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CHRISTIANS vs. CHRISTMAS

By BERNELL WEEMS

Rome never flung a tighter "Do as Rome does" lasso around the religious necks of modern day Christians than that of Christmas. The question is more and more being asked by followers of Christ, "To what extent can Christians celebrate Christmas?" It is the purpose of this article to set forth plain, positive teaching upon the topic, realizing it is not a popular subject to discuss. We ask your careful and prayerful consideration of the following.

First, can Christians celebrate Christmas as a religious holiday? In considering the soundness and purity of anything, its origin and promoters must be carefully investigated. The mother of Christmas festivities on Dec. 25 was pagan Rome with Julian I, Bishop of Rome from 337 to 352 A.D., as head doctor. Standard Encyclopedia is my witness for the above facts. Thus Christmas was born of heathen parentage. The child was well nurtured and cared for by the Roman Catholic Church, and is still a highlight of their crowded religious year, being called High Mass or Mass of Christ from whence the term Christ-Mass originated. It is now the time of year when great preparation is being made for this annual feast. Stores are stocked to capacity, many commercializing under the banner of Christ-Mass, and the unsuspecting public rushes on to make this time of year a huge success, thus enabling Rome to attach her heathen festivals more securely to the "Land of the free and home of the brave."

It is surprising how many Christians will twist their reasoning trying to justify themselves just because they have always celebrated Christmas, or because father and mother did, or because the children would be disappointed if Santa Claus didn't come. Those points have been worn out by every condoner of wrong for centuries. When our religious opponents use those same objections, in principle, against the Bible plan of salvation, we rightfully say they don't answer the argument. Now, what enables these same objections to justify Christmas, a Roman Catholic feast?

Christmas did not have a Bible origin! Nowhere in the Divine Record is the day of Christ's birth even hinted at, as to exact date. Don't you think if God had wanted Christ's birthday honored by all these festivities, He would have specified the date? The date was supplied by the Bishop of Rome

and not the God of Heaven. What a difference! The holiday is wrong in origin and corrupt in practice. God wanted Christ's death honored and specified the time (Acts 20: 7). The Bishop wanted Christ's birth honored and specified the time, Dec. 25. Every time a man commemorates Christ's death in a Scriptural way, he lends influence to the will of God and shows reverence for His commands. It is equally as true that every time a man elevates the 25th of December in celebration, as the Bishop supplied the date, he lends influence to the dictates of the unholy See of Rome. If not, why not? You can't eat fruit from a tree without in some way recognizing the tree that has borne it. The tree that has borne the heathen feasts is corrupt and cannot bring forth good fruit. It may possess a charming appearance, but it is decayed from the inside out.

How many professed Christians there are who spend more time, effort and money in observing a day of pagan origin, than they utilize the entire year in memory of that sacred ordinance our Savior instituted to be observed upon the first day of the week. Yet they have the audacity to call themselves Christians. Thousands walk miles, on at least two Roman feast days, even to the top of rugged mountains, arriving as early as sunrise on cold mornings; and these same people living only a few blocks from a warm church building where Christians worship, never attend a service until next year or if they do they are nearly always late. Is this nation a Christian nation? Or a Roman-inspired nation? Sometimes I wonder. Catholicism is out to capture this nation and the well-wrapped Christmas package is the most effective gift so far used.

Someone says, "I don't celebrate Christmas as a religious holiday, I just observe it nationally." Now please don't assume the term "Narrowminded" as the answer to the following statements, for we may close our eyes and not see, or stop our ears and not understand, but Truth still prevails. Why is Christmas a legal holiday? You know every holiday must have an underlying principle. It is *not* Christmas because it is a legal holiday, but is a legal holiday *because* it is Christmas. Think that through. It did not *originate* in this country! It was *declared* a legal holiday *because* of a principle *already existing*. The same principle per-

meates Christmas now, that originated it in the days of Bishop Julius. If it was not declared a legal holiday because of the Roman Catholics of America, and their strict adherence to it, why was it? There *must* be a reason. The truth is that most of those things we try to *disguise* under the cloak of "Legal holiday" far pre-date this country's discovery in 1492. And the promulgation of them now is just another mile *farther* from Jerusalem, and another crossroad *nearer* Rome.

Mark this down. If the "Mother of harlots" had not given birth to this child, there would be no such day as Christmas as far as we can ascertain from the pages of history. It was tragic enough when this country made this foreign, now full-grown man a naturalized citizen, but it will be far worse if Christians don't break company with this Roman immigrant.

I'm conscious of the objection some will use, "Didn't Paul keep the feast of the Passover at Jerusalem?" They further say, "I know he didn't do it religiously but nationally, and that is the way I celebrate Christmas." Do you really think Christmas and the Passover are parallel? Then why use the comparison? The Passover was originated by God for a religious, as well as national observance, by the Jews. Since Paul was a Jew, and since the national part was unchanged by Christ's death, Paul had that privilege. How different with Christmas! Not only did God not originate it, but one of the Church's worst arch-enemies fostered it, the beast itself. If the Book had even hinted at such a feast as Christmas, then your reasoning would be better.

Now, let's look at a parallel. Even in Paul's day there were multiplied feasts within the Roman empire that were observed as a nation, therefore national; although, like Christmas, they had heathen origin. Why didn't Paul observe them? Oh yes, he was a "Free born" Roman and had a national right to do so—if you disregard all underlying principles. Before you attempt to justify a national holiday (?) which is based on unsound principles, answer why Paul didn't celebrate his own country's holidays. Read the history of some of these feasts and their principles, and you'll readily see. Paul could have said, "I'll do this because I like to and if anyone objects I'll just say, 'Well, it's a national holiday, isn't it? I'm a Roman, am I not?'" Can you imagine Paul doing that? But that is the depth of most modern reasoning.

It is such a general tendency to look for—
(Continued on page 6)

THE SONGS WE SING

By ROY HARRIS

Back in 1887, a magazine took a poll of its readers relative to their favorite hymns. *Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me*, was given first place. The popular story of its beginning is that one day the author was caught in a shower and found refuge in the cleft of a rock near Somerset, England. This experience is supposed to have furnished the incentive for the hymn. Whether that particular incident was true or not, there was a rocky crag, about eighty feet high, near where this man lived. It must have been often in his view. This probably brought to his mind such Scriptures as: "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." (Prov. 18: 10).

The hymn was written by Augustus M. Toplady. It was at a time when he was in a religious controversy with John Wesley, with whom he differed in religious opinions. The hymn was thought to be a kind of metrical protest, though what the dispute was about I do not know. Two reasons are sometimes given for the long life and enduring favor the hymn has enjoyed; its lyric beauty, and religious fervor. Just when it was written I am not sure, but am informed that it made its first appearance in print in March, 1776, as the concluding lines of a magazine article by Toplady.

A great stress is placed in this hymn upon man's dependence upon God, as the only source of help. Perhaps it would be incorrect to think that the writer was ignoring the necessity of man's obedience. At any rate, regardless of the author's viewpoint, it is what it means to us that counts. Consider the second verse:

Not the labor of my hands
Can fulfil Thy law's demands;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears forever flow,
All for sin could not atone;
Thou must save, and thou alone.

Is it not true that man cannot work his way to heaven, separate and apart from Christ, and His atoning blood? "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. 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: 11, 12). There are works of obedience which we must perform today; but man did no works of merit by which he obtained the plan of salvation. I think it well for us to give a little time now and then in the public assembly to a specific consideration of the songs we sing. We might appreciate them more and also better understand the scriptural position concerning them.

Sometimes people want to live outside the "Rock of Ages" and then enjoy its protection when they die. I am afraid all such will be disappointed. We must "run into" this "strong tower" and remain there if we want it to be our refuge.

While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eyelids close in death,
When I soar to worlds unknown,
See thee on thy judgment throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in thee.

by the daughters-in-law, who have already made preparations to go with her to Judah.

Going isn't easy when heart-strings are pulling in two directions, so I'm sure they all moved slowly across the plains of Moab. No doubt they were nearing the border when Naomi asked the girls to return to their mothers' homes, with the prayer that God might deal with them as kindly as they had dealt with her sons and her, and that He would again bless both with companions. But the weeping girls could only reply, "Surely we will return with thee unto thy people." That farewell conversation reveals the unselfish, mutual love of these three women—so different in age, nationality and religion, yet drawn together by a common interest, which had taught them to deal kindly and considerately with each other.

Touched, but not weakened by their devotion, Naomi pictured a lonely future for them if they went on with her. At last Orpah tearfully kissed Naomi and turned homeward, but Ruth clave unto her. As a last reason Naomi reminded Ruth that her sister-in-law had gone back to her people and her gods, and advised her to do likewise. Ruth's appealing answer came in an unconscious poetry of affection which has been forever consecrated by all who appreciate tenderness and beauty in language: "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me; and more also, if aught but death part thee from me." No human confession of love has ever surpassed those simple words. But it was more than a confession of love for a good mother. It was a confession of faith, and the declaration of a strong woman's choice, which Naomi accepted in respectful silence.

In the beginning of barley harvest, the people of Bethlehem had something interesting to talk about. Naomi had returned, bringing with her a Moabitish girl who had been the wife of Mahlon. Debts had accumulated, and their first days were sad ones, but Ruth was not disposed to be a burden, so she asked and received permission to glean after the reapers, which was a common practice because it was God's own system of "relief" for the poor and stranger, and Ruth qualified on both counts!

Fortunately, and providentially, the field where she went to glean belonged to Boaz, a wealthy man, who was also just, generous and religious. When he came to the field to talk with his workers, he was at once attracted by the young stranger. After learning Ruth's identity, he graciously invited her to follow his reapers through the entire harvest, and to share the refreshments of his own maidens, protected by his personal command to the young men. Surprised by such kindness from a stranger, Ruth asked for an explanation. Boaz told her that he

THE REWARD OF A RIGHTEOUS CHOICE

By BESSIE McCLAFLIN

In the Egyptian Book of the Dead, venerable 3000 years before Christ, there is an interesting conception of the last judgment. Osiris the judge, with 42 grim assistants, listened attentively while the soul declared he had not murdered, stolen, coveted, blasphemed the gods, borne false witness or ill-treated his parents. During this recitation, his heart was being weighed in balances over against a feather, the symbol of truth. If the heart was found not light, Osiris welcomed the soul to a blissful immortality where harvests never failed, trees were always green, and wives remained forever young and fair. ☉

Somewhat, I always recall this fragment of ancient history when I read the book of Ruth, that exquisite bit of romance and love which follows the blood-stained stories of Judges. Measured by pagan or Christian standards, the character of Ruth seems to

merit immortality, and she will remain forever young and fair as long as men shall respect confidence, devotion and purity in womanhood.

It was famine that caused Elimelech to take his wife Naomi and their two sons from their home in Judah into the land of Moab, where he was later claimed by death. Naomi must have grieved anew when her sons, Mahlon and Chilion, were married to Orpah and Ruth, girls of that heathen land. We have no details of their weddings, nor of their united lives, but we are told that after dwelling there some ten years, both young husbands died.

"Home" is always the first desire of an aching heart, so, having heard that food has again blest her people in Bethlehem, Naomi decided to leave the land where she had known so much sorrow. We can imagine her last visit to the three graves, accompanied

had heard of her loyalty to Naomi in leaving her own home ties, therefore he prayerfully desired for her a full reward from the God of Israel under whose wings she had come to trust. I think there were tears in Ruth's eyes as she modestly expressed appreciation for this sincere tribute from a noble man. And I'm sure neither of them ever forget that first meal together, where Boaz sat with his servants in parental equality, "and she sat beside the reapers; and he reached her parched corn, and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left," and the thread of romance led on toward its happy termination.

Ruth went home with her portion of barley, unaware that part of it had been dropped purposely, as Boaz had commanded. After hearing the events of the day and the name of their benefactor, Naomi recognized Boaz as a near kinsman of the family, bound by the law of Moses and the custom of the land to become the husband and protector of the daughter-in-law.

The manner in which Naomi directed the obedient daughter to claim that right must not be judged by our modern ideas of propriety. She was instructed to seek the threshing floor at night, lie down at his feet as he slept, and draw over her his mantle, thus, in the symbolic language of the times, asserting her humble claim to a wife's protection. Ruth saw no evil in what was purely and rightly intended. It was enough for her, a stranger, to understand that her mother, an honored Judean matron, would command nothing that was not considered decorous and proper among her people. She obeyed without question, and her action was received in the same spirit of sacred simplicity it had been offered. The dignity, chivalry and ideals of Boaz are apparent in the conversation which preceded their engagement—"And he said, Blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter: for thou has shewed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as thou followedst not young men whether poor or rich. And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirdest: for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman." But Boaz knew something Naomi did not. Very gently he told Ruth of a nearer kinsman who was entitled to first claim unless he refused the obligation, in which case Boaz could and would fulfill the pledge just made. With characteristic thoughtfulness he requested her to rest there until morning, at which time he gave her some barley to take home to Naomi, and requested secrecy concerning her visit—a visit which could have been misinterpreted.

Ruth returned to the waiting mother and told her everything that had occurred. Naomi advised her to wait patiently for the outcome, assuring her that Boaz would have everything settled before night. As she predicted, Boaz did not rest until he had contacted the other kinsman in the presence of proper witnesses. This man was willing to

redeem the lands of his deceased relatives until he learned that a wife was included in the transaction. Since that phase might complicate his own inheritance, he relinquished his right in favor of the willing Boaz, and confirmed the change by the customary testimony of taking off a shoe and giving it to a witness. So, the lovable gleaner, Ruth of Moab, became the wife of the noble landowner, Boaz of Bethlehem, with the universal consent and blessing of all the people.

Time passed. . . . Then one day a new happiness came to the home of the one-time stranger. Ruth held in her arms a son, who was named Obed by the rejoicing neighbors, and tenderly cared for by the faithful Naomi. Years went by . . . and another child was

born in the village of Bethlehem. He became a shepherd, with sunshine tangled in his hair, a beautiful countenance, and countless songs in his heart. And he so sang, and battled, and sinned and repented that every body loved him—and we still thank God for David, who was Ruth's great-grandson.

Many more years went by. . . . Then one night there was a burst of light upon those same Judean hills—with music by a choir that came from that country where everybody sings. Shepherds who were watching their flocks heard the angelic announcement, "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." And that Saviour was another descendant of the Ruth who promised her mother-in-law, "Thy people shall be my people."

"OBEY AND SUBMIT"

By W. G. ROBERTS

We wish to carefully examine the passage which says to "Obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves." Webster tells us that "*obey*" means, (1) "To give ear to; comply with the order of. (2) To submit to the authority of. (3) To yield to the impulse, power or operation of; v. t., to yield obedience." Perhaps few of our readers know much about Greek, but all know something about English, so I first give what Webster says. Note that he defines "*obey*" in this fashion, "to comply with the order" and "to submit to authority."

Let us now notice the word "*rule*." Among many other definitions in regard to "prescribed guide for conduct," etc., he comes to "conduct, behavior" and says, "Act of ruling; administration of law, authority," and a number of other definitions showing that in *ruling* there is *authority* used and the "*ruled*" should be *submissive*.

Now to the word "*submit*." Webster says it means "To yield to power, will or authority. To commit to the discretion or judgment of authority." Thus in all three words "*obey*," "*rule*," and "*submit*" we find authority is used. The elders are put in authority insofar as using discipline, etc., is concerned. The Book teaches that Christ is THE authority, of course, but the elders being under Him, must use His law and "reprove and rebuke with all authority" as the evangelist is told to do (Titus 2: 15).

I think no one will say that the evangelist has *more* authority given unto him than the elders have given unto them. Evangelists are supposed to be under the eldership instead of being *over* the elders.

It has been argued by someone that the Greek word *peitho* means, "To persuade; to make friends, win one's favor," and that there is no idea of authority in the word, and that this is the Greek word for "*obey*" in Hebrews 13: 17. I hardly think that Thayer and Webster contradict each other

at this point. Let us see! The Greek word means, "Persuasive power, persuasion: 1 Cor. 2: 4. (1) *Active*, to persuade; to cause belief in a thing, Acts 19: 8. Class. Gr., to make friends of, win one's favor, gain one's good will, Acts 12: 20; or to seek to win one, strive to please one, 2 Cor. 5: 11; Gal. 1: 10; to conciliate, Matt. 28: 14; to tranquillize, 1 John 3: 19; to persuade unto, i. e., move or induce by persuasion to do something, Acts 13: 43; 26: 28. To be persuaded, to suffer one's self to be persuaded; to be induced to believe, Luke 16: 31; Acts 17: 4; to have faith, Heb. 11: 13; to be persuaded a thing concerning a person, Heb. 6: 9; To listen to, obey, YIELD TO, COMPLY WITH, Heb. 13: 17; James 3: 6."

I emphasized the words *yield* and *comply* with myself for they imply authority we should submit to. Thayer does not give such words as "*yield*" or "*comply with*" until he comes to Hebrews 13: 17. The words are in Hebrews 13: 17, but are not given as being in the other passages Thayer cites. So there is authority to be obeyed in Hebrews 13: 17 and the elders are the ones to be obeyed. There is absolutely no rubbing this fact out!

When a father tells his child to "obey your mother" does that father imply that the mother is simply to try and persuade the child to do better and if the child will not be persuaded, then the mother is at the end of her authority, and must let the child do as he pleases and die and go to the devil, because the mother has no authority beyond trying to *persuade* the child? That doctrine is "something new under the sun."

True, the Greek word has both the active and passive voices, but that does not allow the one being *acted on* the right to refuse the "persuasive power" and leave the elders with their hands tied and powerless. I have always thought that the word "ACTIVE" really meant to induce one by words to believe what was being taught, but let me say

right here that the expression "to induce one by words to believe" is NOT given by Thayer as a *definition* of any word, but it is only his *comment*, if you please. To give it as a definition of Thayer is to misrepresent the lexicographer and deceive the reader. Thayer is the best authority on *definitions* of Greek words we have, but his *comments* are worth no more than those of any other man. Sometimes one will copy and give comments as definitions. It isn't fair to the reader to do this, for it isn't true!

It is very certain that what is often called "bossing" and "domineering" isn't any part

of the elder's work, or of the preacher's work, or any other person in the Lord's family. But some ARE in authority and are commanded to use that authority (Titus 3: 15), but a man can rebuke with "all authority" and not be domineering with it. In 1 Peter 5: 3, elders are commanded not to be "lords" but the word strictly means "tyrannical" or "domineering." This means that the elders should not be as tyrants, unjustly severe, despotic, etc. I do not know of any elders in the Church of Christ against whom such charges could be placed. There may be some, but I do not know them.

located that the church actually exists. The members of the church during the time of the apostles were all advertising agents for the church. They went everywhere preaching the Word. Everyone they came in contact with soon learned of Christ and His Church. The church grew rapidly in those days. It would do so again if everyone in the world was made to realize that the church existed for the express purpose of saving their souls. A good way in which to make a small portion of the world come to that realization is to hand a bulletin to our visitors and strangers when they attend our services. Every bulletin should have within its pages a message of welcome to those who visit the meeting. Also, an article should be prepared that sets forth the purpose, the aim, the principles, and the ideals of the church. This same article can be printed each week or a new one prepared that contains the necessary information in order that the person reading it will be made acquainted with the Church of Christ. Can we afford to turn away from any opportunity to advertise the church that was purchased by the blood of our Saviour? The churches at Mexico, Mo.; Compton, Calif.; Springfield, Mo.; and Manchester Avenue, St. Louis, Mo., carry articles of this nature in their bulletins.

I firmly believe that a well written and attractive bulletin is a valuable asset to any congregation. I call your attention to the word "attractive." No members of the church, much less a visitor or stranger, should be handed a poorly written bulletin or one that is not neat in appearance. The bulletin, when handed to a person becomes a representative of the church and bespeaks the character and nature of the congregation. I receive weekly bulletins from four congregations each week and enjoy reading them very much. I would like to exchange bulletins with every congregation that prints one. If every congregation in the brotherhood printed a bulletin each week and each congregation sent their bulletin to every other congregation then each congregation would receive news from all over the brotherhood. The church is the family of God and it might help us to serve Him better if we knew what other members of the family were doing.

ST. LOUIS (7121 Manchester) (Nov. 2)—The two weeks Bible Study in the Thessalonian epistles ended tonight. Studies were held each night for 2 hours, and the average attendance for the first week was 107; for the last week 120. Six were added, 3 by immersion. A program for study in the future is now being submitted to the church, which will include Teacher Training, Personal Work Training, Problems in Child Training, Beginners' Bible Study, all to be taught by Brother Ketcherside. A Saturday class for boys and girls is also under consideration.

LOCAL CHURCH BULLETINS

By DELWYN THOMPSON

It is very probable that, to many of you who read the title of this article, a question will occur as to "what value can a church bulletin have?" There are several ways that a bulletin can be an asset to any congregation and I would like to call your attention to some of them. Possibly you will be able to think of many more reasons why every congregation should have a bulletin printed each week to hand to its members and visitors who attend the services. Space is limited so I will just mention a few of the reasons.

1. **ANNOUNCEMENTS:** A bulletin can be used to great advantage here. Many times in the middle or at the end of the services someone will get up before the audience and take up 10 to 20 minutes of valuable time making routine announcements of the church. This ought not to be. The time allotted for worship is too short to have a portion of that time used for the purpose of making routine announcements. Special announcements that are received in time to be printed in a weekly bulletin should not be made during services. It is true that many times announcements will be received too late to be printed, then of course, they should be made publicly. However, this would not happen often and the time used for this purpose would be negligible.

The bulletin published by the 59th and Kenwood congregation in Kansas City, Mo., presents their routine announcements in such a way that everyone who is to take part in the next Lord's Day service is notified. This is an excellent idea because, being human, we are prone to forget even our regular appointments.

2. **NEWS ITEMS:** The bulletin is an excellent means of keeping everyone informed about what is happening among members of the local congregation. Reports about the sick in the congregation, marriages, births, deaths, vacations, in fact anything of a personal nature that is all right for publication can be included in the bulletin. Many times someone will visit a neighboring congrega-

tion; a report about the work of this congregation could be printed. News items of general interest concerning the churches throughout the brotherhood can be gleaned from brotherhood papers that are printed monthly. These items can be reprinted in a local bulletin for the benefit of those in the congregation who do not receive the monthly papers.

The weekly bulletin published by the church at Newcastle, Indiana, has a very interesting news section. The news is written from a human interest standpoint.

3. **EDIFICATION:** In most congregations in our brotherhood a program of work and development is arranged for weeks and even months ahead. These programs are necessary and are planned for the benefit of all concerned. However, many times a need arises for a particular lesson to be brought home to the members of the congregation and it is not always wise to break the outlined program in order to present the needed lesson. The congregation publishing a bulletin would not be confronted with this problem because a short article on the subject at hand could be prepared and printed and each member of the congregation would receive a personal copy of the admonition or exhortation that we needed. Several of the bulletins printed by various congregations follow this method of presenting needed exhortation and admonition. I have received weekly bulletins from several of the congregations and bulletins printed by the churches in Anderson, Indiana; Newcastle, Indiana; Colorado Springs, Colorado; Kansas City, Mo., and Manchester Avenue, St. Louis, Mo., all have weekly messages printed in them. These articles are not written by the same person every time but different ones in the congregation write articles for publication. This is as it should be, for in this way we can mutually edify one another.

4. **ADVERTISING:** The churches of Christ are gradually getting to the point where they are willing to advertise to the rest of the community in which they are

Joy

By Fred Killebrew

There is one sustaining thought which should permeate the life of every Christian. In the darkest hour of life, whether it be by death, adversity or poverty, he can smooth over the rough spots if there is implicit faith in God. A righteous life that looks to the glory beyond will erase many of the sorrows here and lighten the load. Paul must have meant something like that when he wrote in Romans 8:18, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed to us."

The secret to joy is not beyond the reach of any. Paul knew the formula and made it a working part of his life. His entire being was lost in service to the Saviour. After having been unjustly and unmercifully beaten with rods and in prison with feet fast in the stocks, he could, with Silas, sing to God. This prison picture transcends the view that some withered and dried-on-the-stalk nominal Christians have of service to God. Paul found joy in suffering for Him. This reminds us of a story in Acts 5:40, 41. "They beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. They therefore, departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the Name." A parallel to the actions of these godly men will seldom be found. Why did they find joy even in persecution? On no other hypothesis can it be explained than that these men lost themselves in the service of God. Their motive for living and for dying was to render an unflinching and faithful service to God. Therein they found unbounding joy which made life worth living, and death worth dying—yea, even inviting!

It is sad and even discouraging if we allow ourselves to be engulfed in the broad way mass (mess) and listen to the grumbling, complaining and excusing that some weak-kneed, spineless, so-called Christians offer for failing to do their duty. They are passing by the narrow road of joy and detouring over the hills and swamps of glum and despair.

The shortest and quickest route to joy is the one directly through the middle of service. One Christian spends the allotted hours assembling with the saints, and finds joy all the week. Another (so-called) wilfully misses and worries, frets and fumes all the week, seeks excuses and finds no joy. One Christian works two hours upon a lesson and enjoys it wonderfully. Another (so-called) spends the whole week enjoying the efforts of those who do study. One evangelist works hard on a lesson and enjoys giving it. Another seldom studies but spends ten times the energy in worry that the other did in study. Some elders (and many they are) are on the job thinking, planning, and work-

ing to be well-pleasing unto God. They find joy in service. Others worry because the church doesn't grow.

A friend of mine said to me not long ago, "If you want to enjoy church work you have to study your Bible and get into it!" Bill, you told the truth! Paul said long ago in Romans 14:17, "For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." If you are a member of God's Kingdom and not enjoying it there is a short in the wires somewhere. Sin has blocked the current coming down from God. Better get it fixed or there will surely be a fire!

TAKING INVENTORY

(2 Cor. 13:5)

By Hershel Ottwell

Business companies take inventory of their stock at least once each year. We are in business for the Lord. Let us take inventory to see where we stand in God's sight. Where art thou?

1. *Sinners* should take inventory.
 - a. All have sinned—(Rom. 3:9, 10, 23).
 - b. Where will you appear? (1 Pet. 4:18).
 - c. There is no hope out of Christ—(Heb. 5:8, 9).
 - d. A total loss—(Matt. 16:26).
2. *Erring children* should take inventory.
 - a. The latter end is worse than the beginning—(2 Pet. 2:20-22).
 - b. Simon was in "the gall of bitterness"—(Acts 8:18-23).
 - c. Demas loved this present world—(2 Tim. 4:10; 1 Jno. 2:15, 16).
 - d. Much spiritual adultery today—(Jas. 4:4).
3. *Faithful disciples* should take inventory.
 - a. Examine yourselves whether you be in the faith—(2 Cor. 13:5).
 - b. Self-examination at the Lord's Table—(1 Cor. 11:28).
 - c. Our attendance—(Heb. 10:25).
 - d. Our prayers—(1 Thess. 5:17).
 - e. Our giving—(1 Cor. 16:1, 2; 2 Cor. 9:7).
4. *Congregations* should take inventory.
 - a. As to your first love—(Rev. 2:1-5).
 - b. As to your zeal—(Rev. 3:14-19).
 - c. As to your order—(1 Cor. 14:40; Col. 2:5).
 - d. As to your mission work—(2 Cor. 9:1, 2).

Conclusion: Do you find the Lord's business failing because of you? Where art thou?

A LETTER FROM G. C. BREWER

A great many of our readers have been interested in the hope of future debates with Dr. G. C. Brewer, of Memphis, Tennessee, who is on the staff of Harding College. I wrote to Bro. Brewer on October 20, asking him to assign a date for the debate which we had agreed to hold at Harding College. This is his reply:

Dear Brother Ketcherside:

Your letter of the 20th has been received. I am very glad to hear from you and I hope we shall be able to meet again in the discussion of the college issue. I did not write you again about it because I understand you went to Europe in the early part of the year and I did not know just when you returned.

We felt that if the debate should be held at Harding College, it would be better to have it in the summer so we could have an out-door discussion. But the summer is now gone and, if we have the discussion, it would have to be in the chapel. The chapel will not seat even the student body and we usually have two chapel exercises each day with a different group attending each one. Of course, we could not, therefore, accommodate the visitors who would come to hear the discussion. This makes it bad to have the discussion at Harding.

I suppose you keep up with the papers and, if you do, you realize that there is a considerable interest now aroused over a question among ourselves. This is the old question of whether or not a church should contribute to a school. You know my position, and this is the position held by the vast majority of my brethren. However, the Bible Banner group has been seeking to destroy me for some years and they thought they would get me committed to an issue on which none of the schools or orphan homes or papers would agree with me, and then they would have me branded as a disloyal, unfair man. They have failed in this and it is about to turn the other way. The Bible Banner is about to find itself standing alone on this point except for the sympathy they get from the Sommers. They are inconsistent or they would go on over to the Sommers or else drop the point they are making an ado about. Right now we have a challenge out to them and it is possible that Roy Cogdill will finally be urged to meet me in debate. If that happens, I'll have him as an opponent instead of you; and, when the debate is over, you can probably take his arguments and debate with me or some other man on our side.

At any rate, this is the status of the case now and I am not prepared to tell you that you and I can have a debate soon. If this other debate fails to develop, then we may get Harding to invite our debate and we can move it to Memphis where we will have a big auditorium. We shall have to wait, however, for a while before we pursue this matter any further.

With all good wishes, I am

Faithfully yours,
G. C. Brewer

WEBSTER GROVES, MO. (Nov. 2)—Two were added to our number today when Bro. W. Carl Ketcherside extended the invitation at close of the edification period. Attendance numbers from 40 to 60. Robert Johnson has recently conducted a song training class.

I BELIEVE IN A PASTOR SYSTEM

By W. CARL KETCHERSIDE

Charles is about thirty years old and has been a member of the church since he was twelve. For about five years, starting when he was sixteen, he wavered a little in the faith, but came safely through, and when he was twenty-two he married Jane, a good Christian girl. They started to read the Bible together and to study the position of the church so they could defend it before their friends. As a result, Charles is pretty well versed in our position. That's why it was interesting for me to sit in the car and listen to him talk to Mr. Banks, the filling station man, who is a member of the Christian Church.

When we drove away, Charles said, "I like to talk religion because we have the truth for our stand. Lots of times, though, one sitting by can see things not apparent to those in discussion. Do you have any suggestions about the little talk with Banks?"

"I liked the way you handled it very much," I replied. "You permitted him to state his views fully and without interruption. Then you took up the points one by one and handled them in turn. I noted that you asked him questions demanding an affirmative answer. That is good psychology, for it gets your opponent to thinking *with you* and in a positive way. But you said one thing that I don't agree with."

"What's that?" quickly asked Charles, looking a little bit surprised.

"You said the Church of Christ didn't believe in a pastor system."

"Well, they don't, or at least I've never heard of anyone in the church who did. You don't!"

"Oh yes, I do," I said. "I'm a firm believer in a pastor system. You have to be, or deny the Bible."

"Next thing we know you'll be in the Christian Church with Mr. Banks," said my companion. "You'd better explain yourself before I lose confidence in you."

"All right, let's look at the Bible on the subject," I replied. "If it teaches anything it teaches that God established a pastor system. God's people are likened to sheep and in the aggregate are called 'a flock.' Thus, the church is referred to as a 'fold.' Each congregation represents a separate unit in the great universal fold. Christ is the chief Shepherd and the universal fold is under his authority, but each local flock is to be under a plurality of shepherds, called elders or bishops."

"Oh, I agree with that," said Charles. "But what about a pastor system in the church?"

"That's what I've just been describing—God's pastor system. The word 'pastor' means 'a shepherd.' The elders are God's pastors, the only ones he has ever ordained.

That's why Peter tells them to 'Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof . . . being ensamples to the flock.' Paul told them to 'Feed the church of God, over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers.' Every congregation ought to qualify men to serve as pastors in the church. In the early church God assisted by direct spiritual gifts in qualifying 'evangelists, pastors and teachers' according to Ephesians 4: 11. We still need them all, but they must qualify now through faith and a study of the Word."

"Why is it all of our brethren insist that we do not believe the pastor system is scriptural?" asked Charlie.

"They have reference to the term as commonly used by the religious world today. We do not believe in the one-man hireling pastor system, that is, in hiring one to come in and feed the flock over which the elders have been placed. This creates two 'pastor systems' in the same church, one authorized by the Scriptures, one unauthorized; and they conflict with each other. The unscriptural system makes it impossible for the scriptural system to function, since those who are the rightful pastors turn their work over to one who functions without Scriptural right. If the elders cease to feed the flock, they are not truly pastors; and the hireling minister usurps the rights and duties belonging to them."

"What we should say then is that we do not believe in the sectarian one-man pastor system, it appears," said Charles.

"Right you are. The Churches of Christ need more pastors of a scriptural kind. God's plan is to have one church under a number of bishops; the world has changed that until they have a number of churches under one bishop. We need in each congregation feeders, leaders and overseers, men who can guide and develop the church so that it will be capable of edifying itself. That is the divine pastor system, and in that we should all believe."

THE PREACHER'S WIFE

There is one person in the church

Who knows the preacher's life;

She's wept and smiled and prayed with him,—

And that's the preacher's wife!

She knows your prophet's weakest point,

And knows his greatest power;

She's heard him speak in trumpet tone,

In his great triumph hour.

She's heard him groaning in his soul,

When bitter raged the strife,

As, hand in his, she knelt with him,—

For she's the preacher's wife!

The crowd has seen him in his strength,
When glistened his drawn sword
As underneath God's banner folds
He faced the devil's horde.

But she knows deep within her heart
That scarce an hour before
She helped him pray the glory down,
Behind a closed door.

You tell your tales of prophets brave
Who walked across the world
And changed the course of history
By burning words they hurled. . . .

And I will tell how back of them
Some women lived their lives;
Who wept with them, and smiled with them—
They were the preachers' wives!

(The above poem was sent to us by Sister Flora (Mrs. L. C.) Roberts, who received it from Sister Bullock, of Bridgeport, Conn.)

WAKENDA, MO. (Oct. 31)—Bro. Robert Brumback is in a meeting at Wakenda, and we have enjoyed the good lessons we have heard. He is deep in the scriptures and shuns not to declare all the counsel of God. We respect him highly for his bold defense of the gospel of Christ.—*Marvin Mayden.*

Christians vs. Christmas

(Continued from page 1)

ward to Christmas, I realize many who read this article will not weigh the truth contained in it. I have carefully studied this feast, and this is my firm conviction upon the subject. The more I searched with an unprejudiced mind, the more firmly I beheld, that what I had always called a national holiday, had principles which lay years ago in the seat of the Bishopric of Rome. And the using of nice terms to label the "Golden calf" doesn't change its true nature.

My concluding thought is to remember that anything that is as highly esteemed, generally, as Christmas, bears investigation. The Savior said, "That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God" (Luke 16: 15). Can you think of any of the children of the "mother of harlots" that has been more pampered, more highly esteemed, or more often courted by the Bride of Christ, than Christmas?

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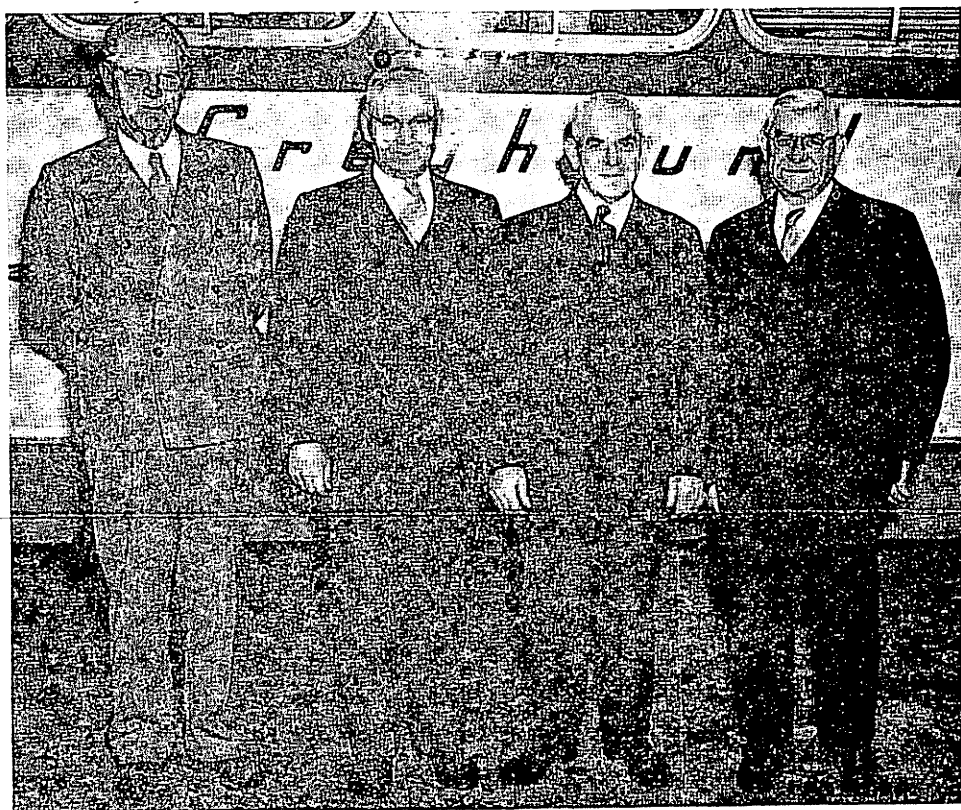
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Dedicated to the task of arousing churches in this state and elsewhere to a greater zeal in mission work, and assist in developing the talents of all to be used to the glory of God.

ELDERS AT FREDERICKTOWN ALL-DAY MEETING



J. W. Watts, Flat River; Lawrence Thompson, Saint Louis; J. C. Mabery and J. H. Mabery, Bonne Terre. (Picture by United Studios, Flat River.)

A NEW CONGREGATION

We have just concluded a two-week meeting at Fredericktown, Missouri, in which we assisted Bro. J. H. Mabery. Ten were baptized and one added by membership. This rounds out the first full month for the new church at that place. It began four weeks ago with 34 charter members, and was augmented on the following Lord's Day by four more. Thus there are now 49 enrolled to meet in the church building purchased from the Nazarene church through the splendid efforts of the Bonne Terre and Flat River churches.

The meeting was highpointed by an all-day meeting on the second Sunday. A bus load from Saint Louis attended, and helped to make the afternoon, especially, one long to be remembered with the gospel singing. Arvel Watts of Flat River directed the singing for the meeting and did an exceptional job of it. On occasions when he could not be present, Lemuel Kelly of Flat River, and Jerry Ketcherside, of Saint Louis, aided.

Special commendation should be given to Bro. and Sister Mabery, who have earned it by their excellent work in contacting former members and non-members and interesting them all in the advancement of the kingdom. We salute the new church at Fredericktown and predict a bright future for them, if they continue steadfast in the work of the Lord.

NEWS FLASHES!

E. M. Zerr reports interest and attendance good in the Bible Study at Martinsville, Ind., which closes December 7. . . . Harold Shasteen began a meeting on Nov. 12, at Crystal Springs, Ark., and reports 1 added in his work at Pleasant Ridge, near Hamilton, Mo. . . . Sister Freed writes to thank all who so kindly helped them during Bro. Freed's recent serious illness. He is over the attack of pneumonia, but unable to be out yet. Their new address is: J. A. Freed, 1900 East Sixth, Topeka, Kansas. . . . Bernell Weems begins a meeting at Salem, Mo., Nov. 25 to continue until Dec. 7. . . . The little group at Perris, California are in need of financial aid to complete their modest building. If you'll prayerfully consider the little band and their needs, please send a contribution to E. N. Hope, Perris, Calif., or to Wilbur Storm, Rte. 5, Box 615, Riverside, Calif. . . . Fred Killebrew started 4 weeks of work at Festus, Mo., on Nov. 24. . . . Reba Lee writes from Clarinda, Iowa that Winford closed his Bible Study in Beloit, Nov. 30. He previously held a study at Green Mound, Kansas for two weeks. . . . There were 9 added, 8 by baptism during Hershel Ottwell's Bible Reading at Chillicothe, Mo. Almost 200 attended the opening night of his work at Lemons. . . . Bob Duncan reports a full schedule of work at Bridgeport, Conn., with 1 restored. . . . Dick Kerr tells us that he

baptized 1 at Yale, Ill.; 1 at Lewis, Kansas; and had 4 immersed and 1 from the Christian church in his meeting at Brookport, Ill. He and Jim Mabery are now in Mission work at Chicago, Ill., sponsored by the Fullerton Avenue congregation. They start a mission at Wapello, Iowa from Dec. 7-21, asking the prayers and aid of all the Iowa churches. . . . Verna Oneth, of Springfield, Mo., reports activities of faithful churches in that area, and the work of Carl Isham and Henry Boren. . . . Fred Killebrew recently closed a week's meeting at Rives, Mo. Four were added at Senath this month; two by baptism, one by restoration, one by membership transfer. Barney Kirby conducted a two-week song training session for the Senath church. . . . Please take special notice of the success of the gospel work reported in this issue of the paper. Souls are being saved!

THE IOWA WORK

Des Moines, Iowa (Nov. 10)—Bro. Walter Lagle was with the church at 59th and University, over two Lord's Days, closing last Lord's Day. For two years he has been working in the community east of Des Moines, and results obtained demonstrate the strong teaching he has drilled into his hearers. At Newton a lively group of disciples has been gathered together. They are now building a meeting house on a lot they have paid for. At Vandalia, where a few struggled along for years, they have been awakened, bought the community building where they met for years, and remodeled it into a substantial meeting place. Bro. Bill Sharpe, a young preacher who has been working with Bro. Lagle, has a small group together at Oskaloosa, where he lives. There are openings at several other points with bright prospects for planting the church. This condition has been brought about by brethren with whom Bro. Lagle has been working, accomplished mostly by Bible Study conducted in the homes, and by personal work of Bro. Lagle and those trained under him. These brethren are strong for the One Body, and the church as the all-sufficient institution for all phases of the Lord's work. They stand in open opposition to all organizations of men set up for dispensing the religion of Christ in any way. They are strong for mutual ministry of the church. Their work has encouraged us so much and set such a fine example, we believe the report of it will be appreciated by readers of the M. M. M.

Eugene Suddeth

CARTHAGE, MO. (Nov. 5)—Campaign at Center Church, three days old, and increasing in interest. We have some outside attendance. Am starting a general Bible Study tonight using blackboard diagrams. The study will occupy 30 minutes before preaching. I have arranged to have "Radiant Truth" published in Kansas City, the third week of each month.—Fred W. Fenton.

THIS and THAT from HERE and THERE

FROM BROTHER FREED

Dear Brother Carl:

I gave your article in the November issue careful reading and do not recall when I have read anything that gave me more pleasure. It is so radiant with the truth and the spirit of the New Testament that I found myself saying "Amen" as I read. The things you outlined in this article are the things I have prayed for all my years of work. I think you should preserve these articles you are writing and put them in book form for the coming generation where they will be needed to keep the church pure. May the Lord bless you in your good work.

Your humble brother,

J. A. Freed.

ABOUT EVANGELISTIC OVERSIGHT

Dear Carl: I want you to know that you have my endorsement of your treatment of the subject of Evangelistic Oversight, in the October issue of the Triple-M, except perhaps the last part, which includes your apology. Your treatment of this subject is excellent in that it sets forth the divine plan which represents the ideal. But I feel that since we do not have an evangelist for each congregation in need of training that it is an absolute requirement that evangelists give the many small groups of disciples the necessary advice and training to protect them from the invasion of false teachers. In the meantime evangelists should not overlook the importance of training men for the eldership and we should work toward the ideal that you have outlined. In other words, we must attain the perfect plan by a gradual transition, and until we have enough evangelists to supply the needs of all the small and new groups of disciples I do not feel that you owe an apology for the part you have had in protecting such from false doctrines. I know the tendency is to content ourselves with simply preaching to congregations, without due consideration for the divine command to "commit what we have learned to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also," resulting in the pastor system. This tendency must be condemned, with all of its resulting evils, while we work toward the perfect plan. Your co-worker in Christ, Fred W. Fenton.

GOD'S ORPHAN HOME

Not long ago the Dunklin County Welfare worker came to the church of Christ, at Senath, on Lord's Day morning. With her was a 13-year-old girl who needed a home. Four families agreed to take her, but since she could only stay at one of them at a time,

Alvin and Marie Compton now have a daughter, "Peggy," in addition to two small children of their own. Our commendation to Alvin and Marie who are doing God's will in God's way.

MILAN, MO. (Nov. 1)—Our meeting with Brother Harold Shasteen, held in a new community, attracted almost 150 non-members. We believe a favorable impression was created for our plea, and we have tried to "sound out the Word." Three were added to the church at Bethel during the meeting. Glen E. Frazier.

NEOSHO, MO. (Nov. 3)—Henry Boren was with us yesterday for our services and we had a fine meeting.—R. A. Ditto.

POLLOCK, MO. (Nov. 3)—Our meeting is to begin at West Concord, the 11th of this month. Bernell Weems will do the preaching. Hope we have better weather than we now are experiencing.—Ray S. Schnelle.

HAMILTON, MO. (Nov. 3)—Am trying to conduct services at Pleasant Ridge, but last week we were able to meet only two nights due to rain and impassable roads. This morning I gave a talk at New York District High School, and the principal arranged to bring all of the students to the meeting on Wednesday evening.—Harold Shasteen.

NEWTONGRANGE, SCOTLAND (Oct. 23)—Work here is going in much the same way as when you were here. We have started our winter campaign again. Monday, Bible Study; Tuesday, Bible Study; Wednesday, Gospel Meeting; Thursday, Women's Meeting; Friday, Children's Sunshine Corner; then all day on Sunday.—W. H. Allan.

MATTOON, ILL.—Excellent crowds attended meeting. 3 placed membership. Bro. W. G. Roberts spent 4 nights with us in the meeting.—Bernell Weems.

VONA, COL. (Nov. 6)—In our meeting at Peaceful Valley, 5 were added on Monday night. There are now 14 members. Brethren plan to build in spring. I begin at Fairbury, Neb., Nov. 11. We hope to be on radio at Colby, Kansas, by Dec. 1.

—J. Ed. Uland.

DENVER, COL. (Nov. 5)—Much interest was shown in Bro. Turner's recent meeting. Our attendance now averages over 65 on Lord's Days. We are starting an addition to our building for classrooms.

—Delbert and Iris Deister.

SAINT LOUIS (7121 Manchester Ave.)—The suggested change in the order of worship has been approved, and will begin the first Lord's Day in the New Year. Another added since the Bible Study, makes a total of 10 in Saint Louis, the last month.

—Lawrence Thompson.

WEDDINGS: H. R. Miller and Mary Bradley, Nov. 7, at the church at Martinsville, Indiana, Ray Harris, officiating.

Bob Fraser and Rosemary Thompson at Lillian Avenue Church, Saint Louis, Nov. 7, J. H. Mabery, officiating.

SULLIVAN, ILL. (Nov. 15)—Two were baptized, one restored and one added by membership transfer, Oct. 26. The church is growing in numbers and spiritually. On Nov. 10 about 50 gathered at the Bert Maycroft home to can chicken to send to Scotland. We are now sending a box each week, and enjoying the privilege of aiding our brethren across the sea.—Bessie McCracken.



LUCKY BABY

If there is any such thing as "luck" in this world, the sweet little baby above has started out with a full share. This is Freddie Diane, recently adopted by Fred and Abbie Killebrew, of Senath, Mo. Here is another case of operating one of God's orphan homes, without calling upon the church for aid, and at the same time giving a baby a daddy and mother. Fred is a faithful preacher of the gospel of Christ, so Freddie Diane will be reared in the nurture and admonition of the Lord!