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The Seed of The Kingdom

W. W. Otey

The parable of the sower (more properly, perhaps, the parable of the soils) is recorded in Mark, chapter 4, and in Luke, chapter 8. Matthew records the parable of the wheat and the tares. These two parables taken together tell a very thrilling story, and a very comforting story, of the seed of the kingdom.

"Behold, there went out a sower to sow; And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the wayside, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth; But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away. And some fell among thorns and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased, and brought forth some thirty and some sixty, and some a hundred." (Mark 4:3-9.)

Elements of the parable

In this parable we have seed, a sower, and four kinds of soil. Three kinds of soil failed to produce a harvest. The failure was not in the seed or the sower; the fault was in the soil. The four kinds of soil show the four kinds of hearts among those who hear the gospel, "the seed of the kingdom." Jesus holds up a spiritual mirror and reveals to each one who has heard the gospel his status before the Lord. The way side bearer represents everyone who has heard but has not "obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine" God has delivered. Satan will surely "take away that which hath been sown."

The stony ground represents those who have heard the word, "and immediately receive it with joy, but in time of temptation fall away." In many places we can find nearly as many "backsliders" as we find faithful disciples. Sad to say, very little effort is ever made to restore them to the Lord.

The thorny ground portrays the state of those who hear the gospel and obey it. "And the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the pleasures of life" choke out the word and it becomes unfruitful. There is no intimation that these went back into the world, or were guilty of any overt immoral practices. They simply became so deeply immersed in the work of providing for their temporal needs, seeking worldly pleasures, and the rewards and prizes of this life that they became spiritually dead — perhaps morally correct, but spiritually dead.

The good ground shows us those who hear the word, and obey it with joy. They are the faithful servants of the Lord. Their lives show forth their "Praises of him who called us out of darkness into the light." These are the ones "who do his commandments," and who will enter in through the gates and have right to the tree of life."

"The Seed of the kingdom"

The seed of the kingdom (the gospel) is God's infallible remedy for sin. This remedy is applicable to all men of all races in all generations since Christ. Sin is rebellion against God, and will remain such for all time to come. Now, as civilization advances and mankind becomes

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knowledgeable, material inventions need to be changed and improved, generation by generation, to meet man's temporal needs. In this field God has left man free to change and improve in every way possible. But sin, the disease, never changes; and God's remedy for sin, the gospel, likewise remains the same from age to age. This is a lesson that few have ever learned; or, having learned it, prefer the changes that satisfy fleshly desires, and are reluctant to bow in humble submission to the will of God.

God has decreed that every seed shall produce or bring forth after it "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," is a decree that has never been violated in the vegetable or animal kingdom. It is equally so an immutable law in the spiritual realm. Sowing the seed of the kingdom has never produced anything other than disciples of Christ, children of God, Christians. The word of God, unmixed with the teachings of men has never made a Mormon. It takes something in addition to the word of God (the Book of Mormon and Doctrine and Covenants, both by Joseph Smith) to make Mormons. The word of God, unmixed with the teachings of men never made a Methodist, a Baptist, a Presbyterian, or an Episcopalian in religion. The same can be said in regard to all other denominations of men — these religious bodies unknown to Holy Scripture.

The wheat and the tares

In the parable of the sower, Jesus teaches the effect of the word of God has on the hearts of different kinds of individuals. In the parable of the wheat and tares, he tells the effect that tares (the teachings of men) have on the church universal or the kingdom of heaven.

"Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field; But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was spring up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest; and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn. He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man. The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels." (Matt. 13:24-30; 37-39.

From this parable we learn how all denominations had their origin. They wear names not found in God's word; they worship in ways foreign to the revealed will of our Father; their organizations, their creeds, their human devices and inventions are all the product of human wisdom. The "seed of the kingdom" never established or built any institution on earth save the Lord's own church. When Jesus ascended to his throne in heaven, he sent the Holy Spirit to "guide (the apostles) into all truth, and to bring to their remembrance all things he had commanded them to teach."

On that first Pentecost following the resurrection the "seed of the kingdom" was preached to a multitude of people. About three thousand received that seed into their hearts. On that day Christ was announced as "Lord and King" being seated at God's right hand in the heavens. The seed of the kingdom made believers in Christ. These believers for the first time were told what to do in order to have the remission of sins. About three thousand heeded the word and obeyed the commandment of Christ.

The church

"I will build my church," Jesus had said. On this Pentecost day he fulfilled that promise and did indeed set up or establish his kingdom, his church. The church was no longer merely in prophecy; it was no longer in preparation; it was now in actual existence. This was, and is, the only institution upon the face of the earth produced by "the seed of the kingdom." Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit the apostles made clear what that church was to be like. They described its organization, the qualifications of those elders who were to oversee or rule it, and all necessary things pertaining to its life and work and worship.

The seed of the kingdom produced no missionary societies, no old folks' homes, no orphan homes in which to herd hundreds of small children, no recreation centers, no schools, hospitals, clinics, or other agencies either to supplement or to supplant the church. The church was then, and is now, perfectly adapted to perform the work of preaching the gospel and caring for the needy. That churches through the ages have sadly neglected both works is no justification at all for the formation of some other institution to take over and do these tasks which God assigned to his church. Anyone who teaches otherwise, does so at the jeopardy of his own soul and the souls of all those who believe him.

Nadab and Abihu

The story of Nadab and Abihu (Leviticus 10) is too well known to need repeating. But the lesson contained in it should be thundered from the house tops of every church building in the world. Surely, it was a "small" thing they did in taking some fire other than that which God had directed that they use. They may

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have had no thought or intention at all of showing defiance or rebellion against God. But whether intended or not, that was exactly what they did!

Paul, referring to such acts of disobedience, says, "Now these things happened to them by way of example; and they are written for our admonition upon whom the end of the ages are come. (I Cor. 10:11.) They not only died as punishment for their sins, but the tragic story of their death is held up as a warning to ages to come.

"Therefore, we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest haply we drift away from them. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?"

Had these terrible warnings been heeded, no missionary society, Herald of Truth, or benevolent organization would ever have been formed to divide and trouble the church of our Lord!

COMPUTERIZED MAILING

We are pleased to announce that VANGUARD is now set up for an efficient computerized mailing service, and hopefully this will eliminate some of the problems you have had (and we have had) in irregular delivery, improper billing, multiple mailings to the same addressee, etc. No human system is perfect, and there will continue to be mistakes made, of course. But we expect them to be far less now. You can help us by doing two things:(a)

write us promptly if there is any mistake in your address, expiration date, multiple mailings, or other. And when you change addresses always give us both the OLD and the NEW address. Thanks!

TRY



the *Gospel Advocate* men have written against such practices. Please read the articles in the July 22, 1976 issue on page 468 and the one in the August 5, 1976 issue, page 498.

Brethren, churches which oppose the "bus ministry" with its attendant reward motivation and "youth church" are being marked as unsound by the churches which use the bus ministry.

The same marking and rejection is in the process of being done over the bus ministry and youth church as was done twenty years ago over church support of human institutions such as child care facilities and colleges and over the sponsoring church method in



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THE SEED OF THE KINGDOM - (II)

W. W. Otey

For emphasis let it be stated again: The seed of the kingdom—the word of God—unmixed with the doctrines of men, never has, and never will produce any other institution, organization, association, great or small, than the church of our Lord. The seed of the kingdom has never produced a denominational church; has never produced a missionary society; has never produced a “sponsoring church”; has never produced a Herald of Truth organization, has never produced an institutional orphan home, old folks’ home, or other charitable organization. All such arrangements originated in the wisdom of men, and are the harvest of tares.

During recent years a number of writers have declared that no opposition had been made against such benevolent institution until very recently. If they believe this statement to be true (and I assume they do), it merely shows their lack of knowledge and information as to what took place in our nation fifty to seventy years ago. For the information of such brethren, let me go back and quote from the *Otey-Briney Debate*, held in Louisville, Kentucky in 1908. Here is an excerpt from one of the speeches I made in that discussion:

Otey-Briney

“My dear friends: I am not here opposing the good they do. I am only opposing the organization through which they do it. He (Briney) knows it, and you know it. Still he harps on that, trying to turn your sympathies, and blind

you to the real issue involved. I am not trying to appeal to your sympathies, but to your judgment and conscience. There is a time to appeal to sympathies, but not now. Now is the time to appeal to your judgment and intellect and conscience. That is what we are here for. So I will make this remark before I forget it. It has been heralded and published abroad that we, the church of Christ, are anti-missionary, that is, we are opposed to missionary work. I say to you that is as unfounded a slander as was ever published against the Son of God. We are not anti-missionary. We are not opposed to sending the gospel to those who have it not; but we *are* “anti-missionary society” with all our hearts! Now, why not in your speaking publicly and privately, and in publishing your papers, do you not refer to these brethren as being “anti-society”? In the name of that is fair and reasonable, why not?

“Do I believe in caring for the widow? Do I practice that to the extent of my ability? Ought the orphans to be cared for? Most assuredly. Any one who would take any other position could not be called a Christian. Through what institution ought the church of Jesus Christ, the body of Christ, do this work? I will let the voice of God answer: ‘If any provide not for his own and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel. Let not the widow be taken into the number under three score years old, having been the wife of one man, well reported of for good works.’ (I Tim. 5:8,9.)

“What institution or organization is in view here? The one body of Christ, the church. The

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Missionary Societies

During recent years of controversy some of the leading advocates and defenders of various orphan homes among us have strongly declared that there is no parallel between such organizations and the missionary societies. These brethren are men of intelligence, and are generally well informed. Without the least reflection on their natural and acquired endowments, I have been made to wonder: What do they actually know about missionary societies? What missionary society do they have in mind? Where are its headquarters? Who are its managers? What is set forth in its constitution and by-laws? Have these brethren attended even one convention of one such institution; or have they even so much as read the current report of the proceedings of one such organization? Direct answers to these pertinent questions would make interesting reading. It is well to be cautious about making sweeping statements. One needs to have verified facts, not reports that have passed through many uninformed writers.

Without seeming to boast, it is in place to state here that this writer, extending back through a period of nearly seventy years, not only diligently read the reports of the deliberations of missionary societies, but attended their conventions in their early days, down to as late as 1910. My first acquaintance with such dates back to a day before most of the modern advocates of our orphan homes were born. And I may add that I have kept in rather close touch with the societies down to the present day. If there have been any missionary "societies" (plural) in existence these last thirty nine years, I have not been able to learn of them. There has been only the *United Christian Missionary Society* since 1919. Do our brethren have this great UCMS in mind when they say "there is no parallel" between that institution and orphan homes? If that organization is what they have in mind, then I am sure no one would disagree with them. Since 1919 I know of no other missionary society that has had any connection with the Christian Church. I do not know of any other organization, in operation now or in the past, that has any likeness to the UCMS. So far as I know, it stands alone in religious organizations.

How they developed

I became intensely interested in Christian Church societies in 1887. From that date till I attended their national convention in 1910, I kept as close track of them as I could. In the late 1810's till the close of the century their first line of societies were "District Co-operations,"

Several counties were in one district. A Board of Managers, a Secretary-Treasurer, were about all the officers to be found in such a "District

Cooperation." There was much talk among the members about "going to the co-operation" at the annual meeting. The churches "co-operating" sent one or more delegates, or wrote a letter, pledging the amount this local church would give to support an evangelist to preach in weak places or start new churches during the following year. The "Board", composed of several God-fearing elders, would counsel together, select some available preacher, and direct him to go and preach in the district.

The money was sent to the Secretary-Treasurer, who then sent it on to the evangelist. How innocent such a small organization looked! The work was desperately needed; and it was the general thought that by combining their resources much more good could be done. Is it any wonder that good and pious men of that early day regarded the society as "scriptural co-operation"? That pious, God-fearing man, one of the greatest Christians I have ever known, G.H.P. Showalter, only about seven years ago solemnly affirmed that such actions were "scriptural co-operation." That was our first serious difference after sixty-five years of as close agreement, I believe, as could be found in any two men in modern times.

But the seeds of apostasy (the tares) were there. Although they were small and innocent in appearance, they finally absorbed and merged into UCMS. Today many of our "sponsoring church" set-ups are many times greater, and much farther removed from the New Testament order of things than were these early day "co-operatives." They operated in only a few counties, and perhaps rarely spent more than \$1,000 per year. but now our "sponsoring church" co-operatives are nationwide, and some of them international in scope, operating in foreign nations. They receive and disburse contributions not from a half dozen or so churches, but from hundreds — perhaps thousands — of congregations, and their receipts and disbursements must run well into the millions of dollars. Yet, with the open Bible before them, and the history of the recent apostasy of the Christian Church to warn them, they close their eyes and stop their ears, and are rushing headlong toward what will most certainly be another great apostasy. But so it was with the Jews under the law; and so has it been under the gospel in the Christian dispensation.

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THE SEED OF THE KINGDOM

W. W. Otey

Societies and Orphanages

The early day missionary societies and present day orphanages are exactly parallel in these essential points:

1. Each is a *human* organization.
2. No instructions are given in the word of the Lord as to the operation of such an institution; no qualifications are given for officers to govern it.
3. *Each* has a board of directors.
4. *Each* receives contributions from many churches.
5. *Each* does the work the Lord has assigned to the church: the society in preaching the gospel; the orphanage in caring for the needy.

In these five points of comparison there is a remarkably close parallel. A "parallel" is defined: "Extended in the same direction, and equidistant at all points; having the same direction or tendency; corresponding." It has been denied, *but never disproved*, that these two organizations are parallel. In fact, I know of no one who has carefully analyzed the two and shown any essential difference between them. They are the same *in principle*. Both of them are attempts to improve upon the church as God gave it. They implicitly deny that God has given "all things that pertain to life and godliness." The very existence of such organizations calls in question Paul's declaration that "Every scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be complete, furnished completely unto every good work." (II Tim. 3:16-17.)

So long as these scriptures are heeded, there never can be any organization to do the work of the church other than the church itself. Such institutions do not *supplement* the church, as some claim; they *supplant* it. In every act they perform, they take the place of the church. The church and the society are two separate organizations. If the church truly does its work in preaching the gospel, it excludes the society from doing that work. If the church truly cares for its needy, it excludes some benevolence organizations from taking over that work. No two organizations can perform the same work at the same time without one or the other getting out of its proper sphere — unless, of course, God has assigned to *both* of them the same

task. And none of the advocates of these institutions will make that claim.

To escape this difficulty, it is sometimes argued that the the orphan home is only a *method* or *agency* through which the church cares for the needy. This is the same kind of sophistry as that employed by the ancient Greeks; it is the art of juggling words so that that which is false appears to be true, and that which is true appears to be false. It is the same tactic as that used so many years ago to justify all sorts of societies, instrumental music, and other innovations in the church. In this art J. B. Briney stood in the fore-front among the men of his day. M. C. Kurfrees said of him: "Briney is the greatest sophist alive."

Only a method?

Let us take a look at this "only a method" which some people are using in trying to justify the orphan home. Webster defines *method*: "system; order; classification." Now, an orphanage is not a *method* but an *organization*. It is legally chartered under the laws of the state in which it is located. It has a Board of Managers, a secretary, and a treasurer. It has legal status; it can sue and be sued. If there exists anywhere a more violent wresting of words from their accepted meaning in calling such an "organization" a mere "method", I have never heard of it. The organization must have and use "methods" of its own to perform its work. In one instance, coming to my attention lately, a 400 acre farm, with an estimated value of \$750,000 was called a "method" of the church!

Some brethren who advocate and defend these various organizations which are so disruptive of the peace of God's people, solemnly declare that those who oppose such institutions are opposed to "caring for needy orphans!" They affirm that the entire controversy is over a difference in judgment as to "methods" to be employed in such care. They ought to know better! In fact, I am persuaded that most of them DO know that the difference is not about the work, nor yet about the "methods" of doing it.

The whole question boils down to this: To be scriptural should such work be done by individuals and churches: OR is it scriptural to form some *organization* to do this work, thus supplanting the churches. Can any body cite a single instance in which some Christian has opposed "cooperation?" OF COURSE, NOT! Brethren know full well that the question is, "What constitutes New Testament

cooperation?" There is really no basic difference in principle between the early day missionary societies and the present day orphanages. Our zealous advocates of present day organizations are advocating the same institutions that the Christian Church promoted two generations ago. "Their missionary societies were unscriptural and wrong," say our modern advocates of Herald of Truth and the orphanages. "We are the Church of Christ, and OUR organizations are scriptural and right." It seems to boil down to a question of who practices *this*; and who practices *that*.

The first harvest

The full harvest will be apparent only when the Lord returns. But surely some partial fruits of that harvest can be seen already in the land. "The Son of man sowed good seed - the word of God - in his field. While men slept, an enemy - Satan - came and sowed tares - the doctrines of men - among the wheat." Both grew together until the time of harvest.

For a number of years now some brethren have been sowing tares (human institutions) among the wheat. They seem to have forgotten that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Our brethren have sow-

ed some institutions and have persuaded themselves that they are at least *harmless*. What will be the full harvest of the sowing? We need only turn back the calendar a few years to see what the harvest was in the last century when this very thing was done.

In 1849 the first missionary society of national scope was organized. It has such a shallow rooting in the hearts of those who had been pleading for a full Restoration of the New Testament church in faith and practice that it barely survived during its first twenty years. It gained strength and survived, however; and other societies rapidly sprang up from the same seed. Six societies of national scope were formed. Many societies, such as state and local district, were also formed.

In 1906, some of the "progressive leaders" proposed that all the national and smaller societies should be merged into one super organization. *The Christian Standard*, with its editor, J. A. Lord, the Sweeneys, and J.B. Briney, the leaders in the "conservative" group strongly and bitterly fought such a merger. The controversy was rather mild at first; but it soon degenerated into a bitter and acrimonious fight which was eventually to split the Christian Church from top to bottom. The "Old Guard" lost the battle, and lost all control of the societies - societies which *they* had labored so hard to create!

The Passing Scene

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The time is not too distant past when flowery speech was common in almost every field of endeavor, from extolling the virtues of Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup to saying "Good Morning" to the mayor in front of the post office. Preachers, quite naturally, were caught up in the practice, not willing to miss out on the latest style of expression. Obituaries, sermons, announcements, reports - all were written and spoken with a flowery flourish.

Isaac C. Hoskins, a son-in-law of I.B. Grubbs, was living in Florence, Alabama when he penned the following note to the McQuiddy Printing Company regarding a recent publication.

"Gentlemen: 'Character,' by Edward W. Carmack, received in good condition. The nobility of sentiment is equaled by the beauty of the bookmaker's art. If the lecture may be compared to apples of gold, surely the workmanship may be likened to a network of silver. If the workmanship is like fruit, fair to behold, then the contents are likewise palatable to the taste and nourishing to the system. I congratulate you on the finish and beauty of the work . . ." (*Gospel Advocate*, June 11, 1914, p. 59.)

B. A. Botkin tells a story that illustrates the age old

truth - "things are not always as they appear to be." It concerns Bill Bush, a resident of Campton, Kentucky, but whose post office was Zachariah in the next county. "Mr. Bush was on his front porch one day, reading his Bible, when Brother Peter R. Legg, an old-time Campbellite preacher passed along the road out front.

" 'Good morning, Brother Bush,' said the preacher, 'I'm glad to see you reading the Scriptures this fine morning.'

" 'Thank you, Brother Legg,' replied Mr. Bush. 'But I'm afraid appearances are deceiving. To tell the truth, I've just ordered a gallon of whiskey from Brown-Forman, and I'm looking in the Bible to see how to spell Zachariah.' " (*A Treasury of Southern Folklore*, p. 94.)

Trouble with postal service in this country is not a late twentieth century development. Alexander Wilford Hall, editor of the *Gospel Proclamation* in pre-Civil War days, took a cautious view of sending money through the mail and with good reason. In the May, 1848 issue of his paper, he wrote: "Persons sending in money, either for the *Proclamation* or books, will please *not show it to the postmaster*. It will be at their *own risk* if they do. Should they want a witness that the money was sent, let them show it to some one else. The plan of letting (sic) the postmaster know when money was sent, has cost us more than \$200 within a few weeks past."

THE SEED OF THE KINGDOM

W. W. Otey

When I debated with J.B. Briney in Louisville in 1908, he affirmed that such organizations as the missionary societies are authorized in the New Testament; in the same discussion he went on record as being opposed to any sort of "delegate convention." Two years later, in October, 1910, I attended the National Convention of the Christian Churches, being held in Kansas City. This was two years and one month following the Otey-Briney debate. Sentiment had begun to crystallize for a merger of all the societies into one centralized United Society. The conservatives among the Christian Church preachers and leaders were strongly opposed to the merger; They had come in force to the Kansas City meeting hoping to stop the movement toward a centralized organization. J. B. Briney, Zack Sweeney, and a number of other men of great ability, whose names I do not now recall, took their position in the front row of seats. Peter Ainslie, the skilled tactician from Baltimore, was in the chair. R. A. Long, the Kansas City millionaire whose money had great weight in forming policies sat on the platform.

When resolutions were presented for approval of merging all the societies into one super organization, Briney sprang to his feet twice in an effort to make a speech opposing the merger. Ainslie did not permit him to complete a single sentence! He was as ruthlessly squelched as it was possible for an autocratic dictator to accomplish. The man who had done more, perhaps, than any other man then living to advocate and defend such organizations was denied the right of free speech even so much as a single sentence to stop or slow down the juggernaut he had so ardently promoted. But such has ever been the spirit of all those who would try to improve the church, God's greatest work. (Does this remind anybody of Harper, Cawyer, et al and their present passionate opposition to Herald of Truth? - Tant.)

After the lapse of nearly fifty years, I still have impressed on my mind the vivid image of that grim, rugged face as J. B. Briney, the victor in countless battles with defenders of denominationalism, sought in vain to gain recognition from the chair to oppose the society he had helped to build. From that day till the day of his death he opposed with all the vigor at his command the full fruit of his own sowing over the previous forty years. *The Christian Standard* strong-

ly opposed the merger, and still does. The present editor of that journal writes me as follows:

"You are right in your assumption that *The Christian Standard* does not support the societies, either the ones that merged to form the United Christian Missionary Society, or the ones that have grown up since around that organizational center.

"In fact, because of the involvement of implied 'support' of any agency whose news is carried in our columns, we have been very limited in our coverage of missionary activities." (Signed) Edwin V. Hayden, Editor.

The merger completed

The merger was completed in 1919. I have the book issued by the organization, 110 pages, entitled "The How, What, and Why of the United Christian Missionary Society." I also have the Constitution and by-laws of the organization, some 22 pages. I have searched both books very carefully to learn, if I could, on what scriptural principle such an organization would seek to defend itself. I failed to find a single quotation from the Bible, or even an indirect reference to it!

I think I did find, however, the philosophy behind the organization, the guiding spirit that inspired it, and which, in fact, gives the very breath of life to the Society today. Were it not for that *spirit*, the Society would never have been born; without it, it cannot survive.

What is the energizing principle? I quote one brief statement which sets it forth: "If mistakes are made, they are the unavoidable mistakes of democracy, but we still believe that that form of expression is the best for us in things of both state and church. It is only ours to enter more fully into the privileges that democracy opens up to us."

Antagonistic to the Bible

If there is found anywhere in any writing a fundamental statement forming the basic principle on which a religious organization is built that implies such disregard for the word of the Lord, I have never seen it or heard of it. Even denominational churches generally, in forming and revising their creeds, express much regard for the Bible as the word of God, and their guiding principle. Not so with the founders of UCMS! They emphatically declare that they are following the principles of DEMOCRACY. A

democracy is a self-governing body; such an organization writes its own constitution, makes its own by-laws, enacts or repeals laws at its own pleasure and discretion, in accordance with the wishes of its electorate. And that is exactly what the UCMS is declared to be. Its Constitution and by-laws were written by a group of seven lawyers. They make no reference to the Bible. If any reference at all to the Sacred Book was made in their deliberations, no record was made of it. The majority vote decides all questions.

Thus, in less than one hundred years after the New Testament church was restored on this continent, a large number of churches matured into the UCMS. There is ample reason to believe that most, if not all, of their leaders are modernists — denying the miraculous birth of Jesus, the inspiration of the Bible, and the bodily resurrection of our Lord. They have long ago ceased to preach gospel obedience for the remission of sins. Not long ago I had an interview with one UCMS preacher. I said to him, "You talk about 'union'; but what is the basis of that union which you seek?" he replied, "Internal acceptance of Christ." I asked, "without any regard to faith and practice?" He responded, "Yes, without any regard to teaching and practice." And then added, "I suppose we have two hundred or more congregations that practice open membership; they accept members whether immersed, sprinkled, or who have had no baptism at all."

Past and present

The seed of the kingdom never has, and never can, produce any organization, big or little, except the church of our Lord. It never has, and never can, produce the UCMS, a missionary society, the Herald of Truth, or an orphan home. With an open Bible before us, the example of the Christian Church to warn us, let us all be aware of the "tares" that are being sown. The 'centralized control' arrangements by such churches as Union Avenue in Memphis, Broadway Church in Lubbock, and Highland in Abilene are bigger and more ambitious in their aims and programs than were any of the missionary societies when I first became acquainted with them more than seventy years ago. Will some of "our" papers and some of the young men now so zealously advocating and defending such institutions live to have the same experience as the *Christian Standard*, J. A. Lord, the Sweeneys, Isaac Errett, J. B. Briney, and others? They believed these "super organizations" could be controlled and held within limits, and were quite sincere in their belief that such organizations were safe and scriptural. But the "liberals" gained control of them, and their creators and staunch defenders spent the balance of their lives fighting the thing they had created!

R. A. Long, wealthy lumberman of Kansas City, bought the *Christian Evangelist* from J. H. Garrison, and made it the "official organ" of the UCMS. It is so listed till this day. The *Christian Standard*, historical-

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ly by far the most influential paper of the Christian church people, was soon in second place. And today it represents only a minority group, and opposes with all its strength the missionary societies. As I write these lines (1959) is in my confirmed opinion that the *Christian Standard* is far more conservative with regard to human institutions than is the *Gospel Advocate*.

Increasing our human institutions in number and size, we will mature into something like the UCMS. We are traveling the same road, headed in the same direction. "Choose ye this day" the road you will follow. "Howbeit, the firm foundation of God standeth, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his."

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God, and those which exist are established by God (Rom. 13:1)." This tells me that the governments that now exist are there because of God's providential control, whether we understand it or not.

God uses government to accomplish several things. Paul tells us governmental controls have been established to take vengeance upon evil doers: "But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing. For it is a *minister of God*, an avenger who brings wrath upon the one who practice evil (Rom. 13:5)."

The Bible further tells us that God will at times use one government to punish another. Assyria was sent to punish Israel (Is. 10:5-14). Babylon was used to bring about the downfall of Assyria (Is. 10:24; Jer. 50:17-18). The Medes and Persians were raised up to take vengeance upon the Babylonians (Jer. 51:11, 28). God still exercises rule in the governments of men today. "From Jesus Christ . . . *the ruler of the kings of the earth* (Rev. 1:5). . ."

GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL CARE FOR INDIVIDUALS

God intervenes not only in the governments of men, but also in the lives of men. He provides for His children everything necessary for our happiness and well-being (Matt. 6:33). This is not to say that the Almighty will do this without any effort on our part. "If anyone will not work, neither let him eat (2 Thess. 3:10)." God may put us in the right place at the right time to get the right job or money to obtain the necessities of life. He may put it into the hearts of others to help us out in time of need. However God does it, we can rest assured that His providence will provide us with food, clothing and shelter if we faithfully serve Him.

"If God is with us, who can be against us (Rom. 8:31)?" Dear brethren, let us rejoice that the God of Heaven loves us to this degree. Further let us be thankful for His concern, and let us "pray without ceasing (1 Thess. 5:17)" that God's providence might be worked in our lives.

Homer Hailey, "Florida College Annual lectures 1975," in *Great Bible Doctrines*, ed. by James R. Cope (Marion, Ind., 1975), p. 53.