

Fulton County Gospel News

"The Churches of Christ Salute You"

Publication No. 211780

Second Class Postage Paid at Mammoth Spring, AR

Volume 26

Mammoth Spring, AR 72554

March, 1992

No. 3

RESTORING BELIEF IN BAPTISM "FOR THE REMISSION OF SINS"

Part Three

by Ted J. Clarke

During the Dark Ages the church had apostatized so badly that it could not be recognized as the church of the New Testament. Nearly every doctrine taught in the Scriptures regarding the church had been changed or forgotten. Copies of the New Testament were not easily available for people to check and see what God's word really said. In the sixteenth century, men like Martin Luther and John Calvin began a return to the Scriptures as the authority in religion, instead of a corrupt church. Copies of the Bible were made in the languages of the people and the printing press made the process of copying and circulation much easier and faster. Some great strides were made toward restoring great Bible truths which had been suppressed for over a thousand years. The common man could read his Bible for himself and check on the accuracy of what he was being taught from the pulpit. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, literally dozens of new religious denominations were born. Most of these new groups based their existence on some particular part of the Scriptures, emphasizing some Bible truths but ignoring others. Religious creedbooks were written by men to bind the teaching of the various denominations upon their followers. These books have been and still are a source of division in the religious world.

Courageous men of different places and different times have sought to unite the divided Christian world by calling them back to the Bible as the only authority for our religious beliefs and practices. Sadly, these voices are not as many as they should be, they are not loud enough, and, most unfortunately, not enough people are listening! In our own country, near the turn of the nineteenth century, a man by the name of Alexander Campbell began to recognize that most of the religious world had lost

sight of what the Bible teaches regarding many parts of the Christian system, especially regarding salvation and the organization and worship of the church of the Lord. Campbell called for the destruction of all human creeds and a return to the Bible as the only standard of authority for those who wished to be known as Christians. The work of Campbell and many other men resulted in a "restoration movement" in our country. There was a desire to **restore** the teaching and practice of Christianity to what the Bible said about every part of the Christian system. One element of the desire to **restore** Biblical teaching centered around baptism. What was baptism? Could it be administered by sprinkling or pouring water on the candidate, as well as by immersion? Who could be baptized? Were infants and children who could not believe to be baptized along with believing adults? What was the purpose of baptism? Was it merely an outward show of an inward faith, or was it necessary to be baptized in order to be saved? Campbell determined from his studies of the Bible that baptism could only be properly administered by immersion of a believer in water in order to receive forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38; 8:35-39; 22:16; Mark 16:16; 1 Peter 3:20-21; Romans 6:1-5).

Campbell's preaching on baptism convinced many who had been teaching and practicing otherwise. Those who followed his call to return to the Bible as the only authority in religion and sought to **restore New Testament Christianity** were often accused of following him and becoming "Campbellites." This became a term of contempt which was called upon those who wanted to do away with denominationalism and creedbooks. However, Alexander Campbell did not establish the religious group commonly called the Church of Christ. We who are members

of that faith do not accept him as our founder. We accept only Christ as the Head of His body, the church (Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23, 25; Matthew 16:18; Romans 16:16). Campbell did try to restore the truth that baptism (immersion in water to a penitent believer) is "for (in order to receive) the remission of sins." He wrote a number of articles and conducted several public debates with denominational preachers (many of them Baptists), proving that one must be baptized in order to be saved. The evidence for this is so strong that no denominational preacher of today will even challenge that fact in public discussion.

Campbell's written articles and debates convinced many among the denominations to change their beliefs and practices, leaving their man-made religious organizations and becoming a part of the effort to **restore New Testament Christianity**. Some hated Campbell and anyone who agreed with him. Some agreed with him but would not leave their denominations with their human creeds and doctrines. We quoted from H. B. Hackett and Alvah Hovey, two great Baptist scholars, in the first article in this series. Both of these men admitted in writing that Acts 2:38 teaches that one must be baptized in order to receive the remission of sins or be saved. Many others have not been so honest. Why? Perhaps a final quote will provide a possible answer. Dr. James W. Willmarth, another Baptist scholar of note, has something to say about baptism "for the remission of sins" and the Greek word "eis" from Acts 2:38. (See the first two articles in this series for more complete material on Acts 2:38 and "eis.") As you read Dr. Willmarth's words, remember that "eis" is the Greek word translated "for" in Acts 2:38, "for the remission of sins."

"It is feared that if we give to *eis* its natural and obvious meaning, undue importance will be ascribed to Baptism, the Atonement will be undervalued, and the work of the Holy Spirit disparaged. Especially is

(Continued on page 2)

FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS

. . . is a monthly publication distributed free of charge to any who care to receive it. We will be happy to add any names to the regular mailing list. If you send in a name be SURE to include the ZIP CODE. It must be with each address according to the Postal regulations. This paper is supported by unsolicited contributions for which we are grateful. If you care to know the financial status and expenses, that information will be furnished upon request. Mail all address corrections to:

FULTON COUNTY GOSPEL NEWS

P. O. Box 251

Mammoth Spring, AR 72554

Ted J. Clarke EDITOR

Publication No. 211780

RESTORING....

(Continued from page 1)

it asserted that here is the vital issue between Baptists and Campbellites. We are gravely told that if we render *eis* in Acts ii.38 *in order to*, we give up the battle, and must forthwith become Campbellites; whereas if we translate it *on account of*, or *in token of*, it will yet be possible for us to remain Baptists.

"Such methods of interpretation are unworthy of Christian scholars. It is our business, simply and honestly, to ascertain the exact meaning of the inspired originals, as the sacred penman intended to convey it to the mind of the contemporary reader. Away with the question—'What *ought* Peter to have said in the interest of orthodoxy?' The real question is, 'What *did* Peter say, and what did he *mean*, when he spoke on the Day of Pentecost, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit?'

"But having entered this *caveat*, as a lawyer might say, it may do no harm to show that dogmatic dangers here exist only in imagination. The natural and obvious interpretation cannot give undue importance to Baptism, for Baptism is here united with Repentance and Faith. It cannot undervalue the Atonement, for Baptism is one resting upon, and deriving all its value from, *the name* of the Lamb of God; and this is distinctly understood by the person baptized, who submits to the rite as a believer in that *name*. It cannot disparage the

work of the Spirit, since he alone effectually calls men to Repentance and Faith; and it is *by* (Greek *en*, in, with the influence of) *one Spirit* that *we are all baptized into one body*, i. e., the Spirit leads the penitent sinner (through God's word -TJC) to Baptism and blesses the rite. And as to Campbellism, that spectre which haunts many good men and terrifies them into a good deal of bad interpretation, shall we gain anything by maintaining a false translation and allowing the Campbellites to be champions of the true, with the world's scholarship on their side, as against us? Whoever carries the weight of our controversy with the Campbellites *upon the eis* will *breakthrough*—there is no footing there for the evolutions of the theological skater. Shall we never learn that Truth has nothing to fear from a true interpretation of any part of God's word, and nothing to gain from a false one?

"The truth will suffer nothing by giving to *eis* its true signification. When Campbellites translate *in order to* in Acts ii. 38 they translate correctly. Is a translation false because Campbellites endorse it?" ("*Baptism and Remission*," in *Baptist Quarterly*, July, 1877, pp. 304, 305.)

In these three articles we have shown from the general teaching of the Scriptures, from the original meaning of the Greek words, and from some notable scholars of different faiths that "for the remission of sins" in Acts 2:38 means "in order to obtain the remission of sins." The teaching of the New Testament is that one must be baptized in order to be saved by the blood of Christ. We of the churches of Christ stand ready to examine the Scriptures with any of you regarding our faith and practice or yours. We want nothing but the truth of God's word on any religious subject. If you have the same desire, will you restudy this matter of baptism "for the remission of sins?" If these articles have helped you to gain a better understanding of God's will for you, we would delight in baptizing you in the right way for the right reason. Although you may have been immersed, if you did not do it in order to be forgiven of your sins, you need to be immersed again with the proper understanding. You cannot be taught improperly and baptized properly. Please note Paul's demand upon some disciples who had

been improperly taught and baptized previous to his meeting them. He required them to be baptized in the right name, Jesus Christ, and for the right reason, the forgiveness of sins. Read Acts 19:1-5 & 2:38. Won't you do the same?

ONE BODY IS SUFFICIENT

by Robert Ball

Ephesians 4:4-6 says, "there is one body, and one spirit, even as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father for all, and through all, and in all." In this passage Paul lists seven ones that are essential to religious unity. For the most part, "Christian" partakers in religion have no problem with unity on the basis of one God, one Lord, and one Spirit. The problem centers on emphasizing one faith, one baptism, and one body. It is clear to this writer that unless we can be united on what the Bible teaches, we cannot have the right unity. Therefore, this article deals with the question, what does the Bible teach about one body?

In answering the above, one must point out that Ephesians 4:4 clearly states, "there is one body." In discussing that Jews and Gentiles are saved on the same ground, that is, through the gospel of Christ, it says "having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, that he might create in himself of the two, one new man, so making peace, and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross, having slain the enmity thereby" (Eph. 2:15-16). The body is the church (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:21-23). When one understands the fact that Jew and Gentiles are reconciled to God in the one body, the church, by the gospel of Christ, then one understands the mystery of Christ. "To wit, that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and the fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel" (Eph. 3:6).

The Bible clearly states the truth about the one body and it is not difficult to understand if one is willing to read with an open mind. In a world of hundreds of churches, however, one body is a problem. Because one body means there is one church. Because the imagi-

nations of men have produced hundreds of churches. Nevertheless, the Bible teaches that Jesus Christ promised to build one church (Matt. 16:13-18). Christ built His church as He promised. On the day of Pentecost following the resurrection of the Lord, about three thousand souls were added to the church of Christ, each of them having heard, believed, and obeyed the gospel of Christ (Acts 2:36).

The world has seen many religious divisions. These divisions are confusing to many people. But "God is not a God of confusion, but of peace" (I Cor. 14:33). Therefore, one may conclude that God is not the originator of religious division. Having sent His son into the world to establish His Kingdom, His Church, there neither was nor is there any need for God, much less man, to establish another. Because of the all sufficiency of Christ on which man can rely, one may be sure that the one church which Christ built is sufficient for the needs of man.

P.O. Box 25
Old Hickory, TN 37138

**WHO ARE GOD'S CHOSEN
PEOPLE TODAY?
ISRAEL OR THE CHURCH?**

by Allen Webster

In the Old Testament, God selected the nation of Israel as His chosen people (Deut. 7:6-8). It was through the Jews that God brought Jesus into the world (Gal. 4:4) as had been prophesied (Gen. 12:1-3). "Israel" became a synonym for "chosen people."

Under the Mosaic system, this selection was conditional. "And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of Jehovah thy God, to observe to do all His commandments which I command thee this day, that Jehovah thy God will set thee on high above all the nations of the earth..." (Deut. 28:1). The Hebrews were also warned of the consequences of disobedience (28:15ff). They could be disinherited as a nation (Num. 14:12) and removed from their land (Jos. 23:13, 16).

Toward the end of Old Testament history, God announced the rejection of Israel as His chosen people in the coming New Testament dispensation.

"Therefore, behold, I, even I will utterly forget you, and I will forsake you, and the city that I gave you and your fathers, and cast you out of my presence, and I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten (Jer. 28:39, 40). God had before warned that if they went into captivity they would never be fully restored (Jer. 19:11, "...that cannot be made whole again). They were captured by both the Assyrians (Northern kingdom, 722 B.C.) and the Babylonians (Southern kingdom, 586 B.C.). Israel, as a kingdom, was never restored, although all twelve tribes returned from captivity (Ezra 2:70).

During the earthly life of Christ, the Jews, as a group, rejected Jesus as the Messiah. At the beginning of His ministry Jesus said of Israel, "And even now the axe lieth at the root of the trees..." (Mt. 3:10). The Lord graphically pictured their rejection in the parable of the wicked husbandmen (Mt. 21:33-44). The "householder" (God) gave the stewardship of His property to His husbandmen (the Jews) who killed His servants (prophets). Finally He determined to send His son (Christ), thinking that surely they would obey Him. But instead they killed Him. The parable closes with this haunting question, "When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?" It is obvious that Jesus is not coming the second time with favor for the nation that killed Him!

The Lord announced to the Jews just before His arrest, "The kingdom of God shall be taken away from you, and shall be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Mt. 21:43). In other words, fruitless (faithless) "national Israel" would be replaced by fruitful "spiritual Israel."

At the trial of Jesus, the Hebrews yelled, "Crucify him" (Mk. 15:13, 14), and were responsible for the cruel death of the Savior. This has been an "everlasting reproach" and a "perpetual shame" (cf. Jer. 28:39, 40) upon them. As a group, the Jews are today as infidelic as ever.

To insist on an arbitrary and unconditional acceptance of one nation above others is an assault upon the benevolent character and impartial love of God (cf. Gen. 12:3; Psa. 145:9; Acts 10:34, 35). Paul wrote that the "middle wall of partition," designed to isolate Israel

from the nations, has been broken down (Eph. 2:14). From God's viewpoint, physical Israel has passed away. Individually, Jews are accepted into the kingdom by Gospel obedience (Rm. 1:16). Since the Jews are rejected, to whom does "Israel" refer in the New Testament? New Testament "Jews" are Christians and "Israel" is the church. Paul wrote, "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly... But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Rm. 2:28-29). The children of Abraham today are those who by faith have been baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:26, 27). For "there is neither Jew nor Greek,... bond nor free,... male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Gal. 3:28-29).

Thus, God has rejected the Jews as His people and selected the church to be His "spiritual Israel."

Rt. 1, Box 38
Tiptersville, MS 38674

CONTRIBUTIONS

CHURCHES

Church of Christ, Garfield, Ar.	\$35.00
Welcome Hill Church of Christ	10.00
Mammoth Spring, Ar.	
Pilot Church of Christ	40.00
Mammoth Spring, Ar.	
Moko Church of Christ, Salem, Ar.	25.00
Church of Christ, Viola, Ar.	10.00
Dellhalf Church of Christ, Myrtle, Mo.	20.00
Jeff Church of Christ, Thayer, Mo.	25.00
Church of Christ, Agnos, Ar.	25.00
Church of Christ, Moody, Mo.	25.00
Church of Christ, Elizabeth, Ar.	15.00
Church of Christ, Clarkridge, Ar.	50.00
Church of Christ, Marionville, Mo.	10.00

INDIVIDUALS

Mrs. Norman Womack, Little Rock, Ar.	\$20.00
Jeff Montgomery, Batesville, Ar.	5.00
Grace Carr	5.00
Beryl Green, Mammoth Spring, Ar.	10.00
Lenore Percell, Osceola, Ia.	10.00
Clara W. Johnston, Springdale, Ar.	10.00
Howard Foster, Lamar, Mo.	20.00
Andy Warren, Jr., Melbourne, Ar.	5.00
Virginia Shehorn, Alton, Mo.	10.00
M/M Victor Wohlford	10.00
N. Little Rock, Ar.	
Jean Wells, Ravenden Springs, Ar.	5.00
Jimmie Phillips, Pawnee, Ok.	10.00
Mrs. Vivienne Garner, Calrsbad, NM	10.00
M/M Loren Fitzhugh, Crockett, Tx.	5.00
Avery Humphrey, Salem, Ar.	5.00
Anonymous	5.00
Anonymous	30.00
Anonymous	50.00

PSALMS ON YOUTH

by Bill McFarland

"Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way?" (Ps. 119:9). That question, posed by the psalmist so long ago, is still an especially practical one. It assumes that a young person will want to keep himself pure, but it also recognizes that the pressures of the world and the temptations of youth will make the way difficult.

The Psalm offers an answer: "By taking heed thereto according to thy word." A person who decides to live his life according to God's word will necessarily do some things that will tend to cleanse his way.

First, he will seek to be right with God. The psalmist said, "With my whole heart have I sought thee: Oh let me not wander from thy commandments" (Ps. 119:10). Having the heart set on God will help keep one on the path of purity.

Next, he will fill his mind with God's word. "Thy word have I laid up in my heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Ps. 119:11). A knowledge of the scriptures will guide a person in the right way.

Then, he will grow in his appreciation for God's ways. "I will meditate on thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways" (Ps. 119:15). The more one sees into the wisdom of the Lord's way, the less likely he is to drift away from it.

Finally, he will find such joy in spiritual things that the world will not appeal to him. "I will delight myself in thy statutes; I will not forget thy word" (Ps. 119:16). Doing God's will with delight will cleanse anyone's way.

A young person can keep his way clean by living according to God's word. It would be great for all of us to keep this in mind.

2148 National
Springfield, Mo.



The largest room in the world is the room for improvement.

If you would lift me up, you must be on higher ground.

When your knees are knocking – kneel and pray.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; I Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2,3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God's commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; I Corinthians 12:13).

GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

1. Hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (I Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

"YOU CAN HELP WITH POSTAGE"

MOVING?

Be sure to send us
your change of address



Mail all address changes to:
CHURCH OF CHRIST
P.O. BOX 251
MAMMOTH SPRING, AR, 72554