

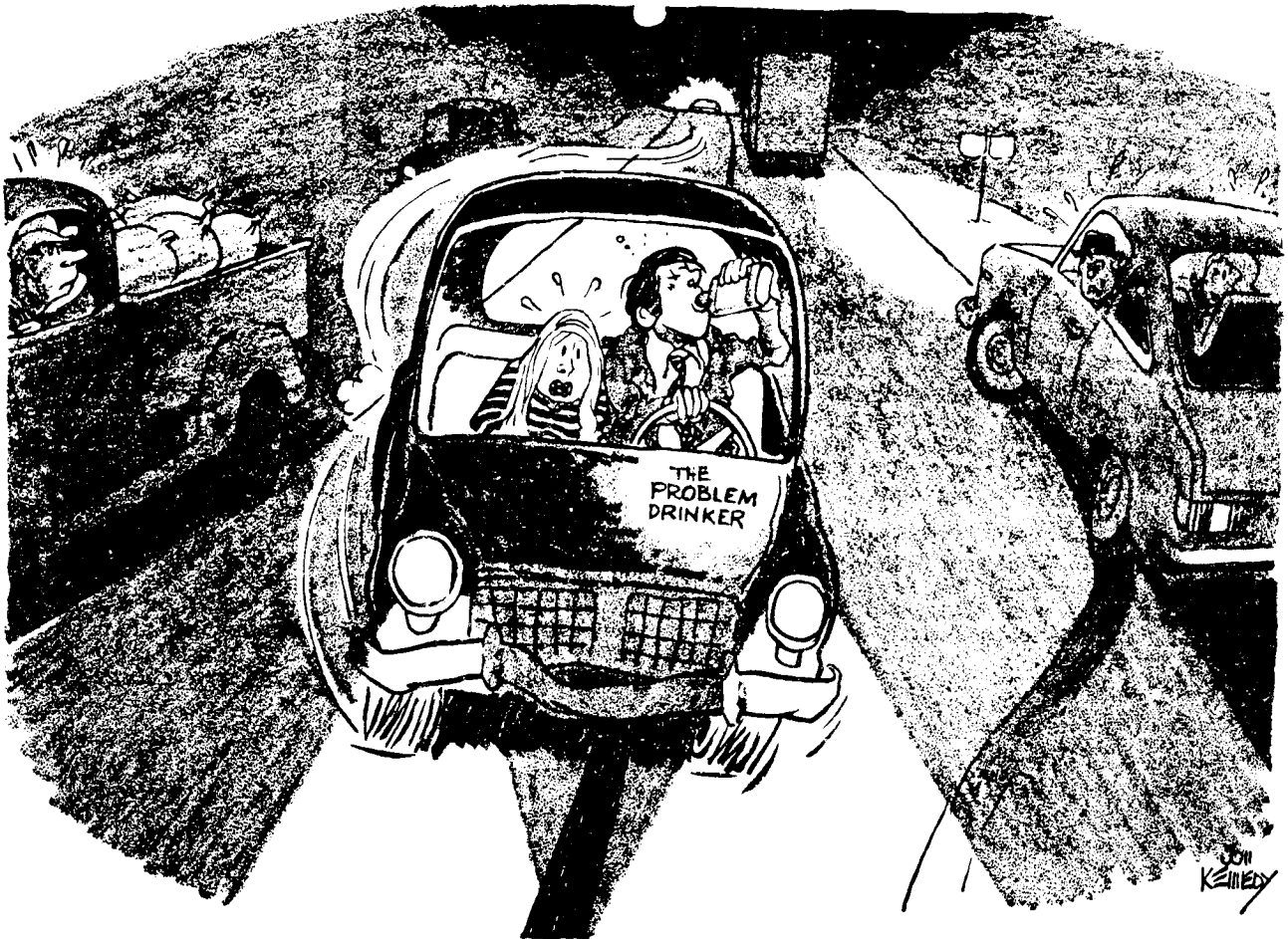
# THE REFLECTOR

FULTONDALE CHURCH OF CHRIST

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## His problem is everybody's problem

And YOU may be the next one to meet him. The statistics reveal that more than one half of all traffic fatalities involve drinking drivers. And yet they tell us that it is none of our business if they drink. When an intoxicated man or woman aims two tons of steel down a busy highway, it becomes a matter of concern to all who are involved. They are potential murderers!

*"Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."*

# The Grace of God That Brings Salvation

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Nothing is more clearly revealed in the Scriptures than our dependence on God's grace for redemption. Paul said to the saints at Ephesus, "by grace are ye saved" (Eph. 2:5). Everyone who is permitted to enter heaven will be there by grace.

Today there are teachers, even in the church, who have warped conceptions of grace. Some seem to feel that grace is the big "cover-up" for whatever they want to allow that is not taught in the Bible. There is endless speculation about what grace may do. Having no desire to join the ranks of the conjecturers, I offer the following facts revealed in God's word.

1. *Grace does not circumvent Jesus Christ.* It is folly to imagine that God's saving grace may somehow take a circuitous route that by-passes Jesus Christ. "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17). God demonstrated His loving-kindness for sinful man in the gift of His Son. In Christ "we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7). Saving grace is found in Jesus, not out of Him. Paul said to the Corinthian Christians, "I thank my God always on your behalf for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 1:4). The grace that saves comes to man by or through, not apart from, Jesus Christ.

2. *Grace does not ignore the Gospel.* The good news of justification through Christ is referred to as "the gospel of the grace of God" and "the word of his grace" (Acts 20:24, 32). To preach the gospel is to distribute saving grace. The saints at Colosse were reminded of "the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel; which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth" (Col. 1:5,6). It was not until the gospel was preached in Antioch that people turned to the Lord and the grace of God was "seen" in that locality (Acts 11:19-23).

3. *Grace does not permit access apart from faith.* "Access" is that which gives admittance, entrance, or introduction. One must show faith in Jesus Christ in order to gain access into saving grace. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:1,2). Since faith comes by hearing God's word (Rom. 10:17), one must hear the gospel to enter God's favor. "For by grace are ye saved through faith . . ." (Eph. 2:8). God provides salvation through undeserved favor; man accepts that provision of grace by means of faith.

4. *Grace does not rule against baptism for the remission of sins.* The faith which gives access into grace is active trust—confidence expressed in cheerful obedience. God requires that we show faith by being baptized, and that demonstration of faith is unto the remission of sins. "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead" (Col. 2:12). Peter preached repentance and baptism "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38). But he acknowledged that it is "through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ" that we shall be saved (Acts 15:11). Salvation by grace requires faith, and faith requires baptism unto the forgiveness of sins.

5. *Grace does not give license to sin.* The law of Moses was given to show the exceeding sinfulness of sin. Under the law sin abounded. "But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound . . ." (Rom. 5:20). Does this mean that the more men sin, the more grace will be shown? Or, as Paul worded the question, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" He answered, "God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Rom. 6:1,2). The triumph of God's grace over sin is not to be interpreted as a license for the Christian to indulge in unrighteousness. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal-body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof" (Rom. 6:12). "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly . . ." (Tit. 2:11,12).

6. *Grace does not offer unconditional security.* Just as our entrance into saving grace is conditioned on our willingness to show faith in Jesus Christ, our remaining in that grace is conditioned on our willingness to continue in faith. The Hebrew writer warns us that one may "fail" or "come short" of the grace of God (Heb. 12:15). The Galatians were called "into the grace of Christ" but afterward accepted false teaching that "removed" them (Gal. 1:6,7). Paul wrote to them, "ye are fallen from grace" (Gal. 5:4). This explodes the theory of once in grace, always in grace.

7. *Grace does not save on the basis of human merit.* The Bible sometimes uses the word "work" to convey the thought of activity that earns, or effort that deserves reward. In this sense Paul used the word when he wrote, "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt" (Rom. 4:4). Our salvation is based on faith, not something earned or deserved, "that it might be by grace" (Rom. 4:16). This is why boasting is excluded. "Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:9). Actions in exercise of faith are sometimes called "works" (James 2:24), but they are not in the category of efforts that earn or merit. No man deserves salvation. God's grace saves and shows our inability to reach heaven by our own might, ingenuity, or deserving. God owes us nothing; we owe Him everything.

I have used this negative approach to show some of the revealed limitations which God places on grace. Hopefully, this will point out that God's saving grace is not a mystical catch-all for whatever odds and ends the speculators in theology may wish to conceal. And let us stay with revelation, giving no honor to speculation.

yes . . .

# undenominational CHRISTIANITY!



Many express confusion today over the various denominations. "Can I be a Christian without belonging to a denominational church?" they ask.

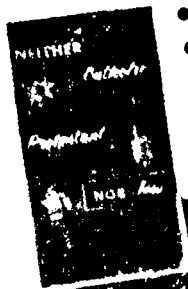
In the early days of Christianity there were no denominations (divisions) as they now exist. The early followers of Jesus Christ were simply called **Christians** (Acts 11:26), and collectively "**churches of Christ**" (Rom. 16:16). Both mean "belonging to Christ." Religiously, the apostles Paul, Peter and John were neither Protestant, Catholic, nor Jew. They were Christians only.

These apostles, as well as all the saved, were undenominational Christians. This term should not be confused with the ideas of inter-denominational or all-denominational Christianity. They did not approve those of their

day who tried to create division within the church which would have resulted in denominations. Instead they strongly condemned such action by saying "Let there be no division among you." (1 Corinthians 1:10-13). Their allegiance was to Christ and to Him only. They were just Christians . . . simply those who were followers of Jesus . . . members of the church of Christ.

Certainly today if we follow Jesus Christ as they did, we too can be just Christians, having "like precious faith" with the apostles (2 Peter 1:1). We then, as they were, will be free from the error and confusion of denominationalism. We can worship and serve God as simply and acceptably as they did. . . . . This has been the constant practice of the church of Christ from her beginning.

Yes, you can be an **undenominational Christian** just as in the early days of the church by following **only** the teaching of the New Testament.



*You are always welcome at the*  
**CHURCHES OF CHRIST**

For further information about the church of Christ, call \_\_\_\_\_  
and ask to speak to \_\_\_\_\_.

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EDWARD O. BRAGWELL, SR., Editor

#### SCHEDULE

##### *Sunday:*

BIBLE STUDY	9:45 A.M.
WORSHIP	10:45 A.M.
WORSHIP	6:30 P.M.

##### *Wednesday:*

BIBLE STUDY	10:00 A.M.
BIBLE STUDY	7:30 P.M.

those lukewarm brethren today who, in excellent health and with ample opportunity, find it "difficult" to make it out to the meetinghouse regularly when the church is assembled in the service of God.

## DIAL-A-BIBLE MESSAGE

2 TO 4 MINUTES

24 HOURS 7 DAYS A WEEK

ANSWERING SERVICE

# 631-2138

## NOT HAVING EYES, YET SEEING!

Earl Kimbrough

Samuel Rogers was one of the lesser known nineteenth century preachers who blazed the trail in restoring apostolic Christianity. He was baptized by Barton W. Stone during the War of 1812 when he was 23. A few years later he began to preach and developed into an effective proclaimer of the ancient gospel.

In his last years Rogers suffered the loss of his vision and hearing. His natural forces abated until he could no longer preach "in the open air so as to be heard by one thousand people" as he could even when nearly 80. Nor would he ever again hear the wonderful words of life from the lips of other men. But he loved the church and loved to assemble with the Lord's people and did so even when many in his condition would have pleaded "providential hindrance."

When F. G. Allen went to Lexington, Kentucky for a meeting, probably in the early 1870's, Rogers was among those in attendance. For three days he sat within a few feet of the speaker's stand though unable to see or hear what was going on. Some were moved to ask him why, in view of his enfeebled condition, he so faithfully occupied his seat.

In "a fatherly talk" to the congregation at the close of the meeting, the old evangelist explained his action. He told them that "while he could neither see the faces of his brethren nor hear their words, he knew they were there! He knew God was there! The very atmosphere which he breathed was pre-  
vaded with divine love, and he loved to be in it! His eyes could not see nor his ears hear, but his soul could feel the presence of God and the communion of the saints" (F. G. Allen, *Apostolic Times*, April 19, 1877).

It would not surprise us if men and women like Samuel Rogers should rise up in the judgment, like the citizens of ancient Nineveh, in condemnation of

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