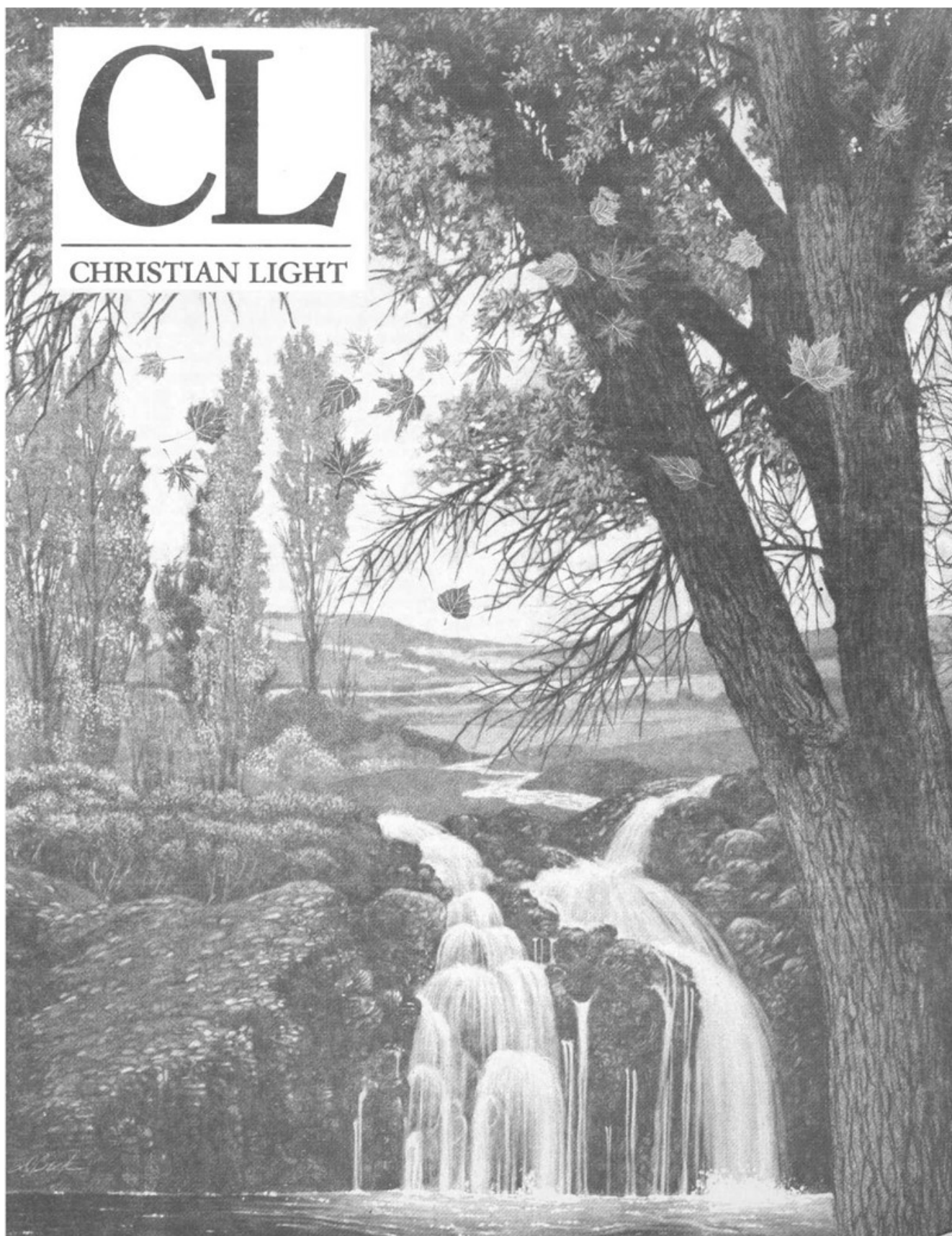


CL

CHRISTIAN LIGHT



McCord Changes Again

J. Noel Merideth

Hugo McCord has given us his new translation of the New Testament and takes “only begotten” out of his version in reference to Christ. In his articles he says the Greek word monogenes does not mean “only begotten.” McCord follows liberals like Dale Moody and argues that monogenetos is the word for “only begotten.” What McCord and others do not tell is that they cannot find the Greek word monogenetos in Greek literature. He is misleading the reading public by such a reckless assertion.

McCord in his new translation translates the Greek word monogenes when applied to Christ, as “unique.” He says he used to believe like the rest of us that it meant “only begotten” but that he changed his mind for “unique” when applied to Christ.

But hold on, McCord has changed his mind again! McCord has notified us that he has decided in the next edition of his new translation to translate the Greek word monogenes “beloved” when applied to Christ. And so all of those who followed McCord and changed from “only begotten” to “unique” must now change to “beloved.” How many more times is he going to change? You can forget all of your “unique” arguments if you are going to follow him; you must now change over to “beloved” arguments.

McCord has been making arguments about the etymology of the Greek word monogenes to try to prop up his position. But how is he going to make an argument from etymology to get “beloved” out of the etymology of monogenes?

The well-known scholar William Barclay makes reference to the King James translation of monogenes as “only-begotten” and admits that “it is true that that is what monogenes literally means.” Even though Charles Williams has “only” for monogenes in reference to Christ he says in the footnote that the Greek word literally means “only begotten.” It is a shame to see these men understanding the Greek word better than McCord.

One of the most scholarly productions of our time is the Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. In Volume IV, pages 737-741 we have the following comments on monogenes (“only begotten”): “In the NT monogenes occurs only in Lk., Jn. and Hb., not Mk., Mt. or Pl. It is thus found only in later writings. It means ‘only-begotten’...Only Jn. uses monogenes to describe the relation of Jesus to God...Jn. emphasizes more strongly the distinction between Jesus and believers and the uniqueness of Jesus in his divine sonship...it is only as the only- begotten Son of God that Jesus can mediate life and salvation from perdition. For life is given only in him.”

Forty-seven scholars who translated the King James version, thought monogenes meant “only begotten.” One hundred one scholars who translated the American Standard Version thought it meant “only begotten.” Bullinger and Bagster thought it meant “only begotten.” Bengel, Meyer and Hendrickson believed it meant “only begotten.” So also did Campbell, Lard, Milligan, McGarvey, Lipscomb, Hardeman, Wallace, Boles, Woods, Warren and a hundred others of eminence among us. But now McCord thinks he has found something new that none of these brethren could figure out. He thinks he has discovered a truth that none of our preachers who have gone before were able to figure out.

Actually, McCord has been influenced by the most liberal minds of our day. The Revised Standard Version was one of the first modern day, committee translations, to change from “only begotten” to “only.” That same version was the one that changed from “virgin” in Isaiah 7:14 to “young Woman”

and McCord goes with that too. Many of the men who translated the RSV were part of the New England liberal college establishment who were trying to turn the churches to modernism. Look at what they believed!

If you take the young people of our generation and get them to accept the arguments of the modernists and the definitions of the modernists it will not take many years to produce modernists. What our preachers and teachers need to be proclaiming is faith in Christ, the reliability of the Bible, and the trustworthiness of the Bible. When

Jesus was upon the earth he condemned the skeptics saying they did not know the Scriptures. The doubters had read Moses but did not believe in the Messiah. The practice today of proclaiming doubt and confusion over the Bible will simply produce more confusion.

Not only has McCord taken the word “only begotten” out of his version; he has also taken the word “church” out of his version. Will McCord and Gilmore be consistent on the removal of the word church from the Bible? Have they told the brethren where they worship that the word “church” should not be used. Will they not tell the brethren where they worship to take down the sign out in front of the building that has “church” in it and remove the word from the sign. If they remove it from the Bible, surely they can remove it from the signs in front of the buildings where they are. We would expect, for example, to see the church in Jackson take church off the sign!

THE FORUM

Questions And Answers From The Audience

The Fourth Forum sponsored by Freed-Hardeman College

Only Begotten, Translations, & Unity

with Robert Taylor, Hugo McCord, J. Noel Merideth, Ralph Gilmore

Included in the discussion:

McCord and Gilmore will deny that Jesus is the “only begotten”

Taylor and Merideth will affirm it

December 3, 1988

The "Image" Of Apostasy

Wayne Jackson

In June of 1985, a new magazine, appropriately dubbed, Image, made its debut among the churches of Christ. It is a slick, professionally produced journal out of West Monroe, Louisiana. The editor of Image is Reuel Lemmons, the elderly Texas maverick whose doctrinal looseness has become legendary over the past several years. The familiar names of its writing staff (e.g., Mayeux, Shelly, Olbricht, etc.) virtually reads like a “Who’s Who” of liberals within the church. Apparently, its aim is to reflect a new “image” of the kingdom of Christ to the religious community—and it is succeeding, but the image is one of apostasy rather than of truth.

A typical example is a recent article (February 1988) by Edward Fudge, entitled, “Musings on Faith and Baptism.” Fudge (perhaps best known for his heretical book, *The Fire That Consumes*, which denies that the wicked will suffer eternal punishment) raises this question: “Might one who has never been properly baptized still be regarded as a person justified through faith in Christ?” With a series of arguments, popularized by Baptist debaters across the years, he proceeds to answer the query affirmatively!

Fudge asks: "How may sinners be set right with a holy God?" He suggests that the answer is not to be sought in the book of Acts. Rather, one should look for the solution in the book of Romans. And it is this: "Solely by trusting Jesus, whom God has set forth as our Savior and atoning sacrifice, and in no other way." Compare this with Edward Hiscox's Standard Manual For Baptist Churches, which affirms that the "gift of eternal life...is bestowed... through faith in Christ" (page 62). In Fudge's view, those of the apostolic age who received baptism did so in order to "indicate [their] faith publicly" (a sort of outward sign of an inward grace, I assume). He declares that salvation is not the result of "anything we do, but the mighty work God did already in Jesus Christ" (pages 24, 25). No sectarian could have said it better!

Not unlike his denominational predecessors, Fudge, with a miscomprehension of Romans 4, argues that "Abraham was set right with God (declared righteous) before he did his great works of obedience and before he received the sign and seal of right standing (circumcision)." His conclusion then is that when one believes in Christ he "is set right with God" and so, "the believer comes to baptism today to receive a visible sign and seal of the righteousness which is inherent in genuine faith or trust in God."

Fudge is apparently oblivious to the fact that the apostle's argument in Romans 4 is that justification is not obtained by means of submission to the Law of Moses (of which circumcision was a prized part in the mind of the Jew). This was illustrated by the fact that Abraham was reckoned as righteous by God before his circumcision. What the author conveniently ignores is the fact that Paul stressed that even before his circumcision, Abraham was walking in the steps of faith! (Romans 4:12). His contention that James 2 (which affirms that Abraham "was justified by works") refers only the outward demonstration of the "professing believer," is negated by the fact that Rahab, a pagan woman, is likewise one of James' examples to illustrate the principle that faith is never reckoned for righteousness until it expresses itself in doing what God has required. In the case of baptism, it is a condition for the reception of forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16). It is quite significant that Fudge utterly avoided any responsible exegesis of these important passages.

Our brother also misapplied 1 Peter 3:21, claiming that Noah was righteous before the flood came, hence, the waters of the flood merely served to make a "visible distinction" between Noah's family and the wicked inhabitants of the ancient world. He presses the type beyond its scope, and misses the apostle's argument. Just as Noah was transferred from a world of wickedness by the waters of the flood, even so, baptism, "which doth also now save us," moves us from the sphere of sin into a new, cleansed environment, i.e., into Christ (Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:27).

The author states that in a meeting with several Baptist theologians, he made the suggestion that if the Baptists would continue to "preach Jesus," but also give more instruction on baptism, and if "Church of Christ evangelists" would cease overemphasizing baptism, and start preaching Christ, the two groups could have a much closer bond! Fudge also contends that somewhere in the conversion process, God "baptized [people] in the Holy Spirit."

For him, the conclusion of the matter is this. Baptism is not an indispensable condition for salvation. Those who are uninformed regarding this divine ordinance will nonetheless "bear visible fruit in ways consistent with their own knowledge." What he really means is that many will be saved in spite of their ignorance of God's redemptive plan.

That an article of this nature could find its way into a major, popular publication among churches of Christ is almost unbelievable. What does this say about Image, its editor, and those associated in this endeavor? Indeed, what does it say about the direction in which a large portion of our brotherhood seems to be drifting? Those who use and recommend Image should reconsider their policy immediately. Continued circulation of this type of material will do untold harm to the cause of Christ.

The Deity of Jesus In Psalms

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

Jesus both recognized and recorded the fact that the Psalms spoke of him. In one of his post-resurrection appearances he said to his dedicated disciples, "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me" (Luke 24:44).

The second psalm states, "The kings of the earth set themselves, and rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying..."(2:2). The Lord here is Jehovah; the Anointed is Christ. Messiah in Hebrew and Christ in Greek mean Anointed in English. Acts 4:26 establishes clearly the Messianic intent of Psalm 2:2. Psalm 2:7 states, "I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." Hebrews 1:5 refers to this very passage and adds further proof of its Messianic intent. The second psalm ends with this intensely interesting charge, "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him" (2:12). The Son is the Messiah or the same one contemplated in 2:7. To kiss refers to the homage, adoration and worship which is his rightful due. The anger refers to the displeasure of the Son if his Messianism is rejected. Such a rejection leads to perishing. His wrath will be kindled against all who reject him as redeemer and spurn him as savior. But blessed indeed will be those who place their trust in him as Deity and as Savior.

Israel's Sweet Singer writes so eloquently and excellently: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever, the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows" (45:6-7). Hebrews 1:8-9 make crystal clear that the Father (the First Person of the Godhead) was addressing the Son (the Second Person of the Godhead). The RSV greatly tampered with this Messianic prophecy by removing Christ's Deity from the passage and leaving him only with a Divine Throne. Even their own rendering of Hebrews 1:8-9 condemns their modernistic treatment of Psalm 45:6-7.

Christ as creator is clearly established in these words: "Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed: But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end (102:25-27). The writer of Hebrews 1:10-12 quotes this very passage and applies it to the Mighty Messiah. That Christ is creator is seen in such other great and precious passages as John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:15-17 and Revelation 3:14.

David in Psalm 110 establishes both the Deity of the Messiah as well as his high priesthood. In verse 1 he wrote, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." The two Lords respectively are Jehovah the Father and the one we know as Jesus, the Second Person of the Sacred Three. Jesus used this very effectively in a great and decisive argument for his Deity in Matthew 22:41-46. No infidel Jew in his audience could handle it then; no one has been able to handle it since. It is an "ungetoverable" argument touching his Deity. Relative to his priesthood David said, "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (110:4). Hebrews 5-10 in the New Testament in general as chapters and Hebrews 7:17 as a particular passage make crystal clear that David was speaking of our great high priest in Christianity—Jesus Christ.

Chinese Superstitions

M. H. Tucker

Among the older generation in Hong Kong, Chinese superstitions abound. While the majority of the young Chinese do not hold to the traditional Chinese beliefs, their respect for and subjection to parents leads them to comply with their parents' wishes. Consequently, the Christian sometimes is faced with a dilemma: To follow the traditions of parents or to follow God's word.

Aside from pursuing worldly success, the major aim of the Chinese is to maintain a "good relationship with the dead. Ancestor worship, the most common form of religion, springs from fear of and respect for the dead. The opinion of many is that it is more out of fear than respect. It is important to keep the spirits of his ancestors happy, lest they return to plague him.

The sending of money or gifts to the dead is common in Hong Kong, especially during the Ching Ming Festival. During this festival it is customary to visit the graves of ancestors and to send things to the dead. This is done by burning paper money, eating pork or smoking a cigar if the deceased were a cigar smoker.)

In virtually all Chinese households can be found the family altar which has a photograph of the deceased; and often a variety of deities will be placed on the altar. Offerings of incense, fruit and tea are regularly made.

Many Chinese shops and businesses have a small altar on display. How honorable the trade or profession does not determine this practice. While every police station in Hong Kong has a shrine, so do the vice dens and brothels.

The gods of the Chinese are considered neither all-powerful nor all-knowing. In fact, they can be bribed or fooled. The kitchen God may have his lips smeared with honey during the Chinese New Year. He will then go up to heaven and give a report on the family. The honey is to sweeten what he may say about everyone.

One of the many strange festivals in Hong Kong is the Hungry Ghost Festival, which lasts one month. When we see small fires on the sidewalks, we know that the Hungry Ghosts have been released from hell to wander the earth. The fires may be paper money (fake money), food and paper gifts, which will appease these spirits which belong neither to this world nor the next.

This brief description of Chinese superstitions accents the need of the gospel of Christ in Hong Kong and China.

"For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth; as there are gods many, and lords many, but to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things and we by him" (1 Corinthians 8:5-6). To make known this one God and the Lord Jesus Christ explains our presence in Hong Kong.

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

On The Elusiveness Of Sleep

Dan Harless

Some time ago a letter came from a dear friend, a former co-worker, who is slowly recuperating from a long and tiring illness. His letter begins, "It is two in the morning and hardly a time for playing kitten on the keys on the old Royal, but I took some pain medication earlier in the evening that sometimes induce drowsiness; this time I am as wide awake as a barn owl. I think God in his goodness gives us sleep to comfort sorrow, and yesterday brought it in a heavy dose. Now I need someone to

talk to when, as Scott Fitzgerald wrote, ‘In the dark of night of the soul it is always three o’clock in the morning.’”

The letter was read just prior to the reading of a book that meticulously outlined the horrors that will be visited upon this planet should full-scale nuclear warfare dissolve major cities, leaving utter desolation for its few survivors amid radio-active lands and seas. When at last the book was put aside, in the early morning, sleep had been routed by dire, racing thoughts.

The letter, as well as the book, brought to my wide-eyed state the yearning voiced by Macbeth for “sleep that knits up the ravell’d sleeve of care.” Sleeplessness, of course, is experienced by both the evil and the just. And far better at such times than Shakespeare’s measured lines are the reassuring words of courage and comfort found in God’s holy book.

“When thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid: yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet. Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh. For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken” (Proverbs 3:24-26).

Will History Repeat Itself?

James Wilford Nickens

One of the most widely read books of all time is *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Written in 1788 by Edward Gibbon, it sets forth five basic reasons why that great civilization withered and died. These were:

- The undermining of the dignity and sanctity of the home, which is the basis of human society.
- Higher and higher taxes; the spending of public money for free bread and circuses for the populace.
- The mad craze for pleasure; sports becoming more exciting, more brutal, more immoral every year.
- The building of great armaments when the real enemy was within—the decay of individual responsibility.
- The decay of religion; faith fading into mere form, losing touch with life, losing power to guide the people.

The oft-heard warning that “history repeats itself” has an ominous meaning in the light of the above.

IT DEPENDS ON YOU!

The average age of the world’s great civilizations has been 200 years. These nations progressed through this sequence: From bondage to spiritual faith; From spiritual faith to great courage; From courage to liberty; From liberty to abundance; From abundance to selfishness; From selfishness to complacency; From complacency to apathy; From apathy to dependence; From dependence back again to bondage. This cycle is not inevitable —it depends on you and your relationship with God.

The Revised Standard Version

B. C. Goodpasture

We have received numerous inquiries concerning the new version of the Bible. The most usual question is, What do you think of the new translation? It should be remembered that the Gospel Advocate carried a number of articles on the New Testament portion of the Revised Standard Version in 1946 when it first appeared. But some never saw those articles because many new subscribers have been added since then.

Frankly, we have not gone into ecstasies over this version. In the first place, we do not like the implication of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America that it, the successor to the Old Federal Council of Churches of Christ, has the right, per se, to issue an "official" Bible. To us the implications of this hierarchy, as such, are scarcely more acceptable than those of the Romish hierarchy. The publication of this version, sponsored by the National Council, will prove to be highly profitable to its sponsors. As a financial undertaking it will be highly successful; as a translation of the Bible, its merits are not impressive and its future is uncertain. Its present popularity is largely due to the tremendous amount of advertising that preceded its completion and publication.

In the second place, we do not like the modernism which is noticeable in the rendering of certain key passages. For example that classic Messianic prediction, Isaiah 7:14, is translated: "Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." In the Authorized and Revised Versions it reads: "Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Thus the Hebrew word *almah* translated "virgin" in the Authorized and Revised Versions is rendered "young woman" by the Revised Standard Version. A "young woman" is not necessarily a "virgin." If it be replied that when Isaiah 7:14 is quoted in Matthew 1:23 it reads, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel," this does not relieve the situation. If it be argued that the Septuagint Version translated *almah* by the Greek *parthenos* this does not help matters. If Matthew, by inspiration, used *parthenos* as the equivalent of *almah*, even in a quotation, then, the two words should be translated alike; that is by "virgin." The fact that the RSV translators rendered *almah* "young woman" in Isaiah 7:14 after they had translated its Greek equivalent, *parthenos*, "virgin" in Matthew 1:23 makes not only their inconsistency, but also their modernism, more glaring and blameworthy. Thus in effect they translated Isaiah 7:14 "young woman" after admitting that Matthew understood the prophet meant a "virgin."

Further, the RSV retains "thee," "thou," "thine" when Deity is addressed; but almost without exception uses "you" when Christ is spoken to. Note Matthew 16:16, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." In the light of the general attitude of the translators of the RSV, it looks as if this was an effort to write down the stature of Jesus to that of a mere man.

Finally, we do not like the loose rendering of some verses, which are scarcely more than a paraphrase. The RSV purports to be a version rather than a commentary. Nor do we like the omission of italics to indicate words for which there is no equivalent in the original. The disposition to strike such verses from the text as Mark 16:9-20 is certainly highhanded.

It is rather unfair to urge, as some have done, in advertising the RSV that there are certain words and expressions in the Authorized Version which are archaic and obsolete, as if these had not been taken care of in the Revised Version (American Standard Version) which are archaic and obsolete. In 2 Corinthians 8:1, for example, Paul says, "Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia." The expression, "We do you to wit" is scarcely intelligible to the average reader of today. Three hundred fifty years ago it meant "We make known to you." The Revised Version (ASV) so renders it.

No, we are not ready to discard the Authorized and Revised Versions (ASV). The RSV is interesting to have and read in comparative study; but many of its renderings are unhappy, some misleading, and others downright inaccurate, even if it does provide smooth and easy reading.

The Genuineness Of Mark 16:9-20

Guy N. Woods

Q: I am disturbed to learn that some now are saying that Mark 16:9-20 is not part of Mark's

biography of our Lord and ought to be omitted. Why?

A: This by no means is a recent allegation. Denominational theologians, unable to avoid the obvious conclusion that is drawn from Mark 16:15-16 regarding the design of baptism in God's plan to save, sought refuge in unbelief, alleging that Mark 16:9-20 is spurious, and thus is not a part of Mark's original inspired production.

Current controversy about modern versions of the New Testament, some of which either omit the passage or deny its genuineness, has prompted a renewal of the allegation in our day.

Reasons for rejecting the passage result from the fact that two of the oldest manuscripts of the New Testament—the Sinaitic and the Vatican—omit it. Copies derived from these sources, some of which still are in existence, are without the passage. Some ancient writers either opposed the teaching in the verses or denied their reliability. This is the sum of the evidence against the Markian authorship.

It should be observed that when it is said, "two of the oldest manuscripts of the New Testament omit it," this is far from being the same as saying the oldest copies of the New Testament are without it. These manuscripts are documents containing the text of the New Testament in Greek. The versions are translations into the languages then in current use. The Old Syriac translation appeared and was in use in the shadow of the apostolic age—within the lifetime of many early Christians who could and did know John the apostle personally. Mark 16:9-20 is in this translation. It also appears in the Ethiopic, Egyptian, Old Italic, Sahidic and Coptic translations appearing soon after the end of the first century, all much older than the two Greek manuscripts omitting it, evidencing the fact that the manuscript or manuscripts from which they were made all contained the segment. Two hundred years before the Vatican and Sinaitic manuscripts were copied, it was in the Scriptures then being used.

Irenaeus, an early "church father" often is said to be the most scholarly writer among the Christians in the century after the age of the apostles. A student of Polycarp, who was a close associate of the apostle John, Irenaeus quotes the passage thus demonstrating the fact that it was in the text used in the decades immediately after the death of the last of the apostles.

In the same century Tatian cites it, and the passage appears in more than 500 ancient Greek manuscripts and in works by dozens of Latin and Gothic writers of the day. Hippolytus, a student of Irenaeus and elder in a congregation in Rome in the early portion of the third century, quotes a portion of the passage, thus demonstrating it was in his Bible.

Any documentary evidence against the genuineness of Mark 16:9-20—is greatly weakened by the fact that an abrupt break in the text of the Sinaitic at the eighth verse evidences clearly that additional material once was attached, and its absence from the text reasonably may be accounted for by the loss from the final section.

The Vatican document, for the same reason, terminates at Hebrews 9:14, thus omitting the remaining portion of that treatise, and the remainder of the New Testament. Are we to conclude from this that these books left out never were part of the original text? The argument against Mark 16:9-20 is no more weighty.

Moreover, a little known fact is that included in the Sinaitic manuscript are apocryphal books with portions of Tobit, Ecclesiasticus and other non-canonical writings. If the omission of Mark 16:9-20 from this document proves the passage to be spurious, does the inclusion of these apocryphal portions establish their reliability?

J. W. McGarvey said in his Commentary on Matthew and Mark, "Our final conclusion is, that the passage in question is authentic in all of its details, and there is no reason to doubt that it was written by the same hand which indicted the preceding parts of the narrative. The objections which have been raised against it are better calculated to shake our confidence in Biblical Criticism than in the genuineness of this inestimable portion of the word of God."

The best and most conservative scholars through the ages have accepted the authenticity of Mark 16:9-20. Infidels, despisers of truth, and rationalistic “scholars” reject it. Each must decide into which camp his views lead. M

Advice To Elders

G. K. Wallace

[Editor’s Note: Brother Wallace was one of my beloved teachers at Freed-Hardeman College. We extend our sympathy to his family in his passing. We bid farewell in this life to this great soldier of Christ. He will be greatly missed]

The feeding of God’s sheep is a high and holy task. Paul said to the elders of the church at Ephesus, “Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops, to feed the church of the Lord which he purchased with his own blood.” Most of the feeding of the flock today is done by someone who has been appointed by the overseers of the church to carry out the wishes of the bishops of the congregation. Paul does not require that an elder personally feed all the flock, but the elder is required to see that proper food is provided and is to guard against grievous wolves entering “in among you, not sparing the flock” (Acts 20:29).

Peter exhorted the elders by saying, “Tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint, but willingly, according to the will of God; nor yet for filthy lucre, but a ready mind; neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves an ensample to the flock” (1 Peter 5:2, 3).

These passages, as well as others, indicate that tender consideration must be given to the flock as they are being led. Paul says in Romans 14:1, “Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, yet not for decision of scruples.” The elders should have great care for the weaker brethren and shape their action with a constant reference to them. It might be lawful for a strong Christian to do certain things if he thinks only of himself, but he will not do one of them because he wishes to act expediently and would not grieve his brother or cause him to stumble (cf. 1 Corinthians 8:13). Every manner of an elder of a church should be one of tenderness. Even a truly kind act may be so performed as to cause much grief. No one would dare throw a penny at a beggar because this would hurt him while relieving him. It is true that many people are morbidly sensitive and this is a severe wrong on their part. However, when Christians are aware of their feelings, they must be more careful lest they cause them needless pain. Signs are stationed all over the hospitals asking visitors to walk softly and to talk quietly. We do not censure the sick for this, but we pity them and tread softly. Why should not we do the same for sensitive souls?

Elders should be careful to see that their preachers do not overdrive the flock of God. Jacob said to Esau, “My lord knoweth that the children are tender, and the flocks and the herds with me have their young: and if they overdrive them one day, all the flock will die. Let my lord, I pray thee, pass over before his servant: and I will lead gently, according to the pace of the cattle that are before me and according to the pace of the children” (Genesis 33:13-14). Reviewing the record of Jacob and Esau, you see that Jacob was unable to keep pace with Esau and therefore, asked to let him come behind that he might look after the children who were young and tender and the flocks and herds with the young among them. Jacob displayed a very tender consideration for the young and feeble. Sometimes leaders of the church, especially preachers, forget that the young and feeble are unable to keep pace with them, and that they need earnest and prayerful consideration. It is easy for the preacher to puzzle the sheep with deep and controversial points of doctrine, and to sneer and laugh at brethren when they are not quite correct in their answers. It is easy for preachers and elders to set up standards of

experience and frown because others have not felt the same joys and sorrows which are known to them. Man who have spent their lives in preaching may set up such a high degree of faith, courage, and patience, and other graces which, in the case of the very young, are but tender buds. Preachers may overdrive their congregation by constantly threatening and brow-beating and never consoling nor comforting the congregation. Sometimes it is easy to manifest a spirit of suspicion, harshness, and contempt for weaker brethren. The young sheep may be overdriven by dwelling upon the temptations and trials and the woes of life. Where little is said about the joys and the blessings of Christianity, it would be good to re-study the attitude of Jacob toward the children and the young in the flock and imitate his tender thoughtfulness.

Jesus was a perfect example of dealing with the weak. In John 16:12 he said, "I have yet many things to say unto you,, but ye cannot bear them now." Jacob said, "I will lead on gently." Someone has well said, "We are not driven by Jehu, but led by Jesus." The song says, "Lead me gently home lead me gently, Father, lest I fall upon the wayside, lead me gently home."

Charles Holt And The Lord's Church

Ben F. Vick, Jr.

Charles Holt, a brother in Christ who thirty years ago opposed the church's supporting orphan homes, continues his attack on institutions. He is now opposing another of God's institutions, the church. He does not believe the church exists, either in the local or the universal sense.

Brother Holt bases his view on the idea that the word "church" is mistranslated from the Greek word ekklesia. He tells us, "The English word 'church' has two primary or major meanings in today's usage: (1) a building called a 'church,' and (2) a religious institution or corporate body like Southside Baptist Church or Forest Hills Church of Christ" (The Examiner, Vol. 3, No. 3, p.2.).

Out of the ten different definitions found in the dictionary for the word "church," it is strange that Holt determined that the word "church" has only two major meanings. Evidently, he should have been asked to help with the production of the latest unabridged dictionary. I do not see how some overlooked his scholarship in lexical study.

There are scriptural definitions found in English dictionaries for the word "church" which are equivalent to the Greek word ekklesia. Note the following parallel:

Church	ekklesia
WEBSTER	THAYER
1. "The organized body of Christians in any particular district, city state, or country as the church at Ephesus."	1. "a company of Christians...who gathered for worship, anywhere, in a city or village constitute such a company and are united into one body."
2. "Any group of worshipers."	2. "An assembly of Christians"

Is it not also strange that the 47 translators of the KJV, and 101 of the ASV, and even many of the modern versions translate the word ekklesia as "church", but Holt knows better? I suppose wisdom shall die with Holt.

Yet, we are told by brother Holt that Alexander Campbell did not believe in the church. Though Campbell preferred the word "congregation" to "church," he did not refrain from speaking of "the church" and even "the church of Christ." It does not really matter in one sense what Campbell

believed; but what counts is what the Bible teaches. Campbell certainly did not hold to Holt's idea of there being no local nor universal church. Campbell was even a member of a local congregation. Do you suppose Holt has his membership with some group of baptized believers? If so, which congregation? It may be that he does not serve with a congregation and under the oversight of an eldership because none would have him.

Charles Holt opposes the church as a religious institution. He tells us that Christ is "not the head not the Saviour of a building: He is not the Head of a corporate structure or organization...He did not establish a material building called a 'church,' nor a legal entity, a religious corporation called a 'church.'"

We grant that Jesus did not establish a material building, nor is he the head of a literal building. But he is "the chief cornerstone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord" (Ephesians 2:20-21). That building is no more a literal and material building than the chief cornerstone is literal and material stone. Peter says we are lively stones, a spiritual house (1 Peter 2:5).

A religious corporation is simply a religious body. Look up the definition for "corporation." It means "a body." Jesus Christ is the head of the body, or corporation, if you please (Ephesians 1:22-23). To say otherwise is to deny the New Testament.

If the fact that a congregation incorporates makes it sinful, then Holt's Truth and Freedom Ministry is a religious corporation, a legal entity under the law, just as the church is a religious corporation and a legal entity. So, down goes Holt's argument, world without end, against the church, based upon the fact that it is a corporation, a legal entity. The church, just as is every individual Christian, is obligated to obey the higher powers, the government. (Romans 13:1-2). So, what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander,

Holt is not only off on the "church" question, but he does not believe members are obligated to obey the elders, even though the Bible clearly says to obey them that have the rule over you (Hebrews 13:17). He does not believe we ought to lay by in store on the first day of the week into the local treasury (1 Corinthians 16:1-2), but he would be "pleased as punch" if you would make a tax-deductible contribution to his Truth and Freedom Ministry, Inc. He does not believe that preachers should be paid for their services rendered; yet, Paul said, "If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?" (1 Corinthians 9:11). Holt supposedly does not believe in "the church," per se; but he surely has no objections to meeting with churches or members of the church if they should accept his invitation into their area or home.

In Holt's paper, *The Examiner* (Vol. 3, No. 3), Dalton Porter, evidently of the same stripe as Holt, wrote, "Jesus did not instruct his disciples to organize a church. Perhaps, that should be enough said, case closed." No, Dalton, it is the defense's turn to cross examine. Paul commanded Titus "to set in order the things that are wanting..." (Titus 1:5). To set in order means "to straighten further, i.e., (fig.) arrange additionally." To the Corinthians Paul wrote, "Let all things be done decently and in order." Vine says "order" means "of due order in contrast to confusion, in the gatherings of a local church" (1 Corinthians 14:40). That sounds like Paul was instructing the early church in organization. Are Porter and Holt advocates of confusion? They certainly are. The doctrine of no local nor universal church is not only confusing and wrong; but it is contrary to scriptural, lexical, and historical proof.

Can We Fall From Grace?

Vera Benefield

In discussions with various people regarding living a Christian life, I have sometimes encountered

the belief that one cannot fall from grace. They apparently sincerely believe one who publicly sins after professing Christianity was never really saved in the first place. They just thought they were saved.

While these people are conscientious and honest, they are mistaken. Numerous passages in the Scriptures refute this premise and definitely prove it to be erroneous.

As we study God's word, we need to keep in mind the people addressed and who is doing the speaking. Notice the following references addressed to Christians.

Peter, an apostle, speaking to Christians, calls them the elect through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. He said, "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour; Whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world" (1 Peter 5:8-9). Why would Peter caution them if there were no danger of apostasy?

The writer of the book of Hebrews is writing to Hebrew Christians. He writes, "Now the just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him" (Hebrews 3:12-14).

While admonishing them to follow peace with all men and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord, he said, "Looking diligently lest any man fail (or fall from) the grace of God" (Hebrews 12:15).

Teaching the parable of the sower, Jesus said, "They on the rock are they, which when they hear, receive the word with Joy, and these have no root, which for a while believe and in time of temptation fall away" (Luke 8:13).

Paul writes to the saints at Rome that we must not put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in a brother's way. This teaching would be superfluous if it were impossible to stumble (Romans 14:13).

To the church of God at Corinth, his exhortation is "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Corinthians 10:11-12).

The brethren at Galatia were told "Christ is become of none effect unto you whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace" (Galatians 5:4).

In the qualifications of elders, Paul writes, "Not a novice (one newly come to the faith) lest being lifted up with pride he fall into condemnation of the devil" (1 Timothy 3:6-7). This line of instructions to our elders is not needful if one cannot fall!

Those who will be rich fall into temptation and a snare and into many foolish lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition (1 Timothy 6:9). This was also written to Christians.

There are many other references like those given above. In view of these Scriptures, we should consider our way of life carefully. Paul said he buffeted his body daily lest after he had preached to others he himself should be a castaway (1 Corinthians 9:27).

We can indeed fall from grace. It behooves each of us to be constantly alert and dedicated in order that we may prove steadfast and receive a home in heaven which is promised to faithful Christians

Hebrews 10:31 tells us that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of a living God. He will take retribution against those who will not listen to him and obey.

A beautiful part of God's plan is that when and if we do sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. Our Father is a loving Father and provides a way whereby we can be reinstated when we fall. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9; cf. Acts 8:22).

While none of us can always be completely perfect, we can pray for forgiveness when we stray, get back into covenant relationship with God and strive for perfection.

The Soul Winner's Divine Assurances

Wendell Winkler

"I drove up in front of the house, but could not get out"; "I started to the house three times before I ever made it." All of us have heard these statements, or similar ones, as uttered by a sincere and well-meaning brother in Christ as he related his initial fears and actions as he went out as a soul-winner for Jesus. Indeed, fear is one of the greatest hindrances to soul-winning in the church today. However, a realistic trust in the soul-winner's divine assurances will replace fear with faith, hesitancy with urgent willingness, and shyness with courage. What are the soul-winner's divine assurances?

"MY FATHER IS WITH ME"

Do you remember when you were a child and your father gave you some chore to perform at dusky dark? With the blackness of night so near, you perhaps replied, "Dad, but I'm afraid to do that now. It's getting dark." And, then, your Father would tenderly reply and say, "Well son, I'll go with you." And, this made all the difference in the world! In like manner, the assurance that our Father is with us in winning souls to Christ will make all the difference in the world. Did not Christ give the commission to go and teach, promising "And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20). Mark tells us that the apostles "went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them" (Mark 16:20). Upon completing the first missionary tour, Paul and his companions gathered the church together and "rehearsed all that God had done with them" (Acts 14:27; 15:4). Yes, God was with them! Then, we read how the Lord assured Paul while he was preaching in Corinth, "be not afraid, but speak and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to harm thee: for I have much people in this city" (Acts 18:9-10).

"WE SHALL REAP"

I have talked to farmers who planted their cotton seed in the spring, but never took a sack into the field in the fall. They planted in vain. But, not so in sowing the seed of the kingdom! We are assured, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with joy, bringing his sheaves with him" (Psalm 126:5-6). Too, we are promised "For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, and giveth seed to the sower and bread to the eater: so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isaiah 55:10-11). And, Paul assures us, "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58).

"WE WILL BE REWARDED"

We serve a God who rewards (Hebrews 11:6). And in Proverbs 11:18 we read, "To him that soweth righteousness shall be a sure reward." And, Daniel tells us, "And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars forever and ever" (Daniel 12:3). In the parable of the talents the lord said to each of the two faithful servants, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21).

CONCLUSION

What will help me to overcome my fear to knock on doors, to teach cottage Bible classes, to engage in visitation programs? What will help me to do a better job in all of these areas of activity? Trust realistically in the soul-winner's divine assurances: (1) "My Father is with me"; (2) "We shall reap"; (3) and "We will be rewarded."