the understanding of Colossians 2:16?

ANSWER: Most of what Paul wrote to the various churches was to warn Christians not to go back under the Old Testament; not be brought in bondage again to it (Galatians 5:1-4); not to accept the binding of the old law of circumcision (Galatians 5:6; Galatians 6:15); and not to allow Judaizing Teachers to insist that Christians keep the Holy Days (including the Sabbaths) of the Old Testament. This is precisely his argument and directive in Colossians 2:16. Note carefully the context of the passage by reference to Colossians 2:14!

QUESTION No.787: Mark 1:21 and Luke 4:31 talk of Jesus going into the synagogues and teaching on the Sabbath Day. If the first day was a commanded day, why didn't He encourage them to assemble on that day?

ANSWER: Jesus lived under the Old Testament and kept its laws perfectly, including worshipping on the Sabbath. The New Testament, under which Christians worship on the first day, did not come into effect until the Old Testament (including Sabbath keeping) was taken out of the way at the cross and death of Christ (Colossians 2:14-16)!

QUESTION No. 788: Acts 17:2 and Acts 18:4 say that Paul went into the synagogues on the Sabbath Day for the purpose of worshiping. This was after Jesus' ascension. Why did Paul not encourage people from worshiping on the Sabbath?

ANSWER: To say that these verses teach that Paul entered the synagogues for the purpose of worshiping is to read something into the passages that is not there. The reasons for Paul going into the synagogues are clearly stated, i.e., (1) that's where the Jews were to whom he wanted to preach and (2) he wanted to preach Christ (New Testament) to them.

Paul encourages people of all time and for all time since the cross to worship on the first day of the week by his example (Acts 20:7) and by commandment (I Corinthians 16:1-2). Some questions need to be asked. Why did these inspired men on a missionary journey wait for seven days (Acts 20:6) to meet and commune on the first day (Acts 20:7) if that was not the appointed day? Why did they not simply abide six days and worship on the Sabbath if that was the appointed today? Why did the apostle Paul direct the Corinthian Christians to lay by in store on the first day of the week if the seventh day was the appointed day of assembling? It is interesting to note that in the original Greek the word "kata" is used (Verse two), which means "every" first day of the week. Can any suggest that the early Christians engaged in all items of worship except "giving" on Saturday, and then reassembled on the first day for the purpose of engaging in that particular act of worship? Surely not. But why the first day? Because that was the day on which our Lord conquered death by His resurrection and it was the day that He established His church in which we worship Him!

Not only does the Bible show that we are to meet on the first day, but it is interesting to note that such was the practice on the basis of secular history. In the writings of Justin Martyr (100 AD – 167 AD) who was a pupil of Polycarp who, in turn, was a pupil of the apostle John, we can read these words: "On Sunday a meeting is held of all who live in the cities and villages, and a section is read from the memoirs of the Apostles and the writings of the Prophets, as long as time permits. When the reading is finished the president, in a discourse, gives the admonition and exhortation to imitate these noble things. After this we all rise and offer a common prayer. At the close of the prayer, as we have before described, bread and wine and thanks for them according to his ability . . ." The writing goes on to talk about the distribution of the bread and wine to the homes of the sick and about the contribution. Clearly then, both the Bible and secular history evidences the fact that worship of the New Testament church was on the first day and not the seventh!

QUESTION No. 789: Do both the Old and New Testaments discuss doing away with the Sabbath?

ANSWER: Yes! First of all, Paul says in Romans, Chapter seven, that Christians are "dead to the law" (Vs.4) and that they are "delivered (discharged) from the law" (Vs.6). In Verse seven, he tells us that the law we are "dead to" and "delivered from" is the law that says, "Thou shalt not covet!" The law that says, "Thou shalt not covet" clearly refers to the Ten Commandments! In fact, "Thou shalt not covet is the tenth Commandment (Exodus 20:17)! Therefore, we are "dead to" and "delivered from" the Ten Commandment Law!

Again, the Hebrew writer says, in Chapter 8:5-13, that "the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: *not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt . . ."* Note in Verse five, the writer refers to the "pattern shewed to thee in the mount." Then, he says, beginning in Verse eight, 'I will make a new covenant, not like the one I made with them when I brought them out of Egypt.' Clearly, reference is being made in this passage to the Ten Commandment Law, because it was the Law/Covenant made with Israel 'in the mount, in the day when God brought them out of Egypt.' This passage in Hebrews shows the fulfillment of the prophecy of a New Covenant made under the Old Testament in Jeremiah 31:31-34. So both the Old and New Testaments attest to the fact that we today

are no longer bound to keep the Sabbath Day! In fact, this is not the only place in the Old Testament where such prophecies are made.

Consider, also, the prophecy in Amos 8:1-10. In Verse two, the Lord says, "The end is come upon my people of Israel: I will not again pass by them any more." Then in Verse five, the question is asked, 'When will the New Moon (religious holy day) and the Sabbath be gone?' The answer to this question is given in Verse eight: "And it shall come to pass *in that day*, saith the Lord God, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in a clear day." So, from this passage, we learn that the Sabbath would be no more in the day that God would cause the sun to go down at noon! When did that happen? It happened on the day our Lord was crucified (Luke 23:44), beginning with the sixth hour. The Jewish day started at six o'clock (six hours) in the morning, therefore, the sun went down precisely at noon as prophesied in the book of Amos. This is exactly what the New Testament teaches in Ephesians 2:13-16 and Colossians 2:14, i.e., the Old Testament was taken out of the way at the Cross!

Zechariah 11:10-14 prophesied the same truth. In Verse five, God says, "I will break my covenant (Deuteronomy 5:2) which I had made with all the people." When would it be broken? Verses twelve and thirteen: In that day when, "they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver" (Matthew 26:14-15 and Matthew 27:1-6). The covenant that God had made with Israel in Horeb was the Ten Commandments! (Mt. Sinai was a mountain within the mountain chain called Horeb).

Many other passages also deal with the fact that the Old Testament was taken out of the way, e.g., II Corinthians 3; Galatians 2:16-21; Galatians 3, 4, & 5; Ephesians 2:11-22; Colossians 2:14; Hebrews 7:12; Hebrews 8:7; Hebrews 9:15-17; and Hebrews 10:1-4. The SDA contradicts every one of the above passages when they read into the passages of inquiry that we today are to keep the Sabbath Day! They pronounce sentence upon those who do not keep the Sabbath in violation of Colossians 2:16 which says, "Let no man therefore judge (pronounce sentence on) you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days."

QUESTION No. 790: Does James 2:10-12 force us to keep the Ten Commandments (Decalogue)? If not what are the commandments spoken of?

ANSWER: No! Neither this passage, nor any other forces Christians to keep the Ten Commandments. Note that James is writing to the twelve tribes scattered abroad (1:1); to those familiar with the Old Ten Commandment Law. Beginning in Chapter two, he begins dealing with relationships between men. He instructs in Verse one, that, as Christians, they (and us) should not exhibit "respect of persons." Then in the balance of the chapter he is going to elaborate on this particular matter. It is important for us to see, as we start, that the commandments of Verse eleven are those which have to do with man's duty to man; which is the subject at hand. In Verse eight, he talks about the "Royal Law" and describes it as follows: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." This "Royal Law" is an eternal law having first been given in Leviticus 19:18 and then incorporated by Jesus into the "Perfect Law of Liberty" (Matthew 22:34-40; Luke 10:26-28); the New Testament. He, as well, incorporated the two Old Testament commandments mentioned in Verse eleven into the New Testament, but with deeper meaning than in the old: (Thou shalt not kill - Matthew 5:21-24; Thou shalt not commit adultery – Matthew 5:31-31). In this deeper meaning, we can see the "Royal Law" being elaborated upon more fully in the statement of our Lord, "But I say unto you" (Matthew 5:22 & 32). James is not (in Chapter 2) suggesting that Christians are to keep these two commandments (or any of the others) as a part of the Old Ten Commandment Law. He is simply teaching Christians under the New Testament how they are to conduct themselves by using the Old Testament as an example. This teaching principle is proper and taught in Romans 15:4 and I Corinthians 10:11. The "law" that James is talking about in Verses 9 and 10 is the "Royal Law" discussed in Verse eight. And he is simply saying in these two verses, that if one commits the sin of "respect of persons," he is guilty of all the law; i.e., all parts of the eternal "Royal Law" governing proper relationships between men, which includes the sins of murder and adultery! So, he looks to two of the Ten Commandments and those who lived under them by way of example, teaching us today that, even though we might refrain from murder and adultery, if we show respect of persons we, nonetheless, are found guilty of violating the "Royal Law," just as were those who lived under the Ten Commandments. Another valid point made in the text is that when we violate the laws governing man's duty to man, and thereby become guilty of all governing law, we are also in violation of the commandments relating to man's duty to God.

Now, a very important consideration in support of the above discussion is found in Verse twelve of Chapter two! This verse is always overlooked by the SDA! Here he says, "*So* do ye, and *so* do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty." The word "so" is an adverb that means "in the way shown;" "according to the example set forth;" or "in the way expressed and understood." Therefore, James is saying something like this: 'I have shown you an eternal principle based on an eternal Old Testament example; you follow that eternal example as they that shall be judged, not by the Old Ten

Commandment Law, but by the Law of Liberty! The Perfect Law of Liberty (James 1:25), by which Christians will be judged, is that engrafted word which is able to save our souls (James 1:21; Romans 1:16); the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

QUESTION No. 791: Did Jesus command anyone to keep the Sabbath (Matthew 24:20; Matthew 12:12; Mark 2:27)?

ANSWER: Jesus commanded only those who lived under the Old Testament (those who lived before His death on the Cross) to keep the Sabbath, just as He did! As shown above, the Old Testament was no longer binding after the death of Christ, including Sabbath-keeping! None were commanded to keep the Sabbath after the Cross!

It should be noted that Matthew 24:20 is not a command to keep the Sabbath under any circumstance. The reason that Jewish Christians were to pray that their flight from the destruction of Jerusalem would not occur on the Sabbath Day was because it was the custom of those Jews, who would still (in error) be keeping the Old Law, to close the gates of the city on the Sabbath Day. If Christians had to flee on that day, then, because the gates would be closed, they couldn't get out of the city! Therefore, they were to pray that it wouldn't be necessary for them to flee on the Sabbath!

Note too what is said in Mark 2:27: It simply says that the Sabbath (for the appointed time) was in the best interest of man. In the Verse 28, we note that Jesus is "Lord also of the Sabbath." This means He can say what should and should not be done on that day; that it is His to do with whatever He wants. And He, through men inspired of the Holy Spirit whom He had sent, said in Romans 7:1-7, that we are 'dead to it, and we are delivered from it' and in Colossians 2:16, that we are not to allow anyone to pronounce sentence on us regarding it.' In other words, Jesus did with it what He wanted to do with it!

QUESTION No. 792: Are the Ten Commandments settled in Heaven (Revelation 11:19?

ANSWER: The phrase "settled in heaven" is from Psalms 119:89: "Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven." This phrase simply means that God's purposes are determined and finalized in heaven. Nothing more, nothing less!

If it is being argued that the ark of Revelation 11:19, which was seen by John in the heavenly temple, holds the Ten Commandments and is, therefore, binding upon people today, then even more clearly seen is the irrational lengths to which the SDA will go to support a false doctrine. This passage is totally symbolic! For any to suggest that the Ten Commandments on two tables of physical stone is literally and physically in a symbolic ark, in a non-physical Heaven, is foolishness. The Hebrew writer says that "Christ is not entered into the holy places [made with hands;] but into Heaven [non-physical] itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Hebrews 9:24). One cannot take something more out of a passage than that which is symbolized therein! Neither can one take something they read into a symbolic passage and make that binding upon people today! Common sense tells us that if one "could" do so with the Ten Commandments, then he would be ethically and scripturally bound (Galatians 5:3) to take everything else with it, including the punishments (even stoning to death) appointed for violating them, which the SDA scrupulously avoids! And if he were to take all things of the temple of the Old Testament, and that for which it stood, and, then, make all of it applicable to us today, (as the SDA wants to do with the Ten Commandments) then we would have to live totally under the Old Testament, including its punishments, and there would be no need for the New Testament! There logic is faulty, to say the least! Revelation 11:19 is but a description of the dwelling place of God which symbolically foreshadowed the church of Christ in which God now dwells (II Corinthians 6:16).

QUESTION No. 793: Would you explain more about the Adventist's idea of what they affirm as the fulfillment of the Law (Matthew 5:17-19 and Romans 13:8-10)?

ANSWER: Adventist's hold that the "all" of Matthew 5:17-19 will not be fulfilled until the end of time! They hold that the "Ceremonial law" (which they call the Law of Moses*) was fulfilled at the Cross, but the Ten Commandments (which they call the Law of God*) will not be fulfilled until the end of time! This is not the discussion of Matthew 5:17-19. What *is* being discussed is the fulfillment of the law and the prophets, which means "all" of the Old Testament! Jesus is simply saying that He did not come for the purpose of destroying the law and the prophets (Old Testament). His purpose was to fulfill it! He further stated that nothing would pass from the law (Old Testament) until

that time when all of it would be fulfilled. That time came when He died on the Cross. At that time all of the Old Testament was fulfilled or filled full. Upon its fulfillment, it had served its purpose of bringing man unto Christ (Galatians 3:24-25). Because it had served its purpose, it was, at that time, taken out of the way (Colossians 2:14). It was nailed to the cross in His death (Colossians 2:14)! When Christ (the Testator) died, His New Testament became effective (Hebrews 9:16-17), "a better covenant, which was established upon better promises, for if that first covenant (Old Testament) had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second" (New Testament) - (Hebrews 8:7-8).

* [The SDA falsely concludes from this passage that there is a Law of God (Ten Commandments- still in effect) and there was a Law of Moses (ceremonial law-taken out of the way). In this passage, the "words of the covenant" and "the covenant which He made with them in Horeb" made up the "Old Covenant," which has been done away with in it's totality, having been replaced by the "New Covenant" (Hebrews 8:6-13)!

The Bible does not recognize the distinction between "Laws" as concocted by the Adventists. For example: In Nehemiah 8:1, Ezra the scribe read from the "Book of the Law of Moses." In Nehemiah 8:18, we see that from which he read was also called the "Book of the Law of God." Luke as well refers to the "Law of Moses" as the "Law of the Lord" (Luke 2:22-23). Clearly, the Adventists are in conflict with God's Word on the matter!]

As in the answer to the first question, the commandments being discussed are those which have to do with man's relationship to man; those commandments which are reflected in the "Royal Law" described in James 2:8 and Romans 13:9, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." As noted, the "Royal Law" is an eternal Law, begun under the Old Testament and incorporated with even deeper meaning by Jesus Christ in the New Testament.

Isn't it significant that neither of these passages refer to the fourth commandment?

QUESTION No. 794: Will you explain the idea of being slave to the law of sin by keeping the Decalogue (Sabbath Law) – Romans 7:14-22?

ANSWER: These passages* do not indicate that one is a slave to sin by keeping the Ten Commandments! Paul in Verse fourteen is talking about his and our condition before becoming Christians. He is simply saying that it wasn't the Old Law (to which we died and from which we were delivered – Romans 7:4-6) that was the factor which caused us to die spiritually, but rather that the cause was sin! When we obeyed the law of sin we were the servants of sin (Romans 6:16-17). But when we obeyed from the heart the spiritual law that was delivered us, i.e., the Gospel of Christ (I Corinthians 15:1-4), we were then made free from sin (Romans 6:17-18). Because we were made free from the slavery of sin and made the servants of righteousness through our obedience to that "form of doctrine," we were, at that time and following, made to delight in it (Romans 6:16-18; Romans 7:22)! The law of God, then, that is discussed in Verse twenty-two is the spiritual law of God that is binding upon men who live under it! In our case, reference is to the New Testament (Gospel) of Jesus Christ. Surely, none would suggest that Paul was saying he was still under and delighted by a Law to which he had died (Verse four) and been delivered from (Verse six)!

*[Though Romans 7:14/22 do not teach that one is a slave to sin by keeping the Sabbath, it is clear that other passages do teach that if we attempt to justify ourselves by reversion to the Old Law, including the Sabbath Commandment, we have "fallen from grace" and are, therefore, in a lost or sinful condition. See also Galatians 3:25; Galatians 4:9; Galatians 4:30; Galatians 5:1; Galatians 5:6-8, in addition to the passages cited in the above answers.]

QUESTION No. 795: Did not the Sabbath exist before the Ten Commandments were given (Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 16:23-30).

ANSWER: The fact of God's sanctifying of the Sabbath at the creation (Genesis 2:1-3) does not mean that the commandment to keep the Sabbath Day holy was given or made known to man as a legal institution at this point. That such is the case is a matter of conjecture by those who espouse that Sabbath-keeping is for Christians today! Speaking of God, Nehemiah said in Chapter nine, Verses 13-14, "Thou camest down also upon Mount Sinai, and spakest with them (the children of Israel) from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments: "**And madest known unto them thy holy Sabbath, . . .**" To suggest that the commandment to keep the Sabbath Day was given and known as a legal institution by man from the events of

Genesis 2:1-3 is to suggest that the Holy Spirit made a mistake in Nehemiah 9:13-14! We must be careful not to read more into a passage than is intended by the inspired writer in order to support a preconceived notion or doctrine.

Exodus 16:23-30 indicates clearly that, although the seventh day was referred to in this passage, it was not previously observed in any special way. If it was previously recognized in any way, why the need for the instructions of Exodus 16? They would already have been doing what they were now being instructed to do! The gift of manna was that which opened the way for the sanctification of the Sabbath by the law that would afterward be given. On the sixth day of the week the quantity yielded was twice as much, i.e., two omers for one (one person). When Moses was informed of this, he said to them, "Let tomorrow be a rest, a holy Sabbath to the Lord." They were to bake and boil as much as was needed for the day, and keep what was left over for the next day, for on the seventh they would find none in the field. They did this, and what was kept for the seventh day, neither stank nor bred worms. It is perfectly clear from this event, that the Israelites were not acquainted with any sabbatical observance at that time, but that, while the way was practically opened here, it was through the Ten Commandments that it was raised into a legal institution (Exodus 20:8ff). Thus, the record of Nehemiah, i.e., that "God (at Sinai) spake with them from heaven and gave them right judgments, and true laws, good statutes and commandments," clearly providing, thereby, the legalities that would from that time be binding upon them, including the fourth commandment to "Remember the Sabbath Day, to keep it holy." Note the support of this fact provided in Deuteronomy 5:2-3, "The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb (Mt. Sinai was a mountain within the mountain chain called Horeb). The Lord made NOT this covenant (including the fourth commandment) with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us alive here today."

QUESTION No. 796: Does not the fact that God said, "Remember" the Sabbath Day to keep it holy indicate that the Sabbath was already being kept and in the minds of the Israelites?

ANSWER: No! The idea that because God said "Remember" the Sabbath Day to keep it holy indicates that it was God's law from the beginning is totally without merit and is a grasping of the wind. Such a suggestion is at odds with, and contradictory to, Nehemiah 9:13-14 and, therefore, implies that the Bible contradicts itself. "Remember" here simply means, "Keep in mind what I am now telling you to do." As an example, I may say to you today, "Remember to write me a letter." This does not imply that I told

you to write me a letter sometime in the past or that you did it! SDA proponents have used this worn-out argument for years, but it remains merely a feeble attempt to support the unsupportable.

QUESTION No. 797: Does not Acts 16:13, 17:1-2, and 18:4 prove that the apostle Paul worshiped on the Sabbath and that we should do likewise?

ANSWER: To infer that these verses teach that Paul entered the synagogues for the purpose of worshiping is to read something into these passages that is not there. The reasons for Paul going into the synagogues are clearly stated, i.e., (1) that's where the Jews were to whom he wanted to preach and (2) he wanted to preach Christ (New Testament) to them. Allow me to illustrate by asking this question: Where would I be on the seventh day of the week if I wanted to preach to a Seventh Day Adventist? Would I not be in his place of worship, because that is where and when I would find them gathered? Would such mean that I would not be worshiping in my own place of worship on the first day? Of course not! Surely, you are not suggesting that Paul went into the Jews' place of worship to participate and commune with them according to the worship practices of the Old Law, i.e., sacrificing animals, burning incense, etc.? The record says that while in the synagogues he "argued" with the Jews (Acts 17:17), he "reasoned" with the Jews (Acts 18:19), he "disputed and persuaded" the things concerning the kingdom of God (Acts 19:8) and when they were hardened and would not believe he quit going into the synagogues and preached for two years in the school of one Tyrannus! Now, from these accounts, how can any unbiased person get the idea that Paul supported Sabbath-keeping by going into the synagogues? Without doubt, one of the reasons why the Jews were hardened and would not believe "things concerning the kingdom of God (the church of Christ) is that they would have to reject the Old Law and its Sabbath in favor of the New Law of Jesus Christ! Would not Paul, guided by the Holy Spirit, speak and argue with the Jews in the synagogues about the same matters he discussed with Roman Christians, i.e., we are "dead to" the Law and "delivered from" the Law that says that shalt not covet; the Ten Commandment Law (including the Sabbath-keeping commandment)? What sense does it make to hear Paul teach these matters in the book of Romans 7:1-7 (and many other places) and then conclude that he violated his own instructions by worshipping in the synagogues according to the Law that he had died to and was delivered from? Without doubt, Sabbath-keepers of today are plagued with the same problems, as were the Jews of Paul's day!

QUESTION No. 798: Does Isaiah 66:22-23 teach the permanency of the Sabbath?

ANSWER: No! The passage does not say that the Festival of the New Moon and Sabbath Day are eternal. They did exist at that time and occurred on a steady and regular basis. So the writer is simply saying that the day (the Christian age) will come when "all flesh shall (in similar manner – on a steady and regular basis) come to worship before me." It is worthy of note that if this passage teaches that people of today are to keep the Sabbath Day, it also teaches that people of today are to keep the Festival of the New Moon! Where is the consistent Sabbath-keeper who does so? Colossians 2:16 clearly forbids the Christian to keep either (or any) of these Old Testament days!

QUESTION No. 799: Does not Hebrews 4:3-9 teach that we are to keep the Sabbath today?

ANSWER: No! It does not. This passage has reference to the Old Law in its comparison with the New Law. It discusses the "rest" of Canaan Land; some entered in and some did not. So, in his comparison, the inspired writer tells Christians, that we should not fall away as some of them did, but, rather, let us labor to enter into the "rest" that God has prepared for the faithful, i.e., Heaven (Verse 11). The passage says absolutely nothing about Christians keeping the seventh day.

QUESTION No. 800: Does the Bible teach that the Judgment laws alone could give life and/or were nailed to the Cross (Romans 10:5; Ezekiel 20:11; Galatians 3:12; Galatians 3:21); that the Ten Commandments are still in force today?

ANSWER: I am not sure what "Judgment laws" mean. Some differentiate by making a distinction between what they call the "ceremonial" part of the law and the "moral" part of the law (including the Ten Commandments). This is usually done to support the erroneous doctrine of present day Sabbath-keeping. However, no matter what distinction one may desire to make, it is the case that the Old Testament in its entirety was nailed to the cross of Christ! Ezekiel 20:12 is simply stating that those who lived under the Old Law would receive the benefits of that law, if they did that which was

commanded. In the context of Romans 10:4-6, Paul is contrasting the righteousness of works under the Old Law with the righteousness of faith under the New Law. He says (Verse four) that “Christ is the end (completion) of the Old Law (not a part of it, but all of it) that He might bring those who were under the Old Law to righteousness through belief in Him. In Verse five, we are told that it was necessary for Christ to end the Old Law, because righteousness under the Old Law could not be realized unless one kept that Law perfectly. Paul is not suggesting here or anywhere else that Christians are to “keep the Sabbath Day holy.” Neither is he suggesting that the Ten Commandments were not nailed to the cross.

Paul tells us very clearly in, Romans 7:1-7, that we are no longer under the Ten Commandments. He states that the Christians are "dead to the law" (Vs.4) and that they are "delivered (discharged) from the law" (Vs.6). In Verse seven, he tells us that the law we are "dead to" and "delivered from" is the law that says, "Thou shalt not covet!" The law that says, "Thou shalt not covet" clearly refers to the Ten Commandments! In fact, "Thou shalt not covet” *is* the tenth Commandment (Exodus 20:17)! Therefore, it follows that one cannot “die” to the law that says, “Thou shalt not covet” without also dying to the law that says, “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy,” because both are contained in the same, identical Ten Commandment law! Further, we must recognize that neither the "Ten Commandment Law," nor any other "Law" was reinstated under the New Testament. The New Testament is a totally "new" law, having replaced totally the "old" law (Hebrews 7:12)! Nonetheless, it is true that the New Testament encompasses and includes the moral principles inherent in "nine" of the "ten" Commandments. However, these principles are applicable to Christians today because they are a part of the New Testament; not because they were a part of the Old Testament! It is very significant that the fourth of the Ten Commandments, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," is strikingly omitted from the New Testament!

Galatians 3:10-13 and Galatians 3:21-23 teach the same thing as Romans 10:4-6, i.e., that man could not be justified through the Old Law, because man could not fulfill “all things which are written in the book of Law” (Verse 10). This fact was the curse of the Old Law that resulted in all men under that Law being cursed. In order to remove that curse, so that man might be redeemed and justified, Christ become a “curse for us: for it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (Verse 13). The Law that is specifically being discussed here is that Law which was given 430 years after the promise (Galatians 3:14) was made to Abraham by God (Galatians 3:17). We learn from Exodus 12:40-41 that the 430 years refers to that time spent by the children of Israel in Egypt. The Law that was given at the end of the 430 years (“when God took them by the hand to

lead them out of the land of Egypt" – Hebrews 8:9) was the Ten Commandments. If the Ten Commandments were not a part of that which was taken out of the way by the death of Christ on the cross, then it is the case that we are still under the curse of the Law and that Christ's death did not fulfill its purpose! But there is no doubt that the Law (including Sabbath-keeping) was added only till (until) the Seed (Christ – Verse 16) should come (Verse 19).

In Galatians 3:21, Paul is only saying that the promise first given to Abraham (Verse 14) was still valid (Verse 29), even though the Old Law was fulfilled and taken out of the way; that the doing away with that Law in no way affected the promise of God, since it was not given under that Law, but 430 years before it was added. In the latter part of the verse, Paul implies that there would have been no need for a New Law if the righteousness of faith could have come by the Old Law. In Verse 24, we learn that it was not the purpose of the Old Law to so do. It was simply a "schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by (His system of) faith. But after that (system of) faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster, i.e., the Old Law."

QUESTION No. 801: Does Galatians 3:10 speak of the abolition of the Ten Commandments. If yes, did Moses write them in the book (Deuteronomy 31:9, 24, 25)?

ANSWER: Yes, but not only the Ten Commandments! Galatians 3:10 refers to all of the Old Testament, including the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament that were written by Moses), which in turn includes the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20: 1-17). The Ten Commandments were first given on two tablets of stone, but, as we can now see in our Bibles today, were included in the books written by Moses (Deuteronomy 31:24).

QUESTION No. 802: If the apostle Paul spoke only about the works of the law (Romans 3:28), why did he establish the law (Verse 31)?

ANSWER: Again, Romans 3:27 and 28 is a comparison of the Old Testament (the law of works) versus the New Testament (the law of faith). He goes on to say (Verse 28), that man could not be justified by the Old Law, thus the need for a New Law. In Verse 31

he says, “Do we then make void the law through faith.” The answer is no! Neither Christ, nor Paul thwarted the purpose of the Old Law, which was intended to bring man unto Christ (Galatians 3:24-25). The word “establish” in Verse 31 does not imply that Paul was the Law’s originator. Moses had already done that. The Law was established in the sense that its completion and fulfillment was “confirmed” by the teaching of Christ and His apostles. There is nothing at all in this passage to support Sabbath Day-keeping!

QUESTION No. 803: Should Gentiles keep the Sabbath Law (Romans 3:29-31)?

ANSWER: No! There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for we all are one by faith in Christ Jesus (Acts 15:9; Romans 2:28-29; Romans 3:29; Galatians 3:26). Whatever one is commanded to do, so the other! As explained and shown above there is no commandment anywhere in the Bible that directs Christians (whether Jew or Gentile) to keep the Sabbath today. In fact of matter, the Bible teaches against keeping the Sabbath by making it clear (1) that the Ten Commandments were taken out of the way (Romans 7:1-7) and (2) that Christians are to worship on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2; Revelation 1:10).

QUESTION No. 804: You did not fully explain about the law and times in regard to Daniel 7:25, how those laws (commandments) will be changed; those commandments which the saints do keep (Revelation 12:17; Matthew 5:17), the testimony of Jesus.

ANSWER: The statement incorrectly assumes that the “commandments of God,” cited in Revelation 12:17, refers to the Ten Commandments. There is nothing in the text that would so indicate. Those who “keep the commandments of God” are those who have the “testimony of Jesus,” not the testimony of Moses! In other words the reference is to the Christians to whom John was writing!

Christians were told by the apostle Paul that they were “dead to the law, that they were “delivered from the law” that says, “thou shalt not covet.” It was the Ten Commandment Law that said, “thou shalt not covet!” Therefore, Christians were, and are, “dead to” and “delivered from” the Ten Commandment Law (Romans 7:4-7)!

Certainly Matthew 5:17 has reference to the Old Law, but to relate this passage to what is said in Revelation 12:17 is out of order, since John refers to the commandments kept by Christians who have the testimony of Jesus Christ while Matthew (in recording the words of Jesus) has reference to the commandments kept by those under the Old Law who had the testimony of Moses.

Neither does Matthew 5:17 teach that we are to keep the Ten Commandments today! Such is totally inconsistent with what Paul said in Romans 7:4-7. Jesus is saying that He did not come for the purpose of destroying the law and the prophets (Old Testament). His purpose was to fulfill it! He further stated that nothing would pass from the law (Old Testament) until that time when all of it would be fulfilled. That time came when He died on the cross. At that time all of the Old Testament was fulfilled or filled full. Upon its fulfillment, it had served its purpose of bringing man unto Christ (Galatians 3:24-25). Because it had served it's purpose, it was, at that time, taken out of the way (Colossians 2:14). It was nailed to the cross in His death (Colossians 2:14)! When Christ (the Testator) died, His New Testament became effective (Hebrews 9:16-17), "a better covenant, which was established upon better promises, for if that first covenant (Old Testament) had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second" (New Testament) - (Hebrews 8:7-8).

The SDA teaches that the fourth beast of Daniel 7:23-25 is Pope Paul of the Roman Catholic Church who was to change the day of worship from Saturday to Sunday, the seventh day to the first day! The only thing wrong with this theory is that there is no truth to it at all! It is an attempt by a false organization to support a false doctrine proposed by Ellen White in 1863 by taking a passage out of context that had reference to events that were to occur during the Roman Empire which existed from 166 BC to 476 AD! Those spoken of in our passage of study who were to “think to change time and laws” has reference to the Roman Empire during its period of rule. They were to enforce their times and laws upon the Jewish nation that they had conquered. This they did, bringing to an end the Jewish nation and its economy in 70AD! Daniel 7:25 had its fulfillment in the Roman Empire at that time, not at some time after that. It is worthy of note that the first Pope began his reign in 606AD!

In Verse twenty-three of Daniel 7, it says that the "fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon the earth". In Daniel 2:36-45, Daniel is interpreting King

Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Daniel 2:31-35). Daniel speaks of four kingdoms, the first of which King Nebuchadnezzar is the head (vs.37). This was the Babylonian kingdom! Three other world kingdoms were to come into existence afterwards (Vs.39-40). Daniel 5:28 tells us that the second kingdom that came into existence was the Medo-Persian. We learn from history that the third kingdom was the Macedonian kingdom; the fourth kingdom was the Roman Empire under the Caesar's. Daniel tells us in Verse 44, that during the days of this fourth kingdom, "the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed." This prophecy was of the church of Christ and had its fulfillment during the days of the Roman Empire in Acts, the second chapter.

The fourth kingdom designated by the fourth beast in Daniel 7:23-25 is the same kingdom to which reference is made in Daniel 2:36-45. In both places the fourth kingdom (which is the fourth beast) means the Roman Empire, not the pope!

QUESTION No. 805: Does Revelation 11:19 indicate that the Ten Commandments are preserved in heaven for all eternity? Do you suppose that the Sabbath Commandment has been deleted from the Ten Commandments in the Ark of the Covenant in heaven?

ANSWER: Revelation 11:19 does not indicate or imply that the Ten Commandments are for all people for all time! Heaven does not contain things that are physical, not the actual ark, nor the actual tables of stone. The book of Revelation was written in symbolic language (Revelation 1:1), i.e., where one thing stood for another. To fully understand the symbols in this passage one must first be familiar with, at least, Chapter nine of the book of Hebrews. Here a comparison is made of the blood sacrifices made under the Old Law with the blood sacrifice of Christ made under the New Law! The temple of God in the subject passage does not refer to the actual temple, but rather refers to the church, which is the temple of God (I Corinthians 3:16) that was opened in Heaven. The blood sacrifice offered by Christ was for the purchase of that church (Acts 20:28), the only institution wherein the blood of Christ is accessed and applied! The old actual Mosaical Ark of the Covenant was kept in the Most Holy Place. Atop this Ark was the mercy seat upon which the blood of animals was sprinkled by the high priest once a year for the sins of the people! Christ symbolically entered the symbolic Most Holy Place as our high priest and sprinkled His blood symbolically upon the mercy seat of the symbolic Ark of the Covenant, once for all (Hebrews 9:11- 10:12).

You are wresting the scripture by carrying the symbolism of this passage too far in order to support a false doctrine. It is totally improper to take a highly symbolic passage and base a doctrine on it when such doctrine is clearly refuted in non-symbolic passages. For example, none of the SDA's has ever tried to convince me that Romans 7:4-7 does not teach that we are no longer under the Ten Commandments. Rather than taking this ethical and proper approach, they often resort to obscure symbolic passages to try to support their irrational teachings! It is the case that if Revelation 11:19 teaches that we are still under the Ten Commandments, then it must be the case that Romans 7:4-7 is in error. Which position will you take?

QUESTION No. 806: Please distinguish between the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ (Revelation 12:17).

ANSWER: Those to whom John was primarily writing were the Christians of the seven churches of Asia (Revelation 1:4). They were Christians because they kept the "commandments of God" that were applicable to Christians! They (these same Christians) had "the testimony of Jesus Christ" in that they would bear witness of Him (not Moses) by sacrificing their lives in His cause (Revelation 12:11)! My friend, you cannot wrest this passage to read that the "commandments of God" mean that we are to keep the Sabbath. It just isn't there! And neither is this phrase to be contrasted with the "testimony of Jesus Christ," with the implication that we, in "keeping" the testimony of Christ, must also "keep" the Sabbath! This is the wresting of scriptures that lead to destruction II Peter 3:16)!

QUESTION No. 807: Seventh Day Adventists assert that Jesus did summarize the Ten Commandments under the two greatest commandments (Matthew 22:35-40); that we Christians are still within the thousand generations spoken of in Deuteronomy 7:9 and are, therefore, to keep the Ten Commandments, including the Saturday Sabbath commandment.

ANSWER: It is improper to say that Jesus "summarized" the Ten Commandments under the two greatest commandments! He is simply saying that the substance of all of the law was encompassed in these two commandments, that the keeping of any commandment, by those under that law, without these two would have been of no avail. In either circumstance there can be found here no authority for Sabbath Day worship by

Christians today. The passage does not remotely suggest any such thing and is again a grasping at the wind in an attempt to void that which Christ as legislated for Christians today, i.e., to worship Him on the first day (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2)!

The thousand generations of Deuteronomy 7:9 do "not" mark off the period of time during which the Sabbath Day was to be kept. The passage is talking about how faithful God is in keeping His covenant and showing His mercy to those who lovingly obey Him! He will be faithful to these throughout a thousand generations! He is not saying that after a thousand generations He will stop being faithful! The term "thousand generations" means He will never stop showing love and mercy to His obedient children! He never stopped showing mercy and love to those under the Old Testament who kept His commandments and He will never stop showing His mercy and love to we who are faithful under the New Testament! This passage does not teach that the Sabbath Day was to be applicable after the Cross of Christ, neither does it teach that it was ever intended that the Sabbath should be bound upon Christians! That the SDA tries to wring their doctrine from this passage clearly shows the weakness and falsity of their position!

QUESTION No. 808: Explain fully Matthew 22:35-40! If loving the Lord with all your heart and loving your neighbor as yourself relieves one from the responsibility of keeping the Sabbath Day holy, why did the two greatest commandments in the Old Testament not relieve the Israelites of this responsibility (Deuteronomy 6:5; Leviticus 19:18)?

ANSWER: Nobody contends that loving God and your neighbor relieves one from responsibility. However, the fact of the matter is, as shown above, the responsibility of keeping the Sabbath Day holy was never assigned to Christians! That responsibility was assigned to those under the Old Testament! In this particular passage Jesus is talking to a lawyer who lived under the Old Testament. He and all others that lived at that time, including Christ, were bound by the fourth commandment. Nothing could have relieved them from that responsibility! Because they were assigned that responsibility does not mean that Christians are bound by that same responsibility. If this were the basis for what is bound on us today, we would also have to conclude that we are also bound to offer animal sacrifices, burning incense, etc. Do you do these things? If not, why not? Based on your argument in this question you have no other alternative, if you would be true to what you believe!

Jesus does not tell Christians today that they are to be limited to the same kind of love He was talking about to those under the Old Testament in Matthew 22:37-39. In John 13:34, He tells us He has given us a "new" commandment. It was "new" in the sense that our love was to exceed the love of the Old Testament. Christians are to love, "*as I have loved you."* Christians are to be willing to die for one another, even as Christ was willing to die for us. This love that Christians are to have far surpasses any love that existed before the cross! See also I John 2:7-11. The commandment was old in that, as those under the Old Testament, we, too, are commanded to love, but it is new in the sense that it is to be a deeper love. Having the love for Christ that is demanded in the New Testament, indeed, relieves us from Sabbath-keeping or any other Old Testament commandment! In Matthew 17:1-8, we are instructed by the Father that we are not to hear Moses and Elijah (the Law and the Prophets), but rather that we are to hear Christ! Jesus said, "If you love me, keep *my* (not Moses') commandments!

QUESTION No. 809: Did Jesus command us to keep the Ten Commandments (Matthew 19:16-21; Luke 18:18-21; Mark 10:19-21)?

ANSWER: No! He did not! He commanded the rich young ruler who lived under the Old Testament to do so. You and I no longer live under the Old Law. It was taken out of the way at the cross of Christ (Romans 7:4-7; II Corinthians 3:1-18; Galatians 3:19-29; Ephesians 2:12-22; Colossians 2:14-16; Hebrews 7:12; Hebrews 8:7-13!

QUESTION No. 810: Can you explain Ezekiel 46:1-3? Do these verses teach that at the time of worship on the earth similar worship is going on in heaven?

ANSWER: The book of Ezekiel consists of three main divisions. (1) Chapters 1-23: The destruction of Jerusalem, resulting from their rejection of God; (2) Chapters 25-31: God's judgment upon Israel through other nations; (3) Chapters 33-48: The restoration of God's cause in Israel.

Ezekiel 46:1-3 is simply discussing the restoration of proper worship practices in a restored temple before God, but only for the people of Israel who lived during and under the Old Testament. In doing so it also instructs as to whom would participate in the restored worship, i.e., the people of that day, the prince/ruler of Israel, and the priests. It

has nothing to do with those of us who live under the New Testament of Jesus Christ. Certainly it does not teach that similar worship practices are being practiced in Heaven at the same time or any other time for that matter. Heaven is a place of spiritual things. It is not a place with a physical temple in which physical animals are being sacrificed on literal fire. Note that Verse three discusses an opening of gates during the day and a shutting of gates during the night. This has reference to that which is physical. Of the gates of Heaven, John says in Revelation 21:25, "And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there."

The Sabbath-keepers have wrested this and many other passages in an effort to support the unsupportable!

QUESTION No. 811: Does John 5:17-18 support Sabbath keeping? "My Father worketh even today" on Sabbath.

ANSWER: The Jews were persecuting Jesus and sought to kill Him because He was healing people on the Sabbath. They felt that He was not keeping the Sabbath Day holy according to their traditions. Obviously, Jesus was without sin (II Corinthians 5:21) and did not violate it by doing this necessary work of healing the sick. He is saying in Verse seventeen, that both He and the Father work continually to do those things that are necessary on the Sabbath as well as every other day. For example: God causes the sun to rise on the Sabbath as all other days. He causes the rain to fall on the Sabbath as all other days. He provides these and other necessary things for the sustenance of His creation (Acts 14:17; Colossians 1:17)! Jesus was not wrong about the matter. The Jews were in error!

QUESTION No. 812: The Ten Commandments were given to the children of Israel only. What was our law from then till now?

ANSWER: The laws that God gave to man before the Ten Commandments were given directly to the patriarchs (the heads) of each family. This is referred to as "patriarchal law." This law continued until the cross at which time both Jew and Gentile were brought into one body under the law of Jesus Christ. It is most likely that Cornelius (Acts 10 & 11) worshipped God under this law. He was an uncircumcised Gentile (Acts

11:2) and, therefore, was not a proselyte of the Jews under the Old Testament. Certainly, he was not a Christian under the New Testament before the accounts of his conversion. Since God has only accepted worship under three laws, i.e., Patriarchy, Old Testament, and the New Testament, and it being shown that he could not have worshipped God under either the Old or New Testament, we must gather that he did so under Patriarchy. The answer to your question, following this line of reasoning, would be, had we lived as Gentiles before the cross, that we could have worshipped God under the law of Patriarchy, or we could have been proselyted to Judaism.

QUESTION No. 813: God rested on the seventh day (Saturday). Christians are to come together on the first day of the week (Sunday). Which day of the week is man's resting day?

ANSWER: Christians have not been given a specific day of the week on which to rest. Our rest will come at the end of our laboring in His service. The Hebrew writer tells us that there "remaineth a rest to the people of God" (Hebrews 4:9). Then he writes, "he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works" (Hebrews 4:10). In the next verse (Hebrews 4:11), he says, "Let us (Christians) labor therefore to enter into that rest." A Christian is not to cease working in this life, but is to continue laboring until spent in death. The rest that awaits the faithful Christian, then, is Heaven. John writes in Revelation 14:13, "And I heard a voice saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them." Christians may rest then, but not now! We are to work, as imitators of Jesus Christ, while it is yet day (while we live), for the night (death) cometh when no man can work (John 9:4).

QUESTION No. 814: Ex-Adventists assert falsely that the righteousness which came by faith is witnessed by the law tablets (Ten Commandments). Would you please explain more on Romans 3:21 and Romans 3:31?

ANSWER: Romans 3:21: Looking first at Romans 3:20, we find Paul saying that 'by the works of the (Old) law no man can be justified.' The (Old) law spoken of here includes the Ten Commandments. They, therefore, being a part of that (Old) law, cannot, and do not, play a part in man's justification! Nonetheless, according to the last part of Verse 20, because those under the (Old) law could not keep it perfectly and, thereby, be

justified, the knowledge of that (Old) law became their means of conviction, i.e., they were convicted of sin through the laws that had been given by men inspired of God. In Verse 21, Paul discusses the "righteousness of God" and tells us that it is attained without, or apart from, the (Old) law, including the Ten Commandments! Then in Verse 22, he tells us how one attains the "righteousness of God," i.e., through faith in Christ Jesus! In the latter part of Verse 22, he tells us that the same is true of all men, both Jew and Gentile. Now to the part of Verse 21 that says, "being witnessed by the law and the prophets." First we must understand that the word "law" refers to the books of law in the Old Testament and not only the Ten Commandments. The word "prophets" refers to the writings of the prophets. When the two words are put together they refer to the totality of the Old Testament. So what Paul is saying here is that the Old Testament, both the law and the prophets, witnessed to the fact that the righteousness of God was to come through faith in Christ Jesus. There indeed are hundreds of prophecies that witness to the coming of the Messiah in His kingdom. For example we will list two; one from the "law" and one from the "prophets." From the book of "law" known as Deuteronomy we find in Chapter 18, Verse 18 a prophecy of the coming Messiah. The fulfillment of this prophecy is seen in Acts 3:22-23! Then from the "Prophet" Jeremiah we find in Chapter 31, Verses 31-34 a prophecy about the New Covenant (the Gospel) which produces the faith through which we are able to attain the "righteousness of God." We see the fulfillment of this prophecy in Hebrews 8:6-13. So then we see how the "law" and the "prophets" witnessed through prophecy to the "righteousness of God," which is by faith in Christ Jesus.

To say that this passage teaches that the Ten Commandments witnessed to the 'righteousness of God" and are therefore applicable today is to wrest the Scripture to one's own destruction (II Peter 3:16). The idea is neither logical, nor scriptural. It is one of many false doctrines proposed by the SDA, an organization developed and established by sinful man.

Romans 3:31: The American Standard Version translates the first part of the verse in this way: "Do we then (because of what was said previously) make the law of none effect through faith?" This translation better captures the intent of what Paul is saying. In the second part of the verse, we note the word "establish," which is generally understood to mean, "to found; to set-up; or to institute." This is obviously not the meaning of the word here, because, as all are aware, the law was established in this sense many hundreds of years before at Mount Sinai. The word "establish" may also mean to "confirm" and in this passage should be so understood. With these clarifications then, Paul is simply saying that the intended effect of the law was not thwarted, or made void, by the coming in of the faith of Jesus Christ. In other words, the law had effectively served its purpose and

the coming of the faith of Jesus Christ "confirmed" that effectiveness. Or we may say it in this way: The main purpose of the Old Testament was to point to Jesus Christ, the coming Messiah. It did that effectively! With the coming of the Messiah, the purpose of the Old Testament was confirmed. Further, in proclaiming that the Messiah has come, the apostles and all today that faithfully preach this message are "confirming" the truths and effectiveness of the Old Testament. This, of course, does not mean, as the SDA would claim, that we are still bound by the Old Testament. Having served, effectively, its purpose, it was taken out of the way at the cross of Jesus Christ. Thus, Christians are said by Paul later (in this same letter to the Romans) to be, "dead to the law by the body of Christ;" and, therefore, "delivered (discharged) from the law." The law that he says that Christians are "dead to" and "delivered from" is the law that also states "Thou shalt not covet." The law that says, "Thou shalt not covet" is, specifically, the Ten Commandment Law (Exodus 20:17) and, generally, the entire Old Testament! This Law that we are "dead to" and "delivered from" also says, "Keep the Sabbath Day holy." Clearly, then, just as we are 'dead to" and "delivered from" the commandment that says, "Thou shalt not covet," we are also "dead to" and "delivered from" the commandment that says, "Keep the Sabbath Day holy," because both are commandments contained in the law that we are "dead to" and delivered from!" (Romans 7:4-7).

Clearly, the notion that we are not "dead to" and not "delivered from" these commandments of the Old Law, as proposed by the SDA, stands in direct opposition to what the Holy Spirit has written through the apostle Paul. The SDA, therefore, is not of God, but is, indeed, anti-Christ! Christians do not keep the seventh day of the week, but rather will assemble to worship God on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:1-2)!

QUESTION No. 815: Would you explain Matthew 5:19 and Luke 16:17 more fully?

ANSWER: These passages are saying the same thing, but neither can be taken out of context. In other words, Matthew 5:19 cannot be properly understood without consideration of Matthew 5:17-18: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am come not to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." Adventist's hold that "all" will not be fulfilled until the end of time! They hold that the ceremonial law (which they call the Law of Moses) was fulfilled at the Cross, but the Ten Commandments (which they call the Law of God) will not be fulfilled until the end of

time! The Bible, however, does not make such a distinction. The notion, therefore, is in error! This certainly then cannot be the discussion of Matthew 5:17-19. What *is* being discussed is the fulfillment of the law and the prophets, which means "all" of the Old Testament! Jesus is simply saying that He did not come for the purpose of destroying the law and the prophets (Old Testament). His purpose was to fulfill it! He further stated that nothing would pass from the law (Old Testament) until that time when "all" of it would be fulfilled. That time came when He died on the cross. At that time all of the Old Testament was fulfilled or filled full. Upon its fulfillment, it had served its purpose of bringing man unto Christ (Galatians 3:24-25). Because it had served its purpose, it was, at that time, taken out of the way (Colossians 2:14).

Now to Verse nineteen: "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." Every jot and tittle of the law was considered inspired of God. The "jot" had reference to the smallest letter of the Hebrew language and a "tittle" was a little mark used to distinguish between letters that would otherwise appear the same. Jesus said that even these would not pass until all be fulfilled, as explained above! Now the verse is not teaching, nor does it in any way imply, as the SDA might say, that these least, or any other, of the commandments of the Old Law were to be kept and obeyed in the Kingdom of God, the church. Note that at this time, the kingdom of God had not come, yet it was near (at hand) as we learn in Matthew 4:17. Jesus and His disciples, along with John and his disciples, were preparing a people for the kingdom that was to come on the Day of Pentecost as described in Acts, Chapter two. So, we know for sure that Jesus was not talking to people in Matthew 5:17-20 that were in the kingdom! With this knowledge then, let's consider what is being said in Matthew 5:19. Christ is simply saying this: 'Whosoever (of you to whom I am speaking that are under the Old Law) shall break one of these least commandments (before all is fulfilled), and shall so teach men (who are under that Old Law) shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven (when it comes): but whosoever (of you to whom I am speaking that are under the Old Law) shall do and teach them (before all is fulfilled), the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven (when it comes)." So the idea is that if one of these to whom Jesus was speaking, that was under the Old Law, would break the least of the commandments under that Old Law before the kingdom came, he would be of such character that, if he were in the kingdom yet to come, he would also break the laws of that kingdom and would, therefore, be the least in that kingdom and, of course, eventually be lost. Conversely, if one would keep the commandments under the Old Law before the kingdom came, if he were to be a citizen of that kingdom to come, he would be called "great," because he would be of such character that he would also keep the commandments of the New Law of the kingdom, as

he did the Old Law when it was in effect! Clearly, Christ is not saying that the commandments that were then binding under the Old Law would be carried over into the kingdom that was yet to come and be taught there along with the New Law, since He has said in Verses seventeen and eighteen, that with the fulfillment of the Law and the prophets (the Old Testament), it would, at that time, pass away! In Verse twenty, Christ refers to the Scribes and Pharisees, implying that they were those guilty of breaking the commandments and teaching others to do so. He further says that in order to enter the kingdom, those to whom He was speaking must not be of their character, but they must have greater character and be more righteous under the Old Law than were the Scribes and Pharisees, so that they could enter the kingdom that was to come. If one were no more righteous than the Scribes and Pharisees, they would not be permitted entry into the kingdom upon its arrival, because if they, as the Scribes and Pharisees, broke the old commandments of the Law, they would also, unrighteously, break the new commandments of the law of the kingdom!

Luke 16:17 when taken in concert with Verse sixteen expresses the same principle. The law and the prophets were "until" John, i.e., "until" the time that the kingdom that John and Christ preached (Matthew 3:2; Matthew 4:17) came into existence. If the law and the prophets (the Old Testament) was to be bound "until" the kingdom came, then it follows that those laws were not binding "after" that time and, therefore, were not a part of the promised kingdom, the church of Christ! Verse seventeen is simply teaching that it would have been easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one "tittle" of the law to pass away before the kingdom came!

QUESTION No. 816: Could you list the works of the Mosaic Law (Galatians 2:16)?

ANSWER: There were, literally, hundreds of "works" or "requirements" within the Mosaic Law! Generally, they include all of the activities that were required of those answerable to the Mosaic Law as set forth in all governing laws, ordinances, and commandments that are contained in the books of Law, i.e., the Pentateuch, or the first five books of the Old Testament. To list these would require copying much of the material contained therein, especially the book of Leviticus. To do this would require more time than is available! However, a quick scanning of the subject matter of each chapter in this book, as indicated by the publishers of most King James Bibles, will attest to the reality of the hundreds of "works" under the Law of Moses!

QUESTION No. 817: Does not Isaiah 42:4 teach that the Old Law was to be magnified and thus continued?

ANSWER: No! It does not! Isaiah 42:4 surely does not disagree with Jeremiah 31:31-34 and its fulfillment, as expressed in Hebrews 8:5-13! The idea of "magnifying" the law does not suggest that the Old Law is to continue forever. It simply denotes the law's magnification through the one that kept its precepts perfectly. Today, we magnify the law of Christ by keeping its precepts! For you to suggest that we reject that which the Lord magnifies is simply not true and a woeful misunderstanding of God's Word! We magnify our Lord by keeping His commandments (John 14:15) and living a faithful Christian life according to the New Testament (Philippians 1:20). To suggest that these or any other passages teach the keeping of the Sabbath in perpetuity is wresting scripture by taking it out of context to prove one's own wish. At this the SDA excels!

QUESTION No. 818: Why do you believe that the Lord transferred the holiness of the Sabbath to the first day of the week?

ANSWER: I do not believe that the Lord transferred the holiness of the Sabbath Day to the first day. You're talking about Protestantism, which I totally reject, as I do Catholicism! The Sabbath Day, and every command associated with it, was removed at the cross of my Lord! The above (and many other passages) proves such to be the case! The notion of the transference of the day of rest from Saturday to Sunday, thereby, referring to it as the "Christian's Sabbath" is ridiculously inconsistent with truth!

QUESTION No. 819: Does not Acts 2:46 teach that the Christians of that day communed on every day, not just the first day of the week?

ANSWER: No! It does not! The notion that Acts 2:46 refers to the Lord's Supper is without scholarship. None but the SDA could begin to make such a claim. Acts 2:42, not 2:46, discusses those things of religious significance. According to what you suggest the people were in the temple and then left the temple to go home and partake of the Lord's Supper. The notion doesn't hold water and somehow, having often communicated with members of the SDA previously, I think you know better; that you're not being

totally up front with me in order to prove your contention! Paul and the other in Acts 20:7 were continuing steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine (Acts 2:42) by partaking of the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week. Paul abode there for seven days in order to do so! According to your teaching, he didn't need to be there for seven days, since he should have partaken of the Lord's Supper on the preceding day! Consider the first sentence of Acts 20:7 without the phrase: "And upon the first day of the week, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow." Question: Why did he preach unto them on the first day of the week? Answer: According to the phrase, because that's the day they came together to break bread! It cannot be successfully denied! In fact "break bread" is a figure of speech called a "synecdoche," which is defined as that for which a part is put for the whole. In other words, "break bread" includes the Lord's Supper, but also indicates the total worship service!

QUESTION No. 820: Does not I Corinthians 16:1 teach that Christians are to lay by in store on the first day of the week in their homes?

ANSWER: No! The idea that Paul is telling the Corinthians to collect (lay by in store) on the first day of the week in their homes so they can contribute it in on the seventh day of the week is irrational! Why would such a command be necessary? Would one be sinning if he were to "lay by in store" at home upon the second day of the week?I am convert of about 7 yrs now and I have been confused on somethings but one that really got me. We all have the same Bible but there is so much that people disagree on We all have the same Bible but there is so much people disagree on...the one that confused me was.. a new member (obeyed the Gospel some time ago) came and worship with us for a good white, she had a baby and the ladies gave her a baby shower etc. Would this not be a violation of the command? Surely! Are not all provisions for the offering to be made prior to the offering? The very command to "give" as one "purposeth in his heart" (II Corinthians 9:7) of itself demands prior preparation. To suggest that Paul is saying in I Corinthians 16:1-2 that individuals were told that they were to "give" into a common treasury on the seventh day of the week, but were so stupid they didn't know they had to make the necessary preparation to do so, and, therefore, had to be told to make that preparation on the first day of every week to the exclusion of all other days approaches the absurd! The idea of the passage is that each Christian within the congregation at Corinth was told to "lay by in store" upon the first day of every week, so that there would be no collection necessary "when I come." In order that there be no collection necessary 'when he came,' it follows that all that was collected was to be in "one place." How could this be assured? Only if that which had been previously purposed by each individual was put into "one place." When was it put into that "one place?" On

the first day of every week! Why would they do it on that day? Because that's the day they came together to worship (Acts 20:7)! According to SDA doctrine, one must assume that the passage teaches that a collection was to be made by each individual on the first day of every week and that it was to be kept in each individual's house until Paul came. Whatever specific collection was to be taken up was specifically so that there would be no gatherings when Paul came! There is no allowance in this passage for a general collection of the individual collections on the seventh day of the week as alleged by the SDA! The passage is teaching one collection or the other, but not both! If it teaches that the collection is to be made by each individual in the home on the first day of every week, then where does this passage teach that these are to bring it to the general assembly, and on what day, in order to prevent the necessity of collection when Paul came? The SDA error and their illogical approach to this passage is typical of their approach to all other passages. The effort is not to seek he truth, but rather to prove the teachings of Ellen White whom many of them accept as inspired! The reason the SDA teaches what they do on this passage is that they must do so, because they know it would be ridiculous to assemble on the seventh day for worship, go home, then return on the first day to give as they had been prospered! Nonetheless, that which they have wrested this passage to mean is just as ridiculous! If they accepted the truth of I Corinthians 16:1-2, then it would be an admission that they are in error as to the day of worship. Thus, they construct a second error that is even more ridiculous to cover their first error!

QUESTION No. 821: An SDA letter.

ANSWER: A response to an SDA letter:

August 15, 2000

Truth Triumphant

P.O. Box 1417

Eustis, FL 32727-1417

Dear Bill,

Having received a copy of the letter that you sent to Chitula, I would like to respond to what you have written to us. I trust you have retained a copy of your letter, because with it before you it will hasten and shorten my response.

In the first and second paragraphs on Page 1, you are in denial that II Corinthians 3 teaches that the Old Testament was taken out of the way. To support your belief, you ask, state and/or imply the following:

1. The glory that was to be done away with was the glory of Moses' shining face.
2. What was making his face shine so brightly?
3. Was it the law of the 10 commandments that condemned people to death?
4. As in other parts of your letter, you indicate that that which was taken out of the way was simply the ceremonial law, i.e., often referred to by those of your persuasion as the Law of Moses as contrasted with the Law of God which is other than the ceremonial.

In response to the above items could we first consider the comparisons and contrasts that the Holy Spirit is making between the Old and the New?

A) Tables of stone versus fleshy tables of the heart.

B) The Old Testament versus the New Testament.

C) The letter versus the Spirit.

D) The ministration of death versus the ministration of the spirit.

E) The ministration of condemnation versus the ministration of righteousness.

F) That which is done away versus that which remaineth.

G) That which is glorious versus that which is more glorious.

Item 1: There is no doubt that Moses' shining face would not shine much longer after coming down from Mt. Sinai. That is not the thrust of Paul's argument at all. The glory that was to done away with was the glory of the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones (Verse 7). Consider what is being said in the following verses. After speaking of the glory that was to be done away (Verse 7), he then continues that discussion in the next verses by saying, "How shall not the ministration of the spirit (New) be more glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation (Old) be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness (new) exceed in glory. The discussion doesn't reference the differences between Moses' shining face and Jesus' shining face. He is discussing clearly the differences in "ministrations," i.e., Moses' ministration of condemnation versus Christ's ministration of righteousness! To Verse 11, "For if that which *is done away* was glorious, much more *that which remaineth* is glorious. To Verse 13: Paul is simply saying that the children of Israel (even those Judaizing teachers who were trying to bring the Gentiles back in subjection to Moses – Galatians 5:1-4) could not, because of the glory of the ministration of death, see and understand that it was the end or finish of that which is abolished and is done away! To Verse 14: Here he says, that those of his (Paul's) day, as was always the case with the Jews, could not see the finality of that written and engraven in stones, because they were blinded in the reading of the Old Testament, refusing to, as it were, read and/or accept the New Testament. The vail that blinded them in the reading of the Old Testament was, and is, removed and done away in Christ by reading and accepting the New Testament! See this explanation clearly in the light of what he says in Verse 15: "But even unto this day, when Moses is read (not just a ceremonial law, but all of Moses!) the vail is upon their hearts. What vail? The vail that keeps the Jews then and today from looking, as is the case with the SDA, "to the end of that which is abolished and done away," i.e., The Tables of Stone, The Old Testament, The Letter, The Ministration of Death, The Ministration of Condemnation, That Which is Done away, and that which is Glorious!

It is my belief that a person alone cannot misunderstand the clear teaching of this Chapter, without first being misled!

Item 2: Answer: Undoubtedly because he had been before the Lord!

Item 3: Answer: It was the breaking of the law of the Ten Commandments, (as well as other laws set forth by Moses, e.g., Leviticus 20:2) by which they were condemned to death. For example: (1) 'Thou shalt not bow down and worship idols' (Exodus 20:3-5. Result? If they did, they were to be utterly destroyed (Deuteronomy

4:25-26); (2) “Remember the sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work” (Exodus 20:8-9). Result? If they disobeyed they were “put to death’ (Exodus 35:2); (3) “Thou shalt not commit adultery” (Exodus 20:14). Result? If they did, they were to be “put to death” (Leviticus 20:10), etc. Yes indeed! The Old Testament, including the Ten Commandments, did constitute a “ministration of death” and a “ministration of condemnation!”

Item 4: Answer: The Bible does not recognize the distinction between "Laws" as concocted by man. For example: In Nehemiah 8:1, Ezra the scribe read from the "Book of the Law of Moses." In Nehemiah 8:18, we see that from which he read was also called the "Book of the Law of God." See also Ezra 7:6 & 12. Luke as well refers to the "Law of Moses" as the "Law of the Lord" (Luke 2:22-23). Clearly, the Adventists are in conflict with God's Word on the matter!

On the last paragraph of page 1, carrying over on Page 2, you deny that I Timothy 4:1-5 teaches that Christians may partake of any food for which they have given thanks. You further state that you believe that we should be vegetarians as the safe and healthy course. To support your position you make the following statements and or assertions:

1. David Amos believes that this passage teaches that anyone who believes unclean meats to still be unclean is an apostate.
2. The Greek word in I Timothy 4:3 that is translated “meats” is *bromata,* which more appropriately means “foods.”

3

3. I Timothy 4:4 declares that “every creature of God is good” and that the Greek for “creature” is *ktisma, which* literally means “everything founded or created.”
4. Paul is stating that the gifts God gave in Eden related to diet are good and we should not let man tell us otherwise.
5. As to Acts 10:15, the discussion isn’t diet, but prejudice.
6. The Bible gives no sanction for eating unclean meats.

7. William Miller was wrong when he prophesied, but he was not a false prophet. I believe that God led Mr. Miller.
8. Because some believed that they should crown Christ king when he rode into Jerusalem, do we cast them away as false prophets?
9. So far, I haven't used Ellen White's writings to defend any teaching found in the Scriptures, nor will I.

Item 1: Answer: You misquote and misjudge me! I believe, respectfully, that this passage teaches that those who believe they can bind on others what they should eat and not eat, as does the SDA, are apostates. However, an apostate is usually referred to as one who was in the faith and subsequently left the faith. It is my studied conclusion that the SDA, having its beginning in the nineteenth century, mostly begun by Ellen White, in Battle Creek, Michigan, (rather than in the first century, by Jesus Christ, in the city of Jerusalem, according to Old Testament prophecy) and having little or no resemblance to the church of the Bible never was in the faith and remains so today!

Item 2: Answer: The Greek word for "meats" in this passage is *broma* from the root *bibrosko*; which means, "to eat." The word *broma* means food of any kind, including meat or other victuals, per Strong's Greek Dictionary of the Bible; references 1033 and 977.

Item: 3: Answer: The Greek word used here is indeed *ktisma* which means an original formation of a product, or created thing; or a creature. This word, however, does not limit the meaning to reflect everything other than meat or flesh, as you imply throughout your letter. It is a word that includes both vegetables *and* meat or flesh. Note the use of the word "every" as used in the phrase, "For *every* creature of God is good." "Every" is from the Greek word *pas*, which means "all, any, every, the whole, throughly, whatsoever, whole, and whosoever." So the discussion is not limited to simply what may be considered a vegetarian diet. In fact, the next phrase, "and *nothing* to be refused," forbids the binding of special diets as a religious practice. The Greek word for "nothing" here is *ouden*, which means "not even one, none, nobody, nothing, any, aught, never, no, not, and nought." In other words, there is nothing (not a thing), whether it is vegetables or meat that is to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving! Those who so refuse are in violation of this passage and, therefore, not of, or in, the faith!

Item 4: Answer: Your imagination has run away with you. Paul is not here discussing Eden or the situation in Eden! He is discussing a future departure from "The Faith" (Verse one) as indicated by those who refuse others the biblical right of marriage (as is the case with the Roman Catholic Priest) and as indicative of those who bind dietary laws on others (as does the SDA) in the face of the biblical injunction that "nothing" (*ouden)* is to be refused!

Item 5: Answer: I agree that the discussion has to do primarily with prejudice and the conversion of the Gentiles. However, this does not relegate the truth of God's example in Peter's vision where God instructed him to "Rise, kill, and eat," from <u>all</u> (*pas)* manner of four-footed beasts of the earth, wild beasts, creeping, things, and fowls of the air. God never, anywhere, at any time, used an untruth, a lie, or an unscriptural practice as an example of a taught truth. The consistency of the truth taught under the New Testament in the godly example used by Him in Acts 10 is clearly taught and supported by Paul's statement, "and nothing (neither meat, nor vegetable) to be refused." Neither can one under the New Testament of Jesus Christ be said to be bound by the dietary laws of the Old Testament.

Item 6: Answer: See the above answers.

Item 7: Answer: "When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him." This is exactly what William Miller did. He spoke presumptuously and, therefore, sinned (Psalms 19:13). He was a false prophet and if you truly believe that God was leading him, your blindness in the matter is, therefore, equal to his (Matthew 15:14).

Item 8: Answer: It appears that you have mixed John 12:12-13 with John 6:15. Nonetheless, those who would make Jesus an earthly king were not acting as religious leaders by prophesying a future religious significant event that was binding upon a group of followers, many of whom were seeking truth, but were religiously devastated by the falsity of Miller's claims. These folks made no claim to prophetic ability, as did William Miller! The suggestion is absurd on the face of it! There is no comparison between the two events!

Item 9: Answer: It is good that you are not using Ellen White to defend the Scriptures, because she was no more a prophet than was William Miller, neither was she inspired as she claimed ("It is God, and not an erring mortal, that has spoken."). The pages of inspiration were closed a long time ago and Paul said (Galatians 1:6-9) that those who preached other than that which was preached are to be accursed. Nothing could be added or taken away from that which was written (Revelation 22:18-19). Solomon said, "Add not to His words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar (Proverbs 30:6). As D.M. Cantright, an ex-SDA of high office, has written, "her 'visions' were merely the result of nervous disease, a complication of hysteria, catalepsy, and ecstasy." Obviously then, anything she might have said or written would not bear any more on any matter than any other man or woman might say or write.

Beginning in the fifth paragraph of Page 2 and continuing to the middle of Page 3 you take issue with passages noted as teaching that the Old Law, including the Ten Commandments, was taken out of the way and nailed to the cross of Christ. To support you opposition you declare or imply the following:

1. Relative to Galatians 3:23 you remark that, "Until we come to Christ we are under condemnation because we have all sinned (Romans 3:23) and have broken the 10 Commandments (I John 3:4).

2. Galatians 3:25 says that when we accept Christ, we are no longer under the law's condemnation. Does this verse say the law has been done away with? If we say that Paul has thrown out the 10 Commandments, then who wrote Romans 3:31? If there are contradictions, we have misunderstood or misinterpreted.

3. The statement of Paul in Ephesians 2:15-16 ("having abolished the law of commandments") shows only that Paul was dealing with certain things like Circumcision, Sacrifices, Jewish feasts and Jewish decrees; that he abolished only the "ceremonial law."

4. Colossians 2:14 and Hebrews 7:12 refer to the ceremonial law.

5. Hebrews 8:5-13 does not teach that the Ten Commandments were abolished.

Item 1: Answer: I John 3:4 does not, nor does it in the slightest imply, that the law being discussed is the Ten Commandment Law of Moses. The Law which binds Christians, including those to whom John was writing, was (and is) the Law of Christ (Galatians 6:2), the perfect Law of liberty (James 1:25), that Law which made us free from the yoke of bondage under the old Mosaic Law (Galatians 5:1). It never ceases to amaze me how the SDA's will claim just about every time they see the word "law," as in I John 3:4, or the word "commandment," as in Revelation 14:12, that reference is to the Ten Commandment Law, but only when it suits their purpose. When those same two words appear in such passages as Ephesians 2:15 and Hebrews 7:12 their meaning changes to mean only the "ceremonial law." This inconsistency is of necessity to the SDA, because ethical consistency destroys their doctrines!

Item 2: Answer: Galatians 3:17 is discussing the Law that was given 430 years after the promise was made to Abraham. Only the brazen and prejudiced will read this and the related Old Testament passage Exodus 12:40-41, and deny that it is a discussion of the Law that was given when the hosts of Israel went out from the land of Egypt, i.e., the Ten Commandment Law. In Galatians 3:19. Paul says that "the" Law that was given at that time was added "till," an adverb of time, the seed (Christ – Verse 16) should come. It was added only "till" that time. The Law was a schoolmaster, necessary to bring us unto Christ (Verse 24), "But after that faith (the system of faith introduced by Christ) is come, "We are no longer under a schoolmaster!" It does not say, as you suggest, that we are still under the schoolmaster, the Mosaic Law, but that we just are not condemned by it when we break it! The notion is inconceivable and irrational. If the breaking of the Ten Commandment Law, or any Law, brings no penalty, it is no law at all! The passage is precise and clear, 'We are no longer under the Law that was added at the time the children of Israel went up out of the land of Egypt, 430 years after the promise was made to Abraham.' This can be no other Law than that which was given at Sinai! This is precisely why the very God of Heaven would effectively say by necessary implication on the Mount of Transfiguration, 'don't hear Moses any longer;' don't hear Elijah (the prophets) any longer, hear my Son' (Matthew 17:1-5)!

As to Romans 3:31, I agree that if any interpretation causes a contradiction, the interpretation is improper. However, it is my belief that you make the contradiction, not I! The American Standard Version translates the first part of this verse in this way: "Do we then (because of what was said previously) make the law of none effect through faith?" This translation better captures the intent of what Paul is saying. In the second part of the verse, we note the word "establish," which is generally understood to mean, "to found; to set-up; or to institute." This is obviously not the meaning of the word here, because, as all

are aware, the law was established in this sense many hundreds of years before at Mount Sinai. The word "establish" may also mean to "confirm" and in this passage should be so understood. With these clarifications then, Paul is simply saying that the intended effect of the law was not thwarted, or made void, by the coming in of the faith of Jesus Christ. In other words, the law had effectively served its purpose and the coming of the faith of Jesus Christ "confirmed" that effectiveness. Or we may say it in this way: The main purpose of the Old Testament was to point to Jesus Christ, the coming Messiah. It did that effectively! With the coming of the Messiah, the purpose of the Old Testament was confirmed. Further, in proclaiming that the Messiah has come, the apostles and all today that faithfully preach this message are "confirming" the truths and effectiveness of the Old Testament. This, of course, does not mean, as the SDA would claim, that we are still bound by the Old Testament. Having served, effectively, its purpose, it was taken out of the way at the cross of Jesus Christ. Thus, Christians are said by Paul later (in this same letter to the Romans) to be, "dead to the law by the body of Christ;" and, therefore, "delivered (a military term which means discharged) from the law." The law that he says Christians are "dead to" and "delivered" from is the law that says, "Thou shalt not covet." The law that says, "Thou shalt not covet" is, specifically, the Ten Commandment Law (Exodus 20:17) and, generally, the entire Old Testament! This Law that we are "dead to" and "delivered from" also says, "Keep the Sabbath Day holy." Clearly, then, just as we are 'dead to" and "delivered from" the commandment that says, "Thou shalt not covet," we are also "dead to" and "delivered from" the commandment that says, "Keep the Sabbath Day holy," because both are commandments contained in the law that we are "dead to" and delivered from!" (Romans 7:4-7).

Clearly, the notion that we are not "dead to" and "delivered from" these commandments of the Old Law, as proposed by the SDA, stands in direct opposition to what the Holy Spirit has written through the apostle Paul. The SDA will often attempt to change the thrust of the above by saying that it does not say that the Law is dead! Even if one were to so assume, the fact that we are "dead to it" and "discharged from it" clearly teaches that we are no longer under it or bound by it! When one is discharged from the military, he is no longer bound by military law. The same is true when one is discharged from the law that says, "Thou shalt not covet!"

Item 3: Answer: Ephesians and Colossians were written by the same author, but to two different congregations. They carry the same message and are often considered commentaries on each other. In Ephesians 2:15, Christ, at His death, abolished "the law of commandments," which in Colossians 2:14 he calls "the handwriting of ordinances." As noted above, in Galatians 3:24-25 it is called a schoolmaster which we are no longer

under, because “it,” not a series of ceremonial laws, was against us, and contrary to us, He therefore, blotted “it” out, took “it” out of the way, nailing “it” to His cross. Thus, He abolished “it!” You suggest that Paul was dealing only with “certain” things like Circumcision, Sacrifices, Jewish feasts and Jewish decrees. However, though you state such without biblical support, it is interesting to note that you selectively forget to state that he is also saying that because “it” was nailed to His cross, that we (Christians) are not permitted to allow any man, including the SDA, to judge us relative to diet, holydays, the new moon, nor of the sabbath days (Colossians 2:16-17). As all laws under the Old Testament were nailed to the cross, so it is that Old Testament laws regarding diet and the sabbath days were, as well! All of these things that Paul dealt with were but a shadow pointing to the substance which was Christ. Paul, not only in these passages, but also throughout his writings, as previously noted, dealt with the totality of the Old Law and it’s abrogation at the cross of our Lord!

Item 4: Answer: Your statement that Colossians 2:14 and Hebrews 7:12 refer to only the so-called “ceremonial law” is pure conjecture! As discussed above there is no basis, other than bias, to so state. Hebrews 7:12 shows that as complete and total was the “change” of the Levitical priesthood to the priesthood of Christ, just as complete and total was the “change” of the Laws from those of Moses to those of Jesus Christ. Only the biased can read Verse 11 and conclude that “the law” received under the Levitical priesthood was something called, and limited to, the so-called “ceremonial law.” Clearly it refers to “all” of the Law and so the same words, “the law,” in Verse 12, as well, refers to “all” of the law. In Verse 18, showing that this particular law under discussion was removed, the writer says, “For there is truly a disannulling (*athetesis*, cancellation, put away) of the commandment given before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.” According to the SDA, the word “commandment” seems nearly always to refer to the Ten Commandments. How then can they rightfully say, given the above, that the term “commandment” here excludes the Ten Commandments? Absurd!

Item 5: Answer: That this passage teaches that the Old Law, the first covenant, including the Ten Commandments, was replaced by a second and better law is made distinctively clear. Your presentation does not prove your point, nor set aside that truth. In Verse five of this Hebrews Chapter (8), there can be no doubt that the writer is discussing “the pattern shown you in the mount,” i.e., “the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt. Obviously the reference included the Ten Commandment law! The writer then states precisely, that it was necessary that a second law (a better covenant) be instituted because the first covenant was with fault. The new covenant or testament that was without fault (James

1:25) would, upon installation, constitute a "change" in laws (Hebrews 7:12) that would 'not be in accordance with the old covenant under discussion, i.e., the one given "in the mount" when the children of Israel were led up out of the land of Egypt! There is no doubt that this new covenant replaced the old covenant: Verse 13, In that He sayeth, "A new covenant, He hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to *vanish away*," not only as a spiritual law at the cross (Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 2:14), but also as Jewish civil law at the destruction of Jerusalem! The Greek for "vanish" here is *aphanismos,* which is defined as "disappearance" or "abrogation!" The law given "in the mount" disappeared and was abrogated in effectiveness at the cross!

Beginning at the top of Page 5 through the close of the letter you state or imply the following:

1. Acts 20:7 is not talking about a Sunday worship service at all. The meeting was held on what we would call Saturday night!
2. Paul broke bread and preached until the light of the 1st day shone.
3. Paul says in I Corinthians 16:1-2 that the collection is to be on the first day so that it can be given on the seventh day. Paul worshiped, not on the first day but on the seventh as shown in Acts 17:2 and Acts 18:4.
4. The statement by Justin Martyr says nothing about setting apart Sunday as a sacred day of worship.
5. Romans 7:1-7 does not teach that Christians are "dead to the law" and "delivered (discharged) from the law" that says thou shalt not covet. It simply says that we are not condemned by the law that says thou shalt not covet.

Item 1: Answer: Acts 20:7 is talking about a worship service on the first day of the week, not on the seventh day of the week. The Jewish first day of the week began at 6:00 P.M. commensurate with the close of the seventh day and lasted 24 hours until 6:00 P.M. the next day. The fact that that the Jewish first day of the week is a part of what Americans call Saturday night, does not change the fact of the first day. The New Testament simply shows that we are to assemble to worship on that particular day and where that day, as the participant recognizes it, begins and ends! In our time, all recognize that a day begins in Greenwich, England. This has not always been the case. It has started in various places through the years, including Washington, D.C. However,

today, given this fact, when it is 10:00 A.M. Sunday, the first day of the week, in Washington, D.C., it is 1:00 A.M. on Monday, the second day of the week in Sydney, Australia. The Americans and Australians will not be worshiping at the same time, yet both will be worshiping on the first day of the week. Our First Day is not their First Day and theirs is not ours! The same thing was true in the first century and has always been true. After the Gospel had been taken into all the world (Colossians 1:6, 23), the same condition existed then. Christians worshiped on the first day of the week as it was recognized where they were! When it is 6:00 P.M. on Saturday night in Florida, it is 9:00 P.M. on Sunday night in Australia. According to your baseless theory, this would be the appropriate time for the Australians to worship. But wait a minute! When it is 6:00 P.M. on Friday night, the beginning of the Jewish seventh day, in Jerusalem, the time and day in Florida is 11:00 A.M. Friday morning, which according to old Jewish timekeeping was the sixth day of the week. According then to the rational you have presented, you could begin your worship and must begin your Sabbath-keeping at 11:00 A.M. Friday morning, because it is 6:00 P.M. in Jerusalem, which is the time that the Jewish Sabbath began! The very idea is preposterous! The first day of the week is the first day of the week wherever we are. Do you not realize that Christ knew the world was round and that there were different time zones dependent upon the position of the earth relative to that of the sun?

Item 2: Answer: The above shows clearly the falsity of this unscholarly allegation relative to Acts 20:7. The first day of the week began at least 12 hours before the sun shone at its next rising as described in Acts 20:11!

In the original Greek the word *kata* is present in I Corinthians 16:1-2, which means “every” first day of the week. The very suggestion that Christians were to take up a collection on “every” first day of the week in order to contribute that collection during worship on the next seventh day, as proposed by the SDA, is unscriptural and senseless. The first day of the week simply means the first day of the week. That’s when the disciples came together to commune and to give! Neither of these worship activities has been shown scripturally to have occurred on the seventh day!

Item 3: Answer: To infer that these verses (Acts 17:2; Acts 18:4) teach that Paul entered the synagogues for the purpose of worshipping is to read something into these passages that is not there. The reasons for Paul going into the synagogues are clearly stated, i.e., (1) that’s where the Jews were to whom he wanted to preach and (2) he wanted to preach Christ (New Testament) to them. Allow me to illustrate by asking this

question: Where would I be on the seventh day of the week if I wanted to preach to a Seventh Day Adventist? Would I not be in his place of worship, because that is where and when I would find them gathered? Would such mean that I would not be worshiping in my own place of worship on the first day? Of course not! Surely, you are not suggesting that Paul went into the Jews' place of worship to participate and commune with them according to the worship practices of the Old Law, i.e., sacrificing animals, burning incense, etc.? The record says that while in the synagogues he "argued" with the Jews (Acts 17:17), he "reasoned" with the Jews (Acts 18:19), he "disputed and persuaded" the things concerning the kingdom of God (Acts 19:8) and when they were hardened and would not believe he quit going into the synagogues and preached for two years in the school of one Tyrannus! Now, from these accounts, how can any unbiased person get the idea that Paul supported Sabbath-keeping by going into the synagogues? Without doubt, one of the reasons why the Jews were hardened and would not believe "things concerning the kingdom of God (the church of Christ) is that they would have to reject the Old Law and its Sabbath in favor of the New Law of Jesus Christ! Would not Paul, guided by the Holy Spirit, speak and argue with the Jews in the synagogues about the same matters he discussed with Roman Christians, i.e., we are "dead to" the Law and "delivered from" the Law that says that shalt not covet; the Ten Commandment Law (including the Sabbath-keeping commandment)? What sense does it make to hear Paul teach these matters in the book of Romans 7:1-7 (and many other places) and then conclude that he violated his own instructions by worshiping in the synagogues according to the Law that he had died to and was delivered from? Without doubt, Sabbath-keepers of today are plagued with the same problems, as were the Jews of Paul's day!

Item 4: Answer: It is true that the statement of Justin Martyr says nothing about a "sacred" day. It simply shows that Sunday the first day of the week, not the seventh day, was the day on which the early church, in accordance with Acts 20:7 and I Corinthians 16:1-2, met to worship God, as the faithful of today, continuing steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine, will do!

In his Bible Handbook, Page 870, Henry H. Halley writes, "Here is Justin Martyr's picture of early Christian Worship." He then quotes him as follows: "On Sunday a meeting is held of *all* who live in the cities and villages." Then he goes on to describe their participation in reading from a section of, both, the Old and New Testaments followed by an admonition and exhortation based on what was read. He also describes other acts of worship such as prayer, the taking of the Lord's Supper, and freewill contributions. There can be no doubt that Justin Martyr, who lived from 100-167, being a

pupil of Polycarp who was, in turn, a pupil of the apostle John, stated that Christian worship was conducted on the first day of the week, i.e., Sunday.

Item 5: Answer: The irrationality of this statement is shown above. The suggestion that we are under a law which when broken brings no penalty flies in the face of I John 3:4 and many other similar passages!

Bill, the fact that you do not see anything in Scripture that does away with the Old Law has no bearing on that specific truth and fact. I hope you will remove all preconceived notions, whether taught or developed, and study the Bible without SDA helps and guides!

Cordially,

David M. Amos

QUESTION No. 822: I am not clear about Sabbath and Sunday keeping. Why does the phrase "ye observe days" in Galatians 4:10 not include Sunday?

ANSWER: We need to consider the verse in the context of that which is under discussion by the apostle Paul. There can be no doubt that he is, in the entire book, presenting the truth that Christians are no longer under the Old Law. He is continuing that same subject in Chapter four and will carry it through the end of book. Verse ten, then, must be understood in that context. In Verse nine, that to which some of the Galatians desired to be in bondage again (at the urging of Judaizing teachers), is a direct reference to the Old Law. The observance of days, and months, and times, and years as stated in Verse ten constituted a part of the weak and beggarly elements of that Old Law (Carefully read from 3:24 through 4:10). Under the Old Law, the Jews kept the Sabbath Day, or the seventh day of the week. Under the Law of Christ, Christians worship on the first day of the week, as demonstrated and taught by this very same apostle in Acts 20:7 and I

Corinthians 16: 1-2. Since the references in Galatians 4:10 are to those things under the Old Law and not to the things under the New Law, we can, therefore, know that Sunday (as our day of worship) is not included! We may also know that Sunday is not included by the fact that the apostle himself observed Sunday worship!

QUESTION No. 823: On the first day of the week in the Greek it is the same word for sabbath. Who has the right to change the meaning of the word from sabbath to first day of the week? 4521 is the word for sabbath in Strong's and also the word for first day of the week. One is right and one is wrong. The Greek is not that wishy-washy. Easter is in the bible also, but not in the Greek.

ANSWER: In I Corinthians 16:2, there are three Greek words that are translated "first day of the week," i.e., "kata mian sabbaton," while the one Greek word for "sabbath" is simply "sabbaton." Of the hundreds of Greek scholars who have prepared all of the world's Greek to English translations, none has ever translated these words to be anything other than "first day of the week." The Jews used the word Sabbath to denote the week; a period of seven days, as is clearly seen in Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:9; Luke 18:12; 24:1; and John 20:1,19; compare also Leviticus 23:15 and Deuteronomy 16:9. Of this period of seven days, the Greek in I Corinthians 16:2 simply says "every first (of the seven) sabbaton." It is universally agreed by all Greek scholars that this, without doubt, denotes the first day of the week, or the Lord's Day.

Neither does the Bible in its original autographs use the English word "easter," as found in only the King James Version translation. The word in the Greek is "pascha" and is properly translated "passover," as seen in the ASV. As well, this error was corrected in the New King James Version, in which was rightly seen no need for a correction of I Corinthians 16:2. The fact of a translator's mistake in Acts 12:4 does not support your notion of a mistake in I Corinthians 16:2, as you seem to imply.

We would recommend that you revisit I Corinthians 16:2 in the light of truth and of the world's scholarship. Communication with one of the many Greek University language departments would definitely be in order, if you do not find the above convincing.

OLD TESTAMENT QUESTIONS

QUESTION No. 824: Is the Old Testament written for our example, yes or no?

ANSWER: The Old Testament has been taken out of the way and replaced by the New Testament of Jesus Christ. Please read carefully the following passages: Romans 7:4-7; II Corinthians 3:13-14; Galatians 3:24-25; Ephesians 2:13-16; Hebrews 7:12 / 8:7. In Colossians 2:14, we see that the handwriting of ordinances (Old Testament) was blotted out; that it was against us and it was contrary to us. Therefore, He took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross!

Although we are not bound today by the laws of the Old Testament, as we study it we will develop a better understanding of the New Testament. As we read about the prophecies of the Old Testament being completely and gloriously fulfilled in the New Testament, it serves, as well, to deepen our faith in God and His word! Also, in the Old Testament, we can learn more about the never changing nature of our God.

Yes! The Old Testament was written for our example and, for this reason, we are commanded to study it! "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Romans 15:4). Also, in I Corinthians 10, we read about something that happened to the children of Israel in the Old Testament. In Verse eleven, Paul says, "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

QUESTION No. 825: Does Genesis 3:15 refer to a conflict between Christ and Satan?

ANSWER: Yes! In this conflict, Satan was to bruise Christ's heel, i.e., our sin, caused by the influence of Satan, would cause Christ to die for us that we might receive the atonement (Romans 5:8-11). Jesus was to bruise Satan's head, i.e., "that He, through death, might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil" (Hebrews 2:14).

QUESTION No. 826: I am concerned about Genesis 1:28 where it says that God directed man to "replenish" the earth. This would indicate that the earth was previously (before the Genesis account) inhabited. Could you explain?

ANSWER: The Hebrew word (male'/or mala) translated "replenish" did not, and does not, mean "to refill" or "to fill a second time." The same is true of the 16th century English word "replenish." At that time, the primary meaning of the word simply meant to "stock" or "fill," as was also the case with the Hebrew word. The same Hebrew word is also found in Genesis 42:25 and there we see it (as in many other passages) translated simply as "fill." The use of the word "replenish" then in the 1611 KJV is understandable. Nonetheless, the New King James Version, necessarily updates the English to accommodate modern usage and correctly says, "FILL the earth," reflecting the original intent of the author and the understanding of the early translators.

QUESTION No. 827: Was King Saul not in the original plan for Israel?

ANSWER: Clearly, God was displeased with the Israelites choice of having a king, as did the nations around them. In so doing God said, " they have rejected me!" Please read I Samuel 9.

QUESTION No. 828: Would you explain the phrase "to obey is better than sacrifice?"

ANSWER: This phrase is found in I Samuel 15:22. In Verse three of this chapter Saul had been directed by God to "utterly destroy" the Amalekites. He disobeyed (did evil - Vs.19) by taking King Agag alive (Vs.8) and sparing the best of their herds (Vs.9) which he intended to be used in sacrifice to God. Samuel told Saul that it would have been better for him to have obeyed God rather than to have sacrificed the animals he had been directed to "utterly destroy." Because of his stubbornness and rebellion toward God in this matter, Samuel said that Saul had "rejected the word of the Lord." As a result, God rejected him from being king (Vs.23).

The lesson for us today is that true obedience to God is the important issue, not acts of worship improperly motivated!

QUESTION No. 829: Why was God not with Goliath during his fight with David?

ANSWER: God will not be with or support those who act contrary to His will. In this case the Philistine, Goliath, was in defiance of the armies of the "living God" (I Samuel 17:26).

QUESTION No. 830: What is the difference between the Ten Commandments and the law of the tabernacle?

ANSWER: Depending on usage, the phrase "law of the tabernacle" could possibly have reference to the Ten Commandments, since the commandments (on two tables of stone) were kept in the ark of the covenant which, in turn, was kept in the tabernacle. The phrase could also be used in reference to those "laws" regarding the design of the tabernacle or those laws governing the communion of man with God through the tabernacle.

QUESTION No. 831: Exodus 20:13 says, "Thou shalt not kill." Does this refer to animals and other creatures, or to human beings?

ANSWER: This passage prohibits the premeditated murder of a human being. That it refers only to humans is clearly seen in that God (before the New Testament) directed the killing of sacrificial animals (Leviticus, Chapter one).

Note, as well, in Genesis 18:1-8, that the messengers (angels) of the Lord ate the flesh of animals. See also Acts 10:13-14.

QUESTION No. 832: What are the "old paths" as mentioned in Jeremiah 6:16?

ANSWER: Judah had forsaken the God of their fathers and gone after false gods (Jeremiah 2:28). Jeremiah 6:16 is a call for Judah to return to Jehovah and abide by His will, the "old paths." "But they said, we will not walk therein" (Vs.16). As a result, Jerusalem was overthrown (Jeremiah 38:28) and Judah was carried into Babylonian captivity. Certainly, the lesson in this for us today is that we must walk in the "old paths" as set forth in the New Testament of Jesus Christ in order to be pleasing to God, turning neither to the right or the left (Deuteronomy 5:32)!

QUESTION No. 833: A: In Genesis, Chapter eleven, why did men try to build the tower of Babel? B: Were those involved a humble people? C: What was the one language used prior to this event? D: Was this the beginning of our languages today?

ANSWER: A: Man attempted to build the tower that they might make a name for themselves, lest they be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth (Genesis 11:4). B: That they wanted to make a name for themselves shows that they were a proud people; C: Though uncertain, some believe that the one language was Hebrew; D: The Jews so believe. However, with the many thousands of languages and dialects prevalent today, such is without supporting evidence.

QUESTION No. 834: Why did not the new King of Egypt "know" Joseph (Exodus 1:8)?

ANSWER: The Hebrew word translated "knew" in this verse often means to acknowledge, or to approve. Therefore, we should not understand this passage to mean that the new king had no knowledge whatever of Joseph, but rather that he did not "approve" of him or his activities under the previous king.

QUESTION No. 835: Why was Jacob blessed by God even though he had deceived his father?

ANSWER: It was the will of God, as He promised in Genesis 25:23, that the older of the twins would serve the younger. God kept that promise which had its roots in the promise made to Abraham that through his seed all nations of the earth would be blessed (Genesis 12:2-3). Neither the deceitful act of Rebekah and Jacob toward Isaac; nor Isaac's attempt to give the blessing to Esau rather than Jacob, while knowing the will of God; nor the profane Esau's (Hebrews 12:16-17) request for the blessing that he had sold to another, could deter the providence of God in this matter!

If God worked His providence only through those who do no wrong, certainly His providential will would be totally thwarted, since all of us do err. This does not mean, however, that in the receipt of His blessings, we do not suffer the consequences of sin, nor that we are free, as God's children from His chastening (Hebrews 12:5-11). Concerning Jacob's deceitfulness, it might be well to ponder the fact that just as he deceived his father, even so was he deceived many years later by his own children (Genesis 37:29-36)!

QUESTION No. 836: How many years did it take Noah to build the ark?

ANSWER: In Genesis 6:1-3, we learn that God gave the wicked people of Noah's day an additional one hundred and twenty years to repent. At some point during this period God instructed Noah to build the ark. At the end of the one hundred and twenty years the flood came upon the earth. We are not told the exact time required to build the ark; only that it was constructed "during" the period of grace granted by God.

QUESTION No. 837: Did God provide Noah the exact type of wood that He required?

ANSWER: God does not demand of anyone those things that are impossible! That Noah had access to "gopher" wood, previously provided by the Creator of all things, is evidenced in Genesis 6:22, "Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he."

QUESTION No. 838: Did God recall Cain or did he die as a vagabond?

ANSWER: There is no biblical evidence that Cain ever repented. It appears that, at least, at the time of his crime he was more concerned about his punishment than repentance (Genesis 4:13-14).

We are not told where he died, but it is most likely that his death occurred in the land of Nod, in the city of Enoch that he had built.

QUESTION No. 839: What covenant did God make with Abraham?

ANSWER: In Genesis 12:1-3 God first promised Abraham that He would (1) make of Him a great nation and (2) that in him would all nations of the earth be blessed. This promise was repeated to his son Isaac (Genesis 26:1-50 and his grandson Jacob (Genesis 28:13-14). The blessing to all nations through Abraham was wonderfully fulfilled in Christ. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ" (Galatians 3:16).

When one is born again (baptized into Christ) he has put on Christ (Galatians 3:26-27). (Note that one does not put Christ on before baptism!) "And if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:29). This passage shows how we become heirs and are blessed through the Seed of Abraham!

QUESTION No. 840: Would you explain Proverbs 16:4?

ANSWER: The idea is that God has made everything suitable to His own purpose, even an "evil day" suitable to the divinely appointed end of the wicked who disobey Him!

QUESTION No. 841: Why did God call David a "man after His own heart?"

ANSWER: Because God could and did look upon David's heart (I Samuel 16:7). He knew the kind of man that David was! Though he sinned by committing adultery and murder, none can deny the penitence, piousness, humility, and devotion to God of this great king of Israel. God never implied that David was not going to sin. He was a sinner, as we are! And, as David, when we are willing to confess and repent of our sins, we can know "the Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die" (II Samuel 12:13). In spite of our weaknesses and failures, if we develop and exhibit the godly characteristics of this great king, we, too, as penitent sinners, can become men and women after God's own heart!

QUESTION No. 842: Would you explain Ezekiel 19:1-14?

ANSWER: This chapter is divided into comparisons. The first (Vs.1-9) is a description of God's justice which He poured out through other nations upon Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim during their reigns in Jerusalem, because they had turned the people away from Him. The lioness in Verse two refers to Jerusalem. The first young lion (Vs.3) refers to Jehoahaz; the second young lion (Vs.6) refers to Jehoiakim. The second comparison (Vs.11-14) describes the captivity of all the Jewish peoples, represented by a vine (Vs.10), who at the first were blessed greatly by God (Vs.10-11). But when they rejected Him and turned to idols, He permitted them to be destroyed and carried away into captivity, as depicted by the destruction of the vine (Vs.12-14).

QUESTION No. 843: Who was the mother of King David?

ANSWER: The Bible does not give us her name. She is, however, referred to as the handmaid of God in Psalms 86:16 and 116:16.

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QUESTION No. 844: Why was Uzzah killed (I Chronicles 13:9-10)?

ANSWER: Because he violated the command of God by "putting forth his hand to the Ark" (II Samuel 6:6-7). God had previously given commandment that man "shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die" (Numbers 4:15). In touching the Ark, Uzzah sinned and the anger of the Lord was kindled against him (I Chronicles 13:10). Indeed, this should be an example and an admonition for us today (I Corinthians 10:11). God expects to be obeyed! There is no excuse for sin (I Samuel 15:22-23).

QUESTION No. 845: Was Nathan (David's son) a prophet?

ANSWER: Nathan, the prophet (II Samuel 7:2), should not be confused with David's son, also called Nathan (II Samuel 5:14)! There is nothing to indicate that David's son was a prophet!

QUESTION No. 846: Why was David not allowed to build a house for God?

ANSWER: Because David was a man of war who had shed much blood upon the earth (I Chronicles 22:6-11; I Chronicles 28:2-3)!

QUESTION No. 847: Would you explain Proverbs 31:6-7?

ANSWER: Solomon is not here authorizing strong drink generally. He has reference only to strong drink used to mercifully dull the senses of criminals who were being tortured or put to death. This type of drink was offered to Christ while on the cross (Matthew 27:34). It is significant that He refused to drink of it!

QUESTION No. 848: Who succeeded Pharaoh after his death?

ANSWER: The word "Pharaoh" is a general designation previously applied to the rulers of Egypt. It is believed that the Pharaoh who ruled during the time of the Israelite oppression was Ramses II. The Pharaoh reigning at the time of the exodus is believed to be Menetaph II, the thirteenth son of Ramses II.

QUESTION No. 849: Where was Joseph buried?

ANSWER: Joseph died in Egypt at the age of an hundred and ten, was embalmed, and placed in a coffin (Genesis 50:26). We learn in Genesis 50:24-25, that Joseph had given commandment that when God would bring the children of Israel into the land that He had promised his fathers, his bones would also be taken out of Egypt. This was fulfilled by Moses (Exodus 13:19). In Joshua 24:32, we learn the Joseph's bones were finally buried in the city of Shechem.

QUESTION No. 850: Would you please tell me which kingdoms are represented in Daniel 2:38-45?

ANSWER: Daniel begins the interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Verse 36 of Chapter two. He speaks of four earthly kingdoms as follows:

Kingdom No.1, represented by the head of gold, under Nebuchadnezzar, was the Babylonian Empire. Judah was carried into captivity in 588 BC. This kingdom survived until 562 BC.

Kingdom No.2, represented by the breast and arms of silver, under Darius and Cyrus, was the Medo-Persian Empire. This kingdom existed from 562 BC until 330 BC.

Kingdom No.3, represented by the belly and thighs of brass, under Alexander the Great, was the Grecian or Macedonian Empire. It existed from 330 BC until 166 BC.

Kingdom No.4, represented by the legs of iron and feet of iron and clay, under the Caesars, was the Roman Empire. It existed from 166 BC until 476 AD.

It was during the days of these Roman kings that the God of heaven was to set up a kingdom that would never be destroyed (Daniel 2:44). Jesus and John the baptist both began preaching during the rule of the Roman Empire that the kingdom of heaven was very near (Matthew 4:17; Matthew 3:2). In Mark 9:1, Jesus said that the kingdom would be established during the lifetime of the people to whom He was speaking. In Matthew 16:18-19, Jesus referred to His kingdom as His church; the church of Christ. This promised kingdom/church came into being in a grand way in Acts, Chapter two on the day of Pentecost. People, for the first time, upon their obedience to Christ, were added by Him to His church. They became citizens in the kingdom of God that had been foretold of by Daniel hundreds of years earlier. When people today are obedient to Christ in baptism, they too, just as those on Pentecost Day, will be added to His church and became citizens of that same kingdom!

QUESTION No. 851: In Genesis 10:31, it was written "after their tongues" (more than one tongue), but in Genesis 11:1 it was written that the "whole earth was of one tongue." Is this a contradiction from the compiler/translator? Or from whom?

ANSWER: There is no contradiction! The genealogy listed in Genesis 10:21-31 encompasses a period of time both before and after the "division" of Chapter eleven. Note in Genesis 10:25 that one of the two sons born to Eber was Peleg (a name which means division), "for in his days was the earth divided." The genealogy of Chapter ten begins with Shem and goes through Peleg (who lived during the "division") and then transfers to his brother Joktan and his sons. The genealogy beginning in Genesis 11:10 also begins with Shem and goes through Peleg, and then continues on through his son Reu, showing the ancestral path leading up to Abraham. Clearly, Shem lived before the "division," Peleg lived during the "division" and Peleg's son and posterity through Abraham lived after the "division." As surely as Peleg's son (Chapter 11) lived after the "division," Joktans son's (Chapter 10) also lived after the "division," as shown in Verse 31! Hence,

just as the genealogy of Chapter eleven, covers a period of time before and after the "division," so it is with the genealogy of Chapter ten. There is, therefore, no contradiction between Genesis 10:31 and Genesis 11:1.

QUESTION No. 852: Will those who died in the flood be punished a second time in the Judgment?

ANSWER: These, along with all others who lived and died during the one hundred and twenty years probationary period before the flood (Genesis 6:3), had been preached to by the Spirit of Christ through Noah (I Peter 3:19). All of these had opportunity to be saved spiritually at that time, but rejected spiritual salvation. Had those of this number who were yet alive at the time of the flood, been spiritually reconciled to God, they would also have been saved physically, as was Noah and his family. However, those who died physically, whether before or during the flood, without being saved spiritually, are said by Peter to be kept in "prison" (I Peter 3:19). So, the punishment reserved for those who reject and disobey God then, is not mere physical death, with the soul still being saved eternally. This blessing is to be the lot and destiny of only the righteous who accept and obey God. The disobedient of all the ages (including those who died in the flood) are to be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of God and the glory of His Power (II Thessalonians 1:7-9)! The disobedient souls of those who died in the flood then are, without doubt, being guarded in the prison of the Hadean world, reserved unto the great Judgment Day (Luke 16:22-31; II Peter 2:4-5; Jude 6)!

QUESTION No. 853: Is Isaiah 66:17 applicable to us today?

ANSWER: No! The prophecies of Isaiah sixty-six are neither applicable today nor tomorrow! They had their total and complete fulfillment in the return of the Jews from Babylonian captivity!

QUESTION No. 854: Who wrote the last chapter of Deuteronomy?

ANSWER: We are not told. Most scholars speculate that Joshua, Moses' successor was the author. In fact, some believe that this chapter was intended to be the first chapter of Joshua.

QUESTION No. 855: Why do you believe that the Israelites marched around the walls of Jericho thirteen times?

ANSWER: In the book of Joshua, Chapter six, Verse fourteen, we learn that they marched around the city once a day for six days, a total of six times! On the seventh day they marched around it a total of seven times (Vs.15). Adding the six times to the seven times, we see a total of thirteen times!

QUESTION No. 856: Who are the sons of God in Genesis 6:2? Are they angels? Would you please explain Verses 1 through 4?

ANSWER: Some have, in error, suggested that the phrase “sons of God” in Genesis Six refers to angels, but this is not the case! The common meaning of this phrase in those days meant “worshipers or beneficiaries of God.” The phrase then is applied to both men and angels, depending upon the context of the passage under consideration. Without question angels as worshipers and beneficiaries of God are referred to in the Book of Job. However, such is not the case in Genesis Six. The phrase "sons of God" in this passage refers to those men who "walked with God;" those who worshiped Him and conducted themselves as His children, thereby being recipients of His blessings. The same is said of Christians today (I John 3:1). The "daughters of men" refers to those women not counted among His children. The passage in question states simply that men who previously followed God took wives of women who did not follow God.

The suggestion that Genesis Six refers to angels cannot be valid for the additional following reasons:

1) The inspired writers of the Bible nowhere promote the idea that angels could or would enter into a marriage with a human being. In fact, at least by

implication, the very notion is rendered foolish in Matthew 22:30 which states that heavenly beings are **not** given in marriage!

2) Angels are spiritual beings and as such cannot be subject to physical passions as would be found in physical man having been aroused sexually by an attractive female. The very idea is preposterous!

3) The penalty for this sin was not imposed upon angels, but was imposed upon man. If the sinners were angels, then it is the case that they would have been recipients of the punishment. Since the penalty was placed upon men, it becomes clear that men (not angels) were the sinners.

4) It is a biblical truth the every seed brings forth after its own kind (Genesis 1:11). That which was produced by the union of Genesis 6:2 were men. Therefore, the seed that produced men must necessarily have come from men, not angels.

5) Some would suggest that it took angels to produce the "giants" spoken of in Genesis 6:4. However, a word study of the word "giant" in this context soon dispels the thought. The original Hebrew word is "nephalim" from Nephal, which means, "he fell." The translators of the Septuagint translated the Hebrew "nephalim" as "gigantes" in the Greek which simply meant "earth-born." The English translators then translated "gigantes" as "giants." However, the original idea is not that these men were of huge size and stature, but rather that they were of the earth and had fallen away from God; that they were "men of renown" (heroes) because they were known for their wicked and ungodly deeds. They were not heroes in the sense that they performed courageous acts on the side of good and right! They had a reputation, but that reputation was of their evil activities! Without doubt, men of this same character exist even today!

The meaning of "contend" or "strive" as found in Verse three is from a Hebrew word, which means, "*to judge*." God's Spirit was clearly striving with man at this time by operating through His Word to instruct, reprove, and to judge. In this verse, He is simply saying that a time will come when that will no longer be the case. In fact, the verse is teaching that God, not willing that any should perish (II Peter 3:9), would delay this judgment for one hundred and twenty more years. It was during this time that the Ark was built and during which Christ preached through the person of Noah to the disobedient of that day (Hebrews 11:7; I Peter 3:19-20). At the end of that period with their rejection of God's Word, the flood came and destroyed all flesh from off the earth, with the exception of Noah and his family (Genesis 7:21-24).

QUESTION No. 857: Why did Obadiah relay Elijah's message to King Ahab (I Kings eighteen)?

ANSWER: Obadiah was the governor of Ahab's house (Vs.3) and undoubtedly had access to him. At God's command, Elijah was on his way to see King Ahab to arrange a challenge to the four-hundred fifty prophets of Baal in order to prove that Jehovah was God. While on his way, Elijah saw Obadiah and asked him to tell King Ahab that he had come to meet with him. Obadiah, apparently knowing that Ahab was angry, feared that he would be slain. Nevertheless, given assurances by Elijah, Obadiah talked to Ahab and arranged the meeting.

QUESTION No. 858: What does it mean, "O troubler of Israel?" Who troubled Israel?

ANSWER: Israel had been suffering from a drought for more than three years at this time. King Ahab held Elijah, the prophet of God, responsible for it, and said in Verse seventeen, "Art thou he who troubleth Israel?" It was really Ahab himself who had troubled Israel. "in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim" (Vs.18). It was Ahab who had brought the great drought upon the land by provoking the God of Israel to anger (I Kings 16:30-33).

QUESTION No. 859: How did the three and one half-year's drought end?

ANSWER: Following the contest between Elijah and the prophets of Baal, the people of Israel turned from worshipping Baal to worshipping the God of Elijah. When this occurred, the drought ended!

QUESTION No. 860: Would you explain the Patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations?

ANSWER: The Patriarchal dispensation is generally referred as the period of time from the creation of Adam until the law was given through Moses at Mt. Sinai. During

this period God spoke to, and dealt through, the heads of the families (the Patriarchs). The Mosaic dispensation began with the giving of the law at Mt. Sinai and continued until the cross of Christ. At this time the old law was nailed to the cross (Colossians 2:14), ushering in the Christian dispensation with all mankind being answerable only to the New Testament. This final dispensation will continue until the end of time!

QUESTION No. 861: Please explain. Do the seven days of unleavened bread (Exodus 12:14-16) come before or after the fourteenth day of the month? How are we to observe the Passover today?

ANSWER: The Feast of the Passover began on the fourteenth day of the first month, which the Jews called Abib. It continued seven days from that time until the evening of the twenty-first day of the month (Exodus 12:18).

Christians today do not keep the Passover. The Old Testament was taken out of the way and replaced by the New Testament of Jesus Christ. Please read carefully the following passages: Roman 7:4-7; II Corinthians 3: 13-14; Galatians 3:24-25; Ephesians 2:13-16; Hebrews 7:12/8:7. In Colossians 2:14, we see that the handwriting of ordinances (Old Testament) was blotted out; that it was against us and contrary to us. Therefore, He took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross. Look carefully at verse sixteen! The passage says that since Christ has taken the Old Law out of the way by nailing it to His cross, we are not to let any man judge us "in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days." In other words, these feasts are not to be bound upon Christians today! Our Passover today is not the lamb of the Old Testament, but, rather, the Lamb of the New Testament, "which taketh away the sins of the world" (John 1;29). He is our "Passover" (I Corinthians 5:7)!

QUESTION No. 862: Where may I read of the history of the prophet Daniel?

ANSWER: Beside the book of Daniel, please also read Ezekiel 14:14, Ezekiel 28:3, Matthew 24:15, Mark 13:14, and Hebrews 11:33. Note also in the book that bears his name, he is also called Belteshazzar.

QUESTION No. 863: What does Psalm 37:25 mean?

ANSWER: The passage reads: "I have been young and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." This scripture is beautifully explained in Matthew 6:24-33. Verse thirty-three is the summarizing passage: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things (food, drink, and clothing) shall be added unto you." The teaching is not that these things will miraculously appear in front of us, but God will providentially aid the faithful in procuring the necessities to sustain life!

QUESTION No. 864: Do not some Old Testament passages teach that the Ten Commandments will stand forever (Psalms 111:7-8)?

ANSWER: No! The words "for ever" in the Old Testament mean "throughout the appointed time" or "age lasting." For example consider carefully the usage in Exodus 12:14; Leviticus 6:18; Leviticus 7:36; and Numbers 10:8. In these the words "for ever" clearly mean "throughout (or in) their (your) generations." Notice too, the Old Testament says that circumcision was to be an "everlasting covenant" (Genesis 17:13). Yet, Paul says in Galatians 6:15 that circumcision avails nothing in Christ! In Numbers 25:13, Moses said that the Levitical Priesthood would be "everlasting," but in Hebrews 7:12, we learn that it had been changed. How can this be? Clearly, the same is true with these as with the Sabbath. They were to exist "for ever in their generations," throughout their appointed times.

QUESTION No. 865: Why is it that some prophets like Elijah went to heaven alive while others died and were buried?

ANSWER: The Bible does not tell us specifically why God translated Elijah. However, of Enoch, who was also translated, it is said in Hebrews 11:5, "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God."

Though all reasons for the translation of these two men of God cannot yet be known, it appears likely that such was done, at least in part, to provide evidence to those living during the Old Testament period that a future state of existence with God through faith was a reality, in spite of the fact that "it is appointed unto men once to die" (Hebrews 9:27)! These actions were, as well, recorded for those of us who live under the New Testament (Romans 15:4). Therefore, these actions, in addition to the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, bear witness to the fact that from the beginning it has been the intent of God that all who are faithful to Him can be assured of a future life in a place called "Heaven" (I Thessalonians 4:13-18; John 14:1-3).

QUESTION No. 866: What is the meaning of the name "Moses" and in which country was he born?

ANSWER: The name Moses means "drawn out." He was so named because Pharaoh's daughter drew him out of the water (Exodus 2:10). He was born in the country of Egypt (Exodus, Chapters one and two).

QUESTION No. 867: Was it God's will that the daughters of Lot commit adultery with him?

ANSWER: No! God causes no man to sin! "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man: but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death" (James 1:13-15).

QUESTION No. 868: Did Lot's daughters become his wives after they committed adultery with him?

ANSWER: No! From II Peter 2:7-8, we read that Lot was a righteous man who hated the lifestyle of the wicked! For him to take his two daughters to wife would be to live in a lifestyle that he hated. As well, he would have violated God's Word. "None of you shall approach to any that is near kin to him, to uncover their nakedness: I am the

Lord" (Leviticus 18:6). It is also clear from Genesis 19:30-36, that Lot did not want to be involved in such a sin, but rather it was born in the hearts of his two daughters who first enticed their old father to become drunken! Surely this account of ungodliness ought to make each of us more aware of the folly and sin of using alcoholic beverages.

QUESTION No. 869: To whom does Psalms 119:19 refer?

ANSWER: Most scholars agree that David was the inspired author of this psalm. In Verse nineteen he confesses that he is a stranger to this world and prays that his eyes would be opened to God's Word so that he might behold the wondrous things of the world to come. This is what the Hebrews writer discusses in Chapter 11:13-14 as he writes about the faith of certain men and women who lived under the Old testament: "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a better country."

QUESTION No. 870: Who is referred to as the messianic prophet?

ANSWER: Isaiah! This is because much of his book tells of the coming of the Messiah; Jesus Christ and His Church. Note particularly chapters 2 & 53.

QUESTION No. 871: Is it true that the first time rain fell on the earth was at the time of the flood?

ANSWER: In Genesis 2:5, immediately following the creation, we learn that "the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth." In Verse six, we find that the earth was watered by a mist that went up from the earth. In Genesis 7:4, just prior to the flood, God said, "I will cause it to rain upon the earth for forty days and forty nights." This is the first account of rain falling in the Bible!

QUESTION No. 872: Did man exist before Adam?

ANSWER: No! The inspired apostle Paul states in I Corinthians 15:45 that Adam was the first man!

QUESTION No. 873: Will Cain enter heaven?

ANSWER: There is no evidence that Cain ever repented of his sins. Without repentance, none can be saved (Luke 13:3).

QUESTION No. 874: What kind of a tree was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? Did the partaking of its fruit symbolically represent sexual intercourse?

ANSWER: There is no reason to believe that the tree was not a literal tree! Neither is there any reason to believe that the eating of its fruit represented sexual intercourse. Such suggestions are nothing but the foolish musings of man!

QUESTION No. 875: Was Adam and Eve black or white? Where did the black race come from?

ANSWER: We have not been told the color of Adam’s and Eve's skin. However, that the various races of today originated through the three sons of Noah appears evident, since all others were destroyed in the flood. Ham and his descendants were later found in parts of Arabia and Africa. Shem's descendants settled in Mesopotamia and the east. Japheth's descendants located in Europe and parts of Asia. The name "Ham" comes from a Hebrew word that means swarthy and sunburned. This descriptive definition, coupled with the location of his descendants, suggests that the black race came through him.

QUESTION No. 876: Is it true that the first month of the Bible year is April; that God created the world during this month?

ANSWER: We do not know the exact month and year of the creation! According to Jewish tradition, God created the earth 3,760 years and three months before the beginning of the Christian era. This tradition is upheld in the Jewish Calendar with the Jewish New Year (Rosh Hashanah) beginning in the autumn, rather than on January 1, according to our present calendar.

QUESTION No. 877: Does the Garden of Eden exist today? If so, where? Do angels with a flaming sword still guard it?

ANSWER: To answer the first question is to answer all three. No! The Garden of Eden no longer exists. It had been created by God as a home for sinless man. When man through sin fell, he was separated from God and lost the home created for him (Genesis 3:23-24). We are not told how long after the fall of man that the Garden existed. Some speculate that it was for a short period; others believe it existed until the flood. Nobody knows! Certainly, however, it does not exist on this earth today!

QUESTION No. 878: Why are there different accounts of creation?

ANSWER: Genesis 1:1 through Genesis 2:3 is a detailed account of creation, in the order of creation. In Genesis, the second Chapter, there is no intent to present another complete account of creation, neither to follow the actual sequence of creation. Moses is only relating certain creation events in the order necessary to discuss properly that which follows, i.e., the fall of man!

QUESTION No. 879: Did God create man first and then create the woman from him (Genesis 2:22-23) or did He create them both at the same time as the Bible states in Genesis 1:27?

ANSWER: Genesis 1:27 does not state that the man and the woman were created at the same time! It simply says that God created them male and female! Genesis 2:7 and

Genesis 2:22-23 explains how they were created and in what order! Also see I Timothy 2:12-13!

QUESTION No. 880: Was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil an actual tree?

ANSWER! Yes! There is no reason to think otherwise. Genesis provides us with a literal, historical account of the creation and subsequent events. Jesus knew it was literal and historical when He quoted from Genesis, Chapters one and two, in Matthew 19:4-6. We, therefore, cannot doubt Him or the words of Moses (John 5:46-47).

QUESTION No. 881: Was the serpent created good?

ANSWER: In Colossians 1:16-17, we read that He created all things! In Genesis 1:31, we find that everything God made was good! The serpent was simply an instrument used by Satan to tempt Eve. Because of this, Satan is sometimes called a serpent (Revelation 12:9)!

QUESTION No. 882: Why was the woman so stupid to believe the lies of the devil?

ANSWER: Eve was tempted then, as we are tempted today. Temptation can come in three ways; through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (I John 2:16). When lust conceives, it brings forth sin (James 1:14-15). Eve was tempted through these lusts and yielded to them and, therefore, sinned. So it is with us today! Eve was no more stupid than you and I! Indeed, all have sinned (Romans 3:23).

QUESTION No. 883: Did Adam and Eve die, as God said they would, on the very day they ate of the forbidden fruit?

ANSWER: Yes! Death is a word that means "separation" (James 2:26). In Isaiah 59:2, we are told that our sins "separate" us from our God. This is why people who live in sin are said to be dead in their sins (Ephesians 2:1-2). On the day Adam and Eve sinned by eating of the tree, they died spiritually and were separated from God! Also on that day, they began to die physically, because they no longer had access to the tree of life.

QUESTION No. 884: When Cain was "driven from the face of the earth" (Genesis 4:14), was he removed from the earth?

ANSWER: No! The phrase "from the face of the earth" is perhaps better translated as "from off the ground." It seems that Cain was talking about the fruitful ground that he had tilled before his sin; the ground that had received his brother's blood. It was from this land that God had driven him to become a fugitive and a vagabond.

QUESTION No. 885: How was it possible that the earth was without form, because our earth has a particular shape like an egg? If God created the heavens and earth, then where did the water come from?

ANSWER: The creation account in Genesis 1:1-2 reads as follows: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was without form and void: and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

The phrase "In the beginning" means that before the acts of creation, nothing existed! All was eternity! The word "created" carries the idea that all existing elements; all existing material came into being by the word of God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) at precisely that time. This obviously included the elements of hydrogen and oxygen of which water is comprised. The fact that God created from nothing is attested to, as well, in the New Testament. "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which appear" (Hebrews 11:3). Immediately following the bringing into existence of all matter, the earth was without form and void (Vs.2). This means that God had not yet spoken the laws that were to govern the arrangement and orderliness of those things that he had created. This action was completed by Him during the total creation period of six literal twenty-four

hour days. In summary, God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) in six days created everything that has ever existed from absolutely nothing (including water) and placed into effect laws that caused and provided for the continuing orderly arrangement and function of it all!

David, in Psalms 33:9, said it this way, "He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast."

QUESTION No. 886: What is the essence of the mark of Cain's forehead (Genesis 4:15)?

ANSWER: The Bible does not say that a "mark" was set in his forehead! Surely, such a visible "mark," indicating that he was a murderer, would have led others to slay him! Rather, according to the passage in question, the "mark" was to assure Cain that he would not be slain. The word "mark" comes from a Hebrew word (oth) which means a "sign" or "token." Therefore, the passage would have been better translated "the Lord showed (or gave) Cain a sign to convince him that none would be allowed to kill him."

QUESTION No. 887: In Genesis it says Cain traveled to the east of Nod and married. Please, who were the people who lived there at that time?

ANSWER: In Genesis 4:16-17, we learn that Cain traveled to the east of Eden into the land of Nod, which simply means a "place of wandering." The passage does not teach that Cain got his wife in this "place of wandering." The phrase "knew his wife" does not mean that he met her east of Eden. It only means that they engaged in marital sex in that place, which resulted in the birth of their firstborn son, Enoch (See also Genesis 4:1). It appears most likely that Cain already had his wife and took her with him when he traveled to the east of Eden!

In Genesis 5:4, we are told that Adam "begat sons and daughters." Clearly, from these, Cain found his wife, and from these came those who eventually inhabited the city that Cain built in the "place of wandering," which he named after his firstborn.

QUESTION No. 888: Please explain Isaiah Chapter 19 in full detail.

ANSWER: A detailed study of this chapter would require volumes and more time than is available. However, perhaps an outline of the chapter followed by responses to the specific verses and questions cited in your letter would aid your further private study.

This chapter is a prophecy through Isaiah about those things that were to befall Egypt as follows:

A. God is seen figuratively coming in a cloud in judgment upon Egypt (Vs.1).

B. The effect of this judgment would cause much confusion and fear (Vs.1-2).

C. The people would turn to their idols for comfort (Vs.3).

D. Egypt would be conquered by a foreign power (Vs.4).

E. They would suffer many physical discomforts (Vs.5-10).

F. All of their princes and wise men would be looked upon as fools (Vs.11-16).

G. God's people would become a terror to them (Vs.17).

H. Many Egyptians would be converted to the one true God (Vs.18-20).

I. The one true God would eventually heal their land (Vs.21-22).

J. An alliance would develop between Israel, Egypt and Assyria (Vs.23-25).

(Verse two question): Egyptians being set against Egyptians. Was this fulfilled or is it yet future?

(Verse two answer): It was fulfilled. Shortly after this prophecy, there was civil war in Egypt.

(Verse sixteen question): What does it mean that Egypt shall be like unto women?

(Verse sixteen answer): It means that they would be alarmed and fearful as a woman might be (See B. above).

(Verse nineteen question): How would Egypt raise an altar to God, since they never recognized Him?

(Verse nineteen answer): See H. above. Many Egyptians at that time did come to recognize and honor Jehovah.

(Verse twenty-four question): What was the connection between Israel, Egypt and Assyria?

(Verse twenty-four answer): See J. above.

(Verse twenty-five question): Is Egypt and Assyria of today to be blessed before Israel?

(Verse twenty-five answer): No! In Christ, "God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him."

Although the prophecies in Isaiah have been fulfilled, it is interesting to note the similarity of imagery used in Chapter thirteen (about Babylon), Chapter seventeen (about Damascus), Chapter eighteen (about Ethiopia) and Chapter nineteen (about Egypt) with that used in Matthew chapter twenty-four about the destruction of Jerusalem!

QUESTION No. 889: Would you explain Daniel's seventy weeks of prophecy?

ANSWER: This prophecy foretells of the coming of the Messiah. The seventy weeks, or 490 days, is, for many reasons, to be understood as representing 490 years. This practice was often the case in biblical prophecy (Ezekiel 4:6). In Daniel 9:24-27 we learn that the Messiah was to appear and accomplish His mission during the 70 weeks or within the 490 year period from the decree (commandment) going forth to rebuild the temple. This period was to include 69 (7+60+2) weeks (483 years - perhaps to the recognition by the Father that Christ was His Son, the promised Messiah) in additon to the final (70th) week or 7 years. The decree to rebuild the temple (Ezra 7) went forth in about 454 BC. Adding thirty-three years (the approximate age of Christ at His death), we are now in the midst of the seventieth week of the 490-year prophetic period (486-487). His mission (as described in Daniel 9:24), during the final week, including His death on the behalf of others (Daniel 9:26), was completely fulfilled. There is little, if any, doubt that this final week also included the establishment and confirmation (through the giving of the Holy Spirit) of the kingdom (the church) of which Daniel had previously prophesied (Chapters two and seven). Certainly, this, and the complete fulfillment of all other Old Testament prophesies, attests mightily to the inspiration and accuracy of God's Word.

QUESTION No. 890: What are the two tribes that make up Judah?

ANSWER: Judah and Benjamin. Please refer to I Kings 12:21, 23; II Chronicles 11:1, 10, 12, 23; II Chronicles 14:8; II Chronicles 15:2, 9.

QUESTION No. 891: There seems to be a contradiction between what is stated in Exodus 33:20 and the encounters that occurred between God and some of the Old Testament prophets. Please explain.

ANSWER: No man has literally looked into the face of God (I John 4:12). Man has, however, seen manifestations of God in miraculous situations such as the burning bush, etc., but never God Himself. In Exodus 33:11, it is stated that “Jehovah spake unto Moses face to face as a man speaketh unto his friend.” This passage does not imply that Jehovah (who is a spirit) took on Himself a fleshly existence so Moses could look into His face. It simply affirms that God spoke to Moses directly and openly, as would a friend.

QUESTION No. 892: Did God create the dinosaurs at the same time that He created all other beasts?

ANSWER: I believe that the answer lies in Exodus 20:11, "For in six days (not periods of time) the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and "all" that in them is, . . ." "All" leaves nothing out! Therefore, it is clear that God in making "all" the beasts within that six-day period also, at the same time, created the dinosaurs!

QUESTION No. 893: Would not the belief that dinosaurs existed millions of years ago conflict with the Bible?

ANSWER: Yes! But, Science cannot prove their allegations relative to the age of the earth. Even their radiometric dating methods are based on assumption, not facts! According to Luke's genealogy at the direction of God, the Holy Spirit, (Luke 3) the age of the earth is approximately 10,000 years. What scientists refuse to accept is the truth that God created everything with the appearance of age. How old was the earth two days after God created it? Obviously, the earth was two days old, but how old did it appear to be? The same is true of Adam. He was actually two days old, two days after he was created. How old did he appear to be? We don't really know, but we do know he appeared to be much older than he actually was! Scientists have assumed the rate of processes that bring about change is the same today as it was in the beginning. According to them the rate has never changed and will never change. Therefore, applying today's rate of change to a measurable unit can tell us the age of the earth. For example, we can know today the build-up rate of sediment and we can measure the depth of the sediment. Simply dividing the depth by the build-up rate will project the time required to deposit the sediment. But, one, in order to accurately project the time required, must first prove that the build-up rate remained meticulously constant through the period of build-up. This, the scientist cannot do! Beyond this, to apply a current rate to that which was created with the appearance of age, even if the rate were proven to be constant, would prove absolutely nothing relative to the actual age of that which was created! "Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar" (Romans 3:4).

QUESTION No. 894: When were the dinosaurs destroyed?

ANSWER: We cannot know with certainty how or when it came about. Scientists cannot prove their theories and the Bible does not speak to the issue. It is possible, however, perhaps probable, that the universal flood of Noah's time brought about the drastic changes in climate and temperature that were responsible for their disappearance. Since we can't know for sure, we must leave the truth of the matter to eternity.

QUESTION No. 895: "We know from Science and Biology that such creatures (dinosaurs) did exist." Is this the only way we can know?

ANSWER: May I suggest to you that we also can know of their existence from the fortieth Chapter of the book of Job, Verses fifteen through thirty-four: "Behold now behemoth, which I made with thee; he eateth grass as an ox. Lo now his strength is in his loins, and his force is in the navel of his belly. He moveth his tail like a cedar: the sinews of his stones are wrapped together. His bones are as strong pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron. He is the chief of the ways of God; He that made him can make His sword to approach unto him. Surely the mountains bring him forth food, where all the beasts of the field play. He lieth under the shady trees, in the covert of the reed, and fens. The shady trees cover him with their shadow; the willows of the brook compass him about. Behold he drinketh up a river, and hasteth not; he trusteth that he can draw Jordan up into his mouth. He taketh it with his eyes; his nose pierces through snares." Some have suggested that the "behemoth" is an elephant, but in light of Verse seventeen the suggestion is without merit, because the creature here discussed "moveth his tail like a cedar." The tail of an elephant is nothing but a wisp!

QUESTION No. 896: What does "pertaineth" mean in Deuteronomy 22:5?

ANSWER: The word translated "pertaineth" in the subject passage means "something prepared." In this case, the passage means 'a woman shall not wear that which has been "prepared for" the man and the man shall not wear that which has been prepared for" the woman.' Such is an "abomination unto the Lord thy God."

QUESTION No. 897: Did God authorize Satan to tempt Eve?

ANSWER: God did not authorize Satan to tempt Eve in the sense that He directed him to do so. However, God does permit all of us, being created with the ability to choose, to be tempted as Eve was. He did not create us as robots to blindly do His bidding. He expects each of us to demonstrate our love and respect for Him through obedience to His directives as contained in the Bible. Such a demonstration would be meaningless if we were created without the ability to choose. Eve was tempted then, as we are tempted today and chose the wrong path. Temptation can come in three ways; through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (I John 2:16). When lust conceives, it brings forth sin. Eve was tempted through all of these lusts and yielded to them and, therefore, sinned and was separated from God (Genesis 3:24; Isaiah 59:1-2). So it is with us today! When we yield to these temptations and lust, we, too, sin. God does not direct Satan to tempt any of us (James 1:12-15), but certainly, He permits him to do so!

QUESTION No. 898: Why did God require that some foods were unclean and others were unclean (Leviticus 11)? Do we respect these distinctions today? If not, why not?

ANSWER: The primary reason for the distinction by God of the clean and the unclean was undoubtedly to establish laws that would discourage the Israelites from associating with the inhabitants of surrounding nations in order that they might not be partakers of their vices and idolatries. The Jews were taught to hate and abhor these practices in others and would, therefore, naturally be repulsed by those who did so and would have little to do with them. In addition, because of the climate and conditions of that time, there were also secondary beneficial results as to dietetics and sanitation that resulted from compliance with these laws. It was necessary, as well, that the Israelites (the people whom God chose, through whom would come the Messiah) keep their lineage pure in view of this fact (Genesis 49:10; Exodus 34:15-16; Deuteronomy 18:15-18). This fact having been accomplished in Christ, and with the Old Law having been taken out of the way by Him (II Corinthians 3:1-18; Galatians 3:19-29; Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 2:14), Christians are not bound to recognize these clean/unclean distinctions. In fact, to the contrary, as clearly stated in the following New Testament passages that are binding upon all men everywhere today: Acts 10:9-18; Colossians 2:16; I Timothy 4:1-5. Therefore, for the Christian today, “every creature of God is good and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: for it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer.”

QUESTION No. 899: Explain Ecclesiastes 3:19-21. Does the spirit go back to God when someone dies?

ANSWER: In order to understand any passage in Ecclesiastes, one must understand that Solomon is speaking from the viewpoint of a vain man or the way that man sees and does things (For example see Ecclesiastes 1:13-18; 2:1-11, 15, 21, 26). He is saying, then, in Verse 19, that the way he, as a vain man, had one time perceived life was that there is little, if any, difference between the man and the beast; that man had no preeminence over the beast; that all go to the grave as an end point of life and return to dust. This, of course, is not the way of God. He made man to have dominion over the animals (Genesis 1:28) and in Matthew 12:12, Jesus says clearly that man is better than the beast. So what is being expressed, by Solomon, is not God's wisdom, but rather man's faulty wisdom. Yet, there are many today who, as Solomon once did, put no difference between man and animals, but they do not do so on the basis of Scripture. In Verse 21, he states that, as vain men, none know whether the spirit of man goes upward, or that of a beast downward, assuming no difference between the two. Later in life Solomon apparently came to the truth of the matter. In Ecclesiastes 12:7 he would state, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." Then in closing the book, he declares in Chapter 12, Verse 13, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." All else (man's perceptions) is vanity of vanities (Ecclesiastes 1:2)!

Consider the following as you study these matters: There are twelve chapters in the book of Ecclesiastes. The first six state the vanity of the conditions of human life, while the last six deal with how one should conduct himself under those conditions.

QUESTION No. 900: Explain more on Psalms 146:4. Is there life after death?

ANSWER: This verse refers to the Prince of Verse three. It states that he (the prince) dies like any other man, no matter how exalted he may be. His thoughts (plans and schemes) perish with him. God is no respecter of persons. As one dies all shall die (Hebrews 9:27).

QUESTION No. 901: What does Solomon teach in Proverbs 21:9, 19? Does he mean we should escape and separate from wives who are angry and contentious? If so, who will turn them to God (I Corinthians 7:16)?

ANSWER: No! Solomon is not teaching that the married should separate. God has ordained that there be one husband and one wife for life; that marriage can only be terminated by death (Romans 7:1-3) or in the case, and for the cause, of fornication (Matthew 19:9), provided that the one putting away their mate is totally innocent in the matter!

A proverb is a short, wise saying, expressing a truth in terms that enable clearer understanding. Solomon is simply stating the truth, in both of these proverbs, that it is often easier to withstand the elements outside the home than it is the storms within the home caused by one who is angry and contentious! Certainly, as you imply, those who are so need to be converted and turned toward God! Also, we can see in this truth the wisdom of marrying one who is already a Christian and, therefore, not given to fits of anger and of a contentious attitude.

QUESTION No. 902: Would you please clarify Isaiah 9:6-7?

ANSWER: Generally, Verse six is a prophecy of the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ, while Verse seven deals with the nature of the kingdom over which He was to rule. Verse six specifically: “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given:” The reference is to Jesus Christ who was to come for our benefit. “And the government shall be upon His shoulder:” This means that the Messiah would come as a ruler and sustainer of government. “And His name shall be called Wonderful:” Everything about Him would create wonder in those who would come to know Him. “Counseller:” One of honorable rank, able to advise princes and kings. “The Mighty God:” The Messiah, Jesus Christ would have all of the attributes of deity. He would possess the Divine nature. “The everlasting Father:” means ‘the Father of eternity’ or ‘one who possesses the eternal nature, without beginning or ending’ (Micah 5:2). “The Prince of Peace:” His purpose in coming would be to restore and maintain peace in the coming kingdom.

Verse seven specifically: “Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end:” This means that there would be no limits to His government and the peace to be enjoyed therein. “Upon the throne of David and upon His kingdom:” He would sit upon David’s throne (refer to II Samuel 7:12-13 & Acts 2:30). “To order it:” means to raise it up. “And to establish it:” means He would provide a proper foundation for His kingdom. “With judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever:” His rule would be just and right in every way forever. “The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this:” means that these things would come to pass through the desire of Jehovah.

QUESTION No. 903: Could you shed more light on II Samuel 24:1 versus I Chronicles 21:1?

ANSWER: I reckon that the question is, “Who moved David to number the people, God or Satan?” The answer is *Satan*! The implication of the verses is that God permitted Satan to provoke David to number the people.

QUESTION No. 904: Could you shed more light on Genesis 6:3 versus Genesis 9:29?

ANSWER: In Genesis 6:3, God is saying that man had one hundred twenty years left on the earth before He would destroy it by water. Genesis 9:29 says that Noah (not being destroyed in the flood) lived nine hundred fifty years.

QUESTION No. 905: There are many covenants in the Old Testament, i.e., between God and man; between God and Abraham; between God and Israel, etc. In lesson five of Beginning Bible Studies, it is suggested that the Law of Moses is the first covenant. How can we show that the Law of Moses was the first?

ANSWER: The lesson is not teaching that the Law of Moses was given before the covenant promises made by God to Abraham, etc. The lesson is teaching that the Bible consists of the first Covenant, i.e., the Old Testament and the second Covenant, i.e., the New Testament. That this is the case can be plainly seen in such passages as II Corinthians 3 and Hebrews 8:5-10! II Corinthians 3 is a discussion of the doing away

(Verses 13-14) of the Law of Moses (Verse 7); the Old Testament/First Covenant (Verse 14) and replacing it with that which is more glorious (Verses 7-11), the Law of Christ, the New Testament/Second Covenant (Verse 6-11). Hebrews 8 is doing the same thing! In Verses 6 & 7, Paul talks about a "better," Covenant/Testament, a second Covenant/Testament replacing the first. The second would not be according to the Covenant made with Moses (Verse 9).

QUESTION No. 906: Was Abraham a Jew or Gentile?

ANSWER: At the time of Abraham people were not so categorized. The title of Jew was first applied only to those of the tribe of Judah, subsequently applied to those who returned from the captivity, and finally to all the Hebrew race.

QUESTION No. 907: Would you explain Genesis 3:22?

ANSWER: The meaning of Genesis 3:22 is better expressed as "Behold, what has become of man who was as one of us" or literally, "Behold the man was as one of us." The tense of the Hebrew does not permit the verb "is come." The sense then is, 'he was like Us in purity and holiness, but because of sin he has fallen.'

QUESTION No. 908: Why should Moses be punished so that he couldn't enter Canaan, just because he was angry with those rebellious children of Israel? I don't know why the Lord told Moses that he didn't believe Him and so on. If Moses did do something wrong, what can we learn from it? (Numbers 20:7-13).

ANSWER: It is true that Moses was angry at the rebellious children of Israel, but it is also true that Moses was just as guilty of rebellion toward God. He was told to smite the rock (Exodus 17:6) and speak to the rock (Numbers 20:8), but he disobeyed and smote the rock twice and did not speak to it! Rather than inform the children of Israel that God would provide water from the rock, Moses said, "Hear now, ye rebels; must *we* (Moses and Aaron) fetch you water out of this rock?" In this, Moses usurped the glory that rightly belonged to the Father (Numbers 20:12). In all of this he sinned, because he transgressed the commandments that God had given him (I John 3:4)! Anger toward the

children of Israel did not justify his sin! Neither is there such justification for sin today! God expects to be obeyed!

God told Moses that he did not believe Him, because Moses did not obey Him! None can doubt the fact that Moses accepted Jehovah as his God! Neither can any doubt that God demanded more than mere acknowledgment of His divine nature by Moses! Many people today think that if they just believe in Jesus (acknowledge His divine nature) they will be saved. However, belief, as used in the Bible means more than just agreement or mental assent. Belief, as used in the Bible, means trusting in God, conjoined with obedience. It means a complete surrender to the will of God. This is the way the word is used in Numbers 20:12 and in John 3:16. When Moses disobeyed God, God said, "ye believed me not." There is no difference in saving belief and obedience in the Bible and there is no difference in damning unbelief and disobedience! When one says he or she believes and thereby claims to be saved without obedience, they do so on the basis of man's teaching, not God's. In the Great Commission, Jesus stated the principle very clearly, "He that believeth *and* is baptized (obeys) shall be saved! He did not say, "accept Me as your personal Savior!"

In the subject passage, we learn that believing in God includes obedience; that there is a penalty for sin (Romans 6:23); that God says what He means and means what He says; and that if we do not believe and obey the commandments of God, we are in rebellion against Him!

QUESTION No. 909: Why do we use or remember the Babylonian names for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, but not for Daniel?

ANSWER: The matter is one of speculation, but it seems reasonable to assume that the reason we most often use the names of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego is because these are the names used in scripture in the event with which we most often identify them, i.e., the fiery furnace. Had the scriptures in the events of Daniel, Chapter three related the names Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, I would suspect they would be so identified today.

The same is true of the use of the name Daniel. It is the name most often used to identify him throughout the book! The name Daniel is used 75 times. Belteshazzar is used only ten times! The fact that Daniel is his Jewish name and the book is a part of the Old Law by which the Jews were governed is, as well, of no little significance.

QUESTION No. 910: In the account of Daniel in the lion's den, why were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego not also thrown into the lion's den with Daniel? The same question also comes up as to where Daniel was when Shadrach, Meshach, and Abdnego were thrown into the fiery furnace. Do you know why these men were not all included together in the persecutions?

ANSWER: Again we are dealing with speculation, but the following is possible. Different offices were held by the three men as opposed to that of Daniel (Daniel 2: 49). Daniel, being in a higher position of influence and authority, obviously was very much in the king's favor. It would only be natural for the three being in lesser positions to be so charged first. If these three were taken out of the way, it would follow that the king in order to be fair and just, must also remove Daniel. To begin with one in such a high position as Daniel would not be prudent in the minds of the Chaldeans. It may also be the case that Daniel was involved in some matter elsewhere in the empire and was not present at the dedication of the image that the king had set up (Daniel 3:3) when the three men refused to worship the image (Daniel 3:12).

The reason why Daniel was the only one thrown into the lion's den is given in Daniel 6:1-9. Daniel was first among the three presidents and over the one hundred and twenty princes of Babylon, second only to the king. Clearly, there was extreme jealousy of this one whom the king "preferred" above all the others, thus the attempt to remove him. The other presidents and princes would not be similarly motivated to deal with those in lesser positions as held by Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, assuming they still held those positions. We need to remember that Daniel 3:30 is the last mention of these three men and that the events of Chapter six followed after the intervening events of Chapters four and five, a period involving many years. The situation regarding the three young men, as to their position and whereabouts, during the events of Chapter six is uncertain and unknown!

QUESTION No. 911: What is the difference between II Kings 8:26 and II Chronicles 22:2?

ANSWER: There are different thoughts and suggestions about what appears to be a discrepancy between these two verses. Some believe that since numbers in Hebrew appear very much alike that in translating from translations going back as far as the original document (which is not now available) that a translator or a copyist simply made an error. We must remember that we are reading from a translation (not the original). Some scholars, however, believe that a copyist's error does not exist, that Ahaziah was admitted to co-regency at twenty-two and continued in that office for twenty years, after which he became the sole monarch at forty-two, reigning in that capacity in Jerusalem for one year.

QUESTION No. 912: What is the difference between I Chronicles 21:5 and II Samuel 24:9?

ANSWER: The difference of the three hundred thousand men of Israel is accounted for by those already enlisted in the royal service (I Chronicles 27). The difference of the thirty thousand men of Judah is accounted for by that number stationed on the Philistine frontier (II Samuel 6:1).

QUESTION No. 913: What is the difference between II Kings 24:8 and II Chronicles 36:9?

ANSWER: Jehoiachin was taken into partnership with his father at age eight and began to reign on his own at age eighteen. Being trained by his father, he followed in the evil ways that he had taught.

QUESTION No. 914: Where is the Ark of the Covenant today?

ANSWER: There has been much speculation as to its existence and location. However, the truth is that none really knows anything about the matter, except that it was

last known to be in Solomon's Temple (I Kings 8:1-9). With the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple in 587 BC by the Babylonian, Nebuchadnezzar, it disappeared and was likely destroyed. The children of Israel had, after much longsuffering by God, totally rejected Him, which is the reason for the destruction and their being taken into captivity. The presence of God was, therefore, no longer manifested on the mercy seat atop the Ark (Exodus 25:22). It became nothing but a piece of furniture with His absence, being of no real spiritual value!

QUESTION No. 915: What was the name of the brass serpent that Moses lifted up in the wilderness?

ANSWER: In II Kings 18:4, we learn that the children of Israel called the brass serpent, "Nehushtan," which literally means "a piece of brass," or "the brass thing." We do not know why the name was given, but it may be the name was selected simply to avoid using the repulsive word of "serpent."

QUESTION No. 916: Was the hand of God in the appointment of the kings of Israel? If so, why did God allow them to worship false gods?

ANSWER: Yes! The hand of God was in the appointment of the Kings of Israel (I Samuel 16:1-13) and not only these kings, but of every power on earth (Romans 13:1). Every man is created a free moral agent to make his own choices in this life. Some of the kings chose to do good, others to do bad and each received, and will receive, the rewards of their choosing! The same is true with Christians today. God appointed in the long ago that all faithful Christians will be saved (Ephesians 1: 1-14). Because He made this appointment does not mean that He also causes us not to sin (I John 1:10). God did not make man to be automatons to do His bidding.

QUESTION No. 917: If God gave Solomon such great wisdom, why did he foolishly marry so many wives who turned him away from God?

ANSWER: Solomon upon becoming king of Israel prayed to God for wisdom to judge and rule Israel (I Kings 3:6-10). He did not ask for wisdom so that he might not sin! Because of his prayer, God responded to his prayer and, in part, said, "I have given

thee a wise and understanding heart" (I Kings 3:11-15). However, Solomon was in the flesh and, though the wisest of all who ever lived to that day, was a man as we are; one who could be tempted! There can be no doubt that Solomon knew of God's command of Exodus 34:16, but he turned from that commandment and gave over to the temptations of this life in the taking of many wives. We don't know what he was thinking as he did so, but one could easily speculate that in having an abundance of this world's goods, even to excess, and knowing that he, as king, could possess all of this and even more, that thinking could have possibly been present in the taking possession of many wives and concubines! Possession of great wealth has caused many to fall away from God!

QUESTION No. 918: Why did Naomi's husband and sons die? Was it God's hand that made it happen as Naomi said? Was it because they went into a strange land?

ANSWER: The Bible does not give the cause of death of these men. Naomi in her bitterness falsely charged God with her great loss!

QUESTION No. 919: Why did God command Israel two destroy many cities when they took the Promised Land? Why did He choose Israel to be His instrument to wipe out these people?

ANSWER: God had promised this land to the children of Israel who were to faithfully maintain that pure lineage through which the Messiah was to come. Those who previously occupied the Land of Canaan were idol worshippers who in time past had turned away from God and were engaged in all kind of unlawfulness, even that of offering their own children in death to idols. They had debased themselves as did those before the flood and God did not want His people to be associated with, nor to marry among these heathen, lest they be, also, turned away from Him and that lineage be destroyed! He, therefore, as God, made the decision to destroy the sin filled land as He did in the flood and since the land had been promised to the Israelites, it was God's choice that they should remove the heathen whom they were to replace! It is interesting to note that they were given the land as a gift by the grace of God, but they had to do something to get the grace (Joshua 1:2)!

QUESTION No. 920: God gave the command, "Thou shalt not kill." Why then did He command them to kill the Canaanites?

ANSWER: The sixth commandment "Thou shalt not kill" had nothing to do with national wars! It meant that one person, of all to whom the commandment was given, was not, with premeditation, to murder another!

QUESTION No. 921: In II Samuel 24:13 and I Chronicles 21:11-12 we have differing numbers. Which is correct?

ANSWER: There is clearly a copyist's error involved. In I Chronicles 21:12, the number is three, not seven, as we find in II Samuel 24:13. The Septuagint records three, the same as in Chronicles, so this is no doubt the true reading, the Hebrew letter zayin (z) SEVEN, being mistaken for the Hebrew letter gimel (g), THREE. A mistake of this kind might be easily made from the similarity of the letters.

QUESTION No. 922: In II Chronicles 36:9 and II Kings 24:8 we have differing numbers. Which is correct?

ANSWER: In II Kings 24:8 it says that Jehoiachin was eighteen years of age. In II Chronicle 36:9, he is said to be only eight years of age, but this must be a copyist's mistake; for we find that, having reigned only three months, he was carried captive to Babylon, and there he had wives; and it is very improbable that a child between eight and nine years of age could have wives; and of such a tender age, it can scarcely be said that, as a king, he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord. The place in Chronicles must be corrupted by either translators or copyists.

QUESTION No. 923: In II Samuel 10:18 and I Chronicles 19:18 we have differing numbers. Which is correct?

ANSWER: In II Samuel 10:18, we have the figure of seven hundred chariots, but in the parallel place, II Chronicles 19:18, it is said, David slew of the Syrians SEVEN

THOUSAND men, which fought in chariots. It is difficult to ascertain the right number in this and similar places. It is very probable that, in former times, the Jews expressed, as they often do now, their numbers, not by words at full length, but by numeral letters; and, as many of the letters bear a great similarity to each other, mistakes might easily creep in when the numeral letters came to be expressed by words at full length. This alone will account for the many mistakes that we find in the numbers in these books, and renders a mistake here very probable. The Hebrew letter zayin (z), with a dot above, stands for seven thousand, the Hebrew letter nun (n) for seven hundred: the great similarity of these letters might easily cause the one to be mistaken for the other, and so produce an error in this place.

QUESTION No. 924: In I Kings 7:26 and II Chronicles 4:5 we have differing numbers. Which is correct?

ANSWER: In II Chronicles 4:5, we have the figure of three thousand baths, while in 1 Kings 7:26, we read two thousand baths. Since this book was written after the Babylonian captivity, it is very possible that reference is here made to the Babylonian bath, which might have been less than the Jewish. We have already seen that the cubit of Moses, or of the ancient Hebrews, was longer than the Babylonian by one palm. It might be the same with the measures of capacity; so that two thousand of the ancient Jewish baths might have been equal to three thousand of those used after the captivity. The Targum, a Hebrew translation, solves the problem by saying "It received three thousand baths of dry measure, and held two thousand of liquid measure."

QUESTION No. 925: In II Chronicles 9:25 and I Kings 4:26 we have differing numbers. Which is correct?

ANSWER: In I Kings 4:26, we read the number of forty thousand stalls, while in II Chronicles 9:25, instead of forty thousand stalls, we read four thousand; and even this number might be quite sufficient to hold horses for twelve thousand horsemen; for stalls and stables may be here mean the same thing. In I Kings 10:26 it is said he had one thousand four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen; and this is the reading in II Chronicles 1:14. In II Chronicles 9:25, already quoted, instead of forty thousand stalls for horses, the Septuagint has “tessares chiliades theleiai hippoi,” four thousand mares; and in this place the whole verse is omitted both by the Syriac and Arabic translations. In

the Targum of Rabbi Joseph, a Jewish translation on this book, we have “arba meah,” four hundred, instead of the four thousand in Chronicles, and the forty thousand in the text. From a comparison of parallel places we may be satisfied that there is a corruption in the numbers somewhere; and as a sort of medium, we may take for the correct answer to be four thousand stalls, one thousand four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen.

QUESTION No. 926: How many people went down into Egypt (Genesis 46:27; Deuteronomy 10:22; Acts 7:14)?

ANSWER: Genesis 46:27 says that the number of souls was sixty-six, besides Jacob’s sons’ wives. Verse twenty-seven says all that came into Egypt were seventy, while Acts 7:14 says that there were seventy-five. There is a remarkable addition here in the Septuagint (Greek), which must be noticed: "These were the sons of Manasseh whom his Syrian concubine bore unto him: Machir, and Machir begat Galaad. The sons of Ephraim, Manasseh's brother, were Sutalaam and Taam; and the sons of Sutalaam, Edem." These add five persons (Machir, Galaad, Sutalaam, Taam, and Edem) to the list, and make out the number given by Stephen, Acts 7:14, which it seems he had taken from the text of the Septuagint. The addition in the Septuagint is not found in either the Hebrew or the Samaritan at present; and some suppose that it was taken either from Numbers 26:29,35, or I Chronicles 7:14-20, but in none of these places does the addition appear as it stands in the Septuagint, though some of the names are found interspersed.

If to the sixty-six children of Genesis 46:27, and grandchildren, and great grandchildren, we add Jacob himself, Joseph and his two sons, the amount is seventy, the whole amount of Jacob's family which settled in Egypt.

In this statement of sixty-six, the wives of Jacob's sons, who formed part of the household, are omitted; but they amounted to nine, for of the twelve wives of the twelve sons of Jacob, Judah's wife was dead, Genesis 38:12, and Simeon's also, as we may collect from his youngest son Shaul by a Canaanitess, Genesis 46:10, and Joseph's wife was already in Egypt. These nine wives, therefore, added to the sixty-six, give seventy-five souls the whole amount of Jacob's household that went down with him to Egypt, critically corresponding with the statement in the New Testament, that ‘Joseph sent for his father Jacob and all his kindred, amounting to seventy-five souls.’

QUESTION No. 927: Can the Medium or the Spiritist bring back the spirit of the dead (I Samuel 28:3-17)? Was a demon only impersonating Samuel?

ANSWER: No! So called Mediums and Spiritists are fakers and have no such powers. The woman in I Samuel 28 apparently had gone through her fake and phony ritual, but notice carefully that even she did not expect Samuel to appear, because she knew that she did not have that kind of power. Samuel, however, actually appeared as is attested to by what he said to Saul in Verses 15-19 by way of prophecy that came to pass. Samuel's appearance was a miracle performed by God on this occasion. It was neither of the woman, nor of any other power!

QUESTION No. 928: Did Adam and Eve partake of the actual fruit of an actual tree or does it mean something different?

ANSWER: There is no reason to believe it was not real fruit on a real tree. The tree and fruit were just as real as was the garden, as was Adam and Eve, as is God, and as is the devil that tempted them. If these things are all real and the Bible speaks of them as being real, who can deny that the tree and the fruit were also real? For example: Romans 5:12-21 discusses the sin and disobedience of Adam. He is further discussed in I Corinthians 15:45-49, as is both Adam and Eve and their sin in I Timothy 2:13-14. In II Corinthians 11:3 there is a discussion of the fact of the serpent beguiling Eve as recorded in Genesis, Chapter three. The New Testament written by men inspired of the Holy Ghost (John 16:13) who gave them "words" to write (I Corinthians 2:13) spoke of the events in the garden as having actually happened as written and expressed by Moses who was also inspired of God. There is no reason to accept the foolishness of men who would say otherwise!

QUESTION No. 929: Why did God's chosen people enjoy sinning by worshiping idols?

ANSWER: Worshiping idols in the Bible very often included all sorts of sensual carousing, every imaginable sexual sin of the worst sort, and excessive feasting and drinking, which indeed did bring temporary pleasure to the participants. The simple fact

is that the idol worshipers gave in to the influences of Satan and the lusts of this world rather than serving God according to His will. Good men and women, however, did not give in to this wickedness, but as Moses, "Chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasure of sin for a season" (Hebrews 11:25). They esteemed the riches of Christ greater then the pleasures of this world, because they looked forward to the reward that He had promised (Hebrews 11:26), i.e., "a city with foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10). The faithful of God today will follow in the footsteps of these who died in faith (Hebrews 11:13)!

QUESTION No. 930: In the book of Jeremiah there is a sentence that talks about a woman encompassing a man. Was Jeremiah talking about Mary, the Mother of Jesus?

ANSWER: The passage is Jeremiah 31:22. Some have said that the reference is to Mary, who encompassed Jesus in her womb. However, this seems to be reaching for something that is not there. In context, the discussion is about the restoration of Israel who was said to be a "backsliding daughter." The word "compass" is from the Hebrew *cabab,* which may also be translated, "enclose or embrace." The idea is that the woman, symbolic of the nation of Israel, as used throughout the chapter, will, upon her restoration, once again will embrace the man, symbolic of Jehovah, their God. In other words, it is simply saying that, in her restoration, Israel will once again embrace God. This appears to be the clear and evident meaning, even from a casual reading of the verses preceding verse twenty-two!

QUESTION No. 931: Who are the people of Ephraim and Manasseh and why did the people of Ephraim fight against the children of Israel?

ANSWER: Ephraim and Manasseh were the sons of Joseph and Asenath, a daughter of the Egyptian Potipherah, a priest of On. Though these two were only grandchildren of Jacob, they were treated as if they were his children. As a result their descendants were regarded as two of the tribes of Israel.

In Judges 12:1-6, we learn the reason why the tribe of Ephraim (not Manasseh) fought against the men of Gilead and Jephthah, a judge and deliverer of Israel, i.e.,

because he had not summoned them for assistance in the Ammonite war. There was undoubtedly much jealousy on the part of the chief and great tribe of Ephraim because they had not been asked to participate in this successful war, won with God's help by a handful of valiant men. Apparently, Jephthah did not ask for their assistance since they had previously refused to help (Verse two). Surely God did not approve of Ephraim's battle with Jephthah, because on that day forty-two thousand of that tribe were slain.

QUESTION No. 932: In Deuteronomy 18:14-17, God said the Israelites could set a king over them, but when they did, I Samuel 8:4-7 says God was displeased with them. Please explain.

ANSWER: Deuteronomy 18:14-17 is not discussing a physical king over Israel, but, rather, it is a prophecy concerning Christ (Acts 3:22-23). I Samuel 8:6 says that "Samuel" was displeased with the Israelites' demand for a king, because he thought they were rejecting him. God said that was not the case; that they were in reality rejecting Him, not Samuel. At God's instructions, Samuel protested to the people, but because of the hardness of their hearts God allowed them to have the government for which they pleaded after warning them of the consequences to come. He allowed them to have a king that they might learn from this, that royalty itself could never secure the salvation that they expected, unless the occupant of the throne submitted altogether to the will of the Lord. They learned in Saul that true salvation was not in men, but only in God; a lesson for us today!

QUESTION No. 932: God said kings were not to multiply horses, silver, and gold, but David and Solomon had many horses and much silver and gold. Did they disobey God?

ANSWER: They disobeyed God, but not in the owning of possessions that were given to them by God (I Chronicles 29:12-14; II Chronicles 1:12; II Chronicles 9:22). The passage of which you inquire is found in Deuteronomy 8:13-14 and is spoken to the children of Israel. In context, God is saying, 'don't let the accumulation of wealth cause you to forget what I have done for you in bringing you out of Egypt into the promised land; remember my commandments, judgments, and statutes, which I command you this day.' God never forbade wealth, only the misuse of it through putting trust in it, rather than in the one that gave it!

QUESTION No. 933: In Deuteronomy 20:11-14 the Lord through Moses said the Israelites could marry women they had captured in war. How do we harmonize this with God's command not to marry women of the land?

ANSWER: Certainly, God directed that such marriages should not occur (Deuteronomy 7:3). In Deuteronomy 20:14, God is not changing His mind and allowing such marriages to occur. In fact, marriage is not even under discussion. You are reading something into the passage that God did not intend. The fact of slaying only the men and taking their women, little ones, and cattle as spoils of war does not indicate marriage to the women. If one would so assume, he would also have to assume marriage to the little ones and the cattle, which also were taken as spoils of war. These were undoubtedly brought captive in some form of servitude, but to read marriage into the context goes too far in fabricating a biblical contradiction.

QUESTION No. 934: In what way was the fourth kingdom of Daniel's prophecies different from the others?

ANSWER: Daniel 7:7 states that the fourth kingdom was different from the first three in that it would be a divided kingdom as indicated by the multiplicity of "horns" of the fourth beast and as expressly stated in Daniel 2:41-42.

QUESTION No. 935: How and when was the fourth kingdom divided?

ANSWER: The fourth kingdom would be divided as the iron and clay were in the image. It does not necessarily mean that there would be an open rupture or an actual separation into two parts; but that there would be "such a diversity in the internal constitution" that, while there would be the element of great power, there would be also an element of weakness. There would be something diverse that could never be blended with the element of strength, so as to produce one united nation. This division was seen in the strife and animosity that existed between the Roman senate and the popular military generals, Pompey and Julius Caesar. This division continued between the senate and the emperors of Rome even after Rome became a world empire. The Roman Empire existed

from 166 BC to 476 AD. Significant strife and division occurred during the one hundred years prior to the birth of Christ, which included the death of Caesar in 44 BC.

QUESTION No. 936: Are the present day powers prophesied in the book of Daniel?

ANSWER: No! The prophecies of Daniel pointed to the fifth kingdom over which the promised Messiah was to reign.

QUESTION No. 937: Daniel 12:1 discusses a time of distress. When was/will this be fulfilled? How and by whom? Does Verse 2 talk of the resurrection at Christ's coming? What does Verse 11 and 12 talk about?

ANSWER: The passage refers to the savage attack and distress that was to be heaped on the Jewish nation by Antiochus Epiphanes who lived from 215 BC to 163 BC. Verse two is speaking symbolically and, though it shows that there was at that time a belief in the resurrection, refers to a Jewish resurrection from captivity and lethargy to serve God and nation courageously.

Daniel 12:11 is a reference to the destruction that would be brought by Antiochus Epiphanes and his desecration of the temple, who would even sacrifice pigs (an unclean animal to the Jews) upon the altar. He would not allow the Jews to continue their daily sacrifices and, in fact, caused the Jews to forsake all order of worship as prescribed by Moses. He forced the Jews to worship idols and even forbade them to circumcise their children! He was truly an abomination.

The figure of 1335 of Daniel 12:12 must be understood in the light of the figure of 1290 in 12:11. The "one week" of Daniel 9:27, which was to commence with the beginning of the personal ministry of Christ, equates to seven years (a year for each day). The Covenant of the Messiah was to be confirmed in the midst of the week or three and one-half years or 1290 days. The sacrifice and oblation was to cease at this time and did so with the death of Christ on the cross three and one-half years after His ministry began. The 1335 days of Daniel 12:12 includes the 1290 days of Daniel 12:11 plus 45 days or

years and refers to that period of time when the preaching of the Gospel would also be extended to the Gentiles, causing the expected blessing to fall upon all flesh, Jew and Gentile alike!

QUESTION No. 938: When was Zechariah 14 fulfilled?

ANSWER: It was fulfilled with the first coming of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.

QUESTION No. 939: Please explain Zechariah 14:5b, 6, 7, 8, & 21.

ANSWER: Zechariah 14:5b is a prophecy about the coming of the powers of heaven (symbolically expressed as the coming of God and His saints) in the destruction of Jerusalem. Verse Six is parallel to Matthew 24:29. Verse Seven states that Christ only, at that time, knew when the destruction would come. Verse Nine is a reference to the spreading of the Gospel of Christ, whose blood would flow backwards and forward (Hebrews 9:15) to cover sin. Verse Nine simply states that Jesus Christ, the coming Messiah, was to be the One King over all people. Verse Twenty-one refers to that time in the church, over which Christ would reign, when there would be a great advancement of holiness. Here the writer states that even the common vessels used in everyday life would be used as vessels of holiness and that no enemy could harm those the faithful, nor could they participate in the holy activities of God's people.

QUESTION No. 940: In Isaiah 2:2, what does it mean, "all nations shall flow to it?"

ANSWER: The prophecy of Isaiah Two has to do with the coming kingdom or the Church of Christ. It was to be established in the top of the mountains (Jerusalem) and people of all nations would flow into it. Such as been fulfilled from the beginning (Acts, Chapter Two) and continues today!

QUESTION No. 941: How do all nations flow into it?

ANSWER: Through obedience to the Gospel of Christ (Acts 2:37-47).

QUESTION No. 942: If the above prophecy has been fulfilled, has Isaiah 2:4 been fulfilled? If not, explain?

ANSWER: Yes! Verse four has been fulfilled. The Verse, however, is not referring to peace among the nations from which people flow. It is referring to the peace that will exist among brethren (both Jew and Gentile) within the kingdom/church that was to be established (Ephesians 2:11-16).

QUESTION No. 943: Please explain Joel Chapter 3, Verse 1, 3, & 20.

ANSWER: The word "for" of Chapter Three links the discussion to what was written in the last part of Chapter Two, which obviously prophesies about the establishment of the church/kingdom of Christ (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2:16-21). So "in those days and in that time" refers to the same period. It was at this time that those of the captivity were first brought to Christ.

Verse three is a discussion of things that happened to the Jews when they were in captivity. It says that their captors would cast lots to decide who would own them as slaves. They paid prostitutes of their evil societies for sexual favors by giving a boy to be a slave rather than giving money. They though so little of females that they would give a girl into slavery for a glass of wine! In the peaceable kingdom of Christ, none of these things were to exist. It follows then that if all were to enter that kingdom, none of these things would exist in our world today!

Verse Twenty does not refer to an earthly Judah, nor earthly Jerusalem, for these must come to an end, together with the earth itself, of whose end the prophets well knew. It is then the one people of God, the true Judah, the people who praise God, the Israel of God that is the church (Galatians 6:16), which is indeed Israel. All the enemies of God will come to a destructive end in eternity; but His church shall never come to an end.

"The gates of hell shall not prevail against her" (Matthew 16:18). The enemy shall not destroy her; time shall not consume her; she shall never decay. The people of God shall abide before Him and through Him here, and shall dwell with Him forever in a place Christ is preparing for the faithful.

QUESTION No. 944: It is difficult for a rich person to enter heaven. How is it then that in Deuteronomy 8:18 that Moses said that God would give power to Israel to "get wealth?"

ANSWER: Certainly, as stated, it is difficult for a rich man to enter heaven. Jesus so taught in Matthew 19:23-24 and Solomon, as well, recognized the same truth in Ecclesiastes 5:12-13. Deuteronomy, Chapter 8 holds to the same principle. In context, God is warning the Children of Israel who had just suffered forty years of hardship, deprivation, and hunger, and who were now going to cross over Jordan to inherit the Promised Land of milk and honey, to not allow the riches of that land to cause them to forget the God who, through His grace, enabled them to "get wealth." They had been a people of humility in their desert wandering and had been caused to see that "man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God, doth man live" (Verse 3). It is the case, however, that man is often lifted up by pride, because of riches, and as a result has a tendency to no longer be humble as at the beginning, but rather becomes one who forgets the God, who through His providential guidance, enabled the wealth to come. In Verse 18, we have a summary of this warning directed to those who were to "get wealth" in Caanan Land far beyond what they had possessed previously. God warns here: "But thou shalt remember the Lord thy God: for it is He who giveth thee power to get wealth (i.e., the wealth of the promised Land)." Through God, came the power to get the land and it's wealth in order to confirm the Promise that He had made to their fathers (Genesis 15:18-21; Exodus 23:31; Deuteronomy 1:7-8). The warning to the Children of Israel was, as it is to all men, 'don't allow riches to cause you to turn from God, but rather remember Him who gave you the power to gain riches, for without Him you have no such power.' James said, "Every good and every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of lights" (James 1:17). Without God, not even the unjust could be rich, because He provides life through the sun and the rain that He gives to both the just and the unjust (Matthew 5:45)! The just will, in humility, handle and dispense their riches in accordance with (and in memory of) God's provision and will, as did wealthy Abraham, a man of faith. The unjust person will, in pride, credit himself for the riches that God as allowed him to have. He will forget God, as a faithless individual, not recognizing the needs of others (spiritually and physically), as did the rich man of Luke 16:19-31. Since God caused Abraham (and others) to be wealthy in their

faithfulness, we can safely conclude that wealth in and of itself is not sinful. However, it must also be concluded that the wealthy are more likely to be lifted up with pride that will divert one's trust from God to self, thus endangering the final destiny of the soul! This truth, the Bible consistently expresses throughout!

QUESTION No. 945: Why was Malachi God's last inspired messenger?

ANSWER: It is true that Malachi was possibly the last prophet of the Old Testament, but why Malachi was chosen to be that individual we are not told. He wrote the final inspired work of the Old Testament in about 450 BC It should, however, be noted that Malachi was contemporary with Nehemiah who had been appointed Governor in 446 BC and who penned, by inspiration, the book that bears his name. It is this book that actually closes out Old Testament history, although Malachi was apparently the last to prophesy in the Old Testament. We should not, however, assume that he was God's last inspired messenger of all time, for, even he, spoke of other inspired messengers to come, i.e., Jesus Christ, the "Lord' of Malachi 3:1 and John, the Baptist, the "messenger" of Malachi 3:1 and the "prophet" of Malachi 4:5 (Matthew 11:7-15; Matthew 17:10-13). Certainly, many in the New Testament spoke and wrote by inspiration (including the apostles - John 16:13) and gave us in written form the final inspired message of our Lord (the New Testament) for these last days (Hebrews 1:1-2).

QUESTION No. 946: In Deuteronomy, Chapter 34, how did God bury Moses?

ANSWER: There has been much speculation about the burial of Moses. Some would suggest that Moses was translated into heaven as was Elijah, but there is no scriptural evidence for this notion. Deuteronomy 34:6 states that "He (God) buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor." The fact is clear as to who buried him and where he was buried. This is all we can really know. The method He used is only speculation, but since God's messengers (angels) were often employed to carry out God's will upon the earth (Genesis 16:7; Genesis 22:11; Exodus 23:20-23; Numbers 22:22; Judges 6:11; II Samuel 16-17; I Kings 19:5, et al), it would seem likely that they would, as well, be employed to carry out the will of God in the burial of Moses' body!

QUESTION No. 947: Why was Ham punished for laughing at Noah, but Noah was not punished for being drunk?

ANSWER: It is very probable that this was the first time that wine was produced and that its intoxicating effect was unknown to Noah. Indeed there have been instances where one has mistakenly taken drink that was later found to be intoxicating. For example, apple cider is usually found to be non-intoxicating, but may unknowingly become intoxicating. Indeed there have been instances where such was mistakenly imbibed. Upon realization of its alcoholic content, however, it is to be penitently discarded! To be an innocent partaker prior to realization of the alcoholic content would not then have been indicative of intent to sin! There is no indication in the passage that Noah was a drunkard or that he intentionally became drunk and, since we see him as a man accustomed to doing all that God commanded (Genesis 6:22), it would seem that the result of his drinking was but an unintended mistake of which he would have been sorrowful and penitent. At the very least, it should not be assumed he was a drunkard in need of punishment!

On the other hand, Ham's expressed attitude was not one of mistaken innocence, but rather one of mocking contempt for his father whom he was bound to honor. He was rightfully punished for his attitude and action!

QUESTION No. 948: Why was David and Bathsheba not stoned to death according to the Law of God?

ANSWER: Generally speaking, the reason why they were not stoned was for the same reason the woman of John 8:1-11 was not stoned. Jesus, as God, did not insist that the penalty of Leviticus 20:10 be carried out, but, to the contrary, He, as God, chose to forgive that sin. We are told in II Samuel 12:13 that God did the same thing in the case of David. As David's creator, He chose to forgive Him. We cannot know all of His reasons, but it seems reasonably safe to assume that perhaps one of His reasons had to do with the promise that He had previously made to David in II Samuel 8:12-14, the fulfillment of which showed His grace and mercy, not only to the sinning pair, but toward all men, including you and me, which involves a possible second reason. Those things that happened under the Old Testament were to be examples for us today (I Corinthians 10:11) and were written for our learning (about both the goodness and the severity of God – Romans 11:22) that we might have hope (Romans 15:4). Certainly many today, equally guilty, have found hope through the mercy and forgiveness of God that was shown David

and Bathsheba. It should also be remembered that they did not totally escape punishment for what they did! They lost the child of their adulterous union, a child for whom they would have been gladly stoned to death had it meant that he would have lived!

QUESTION No. 949: It seems that Moses was unsure of God's blessings because he decided to send the men to spy out the land. Agree?

ANSWER: The plan to send spies into the land of Canaan did not originate with God or Moses. (Deuteronomy 1:22). The idea came originally from the people; they came to Moses, and said, "We will send men before us." They would not take God's word that it was a good land, and that he would, without fail, put them in possession of it. They could not trust the pillar of cloud and fire to show them the way to it, but had a better opinion of their own politics than of God's wisdom. How absurd it was for them to send men to spy out a land which God himself had spied out for them, to try to figure out for themselves how they would enter the land when God himself had undertaken to show them the way! However, Moses was not free from guilt since he said in Deuteronomy 1:23, "And the saying (of the people) pleased me well." God then allowed and directed the people through Moses to carry out the folly of their heart (Numbers 13:1) which was necessary to teach Israel (and us) the foolishness of relying on man's judgment in rejection of God's judgments. Because the people would not accept the words of Joshua and Caleb to not rebel against Him (Numbers 14:9) by refusing to enter the land that He had promised, none of them but Joshua and Caleb and the children of the people would be permitted to finally enter! The Lord's judgment upon them for their sin is recorded in Numbers 14:11-45.

QUESTION No. 950: When Esau sold his birthright to Jacob, did their father know it? What was his reaction?

ANSWER: There is no indication that Isaac knew of the selling of the birthright, but rather to the contrary, since we note that it was his intent to bestow the birthright blessing of the firstborn upon Esau in Genesis, Chapter 27. Upon realizing that He had been deceived into bestowing the firstborn blessing upon Jacob, the record says in Genesis 27:33 that Isaac "trembled," after which he bestowed a lesser blessing upon Esau.

QUESTION No. 951: What was Jacob's only daughter named? Who was her mother? Did she marry? If yes, who was her husband? Was she among those who later came to Egypt?

ANSWER: Jacob's daughter was named "Dinah" (Genesis 30:21). Her mother's name was Leah (Genesis 30:20-21). In Genesis 34, we find that Dinah was defiled by Shechem (a Hivite), the son of Hamor, who later wanted to marry Dinah. However, Jacob and his sons refused to allow Dinah to marry an uncircumcised Gentile in accordance with God's directive of Deuteronomy 7:3. Since there is no indication of a subsequent marriage, it appears likely that she remained single and was, indeed, among those who went into Egypt (Genesis 46:15).

QUESTION No. 952: Why did Aaron and Miriam rebel against Moses when they knew that God had been working through him?

ANSWER: The exalted position of Moses aroused a feeling of envy in the minds of his brother and sister, and they, because of this, disputed his preeminence. Miriam instigated the open rebellion and was followed by Aaron. Summoned to the Tabernacle by the Lord, they were given a stern rebuke, and Miriam, the instigator of the rebellion, was struck with leprosy. When Aaron saw his sister, he said to Moses, "Alas, my lord, I beseech you, lay not the sin upon us" (Numbers 12:11). And Moses prayed unto the Lord, "Heal her now, Oh God, I beseech thee" (Numbers 12:13). God heard his prayer, though He inflicted deep humiliation upon Miriam. She was shut outside of the camp, excluded from the congregation for seven days, after which restoration and purification from her leprosy were promised. During her seclusion the people did not journey any farther (Numbers 12:1-15). This leprosy, and its removal, which took place at Hazeroth, note the last public event of Miriam's life

QUESTION No. 953: Who was Melchizedek? Who are his parents? How many years did he live on the earth? Was he man or angel? What was his occupation?

ANSWER: Melchizedek was a man who was the king of Salem and the priest of the most high God (Genesis 14:17). The Bible does not record the names of his parents,

neither his life span. The relationship between Melchizedek and Christ, as type and antitype, is made in the epistle to the Hebrews (Chapter seven) as follows: each was a priest (1) not of the Levitical tribe; (2) superior to Abraham; (3) whose beginning and end are unknown; (4) and not only a priest, but also a king of righteousness and peace. "Without father," etc. (Hebrews 7:3), refers to priestly genealogies. Melchizedek is not found on the register of the only line of legitimate priests; his father's name is not recorded, nor his mother's; and no evidence points out his line of descent from Aaron. It is not suggested in Scripture that he had no father or that he was not born at any time or died on any day; but these facts were nowhere found on the register of the Levitical priesthood.

QUESTION No. 954: Who were the false prophets in Isaiah's days? Were they sent by God?

ANSWER: The children of Israel had revolted against Jehovah (Isaiah 31:6) and had turned to the foreign gods of Babylon, Egypt, and Assyria, and even idol gods of their own making (Isaiah 31:1 & 7). They rejected truth, by saying "to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits" (Isaiah 30:10). God did not cause His children to go into captivity, but He allowed it to happen because they had rejected Him! When the children of God returned to worship Him, He caused the destruction of their captors (Isaiah 47:6-11) and returned a remnant of His penitent faithful to their land (Isaiah 11:11-16).

QUESTION No. 955: Did Ezekiel marry again after the death of his wife? How many children did he have?

ANSWER: There is no indication that Ezekiel had children or that he remarried after the death of "the desire of his eye" (Ezekiel 24:16).

QUESTION No. 956: Which punishment took place first, that of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, or that of Daniel?

ANSWER: Sahdrach, Meshach, and Abed-nigo were placed in the fiery furnace during the reign of the Babylonian king, Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel, Chapter three). Daniel was placed in the den of lions during the reign of Darius, the Median (Daniel, Chapter six) after the Babylonian kingdom was divided, and given to the Medes and Persians (Daniel 5:28-31). Therefore, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nigo were placed in the fiery furnace before Daniel was placed in the lion's den.

QUESTION No. 957: Would you please shed more light on why Genesis 3:15 is a reference to Christ and His death?

ANSWER: The reason we can know that the Genesis 3:15 refers to Christ is that no other series of events in history even begins to answer to what is, by inspiration, prophesied here by Moses. Consider the phrase, "He shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel?" Is not the seed of the woman here personalized and placed in conflict with the tempter of the preceding verses? Certainly! Do not these words talk about some notable descendant of the woman, who is, in the bruising of the tempter's head, to gain a final victory over the adversary of man? Surely!

The serpent makes the woman (Eve) the object of his attack, but it is the seed of the woman that is prophesied to bruise his head. Who else can be said to have bruised Satan except the Christ, the seed of Eve? Who else but the One who overcame the Prince of this world (Revelation 2:21) by overcoming death, hell, and the grave that comes to all because of his evil assault on the woman? None but He! And certainly not Moses, Elijah, or John the Baptist that you suggest as possibilities. Neither these three or any other answer to Genesis 3:15! This passage describes exactly and literally He who was made of woman without the intervention of man, that He might destroy the works of the tempter. Satan bruised Christ's heel at His crucifixion, but Christ bruised Satan's head at His resurrection; a bruise from which he will never recover, with his power being greatly restricted by that event (Revelation 20:1-3), and finally to be dealt with at the Second Coming (Revelation 20:10; I Corinthians 15:25-26).

QUESTION No. 958: For what purpose did Jacob wrestle with God?

ANSWER: Jacob did not wrestle with God Himself, but rather a representative of God. In Genesis 32:24 he is called a man and in Hosea 12:4 he is said to have been an angel. The phrase in Genesis 32:30 must be taken to mean that God "has dealt directly with me," especially since John wrote in I John 4:12, “No man has seen God at any time."

The purpose of the wrestling appears simply to be that God wanted to assure Jacob that he had power with God and by that power he could and would do all that God had planned for him. Imagine the increased strength of conviction and character gained by knowing that you had wrestled with an angel and had been victorious to the point of receiving God's blessing through him! Surely, Jacob was now more fit to accomplish that which was set before him!

QUESTION No. 959: What does it mean that we should not be “overly righteous” (Ecclesiastes 7:16-17)?

ANSWER: It does not mean that we can do too much for the Lord by being too righteous (Luke 17:10). We are being instructed by principle to avoid a self-sufficient righteousness, thinking and acting like we are something we are not. We are instructed here as well not to involve ourselves in the opposite extreme of utter laxity toward and in sinful practices, i.e., “over much wickedness.”

QUESTION No. 960: In the account of God’s creation (Genesis 1:21-25) the phrase, “according to their kinds” is used. What does this phrase mean?

ANSWER: This phrase indicates that like always produces like and, therefore, that the "kinds" or “species” are firmly set and fixed. There is, according to this biblical phrase, no overlapping between the species. This God-inspired phrase clearly refutes the evolutionary theory that one species is being developed (or has been developed) through a series of sub-species that are often referred to as “missing links,” of which the fossil record is deadly silent!

QUESTION No. 961: Is the word “virgin” in Isaiah 7:14 a proper translation?

ANSWER: Yes, it is! The Hebrew word “almah” refers to a young woman of marriageable age and may be properly translated as “maid,” “damsel,” or “virgin,” as in, both, Isaiah 7:14 and Genesis 24:43. Not only is such proper and possible, the use of the word “virgin” in Isaiah 7:14 is insisted upon by God in Matthew 1:23, as the apostle sets forth the fulfillment of the prophecy, i.e., a “virgin shall be with child.” One who argues for the translation “young woman” in Isaiah 7:14 argues with the Holy Spirit in the meaning and context of Matthew 1 & Luke 1! The Holy Spirit did not use the Hebrew word “bethulah,” which is restricted to the definition of “virgin” because of the need to refer to one of marriageable age in the present context, as well as to one in the future context in whom (Mary) the yet to be virgin-born Christ would be borne.

QUESTION No. 962: Would you explain the new heavens and the new earth as seen in Isaiah 65:17-25, Revelation 21:1-5, and in light of Ecclesiastes 1:3-4?

ANSWER: We must understand that Isaiah 65:17-25 is highly symbolic, and we are not required to understand it literally. There is no more reason for understanding this literally than there is for so understanding that animals will experience a change in their nature with the coming Gospel and church of Christ, as expressed in Isaiah 11:1-8. Calamity and punishment in the Bible are often represented by the heavens growing dark, and being rolled up as a scroll, or passing away (see Isaiah 13:10; 34:4). On the other hand, prosperity, happiness, and the divine favor, are represented by the symbolism of the clearing up of a cloudy sky; by the restoration of the serene and pure light of the sun; or, as here, by the creation of new heavens (see Isaiah 51:16). The figure of great transformations in material things is one that is often employed in the Scriptures, and especially in Isaiah, to denote great spiritual changes (see Isaiah 11; 51:3; 35:1-2,7; 60:13,17). In the New Testament, the phrase used here is employed to denote the future state of the righteous (see 2 Peter 3:13; Revelation 21:1). All that is implied in 65:17-25 that there would be future changes, from that time, in the condition of the people of God as great as if the heavens, often overcast and subject to storms, should be changed, so as to become always peaceful and serene; or as if the earth, so dry and unproductive in many places, should become fully fertile, beautiful, and productive. The immediate reference here is, doubtless, to Palestine and to the welcome changes that would be realized there on the return from Babylon. But there can be no doubt, under this symbolism, there was a prophecy about far more important changes and blessings in future times under the Christ and within His kingdom/church, i.e., changes as great as if a barren and sterile heavens and earth should become universally peaceful and beautiful. Isaiah 35 expresses the same imagery, both immediate and future!

The new heavens and new earth of Revelation 21:1-5 must be seen in much the same way. Remember that John was writing in signs (Revelation 1:1), or symbolic language. This passage simply teaches that the New Jerusalem originated in heaven with God and will one day again be in heaven where He is! It does not teach that the "new heavens and new earth" will be physically located on a renovated planet! The symbolic statement, “and there shall be no more sea,” refers back to Revelation 13:1 and teaches that in the new heavens and the new earth there will be no sea from which a beast would arise to persecute the saints. Those who teach a renovated earth with no literal sea are in error! Reference of this passage is clearly to the redeemed state of the church in the future abode where we shall be with God who will “wipe away all tears from our eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things have passed away,” i.e., that place that He has gone to prepare for us! If He is preparing a place for us where He has gone and from where He is coming to get us to take us to that prepared place, what need is there of a renovated earth? None at all! As noted above, “all” of the redeemed will be before His throne that is located in heaven where we shall abide eternally!

As to Ecclesiastes 1:3-4: Verse three is a question that will be answered throughout the book. The bottom line expressed by Solomon, who experienced all this earth had to offer, is that all that a man does that is of this world and not of God is “vanity.” It is all meaningless and worthless as relates to the soul of man, whose full responsibility is to ‘Fear God and keep His Commandments in light of the coming Judgment’ (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14). Concerning Verse 4, the Jehovah’s Witnesses fully wrest the word “forever” here and throughout the Old Testament the words "for ever" in the Old Testament mean "throughout the appointed time" or "age lasting." For example consider carefully the usage in Exodus 12:14; Leviticus 6:18; Leviticus 7:36; and Numbers 10:8. In these, the words "for ever" clearly mean "throughout (or in) their (your) generations." Notice too, the Old Testament says that circumcision was to be an "everlasting covenant" (Genesis 17:13). Yet, Paul says in Galatians 6:15 that circumcision avails nothing in Christ! In Numbers 25:13, Moses said that the Levitical Priesthood would be "everlasting," but in Hebrews 7:12, we learn that it had been changed. How can this be? Clearly, the same is true with these as with the existence of the earth. It is to exist “forever” throughout its time as appointed by God, just as was the case with the covenant of circumcision and the Levitical priesthood.

QUESTION No. 963: I am concerned about Genesis 1:28 where it says that God directed man to "replenish" the earth. This would seem to indicate that the earth was previously (before the Genesis account) inhabited. Could you explain?

ANSWER: The Hebrew word (male' or mala) translated "replenish" did not, and does not, mean "to refill" or "to fill a second time." The same is true of the 16th century English word "replenish." At that time, the primary meaning of the word simply meant to "stock" or "fill," as was also the case with the Hebrew word. The same Hebrew word is also found in Genesis 42:25 and there we see it (as in many other passages) translated simply as "fill." The use of the word "replenish" then in the 1611 KJV is understandable for that time. Nonetheless, the New King James Version, necessarily updates the English to accommodate modern usage and correctly says, "FILL the earth," reflecting the original intent and understanding of the early translators.

SIN

QUESTION No. 964: What is sin?

ANSWER: Sin is a transgression (breaking or violation) of the law (I John 3:4). All unrighteousness is sin (I John 5:17). To know to do good and not do it is sin (James 4:17). When one conducts himself so that he violates the Word of God, he sins. It may be a deed done, or it may be something left undone.

Sin causes spiritual death (Ephesians 2:1), which is separation from God (Isaiah 59:1-2). It must be removed in order for the sinner to be (saved) reconciled to God (II Corinthians 5:20). Christ shed His blood in order that our sins might be (removed) washed away (Revelation 1:5). Many passages tell us what we *must* do in order to be washed in His blood! See Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; I Peter 3:21.

QUESTION No. 965: Can someone who is born again still sin?

ANSWER: Yes! In writing to Christians, the apostle John wrote, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (I John 1:8). There are those who have interpreted I John 3:9 to contradict what was said in the first chapter. This passage in the King James Version says, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." This passage with consideration to the original language reads, "Whosoever is born of God

doth not (keep on) commit(ting) sin, for his seed (God's Word - Luke 8:11) remaineth in him: and he cannot (continue to live in) sin, because he is born of God." Thus, we see the harmony and agreement between the first and third chapters of Ist John!

QUESTION No. 966: Does God forgive the worst type of sin - child molesting?

ANSWER: God can and will forgive *any* sin of which one truly repents! Jesus said in Matthew 12:31, "Wherefore I say unto you, *All manner of sin and blasphemy* shall be forgiven unto men . . ." He has even forgiven those who murdered His only begotten Son (Acts 2:36-41). Beyond this, He has made a covenant with the penitent obedient, "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Hebrews 19:16-22).

QUESTION No. 967: The Bible teaches that a child does not inherit the sin of its parents (Ezekiel 18:20). In other places it seems like the Bible teaches that God does punish a child for the sin of the parents. Which is right?

ANSWER: In Ezekiel 18:20, it is clear that a person dies spiritually (is separated from God - Isaiah 59:1-2) for their own sins. This means that the son will not die spiritually because of the father's sin; nor will the father die spiritually because of the son's sin. This, however, does not mean that the son will not experience the effect of his father's sin. Often this is the case. For example, a father may spend all of his living on alcoholic beverages rather than buying food for his children. The father is guilty of sin! Though the children are not guilty of the father's sin, they certainly suffer as a result of his sin. It is, therefore, the father of the children (not God) who causes the suffering, because he has violated God's laws by using alcohol and by not providing for his family. The suffering of the children then is a natural result of the father's sin. This is the meaning of such phrases as "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children" found in Exodus 20:5 and 34:7.

QUESTION No. 968: Is masturbation sin?

ANSWER: Masturbation is a stimulation of the sexual organs. Such stimulation, whether personal or reciprocal, as a prelude to sexual intercourse between a husband and his wife would not be considered sin. However, such stimulation for the purposes of self-gratification invariably stems from, and includes, immoral thoughts. This would, indeed, be sinful! The following passages of scripture are violated in this activity: Proverbs 4:23, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life;" Proverbs 23:7, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he;" Matthew 5:28, "But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart;" Matthew 15:19, "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnesses, blasphemies;" Philippians 4:7-8, "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just; whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, *think on these things."* The temptation to engage in the subject activity can be thwarted by obedience to these scriptures!

Remember too, I Corinthians 10:13, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not permit you to be tempted above that ye are able to bear; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it." God has clearly provided a way of escape from this sinful activity: I Corinthians 7:2, "Nevertheless to avoid fornications, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband." There is also an applicable principle in I Corinthians 7:9, "But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn."

QUESTION No. 969: In light of Genesis 1:27; 9:7 (Be ye fruitful and multiply), is it right to use contraceptives and family planning? How about planning through abortion?

ANSWER: We ought not to read more into these passages than was intended. Given the fact that at the time these words were spoken to the first couple and to Noah and his sons, there were two people and eight people, respectively, in the whole earth. God is simply commanding them to populate the earth. Certainly, He is not commanding all couples everywhere for all time to produce the maximum number of children within their physical capabilities, as some Catholics have been led to believe. There is no prohibition in these passages, or anywhere else in the Bible, against birth control. Con-

versely, in I Timothy 5:8, it is clearly implied that our families should be no larger than the number for which we are capable of providing. If one unwisely permits his family to become so large that he cannot make proper provisions "for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." Surely, then, included in this implication we can see and understand the principle of family planning. Nonetheless, that family planning is not to include abstinence, at least for extended periods, is made clear by the reason given in I Corinthians 7:1-5, i.e., to avoid fornication! Exclusive of abstinence, the remaining alternatives to having more children than those for which we can provide are: sexual relations only during the female's non-fertile period, withdrawal by the male, or the use of contraceptives. Some (the Catholic Church) would hold that the first of these remaining alternatives is scriptural; the others are not. However, there is no basis for such theology, since it can be logically and sensibly concluded that each of these alternatives is indicative of birth control and family planning. It can also be correctly noted that none of them are legislated against in the Word of God! We must conclude then, since we are not permitted to have more children than the number for which we can provide and we are not permitted long periods of abstention, that one of the remaining alternatives must be selected. There is no other choice! That selection is not to be mandated by any, but is to be made by each married couple!

As to abortion: The Bible clearly teaches that it is sin to murder (Galatians 5:19-21), i.e., that is, with intent, to take another's life. That a baby in the womb is considered by God to be a living person is made clear by the God-inspired words written by David in Psalms 139:13-15, "For thou hast possessed my reins (created my inward parts): thou hast covered (protected) me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth greatly. My substance (body) was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously fashioned in the lowest parts of the earth (in a place away from man's observation)." God told Jeremiah (1:5), "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations."

If God knew David and sanctified Jeremiah while in the womb, it is certain that He knows all that are in the womb today and recognizes them as persons in the same fashion. Therefore, to put to death that which God recognizes as a person and/or a personality is to violate Galatians 5:19-21.

Also, in Exodus 21:22-25, Moses by inspiration said that if a man hurts a woman with child and causes her to be delivered prematurely with neither the mother or child being permanently hurt, the father may require settlement of the one who caused the premature birth as the judges would decide. Then it discusses what would happen under

that Law to a man who caused a premature birth and the death of the baby (or the mother), i.e., "then thou shalt give life for life." Under the Law that God had given Moses and the children of Israel, life was to be taken from one who had, with intent, taken another's life. Genesis 9:6, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made He man."

Consider (1), since life was to be taken from one who caused the death of a baby through a forced premature birth and (2) since God said that taking of a life of a person was necessary when that person shed the blood of another person, it logically follows then that the unborn baby must be a person, i.e., a living being!

The fact that God said, "life (of the one causing the hurt) for life (of the baby or the mother)," proves that the slain baby was alive and constituted a life, i.e., a person created by God!

Murder it all its forms, including abortion, is a grievous sin against the victim and against the victim's Creator.

QUESTION No. 970: Is it sinful to drink alcohol and use tobacco?

ANSWER: Yes! Please read Proverbs 23:29-35; Isaiah 5:11; Habakkuk 2:15; I Corinthians 6:9-11; and Galatians 5:19-21. In addition to the clear teaching of these passages, also consider the fact that the partaking of alcoholic beverages (in any amount) lowers one's resistance to temptation and, further, that those who do so, very often yield to all sorts of ungodly sins. How can one who drinks alcohol pray (as all have been commanded to do) that they will not be led into temptation (Matthew 6:13)? To do so would be to make a mockery of God and His word! The apostle Paul in I Corinthians 6:19 states that, as Christians, we are not our own; that our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit, belonging to Him! It follows then that to introduce any substance of harm (such as drugs, alcohol or tobacco) into that which houses the Holy Spirit would be inappropriate. As well, such activity in one's body certainly does not glorify God and would, therefore, be a violation of I Corinthians 6:20.

QUESTION No. 971: Is it good to stay with sinners? I stay with my brothers who use abusive language and go to prostitutes. What can I do? Can I stay with them?

ANSWER: It is very important that we always try to convert those with whom we have to do in this life. However, this failing, we need to be acutely aware that any situation in which we find ourselves, which would cause us to compromise our Christianity in any way is wrong and must be avoided. Paul said, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial (Satan)? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore, *come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you,* and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (II Corinthians 6:14-18).

QUESTION No. 972: Why do we fall into temptation?

ANSWER: John tells us that "all that is in this world, is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." So, as long as we are in this world, we will be tempted by these things. This does not mean, however, that we must fall into sin as a result of these temptations. James says (1:12-15), "Blessed is the man that *endureth* temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth He any man: But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lusts, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." Jesus Himself "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15), but when tempted by the devil in Matthew, chapter four, Jesus overcame it by use of the Word of God. You and I can do the same today as we live according to the Bible, looking for the fulfillment of its precious promises!

QUESTION No. 973: Is it sinful to be cremated?

ANSWER: There is nothing in the Bible that teaches that cremation is wrong or sinful. Clearly, after death we will return to dust (Genesis 3:19). Whether we return to dust under normal conditions or through the chosen accelerated process of cremation

matters not at all. Many have not chosen to be cremated, but have been nonetheless consumed by fire! Some have died at sea and been devoured by fish and other creatures! Some have been devoured by wild land animals! No matter how our bodies are disposed of at death, God will reunite the elements that now make up our bodies with our spirits at the resurrection on the day of Judgment (John 5:28-29; I Corinthians 15; II Corinthians 5:1-4).

QUESTION No. 974: Where will those who mock Jesus be in eternity?

ANSWER: Those who mock Jesus obviously reject Him through their mockery. All who reject Christ in disobedience to His gospel will be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power (II Thessalonians 1:7-9).

QUESTION No. 975: Should a Christian dance socially?

ANSWER: No! In Galatians 5:19-21, we find listed the "works of the flesh." Those who engage in any of these will *not* inherit the kingdom of God (Vs.21). One of the "works of the flesh" is described as "lasciviousness" (Vs.19). This word is defined as: an expression of lust; tending to excite lustful desires; unchaste handling of males and females; and indecent bodily movements. Surely, these definitions are vividly descriptive of the "social" dance. Those who engage in such cannot inherit the kingdom of God!

QUESTION No. 976: Should a Christian play music like "disco" and "blues?"

ANSWER: Music is not wrong of itself. However, if that music is so composed (whether through the "beat" or the "words") to cause one to have impure thoughts and feelings, then it is sinful and must be avoided (Galatians 5:19-21; Philippians 4:8)!

QUESTION No. 977: I owe people money, but I am not able to pay it back. What should I do?

ANSWER: Certainly, the Bible is clear that we are to pay our debts (Romans 13:8). When we do not, the result is sin, of which we must repent, if we would be right with God. The situation that causes you to say you are "not able to pay it back" needs to be discussed with those whom you owe to work out possible arrangements whereby the debt could be satisfied. If you do not have the money to give your creditors as agreed, perhaps you could make arrangements to do so over an extended period. Possibly the payback could come through the surrendering of personal belongings, or physical labor in exchange for the debt. All avenues for satisfying your debts must be pursued, because true repentance will always involve restoration when restoration is possible. There are cases in which restoration following repentance cannot be made. For example, in the taking of life, one may be truly penitent, but certainly life cannot be restored. However, such instances are extremely rare.

QUESTION No. 978: When a person is diseased does it mean he has sinned?

ANSWER: No! Please study Luke 13: 1-5. Here, Jesus said. that these particular Galileans did *not* suffer persecution because of their sins. In John 9:1-3, the man was born blind, but *not* because he or his parents had sinned. Disease may come as a consequence of sin (cancer from the use of tobacco; venereal disease from illicit sex), but not as a penalty of sin. The penalty for sin is separation from God and eternal loss, a penalty that can only be avoided through obedience to God. The consequences of sin cannot be avoided, but will remain to be experienced!

QUESTION No. 979: (A) Is it true that God has put aside certain people who no longer trust Him? (B) If so, does God direct these people to speak certain things about His kingdom?

ANSWER: (A) Yes! It is true. Read carefully Romans 1:18-32. Here we read about some who completely abandoned God. They refused to glorify Him, becoming vain in their imaginations (Vs.21). They turned from Him to idols (Vs.23) and became unclean through the lusts of their own hearts (Vs.24). They changed His truth into a lie (Vs.25). They engaged in unlawful and disgusting sexual activities (Vs. 26-27). They refused to retain Him in their knowledge (Vs.28). They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness (Vs.29-32). Upon their total abandonment of God, we learn that He gave

them up (Vs.24-26). In Verse twenty-eight, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, i.e., a mind void of judgment!

(B) God does *not* direct those He has given up to speak things about His kingdom. In fact, God does not directly tell anyone what to do or say today! *All* directions from God today come only through His Word, the Bible. In Hebrews 1:2, we learn that God "hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." This excludes everyone else, since only the words of Christ, as contained in the Bible, will judge us in the last day (John 12:48). The Gospel is His power unto salvation (Romans 1:16)! It alone can make one perfect or complete (II Timothy 3:16). No man can add to it, neither can any take away from it (Revelation 22:18-19). Any man today claiming that God (or any heavenly being) talks to him directly is either untruthful or experiencing mental problems.

QUESTION No. 980: What do you understand about the division of sins?

ANSWER: I am uncertain as to the thrust of the question. Sin, however, is a transgression of the law (I John 3:4) and if one fails to repent (Acts 17:30-31)) of one sin, he is guilty of all (James 2:8-13). Man seemingly always attempts to make one sin worse than another. Although this may be true as we consider the consequences of sin in this life, the sin of taking a brother to law (I Corinthians 6:1-8) is just as eternally damning as murder (Galatians 5:19-21), unless the sinner repents. As well, the sin of murder is just as forgivable by God (II Samuel 12:13) as the sin of willfully forsaking the assembly of the saints! Until haughty man, himself a sinner, learns to forgive others as does God, neither can he be forgiven (Ephesians 4:32).

QUESTION No. 981: How will people be able to support their families if, when becoming Christians, they must leave sinful businesses, such as, beer brewing, dealing in stolen goods, prostitution, etc.?

ANSWER: It is clear from God's Word that any who would become a Christian *must* first repent of all sin in which they have been engaged (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30-31). This means they must get out of the sin. No matter what it is, they must leave it behind! Certainly, at times, there are difficulties involved, but each individual must deal as best he can with his own situation, while putting his trust in God that He will do what He says!

Speaking of the necessities of this life (food and clothing), Jesus said in Matthew 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all of these things will be added unto you." David, by inspiration, said in Psalms 37:25, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor His seed begging bread." There is no doubt that if we do our part (II Thessalonians 3:10), God will do His! We can stand on His promises, because His promises never fail (Titus 1:2; I Peter 1:3-4)!

QUESTION No. 982: What does the Bible teach about destructive devices that we are truly ashamed of, but can't seem to give up? (Smoking, drinking, cussing, etc.)

ANSWER: Friend, you need to realize that you have already taken a giant step in overcoming these vices! You have come to know that these things are against the will of God; that they are destructive to both body and soul. In fact you state that you are ashamed of being involved with them. Many people never recover from these things simply because they refuse to accept what you have already come to realize!

These things are often very hard to give up, because of the pleasure that can be experienced by doing them. The Bible tells us that there is pleasure in sin. In Hebrews 11:24-26, the writer says this about Moses: "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he had respect unto the recompense of reward." What Moses did sets a great example for us today! He considered and compared the pleasures of sin in this life with the reward that would be is, if he would only be faithful to his God. The same must have been true of Abraham, because it is said of him in Verse ten; that "he looked for a city, which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." What really helps us then to overcome these things is to compare the long-term value of spiritual matters with the short-term value of physical matters! Are cigarettes, booze, and cursing to be chosen above an eternity in that city whose builder and maker is God? The choice becomes even more significant when we consider eternity if we make the wrong choice! Now the choice becomes an eternity in a beautiful place called heaven versus cigarettes, booze, cursing, poor health, and an eternity of punishment!

As you continue to study God's Word; as you accept His will, your faith will deepen (Romans 10:17) and your resolve to overcome these things will be strengthened. Let me encourage you to fight with all of your being! James said in chapter four, verse eight, "resist the devil and he will flee from you." Listen to what the apostle Paul to the children of God in Corinth: "There hath no temptation taken you but such is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not permit you to be tempted above that ye are able to bear, but will with the temptation make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (I Corinthians 10:13). Many faithful people have fought and won the battle that you face! You can do it, too! You have our prayers!

QUESTION No. 983: Is it wrong to play pool?

ANSWER: Pool playing of itself is not sinful. Many times, however, pool tables are located in places where a person could not go without compromising his or her Christianity (II Corinthians 6:14-18). This, of course, would be sinful. As well, to use this or any other game as a means of gambling would be wrong. All gambling is sin (including lotteries, raffles, and religiously sponsored bingo games)! It is addictive and has often destroyed loving relationships and homes (I Timothy 5:8). It is also indicative of one without Christian character and principles, whose covetous intent it is to get something for which he has not labored, at the expense of others (Genesis 3:19; Acts 20:34-35; Ephesians 4:28; Ephesians 5:3).

QUESTION No. 984: Is it a sin for a seventeen-year-old boy to have a girl friend?

ANSWER: As long as the boy and the girl conduct themselves as Christians at all times, both in public and private places, it is not sinful. Both should understand, however, that "petting" or any other illicit activity designed to incite or satisfy unlawful lusts is wrong (Galatians 5:19-23; Philippians 4:8)! Christians are to, at all times, be found "pure in heart" (Matthew 5:8)!

QUESTION No. 985: If a brother is disfellowshipped should he be allowed to place membership in other congregations without repentance? What should the attitude of other congregations be toward him?

ANSWER: If a person has been scripturally disfellowshipped, the action and attitude of all Christians everywhere toward this one should be identical, as they are so lead by their own plurality of elders. The *action* described in Romans 16:17; I Corinthians 5:9-11; II Thessalonians 3:6-14; and Titus 3:10 is applicable to, and binding upon all! The *attitude* described in I Corinthians 5:5-8 and II Thessalonians 3:15 is applicable to, and binding upon all!

Those whose actions and attitudes differ from those defined in the above passages (no matter the congregation) need to be called to repentance. Upon refusal to do so, they too become subjects for scriptural church discipline!

QUESTION No. 986: What is the difference between inward sin and outward sin?

ANSWER: Generally, inward sin is thought of as sin that is of the mind, i.e., such sins as hate, evil intent, and impure thoughts. These are sins of which none other may be aware. Outward sins are generally thought of as sins that can be seen by others and are done openly. All are equal in the sight of God and will cause the soul to be lost. Some who appear outwardly righteous may very well be the worst of sinners. However, outward appearance may be seen by man, but God "looketh on the heart" (I Samuel 16:7).

QUESTION No. 987: Is it true that when a man is saved, he is cleansed from outward sin, but inward sin remains until he is filled with the Holy Ghost?

ANSWER: No! A man is in sin and lost no matter the type of sin. When a man is saved, he is saved from all of his sins no matter the classification. "**ALL** sin (inward and outward) is unrighteousness" (I John 5:17). None who are unrighteous can inherit the kingdom of God (I Corinthians 6:9). Therefore, none who sin (inwardly or outwardly) can be classified as saved, as the question suggests. **ALL** sin must be removed if salvation is to result! Note in Acts 2:38-47 that those saved were those whose sins were remitted. There is no indication here or anywhere else in the Bible that "inward" sins are not remitted at baptism through the blood of Christ. The very thought suggests that the

blood of Christ is ineffective and powerless to remit "inward" sin, but is only sufficient to cleanse "outward" sin. The idea is non-biblical!

QUESTION No. 988: Should we no longer fellowship those that use tobacco?

ANSWER: The matter that you bring up is one that is often shied away from, many times because of politics. There can be no doubt that smoking is addictive and introduces harmful, life-threatening substances into the body. Colossians 3:17 teaches that all we do in word or deed, we are to do so by the authority (in the name of) of Christ. There is no authority in the Bible for engaging in that which harms the body, nor for permitting one's subjection to that which is addictive. Rather than bringing the body into subjection, as did the apostle Paul (whom we are instructed to follow as an example – I Corinthians 11:1), those who use tobacco subject themselves to it and the health problems that it brings. Those who would suggest that the use of tobacco is not sinful have turned a blind eye to the Scriptures, as well as to common sense. Sin is sin! All, or any, sin not repented of will cause the loss of the soul. It may be smoking or it may be fornication! The result is, and will be the same!

Since using tobacco is sinful and will cause the soul to be lost, the child of God can but act in matters of fellowship toward those who smoke as they would with those who engage in any other sin. This should not be taken to mean that we ought to spontaneously stop fellowshipping all smokers. Many are good folks who are trying in their weakness to overcome their addiction, often needing our help and prayers. Great patience and love is required on our part for all who sin, whether by smoking or any other activity! All efforts must be exhausted to help, to win, and to restore! If it becomes necessary, after exhausting every effort to win the sinner back, then the God-given instructions set forth in I Corinthians 5 and II Thessalonians 3 must be adopted and followed!

QUESTION No. 989: Is it right for a Christian to watch television or listen to the radio?

ANSWER: It is not sinful to watch television and listen to the radio provided that the time spent is not excessive and what is watched and heard is not sinful. Does it cause

you to have evil thoughts; to focus on evil things rather than that which is good? If so, it is wrong and should not be engaged in (Philippians 4:8). As well, faithful Christians will be careful how they use their time (Ephesians 5:15-16).

QUESTION No 990: I was witnessing to a friend and she asked me this question and I didn't know how to answer it. If God is against incest, why did He begin the population with incest?

ANSWER: It is admirable that you were trying to teach your friend about the Bible. However, I would respectfully suggest that the term "witnessing" not be used, since it implies that you actually saw that of which you are speaking!

In answer to your friend's question, we must realize that in the beginning there was no need for laws relative to incest. At that time, shortly after the perfection of Eden, man was in a relatively pure physical state and that no harmful genetic characteristics had yet developed that would bring harm to children born to those who were closely related. In such a pure state, it would only be logical that population of the earth proceed from the couple whom God had originally created, i.e., Adam and Eve. Laws regarding incest were found to be necessary much later, after genetic disorders began to arise through the improper intake of harmful chemicals and extended exposure of some to excessive solar and cosmic radiation. This having occurred, God, in the law given to the children of Israel, strictly forbade incestuous relationships to protect them against the harm that would otherwise result! As the world has grown older, more and more genetic disorders have arisen and it is even more important now than in Moses' time that we refrain from marrying close relatives. Not only is such sinful, but the physical problems that are sure to rise will be found to be extreme in the offspring of such unions!

QUESTION No. 991: Is it wrong to kill a thief who breaks into a home to steal one's property and who threatens one's family?

ANSWER: A man may kill in defense of his home or his country while remaining a faithful Christian, provided that the situation demands the action! Some have thought otherwise on the basis of the sixth commandment which says, "Thou shall not kill." This commandment, however, is simply a prohibition against premeditated murder. Every man

has the right and obligation of self-protection and self-defense (Exodus 22:1-4), as the protector of home and family. To shun that responsibility would be wrong! However, it should always be remembered that the protection of home and family would not in every case demand the killing of a criminal who enters by stealth and / or force. The force to be used to thwart that entry should only be that absolutely necessary for purposes of defense. To kill under circumstances when killing is not clearly necessary would be wrong!

QUESTION No. 992: Do evil forces only exist from the Christian perspective?

ANSWER: No! All of the world's religions recognize various sorts of evil! That evil does exist in the world is not only stated in the God's Word (I John 2:15-17), but it is quite evident that even the non-religious are aware of the evil in the world from the perspective of the innate morality within man. For example, even the non-religious know and recognize that it is wrong (evil) to kill another without cause.

QUESTION No. 993: Please explain the difference between being drunk and just drinking.

ANSWER: There is no difference scripturally. You are asking simply about degrees of drunkenness. If a man takes one drink, he is one drink drunk. If he takes two drinks, he is two drinks drunk! If he takes five drinks, he is five drinks drunk. The degree of drunkenness also depends upon size and weight, i.e., a small person generally will be more drunk than a large person who consumes the same amount of alcohol. Nonetheless, both may safely be said to be drunk. It has been proven medically and conclusively that one drink makes a person drunk to the degree that it slows reflexes and inhibits rationality even to the point of lowering one's moral character! It is also evident, based on this truth, that when a man takes the first drink, his rationality is inhibited to the degree that he believes he can handle the effects of second drink. And when he takes the second drink, he is that much more inhibited to believe that he can handle the effects of a third drink, etc. etc., until he becomes totally incoherent! A man does not have to be falling into his own vomit (as is often the case) to be pronounced drunk and it is certain that if one does not take the first drink, he will never come to that state! Those who look to the Bible for justifying the use of alcohol in any amount, except for medicinal purposes, will

not find it, but they will find it soundly condemned as sin, e.g., Proverbs 23:29-35; Isaiah 5:11; Habakkuk 2:15; I Corinthians 6:9-11; and Galatians 5:19-21.

QUESTION No. 994: Is it an unpardonable sin to deny that Jesus is God?

ANSWER: It is only unpardonable if one refuses to repent of the sin of denying the deity of Christ. Those who had crucified Christ had denied that He was God and, in part, crucified Him because of His claim that He was God (John 10:31-33). Yet, we see that those who crucified Him (Acts 2:23-24) came to believe on Him, repented, and were baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38-41). Though they had once denied that He was God, they repented of that denial and, in their obedience, were pardoned! The same is true today!

HOLY SPIRIT

QUESTION No. 995: Are men baptized in the Holy Spirit today? Do men receive the "gifts" of the Holy Spirit today? How does He work in people today?

ANSWER: It is clear from your correspondence that you believe the Church of Christ, as you perceive it, is not the church of the Bible. We make this judgment based on the unscriptural use of the name "New Apostolic Church" (Romans16:16) in your letter, which indicates an erroneous acceptance of the idea that both the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the associated gifts are available for men today. Please carefully consider the following:

The gifts of the Holy Spirit were imparted to man in only one of two ways: through baptism of the Holy Spirit, of which there are only two recorded cases in the Bi-

ble (Acts 2:1-4: Acts 10 & 11); and through the laying on of the apostles' hands (Acts 8:14-18), which is often confused by some with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. We must be careful not to do this! The baptism of the twelve apostles, in the first case, was the fulfillment off Christ's promise that He would send them the Holy Spirit (John 14:16; John 15:26; John 16:7). The Holy Spirit was sent (Acts 2:1-4) to teach the apostles all things, to bring all things to their remembrance (John 14:26), and to guide them into all truth (John 16:13). As a result, men inspired of God recorded all truth (the Bible) one time, for all time (II Peter 1:3-11; II Timothy 3:16). Since we now have all truth, there is clearly no additional truth to be delivered. Therefore, this reason for the baptism of the Holy Spirit no longer exists!

After the falling of the Holy Spirit on the household of Cornelius, in the second case, God completed the fulfillment of the promise that He had made to Abraham in Genesis 12:3; "and in thee and thy seed shall all families of the earth be blessed." The Gentiles were to be blessed by God following this second case of Holy Spirit baptism (Acts 11:14; Acts 10:48) just as He blessed the Jews following the first case of Holy Spirit baptism. This means that God would at this time grant salvation through Christ to the Gentiles (Acts 11:18), just as He had done to the Jews on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:37-47). Since Cornelius and his household were baptized in water for the remission of sins (Acts10:47-48; Acts 2:38) following Holy Spirit baptism, it is clear that the reason for Holy Spirit baptism was not to save or wash away sin! What then was the reason? The Bible is clear! In Acts 10 & 11; Acts 15:7-9, we find that this household was baptized in the Holy Spirit only as a witness to the Jews that God had also granted salvation in Christ to the Gentiles. Since the promise of God was fulfilled (filled full) at this time, this reason for Holy Spirit baptism also ceased to exist.

All purposes for Holy Spirit baptism, then, were fulfilled. Therefore, there is no reason for it today. To support this conclusion further, we note that Paul wrote in 63/65AD that, at that time, there was only one baptism (Ephesians 4:5). At the same time (65AD), Peter writes and tells us that water "baptism doth also now save us" (I Peter 3:20-21). In 65AD then, there was only one baptism and this one baptism was water baptism! This being true, we can only conclude that this one baptism is the baptism of the great commission, which is "unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:18-20). There is no room for Holy Spirit baptism today! If there is only one, there cannot be two!

As stated above, spiritual gifts were given in one of two ways in the New Testament, either through the baptism of the Holy Spirit or through the laying on of the apos-

tles' hands. It has been shown above that Holy Spirit baptism does not exist today, but what about the laying on of the apostles' hands? The question that needs to be answered is this: Can one be qualified to be an apostle today? No! To be qualified to be an apostle, one must be an eyewitness of the resurrected Christ (Acts 1:22) as were the twelve (Acts 1:21) and the apostle Paul (Acts 26:13-18). None living today have seen the resurrected Christ! Therefore, none today can be qualified to be an apostle. Those who claim to be apostles today do so without biblical support (Revelation 2:2). Since there is no Holy Spirit baptism today and since the last apostle died about 2000 years ago, it is evident that spiritual gifts could last only as long as the last person was alive upon whom an apostle had laid his hands. In Ephesians 4:7-14; I Corinthians 13:8-13, we find that spiritual gifts were for the church in it's infancy. They were called childish things that would be put away when the church became mature. Some would teach falsely that the mature, or more spiritual, church practices the use of gifts today. This is in direct opposition to what Paul says in verse eleven, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child: but when I became a man (mature), I put away childish things"; speaking of the miraculous gifts that, in verse eight, "shall vanish away" and, in verse nine, "shall be done away."

The only way the church could become complete (mature) was through all scripture (II Timothy 3:16-17), the complete (perfect) law of liberty (James 1:25). In the years following the establishment of the church, the will of God had not yet been fully revealed, written and confirmed by miracles. It was yet in part! The sole purpose of miracles was to confirm the newly revealed word (John 20:30-31). Once all scripture was given by inspiration of God, confirmed and written, it became the complete (perfect) law of liberty, able to "make the man of God perfect (complete), throughly furnished unto every good work" (II Timothy 3:17). Since we now have "that which is perfect" (I Corinthians 13:10); that is, the complete, mature, confirmed word of God, in which are "all things that pertain unto life and godliness," and by which we can become complete (mature) as Christians, there remains no need for gifts to day. They have served the purpose for which they were intended!

Are miraculous gifts evident today? When one, without bias, compares what men claim to do today with the miracles performed in the Bible, it will clearly be seen that "biblical" gifts are not evident today! Where is the man today who speaks a foreign language he has not studied or learned? Where are those today who raise the dead? Where are the dead whom they have raised? Why do those who claim gifts today die? Why do they go to hospitals for treatment? Why do their families get sick and die? Where are those who walk upon water? Surely, biblical miracles are not being performed today!

Those who claim baptism of the Holy Spirit and miraculous gifts today obviously do so without biblical support. They are pretenders and false claimants of something that does not exist! Not only this, but they, knowingly or unknowingly, place themselves on an equality with the apostles! God forbid that we should be found guilty of such!

The Holy Spirit does not work in our lives today separate and apart from the Word of God! He operates only through the instrument of the Word, which is His sword (Ephesians 6:17). Through the Word, He saves us (Titus 3:5), bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God (Romans 8:26), witnesses to us (Hebrews 10:15), strengthens us (Ephesians 3:16), sanctifies us (II Thessalonians 2:13), and He will raise us up in the last day (Romans 8:11) at the direction of Jesus Christ (John 5:28-29). He also makes intercession for us before the throne of God (Romans 8:26-27). Since all of this occurs through the Word of God, what need is there for a "working" apart from it? Absolutely none!

QUESTION No. 996: If the gifts have passed away, what about I Corinthians 12, 13, & 14?

ANSWER: I Corinthians 12, 13, & 14 were written to the church at Corinth to help them overcome problems of division and disorderliness in worship services that the misuse of spiritual gifts had caused. Because the apostle dealt with these problems at that time, it in no way suggests that spiritual gifts continue today. To infer so, is to ignore the clear teaching of I Corinthians 13:8-13 and Ephesians 4:8-14, as discussed above.

The so-called "gifts" of today cannot begin to compare with those found in the Bible. Those of today are most often nothing more than pretentious attempts to prove one's self-righteousness before men. Neither they, nor their "gifts" are of God!

QUESTION No. 997: What is the difference between the words "Ghost" and "Spirit"?

ANSWER: There is no scriptural difference between these two words. At the time of the King James translation, the word "Ghost" was used in the same way the word "Spirit" is used today. However, the word "Ghost" has been foolishly and childishly narrowed in meaning through the years to represent an imaginary disembodied being whose purpose it is to travel about frightening people.

QUESTION No. 998: What is the "gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38)?

ANSWER: Acts 3:19 is a parallel passage to Acts 2:38. They teach the same thing and explain each other! Note that Peter is preaching to Jews on Pentecost Day and later (Acts 3) he is preaching to Jews who had gathered to him and John in the temple on Solomon's porch. In both instances he is preaching the same sermon, convincing both crowds that they (Jews) had murdered the Christ (Acts 2:36 and 3:13-15). At the conclusion of each sermon, he then tells both crowds what they need to do about their sin of rejecting and crucifying Him. There can be no doubt he said the same thing to each group. Surely he would not tell each crowd of Jews something different than the other. The message and solution are identical.

Consider:

Acts 2:38: (1) "Repent, (2) and be baptized for the remission of sins, (3) and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Acts 3:19: (1) "Repent, (2) and be converted that your sins may be blotted out, (3) when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.

The "gift of the Holy Spirit" or "the refreshing that comes from the presence of the Lord" refers to the many blessings (Ephesians 1:3), including eternal life (1 John 2:25), which each Christian derives from the presence of the Lord according to His will as expressed by the Holy Spirit in His Word. In the first century, the many blessings (times of refreshing) from the Holy Spirit would have included miraculous gifts. Today, the many blessings (times of refreshing) from the Holy Spirit do not include miraculous gifts, because their purpose has ceased to exist.

QUESTION No. 999: Does not Joel 2:28 teach that the Holy Spirit would be poured out upon all flesh? Why do you restrict this to the apostles and the household of Cornelius?

ANSWER: The outpouring of the Holy Spirit was indeed upon all flesh, i.e., both the Jews and the Gentiles. However, to assume that "all flesh" refers to "all men" is to assume too much! If such were the case, one would necessarily and logically have to agree that the Holy Spirit was also poured out even upon sinners! The outpouring of the Holy Spirit as prophesied in Joel 2:28 is not restricted only to the apostles and the household of Cornelius! This, however, does not mean that others were baptized in the Holy Spirit! They were not (See above answers)! It simply means that miraculous gifts were poured out upon others, not through Holy Spirit baptism, but through the laying on of the apostle's hands (Acts 8:18).

QUESTION No. 1000: Does not Jesus tell Nicodemus (and us) that he needed to be baptized in the Holy Spirit (John 3:5)?

ANSWER: No! Jesus is simply saying that baptism in water is through the agency (direction) of the Holy Spirit. Paul says the same thing in I Corinthians 12:13, "for by one Spirit (by His direction) are we all baptized into one body." The command to be immersed in water comes only through His Word! That Jesus is not telling Nicodemus to be baptized in the Holy Spirit is evidenced by the fact that, at this time, the Holy Spirit had not yet been given (John 7:39). As well, the Holy Spirit was to come only as a "promise" (John 14:16-17; John 14:26; John 15:26; John 16:7; John 16:13; Luke 24:49; Acts 1:4). Neither the apostles, nor any, were ever "commanded" to be baptized in the Holy Spirit. The only baptism of commandment is water baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38).

QUESTION No. 1001: Were not the people in Acts 19:1-7 baptized in the Holy Spirit?

ANSWER: No! They were not! They received the "gifts" of speaking in foreign languages and prophecy through the laying on of Paul's hands (Vs.6).

QUESTION No. 1002: Do you believe that the Holy Spirit is of no use today?

ANSWER: The Holy Spirit is God and has revealed Himself to us through the written Word. To believe that the Holy Spirit is of no use would be to reject the very Gospel by which we are saved. However, our understanding of the Holy Spirit cannot be based upon the feelings, doctrines and traditions of men! We must believe and accept the Holy Spirit according to the gospel He has given! To do otherwise, would be to deny Him in disbelief!

QUESTION No. 1003: What is baptism of the Holy Spirit and the baptism of fire as expressed in Matthew 3:11?

ANSWER: Baptism of the Holy Spirit has been explained above. The baptism of fire is also explained quite clearly in Matthew 3:12. In the King James version of the Bible, the eleventh verse ends in this way, "and with fire:" Notice that the many scholarly English translators involved placed a colon (:) after the word "fire." In English grammar, that which follows a colon is an explanation of that which appears before the colon. Therefore, Verse twelve explains the phrase, "and with fire." That Verse twelve (as well as the preceding Verse ten) has reference to the unquenchable fire of hell can not successfully be denied! Also proven by Verse twelve is the fact that the word "you" does not refer to everyone, but, rather, is used in the sense that there are those among "you" who will be baptized with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. Obviously, not all people will be cast into hell (immersed in fire)! Similarly, not all people would be immersed in the Holy Spirit. To apply Matthew 3:11-12 to all people, would force the conclusion that none will be saved.

QUESTION No. 1004: Can one be qualified to be an apostle today?

ANSWER: No! To be qualified to be an apostle, one must be an eyewitness of the resurrected Christ (Acts 1:22) as were the twelve (Acts 1:21) and the apostle Paul (Acts 26:13-18). None living today have seen the resurrected Christ! Therefore, none today can be qualified to be an apostle! We can be sure that those who claim apostleship today do not represent the church of the New Testament!

QUESTION No. 1005: Did Paul see the Lord only in a vision?

ANSWER: The details surrounding our Lord's appearance to Paul are not specified. However, that He was seen of Paul cannot be denied: Acts 9:17, Jesus "appeared" unto him; Acts 26:16, Jesus "appeared" and was to "appear;" I Corinthians 9:1 & 15:8, Paul said he had "seen" the Lord. To deny that "seeing" the resurrected Christ was a requirement for being an apostle is, with bias, to ignore the plain teaching of Acts 1:22. Those who reject this verse are usually falsely holding to the misconception of modern apostles and "gift" usage today.

QUESTION No. 1006: For what purpose did the apostles impart gifts to others?

ANSWER: To confirm the word (Mark 16:20; Acts 14:3). The word had not yet come in its fullness. It was necessary then, in order for the gospel to be proclaimed in all the world (Colossians 1:6) to every creature (Colossians 1:23), that others, besides the apostles, be involved in its proclamation! We see an example of this in Acts, the eighth chapter, when the disciples were scattered abroad and went everywhere preaching the word. Philip, at that time, went down to Samaria and preached Christ unto them, and the people gave heed unto those things which he spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did (Vs. 5-6)!

As an aside, it is also interesting to note that since Philip was not an apostle he could not impart gifts that he was able to perform in Samaria. It was necessary that Peter and John be sent to do so (Vs.14-17). It is clear then that only the apostles had this ability, which should raise some questions as follows: Why did God not send the Holy Spirit directly to the Samaritans, as some claim is sent to them today? What happened when the last apostle died, if only they could impart spiritual gifts? What happened when the last person died upon whom an apostle had laid his hands? The answers are obvious! Since the purposes for Holy Spirit baptism were totally fulfilled and the apostles no longer live, it is quite evident that there can be no gifts today. These means of conveyance to man no longer exists by the will of God! Neither is there a reason for gifts today, since the Word of God has already been confirmed!

QUESTION No. 1007: Since some in the church today are still babes, are not gifts still necessary for maturation?

ANSWER: No! Christians today become mature by partaking of the meat of the word of righteousness (Hebrews 5:11-14; I Peter 2:2).

QUESTION No. 1008: I find it very difficult to agree that there was a time when the truth was only in part and that gifts ended when it (the New Testament) was completed. The word of God has always been perfect, since God is perfect. Can you agree?

ANSWER: Not at all, when we acknowledge the truth that the word “perfect” in the context of our discussion means, “complete.” Clearly, the New Testament was not given in its totality on the day of Pentecost, but rather it was given and written over a period of years during the first century. Once it was completed, it became the perfect (complete) law of liberty (James 1:25). Upon the New Testament being totally given, confirmed and written, the need for gifts (confirmation of the word) no longer existed! Certainly we agree that God is perfect in all that He is and does. We also agree that as God, through the Holy Spirit, guided (led; indicative of progression) the apostles into all truth, it was (and is) perfect (without flaw). In 1 Corinthians thirteen, however, the word "perfect" does not denote "sinlessness" or "without fault" It simply means "complete" or "mature." In verses eight through eleven, this word (perfect/complete) is contrasted with that which is in "part;" that which is to be done away. What was it that was known in part (vs.9)? When would the part be done away (vs.10)? According to verse ten, the part would be done away when the complete (perfect) was come! With the coming of the "complete" law of liberty, Christians would no longer have to know in part, because they would now have all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who hath called us to glory and virtue (II Peter 1:3), through all scripture which would make the man of God complete, furnished unto every good work (II Timothy 3:16-17). It cannot be successfully denied that the gifts were indicative of that which was in part and, further, that which represented childhood or spiritual immaturity/incompleteness (I Corinthians 13:8-11). To the contrary, however, some today, who falsely claim the ability to perform miracles (gifts), represent these as being indicative of spiritual maturity. They do so in opposition to God's Word and Will!

QUESTION No. 1009: We still need the Holy Spirit to teach us today in the same way as He taught the apostles. Can you agree with this?

ANSWER: No! The allegation is not biblically based. The apostles were guided into all truth. All truth has been recorded by inspired men once for all (Jude 3). It is only through this truth that we become complete/mature (II Timothy 3:15), and only through it can we be saved (James 1:21). If the above allegation were true (with the Holy Spirit teaching and guiding us, as He did the apostles) there would be no need for Christians to study the Bible today. In fact, what need of the Bible would we have? That this is clearly false can be seen in many scriptures, e.g., II Timothy 2:2; II Timothy 2:15; Hebrews 5:12-14; et al.

QUESTION No. 1010: The purpose of Holy Spirit baptism is to give special abilities. You explained that the Holy Spirit indwells only through the word. Since you have the Holy Spirit dwelling in you, but you have no special ability, how is it that you can teach the Bible? Where did you get the ability?

ANSWER: Certainly, none (including myself) are endowed miraculously today. Those who are able to teach the Bible can do so only after having been obedient to such passages as shown in the response immediately above.

The reason for so many different denominations and false doctrines today is that some who claim to be ministers of God's word have not been obedient to the Scriptures, but rather they have immersed themselves in their own imaginations (claiming to be so led by the Holy Spirit) and/or man-made denominational by-laws and directives (Matthew 15:9). Many of these so-called Spirit-led folks believe and practice different, contradictory things. Why? Is the Holy Spirit divided? Clearly, where there is contradiction, truth is an impossibility! Which of these folks is telling the truth? Which one is really being led by the Holy Spirit? Which one can we trust? Evidently, we cannot trust in what man says (Matthew 15:9); neither can we trust in what one might imagine to be Holy Spirit directives (Isaiah 55:8; Jeremiah 10:23). We must trust only in His words, as recorded in the Bible, for "they are spirit and they are life" (John 6:63). They, and they alone, will judge us in that day (John 12:48)!

QUESTION No. 1011: Does I Corinthians 12:7 (all men) include Christians today?

ANSWER: No! "Every man" refers to those Christians under consideration during the time when "gifts" were employed. Specifically, Paul is writing to the Corinthian Christians who were misusing the "gifts" (Please read Chapters 12, 13, and 14). To apply this to Christians today would be to negate the force of I Corinthians 13.

QUESTION No. 1012: Does Mark 16:17-20 teach that gifts of the Holy Spirit are meant for us today?

ANSWER: No! Note carefully in Verse seventeen that the gifts of the Holy Spirit were to be done in the name of (by the authority of) Christ. By His authority, the gifts were to be used to confirm the word (Verse twenty). Also, by His authority, the gifts were to be done away upon confirmation of that word or "when that which is perfect (complete/mature) is come" (I Corinthians 13:8-11). The "perfect" refers to the complete/perfect law of liberty (James 1:25). Spiritual gifts in their fullness, then, were authorized only during the period between the baptism of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:1-4 and the completion of the perfect law of liberty, i.e., the New Testament! Since the New Testament has already been confirmed with "signs" (once confirmed, always confirmed), it is clear that there is no reason for "gifts" today and, further, that those who pretend to practice "gifts" today are violating God's Word, because they do not have the authority of Christ for their practices!

QUESTION No. 1013: Some say that the one hundred and twenty disciples (Acts 1:15) were baptized in the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Is this true?

ANSWER: No! It is not true. Notice in the latter part of the first chapter of Acts that the discussion involves the apostles, specifically about a replacement for Judas Iscariot. In Verse twenty-six we read, "and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles." In Chapter two, Verse one, Luke says, "and when the day of Pentecost was fully come "they" were all in one accord in one place; "they" were sitting in the house (Vs.2) and cloven tongues like as of fire sat upon each of "them." Who are the "they" and the "them" in these verses? These words refer directly to the eleven plus

Matthias in the last verse of Chapter one! Can we be sure? Yes! In Chapter 1:2-8, to whom was the promise of baptism in the Holy Ghost made? Was it to the hundred and twenty? No! Clearly, in these verses, commandment (Vs.2, 5) and promise (Vs.4, 5, 8) was made to the apostles only! The same is true in John 14:16-17,26; John 15:26; and John 16:7,13. In each instance, the Holy Ghost in baptismal measure was promised only to the apostles! Note also, in Verse fourteen, that after the baptism of the Holy Ghost (Chapter 2:1-4), Peter stood up with the eleven (not the hundred and twenty) and preached. Those who put the hundred and twenty disciples into the commandment, promise, baptism of the Holy Ghost, and preaching in these chapters, do so without scriptural basis. They have wrested God's Word to support their own doctrines!

QUESTION No. 1014: What does Ephesians 5:18 mean? How can one be filled with the Spirit?

ANSWER: In Ephesians 5:18-19 and Colossians 3:16, which are parallel passages (with each passage explaining the other), Paul is discussing music in the church. In the Ephesian letter, as he begins, he commands, "but be filled with the Spirit." In the parallel passage of the Colossian letter, as he begins, he commands, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." He is saying the same thing! Conclusion: We are filled with the Spirit as we let the word of Christ dwell in us richly!

QUESTION No. 1015: What is the difference in being baptized with the Spirit and being filled with the Spirit?

ANSWER: Being filled with the Spirit is discussed in the answer to the preceding question. "Baptism of the Holy Spirit" is very different from "being filled with the Spirit," just as there is a great difference in the meaning of the two words "baptism" (immersion) and "filling." Consider the action one would take if he were to "immerse" a cup for cleansing. Then consider the action if he were to "fill" a cup for drinking. An immersed cup for cleansing is filled, but a filled cup for drinking is not immersed. The actions and purposes are totally different!

QUESTION No. 1016: How does the Holy Spirit convict men of sin, as John 16:8-13 says?

ANSWER: Romans 3:20 tells us that "by the law is the knowledge of sin." Therefore, we are convicted of sin by the Holy Spirit when we come to a knowledge of His Word!

QUESTION No. 1017: How is the fruit of the Spirit produced in our lives today (Galatians 5:22-25)?

ANSWER: In Ephesians 5:9, we read, "For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth." This verse is telling us what the result will be if we "walk as children of light," as commanded in the preceding Verse eight! These two verses combined, then, teach that the Holy Spirit produces fruit (as described in Galatians 5:22-23) through the lives of those who walk as children of light (faithful Christians) according to the truth (the Gospel).

QUESTION No. 1018: If heaven is a place of no pain, no tears, how can the Holy Spirit of God be grieved (Ephesians 4:30)?

ANSWER: Many times in trying to understand the Bible, we often try to see spiritual things in the light of physical things. When we do so, generally, it leads to misunderstanding. Revelation 21:4 says, "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be anymore pain: for the former things are passed away." In the context of this chapter, we understand that this earth with all of its physical burdens will pass away, because there is being prepared for the faithful child of God a new dwelling place; a spiritual place for spiritual bodies, into which, flesh and blood cannot enter (I Corinthians 15:50). The Holy Spirit, not being of flesh and blood, does not endure physical things as you and I! Neither does He suffer grief as you and I! Ephesians 4:30 simply commands us not to engage in any grief-causing physical conduct, which could possibly result in the separation of our spirit from His Spirit!

It is good to know that when physical things have passed away and are replaced by spiritual things, i.e., when the former things have passed away, sin too will have

passed away (Revelation 21:27). When this occurs there will be no grief of any kind, because there will be nothing over which to grieve!

QUESTION No. 1019: If the Lord calls people today, then the gifts of the Holy Spirit are still given (Acts 2:39). Agree?

ANSWER: This is an assumption that ignores the totality of what God has spoken on the matter! We cannot know the truth on a particular subject until we study and digest all of the relative scriptures. God calls people today through His Holy Spirit-given Word (II Thessalonians 2:14). Blessings by the Holy Spirit were, and are, given only within the parameters or boundaries prescribed by that Word. From answers to preceding questions, it has been clearly shown that the parameters of God's Word restricted the use of spiritual gifts (by selected Christians) to a specific time, for a specific purpose.

The assumption made in this "Question/Statement" would, when taken to a logical conclusion, demand that every Christian, from the first century until the end of time, be endowed with all of the spiritual gifts. Clearly, from I Corinthians 12, 13, & 14 (written to solve problems with the gifts during the time when they were in use), Acts 8:5-24, and Romans 1:11, we can understand that not all Christians, even in the first century, were endowed with gifts; that only certain Christians possessed certain gifts for a certain time and for a certain purpose!

QUESTION No. 1020: If the gifts have passed away, there is no salvation, since we are born of water and the Spirit (John 3:5). Agree?

ANSWER: No! Again, this passage does not remotely address the issue of miraculous gifts. One is not free to assume that wherever the word "Spirit" appears that Holy Spirit baptism and/or gifts is/are being discussed! The "water" referred to in this passage simply relates to our baptism (immersion) in water for the remission of sins. The word "Spirit" tells us by whose direction we are to be baptized in water. In I Corinthians 12:13, we have similar language, "For by one Spirit (that is, through the agency or direction of the one Spirit) are we all baptized (in water) into one body." Indeed, one is saved when he or she is born anew of water and the Spirit!

All must be extremely careful not to read more into a passage than is appropriate. This would be adding to God's Word (Revelation 22:18-19).

QUESTION No. 1021: Ananias was not an apostle, but he laid hands on Paul and he received the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:17). Agree?

ANSWER: This, as well, reads more into scripture than was intended. Acts 9:12 states explicitly why Ananias was to lay hands on Paul: "that he might receive his sight." Nothing more, nothing less! Paul was chosen to be an apostle of our Lord. His becoming an apostle would require baptism in the Holy Spirit, which could only be performed by Christ (Matthew 3:11). Ananias did not have the power to do what our Lord could do! However, his coming to Paul would soon lead to Paul's baptism in the Holy Spirit. Further, had Paul chosen to reject Ananias, he would also have rejected Christ and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This is the sense of the passage in question!

QUESTION No. 1022: Does God still call people today, as He called Ananias?

ANSWER: The Bible does not tell us when Ananias was called. In Acts 9:10, we learn that he was already a disciple (Christian) when the Lord appeared to him in a vision. If the "Question" is intended to imply that we today are "called" by the appearance of the Lord in a vision, it would be in contradiction to II Thessalonians 2:14, "Wherefore He called you by His Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." This is the only way men are called, whether to be Christians or to preach the Word!

QUESTION No. 1023: Jesus, according to Matthew 4:23-24 and other passages, healed people with various diseases. Do pastors, evangelists, and bishops have this same power today?

ANSWER: No! The sole reason for the gifts of the Spirit, which included healings, was to confirm the Word being taught (John 20:30-31). Once all scripture was given by inspiration of God, confirmed and written, the need for gifts then passed away! Such

was the will of God (Ephesians 4:7-14; I Corinthians 13:8-13). Men who claim to have the "gifts" today are false teachers and need to be avoided!

QUESTION No. 1024: If some have the power to heal today, why don't they heal those in the hospitals?

ANSWER: Your question is quite logical! The fact that they do not heal those in the hospitals is proof that they cannot heal anywhere or under any condition! Some of these "fake healers" also claim to raise the dead, but none of them are ever seen near a graveyard, unless it is to bury someone they previously failed to heal! They are not of God!

QUESTION No. 1025: In John 16:12-13, is Jesus telling only His disciples that they will be guided into all truth by the Spirit of truth or is He saying that He will guide people today into all truth?

ANSWER: This promise was only for His disciples; those to whom He spoke on this occasion! He sent them the Holy Spirit as He promised on the day of Pentecost and as recorded in the second chapter of Acts! The writers of the New Testament, being inspired by the Holy Spirit (II Timothy 3:16), were guided into "all truth" (John 16:13) and given "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (II Peter 1:3). Since we have the completed New Testament today, it follows that we, too, have "all truth" and, therefore, "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (II Peter 1:3). This being true, what need would there be of direct Holy Spirit guidance today? What additional truths could He give us, if we already have "all" of it? Obviously none! There is, therefore, no need of further direct guidance today! All of the guidance and truth that people need today is to be found "indirectly" in God's Word! This is why each is commanded to "study" (II Timothy 2:15). Certainly, if it were the case that individuals were directly guided into "all truth" by the Holy Spirit today, there would be no need for study, bibles, preaching, preachers, or missionary work of any kind!

Those who claim the direct guidance of the Holy Spirit today are always those who propose religious doctrines and activities foreign to, and outside of, God's Word! From such sinful foolishness comes the God-opposing and self-opposing denominational

system of religion that has filled the world today! Most of its groups are claiming to be directed by the Holy Spirit and yet they contradict and they fight and war against each other. Can any sensibly believe that the Holy Spirit is so divided? Since Christ prayed that His followers would all be one (John 17:21-23), can any sensibly blame the Holy Spirit of Christ for the religious division among these today? Surely not!

QUESTION No. 1026: Please explain I Corinthians 13:10 as to what the "perfect" is. Basically we teach that it is the complete Word of God as opposed to Ephesians 4:13: "unto a perfect man." Is this correct?

ANSWER: Both passages are teaching the same truth! The "perfect man" of Ephesians means a "mature/complete man" as contrasted with a child (an immature person) and has reference to the mature church, but note how that maturity is attained: "through the knowledge of the Son of God." The knowledge necessary for maturity could only come through the completed/mature Word of God! The perfect of I Corinthians 13:10 also means "complete or mature," but refers directly to that which is able to make the church (Christians) mature (I Corinthians 13:11-12), i.e., the Word of God.

Clearly, the New Testament was not given in its totality on the day of Pentecost, but rather it was given and written over a period of years during the first century. Once it was completed, it became the perfect (complete) law of liberty (James 1:25) and being confirmed and written, the need for gifts (confirmation of the word) no longer existed! The word "perfect" in the subject passages does not denote "sinlessness" or "without fault." It simply, as already indicated, means "complete" or "mature." In I Corinthians thirteen, Verses eight through eleven, this word (perfect/complete) is contrasted with that which is in "part;" that which is to be done away. What was it that was known in part (Vs.9)? When would the part be done away (Vs.10)? According to verse ten, the part would be done away when the complete (perfect) was come! With the coming of the "complete" law of liberty, the church would no longer have to know in part, because it would now have all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who hath called us to glory and virtue (II Peter 1:3), through "all" scripture which alone can make the man of God "complete, furnished unto every good work" (II Timothy 3:16-17).

Both passages teach that when the perfect/mature/complete would become attainable through the perfect/mature/complete Word of God, then the gifts would pass away!

QUESTION No. 1027: If you are a Christian, but cannot speak in tongues, what can you do about it?

ANSWER: Speaking in tongues as happened in the first century is not the same as the gibberish that people in error engage in today! In the Bible we learn that to speak in tongues was simply to be able (without formal education) to speak a foreign language that already existed (Acts 2:6, 8 &11). This is not being done today, nor can it be!

The purpose of miracles and signs in Bible times was to confirm the Word of God (Mark 16:20) that was being spoken, but not yet written. When the Word of God (the perfect law of liberty – James 1:25) was completed, the "gifts" were to fail, cease, and vanish away (I Corinthians 13:8-13). Since the perfect Word of God was confirmed and written about the end of the first century, it follows that at that time the miraculous, including speaking in tongues, passed away according to the will of God. Since we today have the same completed and confirmed New Testament, which provides "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (II Peter 1:3), there is clearly no need for the "gifts" today. The faithful child of God will not be involved with such matters!

QUESTION No. 1028: How are we to understand the word "now" in I Corinthians 13:12 and how are we to understand the word "now" in I Corinthians 13:13? Are they to be understood as referring to different periods?

ANSWER: The context demands different understandings of the usage of the word "now" in the two subject verses. "Now" in Verse 12 (in contradistinction to "then") has to refer to that period of time when Paul wrote, before the completed Word of God. "Now" in Verse 13 must be taken to mean "in this present life." The word "abideth" means "remains" and stands in contradistinction to that which is passing away. Therefore, the word "now" (Verse 13) would include the "now" time of Verse 12, as well as all future time! In other words, faith, hope, and love, were to be prevalent in the life of Christians during that time and would be all that "remained" for all future time in light of the fact that the other items mentioned were to cease!

QUESTION No. 1029: Please explain further Ephesians 4:7-14.

ANSWER: Note first of all (for ease of understanding) that Verses 9 and 10 are parenthetically expressed and are not germane to the issue at hand. Verse 7 states that Christ gives to every obedient person the gift of His grace according to His measure. For example: Acts 2:38 teaches that those who are immersed for (in order to attain) the remission of sins "shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." What did this mean to the people who lived then and what does this mean for you and me today? Allow the Bible to explain! Acts 3:19 is a parallel passage to Acts 2:38. They teach the same thing and explain each other! Peter is saying the same thing to the Jews on Solomon's porch as he was to the Jews on Pentecost, i.e.; he preached the same sermon and extended the same invitation!

Acts 2:38: (1) "Repent, (2) and be baptized for the remission of sins, (3) and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Acts 3:19: (1) "Repent, (2) and be converted that your sins may be blotted out, (3) when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.

The "gift of the Holy Spirit" or "the refreshing that comes from the presence of the Lord" is the many blessings each Christian derives from the Holy Spirit according to Christ's measure. In the first century, the many blessings (times of refreshing) from the Holy Spirit would have included miraculous gifts. Today, the many blessings (times of refreshing) from the Holy Spirit do not include miraculous gifts, because their purpose has ceased to exist. What blessings are derived today? Many, not the least of which are forgiveness, mercy, grace, and the hope of heaven!

Verse 8 of Ephesians, Chapter 4 says basically that when He ascended on high, having overcome the captivity of death, He gave gifts unto men. The gifts could not have been given unless He first returned to heaven from which he had come. Jesus so said in John 16:7, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the comforter (Holy Ghost) will not come to you (the apostles); but if I depart I will send Him to you."

Verse 11 relates to whom the gifts were given (not how or how many), i.e., apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors (elders), and teachers.

Verse 12 explains reasons for giving the gifts: Perfecting (maturing) of the saints (Christians), for the work of the ministry (proclamation of the gospel in all the world), and edifying the church.

Verse 13 limits the duration of the gifts: "Till," an adverb of time, we all come to the oneness (unity) of "the" faith; not simply "faith," but to a unified system of faith (the Gospel) by which, and through which, we can have full knowledge of the Son of God that will enable us to be complete/mature and walking in the image of Christ! When this knowledge would become attainable through that which was, and is, able to make a person "perfect/mature (II Timothy 3:16-17), the gifts would cease to be. The very same thing is taught in I Corinthians 13:8-10!

Verse 14 says that with our coming of age (no longer as children or the immature – I Corinthians 13:11) we will not be tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine taught by those who deceive . . . but speaking the truth (John 17:17 – "Thy word is truth") in love one may mature up into Christ in "all" things. How do we know false doctrine (John 8:32)? What is our maturation agent (I Peter 2:2)? The Gospel of Jesus Christ!

QUESTION No. 1030: Our "Pastor" says that the "perfect" in I Corinthians 13:10 refers to the Second Coming. True?

ANSWER: No! "Perfect" in I Corinthians 13:10 cannot refer to the Second Coming, because when the "perfect is come" faith, hope, and love will still abide (Vs.13). Such will not be the case at the Second Coming, since there will be no need for hope and faith when we see the Christ, for "faith" is the evidence of things "not seen" (Hebrews 11:1) and "hope" that is "seen" is not hope (Romans 8:24). I believe you indicated previously that you were affiliated with the Presbyterians. Allow me to quote Albert Barnes, the greatest Presbyterian Scholar and Commentator to have lived. He says that the word abideth must be understood as to "remain" and "must be understood to be used to denote permanency, when the other things of which he had spoken had passed away,

and the sense is, that faith, hope, and love would remain when the gift of tongues should cease, and the need of prophecy, etc.; that is, these should survive them all." (Barnes Commentary on I Corinthians 10:13, Page 257). Mr. Barnes has written correctly! Logically and scripturally, faith and hope will not remain at or after the Second Coming! Therefore, the "perfect" of I Corinthians 13:10 that 'is to come' before the cessation of gifts cannot logically or scripturally refer to the Second Coming.

QUESTION No. 1031: Does I Corinthians 13:1 teach that there are two kinds of tongues; one of foreign languages; the other a heavenly language?

ANSWER: No! I Corinthians 13:1 does not indicate that there are two kinds of tongues that Christians are to, or may, employ. He is simply saying that even though (if) he had the ability to speak all of the tongues known to men and angels, without love it would avail him nothing. The emphasis here is not on languages, but upon love! There appears here to be, however, an allusion to what he heard in II Corinthians 12:4, where he says that he was caught up into paradise and heard words that were unlawful for him to utter (the same would be true of any person). He may, then, in I Corinthians 13:1, be referring to, not what he supposed to be the language of angels, but what he actually heard; a higher, more eloquent, heavenly language. Thus, even though he, too, had the ability to speak with this eloquent language of angels that he had heard with his own ears, as well as the languages of men, the result and effect would be as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal, if unaccompanied with love.

QUESTION No. 1032: Is it true that we take away the empowering of the Holy Spirit today when we discredit Mark 16:16-20?

ANSWER: It is not true that people are empowered to miraculously heal today as previously discussed. Certainly, we should not discredit Mark 16:16-20 or any part of the Bible. However, to read something into a passage that is not there is to discredit it in a most grievous way! This particular passage simply says that confirming signs were to accompany believers. It does not teach here, or elsewhere in the Bible, that every Christian for all time would be able to perform one or all of these signs. The Bible is clear throughout that such was not the case, e.g., Acts 8:13; Romans 1:6-11. Neither is there here a discussion as to who specifically would receive the gifts or of the duration of the gifts. To base a doctrine or belief on one passage to the exclusion of all related material is

to violate the intent of the subject. All passages relative to a subject must be studied with understanding and knowledge coming from and based upon the sum of those passages. It should be noted that the particular prophecies of this passage have been fulfilled; that signs did, indeed, follow the believers, but only in the way (I Corinthians 12:11) and during the time appointed of God (I Corinthians 13:10). Demons were cast out (Acts 8:7; Acts 5:16). They spoke in new tongues (Acts 2:4-11). They took up serpents (Acts 28:5). Jesus does not say they "shall" drink some deadly thing, but "if" they should. Knowing that attempts would be made on the lives of the apostles, he gave them assurance, that if by poison, it would not hurt them. Allow me to suggest that if the Pentecostal believes that these confirming signs are requisite today, then it is he or she who refuses to confirm their word with signs and, therefore, it is they who discredit the passage. Where is the Pentecostal today who will take up a deadly viper to confirm what is being taught? Where is the Pentecostal who will drink deadly poison to confirm his or her doctrine? Why is it that they "do" exorcisms, healings, and speaking in tongues, but exclude the other two? May I also suggest that it is not ethical to say that they heard that someone in a far away country did it? There is no proof in such allegations!

QUESTION No. 1033: Why weren't all of the gifts mentioned in I Corinthians 13:8?

ANSWER: In I Corinthians 13:8-12, the thrust was not to show that only specific gifts were to cease, but rather to show that that which was in part (the miraculous and the miraculous age, necessary for confirmation and edification) was to terminate when that which was "perfect/complete" came, as previously discussed. The point would have been made no stronger by citing all of the nine gifts, since the purpose of all was the same. Therefore, it is clear and understood by biblical scholars at all levels that the three mentioned are simply representative of the total. The principle is used throughout the scriptures, e.g., Acts 20:7: "breaking of bread" is a part of the worship that stands for the whole; that is, "breaking of bread" in this context, means "to worship." .

QUESTION No. 1034: Have we concentrated less in the past on the Holy Spirit than the Father and the Son?

ANSWER: The line of thought, that we have not concentrated on the Holy Spirit to the same degree as God and Christ, is to some degree legitimate, since He is the third

person in the Godhead. However, I know of none that have suppressed the knowledge, attributes, or functions of the Holy Spirit. It appears that some, especially in the Pentecostal movement, have taken it upon themselves to give "undue" attention to the Holy Spirit, thus relegating the Father and Son to seemingly inferior roles. This ought not to be! The yearning for spiritual gifts by the groups you speak of stems from an immature need to "walk by sight and not by faith," instead of the other way around (I Corinthians 13:11; II Corinthians 5:7). It is an attempt to prove (or to be assured of) one's faith based on a "feeling" of being set free as the result of seeing or experiencing a sign from God (Matthew 12:39). It is a false assurance based on a false premise and it, therefore, will not stand in Judgment! Faith comes only by hearing (which includes acceptance and obedience) the Word of God (Romans 10:17).

QUESTION No. 1035: Why do people speak in tongues today? Even the apostles knew what they were saying, but people today aren't able to tell you what they said.

ANSWER: Speaking in tongues as happened in the first century is not the same as the gibberish that people in error engage in today! In the Bible we learn that to speak in tongues was simply to be able (without formal education) to speak a foreign language that already existed (Acts 2:1-11). This is not being done today, nor can it be! The reason most Pentecostals speak gibberish (not tongues as we read about in the Bible) is because they have been taught to do so by those who are ignorant of God's word. These misguided people are led to believe that they need a physical sign to assure that the Holy Spirit indwells them and that they, therefore, are assured of heaven. In their emotion, enhanced by loud music and shouts from others, these people begin to make vocal gibberish in concert with others, as they have been taught and encouraged to do. The emotion and excitement that they feel is mistakenly said to be the power of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, these attempt to walk by sight and not by faith in Christ and His Gospel, which announces clearly that the gifts of the Holy Spirit ended about 2000 years ago!

QUESTION No. 1036: Does not Paul refer to the resurrection in I Corinthians 13:10?

ANSWER: No! He does not! "Perfect" in I Corinthians 13:10 cannot refer to the resurrection that is to occur at the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, because when the

"perfect is come" faith, hope, and love will still abide (Vs.13). Such will not be the case at the resurrection, since there will be no need for hope and faith when we see the Christ, for "faith" is the evidence of things "not seen" (Hebrews 11:1) and "hope" that is "seen" is not hope (Romans 8:24). As well, the "perfect" cannot refer to Christ since the Greek "telion" is of neuter gender. Notice carefully in I Corinthians 13:8, that although the three gifts mentioned represented all the nine gifts that were to cease, these specific gifts that Paul said were in "part" and were to pass away when the "perfect" (complete or mature) came, all had to do with the proclamation of the Gospel. For example, Paul is discussing "prophecies," which is not foretelling the future, but biblically refers to miraculous teaching. "Tongues," or speaking in foreign languages (Acts 2:4, 6, 8, & 11), was the gift necessary to enable men to go into "all" nations and preach the Gospel (Mark 16:15-16) and "knowledge" had to do with miraculous knowledge in revealing the yet incomplete will of God. The word perfect/complete in Verse ten is clearly contrasted with that which is in "part;" that which is to be done away. What was said by Paul to be in part (Vs.9)? Obviously, miraculous knowledge and teaching! When would the part (miraculous knowledge and teaching) be done away? According to Verse ten, the part would be done away when the complete (perfect) was come! The things that were in "part" were to pass away when the complete or perfect came into being! That occurred when the Gospel came in its fullness; when it became the perfect or complete law of liberty (James 1:25) giving us, thereby, "all" things that pertain unto life and godliness through the knowledge of Jesus Christ (II Peter 1:3). The purpose of miracles was to confirm the word that was not yet written (Mark 16:20) and to cause people to believe who did not have the written word. This purpose was totally satisfied when the New Testament was once confirmed and written!

QUESTION No. 1037: Does not I Corinthians 14:2 imply a personal prayer language between man and God?

ANSWER: No! It does not! In Verse one of this chapter, Paul is telling the Christians at that time to follow after love and to desire spiritual gifts, not to bring honor and attention to themselves, as was the problem with which he was dealing, but rather that they might prophecy or teach men. In Verse two, he is saying, 'For he that speaks in a tongue/language that is not known by the hearer is obviously not speaking to that person and that the only one understanding what is being said is God; that speaker is speaking mysteries or that which is hidden or covered to the hearer.' In Verse three, Paul goes on to say, 'But he that prophecies (teaches in a language understood) speaks unto men for their edification, exhortation, and comfort.' None of these aims would be realized, if the speaker were to speak in a language that only God could understand! There is no

implication here or anywhere else that there is a given language in which we are to pray to God, as though He would not understand our common language. The fact is, God knows our hearts, desires, and thoughts without our saying anything at all. What possible difference would it make, and what need would there be, to have a special "prayer language?" Surely, God gets the message, no matter the tongue or dialect!

QUESTION No. 1038: Explain why the question should be "Who is the Holy Spirit?" rather than "What is the Holy Spirit?"

ANSWER: Because the Holy Spirit is the third personality of the Godhead and is always referred to in the Bible by the personal pronouns "He" and "Him." See John 14:16-17; John 14:26; John 16:7; and John 16:13. The Holy Spirit is not an "it," but is always spoken of in the male gender.

QUESTION No. 1039: How does the fact that the Holy Spirit can be mistreated indicate that He is a person?

ANSWER: Because only persons can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30) and despised (Hebrews 10:29) based on what they have spoken, taught, and for what they have testified, as shown in the above passages. Obviously, one who speaks, teaches, and testifies must be a person.

QUESTION No. 1040: Does God no longer speak to men? Does the Holy Spirit not convict us today?

ANSWER: He does not speak directly to anyone today. He does, however, speak to us through the knowledge of His Son (The New Testament) which gives us "all" things that pertain unto life and godliness (II Peter 1:3). The New Testament through which we are saved (James 1:25) contains all of the necessary communication from Christ to man necessary to his salvation and well being, and He has already spoken (Hebrews 1:1-2) all of the words by which all shall be judged (John 12:48). There is nothing to be added, subtracted, or changed (Revelation 22:18-19; Galatians 1:6-9). Any additional revelation directly from God would constitute a miracle. The sole purpose of miracles was to

confirm the newly revealed word (John 20:30-31). Once all scripture was given by inspiration of God, confirmed and written, it became the complete (perfect) law of liberty, able to "make the man of God perfect (complete), throughly furnished unto every good work" (II Timothy 3:17). Since we now have "that which is perfect" (I Corinthians 13:10); that is, the complete, mature, confirmed word of God, in which are "all things that pertain unto life and godliness," and by which we can become complete (mature) as Christians, there remains no need for miracles today. They have served the purpose for which they were intended! Since miracles have served their purpose and passed away, God does not communicate miraculously in any way today! The New Testament is His communication for all men for all time (Jude 3)! Yes! The Holy Spirit convicts us, but only through the Holy Spirit-filled and living Word of God, the New Testament of Jesus Christ! The division in the religious world today has been caused because people have been misled to believe that the Holy Spirit is guiding each of them through their own individual thought processes (which are usually in conflict with God's Word), many times to establish their own denominations of which there are now many thousands. If the Holy Spirit were so guiding men today, there would be but one religious thought, doctrine, and church!

QUESTION No. 1041: How could all of the Christians at Corinth have spiritual gifts? Surely the apostles did not lay hands on all of them.

ANSWER: There is no indication at all that every Christian in the church at Corinth had received the ability to perform miraculous gifts. However, that they had as many or more gifts than any other congregation cannot be doubted (I Corinthians 1:7). At the same time there can be no doubt that the imparting of gifts came through the laying on of the apostle's hands (Acts 8:18; Romans 1:11; I Timothy 1:6). Note, in Romans 1:11, that one of the great desires of the apostle Paul was to go to Rome, where he had not previously been, in order to impart gifts to the saints in Rome, i.e., to those who were saints (sanctified by God), but who did not have the gifts of the Spirit. Would it not be right to assume that Paul had the same desire for all the churches? In Acts 18:1-11 we have an account of Paul and others establishing the church at Corinth. Note, as well, that "he continued there a year and six months teaching the word of God among them (Verse 11). Undoubtedly during this lengthy period of a year and a half the apostle imparted gifts through the laying on of his hands to many of the Corinthians who had heard, believed, and were baptized (Acts 18:8), as he was so directed by the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 12:11).

QUESTION No. 1042: Since Romans 11:29 says, “For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance” (KJV) or “are irrevocable” (NKJV), how can you say that there are no apostles or gifts today?

ANSWER: Romans 11:29 is not discussing "calling of apostles," neither is it discussing "miraculous gifts." It is discussing the callings and promises made to the Jews (through their fathers, such as Abraham) under the Old Covenant. God will not and did not repent of these, even under the New Covenant. However, Paul is saying, directed by the Holy Spirit, that in order for the Jews to receive the blessings of those callings and promises they would have to be saved after the cross by being "graffed" back into the tree as natural branches. "God hath not cast away His people which He foreknew" (Verse 2). The point is that both Jew and Gentile will make up that tree, and as the Gentile is saved, so all Israel (or any other people) must be saved! Both Jew and Gentile in obedient faith through baptism are made one "in" Christ (Ephesians 2:11-18) and thereby recognized by God as Abraham's spiritual seed and heirs of the blessings (or gifts) according to the promise as related by God in the Old Testament (Genesis 12:3; Galatians 3:26-29).

It is wrong to wrest the Scriptures by taking verses out of context to support a doctrine or belief (II Peter 3:16), especially one that is in opposition to truth.

The reason there can be no apostles today is found in Acts 1:22. In order to be an apostle one must be an eyewitness of the resurrected Christ, i.e., that one would have to have seen Christ alive after His resurrection. Since none today have actually seen the resurrected Christ, it follows, therefore, that none today are, neither can they be, qualified to be apostles! Assigning such a title to man does not make him an apostle of the Lord! He presumptuously assumes a title to which he has no claim and to which he is not entitled (Psalms 19:13).

QUESTION No. 1043: I am trying to show from the Bible that the Holy Spirit indwells through the Word. Can you help?

ANSWER: I agree that the Holy Spirit indwells the Christian through the Word only. In fact, the Bible teaches that all three personalities of the Godhead indwell the Christian. For example: I John 4:15 (God dwells in us); Ephesians 3:17 (Christ dwells in

us); Romans 8:9 (Holy Spirit dwells in us). The Bible teaches then that the Three actually dwell in us, but there is no evidence whatsoever that they literally indwell us. There is often a misuse of the sense of the words "actually" and "literally." All members of the Godhead actually indwell the Christian symbolically, i.e., through the Word! It is worthy of note that they all are said to indwell us and there is nothing to indicate that the Holy Spirit dwells in us in some way other than do the other two members of the Godhead. The "literal indwellers" hold that the Father and Son actually indwell us representatively through the Holy Spirit who literally indwells us. Such is pure conjecture, unexplainable, and unscriptural! The fact is that how one indwells us, they all indwell us!

It is also worthy of note that the Bible does not teach an indwelling in the flesh, bones, and sinew of man. For example: Galatians 4:6,"God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son INTO OUR HEARTS, crying, Abba, Father; Ephesians 3:17, "That Christ may dwell IN YOUR HEARTS by faith." The indwelling is in our HEARTS, which is the seat of understanding, i.e., the mind of the Christian. This is not to say that there is a literal indwelling in the gray matter within our skulls! We are indwelt within our capacity to know, understand, and receive (believe, adopt, obey) the Word of God!

The books of Colossians and Ephesians are in reality commentaries of each other and can only be properly understood in light of each other. In the parallel passages, Ephesians 5:18b-19 and Colossians 3:16, we see the following respectively: "but be FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT; speaking to yourselves in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, etc. - "LET THE WORD OF CHRIST DWELL IN YOU RICHLY in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing etc. The passages are identical! They teach and say exactly the same thing! Therefore, to be "FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT" is to "LET THE WORD OF CHRIST DWELL IN YOU RICHLY." Conclusion: The Holy Spirit indwells one through the Word!

Also, it would be well to consider the fact that when there was a literal indwelling in the Bible, e.g., Jesus in the flesh, it was the result of a miracle! Since we all agree that miracles do not exist today, it follows that a literal indwelling cannot occur today! If such does occur, then it follows that miracles occur today. A person cannot have it both ways!

It is also true in the Bible that when Deity literally indwelt flesh, as in the case of Jesus Christ, that personality was deemed worthy of worship. If it is the case that Deity (The Holy Spirit) literally indwells the flesh of a man today, then it is the case that that man is due worship! In other words if the Holy Spirit literally inhabits our flesh, then it is the case that we ought to be worshiping one another!

WORSHIP

QUESTION No. 1044: One Sunday evening two men in our congregation put a "feet washing." Is it right to do this as part of the worship service?

ANSWER: No! There is neither scripture nor precedent for doing so in God's Word. As an item of worship, it began in the fourth century by the apostate church. Jesus made the statement after washing His disciple's feet "For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done unto you." In saying this, He was not instituting an act of worship. He was simply teaching individuals by His example that we should, with humility, submit to one another. It was the custom at that time because of the common footwear and the dusty conditions to wash the feet of those entering one's dwelling-place. Jesus used this particular custom (perhaps because there was no host present) to teach His disciples for all time not to exalt themselves, but to humbly adopt an attitude of servanthood to each other and to God! To add this practice, or any other, as an item of worship to God is to presumptuously sin against Him (Psalms 19:13)! It is vain worship (Matthew 15:9)! It is to preach another gospel (Galatians 1:6-9)! It is to add to God's Word (Revelation 22:18)!

QUESTION No. 1045: Is clapping hands while singing forbidden in the New Testament?

ANSWER: Yes! Hand-clapping (applause) is often engaged in to give praise and honor to ungodly performers and entertainers who with their additional and unscriptural worship practices (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16: I Corinthians 14:15) usurp the praise, honor and glory that rightly belongs to our God. They, and those who praise (applaud) them, do not worship in spirit and truth (John 4:24), because they have no authority for that which they do (Revelation 22:18)! Neither is there authority to use the hands to create a rhythmic beat in accompaniment of vocal music when worshiping God. This differs in no way from the use of drums or other rhythm producing instruments! There is no scripture in the New Testament that authorizes the clapping of hands or mechanical instruments in worship to God! In Colossians 3:16, we are told that whatever we do in word (which includes singing) or deed (which includes playing, clapping, and singing), it must be done in the name of (by the authority of) the Lord Jesus. Clearly, from Ephesians 5:19, Colossians 3:16 and I Corinthians 14:15, we see that the music authorized by the New Testament is strictly vocal and congregational, which excludes clapping and playing! We cannot, without sinning, take away from God's Word

(Revelation 22:18). We cannot, without sinning, add to God's Word (Revelation 22:19). We cannot change His Word in any way (Galatians 1:6-9)!

Neither can we go to the Old Testament to learn how we are to worship under the New Testament. This is true, because the Old Testament was taken out of the way at the cross of Christ. Please read carefully the following passages: II Corinthians 3; Galatians 3:16-29; Ephesians 2:13-19; Colossians 2:13-14; Hebrews 7:12; Hebrews 8:7.

QUESTION No. 1046: Is it a sin for women to leave their heads uncovered during worship services (I Corinthians 11:1-16)?

ANSWER: No! Those who so teach have failed to understand that it was the "custom" in Corinth in the first century to wear a long veil (body length) to show or denote submission. This "custom" is not prevalent in most civilizations today! Although it would be improper to bind "custom," the principle of submission remains an eternal binding principle (Genesis 3:16)! Thus, the inspired apostle wrote in I Corinthians 11:3, "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is man; and the head of Christ is God." This means that just as man must be in submission to his head, who is Christ, that the woman must be in submission to her head, who is man. It does not mean that the woman must show her submission by practicing a "custom" of submission (wearing a covering) that was prevalent in first century Corinth!

QUESTION No. 1047: Are Christians today commanded to partake of the Lord's Supper?

ANSWER: Yes! We are commanded to do so on the first day of every week! Please read Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:20-29: I Corinthians 16:1-2). To not be obedient to these scriptures is to sin!

QUESTION No. 1048: Why have many of your kinds of churches stopped using (fermented) wine and substituted grape juice?

ANSWER: The question implies an invalid assumption, i.e., that many of our "kinds of churches" at one time, scripturally and generally, used fermented wine during the Lord's Supper. Before the implication can be accepted, it must first be validated. Such cannot be done, either scripturally or historically (although rarely, individual congregations may have done so). The Greek word for wine (oinos) is used thirty-four times in the New Testament. It is a neutral word that may refer either to fermented or unfermented grape juice and is so determined by the context of the passage. When instituting His Supper, the Lord used, significantly, the phrase "fruit of the vine," rather than "oinos," which could have been misconstrued by some to mean fermented wine. In view of these two facts, it is clear that the drinking of unfermented grape juice during the Supper is the justifiable and scriptural response to our Lord's commands. Those who insist on the use of fermented wine do not do so on the basis of scripture!

That heaven stands opposing the use of alcoholic beverages is made clear in Proverbs 23:29-35 and Isaiah 5:11. Note that these two passages show a correlation between "wine" and "strong drink." Then consider Habakkuk 2:15, "Woe unto them that givest his neighbour drink, that puttest the bottle to him, and makest him drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness." Certainly, this does not suggest that our Lord who was without sin, having kept the Old Law perfectly, including this passage, gave His neighbour (His disciples) to drink and "put the bottle to them." Clearly the opposite is implied!

Simply from a logical standpoint, we must consider the fact that the Lord knew of the many drunkards (I Corinthians 6:9-11) who would, following His glorification, repent of this sin and be saved. What kind of a loving Savior would then insist that these be reintroduced to alcoholic beverages each Lord's Day afterwards as part of their worship responsibilities? Would such not cause the drunkard to be tempted? James said that God does not tempt any man (James 1:12-15). We submit that those who would insist that the recovering alcoholic imbibe an alcoholic beverage each Lord's Day stands guilty of causing one to be tempted and putting a "stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way" (Romans 14:13; Mark 9:42).

With consideration to the above, the question then needs to be asked, when and why have some stopped using unfermented grape juice and turned to that to which the Bible is opposed?

QUESTION No. 1049: Are Christians today commanded to tithe as those in the Old Testament?

ANSWER: No! Those who live under the laws of the New Testament (Christians) are not bound by the laws of the Old Testament. The Old Law was taken out of the way, because it was fulfilled by Christ with His death upon the cross (II Corinthians 3:13-14; Colossians 2:14). However, Christians have been given instructions on how to give. "Upon the first day of the week let everyone of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come" (I Corinthians 16:2). "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."

A Christian today is not bound to a specific amount or a specific percentage of his earnings. He is simply instructed to give as God has prospered him. This should not be taken to mean that one may contribute from his leftovers on payday. Certainly this would not be seeking first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33). In all of our giving, whether it be time or money, we must do so sacrificially (Mark 12:41-44). This may often exceed the tithe (10 percent) of the Old Law.

QUESTION No. 1050: Why are women not allowed to ask questions, pray, or preach during the worship service?

ANSWER: It is the will of God! I Timothy 2:11-12 forbids the woman to usurp authority that God has given to the man: "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." The reason given in verses 13-14 is: "For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression."

This does not mean, however, that the woman is inferior to the man. God has assigned different roles to each, and each must function within his or her assigned roles to be pleasing to God. The significant roles assigned to women are expressed in I Timothy 5 and Titus 2. Christian women will have no desire to violate or go beyond the bounds of what God has prescribed for them!

QUESTION No. 1051: There appears to be a contradiction between I Corinthians 14:33-38/I Timothy 2:11-15 and Acts 2:17-18. The Acts passage seems to allow what the other passages, written by Paul, prohibit. Would you explain!

ANSWER: Since God's Word is "truth," it is clear there can be no contradiction. First of all, Paul's passages do not prohibit a woman from prophesying or teaching, as did Priscilla, working privately with her husband in instructing Apollos (Acts 18:26), and as did the virgin daughters of Philip, the evangelist (Acts 21:8-9). Paul's passages in context simply show that a woman is not permitted to engage in the kind of public teaching or prophesying which exercises rule or authority over the man; that in such settings she is to be in subjection (I Timothy 2:11) and under obedience (I Corinthians 14:34).

Neither does Acts 2:17-18 imply that the prophesying to be done by female recipients of this gift of the Holy Spirit was to be done publicly; in a way to exercise authority over the man. Those who hold that it does are reading something into God's Word that is not there, but is really nothing more than an assumption of fallible man! To so assume and teach is to sin (Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 22:18-19).

The passages under consideration do not contradict, but, rather, are in complete harmony as is all of the Word of God!

QUESTION No. 1052: In a recent issue of "Truth for the World" (Vol.4, Number 4. August, 1995) in a discussion of prayer in public worship, you only speak of a particular kind of prayer. Aren't there other types of prayer? How about Romans 8:26?

ANSWER: Yes! The article you write about deals with public prayer when both males and females are present. The point is rightfully made that, in such an instance, the men of the church are to lead the prayer. Otherwise, the congregation would be in violation of I Timothy 2:8-12.

In I Timothy 2:1, we learn of different types of prayer; 1.) Supplications; a request of God for particular or certain benefits, 2.) Prayers; a more general term, during which

we commune with God, expressing our emotions and asking His guidance in our lives, 3.) Intercessions; requests of God on the behalf of others, and 4.) Thanksgivings; thanking Him for both the physical and spiritual blessings He has provided. All of these are often included as we approach our Father with a need (whether for self or others).

Romans 8:26 is not discussing a different kind of prayer. It is teaching that when we do not know how to express ourselves to God (perhaps only with a groaning that cannot be uttered) that the Holy Spirit will intercede in our behalf.

QUESTION No. 1053: Why when people pray do they say "through Jesus our Lord?"

ANSWER: Jesus is the mediator (go-between) between God and man (I Timothy 2:5). This is why in Colossians 3:17, we are told to 'give thanks to God and the Father by (or through) Him (Christ).' In saying these words, we sanctify and honor Christ in our hearts, and before men, as our one and only mediator and Lord!

QUESTION No. 1054: Is it forbidden for a person to justify himself in prayer to God?

ANSWER: Man does not and cannot justify himself alone! It is God who justifies (Romans 8:33). A man is justified by faith (Romans 5:1), when he hears (Romans 10:17) and obeys (Romans 6:16-18) the doctrine of Christ, i.e., the New Testament.

QUESTION No. 1055: Is it scriptural to close your eyes during prayer?

ANSWER: The Bible does not specify whether our eyes should be opened or closed in prayer. It is, therefore, scriptural to pray either way. For man to presume (and bind on others) that one is acceptable to the exclusion of the other, would be adding to God's Word. One would be guilty of presumptuous sin! The certainty of prayer is only that our approach to God be according to His will, in reverence, sincerity, and humility, as those who "hallow His name" (Matthew 6:9).

QUESTION No. 1056: During prayers in church should everyone pray aloud, or is it better for a man to lead?

ANSWER: One of the principles dealt with by the apostle Paul in I Corinthians fourteen is that there should never be confusion in the worship services. Certainly, this was a problem at Corinth, with people speaking in foreign languages that others did not know (Vs.23); often at the same time (Vs.26-33). Paul directed them to stop this practice, because "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints (Vs.32). They were to do "all things decently and in order" (Vs.40). If all in a congregation would pray at the same time, they, too, would be creating a problem of confusion, just like the one in Corinth. Those involved would be doing things indecently and out of order (Vs.40), thereby violating Paul's inspired directives.

A Christian man is to lead the prayer (I Timothy 2:8), with those "occupying the room saying Amen at thy giving of thanks" (Vs.16).

QUESTION No. 1057: Is it scriptural for a sister in Christ to give comments after the "Bible Study" period, instead of asking questions submissively (as was the case of the women in the worship service of I Corinthians 14:34-35)? Is such a sister in violation of I Timothy 2:12? Is such a sister usurping authority over the men?

ANSWER: If a woman is responding to a man who is in authority during a "Bible Study" period, she would not be in violation of scripture. If she, as the question implies, takes a position of authority over the men in the class by assuming the leadership, she would be sinning, as would all others participating in such an arrangement (I Timothy 2:11-12). The same is true of the formal worship services to God. The woman must always be in subjection, not usurping the authority of the man. This means that she cannot participate in a leading or authoritative way in any situation, and within the worship service, not even to speak beyond singing with all others collectively and saying “Amen” at the closing of a prayer in a decent and orderly fashion.

QUESTION No. 1058: What is the specific time to partake of the Lord's Supper?

ANSWER: Acts 20:7 states very clearly that the disciples came together "upon the first day of the week" to break bread. A day encompasses twenty-four hours. Therefore, partaking of the Lord's Supper anytime during those twenty-four hours would not violate this or any other passage of scripture! As well, in Acts 20:7-8, we are not told at what time on the first day of the week this particular worship service began. We only know that Paul continued his speech until midnight. The service could have encompassed both daytime and nighttime hours or it could have included only nighttime hours. Precisely when, during the worship service, they partook of the Lord's Supper, we are not told. It could have been at the beginning, the middle, or the end of the service. Apparently, the precise hour was not significant. Otherwise, the Holy Spirit would have so specified. He did specify the "first day of the week." We must leave it there, being careful not to bind things on ourselves and others what the Holy Spirit has not bound in the New Testament!

QUESTION No. 1059: Does I Corinthians 14:26-27 authorize groups of two or three singing during worship?

ANSWER: Singing groups are not authorized anywhere in the New Testament! One of the problems in Corinth was that many members of the church with various gifts of the Holy Spirit were speaking at the same time and were, by that, causing confusing and disorderly services. Paul states in Verse thirty-three that God is not the author of such confusion, and in Verse forty, that all things are to be done decently and in order. So that there might be order, He directs in Verse twenty-seven that no more than two or three sentences were to be uttered at one time, and then by only one person at a time. The passage does not deal with music at all and, therefore, does not authorize singing groups of any kind!

QUESTION No. 1060: Is it scriptural to perform simultaneous acts of worship during the assembly, such as singing during communion?

ANSWER: No! Scriptural worship clearly consists of five separate and distinct acts: (1) Singing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16), (2) Prayer (I Timothy 2:8; Acts 2:42), (3) Teaching (II Timothy 4:2; Acts 20:7), (4) Communion (I Corinthians 11:23-30; Matthew 26:26-29), (5) Giving (I Corinthians 16:1-2; II Corinthians 9:7).

There is no command, example, or implication that authorizes simultaneous acts of worship. In other words, there is no authority for doing such. There is no difference in this false practice and the ungodly practice of using singing groups in which one group of Christians attempts to sing for every one assembled. The Bible teaches in the passages outlined above that every Christian is to sing when the singing is done! How can this be when some of the people are eating and drinking while others are singing? It cannot be done!

QUESTION No. 1061: Does not Galatians 3:28 justify the use of women in a leading role in public worship?

ANSWER: No! The passage simply teaches that all people, regardless of race, status, or gender, are on an equal footing as far as salvation is concerned; that all may come to Christ!

QUESTION No. 1062: If choirs that mostly sing songs not known to the rest of the church are allowed, would the church be allowed to sing any song that some of the members don't know?

ANSWER: Choirs in worship to God are not authorized by the Scriptures whether a song is known by the rest of the church or not! Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 authorize only vocalized (clearly enunciated words) congregational singing. These passages demand the exclusion of solos, duets, trios, quartets, choirs of any size, and instrumental music, under any and all conditions, in worship to God (Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 22:18-19)!

Worship to God is to be done decently and in order (I Corinthians 14:40). Certainly, when a song leader (a man) uses the worship period to teach music, including new songs, he is in error! This does not mean (when there are no songbooks available) that everyone in the assembly, including visitors, must be totally familiar with every song that the leader might select. How is the song leader, or anyone else, to know who knows what, and how much they know? Must he know that every person in the assembly knows every word and every note of every verse? Such is surely impossible and, certainly, God

does not demand the impossible. The song leader, however, must always do his best to carefully select scriptural songs and direct the song worship so that all things can be done according to truth, and "decently and in order." (Clearly, it would be indecent and out of order if the song leader were to lead a song that only he and a few others knew!) As well, each individual within the assembly must do their best to scripturally fulfill the demands of Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16, within the bounds of their own individual capabilities.

QUESTION No. 1063: If such songs can be sung by members who know them, and those who don't know them can't sing, how does this differ from a choir?

ANSWER: Many reasons! First of all, it is impossible for those who don't know the song to sing it, if there are no songbooks available. Obviously, it is not the intent of these to remain silent and have others do their worshiping "for" them, as is the case when a choir is used! Secondly, those who are singing under these circumstances do not formally constitute a choir whose intent it is to sing "for," or in behalf of, the others! Thirdly, in the case of using a choir, those who don't sing the song are (either of their own accord or at the direction of others) refraining intentionally from singing, while having the capability to do so, and, thus, are in violation of the command to "sing" in Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16! The commands of these passages are applicable to each person within the congregation. This means that every person within the congregation, who has the capability to sing, must sing every time there is singing! Anything else is sin! Clearly, there is no authorization in God's Word for one person, or group of persons, to sing for (in the place of) another; just as there is no authorization for one to commune or give "for" (in the place of) another.

Let's assume that in a congregation there are one or more people who were born without the ability to speak. Do these sin by not singing? Of course not! Why? Simply because they do not have the capability of singing! Does the rest of the congregation constitute a choir? Does the rest of the congregation sin by singing when others can't? Of course not! Would such justify the use of a formal choir? Of course not! Individuals who find it totally or nearly impossible to sing must simply do the best they can within their capabilities to satisfy the demands of Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16. And so it is with every member of the congregation!

Choirs and specialized singing groups have been developed to, (1), entertain and (2), to satisfy the pride and ego of man! Neither of these is compatible with worship that is in spirit and according to truth (John 4:24).

QUESTION No. 1064: If a church cannot sing a song that is not known to some members, how can those members learn it?

ANSWER: Please read the above answers again. When songbooks are available, individuals, by focusing on the words of the book, can tonefully recite these words in concert with the rest of the congregation and, in this way, worship God scripturally. Most learn new songs in this way. However, sometimes it is expedient, especially when song books are not available, to set aside special times for the congregation to learn and practice "new" songs, just as one practices before reading the Scriptures to the congregation, or as the preacher practices his sermon! Many times as individuals and congregations we often fail to adequately prepare for properly worshiping God.

QUESTION No. 1065: In Romans 15:9 and Hebrews 2:12 (Psalms 22:22) are these quotations from the Old Testament: "I will confess to you among the Gentiles and sing to your name" and "I will declare your name to my brethren; in the midst of the congregation I will sing praise to you." Is this talking about singing together or, I, a single person, singing among the midst of many people?

ANSWER: Certainly, these passages do not support the idea of one Christian singing a solo to the rest of the congregation. The pronoun "I" in these passages refers not to individual members of the church, but to Jesus Christ. Note that in Hebrews 2:11, Paul is discussing "He that sanctifieth." Of course, this refers to Christ. He also discusses those "who are sanctified." This obviously refers to Christians who make up the church. He then says that both He who sanctifieth and those who are sanctified are "of One" (God). Because of this relationship that both have with God, He (Christ) is not ashamed to call them (Christians) brethren! In Verse twelve, because He is not ashamed of His brethren, He (Christ) will declare God's name to us and will commune and participate with us in our worship to the Father. Neither the word "I," the word "sing," or the word "midst" teach or imply that men are authorized to sing a solo in the worship services of the church. These words simply denote the communion and relationship that Christ has with His church (and within His church), even as we worship God.

QUESTION No. 1066: If the church must be taught a song not known to them, where in the Bible do we read about Christians coming together to learn a song? Where do we read about the use of songbooks?

ANSWER: Any aid or expedient action that provides a scriptural advantage to complying with a direct statement (command), implication, or approved example from God's Word is scripturally authorized for use. This would include such things as church buildings, church benches, artificial lighting, meeting to learn new songs, songbooks, and tuning forks or pitch pipes. All of these things, being subordinates (not equal to), provide a scriptural advantage to the accomplishment of the primary purpose or duty. Instruments of music, however, do not fall in the category of authorized expedients, because they are not subordinate to the primary duty or action of making vocal music. That is, instrumental music, being totally different in kind, is, in the realm of music, equal to (not subordinate to) vocal music. Therefore, the use of instruments in worship are not authorized as expedients and, when used, are in addition to God's Word, violating Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; I Corinthians 4:6 and Revelation 22:18-19.

QUESTION No. 1067: Larry Powers says in his tract on choirs that Colossians 3:16 "teaching" means to teach, instruct by word of mouth and "admonishing" means to put in mind, instruct, warn. Therefore, this teaching and admonishing is to be done to one another, which means that all do it at the same time together. If what Larry Powers says is true, then it means that pulpit preaching, teaching, and admonishing are wrong, because only one person does it at one time. Is this true? Please explain.

ANSWER: Brother Powers is correct in his definitions of "teaching" and "admonishing." He does not say, however, that these definitions constitute the basis for doing them to "one another." He is saying that since this passage commands that teaching and admonishing in our singing is to be directed to "one another," we are, thereby, limited to "all of us doing it at the same time together." He is correct! The limitations of this passage exclude, and regard as sinful, the use of choirs! We are commanded in Colossians 3:16 to all sing together at the same time. We are not all commanded to preach at the same time (I Corinthians 14:33 & 40).

QUESTION No. 1068: Nowhere in the New Testament are choirs mentioned. If this means choirs are wrong, then why are not many cups in communion wrong, because nowhere in the New Testament do we read of many cups being used, but only one cup? Since there is no scripture telling us how many cups to use in communion, who decided we should use many cups, and by what authority?

ANSWER: The last part of the first question says that we only read of one cup (container) being used for communion in the New Testament. The first part of the second question says that there is no scripture telling us how many cups (containers) to use. The second question is accurate! There is no passage that tells us how many containers to use! The cup referred to by Matthew in Matthew 26:27 does not refer to the container, but rather to the contents of the container (cup). Notice that Jesus in this passage "took the cup and gave thanks." Did He give thanks for the container or for the fruit of the vine that was in the container? He told them (His disciples) to "drink ye all of it." Was He telling them to drink the container or the fruit of the vine that was in the container? If one says that Matthew was referring to the container when he says "the cup." Then, to be consistent, one would also have to say that Jesus gave thanks for the container, and that He told His disciples to drink the container. Such is foolishness! If a friend asks if you and your wife want a cup of tea and you respond, "Yes, we want a cup," does this mean you want one cup or does it mean that you and your wife want tea? Obviously, your interest is in the contents of the cup or cups; the tea!

If, as some would teach, we are to use only one container today, would it also not be proper and consistent to suggest that the one container today be passed only to the number of people equal to the number who were present in the upper room? It would appear, if their contention is true (and it isn't) that we must, in order to be ethically consistent, logically conclude that we must have one cup for every twelve people assembled (Judas was likely not present at the institution of the Lord's Supper, though present at the preceding meal)! Both the contention and the logical resultant conclusion are foolishness, having their roots in the mind of man, not in the mind of God!

Since the New Testament does not tell us how many containers to use, the option of "how many containers" is left up to each congregation. None has the authority to bind upon another the number of cups to be used, whether one or many! To do so is to bind where God has not bound, and to sin thereby (Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 22:18-19).

QUESTION No. 1069: What was the color of the grape juice Jesus used at the Last Supper to symbolize His blood?

ANSWER: The Bible does not relate this information. Therefore, we should not consider it a matter of significance. Neither should we bind our personal opinions on others. If it were a matter of importance to us, the information would have been provided! All we can be sure of is that which the Lord used was the fruit of the vine or grape juice (Matthew 26:29). We can not go beyond what we know. Some would hold that we must drink only that fruit of the vine that is dark in color, since according to them it more closely resembles blood. It is doubtful, however, that any grape juice is the exact color of blood. Most of it is produced in varying shades of purple or in almost a clear form. Who is wise enough to determine the exact shade of color Jesus used at the Lord's Supper or the exact shade we should use? How close do we have to come to the exact shade Jesus used in order to worship acceptably? Further, who would be so presumptuous to make such a determination? We truly need to learn to be silent where the Bible is silent! To do otherwise is to divide the Body of Christ!

QUESTION No. 1070: Since Christ instituted the Lord's supper in an upstairs room and the apostles received the Holy Spirit in an upstairs room, then an upstairs room has some importance to Jesus Christ. Why don't we go to an upstairs room to partake of the Lord's Supper? Do we have Bible authority for taking the Lord's Supper downstairs? Where in the Bible do we read that it does not matter where we observe the Lord's Supper, but it does matter what we observe?

ANSWER: The Bible does not imply or teach that the upstairs room had any special importance or significance to Christ! In New Testament times, most of the houses in Jerusalem had an upper room which was customarily designated as a place set aside for conversation, for devotions, and often for placing of the dead prior to burial. Christ and the apostles used an upper room simply because of custom and availability. The word translated as "upper room" occurs four times in the new Testament; in the two places mentioned in the question (Luke 22:12 & Acts 1:13); in Acts 9:37-38, where the body of Dorcas was laid; and in Acts 20:8, "And there were many lights in the upper chamber." If one would assume from these passages that the Lord's Supper could be taken only in an upper room, then he or she would also have to assume that when we die, our bodies could only be laid in an upper room, and that we could have lights only in an upper room! Surely, such is not the case! Further, if the position suggested in the question were adopted, how could one stop with the assumption that communion should be taken in just

any upper room? Why would it not be necessary to assume that it should be taken only in the same upper room; the one that Christ used? Should it be taken in an upper room on the second floor or the third floor? Should we similarly assume that the Jordan River had some importance to Christ since He was baptized there? If so, should we not further assume that we also must be baptized in the Jordan or, at least, in some other river? Would this mean we could not be scripturally baptized in a lake, pool, bathtub, or baptistry? Surely not! The important thing clearly is the element of water (I Peter 3:21), not the location of the water. So it is with the Lord's Supper! The important things are the elements of unleavened bread and fruit of the vine (Matthew 26:26-29; I Corinthians 11:23-26), not the location of the service!

QUESTION No. 1071: Why do men not wear hats during worship to God?

ANSWER: Because it evidences disrespect, indicating non-submission. It, therefore, brings dishonor to our Head, who is Christ (I Corinthians 11:3-4).

QUESTION No. 1072: Because we now have liberty in Christ, would it be acceptable to burn candles or to sleep in worship services?

ANSWER: No! Neither of these would be proper! We must worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). Since sleeping during worship services would clearly violate this passage, and since burning of candles in worship services as a religious act is not authorized in the New Testament, both would be sin!

Our liberty in Christ "hath made us free from the (Old Testament) law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2), but we not use that liberty to do whatever we want. We are to walk after, and to be led by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:4-14). This occurs in our obedience to God's Word!

QUESTION No. 1073: I have enclosed a document entitled "Breaking Bread." Would you please explain what is being taught? Is it right or wrong?

ANSWER: The document submitted teaches that as Christians, when we partake of the Lord's Supper, we should:

A) Feel that God is talking to us.

B) Have feelings about how we are living in Christ.

C) Be thinking about who needs what in the Body.

D) Be thinking about the lost.

None of the four items suggested above are taught in the Word of God! The Lord's Supper is simply and solely a reminder; a commemoration of the death of our Savior and is to be taken on the first day of every week (Acts 20;7) in His memory (I Corinthians 11:24-25) to "show forth His death until He come" (I Corinthians 11:26). It is not to be taken to show forth anything else, nor to remember anything else! To partake of the Lord's Supper for the reasons listed by the author of the document in question is to violate God's Word!

The author of the document has suggested that Christians think about these four items in order to keep the Lord's Supper from becoming "boring." We would suggest that if the death of our Lord on the cross cannot keep the Lord's Supper from becoming ritualistic and boring, then it is certain that those things suggested by the author, as well, cannot! When a Christian's worship (John 4:24) is in spirit (the proper attitude) and truth (according to His will), the Lord's Supper will not be boring or ritualistic to him, but, conversely, will be a significant and praiseworthy highlight of his week!

QUESTION No. 1074: If a church fails to get wine for communion, is it right to use other juices, such as pineapple or lemon?

ANSWER: No! Most often the reason a congregation does not have non-alcoholic grape juice available is because of a failure to plan ahead. It may be difficult for some, but it is certain that the Lord did not command us to do something we can not possibly do. No matter how difficult it may be, the congregation needs to plan ahead to make sure it has what the scriptures require, i.e., non-alcoholic grape juice!

QUESTION No. 1075: Where in the Bible are we told what to wear when presenting a sermon in church?

ANSWER: We are not told to wear a specific type of clothing. It is certain, however, that nothing should be worn which sets the preacher apart from his brethren. This principle is seen in Matthew 23:1-12.

QUESTION No. 1076: Is there any biblical instruction about who should prepare the Lord's table? Where the elements should be prepared? Who should give thanks? Who is to get the leftovers?

ANSWER: No! Except in the case of giving thanks. This is limited only to Christian men (I Timothy 2: 12), unless there are none present. In determining the other matters contained in the question, we should always remember the exhortation of Paul in Romans 14:19, "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."

QUESTION No. 1077: Should there be special seating in the church for the "prominent" members?

ANSWER: No! Christians are all one in Christ (John 17:21; Galatians 3:26-29). Christ spoke strongly against those who loved the uppermost seats in the synagogues, teaching all of us to exhibit attitudes of humility and service (Matthew 23:1-12). If our attitudes are proper and emulate that of our Lord as He washed the feet of His disciples (John 13:1-17), there will be no "special seating" where the saints congregate!

QUESTION No. 1078: I hold the view that in things that are essential to our salvation there should be unity. In things that are non-essential we should allow liberty. Can issues like the number of cups used at the Lord's Table; women serving the Lord's Supper; ordination of women; and head coverings constitute essentials?

ANSWER: It is "essential" that we are obedient to the Word of God in all issues! In Colossians 3:17, we are told "Whatever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name (by the authority of) the Lord Jesus . . ." Each issue then that arises must be weighed in the light of this passage and other passages that may be related to the issue. The primary question must always be, "Does the Bible command / authorize the action? For example: there is no commandment that specifies the number of cups to be used during the Lord's Supper. Therefore, it is not essential that we use one cup, nor is it essential that we use multiple cups. The option must be left up to each congregation, with none binding their opinion on the other. In this matter, there must be liberty!

Those who teach that it is essential that women wear hats in worship services have failed to understand that it was the "custom" in Corinth in the first century for women to wear an ankle length covering (veil) to show or denote submission to their husbands. This "custom" is not prevalent in most civilizations today! Although it would be improper to bind "custom," the principle of submission remains an eternal binding principle (Genesis 3:16)! Thus, the inspired apostle wrote in I Corinthians 11:3, "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is man; and the head of Christ is God." In Ephesians 5:22, he would say, "Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as unto the Lord." Therefore, submission of a wife to her husband is an "essential;" the wearing of a veil/hat by a woman is a "non-essential." For her to wear or not to wear is not sin, but a matter of liberty and opinion, to be left up to each individual!

As to the issues you raise relative to women being "ordained" and serving the Lord's Supper, suggesting that this matter is non-essential: In these issues, the Bible clearly specifies what is to be done, negating any opinion that man may have. In other words, in these matters, man has no liberty to exercise his own options. It is "essential"

that we abide by the teaching of the New Testament (John 12:48; John 15:10)! In I Timothy 2:11-12, all are clearly bound by the following inspired directive: "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." Any position or activity, then, of a woman in the worship service that takes away the authority of the man is sinful! Within the intent of this passage, she is permitted only to vocally engage in congregational singing (Ephesians 5:19) and to say "Amen" with those occupying the room at the giving of thanks (I Corinthians 14:16), doing such decently and in order (I Corinthians 14:40) as she worships in spirit and truth (John 4:24). To this she is limited by the Holy Spirit! To make the issue of the use women in worship services to God a "non-essential," when God has clearly spoken on the matter, is to pervert the Gospel of Christ and be accursed (Galatians 1:6-9).

It is true that in things that are essential there must be unity and that in things that are non-essential there must be liberty. However to take the denominational position that only those things that pertain "to our salvation" are essentials, assumes an attitude and position that only a part of God's Word is essential to our salvation. This is not true! Obedience to all of God's Word is essential and critical to our salvation; every book, chapter, verse, and word! The essentiality or non-essentiality of a particular activity or action can only be determined on the basis of the totality of His word, by which all men will one day be judged (John 12:48)!

QUESTION No. 1079: What are the acts of worship authorized by the New Testament?

ANSWER: Scriptural worship clearly consists of only five separate and distinct acts: (1) Congregational Singing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16), (2) Prayer (I Timothy 2:8; Acts 2:42), (3) Teaching/Preaching (II Timothy 4:2; Acts 20:7), (4) Communion on Sundays only (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:23-30; Matthew 26:26-29), and (5) Giving on Sundays only (I Corinthians 16:1-2; II Corinthians 9:7). To these five acts of worship we are limited! The New Testament (by which we will be judged-John 12:48) does not allow women to lead in these matters when men are present (I Corinthians 14:34-35; I Timothy 2:11-12)! Neither does it authorize mechanical instruments of music (including drums); hand clapping; singing groups; choirs; shouting and raucous behavior; or any type of entertainment. To engage in any of these is to violate the Word of God (Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 22:18-19). All worship must be in spirit and truth (John 4:24), as well as decently and in order (I Corinthians 14:40).

QUESTION No. 1080: Is it a sin not to attend mid-week services?

ANSWER: Yes! The admonition of Hebrews 10:25 (to say nothing of Psalms 122:1; Matthew 6:33; Colossians 3:2; etc.) is explicit! We are not to forsake the "assemblings (plural)!" This passage does not say "the" assembly (singular), as though it had reference solely to Sunday morning and/or evening. Neither does "the day (singular) approaching" refer to the next first day of the week or any other day of worship for that matter. To so suggest would also be to suggest that the exhortation to assemble would require each of us to progressively exhort to a higher degree as we go through the week! No scholar through out the ages has so held! The "day" may refer to one of two "days," with neither violating the context, i.e., either Christ's symbolic coming in the destruction of Jerusalem or His literal coming to judge all of mankind.

Undoubtedly the time of worship on the Lord's Day and frequency of worship on other days is a matter of option. In such matters, the collective decision of the elders is totally authoritative and binding upon each Christian under their oversight. Each is to be obedient to those who have the rule over them (Hebrews 13:7,17). To forsake the mid-week service, or any other service so appointed by the elders, is to sin by violating these verses, as well as those cited above! Some would argue, "Well, I don't think we have to meet during mid-week, because the elders could lord it over the flock and demand that we meet seven times a day, seven times a week!" Certainly they could, but in my 60+ years in the church I have not known any who have so done and, further, I doubt that those who make such an argument have! If any group of elders would lord it over the flock in any way, provisions are made for such an eventuality (I Timothy 5:17-20). Our commitment to the Lord must be never depend on what we think could happen, but rather upon His Word.

QUESTION No. 1081: Is it right for a fornicator to partake of the Lord's Supper?

ANSWER: No! A person engaged in such activities has separated himself from God (Isaiah 59:1-2). He or she is no longer walking in the light and is out of fellowship with Him (I John 1:6-7). Before one can worship acceptably, he or she must be in fellowship with Him, because in a state of separation He has hid His face from the impenitent sinner, that He will not hear (Isaiah 59:2)! Jesus said in the sermon on the mount that one is not to worship until he or she is reconciled to a brother who has ought against him (Matthew 5:23-24). How much more should an habitual sinner be first reconciled to the Lord before engaging in the worship activity of the Lord's Supper!

QUESTION No. 1082: Is everything we do worship to God?

ANSWER: No! The Bible clearly distinguishes between service and worship! In Genesis 22:1-14, we see Abraham serving God in that he was obediently preparing to sacrifice his son, Isaac. In the course of his service, Abraham said to the young men that were with him (Vs.5), "Abide ye here with the ass; I and the lad will go yonder to worship, and come again unto you." He was not worshiping at the time he was talking to the young men and, clearly, he intended to go to a certain place in order to engage in worship. We can, therefore, scripturally conclude that "worship is service, but not all service is worship!" As well, we can see that "intent" is involved in worship to God, i.e., we must "intend" to worship. One cannot worship God by accident!

To suggest that "all" we do is worship to God, if not blasphemous, closely approaches it! Would those who so teach also hold that hygienic and bathroom functions constitute worship? What about sexual relations between husband and wife? Absurd!

The position is neither logical nor scriptural!

Note a few of many passages that show a difference between service and worship: Deuteronomy 4:19; 8:19; 29:26; I Kings 9:6; 9:9; Jeremiah 8:2; 16:11; 25:6.

QUESTION No. 1083: Paul says in I Corinthians 14:34 that women should keep quiet in the meeting, and yet the same author says in Galatians 3:26-29 that we are all the same because of the blood of Christ. What does he mean?

ANSWER: Galatians 3:26-29 is not discussing functions and roles of men and women in the church or in the worship services of the church. This particular passage is a "salvation" passage and teaches that all, regardless of race, position in life, or gender (sex), can and must be saved under the New Testament system of faith (as opposed to Old Testament law - Galatians 3:23-25) by being baptized into Christ Jesus.

We must be careful not to take a passage out of context, nor read into a passage more than was intended. Those who use this passage to teach that women may take a leading role in the church are in direct conflict with I Corinthians 14:34-35; I Timothy 2: 11-12, and many other passages. Such is a sinful mishandling of God's Word (Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 22:18-19)!

QUESTION No. 1084: If women are forbidden to preach in the church, does this mean that they don't have to talk to unbelievers about Christ?

ANSWER: That the Bible teaches that women are not to teach in mixed (men and women) assemblies; nor to in any way usurp authority over the man is very definite and clear (I Corinthians 14:34-35; I Timothy 2:11-12). This does not mean however that she does not have the responsibility of teaching unbelievers about Christ in a private setting.

That we have approved example of such is seen in the case of Aquila and Priscilla (Acts 18:24-28) and by those who were scattered abroad in Acts 8:1-4. That women have also been directly commanded to teach is, as well, evident (Titus 2:3-4).

QUESTION No. 1085: Where in the New Testament is the phrase "worship services" used, and can you show that the "assemblies" equal "worship service?"

ANSWER: The phrase "worship services" does not appear in the Bible in these terms! This does not mean, however, that the use of such a phrase is not authorized by scripture. The same is true of the word "Trinity." It does not appear in the Bible, yet its use is authorized by scripture on the basis of implication and principle.

The Greek word (proskuneoo) translated as worship in the English denotes "an act of reverence whether paid to a creature, or to the Creator" (ASV marginal note, Matthew 2:2). The very instruction to obediently engage in certain "acts" of worship, in which homage to the Creator is paid, demands and points to service to that same Creator. Thus, in worship we are serving God as He instructs. To suggest that there are services (periods of time set aside to serve God) in which we engage in specific acts of worship is completely authorized and, therefore, scriptural. To use the phrase "worship service" is to recognize the above truths in brief terms.

To answer the second part of the question: Can any doubt that the saved of Acts 2:41-47 assembled ("all that believed were together" – Verse 44) as the church (Verse 47) to serve God ("continuing in the apostles' doctrine" – Verse 42) by engaging in specific acts of worship ("breaking of bread and in prayers" – Verse 42)? That these particular assemblies were equal to services in which God was worshipped cannot successfully be denied! As well, we see in Acts 20:7, that the disciples came together (assembled) to serve God by engaging in the worship act of "breaking bread," a phrase used as a part to denote a whole, or all the acts of worship as commanded! On this same day (the first day), we see that when they were assembled they also served God by being obedient to the specific command to give as they had been prospered (I Corinthians 16:1-2)! See also I Corinthians 11:18, 20, and 33. In all three verses the phrase "come together" is used, synonymously with the "assembly," during which they worshipped God by partaking of the Lord's Supper!

QUESTION No. 1086: I Corinthians 16:1-2 deals with the offering. Is it right for a non-believer found in the assembly to participate? Is the offering for baptized believers only?

ANSWER: Non-believers, rejecting truth, cannot worship a God in whom they do not believe acceptably in any way! God accepts only worship that has been offered in spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24). Therefore, God accepts only worship that has been offered by faithful Christians, no matter the act of worship. Many times those in the

denominations will attend worship services of the Church of Christ and participate in the singing; will say "Amen" at the conclusion of a prayer; will listen attentively to the sermon; will contribute; and will participate in the Lord's Supper. Though God does not accept their worship, there is no sensible way to exclude them from so doing. If we were to insist that they not contribute, then it would follow that we should also insist that they not sing; that they should not say "Amen" or participate in anyway in any act of worship. Certainly, it is inconsistent to exclude them from engaging in one act of worship (giving), while including them in others (singing and prayer). To carry the idea of forbidding some to participate to its logical conclusion, we would then have to say that those in the denominations are forbidden even to attend our worship services, lest they participate in any way. And in so doing, we would have lost an opportunity to teach someone the saving message of Jesus Christ. We can teach the truths of John 4:23-24, but we cannot force truth upon any person. Neither can we, especially in larger congregations, examine every person who enters and participates as to whether or not they are faithful children of God! Each man is to examine himself (I Corinthians 11:28)!

QUESTION No. 1087: God doesn't want confusion in our manner of worship (I Corinthians 14:33, 40). Is it in order for everybody in the assembly to be praying aloud at the same time, as do Pentecostals churches? Their argument is based on Revelation 4:10, 11 and Acts 4:23, 24. A careful study of the two chapters reveals order because people spoke the same words.

ANSWER: The argument based on Revelation 4:10-11 is invalid for, at least three reasons: (1) The passage is not literal, but symbolic, i.e., it was written in signs. God sent the revelation to John and "signified" it by His angel (Revelation 1:1). (2) Even symbolically, one must assume (a) that the twenty-four elders were doing everything in unison, which is not indicated, and (b) that if they were doing everything in unison that they were not singing, which involves "saying" or "speaking" (Ephesians 5:19). (3) The passage has nothing at all to do with Christian worship in the church of Christ and, therefore, does not establish a pattern of worship for Christians today.

The argument based on Acts 4:23-24 is similarly invalid. There is, also, no indication here that all present were saying something at the same time. The phrase "with one accord" does not so indicate! The Greek word translated "accord" is *homothumadon,* which simply means that they were unanimous in that which they were doing; that they were of one mind! See the same word used in Acts 1:14 and Acts 2:2!

The principles of I Corinthians 14 are directly applicable to Christian worship and demand, as you have indicated, that all we do in worship to God "must" be done decently and in order (I Corinthians 14:23, 33, and 40). The Bible does not contradict itself by teaching in Acts 4:23-24 and Revelation 4:10-11 the opposite of what it clearly teaches in I Corinthians 14! The Pentecostals sinfully assume such and act accordingly! In so doing

they are in violation of the biblical principles governing our worship to Him. They are in transgression of God's Law (I John 3:4)!

QUESTION No. 1088: Is it wrong for the entire congregation (both men and women) to read aloud in unison at the request of the preacher during the worship service?

ANSWER: In order for a congregation to engage in this practice scripturally, it must first determine if the Scriptures authorize the action. Before looking for verses that might condemn the action, where are the verses that approve the action? Where is God's authority for doing so? Assume for a moment that the Bible does not say you can't do it. Does this mean you can do it? With this argument I can justify the instrument, because the Bible doesn't say specifically you can't do it. However, we don't do it, because there is no authority to use them. You suggest that the brethren there, and apparently yourself, feel it is authorized because the women are clearly authorized to sing along with the men (Ephesians 5:19; Colossian 3:16). You further suggest that the Bible nowhere prohibits this action on the basis that it does not prohibit singing in unison! In so doing, you in error suggest that there is no difference between the two! But, Rob, there is a difference in the two! The act of reading is different from the act of singing! Because words are used in both does not make the acts equal. If this were true then we would also conclude that it is also authorized for men and women to pray in unison, since words are involved in that act as well! None can deny that singing as a congregation is authorized! At the same time, none can show where reading in unison is authorized! This is the primary difference! One is authorized, the other isn't! None has the authority to say, "well this particular act is similar to an approved act, therefore, this particular similar act is also authorized!" Such is adding to the Word of God (Revelation 22:18-19)!

Women in worship are authorized to join in the singing with the men (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16). They are authorized to say "amen" at the close of a prayer (I Corinthians 14:16). Where and when they are not specifically authorized to be vocal, they are commanded to be silent (I Timothy 2:11-12)! Men and women singing aloud together in worship is authorized! Reading aloud together is not authorized! Women may reciprocally teach men in singing, but they are not authorized to reciprocally teach men by reading! They are two distinctly different acts!

Other questions that might be asked are: "Why is it being done?" "What purpose does it serve?" "What purpose is served if only the men read in unison?" "Does not a lone man lead the minds of all worshippers in prayer (I Timothy 2:8)?" "Is not the same accomplished when a lone man leads the minds of all worshippers in reading and preaching?" Since God has not prescribed that those readings and prayers be performed in unison by worshippers, He, as an all-knowing God, apparently saw no benefit to doing

so! This being the case, we need to leave it alone! Doing that in worship which God has not authorized is sinful (Colossians 3:17)!

Though some may opine that women of a congregation in so doing are not being unsubmissive to the men, it is, nonetheless, certainly true, that all who engage in such are not being submissive to God. The reason: He has not authorized the action!

QUESTION No. 1089: Is the "setting" of I Corinthians 14 and I Timothy 2 limited to the worship service?

ANSWER: It seems clear that the discussion of I Corinthians 14 and I Timothy 2 has to do primarily with public worship, but is not limited to that. In I Timothy 2:8, Paul is discussing prayer and who should lead those prayers. Here he specifically uses the word "men" (from the Greek, "andras," i.e., males) as opposed to "men" in Verse one, which means mankind or men and women (from the Greek, "anthropos"). In Verse eight, it should be noted that men (andras) only are to lead in prayer "every where," not just in worship. In any setting then, the woman is not to usurp the authority that God has given to man. However, her silence, with the exception of singing and saying "amen" at the close of a prayer, as commanded of God specifically in worship, does not carry over into the home or into Bible studies. The asking of a question or making a comment by a woman outside of the worship (I Corinthians 14:35) is directed by God and, therefore, cannot be considered a usurpation of authority, but her leading in prayer in place of the man "any where" would be! The woman's subjection to man is an eternal principle applicable to all settings (Genesis 3:16; I Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5: 22:24). Her manner of conduct in worship, which includes subjection, is not commanded elsewhere!

QUESTION No. 1090: Can the church of Christ practice mass prayers? That is where the whole church will be asked to pray, not in silence, but with each and everyone hearing what the others are saying?

ANSWER: Such is as sinful as can be. Not only is such not authorized by God, but such activity is condemned at length by the principles of I Corinthians 14! If the church is assembled and unbelievers come in, not understanding what is being said (with everybody talking at the same time), "will they not say that ye are mad" (Verse 23)? In Verse 26, Paul is saying that everyone in the assembly at Corinth was doing something at the same time and causing confusion, so in Verse 40, he says, "Let every thing be done decently and in order." In other words stop causing confusion! Verse 33: "For God is not the author (source) of confusion, but of peace as in all churches of the saints." Additionally, women are not to pray out loud in the churches, but are to be silent (I Corinthians 14:34-35)! They, along with all others in the room, are to say "Amen" at the giving of thanks (Verse 16). All are to clearly understand what the man leading in prayer

is saying (Verse 16 and I Timothy 2:10)! All are not to be praying vocally! All are to be taking knowledge of what the man is saying, so that at the end of the prayer they can simply say, without noisy shouting, “Amen!” The “Amen” is being spoken to God and not the person sitting near by. We do not need to shout for God to hear it!

All that we do as Christians we are to do by the authority (in the name of) Jesus Christ (Colossians 3:17)! The activity you describe is not authorized by Him, but, to the contrary, is condemning and sinful!

QUESTION No. 1091: Is it right to have a choir in the church building on Saturday night and after the worship services on Sunday?

ANSWER: A "choir" in a church is a group of people, generally consisting of both men and women, who often (1) lead the singing in a church, (2) sing to the church, and (3) sing for the church. In either or all of these cases, such is sinful! There is no authorization in God's Word for singing groups in worship services! Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16 are instructions and exhortations relative to acceptable worship for all Christians for all time. In these passages, we are taught that our singing is to be corporate (collective or congregational) with vocally enunciated words by which we teach and admonish one another! No other type of music is authorized, and would, therefore, be in error! This is to say that the Bible does not authorize, and reckons as sin, the use of solos, singing groups, humming, whistling, drums, or any type of musical instrument in the worship services!

The next logical question would be, “Is it right to use musical instruments in the church building outside of the regular worship services, e.g., in the ‘multi-purpose room,’ weddings, etc.?” It is wrong for many reasons, not the least of which is that it teaches those who (in error) perceive the "meeting house" to be the "church" that it is okay to use mechanical instruments in worship to God. Since both worship and weddings occur in the place of worship, they often hold that if the instrument can be used in the wedding, (often in accompaniment of hymns, which is as well sinful - Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16) it can, likewise, be used in the worship service. Indeed, they (because of their misperception) see the inconsistency in what the church sometimes practices. Not only sinful practices, but anything that could detrimentally affect the destiny of a soul needs to be avoided, whatever the cost (Matthew 18:6).

What about choirs? Is it right to have them perform in the church building on Saturday night or after one of the Sunday worship services? What is stated in the above paragraph about instruments must also be stated about choirs. There is no difference! As instruments wrongfully cause division and stumbling, so it is with the use of choirs! The scriptural logic and rationale that causes us not to use the instrument in this way should

be the same scriptural logic that we apply to the use of choirs! Additionally, it is decidedly wrong to use spiritual things to entertain people either in a worship setting or in a non-worship setting! If we can have choirs entertain people with hymns that are designed to praise God outside the worship assembly then it follows that any act of worship can be taken outside the formal assembly to entertain the populace! Why not build on the Lord's Supper and make it into a dramatic presentation and entertain people outside the assembly with it? There is no difference! (It is a fact that some of the liberal groups are doing this very thing within their services, having begun with the choir "after" the worship service!) If college choirs need to entertain people let them go off site and entertain with non-spiritual songs! None would be offended and no division would be caused, as is often the case today! A great disservice, I believe, was done to the brotherhood when "our" colleges were permitted to have choirs developed and trained to sing hymns and spiritual songs and then encouraged to go out to entertain and perform to encourage enrollment and raise money. As a result of this activity many congregations unsuspectingly started out with choirs outside of the worship services with no intention of going further, but now employ choirs without hesitation in their formal worship services to our God, often driving the faithful away. It is further the case that some of these college choirs periodically do their entertaining in the worship services, and "after" the worship services, of congregations that have apostatized in giving over to extreme liberalism. How can those claiming to be the faithful have fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness (Ephesians 5:11) through colleges that fellowship, aid, and abet apostates? I submit that such relationships promote liberalism within one's own congregation! I was in a congregation once when the preacher wanted to use a quartet (the preacher's sister from another congregation was one of the four) during a Sunday afternoon sing. When some of us rejected the proposal, telling him in would be wrong to do so, his reply was, "Well, halfway through the song worship service we will stop and say a closing prayer, the quartet can sing, and then after that we will open the services again." Needless to say, his idea was rejected by all of the men out of hand! But this simply points out to what length men will go to have their entertainment! When men and women at the conclusion of a formal assembly, sitting in the same pew in the same setting, are encouraged to sing along with a choir, "Holy, Holy, Holy," who is the man or eldership that can say, "Even though we (the church assembled) are engaging in what was an act of worship a few minutes ago, none of us are really worshipping now, because we had one of the deacons recite a closing prayer in between our closing hymn and this hymn." And "those women up there are not really leading the singing because brother so and so dismissed us before the ladies began to lead!" The idea is absurd!

The Bible says, " I will glorify His name forevermore" (Psalms 86:12); "For His name alone is excellent (Psalms 148:13); "Holy and reverend is His name" (Psalms 111:9); "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, . . . (Philippians 2:9-

10). Only the brazen would dare exploit the sweetest name on mortal tongue and the phrases by which we praise that name that is above all others for purposes of entertainment!

QUESTION No. 1092: I am studying with an exchange student from Finland who says that they recognize Monday as the first day of the week, but worship the day before on what they call the Sabbath! How do I deal with this?

ANSWER: The New Testament does not name the first day of the week. It simply shows that we are to assemble to worship on that particular day and where that day, as we recognize it, begins and ends! In our time, all, including the Finns, recognize that a day begins in Greenwich, England. This has not always been the case. It has started in various places through the years, including Washington, D.C. However, today, given this fact, when it is 10:00 A.M. Sunday, the first day of the week, in Washington, D.C., it is 1:00 A.M. on Monday, the second day of the week in Sydney, Australia. The Americans and Australians will not be worshiping at the same time, yet both will be worshiping on the first day of the week. Our First day is not their First day and theirs is not ours! The same thing was true in the first century and has always been true. After the Gospel had been taken into all the world (Colossians 1:6, 23), the same condition existed then. Christians worshiped on the first day of the week as it was recognized where they were! The same would be true of those living in Finland today.

As to the specific situation you bring up: I have visited Finland on business and am not aware of such. However, it may possibly be that the Finns recognize Monday has the first day from a work or secular standpoint, but I am reasonably sure that they recognize Sunday as the Lord's Day and, therefore, religiously as the First Day, especially since 95% of all Finns are Evangelical Lutherans. The fact that they refer to Sunday as the Sabbath is insignificant as relates to the matter at hand. Doing so is in concert with the majority of the rest of the denominational world who in error hold that the Ten Commandments of Moses are applicable today. To make this appear reasonable they misapply the fourth commandment, making it applicable to the First day, rather than the Seventh! The New Testament does not agree with their theology (Romans 7:1-7; Colossians 2:14-16)!

QUESTION No. 1093: Should people who have not been baptized be allowed to partake of the Lord's Supper?

ANSWER: They should not take it, but there is little one can do to keep it from happening, if they want to. We certainly cannot physically restrain any from partaking. However, we obviously should not aid them in so doing, but should teach them the truth about the matter. Additionally it does not fall to one man or a group of men to determine

who is eligible and spiritually fit to commune. The Bible says in I Corinthians 11:28 that such examination is a personal matter!

QUESTION No. 1094: We say we take the body and the blood in communion. Why, in the Roman Catholic Church, do they only give the body?

ANSWER: Because they believe they have a right to overrule and change God's Word. The longer they are in existence the more they leave the truth and turn to the ideas of their own man-made human hierarchy.

At one time the Catholic Church did demand that their people partake of both the bread and fruit of the vine. They say in their Confraternity version of the New Testament when commenting about Matthew 26:28 that, "The Catholic Church for a long time allowed all church members to have the fruit of the vine, just as the Lord commanded: All of you drink of this."

According to the Catholic Church in the Catholic Encyclopedia, IV, 176, "Communion under both kinds (bread and fruit of the vine) was the prevailing usage in apostolic times. In the fifth Century, Pope Gelasius commanded the laity (regular church members) to receive both elements (Question Box, 446, 1913 edition).

Not only did they command it, but Pope Leo and Gelasius also condemned all who did not partake of the cup (Catholic Dictionary, 202).

Apparently later Popes ignored and rejected the alleged infallibility of what the earlier Popes had pronounced and the practice of communion "under both kinds' was "entirely and formally abolished in 1416, by the Council of Constance" (Lives and Times of the Popes, De Montor, I, II).

The Bible is clear on the matter regardless of what the Catholic Church said, did, or does. Faithful Christians in the church of Christ will always partake of both the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine on the first day of every week in keeping with God's Word (Matthew 26:26 29; I Corinthians 11:23-29; Acts 20:7)!

QUESTION No. 1095: I am not a Christian. I am a young boy and I don't know how to pray. How do I begin? What do I say? What can I pray for? How should I close?

ANSWER: First of all we must understand that all prayer must be in accordance with the will of God (James 4:3; I John 5:14). This means that if God has told us in the Bible how to do something, it would be against His will if we asked Him to do it in some other way. For example, God has told us how a person must become a true follower of Jesus Christ. If we were to ask Him to make us a follower of Christ in some other way, we would be asking Him to do something against His will. This kind of prayer is empty

and worthless. As a true follower of Jesus Christ, one has the right to pray to the Father through Him. This is one of the spiritual blessings that we can enjoy as His faithful children. After becoming His true follower one can, for example, ask Him in prayer to forgive sins and He will, as He has promised, do so (I John 1:9). We do not have this right, however, until we become true followers according the New Testament. Once one has become a true follower of Jesus Christ, he may rightfully call upon God as his Father, praying through Jesus Christ. This means that children of God are to pray through Christ to the Father (Colossians 3:17). A child of God may begin his prayer by addressing and recognizing the Father, as indicated by Christ in Luke 11:2, "Our Father who is in heaven, holy is your name," or in some similar fashion. After beginning in this way, we may pray for such things as for sick people to get better; for the furtherance of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the salvation of lost souls; for the ability to earn and provide a living for our families; for good government; and for the church. We may thank Him for the giving of His Son to die for us; for giving us the Bible that tells us how to be saved; and many other such things for which we see need. In closing it is appropriate to state, "I say this prayer in the name of (by the authority of) Jesus Christ. Amen" (Amen means, "so may it be"). As one begins to pray and grow as a Christian, he will also grow in prayer, but the above is a good starting point for a new follower of Jesus Christ. Having done this, one may then pray through his Savior Jesus Christ to God the Father who will hear and answer prayer. This does not mean that God will give everything that a person asks for. Sometimes God will honor the request and sometimes He won't, but He will always do what is best for His child. We must always remember that He knows our needs better than we do. Also, we must recognize that if God wants to honor our requests, this does not mean that He is going to drop something out of the sky into our hands, but it does means that He will provide a way for us to attain that for which we seek. To pray to God for something and then to not do our part in order to realize our request is to really show a lack of faith in our prayer and in God.

As noted, in order to be able to scripturally ask and receive His blessings, all of which are in Christ (Ephesians 1:3), through prayer, one must first become a child of God according to His Word, the New Testament.

QUESTION No. 1096: Is it necessary to take communion to those who are sick? I have no problem in doing so, but I do have a problem giving it to those who are not Christians when taking it to members.

ANSWER: Although such has often been the practice over the years, there is really no Bible example for such. Certainly, if a person is sick and cannot make it to the worship services, the Lord is aware of that fact. Most often, when the elements are taken to those who are sick, the practice is to pray for each element and then the sick one partakes in order. It would seem that if this one particular act of worship is necessary to be engaged in at the home of the sick person, then all acts of worship should also be

necessary. Why are just one or two acts selected and the others most often omitted? There is no logic to so doing. At the same time, I see no particular or inherent wrong in allowing sick Christians to partake at their desire on the first day of the week. However, to make such an authoritative practice and then to carry it to those who are non-Christians makes no logical or scriptural sense at all. Christ said He would drink it anew with His disciples "in His Father's kingdom" (Matthew 26:29). I see absolutely no room for participation by those not in the kingdom, if reasonably avoidable. Of course, in a congregational assembly it is impossible to assure that a non-Christian does not partake. In any case, the examination of one another is not commanded, but each man is to personally examine himself (I Corinthians 11:28). But to actually carry it purposefully to known non-Christians outside of the assembly goes too far. If it should be said that it is given to all who might in the room of the sick person, it seems that the wise thing to do would be to assure, to the extent reasonable and possible, the presence of Christians only in such a situation.

QUESTION No. 1097: May one shout "hallelujah" during the worship services!

ANSWER: The expression "hallelujah" means "praise be to God." There is justification for congregational singing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16) and for the saying of "Amen" at the conclusion of a prayer (I Corinthians 14:16). However, there is no justification for an emotional outburst within the worship service regardless of what is said or when it is said. The attitude and conduct of the worshiper is to be one of decency and order wherein "all" glory is given to God (I Corinthians 14:40; I Corinthians 10:31). Outbursts of emotion generally are attractions to oneself rather than to Christ! Since we have no biblical authorization, (neither command, example, nor implication) such outbursts of emotion would be in violation of His Word!

QUESTION No. 1098: Should only adults be called upon to "give" on the first day of the week?

ANSWER: According to I Corinthians 16:1-2 and II Corinthians 9:6-8, any Christian, (regardless of age) who has been prospered by God and so purposes is to give on the first day of each week. Obviously then, if one has no money they can give no money! As to the very young who do not have a source of income, we are to raise them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (as the Lord admonishes). This means that we are to train them to do the things that the Lord would have them do while they are young so that, in later years, they will abide in His favor. To give a child money to place in the collection plate for purposes of teaching and training is a wise thing to do!

QUESTION No. 1099: What can you say about raising money for the church through car washes, bake sale, etc?

ANSWER: Many have written on the subject of giving. However, there is not anything good that one can say about car washes, bake sales, etc. to raise money for the Lord's church. In Colossians 3:17, the Apostle Paul wrote that all we do in word or deed must be done in the name of (by the authority) of the Lord Jesus. This is to say that everything we teach and everything we do as worship, and everything we do in service to Him, even everything we do in our daily walks of life must be authorized by the Word of God. There is no biblical authorization for car washes, bake sales, etc. in order to raise money for the work of the church. Christians have been given instructions on how to give. "Upon the first day of the week let everyone of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come" (I Corinthians 16:2). "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver" (II Corinthians 8:9). To this the faithful of God are limited. To go beyond these limits, is to preach and practice a different Gospel that results in being accursed of God (Galatians 1: 6-9). To go beyond that which is authorized, either through subtraction or addition, is to, as well, invite the condemnation of Heaven (Revelation 22:18-19). No amount of man's logic; no amount of man's rationalization; and no amount of man's hypothetical machinations can circumvent the requirement for biblical authority in all of worship, all of doctrine, and all of practice! Since no authority exists for "fund raisers" in the church, there is no righteousness in so doing, but to the contrary, those who do so are engaging in unrighteousness, which is sin (I John 5:17).

QUESTION No. 1100: Is it right to dismiss some from the main assembly to partake of the Lord’s Supper on Sunday evening in a different room?

ANSWER: I can find no biblical authority for dividing one group into two groups with each engaging in their own particular acts of worship simultaneously. The biblical authority that I see is that the church is to gather "together" in “one place” for collective and congregational worship to God (I Corinthians 14:23; I Corinthians 14:26; I Corinthians 5:4; Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 11:18-20). It is worthy of note that these passages were written to "the" church and that the key word in each verse is "together." When the congregation is divided it can not be a church that is "together," no matter the rationalization to the contrary. Some would say that those who are separated from the main body of the congregation to partake of the Lord's Supper can do so more effectively in a quieter, isolated part of the building. Pure assumption and rationalization! I was fortunate to attend a congregation for many, many years (and attend one now) where the main body of the congregation waits in respectful quietness while those they love complete their worship to God. More often the real reason for the division appears to be that it shortens the service which gladdens the impatient hearts of many! As an aside, it

also seems that the same hearts are gladdened when the song leader omits most of the verses of a song (especially toward the closing of the service) and the preacher is directed to shorten his message to fit a "more appropriate time frame."

It is sad indeed to see the main body of the congregation often rush out without even noticing those who have been ushered elsewhere to commune in private! I see a terrible conflict in this arrangement in light of I Corinthians 11:33, "Wherefore, my brethren when ye come together to eat, 'tarry' one for another." I see little "tarrying" taking place when some are directed to leave and complete their worship somewhere else outside of the common assembly! The word "tarry" is from 'ekdechomai' that Strong's Concordance defines as, "to await, expect, look (tarry) for, wait for." I should think that Mr. Strong, if he were alive today, would see little, if any, 'tarrying" one for another in the split assembly arrangement under discussion. As for me, I see none!

QUESTION No. 1101: Should the church accept contributions from a polygamist, or from one who has stolen from his employer?

ANSWER: II Corinthians 8:1-4 tells us that when a gift or offering is made and received for purposes of proper and scriptural distribution, the giver of the gift, the receiver of the gift, and the distributor of the gift are said to be in “fellowship” (Verse four). Therefore if a giver of a gift (or offering) is a polygamist or a thief, and if that gift is accepted, then it would be the case that the receiver and distributor of the gift are in “fellowship” with the giver! Ephesians 5:11, however, directs that we are to have “no fellowship” with the unfruitful works of darkness. Since polygamy and thievery are sinful, they are, clearly, unfruitful works of darkness. We, therefore, cannot knowingly accept gifts or offerings from the polygamist and the thief (or any known impenitent sinner)!

QUESTION No. 1102: Should we worship with a dead person in church?

ANSWER: To sing songs of praise and encouragement; to offer prayers in behalf of living relatives and friends of the deceased; to look to Jesus in this way in such a time of need is good and helpful to all. There is nothing scriptural that would prohibit such! Whether such is done in a church building, a private home, a funeral home, or out in the open at the grave site, no difference exists. There is nothing sacred or holy about the “place” of worship. The key to acceptable worship is to do so in spirit and in truth (John 4:21-24), whether a dead body has or has not been placed nearby!

QUESTION No. 1103: Does John 14:9-12 and Acts 7:59 teach that we ought to pray directly to Jesus?

ANSWER: Jesus in John 14, 15, & 16 is discussing the coming Comforter and the miraculous with His disciples, giving them assurance that He would still be with them, though absent in the flesh, and that He would still be working with them through the Holy Spirit. In John 14:9-12, He is discussing His relationship with the Father and then assures them that, because He has that relationship, He can and will grant those things for which they ask that are in concert with the Father's will. He, thereby, comforts them! He is not here setting a pattern for all disciples everywhere to follow in prayer, i.e., He is not suggesting that Christians are to pray directly to Him. Of course, no prayer can be answered that does not pass "through" Christ and, thereby, His approval. Surely, in this sense He answers prayer, as well as through His oneness with the Father, but to suggest that one may pray directly to Christ without the Father's participation and response rejects what the scriptures teach in Matthew 6:9 and Colossians 3:17! The same thing is true relative to Acts 7:59. This account of Stephen's death is not meant to set an example as to how one is to pray. Stephen was permitted to look into heaven and see Jesus Christ standing on the right hand of God. It would only have been natural for him to speak to the One he saw; the One whom he loved and trusted unto death. If this is an example of how one is to pray, may I suggest the circumstances of that example must also be present?

Neither of these passages constitutes directives or examples as to whom and through whom Christians are to pray. In Matthew 6:9, the Master directs the following: "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven." That should settle this end of the matter for all time! The command is direct, clear, and complete! Our prayers are to be directed to the Father! Why should one look to overturn or reject the words of Christ in the matter (John 12:48)? Christ said what we are to do! Why not do just that? In Colossians 3:17, we learn, through the Holy Spirit-inspired apostle Paul, again that prayer is to be directed "to" the Father "through" Him (Christ)! That should settle the other end of the matter once and for all! John 14:13-14 and Acts 7:59 is not discussing the manner of prayer, but without doubt Matthew 6:9 and Colossians 3:17 are!

QUESTION No. 1104: Can you tell me the Greek words for “silence” as used in I Timothy 2:11 and I Corinthians 14:34?

ANSWER: The Greek word for silence in I Timothy 2:10 is “heesuchia.” The English Revised Version of 1885 renders the word "quietness." The admonition concerns the behavior of women in religious assemblies. The word is used in the sense of "silence" in Acts 22:2, with the broader meaning of "quietness" in 2 Thessalonians 3:12.

The Greek word for silence in I Corinthians 14:34 is “sigatoosan.” The same word is used in Verse 28 in reference to the disorder cause by speaking in foreign languages in the worship services of the church. There is no doubt at all as to Paul's meaning here. In church the women are not even allowed to speak (lalein), neither to ask questions.

Within the intent of these passages, a woman is permitted only to vocally engage in congregational singing (Ephesians 5:19) and to say "Amen" with those occupying the room at the giving of thanks (I Corinthians 14:16), doing such decently and in order (I Corinthians 14:40), as she worships in spirit and truth (John 4:24). To this she is limited by the Holy Spirit!

QUESTION No. 1105: What is the difference between "praise" and "worship?"

ANSWER: The Greek word (proskuneoo) translated as worship in the English denotes "an act, or acts, of reverence whether paid to a creature, or to the Creator" (ASV marginal note, Matthew 2:2).

To praise God is to express our admiration and thankfulness in prayer and song in worship (privately and/or collectively) for what He is; what He has done; what He is doing; and what He has promised to do! We do it, because He is most deserving of it! Also many passages teach that it is the right thing to do. See Psalm 148; Luke 19:37; Romans 15:10-11; et al.

Praise toward God then is something that is done in worship, and as we worship. In other words it is an ingredient of Scriptural worship and is not to be considered the totality of worship or a substitute for worship. Further, it is not to be decided by man "how" we are to praise God in worship. All that is done in worship must be in spirit (the right attitude) and in truth (according to His Word), all of which must be directed toward Him and not man (John 4:24). The praise of man toward God is the means by which we express our joy to the Lord. It may, and usually is, expressed in the worship acts of song and prayer, individually or collectively, emanating from the emotions or from the will, but that which is motivated by, and which must be in concert with His will, lest such praise would find itself in violation of the God-focused Scriptural worship that must in spirit and truth.

Some individuals and groups want to praise God with loud and raucous shouts accompanied by cheering and boisterous applause that clearly violates the decency and order demanded by God in worship (I Corinthians 14:40). Sometimes this is engaged in due to ignorance or false teaching. More often it stems from those who themselves are searching to emotionally entertain or be emotionally entertained in worship, having become excessively emotional thereby they mistake it for true worship because it makes them feel good with little regard for what God has asked them to do in worship toward Him.

There is no justification for emotional outbursts within the worship service regardless of what is said or done, when it is said or done, or who said it or did it. The attitude and conduct of the worshiper is to be one of decency and order wherein "all" glory is given to God (I Corinthians 10:31) in spirit and truth. Since we have no biblical authorization to do so, (neither command, example, nor implication) such outbursts of emotion non-Scriptural and clearly in violation of His Word!

SUBSEQUENT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS UNCATEGORIZED

Question No. 1106: (Again) Are we authorized to sing while partaking of the Lord's Supper?

ANSWER EXPANDED: Is it really scriptural to perform simultaneous acts of worship during the assembly? Well, it certainly appears that the Scriptures that outline worship to God consists of five separate and distinct acts: (1) Singing (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16), (2) Prayer (I Timothy 2:8; Acts 2:42), (3) Teaching (II Timothy 4:2; Acts 20:7), (4) Communion (I Corinthians 11:23-30; Matthew 26:26-29), (5) Giving (I Corinthians 16:1-2; II Corinthians 9:7).

There can be found no command, example, or implication that authorizes simultaneous acts of worship. In other words, there is no authority for doing such. There is no difference in such a proposal and the ungodly practice of using singing groups in which one group of Christians attempts to sing to, and for, every one else assembled. The Bible teaches in the passages outlined above that every Christian is to sing when the singing is done! How can this be done when some of the people are eating and drinking while others are singing? It cannot be! When the congregation sings, I, as a member or part of that congregation, am obligated to be singing and teaching others collectively with them. Am I excused from that singing and teaching while I am eating and drinking, since it's impossible for me to physically do both at the same time? And if I am excused from singing as a part of the congregation, is it to be said that Colossians 3:16 and Ephesians 5:19 do not apply to me all of the time and that I am excused from obediently participating in the singing when I am partaking of the Lord's Supper? Or, in such a case, does the Lord's Supper negate or overrule the directive for me to sing? If so, in what passage is that authority set forth? When partaking of the Lord's Supper we are to be focused on our Lord's death, not upon words that often are unrelated to Calvary, musical

rests, holds, and notes being recognized and sung, or perhaps even how well it's being sung by self or others singing to us as we partake of the emblems! Neither are we excused from participating in the collective singing of the congregation whereby we teach each other! There is no authority, then, for an individual to intermittently partake of the Lord's Supper, stopping and starting to allow for the insertion of a musical notation. The Lord's Supper is a continuous single act of worship from its beginning to its end, not to be interspersed with parts of other separately designed acts of worship. Neither can we scripturally conclude that there is authority for temporarily pausing a lesson taught through our singing to partake of the elements of the table! Scripture clearly authorizes both acts of singing and partaking of the Supper distinctively, separately, and individually. Therefore, we need to let it go at that, as authorized, without question, and without addition, modification, or subtraction!

Question 1107: What will our resurrection bodies be like?

ANSWER: The Corinthians who did not fully understand the resurrection asked this question in I Corinthians 15:35. First of all, we note that there will indeed be a general resurrection of all the dead (John 5:28), but what will the resurrection body be like? Paul begins to answer this question in I Corinthians 15:36. In Verse 38, he assures us that there will be a resurrection body. He does this same thing in II Corinthians 5:1-4 when he tells us that after our physical body is dissolved we have a "building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens". He says that we will not be found naked, but, rather, will be clothed "with our house which is from heaven." In I Corinthians 15:44, we learn that we shall be resurrected with a "spiritual" body, i.e., one that is unlike the "natural" body that requires sustenance and is given over to disease and death. Earlier, in Verse 39, we are told that there are many different kinds of fleshly bodies: such as that of animals, birds; and fishes. The implication is that the resurrected "spiritual body," will be of a substance unlike any of these or even our present bodies, since flesh and blood cannot enter heaven (Verse 50). But, precisely what kind of body will we have in the resurrection? This, the Bible does not specifically state, but does say (I Corinthians 15:38) that "God gives it a body as He pleases". We learn a little more in Philippians 3:20-21 and I John 3:2: "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body"; Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

The bottom line answer to the question about the resurrection body is as noted above: "*It has not yet been revealed what we shall be*." All we are told is that it will be a

body like nothing else of which we know and that it shall be like His glorious body. In this, as the children of God, we place our trust and confidence.

Question No. 1108: With consideration to Matthew19:28, are we being judged by twelve or thirteen apostles?

ANSWER: In Matthew 19:28, note that Jesus said that the judgment of the twelve tribes by the apostles was to occur during the regeneration, that time between Pentecost until the end of time. It is certain that Judas killed himself before the regeneration even began and, therefore, could not sit in such judgment. Again, in Revelation 21; 14, we read that the names of the twelve apostles would appear on the twelve foundations. The question then seems to be, who is included and who is excluded given that there were thirteen apostles, including Matthias and Paul, after Judas fell. It is really pointless to ask if Matthias or Paul was left out! The apostles here are mentioned in their collective and official sense, not in their individual character. Just as Roman (Latin) decemviri and centumviri came to be official terms without regard to the precise numbers, the term 'apostles' came to be used in the same way. The "decemviri" was a commission of ten men that varied in number, but was still referred to as the "decemviri". The "centumviri" was a commission of one hundred men that eventually rose to one hundred and eighty men, but was still called the "centumviri". In today's thinking in football, the "Big Ten" started out with ten teams. Today there are fourteen teams in the "Big Ten" and it is still called the "Big Ten". The "twelve" came to be known and expressed in the same way, even though there are thirteen! The names of the apostles in the twelve foundations is not physically literal, but is an allusion to the literal fact that the glorified church was built on the foundation of the apostles (collectively) and the prophets, i.e., upon their inspired Word!

Question No. 1109: What is our responsibility when we receive an e-mail that we know is not correct (or have a hard time believing it is true), or hear another talking about something we know s not correct or don't think it might be correct. If we research the subject and determine the information is false, do we contact the sender; the sender of the e-mail and all those who received the incorrect information from him/her. or just do nothing?

With the elections so near, we get all types of e-mails through the Internet. Are we obligated to verify their truthfulness before we pass them along to anyone else? Should we ask, would Jesus pass this information on to someone else if He were still here on the earth?

ANSWER: All communications no matter how they are received (orally, e-mail, or by letter) should be handled in the same way! There is no difference in how a thought is communicated, whether by mouth, pen, or e-mail. To forward something that is not

true is simply to gossip and put one in jeopardy of the Judgment. James writes in 3:5-8: "Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! [6] And the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. Every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. But no man can tame the tongue. *It is* an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Gossip from the tongue, email, or pen is preceded by the abundance of the heart! In Luke 6:45, Jesus said, "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks". Therefore, it is NOT the tongue, e-mail, or pen alone. It is the heart that produces the gossip!

A Christian when he or she begins to come aware of some incorrect or evil message that the talker, writer, or e-mailer is proposing, the communication should shutdown at that point! However, If a person tells you orally or pens something that is not true, you would rightly correct him or her! We shouldn't handle e-mail in any other way! Are we obligated to e-mail every person who received the incorrect message to tell them the truth? That responsibility is not yours, but, rather, the responsibility of the sender. Certainly, one should correct the sender and suggest that he or she make the necessary corrections to all, while also suggesting that such e-mails to you should be terminated immediately. Be positive and sure that anything you communicate to another is the absolute truth. If it isn't, don't! If you're not sure, don't! That's what Jesus would do!

Question No. 1110: Is there anything in the Bible that suggests that Paradise is Heaven or anything specifically setting them apart as to different places?

ANSWER: Yes, there is! "And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). We note that after He had arisen, He appeared to Mary and said, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father" (John 20:17). Clearly then, He was not in heaven during the three days. He did not ascend to the Father in Heaven until forty days later (Acts 1:3).

Question No. 1111: What is it talking about in Matthew 12:32, 36, 43-45? Also when Jesus is explaining the seed falling on different soil, are people either good or bad or can they change!

ANSWER: Matthew 12:32 refers to those who deny, reject, and speak against (blaspheme) the deity of the divine persons of the Godhead (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost). All who do so will remain in a lost condition until they through faith, repentance, confession, and baptism, accept and obey the divine message that comes from the Godhead, i.e., the New Testament of Jesus Christ.

Matthew 12:36: This is a strong admonition to guard against what is spoken. "Idle" words are not simply those casual and insignificant sayings that we all use day-to-day, nor such words as may be calculated to bring a smile to care-worn faces, but rather,

they are the words that betray a bias of the soul against God and expose the evil heart of the sinner.

Matthew 12:43-45: This parable about a wandering demon applies to the Jewish nation, which is "the man." The "going out" represents the spiritual rebirth of Israel under the preaching of John the Baptist. The "swept and garnished" period (in the next verse) referred to the lack of any meaningful change in the character of the people, and the neglect of Christ during the early part of his ministry. The restlessness of the demon showed the hostility of the forces of evil against Christ. Although the primary application of the "swept and garnished" condition must be to Israel's lack of the fruits of repentance, the principle applies to all today. No house can remain long empty, unused, swept, garnished, or idle. This is a true description of the spiritual condition of many today. They are "good," but "good for nothing." Their righteousness consists of emptiness and superficial activity. However, the life that is not constantly improved and dedicated, and pressed, and worn out in service to God, will finally revert to a condition worse than at the first. The evil that came from the Devil cast out of a man is always seeking an opportunity to return with seven companions worse than his first evil, and to take over and plunge the soul in greater wickedness than before. That is exactly what happened to Israel. These words were doubtless spoken in sorrow. They were a prophecy of Israel's rejection of Christ, reminding one of 2 Peter 2:20. What state is worse than being unsaved? It is the apostasy from which it is impossible to be renewed (Hebrews 6:4-6).

As to the seed being cast into different types of soil or, in other words, the hearts of different men: This passage does not teach that men cannot change, but simply how differently men will receive and react to the Word of God. Jesus has always required that men must change (repent) or perish (Matthew 4:14; Luke 13:3-5; Acts 2:38; Acts 17:30). Repentance is a changing of the mind or heart of man, which brings about a change of action.

Question No. 1112: If the head of woman is man and man is the leader of woman (I Corinthians 11:3), then what is the deal with equal rights and suffrage in modern society?

ANSWER: Clearly, as you have noted and in other passages we see that God has made man the head of the woman just as Christ is the head of man. See also Ephesians 5:23-25. Women already have the right to vote (Suffrage), so that matter should be settled. However the equal rights movement has seemingly moved beyond just equal pay for equal work(for which most are in agreement) and many involved in that movement have attempted to introduce the notion that the Bible teaching of man being the head of the women is outdated and they will not accept it under any condition, even so far as having women preachers, elders, and church leaders. Our Standard must be the Bible and it alone. Both men and women are subjected to its teaching and none, no matter their gender, have a right to reject one jot or title!

Question No. 1113: Before Christ died so that all could have salvation, what happened to all the Gentiles who died while the Jew's were God's chosen people?

ANSWER: Gentiles could be saved through the “Patriarchal Law” or by becoming a "proselyte" to the Law of Moses. What is this l"Patriarchal Law" that we hear mentioned so often, yet seldom see explained? The fact is, the phrase “Patriarchal Law” is never found in the Bible. It is simply a name given to the law that governed all men from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, and for Gentiles from Adam until the Christian dispensation began. Other than Christianity and Judaism, there has been but one other law, through the ages, under which God accepted worship: This was a system that had continued since commands were first given in Eden. Although the Bible does not give this law a “proper name,” it has become known as “the Patriarchal Law.” since God at that time spoke directly to the Patriarchs. The Law of Moses was given only to the Israelites—and to those Gentiles who allowed themselves to be proselyted (by circumcision) to it (Deuteronomy 4:1-8; 5:1-21; Acts 2:10; 13:43; 2 Corinthians 3:1-11). But the Gentiles also were under some kind of law, for the apostle Paul stated, “where there is no law, neither is there transgression” (Romans 4:15). For the Gentiles to have been guilty of sin (which we know they were—Romans 3:10, 23), they must have transgressed **some** law. What law was it? It was not the Law of Moses, because they were not amenable to that law. It was not the Law of Christ, because it did not come into effect until the first century A.D. Then under what law (prior to the events recorded in Acts 10—the conversion of the first Gentiles to Christianity) did the Gentiles live? They lived under the only law to which they were amenable—commonly known as “the Patriarchal Law.” Most Gentiles accepted neither circumcision, nor Patriarchal Law, but began to worship the creation instead of the Creator, for which God gave them over to a reprobate mind (Romans 20-32).

Question No. 1114: How can I know that I'm saved?

ANSWER: Can I really know if I’m saved? Some hold that one can never really know and will not ever really know until the Day of Judgment. For those who truly believe in the words of the Bible, however, the answer is undeniable, positive, and clear. For example, Jesus said that those who continue in His Word are His disciples and they can *know* the truth that makes them free (John 8:31-32); i.e., the truth through which they are sanctified (John 17:17). I John 5:13 records these words, ” These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may *know* that you have eternal life”. Indeed, we can *know*, according to the Bible, that we are saved.
It does not appear there is any doubt as to what a person must do, and does, in order to become a saved individual according to the Word of Truth: Mark 16:16, “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned”; Acts 2:38, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”; Romans 10:9-10,”that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation”. Clearly we can *know* scripturally what we must do to be saved!

The doubt, then, that, as to one's salvation, must lie in the question, "Am I being faithful and continuing in His Word?" The doubt that arises from a truthful answer to that question is the doubt that precipitates a question about one's salvation. It is certain that our faithful obedience is required if we are to be saved (Hebrews 5:9). Faithful obedience, however, does not mean perfect obedience, for no human can accomplish such (I John 1:8). When a Christian walks in the light by giving it his/her best shot, though he/she will through weakness sometimes sin, confession and prayer toward a just God cleanses those sins by the blood of Jesus Christ (I John 1:7 & 9) and with faithful acceptance of that truth, we can surely *know* that we have eternal life (I John 5:13)!

Question No. 1115: In using the designation (C)hurch of Christ, should we capitalize the word church or not?

ANSWER: Some have suggested that "church of Christ" is a noun and, as such, should have a capital "C" for church. Others maintain "Church of Christ" (upper case) would be more of a denominational use of the expression. The early church (lower case) did not have a specific official name. We can read of a number of designations, but not specific official names, (Acts 20: 28; 1 Cor. 1: 2; Rom. 16: 16). Many times we simply read of "the church" (Acts 5:11).

Even though most of the earliest manuscripts have the upper case regarding all letters or characters (not just nouns or the first word of a sentence), generally, all of today's translations hold to the rule of the lower case in the situation being discussed. For example: "...the churches (lower case) of Christ salute you" (Rom. 16:16). It is true that in English all proper nouns, a particular person, place, or thing, are supposed to be capitalized. However, most Bible translators attempted to express the Greek in English terms, concepts; and in the case of "church" maintained what they believed to be correct in the use of the lower case "c".

In most instances when writing, I will use the lower case, but will at times honor the English rule and upper case, especially when "Church of Christ" is included in a subject title or, perhaps, as a logistic entity. Use of the upper case "C" seems to some to denominate the Lord's church and, thus, to these will always under all conditions use the lower case "c". Personally, I do not believe that it makes one iota of difference as to what the world or the denominations thinks about our use of the lower or upper case! Simply because the upper case "C" is used by some in the church, it does not indicate to the denominational world that those who do so are, thereby, in agreement that the Lord's church is also a denomination!

Neither do I believe it to be sin no matter which is used and, certainly, such personal preferences should never be a reason for division or determining fellowship!

Question No. 1116: Can one remain in an adulterous relationship following their baptism?

ANSWER: Being proclaimed publicly in this regard is (1) the false theory that I Corinthians 7:17, 20, and 23 teaches that one can scripturally remain in an adulterous marriage upon and after baptism; (2) that love demands inclusion of those in adulterous marriages and does not allow exclusion from the Body of Christ; (3) that the "present distress" of I Corinthians 7:26 has nothing to do with the persecution of the church at Corinth, but rather it signifies their distress and confusion relative to the return of Jesus Christ; (4) that the doctrine as noted above and being taught publicly cannot be refuted or challenged until one goes to, and talks to, that particular preacher / teacher privately.

Specifically, being taught publicly is that the above verses that record, e.g., "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called" provide scripture and authority that demand that we must assist those in adulterous marriages to gain entrance into the Body of Christ and that we must assist them in continuing in the Body of Christ while they are continuing, and as long as they wish to continue, in their adulterous relationship. As a means of attempting to logically support that conclusion supporters have stated that "God does not want us to be home breakers, but that He wants us to be inclusive (by including those in adulterous marriages as members of the Body of Christ); not exclusive (by excluding them from being members of the Body of Christ). According to those who so hold, those who "include" do so with much love; those who "exclude" do so without love.

Moichos (Greek word for "adultery") is defined as, "...unlawful intercourse with the spouse of another (Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words, Vol. 1, pg. 32). Fornication (porneia) is illicit sexual intercourse (Ibid, Vol. 2, pg. 125). Adultery is a specific for the more generic fornication. Sometimes these two words are used interchangeably (cf. Matt. 5: 32; 19: 9). That adultery is sin is clearly set forth in the Scriptures, e.g., Galatians 5:19-21 & I Corinthians 6:9-10: "adulterers shall not inherit the Kingdom of God". That adultery can be forgiven is, as well, clearly set forth in I Corinthians 6:11, which states that the Corinthians "were" (in time past) adulterers, but had been washed, sanctified, and justified, i.e., after washing, sanctification, and justification they were (in time present) no longer adulterers. It is worth of noting that in order to become heirs of the Kingdom of God, these Corinthian adulterers necessarily had to be washed of that terrible death-causing sin (Romans 6:23). The irrational suggestion that these could have just as easily continued in adultery as members of the Lord's Body after they had been washed would, if truthful, have negated the necessity of the washing. To conclude that adulterers may scripturally continue in such sin after baptism is to, quite foolishly, imply that baptism miraculously changes a sinful act into a righteous act! Yet this is the logically implied conclusion that must develop from the unscriptural and heretical belief that adulterers may continue to commit adultery after they have been

baptized! Absurd! Clearly and scripturally, if an action or activity is sinful "before" baptism, then that same action or activity is sinful "after" baptism.

One certainly cannot escape or avoid the truth by invoking the reckless notion that adultery is a one–time sinful act that is forgiven in baptism and the adulterers may then continue with impunity full speed ahead. Colossians 3:1-7 teaches the opposite; that those of Colosse, before having been risen with Christ, had "lived" and "walked" in that sin, but in mortifying those sins they no longer lived or walked in them. It is evident that to suggest that they could have continued to live and walk therein after baptism would have negated the purpose and need of their rising from the baptismal waters in the first place (Colossians 2:12; 3:1)!

Jesus said that when one divorces without cause, i.e., the cause of fornication, and marries another, that one "commits adultery" and the other involved party also "commits adultery" (Matt. 5: 32, 19: 9). "Commits adultery" is from the Greek "moichatai", which is in the third person, singular, present tense, and in the indicative mood (The Analytical Greek Lexicon, pg. 272). In other words, they both continue to "commit adultery" as long as they actively remain in (live and walk in) that relationship, a fact that destroys the wrested notion/rationalization that adultery is a one-time act!

The reason Paul, by inspiration, recorded the subject verses was in response to questions asked by those in the congregation at Corinth. Paul is simply saying in response to those questions that it would be wise for the single folks there to stay single and the married folks to stay married because of the "present distress" or the persecution that had befallen them. A parallel is seen in the Old Testament when God directed Jeremiah not to marry (Jeremiah 16:1-2) because of the pending destruction and captivity of Judah by the Babylonians. An attempt was recently made to muddy the truth about the matter with the suggestion that the "present distress" related to only the Corinthians' distress about the second coming of Christ. No scholar of repute holds such and the suggestion is but one's grasping opinion and really does not bear on the issue at all.

It must also be noted that "if" those living in adultery can continue to live and walk in adultery after baptism, then the same principle must be applied to the African husband married to ten wives, i.e., he, too, can "abide in the calling wherein he is called". If not, why not? The principle would also have to be applied equally to homosexual marriages because they, too, can "abide in the same calling wherein they were called". If not, why not? In fact, if baptism turns the sinful act of adultery into a righteous act, why do we have to repent of any sin if we don't have to repent of adultery? If baptism turns one sinful activity into a righteous activity, it must then turn all sinful acts into righteous acts. If not, why not? That being the case, "Let's all just eat, drink, and make merry, for tomorrow we die"!

The suggestion that God wants us to be "inclusive" and not "exclusive" further suggests that it is man who controls who is "in" the church and who is "out" of the church. How arrogant! It is God who has made that decision, not man, and God has once

for all decided that only those believers in Christ who repent of their sins (including adultery), confess Christ as Lord, and are immersed in water for the remission of sins are to be included in His Body. None can change the components or the process in aggregate as He commands! When man decides that certain ones do not have to repent of certain sins, but may continue to walk and live therein, they fly in the face of God and will stand before Him one day to give an account of their wresting of His Word.

To also suggest that man can include one in the church who is an adulterer because God doesn't want us to be home breakers is even worse. A scriptural marriage and home is established by three persons; a man, a woman, and our God who joins them together (Matthew 19:6). It is scripturally true that any marriage in which God had no part is already a broken home! God does not join a man and a woman together in a sinful adulterous relationship! Neither does He tempt or cause man to sin (James 1:13). Adulterous marriages are not from, or sanctioned by God, under any condition!

Again, to presume that if one loves, he will include the adulterer in the Body of Christ, and that if he doesn't, his love has failed is another absurdity. If a man loves another's soul, he will, at any risk to self, love him with the love of Christ, and beg him to repent of the terrible sin of adultery in concert with God's directives (Acts 17:30-31). To refuse to tell the sinner to repent is really to <u>not</u> love God (John 14:15)! Further, may I suggest that to give an impenitent adulterous sinner the false hope of Heaven by "including" them into a local congregation of the Lord's church is anything but love, either for the sinner or for God!

Those publicly teaching the subject of this writing have held that, though they taught publicly, I am scripturally required to go to them privately to discuss the issue on the basis of Matthew 18:15-17. In logic, one simple way to overthrow a proposition is by noticing facts that are not in harmony with the position being taken. It is a basic and undeniable fact that certain inspired ones in the Bible, obviously having the approval of God, did not follow the personal protocol of Matthew 18:15-17 when addressing public circumstances. It is apparent that Peter understood Jesus' teaching in Matthew 18:15-17 as being personal ("against thee") as opposed to the general because he asked, "…Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?...." (Matt. 18:21), there should be no question about the words "against me" in this passage. The first example to be considered involves a sin committed by Peter, which was publicly rebuked by Paul. "But when Peter was come to Antioch," wrote Paul, "I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed" (Gal. 2:14). Peter's behavior had taught a false lesson and since it had been public, Paul addressed it in a very public manner, "before them all" (see Gal. 2:12-14). Paul did not first privately go to Peter, then take witnesses, etc. As well, many of the Pharisees openly taught error and perverted the word of God. Jesus very publicly exposed them and warned others not to be influenced by these in error. He didn't have to go to them privately. Was He ignoring Matthew 18:15-17? Of course not! Another example involves the apostle John and Diotrephes. Regarding Diotrephes John writes (John III:9): "I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. 10: Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content

therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church. 11: Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil has not seen God". Question: Was John wrong in writing about Diotrephes in a public way or not? Did John violate Matthew 18:15-17? Why not?

It is quite clear in the case of Paul, Jesus, and John that the procedure set forth in Matthew 18:15-17 was not followed. Should Paul, Jesus, and John have first gone to Peter, the Pharisees, and Diotrephes, respectively? Did Paul, Jesus, and John sin? Of course not! Public preaching is fully open to public refutation! The reason for one trying to invoke the principles of Matthew 18:15-17 is to avoid and deflect honorable criticism. It is but an attempt to hide behind an invisible fence!

Very often those who lovingly follow in the steps of Jesus, Paul, and John are accused of being unkind, unloving, nasty people who are totally politically incorrect because they would dare to challenge the public false teacher as did my Lord and His Holy Spirit who directed Paul and John to do so, telling them precisely what to do and say (John 16:13). When folks come to believe, no matter their degree of education and self-aggrandizement, that they can pontificate publicly about spiritual matters with impunity and without criticism as public as their pronouncements, they have usurped a position to which they have no scriptural right.

In a nutshell, the teaching that those in adulterous marriages may be born again without repentance; that they may continue in the sin of adultery after baptism is a false doctrine that rejects the truth of God's Word. It is a false doctrine that promotes a sense of security in the impenitent that may well cause them to die in their sin. "When I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die; and thou givest them not warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand" (Ezekiel 3:18).

Question No. 1117: Do both verbs of Acts 2:38 modify the phrase "for the remission of sins? Can they be separated on the basis of grammatical numbers:

ANSWER: Over the years it has been argued by some that the word "for" (from the Greek *eis*) in Acts 2:38 should be translated "because", indicating, thereby, that one was to be baptized "because" his sins *were* already remitted. There are still a few "hangers-on" of that unsound theory, but the elite of those who once held that position have surrendered it in the face of reason and scholarship and now agree that the word "for" is the proper translation and means "unto", "with a view toward", or "in order to" the remission of sins.

However, their overall position and intended end, as aired on the John Ankerberg (a Baptist theologian) television program, has not changed. Now, more often than not, they hold that the first verb, "repent", and the second verb, "be baptized" cannot both be

associated with “for the remission of sins” since the verbs in the Greek are not of the same grammatical number! Of course, in so holding, it is evident that these totally ignore the existence of the coordinating conjunction “and” that the Holy Spirit used to tie the two verbs and their end result forever together! Coordinating conjunctions, also called *cordinators,* are conjunctions that join, or cordinate, two or more items (such as words, main clauses, or sentences) of equal syntactic importance, as is also the same case and situation found in Mark 16:16, “He who believes *and* is baptized shall be saved”. Therefore, Mr. Ankerberg's attempt to, not coordinate, but to subordinate the second verb of the passage to a position of lesser syntactic importance than the first verb is a total violation and misuse of both the Greek and the English!

His faulty suggestion is that “Repent” is plural (addressing all assembled), while “be baptized” is singular and speaks to “every one of you” who are instructed to be baptized as one having already been forgiven and saved by having engaged the plurality in the act of repentance! They assume that because of the difference in grammatical numbers that “repent” and “be baptized” must be separated and based on that erroneous conclusion, they further, in error, assume that there must also and likewise be a separation between the verb “be baptized” and the prepositional phrase “for the forgiveness of sins”.

Is it not strange that the many thousands of Greek scholars who edited and re-edited over 250 different English translations of the Bible did not, in one instance, recognize Ankerberg's alleged separation in grammatical numbers by translating Acts 2:38 thus: “Repent for the forgiveness of sins to become Christians and after that let every one of you get baptized to become Baptists after your sins have already been remitted.”? May I respectfully suggest that the thousands of scholars has it right and Mr. Ankerberg has it wrong! May I also suggest that Mr. Ankerberg implies by his stated position that one seeking the Lord must first become a Greek scholar to understand that Acts 2:38 doesn't mean what it clearly says, or one must listen to Ankerberg's theology relative to the passage, no matter what thousands of scholars have recorded to the contrary? Jesus said that *we shall know* the truth and the truth will make us free (John 8:32) and Paul said by direction of the Holy Spirit that when we read *we may understand* (Ephesians 3:4)! Ankerberg says, by implication, that you and I (common folk) can't know and understand what Acts 2:38 says unless we (1) become Greek Scholars and/or (2) by listening to his rejection of the world's Greek language scholarship and/or (3) by his own personal and biased rendition of Acts 2:38 which stands alone in opposition to 250 different versions of the New Testament, versions that state the truth clearly set forth in Acts 2:38, i.e., that “remission of sins” is granted when a believer repents and is baptized!

As brother Wayne Jackson has written: Neither in the Greek or English is there a rule of any sort that would necessitate separating two verbs on the basis of grammatical number. Nor is there a rule that would keep the phrase “for the remission of sins” from

modifying both the plural and singular preceding verbs of Acts 2:38! The thousands of opposing scholars were indeed accurate in their translation of this passage! They carried their scholarship in this way into many other passages of Scripture, for example, Acts 3:26, “To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you (plural), in turning away every one of you (singular) from your iniquities." It is clear that the prepositional phrase, “from your iniquities” modifies both the plural and the singular, as is the case in Acts 2:38.

The same is true today, e.g., the President of a University stands before a group of seniors and announces, “All graduating students (plural) must line up at the auditorium stage and each of you (singular) will be awarded a diploma”.

It does not follow that on the basis of grammatical numbers (plural and singular) that it is necessary to separate one from the other, since it remains true that in the instances above both the plural and the singular comprise exactly the same group!

Again, the attempt to negate the necessity of baptism in the salvation process has failed! Peter had it right, “Repent (plural), and let every one of you (singular) be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”.

It is also worthy of note that Mr. Ankerberg states and acknowledges, in dealing with Acts 2:38, that *repentance is* a biblical requirement “for the remission of sins / salvation”, which places him in his second dilemma, because he also holds that salvation is by “faith alone”. The definition of “alone” is as follows: 'separated from others; isolated; exclusive of anyone or anything else'. The second dilemma, then, derives from the fact that his statements are totally contradictory: One cannot be saved by “faith alone” if repentance is also required “for the remission of sins”, regardless of Ankerberg's failed theology to the contrary! And, then, the dilemma is made even deeper and worse when he attests to the claim that man is also saved by “grace alone”! Logically, if we are saved by “grace alone”, faith has nothing to do with it! If we are saved by “faith alone”, grace has nothing to do with it! And if we are saved by “faith alone”or “grace alone”, repentance has nothing to do with it!

The dilemma for him continues: The 3000 on the day of Pentecost expressed their “faith”, which “alone”, according to Ankerberg's positions, saved them when they accepted Christ by asking the question of Peter, “What shall we do?” The implication by Mr. Ankerberg is that they were saved by that expressed faith at that time and, then, later were told to repent “for the remission of (their) sins”! If they were already saved by “faith alone”, as Ankerberg teaches, why then would they later be be told to repent of sins already forgiven? In summary, Ankerberg implies (1) that when a person believes, at that point, he or she becomes a saved Christian, after which (2) he or she, already having been saved, must repent of past sins of which he or she has already been forgiven, and (3) then he or she can be baptized simply to become a member of a Baptist congregation of which none were in existence before 1607 AD! The only sensible, logical, and scriptural

conclusion must be is that one is NOT saved by “faith alone” (James 2:24) and Ankerberg's theology totally fails and falls to truth!

The Bible makes the entire matter clear, Ankerberg notwithstanding!! For by (God's) grace are we saved through (our) faith (Ephesians 2:8) when we, as believers, accept God's grace through the demonstration of our faith in obedient submission to the directive of Acts 2:38:, i.e., “Repent and be baptized by the authority of Jesus Christ 'for the remission of sins' and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”!

Question No. 1118: Why does God tell Adam and Eve don't eat the fruit of the tree in the center of the garden which will tell you what is right and wrong? But He expects you to know it is wrong to eat the fruit even though you can't unless you "eat" the fruit. How can God demand Adam and eve to follow a rule that requires the understanding of right and wrong, but doesn't give Adam and eve the knowledge of right and wrong?

ANSWER: I would first suggest that God, when giving the command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, did not at that time require that Adam and Eve first have "the understanding of good and evil", as the querist suggests! That understanding would come only after sinning by partaking of the tree (Genesis 2:17; 3:7). Let's remember the moral condition of Adam and Eve before they partook of the tree; they were innocent and had no knowledge at all of good and evil, yet, as stated, they were instructed not to partake of the tree. Consider a parallel situation of today. Let's say that you, or I, have an innocent six year old child today; a child who does not know the difference between right and wrong, yet we instruct or command the innocent child not to touch the hot stove. Because we have so instructed the innocent child not to touch the hot stove does not imply that the innocent child must first know the difference between right and wrong. The same is true with Adam and Eve in their innocence just as the six year old child is also said to be innocent! As we would not expect the innocent six year old child to first know the difference between right and wrong, the same must be said about the innocent Adam and Eve. The command first given does not indicate in any way that either Adam and Eve or the child would first have to have knowledge of good and evil!

Question No. 1119: God preaches forgiveness and not to make enemies and to pray for those who are misguided and lead a life of destruction and, therefore, "Thou shalt not kill", yet He kills millions of people in a flood and allows stoning people to death as an appropriate punishment for trivial sins. Why is this?

ANSWER: Let's first understand the sixth commandment "Thou shalt not kill"; that it is a directive that man is not to, with premeditation, murder or take the life of another. The command is better understood as "Thou shalt not do murder". Secondly, man may suggest that to him, or as man sees it (from his perspective), some sins are classified as being "trivial". I would suggest that God's Word does not count any sin as

being merely "trivial" but that the wages of any sin (no matter man's perception) is death (Roman's 6:23)!

Surely the issue of God commanding what we see as violence as a penalty for sin in the Old Testament is sometimes difficult. However, we must remember that God sees things from an eternal perspective, and that His ways are not our ways (Isaiah 55:8-9). The Apostle Paul tells us that God is both kind and severe (Romans 11:22). While it is true that God's holy character demands that sin be punished, His grace and mercy remain extended to all who are willing to obey Him and be saved. The Flood and the Canaanite destruction provides us with a serious reminder that while our God is gracious and merciful, He is also a God of holiness and wrath. Does this mean that God was wrong or unjustified in the way He determined that one or many should die for their sins? Does it mean that in His judgment He improperly punished the infants of Sodom and Gomorrah and in the flood? Of course not! God cannot sin or do wrong! Some thoughts that would be good for consideration are these: What would the final destiny of the destroyed infants have been had they been brought to maturity in the traditions and teachings of their ungodly parents - heaven or hell? Obviously hell! If Ezekiel 18:20 is true (and it is) what will be the final destiny of these children - heaven or hell? Obviously heaven! Which course was the better of the two for the infants involved? Obviously God in His wisdom pursued the best course! Further, how could we today under the perfect law of liberty understand the terribleness of sin more clearly than the way God that dealt with it in the Old Testament? In knowing the methods with which God demanded their destruction, we can more fully understand the terribleness of sin as He perceives it and that those things done and written in the Old Testament were for our learning (Romans 15:4) and as examples for us upon whom the ends of the world are come (I Corinthians 10:11)!

Question No. 1120: Why does God demand the death of so many innocent people (millions of Americans) in the Bible? There are several passages from the Old Testament that deals with the stoning to death of those who work on the Sabbath; disobedient teenagers. homosexuals, etc., and it suggests that such are applicable today and, therefore, "God wants us to to murder our fellow human beings over such "trivial" matters" today? The Word of the Lord as recorded in the Old Testament will stand forever and not change, so does the Bible really means what it says? Is this the Lord's wishes? Or is this just repulsive?"

ANSWER: Most of the answer is dealt with in the preceding answer! Additionally the querist uses the term "trivial" which is also dealt with above and then asks the final question, does the Bible mean what it says or is it just repulsive? To call God's Word repulsive is tantamount to suggesting that the holy and pure God of Heaven is also repulsive which is adamantly rejected by truth and all believers. It is apparent that the querist has not divided the Word of God correctly and does not understand that the Old Law was taken out of the way at the Cross of Christ (Colossians 2:14) and that the

commands and directives contained therein are not binding on people today; and that we today are amenable only to the New Testament of Jesus Christ. Certainly the Bible really means what it says when we understand it in context and have rightly divided it correctly!

Question No. 1121: **Why? All that happens is a part of a plan that God has developed for each individual. which may include terrible things such as amputations, cancer, hurricanes, car accidents, etc. God has in advance determined and chosen the "exact" time when each should be born and the "exact" time when when each are going to die. "God plans everything" we do as His puppets, including rapes, murders, and our spouses, and we therefore have no free will! I believe what Psalms 139:16 says: "Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when *as yet there were* none of them."**

ANSWER: Is this really the meaning of the passage cited as a basis for such conclusions? It is not! It does not speak of God's plan for the individual, but rather of the foreknowledge of God that relates to all men. A pertinent reference is that of Hebrews 9:27, "It is appointed unto men once to die, and after this cometh judgment". There is nothing robotic about man's mortality or life. Simply put, it is the ordained will of God all men are to die. This passage declares that the psalmist's days were known by God and visible to Him long before they had actual existence, as would be the case with all men. Any non-scriptural view of fatalism falsely based upon these words should be rejected and any such view that robs man of his personal responsibility, while sometimes charging that what he does lies to the fault of God, is scripturally untenable. That's almost like saying, as Flip Wilson used to say, "The Devil made me do it!" Concerning the foreknowledge of God, it has the same relationship to human events that the knowledge of them has after those events have occurred. Thus, a man's knowledge of "what happened yesterday" is in no way related to those events as though they were caused by God. In the same way God's knowledge of "what will happen tomorrow" is unrelated to those events that will occur as though they were caused by God. Man's conduct in this life may very well determine his unplanned number of days upon the earth (Ephesians 6:2-3) which results from free choice, not a personal plan devised by God for each (Joshua 24:15; Revelation 22:17). It is true as the querist says, that "God never does anything by mistake or accidentally", but neither can we assume that our lives are planned out as puppets and that God is our puppeteer.

Question No.1122: Why do Christians get divorced at the same rate as non-Christians? "God is (supposedly) all-powerful, so if God has put two people together that should seal the deal, right? Yet Christians get divorced at the same rate as everyone else. With that said, is there a logical reason for this? Or do I need to create some convoluted rationalization?"

ANSWER: First of all, they don't get divorced at the same rate! Any conclusions drawn about this or any other matter should be based on facts and evidence. Recent figures show that the National divorce rate is 50%, while all of those claiming to be Christians have a divorce rate of 38%. Among the "Born Again Christians", the Baptists have the highest rate of 29%; and the churches of Christ have a rate of only 6.9%, a 43.1 % difference. Additionally, the fact of God joining a man and a woman together in marriage (Matthew 19:6) was never intended to assure (seal) that one or the other, or both, would never break their marriage vows in rejection of the will of God! There is certainly no need for convoluted rationalization (or any other kind) at all, especially about this issue. Just the facts, ma'am" will do!

Question No. 1123: Is the Book of Mormon really another Testament of Jesus Christ?

ANSWER: Of all the foolish theologies in this world, the Mormons are certainly second to none. This group was begun in 1830 by Joe Smith, a man who was a troublemaker and an eccentric treasure hunter. Mormons teach that all men, if they become Mormons, can become just like God, eventually ruling over their own planet somewhere out in the universe. They teach that God is a physical being with many physical wives engaged in the practice of sexually producing the souls that inhabit our earthly bodies. They teach that marriages contracted on earth will continue in Heaven (Matthew 22:30). They have created their own Bible on the basis of a fictional story written by an American by the name of Solomon Spaulding. This alleged "Another Testament of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1:6-9) is filled with errors of all kinds, i.e., geographic, historic, scientific, and theological. Literally thousands of correctional changes have been made over the years, but many such errors still remain.

A huge problem has developed for members of the Mormon Church to deal with...somehow. To summarize it, the Book of Mormon teaches as historical fact that the Indian tribes in the Americas are descendants of Israelites who came across the Atlantic mainly about 600 BC. BUT... studies of 150 plus Indian tribes' DNA has revealed a total lack of any Semite (Israelite) genetic markers in the Indians in the Americas. The logical conclusion is that the Book of Mormon story is fiction, not fact. The Book of Mormon is allegedly the whole foundation of Mormonism, so it is a very significant issue. This information has been out now for several years, and is appearing in tracts, videos and newspaper articles. Mormons are having mixed reactions; shock, disbelief, denial, and disillusionment, but the evidence is precise and clear! A purely scientific form of testing has been done of the Book of Mormon’s foundational claim that it is a record of the Israelites who migrated to the Americas around 600 BC and whose descendants are the American Indians. The DNA tests, which can accurately pinpoint back through hundreds of generations, of over 5500 persons from over 150 native American tribes in North, South and Central America and Greenland, have revealed a total absence of any DNA

markers to tie the native Americans to Israelites; the markers instead tie these people in 99.4% of cases to North and East Asian people (Siberia, Mongolia). The other 0.6% of markers point to European or African extraction. The Smithsonian Institution has stated for decades, and this information confirms, that the native Americans migrated from Asia, most likely across the Bering Strait (to Alaska) to populate the Americas.

This evidence is further confirmed by linguistic similarities study, dental traits study, and study of the artifacts of the cultures. ALL the evidence agrees. The Book of Mormon's underlying thesis (as stated on its title page, and in the introduction's testimony by Joseph Smith) is false in its claim to be a history of the former inhabitants of this continent (North America) who were primarily Israelites.

The Book of Mormon also claims to be the word of God and the equivalent of the Bible. There are hundreds of artifacts and volumes of printed information relating to archaeological research that has confirmed the Bible as real history. But not one person, place, or event in the Book of Mormon has been confirmed in any place or locale in the world, including Central and North America! Ancient manuscripts of the Bible exist in the multiplied thousands of copies. Not one confirmed ancient manuscript or part of one has ever been found for the Book of Mormon, nor a single artifact relating to it.

The Book of Mormon claims to be the most correct book on earth, a history, and the keystone of the faith of the Latter-day Saints, and so it has been stated and proclaimed by all the "Presidents" and "Prophets" of the church since its inception. But with no Israelite migration, all the ensuing stories become fiction, as well as Smith's story about Moroni burying the historical plates, and the whole Mormon religious structure crumbles.

How do Mormons respond to this? Some are unaware of the information. Some ignore the information, trying to segregate faith from facts (the Bible warns against being double-minded). Some have suggested that God changed the DNA to test the faith of Mormons. That would make the God who claims to be the embodiment of truth a deceiver. He did no such thing to force faith in the Bible; why would He do so for the Book of Mormon?

Some are admitting the Book of Mormon is a product of the 19th century, but that undermines its divinity. Some do not understand just how strong the evidence is (there is total consensus among the branches of anthropological science on this issue). Some do not want to know. But those who are HONEST enough to look at the facts...many of them… are leaving the Mormon church.

Question No. 1124: Genesis 6:2-3. Explain "sons of God" and "daughters of men." Who are they, what is the difference and why did wickedness result?

ANSWER: Some have, in error, suggested that the phrase “sons of God” in Genesis Six refers to angels, but this is not the case! The common meaning of this phrase in those days meant “worshipers or beneficiaries of God.” The phrase then is applied to both men and angels, depending upon the context of the passage under consideration. Without question angels as worshipers and beneficiaries of God are referred to in the Book of Job. However, such is not the case in Genesis Six. The phrase "sons of God" in this passage refers to those men who "walked with God;" those who worshiped Him and conducted themselves as His children, thereby being recipients of His blessings. The same is said of Christians today (I John 3:1). The "daughters of men" refers to those women not counted among His children. The passage in question states simply that men who previously followed God took wives of women who did not follow God.

The suggestion that Genesis Six refers to angels cannot be valid for the additional following reasons:

1. The inspired writers of the Bible nowhere promote the idea that angels could or would enter into a marriage with a human being. In fact, at least by implication, the very notion is rendered foolish in Matthew 22:30 which states that heavenly beings are **not** given in marriage!
2. Angels are spiritual beings and as such cannot be subject to physical passions as would be found in physical man having been aroused sexually by an attractive female. The very idea is preposterous!
3. The penalty for this sin was not imposed upon angels, but was imposed upon man. If the sinners were angels, then it is the case that they would have been recipients of the punishment. Since the penalty was placed upon men, it becomes clear that men (not angels) were the sinners.
4. It is a biblical truth the every seed brings forth after its own kind (Genesis 1:11). That which was produced by the union of Genesis 6:2 were men. Therefore, the seed that produced men must necessarily have come from men, not angels.
5. Some would suggest that it took angels to produce the “giants” spoken of in Genesis 6:4. However, a word study of the word “giant” in this context soon dispels the thought. The original Hebrew word is “nephalim” from Nephal, which means, “he fell.” The translators of the Septuagint translated the Hebrew “nephalim” as “gigantes” in the Greek which simply meant “earth-born.” The English translators then translated “gigantes” as “giants.” However, the original idea is not that these men were of huge size and stature, but rather that they were of the earth and had fallen away from God; that they were “men of renown” (heroes) because they were known for their wicked and ungodly deeds. They were not heroes in the sense that they performed courageous acts on the side of good and right! They had a reputation, but that reputation was of their evil activities! Without doubt, men of this same character exist even today!

The meaning of "contend" or "strive" as found in Verse three is from a Hebrew word, which means, "*to judge*." God's Spirit was clearly striving with man at this time by operating through His Word to instruct, reprove, and to judge. In this verse, He is simply saying that a time will come when that will no longer be the case. In fact, the verse is teaching that God, not willing that any should perish (II Peter 3:9), would delay this judgment for one hundred and twenty more years. It was during this time that the Ark was built and during which Christ preached through the person of Noah to the disobedient of that day (Hebrews 11:7; I Peter 3:19-20). At the end of that period with their rejection of God's Word, the flood came and destroyed all flesh from off the earth, with the exception of Noah and his family (Genesis 7:21-24).

Question No. 1125: A person marries someone who was not scripturally divorced. That person came out of that marriage, later remarried and had children. Has now studied the Bible. Is the current marriage scriptural? If the first marriage put them in a state of adultery, didn't leaving that marriage take them out of a state of adultery? They would no longer have been in a sinful state.

ANSWER: First, we need to realize that a scriptural marriage involves three personalities; a man, a woman, and God (Matthew 9:6). God was not a participant in this marriage first mentioned. Therefore, both participants were simply in an adulterous relationship. God does not join two people into adultery! If either of the two would be saved, repentance, demanding a cessation of that relationship, would be required (Acts 2:38, Acts 17:30). If the person under discussion terminated that relationship in repentance, he or she would be free to marry another who was also scripturally free to do so.

Question No. 1126: Halloween is celebrated by many Christians (baptists, Catholics, etc.). However, those who consider themselves Jehovah's Witnesses do not celebrate Halloween. Why is this? Is it okay to celebrate Halloween or is it a holiday that worships something more sinister?

ANSWER: Jehovah's Witnesses often teach and engage in activities that have no biblical basis. Their treatment of the holiday we call Halloween is no exception. Actually, many weird and strange practices engaged in about 2000 years ago, eventually evolved into what we know as Halloween. Some believed that after death, souls would linger and need to be fed and nourished, so foods from the harvest would be set out for them. Some believed that these souls would seek revenge on those still alive and would actually bring them physical hurt and suffering. So they began to wear hideous masks to scare these ghostly spirits away. In about 835 AD, Pope Boniface IV decided to replace all of that an announced that May 13 as "All Saints Day" would be the designated day held to honor the dead; a day on which they would build bonfires, have parades, and dress up in

costumes. Pope Gregory changed the day from May 13 to November 1 and referred to it as "All Hallows" day. The celebrations would occur the night before and then became known as "Halloween" or "Hallow evening. "All saints day then became known as "All souls Day". Over the next several centuries, superstitions about witches and black cats were added to to the folklore and legends of Halloween. Cats were thought of as evil, especially black cats, and were killed by the thousands in Medieval times, possibly contributing to the Black Plague, due to the shortage of the rat's natural enemy, the cat. During this time, the church created the belief that evil witches existed. And so what we see today developed over the years from this beginning.

Today, as we put on costumes, bob for apples, make pumpkins into Jack O' lanterns with candles inside, we do not attest to the serious intent of years gone by, nor do we so in any religious sense. It is a time that folks today set aside a time for children, friends, and fun! We need, of course, to realize that no such thing may be seen as biblical, and must never appear on a church calendar as being significant in any way.

The J.W.'s believe that it still carries it's beginning roots and is sinful. They, therefore, totally reject Halloween in all respects,.leaving pumpkin pie, candy, and bobbing for apples to us! Good Deal!

Question No. 1126: Acts 17:30. Israel was God's chosen people and were held accountable to the law. God used other nations to punish Israel, but those nations did not know the law. There were "times of ignorance" for those not under the law. Jews did not evangelize Gentiles or try to convert anyone to Judaism. I understand that we have the responsibility to teach the ignorant today or they will be lost. But what happened to the souls of those in the ancient times who were not under the law?

ANSWER: First we must take issue with the statement contained in the question that "Jews did not evangelize Gentiles or convert anyone to Judaism". Jesus said in Matthew 23:15,“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves". Some of these proselytes were present on Pentecost Day (Acts 1:10). Ruth of the Old Testament was a proselyte from Moab! The question really boils down to, "What happened to the souls of those in ancient time who were not under the Law"?

In the beginning there was only something we call Patriarchal Law under which God spoke and dealt with and through the Head of the family or clan, like Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc. That Law continued until the Cross of Christ, running parallel to the Law given only to the Jews through Moses at Sinai (Deuteronomy 5:2-3, which also lasted until the Cross, at which time both Jew were bound no longer by either of

those laws, but were made one body under the Law of Christ, the New Testament. If a Gentile was not proselyted to Moses' Law from Sinai to the Cross, that person was still expected during that time to be under the Law first given to the Patriarchs. That Law was not something written in stone as was the Mosaic Law. All men everywhere have a conscience and all men everywhere know, based on that God-given conscience, what is right and wrong! All man everywhere know that it is wrong to kill; that it is wrong to steal; that it is wrong to covet another man's wife, and they know there is a God of Creation who placed those laws within His conscience (Romans 2:12-15). Some of those good Gentiles prayed to God and kept their consciences as He would have it; a case in point is the Roman centurion, Cornelius who was said to be a devout man who feared God, gave much to the poor and prayed to God always (Romans 10:2). However, many of the Gentiles who once knew God rejected him fully and He, therefore, gave up on them and turned them over to a reprobate mind. Of these Paul said at one time they were without hope and God in this world (Ephesians 2:12), not because they had no law, but because they refused to keep Him in their knowledge (Romans 1:28), unlike Cornelius. Clearly, the Gentiles sinned (Romans 3:23) and in I John 3:4 we note that sin is a transgression of law. Therefore the Gentiles were under law!

Question No. 1127: Can a person once saved be lost?

ANSWER: From Revelation 2:10 we learn that in order to receive the crown of life, we must be faithful until death! If one, then, is not faithful unto death, but is like the servant of Matthew 25:14-30 who did no "works," but rather hid his talents, then it would be the case that he would receive the same judgment that fell to that "wicked and slothful servant (Matthew 25:26), i.e., "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." In Matthew 25, Jesus is giving examples of the conduct He expects of His servants in the kingdom of heaven or His church (Matthew 25:1; Matthew 25:14). It is worthy of note that the one-talent servant in His kingdom was cast into outer darkness, i.e., the one-talent man had been accepted as a servant in His Kingdom, but was subsequently lost in hell which brings us to, and answers, the question, "Can I lose my salvation?" Obviously, the answer is yes! Not only does Matthew 25:14-30 teach that one saved can subsequently be lost, but clearly the following passages teach the same: Matthew 7:19; Matthew 13:41-42; Luke 8:4-15; John 15:2-6; I Corinthians 8:11; I Corinthians 9:27; I Corinthians 10:12; I Corinthians 15:2; II Corinthians 6:1; Galatians 5:4; Galatians 6:7-9; Colossians 1:23; I Timothy 4:1-3; Hebrews 3:12; Hebrews 6:4-6; Hebrews 10:26-29; James 5:19-20; II Peter 1: 1-10; II Peter 2:20-22; Revelation 3:16, to name just a few!

The errant notion of "once saved, always saved" does not find its source in John Calvin or any other man, though it has been perpetuated by man! The source of this statement and all sin is found in Satan who first implied and proclaimed this sinful doctrine when

he wrested the Word of God by saying, “Thou shalt not surely die”! God had said to Adam reject Me and My words, and in the day you do “Thou shalt surely die”! Satan said, “Adam, you’re saved and you’re going to remain saved!”

Question No. 1128: I recently heard a Bible teacher on the radio discussing baptism. He told a story of Iraqi war soldiers who desired to be baptized but had no water. In place of the water, the minister had them "immerse" themselves in a body bag thereby identifying with the Lord's death. I understand that it isn't the Biblical example we are to follow, but I personally have a hard-very hard time saying that the soldiers "immersion" was not acceptable to God. I would like to ask: How essential is water for baptism? If not just for me, as a refresher for the church.

ANSWER: The word “must” when expressed as a noun is defined in the World Book Dictionary as “something necessary; an obligation”. When the word “must” is expressed as an adjective it is defined as “demanding attention or doing”. Our Lord said in John 3:7 “Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You *must* be born again’”. He also said in Verse 5 that “unless one is born (again) of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God”. The word “unless”, used as a preposition, is defined as “except” (as in the KJV), which means “if and only if”. One cannot then be born again except (if and only if) water and the Spirit are the elements involved. Clearly, the scriptures disallows adding to, or taking from, the Word of God (Revelation 22:18-19) and it cannot be changed (Galatians 1:6-9). Therefore, the use of a body bag as a substitute for water is not authorized in any way by Scripture. Additionally, the act of inserting a person into a body bag in no way represents a death, burial, and resurrection after the pattern set by our Lord that is to be reflected in baptism (Romans 6:3-5). One may hope and imagine that such an act will be accepted and that it will be perceived as a burial, but it is not a burial and since God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34) how then can He be true to that statement and then accept substitutes for that which he has commanded? Placing one in a bag as a substitute for scriptural baptism is tantamount to simply wrapping a person completely in a blanket, or covering him with anything, and calling it baptism! It is not up to man to look for substitutes, but simply to obey the Lord whatever it takes. Water can be found in abundance in the rivers and streams of Iraq and wherever it can be found there one “must” go to be born again of water and the Spirit! From Nazareth of Galilee to the Jordan where John baptized in water was about sixty (60) miles. Jesus walked the dusty roads of that region for sixty (60) miles to set an example for our baptism in water that we “must” follow!

Question No.1129: What is the Biblical definition of disfellowshipping and under what circumstances should the church/elders remove a person from fellowship? Is the process shunning? What if it is a member of your personal family? Please discuss in context of 1 Cor. 5 and 1 Tim. 1:20

ANSWER: Scriptural response to this question can be derived simply by consideration of the following passages that are clearly set forth in Scripture. First Roman 16:17: “Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them”; I Corinthians 5:11: “But now I have

written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person"; I Corinthians 5:7:" Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us"; II Thessalonians 3:6: "But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us"; II Thessalonians 3:14-15, "And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet do not count *him* as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother"; Titus 3:10, "Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition".

The circumstances under which a person may be disfellowshipped are clearly delineated above. When a person is engaging in a disorderly walk; a walk not in concert with truth and the character of a faithful child of God that person is to be subject to church discipline, not as a matter of choice, but as commanded by the authority of Christ (II Thessalonians 3:6, I Corinthians 5:4). Specific sins are mentioned above, but these stand for the totality of sins in which one may be involved. If the involved person refuses to repent after all has been done to win that one back, then withdrawal of fellowship is commanded

Scriptural church discipline does not involve shunning, as it is generally described, Shunning is an act that totally ignores the sinner, even to the point of not acknowledging one's existence. In Scriptural disfellowshipping, the sinner is not to be counted as an enemy, but, rather, admonished as a brother (II Thessalonians 3:15). As to a member of one's family being disfellowshipped, it must be understood that even under this situation there are responsibilities toward one's family members. Paul who commanded church discipline also wrote in I Timothy 5:8, "But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever". Clearly, there are obligations to, and in, families that do not exist outside the family. The notion that one cannot eat a meal with a family member who has been withdrawn from goes beyond the intent of I Corinthians 5. Even in a situation where a wife remains faithful and the husband has been withdrawn from there remains the obligations due to each other in the marriage bed. It makes absolutely no sense to suggest that one cannot eat with their spouse, but yet fulfill the obligations of the marriage bed enjoined on all married couples in I Corinthians 7:1-5.

Question No. 1130: Should Christian women wear a bikini? How is one's influence affected? Would this be a stumbling block or cause one to go astray? Would it not be awkward trying to invite someone to church while wearing it?

ANSWER: In I Peter 3:1-2, the inspired apostle is telling Christian women that they can win their husbands to the Lord, if their manner of life is appropriate. In Verses three and four, he is contrasting an inappropriate lifestyle for women of that time with an appropriate lifestyle. Some women in that time conducted themselves sinfully by being vain and proud, having a desire to dress and arrange their hair in such a way as to draw

the attention of others to their persons (often for purposes of immorality), rather than dressing in such a way to show that they were in subjection only to their own husbands. So Peter tells them not to dress and arrange their hair as the immoral, haughty, and proud women of that day, but rather to dress in such a way that a life of subjection, meekness, and quietness would be portrayed, as holy women who trust in God! The lesson for women today is that they need also to dress modestly as those professing godliness; dressing as those in subjection to their own husbands, and not dressing in such a way as to entice and attract the view of others! When women, or men, frolic on the beach, or in public, wearing today's immodest swimsuits, including bikinis, they are sinning before God. A bikini certainly cannot be classified as modest, except in the bedroom of the married. The exposure of one's body (man or woman), either by those scantily clothed, clothed with see-through clothing, or excessively tight clothing that leaves little to the imagination are dressed immodestly and, therefore in violation of holy writ (I Timothy 2:9; I Peter 3:1-5). To attempt to throw the blame on those of the opposite gender for what they are caused by our dress to think will not do in the Judgment. When we cause, by our dress, another to sin, we, too, are to be found guilty: (Matthew 18:6), "Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea". I would suspect that if there are those wearing bikinis when the Lord returns, there would be a great effort on the part of each of them to cover their nakedness. The same would be found true of any immodest apparel. The question of "what is immodest?" should never have to be asked by a faithful child of God, because when we dress, or whatever we do, we are to do it "as unto the Lord", (Colossians 3:23-25) "And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality". The question we should ask when we arise each day is, "Am I dressing for the Lord or for man"?

Question No.1131: Can we expect to see Judas in Heaven?

ANSWER: There is no indication that Judas was forgiven, nor that he or his name would be in Heaven! The transgression of Judas (caused by his ungodly character) against Christ could have been forgiven, as were those on Pentecost (Acts 2:23; Acts 2:36-47), so long as Judas lived, had he been willing to bend his will to the Lord's. The transgression of Judas in taking his own life (caused by his ungodly character that rejected the will of God) could not be forgiven, because there is no provision or opportunity to become saved after death occurs (Hebrews 9:27). Thus he has gone "to his own place," the place of perdition (Acts 2:25)! He is called the "son of perdition" in John 17:12 and was the only one of the twelve who was said to have been "lost" by Jesus! The Lord said of Judas in Matthew 26:24. "woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born." The term "perdition" in the New Testament is defined as: (1) Entire loss or ruin; utter destruction; (2) The utter loss of the soul or of final happiness in a future state; future misery or eternal death. The impenitent sinner is condemned to final perdition. Therefore, neither Judas or his name will find place in Heaven.

Question No. 1132: Is Satan bound today?

ANSWER**:** Jesus clearly taught in Matthew 12:22-30 that he had come to bind Satan. Christ never fails in that which He intends to do and He did not fail in this mission. He mightily accomplished the binding of Satan as He had intended to do. This binding of Satan *and his servants* resulted in their power being limited only to evil influences. Today, when the faithful child of God resists these influences in obedience to the word of God, the devil will flee from him (James 4:7).

If Satan was not first "bound," his demons could not have been cast out (Verse 29). Satan continues to be "bound." All the evil on earth seems, at first, to negate this view; but, when it is considered that things might be infinitely worse than they are, and when certain passages of the word of God are taken into consideration, it appears certain that Satan is limited and restrained by Christ imposed boundaries that keep Satan within the control and restraints imposed on him by Christ! For example: (1) Satan cannot tempt a child of God more than is possible to bear (1 Corinthians 10:13). (2) He could not enter even a herd of swine without our Lord's permission (Matthew 8:32). (3) God's specific permission was necessary in Satan's harassment of the patriarch Job (Job 1:12). (4) Satan sifted Peter only after the Lord allowed it (Luke 22:31). (5) Satan and his angels are reserved "in chains of darkness" until the day of judgment (II Peter 2:4). (6) He sowed tares in the wheat, but could do so only "while men slept" (Matthew 13:25). (7) He snatches the word of God from man's heart, but he can do so only when hearts are hardened (Matthew 13:4). (8) He cannot destroy the Bible (Matthew 24:35). From these and countless other implications in the Scriptures, it may be positively concluded that Satan does not share control of the universe with God. Whatever Satan may do, it is always under God's permissive will; and all that he does will finally serve the eternal purpose.

Revelation 20:2 “And bound him for a thousand years” simply means the binding of Satan during the entire Gospel Age. The effective binding of Satan took place in the events of the Incarnation. Satan had already been thrown out of heaven (Revelation 12:7-9); therefore, what is revealed here is a more restricted phase of Satan's activities. The "binding" here, then, is exactly what is referred to in Matthew 12:29, where Jesus said, concerning his salvation of people, "How can one enter into the house of the strong man (Satan) and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man?" Every saved person since Christ came is proof of Satan's being bound throughout the whole period of anybody's being saved "in Christ." Not one soul could ever have been saved unless Satan had first been bound!

Question No. 1133: Does “missing" a service equate to “forsaking” a service?

ANSWER: There is little doubt that the subject of this article is quite timely given current trends in most congregations of the Lord’s church. Generally, Sunday and mid-week evening services experience a drop-off in attendance of just about fifty percent. Positions and opinions as to “missing” and “forsaking” run from one extreme to the other. Some few would hold that nothing short of near death should keep one from any

assembly. Seemingly, however, it appears that far more consider attendance a matter of personal opinion, except perhaps for the Sunday A.M service, thus the significant drop in attendance at other services!

Often those scripturally employed to support their families according to God's design are not able to attend services that must be appointed to accommodate the majority of any particular congregation. Many of these, in spite of their absence have a deep desire to attend, but cannot. These may be "missing", yet not "forsaking". The same may also be concluded relative to the truly sick, infirm, and elderly.

At the other end of the spectrum, there are those who have become complacent in their faith, allowing their physical priorities to cause an ignoring of their first love and, as a result, idolizing such activities as being more important than God. The root cause then is a heart attitude which implies, "I will self-approve, through rationalization, my desire not to attend while turning my attention away from 'seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness' by relegating it to a secondary position". Simply put, the kingdom of our Lord is not sought first in the lives of those who pursue things of less importance!

Some would ask for proof that they have to attend other than Sunday A.M. What a sad question that, in reality, is a portrayal of a misguided heart and a troubled soul! Where else would a spiritually minded person, being aware of Matthew 6:33 / Matthew 18:20, want to be?

Note carefully that the Elders are instructed to oversee and "feed the flock" (Acts 20:28), which necessarily demands set and specific "feeding times", and the flock is directed to respond positively by partaking of the spiritual food provided at the times established (Hebrews 13: 7 & 17).

Let's all reconsider the need for faithfulness in attendance as we together seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness!

Question No. 1134: What is the Doctrine of Christ and how does one abide therein?

ANSWER: "Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this doctrine, do not receive him into your house nor greet him; for he who greets him shares in his evil deeds". (II John 9-11). The doctrine under discussion in this passage is dealing with "what" Christ teaches through His Word; the New Testament, not simply the doctrine "about" Christ. Paul in writing to a young preacher instructs him in this fashion relative to doctrine: "Take heed to yourself and to the doctrine. Continue in them, for in doing this you will save both yourself and those who hear you". And in I Timothy 1:3, "charge some that they teach no other doctrine".

Certainly, the importance of teaching sound doctrine is enjoined upon preachers of the Gospel in order that they may be saved in addition to those that hear them. Without sound doctrine; without proclaiming "all" of the doctrine (Acts 20:27), a preacher places himself and those that hear him in extreme spiritual jeopardy. Motivational speeches void

of sound doctrine will save none! Soft soaping speeches will save none! Political speeches will save none! Hireling speeches will save none! Appeasement speeches will save none! Watered down speeches so as to not make someone feel guilty will save none! Job saving speeches will save none! Only sound doctrine can save!

Not only preachers, but elders, whose responsibility it is to "feed the flock", and all who would teach under them, are to "speak the truth (sound doctrine) in love" (Ephesians 4:15). And it is also incumbent upon the hearers of sound doctrine, if they would be saved, to incorporate that doctrine with love in all of life's activities, all the time, with all they meet, and on every day of the week!

In conclusion, it is only sound doctrine (truth), when taught and obeyed, that will make man free from sin (John 8:32) and save his soul (I Peter 1:22). All else is to fail!

Question No. 1135: Would you explain definite and indefinite articles? What are they?

ANSWER: A **definite** article indicates that its noun is a particular one (or ones); something uniquely specified. The definite article in English, for both singular and plural nouns, is "*the"*.

An **indefinite** article indicates that its noun is not a particular one (or ones), nor something uniquely specified, but rather something irrelevant or hypothetical. Indefinite articles in English are *"a"* and "*an"*.

With the above in mind, a reading of Ephesians 1:22 speaks volumes! That is, in using the definite article, *"the",* twice in this passage, we are given to understand (1) that *"the"* Head of the church is uniquely specified and (2) that *"the"* church is uniquely specified. It is the case then that the uniquely specified conclusion forever does away with the reckless notion that there is more than one Head of the church and, further that there is more than one church, or that there is more than one body. Therefore, the suggestion that the church has an earthly head and a heavenly head belies the use of the definite article and, in error, forces the use of the indefinite article to suggest that Christ is *"a"* Head of the church, leaving the door open for *"a"* second head, having thereby created the monstrosity and absurdity of a body with two heads.

The same principle rings true with *"the"* uniquely specified church over which the uniquely specified Head reigns. It being uniquely specified means, as with the Head, there is only one, otherwise inspiration would have used the indefinite article *"a"* which would make a lie of Ephesians 4:4 that clearly records that there is only "one Body". This being true then, the idea of uniting with *"a"* body must scripturally be surrendered to the truth that all must be united with *"the"* one body uniquely specified by Scripture. That uniting is complete when a believer is baptized "into" the one uniquely specified body; that body which alone contains all of the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ. All of Christ's blood, every drop of it, is in His Body, the church! To unite with other than His uniquely specified body is to join a dead body, void of His life-giving blood!

Question No. 1136: How should we deal with insults?

ANSWER: James, the Lord's half-brother, records in Chapter 3, Verse 6; "And the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell".

Proper control of the tongue is a godly attribute that all need to learn, attain, and maintain. However, many of this world, even some claiming Christ, never seem to reach that goal and are often involved in sinfully misusing the tongue to hurl insults; to gossip; to bring another down; to elevate self; to get even; or to bring others into line with their arrogantly perceived ideas of "what needs to be".

How does one deal with such insults and allegations? The Scriptures leave no doubt as to how a child of God should and will deal with such matters. Jesus said in Matthew 5:39,"But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also". In other words, don't retaliate, but submit yourself to a second insult! This, however, is not always our response. How often have we heard it said, "I don't get mad, I just get even"? But, in I Peter, Chapter 2, Verses 20-25, he writes that when we do good and suffer patiently, "this *is* commendable before God". And then he states that we are "called" to suffer patiently, because in Christ's suffering He set the example for us to follow: "Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth"; who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed *Himself* to Him who judges righteously". He turned the "other cheek" and, suffering patiently, "bore our sins in His own body on the tree."

Vengeance does not belong to any man, for God said in Deuteronomy 32:35, "Vengeance is Mine, and recompense"; "I will repay, says the Lord" (Romans 12:19). Thus, as our Lord committed Himself to Him who judges righteously, we are to do likewise.

In summary, when insults are hurled; when hurtful things are said, those following in His steps will simply turn the other cheek and turn it all over to Him, because His pending judgment and eventual resolution of the matter toward all involved will be fully righteous and just!

Question No. 1137: May someone from a denomination be allowed to simply switch their membership into the Lord's church?

ANSWER: Our Lord died for only one church (Matthew 16:18/Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4). All from the beginning who have ever entered that church have done so in exactly the same way! God does not respect one person above another (Acts 10:34) to allow special or different means of entry into His church. However, in recent years some have arisen in and out of the church making the claim that there are sincere and devout Christians in all the denominations. In fact, many of these have come to accept the denominational churches as equal to, or a part of, the Lord's church. Because of this error, it has become common practice by these same folks to permit and encourage

members of the denominational world to simply “place membership” in the Lord’s church. They do so, however, without regard to our Lord and His Word. It is He who adds men to His church, not men (Acts 2:47). Men do not have the right to receive other men as brethren who have not first been obedient to the Gospel. Jesus said, “I am the Door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture” (John 10:9). All who would enter His sheepfold must do so by him, which clearly means that it must be by His authority! Men who try to enter some other way are doomed to failure, according to the words of our Lord: “Verily, I say unto you, he that entereth not by the Door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber” (John 10:1).

Since the Lord clearly established one church, and only one way to enter that church, it follows that those in the various denominations have not come to “the Door”. These are they who “climbeth up some other way.” When men, by their own usurped authority encourage these to simply “place membership” in the Lord’s body, they sinfully place their stamp of approval on that which God condemns. Of this, we must never be found guilty!

Whenever there are those claiming membership in the Lord’s church on the basis of prior membership in *any* denomination, they need to be lovingly taught God’s will and encouraged to enter in by “the Door”. In the second chapter of Acts (Vss. 37-47), we find three thousand souls being added to *the* church by the Lord. They were added *only after* they were immersed by His authority *for the remission of sins.* These are they who hear His voice and “entereth by the Door (John 10:2). To them the Porter openeth (John 10:3), but to no other!

Question No.1138: What should the relationship between a Christian and the political arena be?

ANSWER: As citizens of earth, as well as of heaven, we should never complain about the political leaders we have, neither the decisions they make, unless we are willing to elect men and women of integrity who support policies that restrain evil and reinforce goodness. For Christians to make a difference in this world, as salt and light, they need to be involved in the political process, both by voting and by encouraging qualified men and women to enter the vocation of politics.

The apostle Paul writes: "Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God" (Romans 13:1). He also writes: "Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence (1 Timothy 2:1-2). Who then can deny that praying for the welfare of our political leaders is being involved in politics and that we are commanded so to be?

Members of the Lord's church are citizens of both this world and the world to come, but our heavenly citizenship must always come first. The Christian’s dual citizenship requires and demands wisdom that is from above (James 3:17). It is the only wisdom that imparts the ability to perceive Christ-magnifying, gospel-based, people-

loving, community-betterment ways to live with the knowledge that God supplies us through His Word. This wisdom from above is needed because so many of the decisions we have to make in this regard, and in most facets of our lives, are not explicitly regulated by specific Scriptures. Yet, it is the Scriptures that imparts the knowledge and consequent wisdom to discern both good and evil (Hebrews 5:14b) that allows us to make choices that are God-approved. Wisdom is obviously needed when one thinks about having their citizenship permanently in heaven, not in America. How do you live on the earth when your life is hidden with Christ in God, when you are an alien and exile on this earth, and yet commanded to submit to the powers that be, and to love your neighbor, and to provide for your family, and to remain faithful unto death? How are we to be in the world and not of the world? We must never forget that we are only exiles on a journey that transcends and is beyond this life wherever we find ourselves, and that there are clear scriptural limitations on blind allegiance to any human, to any political party, political structure, or political ideology.

When we walk into a voting booth we will never find God or the church of Christ on the ballot. However, there will be electoral choices that will significantly indicate to whom our allegiance belongs. Our electoral choices then become extremely important with eternal ramifications and personal consequences. May each of us always enter the voting booth as His agents and make our selections based on the Scriptures, for the glory of our God, and the spiritual well-being of fellow man.

Question No. 1139: Is it a sin for a Christian to vote for a politician who supports abortion and/or homosexual marriages?

ANSWER: A Christian is not one who merely claims to be such, but, rather, is one who obediently conforms to the life, character, and teaching of Jesus Christ! To conform means to correspond in form or character; to act or be in accord or agreement; to comply with. If one does not so conform, it becomes clear that his/her claim of being a faithful Christian is hollow rhetoric, vain, and, perhaps, even hypocritical. It follows, as well, that such a claimant when supporting (aiding and abetting) that to which Christ is opposed cannot rightly claim Christianity, or to be a faithful Christian. Legally, the person who aids and abets another is just as liable, and subject to the same measurement of damages and penalties as the person who commits the crime or the tort (a wrongful act). For example: If one knowingly votes for a candidate that is later elected to an office of authority and facilitates by his/her policies the killing of infants through abortion procedures; or one who supports and promotes homosexual marriages, it follows, and must be the case, that the knowing one is also guilty of aiding and abetting that to which our Lord is opposed. Therefore, that person has not conformed to the life, character, and teaching of Jesus Christ and cannot logically or scripturally be classified as a faithful Christian, regardless of claims to the contrary! Neither can such a one expect to escape the same damage and penalties as dealt to the one who actually commits these sins to which our Lord stands opposed. Some would try to justify their supportive actions by suggesting that in view of Romans 13 the sinful candidate is God-approved since “there is no power, but of God”; an absurd suggestion indeed! God certainly ordained governmental authority as a “minister of God to thee for good”, but just as certainly, not as an agency for the promotion of evil! The reason ungodly influences prevail in

government is not because of God, but because of an approving ungodly populace that supported those very same influences!

The Scriptures are clear that those who commit murder and homosexuality will not inherit the kingdom of God (I Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21). This being true (John 17:17), then it must also be the case that those once saved and who have aided and abetted such practices, no matter how remote, cannot be found guiltless in their approval and contribution to these ungodly acts, unless repentance and prayer be forthcoming (Acts 8:22)!

Question No. 1140: Can a Christian citizen take matters into his own hands? If we say that Christians should have risen in revolt against Hitler for murdering Jews, can we not also say that Christians should, likewise, rise in revolt against a government that promotes murdering infants?

ANSWER: Clearly, the taking of life by an individual or a government through the different methods of abortion is wretchedly sinful. Because of this, emotions understandably run very high which, in turn, raises such questions as this. However, I am caused to remember another event of the same sort when the decree went out from Herod to kill all the male children of Bethlehem and it's surrounding borders who were two years old and younger. The action was taken by Herod in an attempt to destroy God's very Son, the promised Messiah. I can find no suggestion, recommendation, or command for God's people at that time to take up arms against Herod and I can find no suggestion or command that would approve of such an insurgency today. God preserved His Son and if he so elects, He will preserve His children today. Christians are to be in subjection to the higher powers (Government), and not to be in resistance to them (Romans 13:1-2). We honor the king when we subject ourselves to the rule of Government (I Peter 2:17). It does not fall to Christians to, with vengeance, attack man or Government. “Vengeance *is* Mine, I will repay, says the Lord".

At the same time, as noted in the answer to the first question, it would be my belief that we have, not only the right as men, but the obligation (not to attack anyone or any group of men) to defend our personal families and, as well, our church family should a physical or verbal assault come upon them from any source.

Question No.1141: At the end of time will the Earth be renovated to house the great multitude spoken of in the Book of Revelation?

ANSWER: The Bible nowhere teaches a renovated Earth! II Peter 3:10-12 tells us clearly that the material of which the heavens are made will "melt with fervent heat, the Earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." The original Greek word for "burned up" (katakaid) carries with it the idea of being “totally” burned up. There is no hint in the Bible of a reworking or a renovation of this Earth at the conclusion of all

things to eternally support most of the saved while a select and special group of exactly 144,000 (the most holy ones) will have a place prepared just for them in Heaven! Such an idea was developed solely in the vain imaginations of apostate man! The Scripture plainly teaches that, at the conclusion of all things, both the 144,000 and "the great multitude" will dwell together in precisely the same place. (In fact the 144,000 will be a part of the great multitude!) Notice carefully the following: The 144,000 in Revelation 14:3 are said to be "before the throne." Again, in Verse five, we find this same group to be "before the throne." In Revelation 7:9, the "great multitude" is also said to be "before the throne." Clearly, both groups are to be found “before the throne!” They are in exactly the same place! Nonetheless, where is the throne to be found? Is it to be found on the Earth? No! In Revelation 7:15, we learn that the throne is in His temple, and in Revelation 11:19, we find that the temple is in Heaven! Revelation 4:2 also states that the throne is in Heaven! The only conclusion that can be drawn is that both groups (the 144,000 and the "great multitude") will be in exactly the same place, i.e., both are found, as a single group, “before the throne,” which is in the temple, which is in Heaven! The allegation by the Jehovah's Witnesses that a renovated Earth is needed for the "great multitude" is very clearly negated and rendered foolish by the Word of God!

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Question No.1142: Are school dances, proms, etc. good activities for our young people to participate in? Is it okay for them to participate if they are not Christians?

Answer: Allow me to begin by saying that if something is wrong for young Christians, it is also wrong for young non-Christians, since all folks everywhere are amenable to the Law of Christ! What does the Bible say about dancing? In Galatians 5:19-21, we find listed the "works of the flesh." Those who engage in any of these will *not* inherit the kingdom of God (Vs.21). One of the "works of the flesh" is described as "lasciviousness" (Vs.19). This word is defined as: an expression of lust; tending to excite lustful desires; unchaste handling of males and females; and indecent bodily movements. Surely, these definitions are vividly descriptive of today's "social" dance. Prom dances as seen on television certainly reflect the various definitions of lasciviousness, with many of them even portraying vulgar, suggestive, and immoral sexual activity. Those who engage in such cannot inherit the kingdom of God! In brother A. G. Hobb's tract "IS IT RIGHT TO DANCE?", he states that an audience of 1500 men were asked the question, "How many can dance and not have evil thoughts," and not one hand was raised! Hear this testimony from one in a position to know: "I attack the modern dance as a reversion toward savagery. As a medical man, I flatly charge that modern dancing is fundamentally sinful and evil. I charge that dancing charm is based entirely on sex appeal. I charge that dancing is the most advanced and most insidious maneuvering preliminary to sex betrayal. It is nothing more than damnable, diabolical, animal, physical dissipation. I tell you the basic spell of the dance is the spell of illicit physical contact. Under what other shield can a man, or woman, a youth or maiden so promiscuously fondle so many of the opposite sex in a single night, or a lifetime - Dr. E. S. Sonners, M.D.

Question No.1143: Some websites support the suggestion that orphans may be supported out of congregational treasuries, which I believe! What are your thoughts?

Answer: I understand that one can go to various websites and find material on both sides of any issue. I have done that very often and, in fact, have read some of the same websites that you have apparently read. Obviously, we have the personal option of selecting which we want to adopt, but, of course, the final decision must be based on Scripture. I am nearing eighty years of age, having been an elder for many of those years, and have diligently studied both sides and listened to argumentation of various positions. I have come down on the side that says that orphans homes may scripturally be supported out of the congregation's treasury.

God has always wanted children to have parents and homes in which they can be provided for and trained in the way of the Lord. Now these parents can either be their biological parents or their legal parents and this is exactly what we have in these orphans homes. Now some non-institutional brethren would argue that these homes are not real homes as God would have them because they are

incorporated and have a board of directors. They further hold that such is wrong because, according to them, elders of a congregation surrender their oversight when they send money out of the treasury to an incorporated orphans home. The oversight of what and whom? The suggestion seems to be that the elders have oversight of the orphans rather than any money that might be sent and lose oversight of the orphans that are overseen by the legal parents of the orphan's home; a ridiculous theory! Well then, are they suggesting that they lose oversight of the money involved? Must be! But that doesn't make sense! If an eldership oversees and attests to the fact that the money being sent to an orphans home is used as the elders have appointed and directed, does it make sense that they have surrendered their authority to a Board of Directors? Of course not! It is by their specific authority and for specific purposes that the money is being used. How do we know it is? Under the oversight of the elders, assurance will be made through legal accounting procedures that the money sent was, indeed, spent as the elders have so authorized!

A question for your consideration: If elders of a non-institutional congregation decide to send $10,000 to a Board-governed and incorporated construction firm to put a new roof on the building where the church meets, have they surrendered their oversight of the money to that firm? Of course not! Why not? Simply because they are going to make sure that the money is spent as they have specified! The same is true with orphanages! I vividly recall our congregation sending money to an orphans home with specific instructions as to how that money was to be used. We did not surrender our authority to the orphanage Board. Those funds remained under our oversight until they were depleted! As we continued to followed up on the specifics of our directions to the Board, we found, that with a change of Board members, that they had decided to use the money sent in a way not commensurate with our oversight and directions. Therefore, we terminated our contribution to that orphanage! Where in this process did we surrender our authority and oversight? Where in this process did we violate God's Word? Where in this process did we sin?

The issue really seems to rally around the notion that only those within the congregation are eligible for support from the treasury and since orphans are not really a part of the church, even though those who care for them are, we must never support then collectively no matter their hunger and physical need and requirements. Their idea is that we can do so individually, but, in truth, I find not many of them who do!

The matter of providing aid to those who are not Christians is settled soon for me into the Gospel according to Matthew. Christ in preaching that the kingdom

of heaven was at hand (Matthew 4:17) was laying the groundwork for that kingdom that was yet to come, i.e., He was teaching those who would come into the kingdom how they were to conduct themselves in the kingdom, both, as individuals and collectively. In Chapter five, He often said, "Ye have heard it said of those of old time . . . , but I say unto you . . ," e.g., Matthew 5:21 & 22; 27 & 28; 31 & 32; 33 & 34 and; 38 & 39. He says the same thing in Verses 43 & 44 and, in so doing, tells us (the called out) that we are to love, bless, do good, and pray for our enemies so that we may be the children of our Father. Christ is telling us to be like our Father who does good things to both the unrighteous and the righteous; the just and the unjust. He further says, 'If you only love them that love you, what reward do you have? Even sinners do that much! And if you salute only your brethren, how do you differ from the unrighteous publican?" In the closing verse, He says that we are to be whole, complete, and mature children of God by being whole, complete, and mature, as is He. In other words as He loves, blesses, and does good to the unjust (those who are not His children), we are to do the same. None can deny that the Son who is the express image of the Father (Colossians 1:15) so conducts Himself. Therefore, in whatever fashion He, as the Head of the church, conducts Himself, so the church, which is His body and His bride, conducts herself (Ephesians 5:22-32). To do otherwise would be to put the body at odds with the Head!

Further, it is clear in II Corinthians 8 and 9 that Paul is commending various congregations for supplying the needs of the poor saints in Jerusalem. In Chapter 9, Verse 13, Paul writes, "Whiles by the experiment of this ministration (the supplying of needs) they (the recipients) glorify God for your (the church at Corinth) professed subjection unto the Gospel of Christ, and for your (the church at Corinth) liberal distribution unto them (the saints), and unto all men (other than saints)."

I realize that commentators Albert Barnes and Matthew Henry are not the final authority in biblical interpretation, but, nonetheless, the following quotes that come from them relative to this same verse is worthy of note.

Barnes says: "There was a real and sincere submission to the Gospel of Christ, and that was manifested by their giving liberally to supply the needs of others. The doctrine is that one evidence of true subjection to the gospel; one proof that our profession is sincere and genuine, is a willingness to contribute to relieve the needs of the poor and afflicted friends of the Redeemer. And unto all people. That is, all others whom you may have the opportunity of relieving."

Henry says: "Besides these, others also would be thankful; the poor, who were supplied in their wants, would not fail to be very thankful to God, and bless God for them; and all who wished well to the Gospel would glorify God for this

experiment, or proof of subjection to the Gospel of Christ, and true love to all men, Vs. 13."

With these men I fully agree, as does brother Bill Jackson in his fine commentary (Page 78) on this great book. He writes, "It is noteworthy also to see that the distribution was made, in liberality, unto "them" – the saints – and unto "all men" as they stood in need. The liberal distribution of aid manifested the subjection, or obedience, that the Corinthians had to the demands of the Gospel of Christ. It should be clear to any who have any understanding of the rule of Christ in our lives, and thus for our service in the kingdom, that benevolence is directed first toward members of the body. Yea, doing good unto all men, 'especially unto them who are of the household of faith' (Galatians 6:10). The connection we have together in the Christ would demand that fellow-Christians would have to first call upon the kingdom's benevolent resources. But we dare not allow some to build a man-made doctrine restricting benevolence only to saints! "Saints" are mentioned in Vs.12, and then another category, "all men." The work of God in any given place may occasion circumstances wherein non-members are in need, and the saints of God can meet those needs, and should meet them. Some have gone to an extreme in this, to the extent that they hold that non-members living next door to the church building, yet attending services and studies with regularity, and who themselves give into the contribution when they attend, and who are known and appreciated by many members of the church, etc., cannot be aided by the church once the funds have entered the contribution. These do state that individual members of the church may render that aid, but forbid it 'from the treasury.' However, the funds here spoken of entered the Corinthians treasury, and from here entered, doubtless, the treasuries in the places receiving the aid (and we have seen this in Acts 11:27-30). Still, distribution of funds is seen to be unto 'saints' and unto "all men," and from the Corinthian congregation!"

I believe all three of these men have interpreted correctly!

Christ is clear in Luke 10:25-37 who our neighbor is: Our neighbor is any person in need, even if he is not as we are! Those who would teach that members of the body of Christ cannot use the "Lord's money" to do that which He taught us to do in emulation of Him, place themselves, as a congregation, without compassion in the category of the priest and the Levite who looked and passed by on the other side! These errant brethren, knowingly or unknowingly, as the case may be, effectively teach that individual Christians may conduct themselves with compassion, as did the Samaritan, but the church collectively "must" conduct herself as the priest and the Levite! Absurd!

I don't know whether this will help your thinking on the subject, but, I, in good conscience, finding no biblical support for congregational non-support of alien sinners and/or orphans, and as an elder; that I am to direct those under my (our) oversight to collectively "pass by on the other side", but to say "if one of you guys want to go back and do it individually, that'll be okay"! Christ, the Head of the Body, as did the Samaritan, would not have passed by! And the body must go where the Head goes! Christ's body does not conduct itself as the priest and Levite and pass by on the other side!

Question No. 1144: What language was spoken before the Tower of Babel?

Answer: All we can know for sure is that it was a common language that all spoke at that time. Man attempted to build the tower that they might make a name for themselves, lest they be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth (Genesis 11:4). That they wanted to make a name for themselves shows that they were a very proud people. Though uncertain, some believe, then, that the one language was Hebrew. The Jews so believe. Offered as a basis for this suggestion is that the proper names, and their significations given in the Scripture, would tend to support this conclusion. However, with the many thousands of languages and dialects prevalent today this proposed "evidence" does not assure the accuracy of such a conclusion. The fact is that we cannot say without doubt what language was spoken before Babel, since neither the Bible, secular History, nor Science reveals that knowledge!

Question No. 1145? What does it mean that God hardened Pharaoh's heart?

Answer: Certainly, it does not mean that God infused sin into the heart of Pharaoh so that he would reject what God, through Moses, told him to do, i.e., "Let my people go". God tempts no person to sin (James 1:13-14). However, God does harden the heart of those who resist the Spirit of God by not imparting mercy to them. God does not cause the hardness of heart in man, but He may be said to do so when He withholds His blessings from those to whom He has repeatedly offered His grace, because they have despised and rejected His Word. Simply put, God would not be merciful toward Pharoah because of his rejection of God's will. It is a just and right action of God to withhold mercy from Pharaoh and, therefore, on this basis, it may be said to be a "hardening of Pharaoh's heart".

Question No. 1146? Who will judge us on the last day? Christ or God?

Answer: John 5:22 states that God (The Father) has committed all judgment unto the Son. II Corinthians 5:10 states that we all must appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ. Matthew 25:31ff states that the Son of man will sit in Judgment on all nations. Romans 14:10 states that we all shall stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ. Romans 14:11 states that all men will confess to God; and Romans 14:12 states that all will give an account to God, as does Revelation 20:12. This series of passages in Romans and Revelation teaches and attests to the divinity of Christ; that He is God. Using Romans 14:12 and Revelation 20:12 as a basis for a direct answer to the question, "Who is our Judge?", we must conclude that "God" would be a correct answer, but it should be understood that God in the context of both passages refers to Christ who is divine, and, therefore, God. Further, it is clear in Acts 17:31 that He (God, the Father) will judge the world in righteousness by (through) that man (the resurrected Christ) whom He has ordained to sit on the Judgment throne! Both God, the Father and God, the Son will have much to do with the Judgment and, as well, God, the Holy Spirit whose words will be the standard by which all shall be judged is, thereby, involved greatly, as well, in the Judgment process of all men (Revelation 20:12).

It would be my opinion, on the basis of the above scriptures that either answer (Christ or God) would be correct!

Question No. 1147: Is Mormon baptism the baptism authorized by Christ in the New Testament?

Answer: As we look for an answer to this question, we must first recognize the fact that baptism is certainly “for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38), but that is not the sole purpose of scriptural baptism (Acts 2:47). Consider the Biblical truths that there is only “one body”(Ephesians 4:4), and that the “one body” is the “one church” (Ephesians 1:22-23). Further consider the truth that it is baptism that puts us into the “one church'" (I Corinthians 12:13). Can one be taught that the Mormon church is the “one church” and be baptized by immersion into that church and be accepted by God? Those on Pentecost Day (Acts 2:47), were, upon their baptism added by the Lord to His "one body, the church". Now we have an issue! The Mormon church had its beginning in New York on April 6, 1830. Therefore, those 3000 folks on Pentecost were not added by the Lord to the Mormon church, because it would not come into existence for 1830 years. Clearly then the “one body” existed at Pentecost and the Mormon church, therefore, would then,1830 years later, logically be classified as another body, or a second body. Nonetheless we are told in the New Testament that there is only “one body”, the “one church” which is the body (or church) of Christ (Ephesians 4:12; Ephesians 1:22-23). What happens when we are baptized into that “one body”? What is it that washes away

our sins" Clearly it is the blood of Christ (Revelation 1:5; I Peter 1:18-19). Therefore, we are baptized into the "one body" to access the cleansing blood of Jesus Christ. Where is Christ's blood? Where is your blood? Is it not in your body? Of course! Is all of your blood in your body? Of course! Is your blood in anyone else's body? Of course not! If all of Christ's blood is in His body, then it follows that none of His blood that washes away sin is in any other body and when one is baptized into a body that came into existence 1830 years later, then there is no cleansing blood in that body! Therefore, an immersion into that or any other body than the one that existed on Pentecost Day, results in an immersion of none effect. Clearly, one must be immersed into that first and "one body" in order to be saved from their sins! There is "one Body" (Ephesians 4:4): and "one Head" of the "one body", "the church". There cannot be one Head with many bodies; One Head, one body with all of His blood being in that "one body". In order to be saved, one must be baptized into that"one Body" which only contains all of His blood! Further, a person must stay in that body to have continual access to that blood. When one leaves that "one body", he or she leaves the blood that exists only in that body! The scriptural conclusion is that one baptized into any denomination that developed years after Christ's church (Acts 2:47) has clearly not reached the blood of Christ and, therefore, will remain in their sins, separated from God (Isaiah 59:1-2) until they are baptized for the right reason and with the understanding of the "one body" wherein His cleansing blood resides.
One cannot be taught wrong and baptized right! One cannot be taught that the body called the Mormon church is the Kingdom of God and be baptized into that body and be right! The Mormon Church teaches that when they baptize someone, that person is being baptized into the Mormon church that they refer to as the kingdom. The Mormon church, based on what they call "another Gospel" of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1:6-7) is not another, and, clearly, cannot be, the "one body" of which the Bible speaks. It is another; a different body, founded in the wrong place at the wrong time on a Gospel which is not the Gospel of Christ! Therefore, baptism into that group, which is "another group", based on "another Gospel" (which is not another- Galatians 1:7) avails absolutely nothing! What is the answer; the only wise and scriptural thing to do? Simply be baptized into that "one body" that contains all of the blood of Christ and remain faithful in that "one body" unto death and the crown of life will be yours (Revelation 2:10)!

Question No. 1148: A denominational person perceives that his prayer was answered and, thus, he now has evidence that he is saved "in Christ". Does perceived answered prayer mean that the one praying is saved "in Christ"?

ANSWER: In dealing with this issue that we need to carefully consider Matthew 5:45; that God causes physical blessings to fall on the just (the faithful) and the unjust (the unfaithful) with such naturally happening based on God-established physical laws from the Creation. For example, an unjust (unfaithful) farmer may be praying for rain; the rain falls because of natural law, and this farmer then concludes that God has answered his

prayer and he, therefore, now has supporting evidence that he, with the pouring rain, has been deemed to be faithful "in" Christ! The same is true, for example, of physical medical advances developed through God's providence that effect cures and healing. Those God-provided physical medical advances effect cures and healing for the just and the unjust alike. The application and effect of those cures and healing is not supporting evidence that the praying unfaithful are, thereby, proven to be faithful "in" Christ!

The logic of those who so hold must also be examined from the flip side of the issue. If the unfaithful are to be deemed faithful as a result of their own perception of "answered prayer", then it would necessarily be the case that when a faithful Christian mother, sitting and praying at the bedside and imminent death of her child, would, thereby, be given supporting evidence that, upon the death of the child, she is not "in" Christ, because her prayer did not cause the child to live.

Both sides of the position are equally absurd and non-scriptural.

Physical blessings often fall both to the just and the unjust, but spiritual blessings (including salvation) fall only to those "in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3), and there is only one way to be "in Christ", i.e., through baptism (Romans 6:3, Galatians 3:27). As God placed salvation "in" the ark, He also placed salvation "in" Christ (II Timothy 2:10). In order to be saved Noah and his family had to enter the ark to access the salvation that had been placed therein, and so folks under the New Testament must enter Christ to be saved, because there is no salvation in any other place or any other way (Acts 4:12). No person in Scripture was ever told that one could "pray into" Christ, all who were saved under the New Testament had to be baptized "into" the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:13) to access that salvation!

It must also be noted that simply being religious and praying does not effect one's salvation. In that great day, many religious people will claim and tout their religious activities while in this life and they will hear Him say, "Depart from me, I never knew you"; never approved of what you were doing religiously (Matthew 7:21-23). Baptism is the only door, through which one "enters" into Christ, those who would enter some other way than that given is equal to a thief and a robber, based on the principle found in John 10:1.

Bottom line: Physical blessings will fall to all, but spiritual blessings fall "only" to those "in Christ", not simply as may be personally perceived, but on the basis of our spirits being found in agreement with the Holy Spirit. i.e., the Spirit's Word (Romans 8:16). Then, and only then, can we rightly claim to be His children "in Christ"!

Question No. 1149: In Job 1:6, did Satan actually go to Heaven?

Answer: Some would suggest that on the basis of Job 1:6 that Satan did enter into Heaven to join the angels and to have a discussion with God, the Father, about Job! However, consider the fact that Job 1:6 does not even mention the word "Heaven". Neither does the phrase "sons of God" refer to angels in this context, even though the phrase may refer to men or angels in other places, depending on the immediate context. In Job 38:7, it becomes clear that the phrase refers to angels. However, the phrase in the context of Job1:6 simply means those who worship God. For example, Romans 8:14: "As many as are led by the Spirit of God are the sons of God". Certainly, this discussion by Paul is not about angels. Some have as well, in error, suggested that the phrase “sons of God” in Genesis 6:2 also refers to angels, but neither is this the case! The common meaning of this phrase in those days meant “worshipers or beneficiaries of God.” The phrase then is clearly applied to both men and angels, depending upon the immediate context of the passage under consideration. Without question, angels as worshipers and beneficiaries of God are, as noted above, referred to in Job 38:7. However, such is not the case in Genesis 6:2. The phrase "sons of God" in this passage refers to those men who "walked with God;" those who worshiped Him and conducted themselves as His children, thereby being recipients of His blessings. The same is said of Christians today (I John 3:1). As well, the phrase " before the Lord" is often used of men who are on the earth. For example: Genesis 10:9. "Nimrod was a mighty hunter "before the Lord"! Where do men hunt today? Surely not in Heaven! Sometimes in worship, we will pray, "Father we are assembled "before thee". That doesn't mean we have been transported to Heaven in order to pray! God's presence is not limited to Heaven! He is omnipresent! However, the earth is where Satan operates, obviously not in Heaven (I Peter 5:8). Note, too, that Revelation 21:28 states that sin cannot enter Heaven. Satan is sin personified and, therefore, surely he did not, cannot, and will not enter that Holy City! The word "before" simply means "in the presence of". Paul admonished us to "draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace". God's throne is in Heaven! Paul did not mean that we must go to Heaven to pray! Note that the assembly of worshipers (sons of God) in Job 1:6, which probably included Job, was joined by Satan. There has hardly ever been an assembly of the saints (sons of God) on this earth when Satan was not present! So the scriptural response to the subject suggestion must be” No!”, Job 1:6 does not mean that Satan went to Heaven and joined the heavenly host to engage our Father face to face!

Question No. 1150: I am convert of about 7 yrs now and I have been confused on somethings but one that really got me. We all have the same Bible but there is so much that people disagree on. The one that confused me was.. a new member (obeyed the Gospel some time ago) came and worship with us for a good white, she had a baby and the ladies gave her a baby shower etced on somethings but one that really got me. We all have the same Bible but there is so much that people disagree on We all have the same

Bible but there is so much people disagree on...the one that confused me was.. a new member (obeyed the Gospel some time ago) came and worship with us for a good white, she had a baby and the ladies gave her a baby shower etc. A few months or so later she left without any word to the sisters, just stop attending. When I was finally able to so call corner her and asked why she left she informed me it was because the bldg. had a kitchen in it and she thought per scripture it shouldn't be that way...now they used the kitchen for fellowship meals but this is way after services are concluded. Your thoughts or views in a situation like this?

Answer: Usually the opinion of a wayward group, such as you describe, say that it's wrong to even have a kitchen in the church building. Most of them also really teach that it's sinful to eat in the church building, thus no kitchen is often not allowed! The person with whom your discussion occurred has stated that she thought "per scripture" that there should be no kitchen in the church building. First, there is no scripture that so concludes, but to the contrary tells us in Romans 16:5 and I Corinthians 16:19 that some New Testament congregations at Rome and Corinth worshiped in personal houses which. obviously had kitchens and, therefore, places in which to eat! Clearly, on the basis of these two situations it can be seen and understood that there is no sin in having kitchens and eating places in the same construction, whether it be called a church building or a personal house! Such a position as stated is contrary to the claim of the person with whom you spoke. She has claimed that she has supporting scriptures that evidences her cited position! She does not! Therefore, her position is false and invalid! The two verses noted above speaks to the truth that there is nothing sinful in having a kitchen or eating in the same structure in which we worship!

You also state that there is confusion when people using the same Bible disagree with each other! Allen, the confusion does not come from the Bible for Paul writes in I Corinthians 14:33 that "God is NOT the author of confusion". The confusion comes from differing and conflicting opinions of men who wrongly assume that their opinions must also be God's opinion! Thus,the development of confusing sinful division and denominationalism!

Question No. 1151: Question: Qualification to be an Elder 1 Tim 3: 4 one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence 5 (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?)..Would this disqualify a member that has grown children not in his house that are not in the Church?

Answer: Allen, thanks for the question! My position is simply this: Please note that the qualification deals with the proper ruling of his own house! When this man's son leaves his house, the child is no longer a part of that house. The child has become a part of

another or different house! The question then becomes "did the prospective elder rule his house well when the child was a part of that house"? Was the child in "subjection: while in the house (Verse 5). Was the child "faithful" when a part of the house (Titus 1:6)? If so, the prospective elder would be qualified. The son is to rule his own house well, as are all men. How that departed son rules his own house falls to him for which he shall be called into judgment, not the father! If the son had been in subjection and faithful under the rule of his father's house and then he left his father's house and turned his back on Christ, don't blame and limit the Father desiring the work of an elder, but, rather, recognize that the fault lies with the apostate!

Consider this: The Church is the house of God (I Timothy 3:15) over which the elders are to rule (Hebrews 13:7 & 17) and feed the flock that is among them (I Peter 5:1-3). If a faithful member of the church family, while in the house of God. decides to turn his back on the Lord and leave that house, whose fault is it the elders or that apostate? Would that disqualify the elders? Of course not! Similarly, the father of his own house would not be disqualified in any way if his once faithful child departed and fell into iniquity!