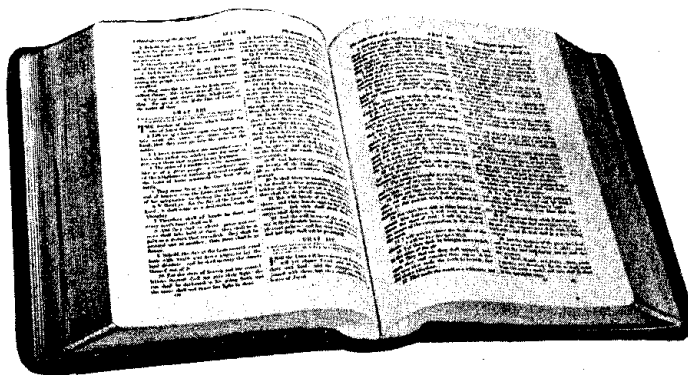


The Sword AND Staff

"Preach the Word!" (II Timothy 4:2)

"Feed the Flock!" (I Peter 5:2)

THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH THAT WAS A NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH



• By James E. Gibbons
129 CHERRY STREET
MT. AIRY, N. C. 27030

WE MAKE our appeal to the New Testament and insist that we must be a New Testament church. Of course we mean a New Testament church in the sense that the Lord wants, and we do not necessarily have reference to every church we read about in the Scriptures. Not every church of the first century was a New Testament church in the full sense of the word. In other words, although they had entered into covenant relationship with the Lord, some of them had departed from the right way.

The church at Corinth was a nominal church (I Cor. 1:2) and called into the fellowship (1:9), but they had to repent to regain their salvation (II Cor. 7:8-11). Many things plagued that church there on the Grecian peninsula. They were overcome by the carnality of division (I Cor. 3:1-4), fornication (5:1), abuse of the Lord's supper (11:20, 29), wrong attitude toward spiritual gifts (chapters 12-14), unbelief (15:12), and other things. Paul closed his letter to them by holding out a warning: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema

Maranatha" (16:22).

It seems the churches in Galatia were called such nominally (Gal. 1:2) for they were removed from the gospel (1:6-8). Paul feared that his labor had been in vain among them (4:9-11). Christ had to be formed anew in them (4:19). Because they had gone back under the law of Moses, Paul said, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law: ye are fallen from grace" (5:4).

Among the seven churches in Asia mentioned in Revelation, only a few were faithful. In the midst of their unfaithfulness, however, there is optimism and hope that they will repent and return to the right position. They are called upon to do this.

But in the New Testament Scriptures we find some churches that shine out as New Testament churches should. The Jerusalem church in its early days makes a profound impression on us. Antioch on the Orontes in Syria became a beehive of activity for our Lord. The Thessalonian church is of note. There were others. They were really trying to walk in the way of the

Lord and seemed to be making a success of it.

However, the Philippian church catches our attention at this time as a "New Testament church that was a New Testament church." Paul's epistle to this church gives us an excellent impression. They were very close and dear to him.

Philippi, located in Macedonia in northern Greece, became the site of the first church Paul established in Europe (Acts 16). Some wonderful women, among them Lydia, constituted the first converts. The Philippian jailer and his family became members. There being no synagogue here, the implication is there were few Jews here, and the church was primarily a Gentile church. After Paul's departure, from all indications Luke stayed a long time. But they never forgot Paul.

Let us notice some good points of this "New Testament church that was a New Testament church."

I. THEY WERE MATURE ENOUGH TO HAVE ELDERS AND DEACONS.

(Continued on Page 3)

THE SWORD AND STAFF
Post Office Box 147
Mount Airy, N.C. 27030

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Renew your subscription when it is due—no notice will be sent. Thank you for doing this.

Proverbs of Today

If you will keep God's commands, then God will keep you.

"I have tried to keep things in my hands and lost them all, but what I have given into God's hands I still possess."

A lot of people would feel very much out of place in heaven, even if they could go there, because it's only for the pure and good.

"God will not help them who refuse to help themselves."

If you convert people on food (or some gimmick) to get them in church, you will have to feed them on food (or keep up the gimmicks) to keep them in the church.

"Too many people use religion just as a bus—they ride it only when it goes the way that they want to go!"

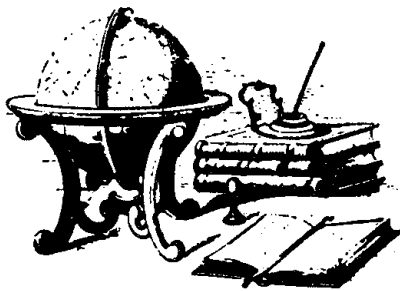
Perhaps we could well measure your Christianity by what you regard as your treasure and what you enjoy as your pleasure.

"If you can't forgive your brother on earth, you won't have to worry about forgiving him in heaven—you won't get there."

To succeed, plan your work, and then work your plan.

"Even when opportunity knocks, a man still has to get up off his seat and open the door."

Man cannot lift himself by his own bootstraps; neither can he be saved without the applied blood of Jesus.



EDITORIAL

COMMENTS...

ON BEING CALLED LEGALISTIC, PHARISAICAL, AND NOT HAVING THE RIGHT ATTITUDE

THE GREAT BULK of the mail we receive in connection with this publication is favorable and very encouraging. However, occasionally there is a sour note. Recent correspondence from another city of North Carolina (which was without a personal signature) tended to label us with such loaded terms as "legalistic," "pharisaical," and accused us of not having the right attitude. In reference to this paper they (or he or she?) said, "We have not been very impressed with the content." Although we have only the kindest regards for the correspondent, we beg to disagree with the use of the said terms in relation to the stand we are striving to take. We are most conscientious, and are deeply and humbly in earnest about what we write. We sincerely believe that in too many areas of "church life" the cobwebs of traditionalism need to be brushed aside. Worldliness needs to be replaced by a true spirituality.

"Legalistic"

We are accused of being "legalistic." (May we ask the correspondent: DO YOU WISH TO BE ILLEGAL?). It seems the religious people in today's world are unending who will call you "legalistic" if you wish to follow the Scriptures closely. Such are the times in which we live. A Methodist friend called us "legalistic" when we said a person should be immersed because that is what the New Testament taught (not sprinkling). Now we are called "legalistic" because we teach that the New Testament has revealed the organization for the government and function of the church. Charges of being "legalistic" come from and take a wide spectrum.

There seems to be much inconsistency among many, may we humbly say, who level charges of being "legalistic" at others. We have by experience found some to be very legalistic with the negative commands of the Lord, but with the positive commands they are completely out of bounds in the other direction. Let us elaborate. With many negative commands they stick strictly to the letter of the "law" (even ignoring principles and the spirit of the "law"). Thus, they say you cannot preach against the movies, the dance, etc., because the Scriptures do not condemn these things by name (but the New Testament condemns such by principle). They are ever so legalistic here. However, when it comes to certain positive commands, they throw their brand of legalism (used on negative commands) to the wind. Let us illustrate. The Bible teaches

(Continued on Page 3)

"What was the early church really like?"



IN THE FACE of the confusion and uncertainty to be found in our modern religious world, we are made to ask this question.

Get your Bible. Read the New Testament. You will find that the book of Acts and the following epistles give the answer, and it is a clear, certain one.

It is a challenge, joy and thrill to study the Scriptures anew unencumbered by human tradition to seek out the "old paths." Nothing can replace this exuberant experience. You drink of the fountain of life from the original source. You become one with the early church, because you are part of it. Their spiritual perceptive is yours.

Does that sound good? That is the position we are humbly trying to take, and it is not a denominational one. Would you "join" us in this endeavor?

EDITORIAL COMMENTS . . .

(Continued from Page 2)

that the Lord's work is to be supported by the giving of Christians, but many think it is okay for churches to have bake sales, auctions, etc., which are not even intimated in the command. We find the New Testament presents the organization through which the church is to function, but the command is unreasonably augmented and replaced by all kinds of man-made organizations. Thus, the Lord's pattern of government falls into disuse. We could list other examples of such loose and abusive treatment of positive commands, yet at the same time there is the practice of a sterile legalism in reference to the negative commands (in essence not greatly unlike that of the Pharisees—Matthew 5:20-48).

We are "legalistic" only in the sense that we want to do what the Scriptures teach. However, we believe there are principles sur-

(Continued on Page 6)

THE N. T. CHURCH THAT WAS... (Continued from Page 1)

The salutation in the Philippian letter reads, "Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons." Of course a bishop and elder refer to the same office, the word bishop meaning overseer—and that of a local church (Titus 1:5-7; Acts 20:17,28). Deacons are mentioned. The word means servant, and they are servants or assistants, and not overseers. The elders are this.

Spiritual growth and maturity are evident in the Philippian church. The fact that they had elders and deacons proves this. An elder couldn't be a novice in the faith (I Tim. 3:6). Deacons first had to be proved (I Tim. 3:10). Certain required qualifications of spiritual maturity had to be acquired (I Tim. 3; Titus 1). These things were a "must" before entering the office (I Tim. 3:2).

A qualified leadership is a "must" to having a faithful New Testament church. With such godly men at the helm, they could enjoy the blessings of unity and a minimum of problems in the local church (Eph. 4:11-14; Titus 1:9-11). (In fact, only one problem is hinted at in the Philippian letter—two women, Euodias and Syntyche, are urged to "be of the same mind in the Lord"—4:2).

It seems some in the past have mistakenly supposed they could not be a New Testament church without having elders and deacons. Unqualified men were installed just so they could say that they had elders and deacons and had met the pattern for the church. Although qualified leaders are a "must" to having a faithful New Testament church, unqualified and unfaithful men can result in a fast undoing of the quality and faithfulness of the church. A church should not have elders and deacons until they are needed and until there are men who qualify. In such a situation the faithful evangelist is the primary leader, and the church is no less a New Testament church.

II. THEY WERE A CHURCH DEVOTED TO EVANGELISM.

(Continued on Page 4)

THE N.T. CHURCH THAT WAS...
(Continued from Page 3)

Although Paul had long been gone from the church at Philippi, they never forgot that he had brought the good news to them. They loved him, and wanted to help him share the gospel with others. On down the road from Philippi at Thessalonica, Paul said, "Ye sent once and again unto my necessity" (Phil. 4:15-17). They shared in supporting Paul when he labored at Corinth (II Cor. 11:9). Years later in Roman imprisonment, Paul wrote to them, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now" (Phil. 1:3-5). Because of their devotion to him and evangelism, they had helped him from the beginning until then. They truly realized the significance of what is taught in I Corinthians 9:7-14.

Not only did they support Paul in his evangelistic endeavors, they personally evangelized themselves. When the Philippian jailer had earlier cried out, "What must I do to be saved?" Paul seemed to sense and to know that his interest also was beyond himself. He answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16:31). Later the jailer is described as "believing in God with all his house" (16:34). And in later writing Paul reminded the Philippian brethren that they were "in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life..." (Phil. 2:15,16)

The faithful New Testament church must be devoted to evangelism. We shouldn't be selfish about salvation. Efforts and expressions of evangelism can take many forms. Among these, like the Philippians, we should financially back those who preach the gospel, while at the same time personally speaking up for the Lord.

III. THEY WERE A CHURCH ACTIVE IN BENEVOLENT WORK.

"For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are in Jerusalem" (Romans 15:26). The church at Philippi was included

in this. It is commendable that they were concerned about others beyond their own little world. Benevolent concern and the helping of others is the essence of true religion (James 1:27; I John 3:17, 18). The Philippians were putting their religion into practice.

Benevolent relief was forthcoming from them when Paul was a prisoner in Rome. One of their number had been sent all of those miles from across the sea with help for Paul. Paul wrote, "But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the thing which were sent from you..." (Phil. 4:18). Not only had Epaphroditus brought things Paul needed, he was there to minister personally to the wants and needs of Paul (Phil. 2:

25-30). Paul wrote, "Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service to me." What love and tender regard for an imprisoned brother! (Such will be remembered in that great day of Judgment - Matthew 25:31-46).

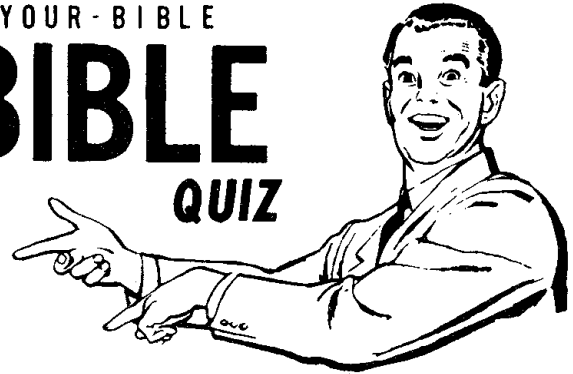
In this day of greed and insensitivity toward others, how we need to look beyond ourselves. Spiritual concern will make us see physical needs too. A New Testament church will be a benevolent church.

IN THE FIRST CENTURY church at Philippi we see a "New Testament church that was a New Testament church" We have noticed a few of

(Continued on Page 7)

KNOW-YOUR-BIBLE

**BIBLE
QUIZ**



1. What do the following prefixes of Bible words (names) mean? (1) Beth-; (2) Ben-, (3) Beer-; (4) El-; (5) Bar-.
2. What were the ancient names of Bethel, Jerusalem, and Hebron?
3. Of the twelve sons of Jacob (Israel) which two did not receive an inheritance by name as a tribe in the land of Canaan?
4. What were the names of the six cities of refuge provided among the Israelites for anyone who had accidentally killed another?
5. How long had the prophetess Anna been a widow who saw baby Jesus in the temple?
6. What apostle was the last one to see Jesus?
7. Was I Corinthians the first letter that Paul had written to the Corinthians?
8. What epistle was written dealing with the problem of Christians going back under the law of Moses?
9. What epistle expressly shows the superiority of Christ over the Old Testament?
10. Faith without works is what?

(Answers found elsewhere in this issue)

Asa A. Allen, A Modern Healer?

James D. Bales

R. G. Hardy has a regular column in his paper which presents "this month's prophecy" which is supposed to be a modern revelation and is viewed as "thus saith the Lord." He recently wrote: "The closing of the past two decades of the miracle ministry of Rev. A. A. Allen has brought grief and shock to the Christian world. City after city, church after church, preacher after preacher, even down to every individual will long feel the effects of the removal of such a great spiritual leader.

"This personal loss is heightened by the heavy task of reaching our nation with one less laborer and the greatest of his day. We realize more than ever, the straitness and lateness of the hour in which we live. Another great light has been removed: the greatest deliverance ministry of our day has come to an end.

"Recalling the innumerable campaigns and revivals Brother Allen has held, we are most grateful for his unmarred and true image as 'God's man of faith and power.' For truly his life was dedicated to the masses and his compassions were theirs alone for the healing and deliverance of their souls, minds, and bodies as well as their spiritual and material prosperity.

"Brother Allen was compassion, hope, and faith to thousands of the sick and oppressed that flocked to his meetings for deliverance. For no matter how desperate their situation, here was a place, and here was a man who had enough power of God to set them free and thus change their lives.

"There was no greater inspiration for any young preacher or servant of God than to be influenced by this man's great ministry and contact with God." (*Faith in Action*, Baltimore, Md. 21230, Faith Tabernacle Inc., 828 Williams St., July 1970, p. 5).

THE CORONER'S REPORT

Asa A. Allen, a prominent "healer" and President of Miracle Valley Bible College in Arizona, died June 11, 1970 in San Francisco, California. The Coroner's report revealed the following: *First*, on the left knee there were old surgical scars. In times past, Allen had been treated "for arthritis of the knee." *Second*, Allen had an appointment arranged with his *personal physician*, "because of severe pain in the knees. A decision was to be made whether to operate on the second knee because of continuing severe pain." *Third*, "two prescription bottles were found alongside the television—1 contained 10 yellow tablets and 1 contained 18 pink and white capsules." *Fourth*, "the deceased had been taking relatively large quantities of pain-killer, and medication for sleep. These consisted of Percodan and Seconal." *Fifth*, the "alcohol blood level was found to be 0.36%." A study published by the U. S. Department of Transportation on *Alcohol and Highway Safety*, August 1968, said that some

states adopted as the standard, by which to determine whether a driver was driving while his ability was impaired by alcohol, as more than 0.5% and some 0.10%. (P. 105.) *Sixth*, "the cause of death was acute alcoholism and fatty infiltration of the liver." *Seventh*, "the apparent mode of death was Natural vs. Accident, undetermined."

God is the judge of Mr. Asa A. Allen, as he is our judge. But is it not clear that Mr. Hardy, who paid such high tribute to him, did not have the gift of discerning the spirits even though he claims to get revelations from the Lord?
GOSPEL ADVOCATE

WAIT THOU ONLY UPON GOD

*'Wait only upon God:' my soul, be still
And let they God unfold his perfect will,
Thou fain would'st follow Him throughout this year
Thou fain with listening heart His voice wouldst hear.
Thou fain would'st be a passive instrument
Possessed by God, and ever Spirit sent
Upon His service sweet—then be thou still,
For only thus can He in thee fulfill
His heart's desire. Oh, hinder not his hand
From fashioning the vessel He hath planned.
'Be silent unto God,' and thou shalt know
The quiet, holy calm He doth bestow
On those who wait on Him; so shalt thou bear
His presence, and His life and light e'en where
The night is darkest, and thine earthly days
Shall show His love, and sound His glorious praise
And he will work with hand unfettered, free,
His high and holy purpose through thee.
First on thee must that hand of power be turned,
Till in His love's strong fire thy dross is burned,
And thou come forth a vessel for thy Lord,
So frail and empty, yet since He hath poured
Into thine emptiness His life, His love,
Henceforth through thee the power of God shall move
And He shall work for thee. Stand still and see
The victories thy God will gain for thee;
So silent yet so irresistible,
Thy God shall do the thing impossible.
Oh, question not henceforth what thou canst do;
Thou canst do naught. But He will carry through
The work where human energy had failed
Where all thy best endeavors had availed
Thee nothing. Then, my soul, wait and be still;
Thy God shall work for thee His perfect will.
If thou wilt take no less, His best shall be
Thy portion now and through Eternity.*

By Freda Handbury
(Submitted by H. N. Solliday)

Rely on Christ, Not Excuses!



TUCSON, ARIZ. (AP)—A geologist has filed suit against the University of Arizona claiming it denied him a doctorate degree because he believes the Biblical story of Noah's ark.

Clifford L. Burdick said in his suit filed in Superior Court that he was denied his degree 10 years ago because some of his professors were "allergic to Religion." The suit, filed Wednesday, asks the court to order the university to give him degree.

Dr. Richard Harvill, University of Arizona president, said: "Under no circumstances do we make a comment on any case that is in the courts."

Explaining why he decided to go to court 10 years after the degree was denied, Burdick said, "I tried to deal with them for years, but I couldn't reason with them. I decided adjudication was the only answer."

The university said it's just bad science to believe in the flood, he added.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: This appeared in the newspaper this past summer. Is this the academic freedom we hear so much talk of?

Those who have never considered it will be profoundly impressed by a Biblical approach to geology and the Flood (at least we were). We call your attention to a most interesting and scholarly book, THE GENESIS FLOOD, by Henry M. Morris, PhD. (and professor at VPI when this book was published) and John C. Whitcomb Jr. This book is especially worthy of your time and money in getting it and reading it. Cost—\$6.95. You can order this from The Sword and Staff.)

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EDITORIAL COMMENTS . . .

(Continued from Page 3)

rounding the negative commands and principles surrounding the positive commands of the Scriptures. If we do not take this into consideration, we will have a sterile legalism modeled after the way the scribes and Pharisees treated many of the laws of the Old Testament. The New Testament hinges around the divine and living personality of Jesus as the center of our religion and compelling motive for obedience. Let us give him the glory.

"Pharisaical"

It is not very pleasant to be called "pharisaical"—especially when that is not in one's heart, nor, we trust, in one's actions. We feel our correspondent has not deeply considered what is involved in this and just who the Pharisees were. WEBSTER'S NEW COLLEGIATE DICTIONARY gives this definition of "pharisaical": "Resembling the Pharisees; outwardly but not inwardly religious; hypocritical; self-righteous and censorious of others' manners and morals."

The Pharisees originally were a very strict sect among the Jews who earnestly stood for the law of Moses (but also for the tradition of the elders, which Jesus condemned—Matthew 15). By the time of Jesus the Pharisees were merely a shell of their former selves, their religion being more superficial than real. The Sermon on the Mount was directed against them. Starting with Matthew 5:20, they are in the mind of Jesus through chapter seven. Here we see their righteousness was legal and not spiritual; it was showy and pretentious; and it was dominated by materialism. The most "scorching" words of Jesus were directed against them in Matthew 23. Jesus did not rebuke them for carefulness in observing the law of God. They were the object of his scorn because they said and did not. They were hypocritical. They were guilty of that for which they censored others.

Therefore, to call one "pharisaical" has many serious implications. The word is tossed around too lightly by the unthinking. We have seen men called "pharisaical" simply because they did not agree nor go along with a certain point of view which they believed to be out of harmony with the Scriptures; just because they had different, but definite, convictions about what the Bible teaches. It would appear much easier to cry "pharisaical," while clinging to a traditional position, than to answer an earnest and humble man in what he believes to be a Scriptural stand. Whether consciously meant so or not, such loaded terms make a good smoke screen.

"Not Having the Right Attitude"

Our attitude is one of openness, and a one of continual searching and examination of our position in the light of the Scriptures (Is this the position of our correspondent?). Several years ago we searched the Scriptures and searched our heart, and we left denominationalism. We are resolved not to be entangled again therein. We have found many who profess undenominational Christianity

actually to be denominational (which has been a source of much illusion to us). We speak in humility. We believe there is much setting in order that needs to be done. (We are suspicious that some think our attitude is wrong because of our conviction in this matter).

If taking a definite stand for right, and standing against what we believe to be wrong is having the attitude of the Pharisees (which it is not), then many fall under that category. If you have spent any time with the Old Testament prophets, you know they were outspoken (more so than this writer has ever been). Then, what about John the Baptist? What about the Lord Jesus? We have never called a man a snake yet! (Matthew 3:7; 23:33). Were John the Baptist and Jesus pharisaical in dealing with the Pharisees? (Was our correspondent pharisaical in criticizing us?). Did Paul have the wrong attitude when he wrote the I Corinthian letter?

We love the Lord Jesus. He has suffered and done so much for us. We humbly bow before him and the Father who made us. If we are going to be religious, let us go all the way. If we are going to take the time to be religious, we might as well "do this thing up right." The Lord is worthy of more than a second-class denomination (we are not pointing any fingers—just making a statement). Let us be humble. Let us search the Scriptures in humility, ready to increase our understanding. Let us love one another. And, yes, let us have the right attitude. Amen. □



“Just to be with you”

A SMALL BOY went into the room and sat down close to his father. After a time, the father looked up from his work and asked if there were something he wanted. The boy replied, “No, just to be with you.”

How good it would be if this was our attitude and desire where our God is concerned—both here and hereafter. If our heavenly Father should ask: “Why do you come to the worship service? Why do you come to the Lord’s table? Why do you kneel in prayer?” We could humbly answer, “Just to be with you.”

—LEXINGTON LAMPLIGHTER

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

THE N.T. CHURCH THAT WAS... (Continued from Page 4)

their praiseworthy attributes. Let us follow their example. It is one thing to claim to be a New Testament church, but quite another to “measure up.” Too many times we may have the correct form (we rattle the dry bones), but we don’t have the power. We need to talk about the life that goes with the form. We need to stop throwing around unpracticed theories about restoring the “New Testament church,” and get down to business and start being it. We are in covenant relationship with Christ. Let us enter into its fullness. □

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

ANSWERS TO “KNOW-YOUR-BIBLE” BIBLE QUIZ

1. (1) Beth- (House-); (2) Ben- (Son-); (3) Beer- (Well-); (4) El- (God-); (5) Bar- (Son-); 2. Bethel—Gen. 28:19; Jerusalem—Joshua 18:19; Hebron—Joshua 14:15; 3. Levi—Joshua 13:33, and Joseph, his sons becoming tribes; 4. Joshua 20:7-9;
5. Luke 2:36-38; 6. I Cor. 15:8;
7. I Cor. 5:9-11; 8. Galatians; 9. Hebrews; 10. James 2:14-26.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

FAITH:

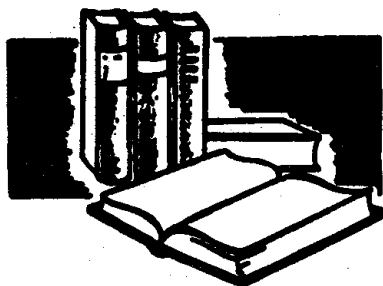
That...

Conviction of the vast unseen
Made closer than the touch of hand;
Alerted in the mind, supreme—
The spiritual as seen by man.

By A. BROTHER

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

**BOOK
Selection**



THE HAZARD OF THE DIE (Tolbert Fanning and the Restoration Movement) by James R. Wilburn.

Here is a most valuable and interesting book about a most remarkable man. His name may be hardly familiar to some, but he played a very decided part in the history of "churches of Christ." This book will help fill in the wide gap toward understanding how that two distinct groups came out of the 19th century restoration movement (those opposed to mechanical music in worship and those who use it). This book will increase your personal understanding, and perhaps realign some of your personal feelings about certain matters. You can only profit from reading this book. The price is \$4.95. Order from *The Sword and Staff*.

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