

In Vain They Do Worship – Chapter 6

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Ch 6: Loopholes · By Willis Young

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CHAPTER 6: Loopholes

Loopholes? What is a loophole?

"A loophole is a small or narrow opening as in a wall for looking or shooting through."

"A loophole is a means of escape or evasion."

The people in "The Truth" are held by a wall of authority and man-made rules and commandments all—yes, I said *all*—concocted, maintained and enforced by the workers. Some rules are different from other rules because some workers are different from other workers, and some workers are in different areas from other workers. Some of these rules are more universally accepted and enforced while others are often left up to somewhat local discretion. If you were to question why local discretion takes precedence over the universal edicts, you will get such a variety of answers and excuses that time and space would prevent my listing them here. I daresay each of the excuses would be prefaced with, "Yes, that's true, but we feel . . ." or "Yes, we understand that's the way it is in some places, but . . ."

As I said a loophole is a means of escape or evasion.

In this chapter I am going to examine ten of what I consider to be the most glaring "openings in the wall," and as I look at each one, I will attempt to categorize it into whether or not it is considered biblical, whether or not it is universally accepted within the movement, or whether or not it is a localized phenomenon or aberration. In doing this I ask you to bear with me as I may sometimes have to re-cite here or there an anecdote or a part thereof that I have already used in earlier parts of this work.

CONVENTIONS

When I was a child growing up in "The Truth," I never stopped to wonder about conventions or to question their biblical legitimacy, and I think I thought that they, like every other aspect of this "one-and-only-true-way-of-God," were "from the beginning." I am sure I envisioned Jesus and two of his disciples sitting on a platform somewhere in Judea. There is no doubt about it, I reasoned—Paul, Silas, and Barnabas, at one time or another, or in one combination or another with Peter or John Mark or Aquila (since Priscilla would never have been allowed on the platform!), could all have been found in Corinth or Ephesus or Saloniki sitting in one of those tents that Paul himself may have helped to sew, sagely looking out over a congregation of men on one side with short hair and long faces and women on the other side with long hair and long skirts. There, on the "sisters' side" would be the *girl workers*, Tryphena and Tryphosa and Phoebe and the four daughters of Philip the evangelist, and, who knows? maybe even Priscilla, too. And let me add, there would not be a hint of makeup on the sisters' side, or of jewellery on either side! Isn't the imagination a wonderful thing?—especially when we've been programmed and brainwashed into believing the lies and deceit that the workers have used over the years as a basis to propound, expound, and—bite your tongue!—confound.

And then common sense—no, intelligence—took over, and I began to look for biblical background for all that we were doing. I recalled some of the early Irish and Scottish workers laughing and talking about the two-week long conventions "in the olden days overseas." And I remembered my father talking about his own very first convention at Almonte, Ontario. He often recounted that bread and "wine" were distributed on the Sunday morning during the first convention or so, and then the workers got together and decided that that practice was not to continue since it was unscriptural to have the emblems anywhere but inside the confines of a "man's home."

Well, now!

If conventions were Biblical and instituted of God, or if they were in fact “from the beginning,” why had all those discrepancies not been ironed out and corrected in New Testament doctrine? How long did Jesus or Paul or Barnabas direct that conventions should be? If bread and grape juice were not to be taken at conventions, would the New Testament not have said so? And, furthermore, where does it say in the New Testament that those people who were first called Christians at Antioch ever met together anyway?

In fact, there is not one letter in any one word in any one line in any one verse of any New Testament writing that suggests or supports the idea of conventions.

How is that for a loophole?

Now I began to look at the Old Testament feasts and feast days. The closest I could come to our modern conventions was the Feast of Tabernacles outlined in Leviticus 23. It was to be in the seventh month of the year. Well, MANY conventions were in July, for sure, but a law is a law, and were we breaking God's law when we met in late June, early August, or even September and October? I had even attended a convention in Jamaica in January because, I was told, the workers felt it would be too hot to hold them there in the summer. (“Hotter than in Israel?” I ask.)

The Feast of Tabernacles was to be seven days, starting and ending on the Sabbath. That's what the Bible said, or more particularly, that's what the Bible said that Jewish law directed. H-m-m? I grew up going to three-day conventions and then one year they all became four days except one or two, North Hatley, Quebec being the one with which I was most familiar. And there was a time—one or two years as I recall—when we began on a Saturday and ended on a Tuesday. A few times the Friday to Monday span was tried, but always we reverted to the Thursday or Friday to Sunday plan. How did that square with the seven days in Leviticus 23? “Well, that's a different time, you know, and, of course, we do not follow Jewish law.”

We don't?

We don't!

“Could you tell me then what the New Testament says about the convention custom?” After all, if Jesus came to fulfill every jot and tittle of the law, and if, having fulfilled that law, he nailed it to the cross, why do we offend him by dragging across the threshold of time and testaments certain laws that may or may not justify conventions or any other practice which, in the workers' eyes, implies more semblance of religion and spirituality and which, in fact, adds power to an already powerful ministry and helps to increase the opportunity of oppression in a pharisaical and a hierarchical system?

Some workers were a little bit honest with me and said they just didn't know. Others were more honest and said they had often wondered about them themselves. And then there were those who told me in a roundabout way—and some not so roundabout—that it had “always been done” and it was not for us “to question the working of the Holy Spirit.”

In other words: “Keep your mouth shut!”

For years I did that, but the time came when I just couldn't keep it shut any longer. When I saw the permanency of the buildings used for cooking, dining and sleeping on some conventions “grounds,” I knew that was not what I had preached about during my brief sojourn in The Work, and it was not that about which I had been preached to. When I got to the “Convention Preparations” or “Preps” as they are called—and, believe me, that is a season unto itself—and when I saw the elaborate nonsense that went on to “make ready” the little houses under the various elm trees for George Walker or Andrew Abernathy or others of their senior position, I knew something was really out of kilter. These houses could have special amenities like lovely innerspring mattresses and desks and carpets and showers while the friends who funded all this were often over in a temporarily converted barn, henhouse or machine shed sleeping on a straw tick surrounded by sixty or a hundred snoring souls, washing with cold water out of a pail and enjoying the same privacy as inmates in a standard concentration camp.

And then under other elm trees—or maybe this time they were maples—there were the larger houses for those with less “stature” where two or three or four could co-habit and share their somewhat lesser amenities. And, lastly, there were the sheds where most of the local workers stayed (unless they were really old and qualified for more privacy) and a few other places for the younger visitors—of whom there were not many unless they were brought along by an older companion, either for display purposes or to be checked out for their worth as senior material in a year or so down the line.

I would like, now, to introduce you to the *workers' table*. I saw it; I waited on it; I ate at it, I'm ashamed to tell you; and I deplored it.

I did not always deplore it, and in the days when I waited on it, I was as a-titter as a teenager on his first date, but that was all to change. By the time I entered the ministry—or “went into the Work,” as they say—I had come to recognize the “table” for what it was—a representation of the arrogance and exclusivity of the chiefs of the Pharisees.

“God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are . . .” prayed the Pharisee in Luke 18:10.

“Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?” the Pharisees asked the disciples in Matthew 9:11. Did you notice the pronoun *your*?

Yes, the workers' table.

It may or may not have a tablecloth, but that is not a priority. It is set with special sets of dishes replete with cereal bowls, fruit nappies, and serving napkins. Food is served in special bowls, and the dishes must be washed in a special tub, extra care being taken that nothing from this table ever gets put on a table used by any of the common herd and, of course, vice versa.

“Why do they have all that special food?” I so often asked, and I was told that the poor senior workers who spent their whole year—year after year—attending conventions could not be expected to eat a constant diet of porridge, boiled eggs, stew, rhubarb, and bread. I might even have been able to understand that explanation on one level, but the idea of special serving dishes, cute little plates, egg cups and napkins put me right back to square one. And, too, if those mighty men of the ministry were to get out and seek for lost souls as they said Christ called them to do, how could they possibly have time to spend year after year running around to conventions for which there is not one tittle of New Testament support—or Old Testament, either, for that matter.

I told you, I ate at that infamous table, but I never wanted to do so. At all the conventions I attended during my very short sojourn in the work, I tried always to slip into a table with the friends and, if necessary, I sometimes waited for the second setting in order to do so rather than eat with the other workers. Occasionally I had a duty to perform, and it made it essential for me to eat first and in a hurry. I never ate there without feeling guilty, and I was always afraid of being seen by others as thinking myself greater or better than they.

I believe I have established that conventions are not Biblical, but they surely are universal. It is not unheard of that many a good, cross bearing professing family plans its yearly vacations around a series of conventions where the accommodations are free and the food flows in abundance. And, who knows, maybe the eligible son or blossoming daughter may just succeed in landing a good, up-standing mate with whom he or she may settle down and raise up to the Lord a whole new batch of worker-approved Christians.

Over a period of thirty-three years I attended conventions in North Hatley, Quebec; Almonte, Picton, Strathroy, and Dunnville, Ontario; Woodstock, New Brunswick; and Silverdale, Duncan, and Salmon Arm, British Columbia. In the United States I was at Schenectady and Freedom, New York, as well as Carsonville and Alma, Michigan. I was once to a convention in Jamaica, twice to one in Northern Ireland, and once each to one in Germany and Switzerland, and two in Austria.

Their universality is obvious, but there are local flavours and customs, which reflect the biases and preferences of the workers in charge. I felt that if the church was going to insist on holding these un-biblical festivities, it should do it universally in the way it is done in some parts of Germany. There, a large Gymnasium is rented when it is already free for the summer vacation anyway. It contains all the kitchen utilities and cooking facilities that are required to feed a crowd. The workers stay in the homes and apartments of the local friends and do not require little houses to be maintained under the elms and maples. Friends coming from a distance may stay with friends if there is room for them to do so, or they may go to Guest Houses (Gasthauser), or they may camp. This arrangement allows for a much greater spirit of fellowship and cooperation between the workers and friends and between the friends, themselves, and does not require the workers to be away from their “mission work” for weeks or months at a time in these elaborate preparations which we find going on here in North America. Moreover, when the week-end is completed, there is no real estate left on someone's farm where it has to be denied, excused, explained away or completely ignored for purposes of property taxation.

In Austria another system is used. A resort hotel that has closed for the season is rented, and there, under one roof, are all the facilities and amenities to cater to the gathering for the whole week-end. There is a perfectly adequate kitchen, all equipped, where all the meals can be prepared. There is a furnished dining room where the entire congregation can eat in comfort. There is a large banquet room outfitted with all the chairs required for the meetings, and, upstairs, there are all the bedroom and bathroom facilities that are needed to cater to the group's needs.

I can hear the sceptical Canadian or American workers protesting that that would be all right for a small group such as they might have in a place like Kitzbuhl, Austria, but that it would never work with the crowds we cater to here in North America. Why are the crowds necessary? Since the whole practice is completely born of man's design, why could not a series of more and smaller conventions, perhaps like a four-day “Special Meeting” arrangement not be a better way to keep workers and friends in touch with each other and would reduce the long unnecessary days “at Preps”? On top of that, there would be no buildings to build, no tents to make and repair, no henhouses, barns, and machine sheds to clean and furnish with straw ticks or foam mattresses, pails of cold water and makeshift toilet facilities.

And, what is more, the workers' time would not be wasted by “leaving the work of God to serve tables,” and their time could be devoted to the real call of the ministry which is trying to bring the sinners to repentance as well as feeding God's lambs and God's sheep.

As you can see, even though there are bad ways of doing it and some better ways, it is the doing of it at all that is the loophole, and it is the loophole that makes the whole arrangement wrong. My personal contention is that if the workers are going to insist on holding these annual, power-perpetuating camp meetings, they should be done with the least amount of fuss and bother to everyone, and they should provide as little opportunity as possible for the workers to promote their own power and influence, and attending them should be strictly voluntary on the part of workers and friends alike.

SUNDAY MORNING MEETINGS

“Surely,” you have already blurted out, “the Sunday morning meeting can't possibly represent a loophole!”

Let's have a closer look at it to see if it can or not.

Can any of you find one New Testament passage that supports a Sunday morning meeting?

Mark 14:12–17. “Now on the first day of Unleavened Bread, when the Passover lambs were being slaughtered, his disciples said to him, ‘Where would you like us to go and prepare for your Passover *Supper*?’ So he sent out two of his disciples with these instructions: ‘Go into the city, and a man will meet you carrying a jar of water. Follow him, and when he enters a house, give this message to the householder: “The Master says, ‘Where is the room reserved for me to eat the Passover with my disciples?’ He will

show you a large upper room” . . . So [the disciples] prepared the Passover. *In the evening* he came to the house with the twelve. As they sat at *supper* . . .”

As *they sat at supper* . . . Is supper not in the evening? When can any of us recall having supper on Sunday morning, and, after all is that not when we were told we must meet “in a man’s home” and *why* we were to meet “in a man’s home”—albeit, not in an upper room for that part of the verse was always spiritualised away? And is that not where and when we all partook of the emblems? Furthermore, what evening of the week did Jesus sit down with the Twelve? Since it surely must have been the seder (after all, no work or preparations would have gone on if the day had been the Sabbath), and since seder is eaten the night *before* the Sabbath, and since the Sabbath is Saturday as we know and understand it to be, was that *supper in a man’s home* not on Friday evening? Some authorities, in trying to establish the chronology of these events in John’s gospel, believe that this “last supper” was even as early as Thursday evening. *How does that square with Sunday morning meeting?*

A loophole? H-m-m-m.

It’s not a very serious loophole perhaps, but I believe it’s a loophole nevertheless, and it’s a loophole that almost every one of the organized Christian denominational churches falls through.

Luke 24:1. “Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, *bringing the spices which they had prepared* . . . and they found the stone rolled away . . . and *found not the body of the Lord Jesus*.” The New English Bible says: But on the Sunday morning very early they came to the tomb bringing the spices they had prepared . . . but the body was not to be found.”

Is this a loophole?

I had always been brought up on the theory that the reason we went to meeting on Sunday morning was that those women (and others with them?) went to the tomb to “anoint the body of Jesus” on that day. But let’s look back a minute to the “meeting-in-a-man’s-home” idea.

The women didn’t go to a man’s home that day; they went *to the tomb*. So when we met on Sunday morning, should we really have gone to a home or would it have been more appropriate for us to go out to the local cemetery? After all, there was as much chance of discovering the body of Christ there as there was in finding it in the empty tomb!

Oh, how I recall week after week and year after year not being able to go out to do anything on Saturday night or not being able to invite anyone in because we had to stay home and “get quiet” for the “next morning” for, after all, did not the women rest on the Sabbath In order to get up with the prepared spices to anoint the Lord the next day? I was always led to believe that the “prepared spices” were a spiritual version of our testimony that we were to prepare during the week by reading and praying and then quietly meditating on Saturday evening about how we could best “*edify* (could that mean *anoint*, do you think?) the body of Christ” in meeting on Sunday morning.

But the body of Christ was nowhere to be found that Sunday morning.

What do you suppose ever happened to those spices?

I’ll just bet you (if I could still allow myself to gamble!) that those spices got thrown on the ground, forgotten, while those women (and others with them?) went shrieking around looking for someone who knew where Jesus’ body was, or who had stolen it, or who had any information at all about it. Does that scenario resemble a worship service format?

So much for the spices! So much for all the preparation and rest on the Sabbath! So much for our testimonies! So much for our *anointing the dead body of Christ on the first day of the week!* (For had they not really been planning to anoint a dead body when they went there?)

So much for meeting on Sunday morning!

And so much for the “man’s home” theory unless you really stretch your imagination and combine the Seder feast with the mummification of the still unrisen body of the Son of God! Some assemblies of the Plymouth Brethren sect are honest enough in their worship and prayer to actually say right straight out, “We are here today to celebrate the empty tomb.”

Acts 1:12–26. It is not clear what day of the week this was or, for that matter, what time of day it was, but, from the recorded activities and conversations, it is fairly clear that it was not a “Sunday morning meeting.”

Acts 2:1. According to the New English Bible Peter stood up and said, “. . . These men are not drunk, as ye imagine; for it is only nine in the morning . . .” Well, that does put it in the morning doesn’t it? Furthermore, this was the Day of Pentecost, and, if you follow the reference back to Leviticus 23: 15, 16, you will read: “From the day after the Sabbath. . . you shall count seven full weeks. The day after the seventh Sabbath will make fifty days, and then you shall present to the Lord a grain offering from your new crop . . .” and that will put the day to a Sunday.

But Christ fulfilled *all the* law and nailed it to the cross didn’t he? Are we, therefore, supposed to bring a grain offering to God out of our new crop? What about those of us who are not farmers and have no crops? And, if this was a Sunday morning meeting, why would it happen only the day after each fiftieth Sabbath?

I cannot read a Sunday morning meeting into the Day of Pentecost in Acts two, no matter how hard I try!

Acts 2:42–47. “They met constantly to hear the Apostles teach (K.J.V.: continued steadfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine), and to share the common life, to break bread and to pray. . . With one mind they kept up their daily attendance at the temple, and breaking bread in

private houses, shared their meals with unaffected joy, as they praised God . . .”

I don't know about you, dear Reader, but that passage of Scripture does not support the idea of a Sunday morning meeting, at least in my mind.

Acts 3:1. “One day at *three in the afternoon*, the hour of prayer, Peter and John were *on their way to the temple* . . .”

When it comes to Sunday morning meeting, two things do not add up here. First, it was *three in the afternoon*, and, second, *they were not on their way to a man's home*. There is nothing to indicate that they were holding a mission and were on their way to one of their meetings. *It was the hour of prayer, and it is a well-documented fact that the early disciples—Christians, if you will—continued to worship in the temple and teach in the synagogues well into the first century.*

Acts 12:12. “On the very night before Herod had planned to bring [Peter] forward, [he] was asleep between two soldiers . . . the Lord sent his angel and rescued [him] from Herod's clutches. . . When he realized how things stood, he made for the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where a large company *was at prayer* . . .”

No one can be sure from what is recorded here what night of the week this was, but what we are told is that *it was night* and that a large company was gathered at prayer. This time, indeed, it must be conceded that it was in a home, and I have often wondered if that was the scripture that the workers used to justify the Wednesday evening meeting, which I will be discussing shortly. What we do know again most definitely was that it was surely not on Sunday morning.

Acts 14:14–15. “From Perga [Paul and his companions] continued their journey as far as Pisidian Antioch. *On the Sabbath* they went to synagogue and took their seats . . .” Need I repeat that this was neither a Sunday morning nor a man's home?

Acts 20:7–8. “On the Saturday night, in our assembly for the breaking of bread, Paul, who was to leave the next day, addressed them, and went on speaking until midnight. Now there were many lamps in the upper room where we were assembled . . .” The K.J.V., however, states that it was “the first day of the week,” and it also makes it clear that the people were assembled in [an] “upper chamber,” but both translations are clear on the fact that it was definitely *not morning*.

I will not belabour this loophole any further, but I believe I have shown that the custom certainly is a universal one. There are a few localities that have met (or do meet) for a second service on Sunday evening, but that practice seems to be at the whim of the workers in those areas. Even though the Biblical support is either very thin or non-existent, I am sure it is not of major import whether Christians meet for worship in the morning or in the evening in this present age or whether they even meet in a man's home for that purpose, but the point I have been trying to make with all these references is that I do not believe that I should have been indoctrinated all my life—brainwashed, if you will—into thinking that meeting in a man's home on the first day of the week was a New Testament “law,” that it had continued uninterrupted from apostolic times to the present and was one of the inalterable “truths” that set “the Two-By-Two's” apart as “God's only true church” in the world today.

SPECIAL MEETINGS

It is very difficult to know where these phenomena came from and where they lie in the overall scheme of things. Let me be very clear, however. They must not be confused with Union Meetings which are nothing more than enlarged Sunday morning get-togethers and are held on the first Sunday of each month unless a Special Meeting or a convention overlaps them, and they are, therefore, pre-empted. The Union Meeting seems to have been concocted by the workers as a means of making sure that all the “friends” or “saints” in a given portion of a “field” have the opportunity of meeting at least once a year with every other person in the area.

The Special Meetings could be described as little versions of a convention, and, as far as I can tell, they have the same amount of biblical support and background. To my knowledge, and from all of my travels, I believe the custom to be completely universal within the church movement. The only local variation I have experienced is that in some areas there are two whole “rounds” of these meetings, one “round” being in the fall and the other being in early spring.

Special Meeting practices and customs changed over the years from the time I was a babe in arms to the later years of my association with the group. In the early days they were always held in homes that had fairly large “parlours” with, maybe, an adjoining dining room. I remember being bundled up in a blanket or quilt or buffalo robe as my parents and grandparents fought the elements of ice and snow for fifteen or twenty miles by horse and sleigh. Later we went in an old car as long as “the roads were open,” and I recall everyone hoping that the snow would “hold off” until we got safely home that night.

As cars improved and road conditions became more predictable people started to travel longer distances, and this originated the trend of renting a hall, community centre, or school basement or auditorium. Families made great stacks of sandwiches to take along to share with all the other families' stacks, and, after the assembly had “sung grace,” the ladies or young women had the privilege of sorting out all these sandwiches, cakes, and cookies, putting them in baskets or on trays and passing them around for lunch between meetings along with the “community” tea and coffee that were made fresh on the spot in the kitchen. In the days before plastic and Styrofoam, the women in each household would pack baskets of cups and spoons (after they were identified with a coloured string around the handles—“Let's hope Martha or Jean won't use blue thread, too”—or some other means of recognizing your own wares), and then a great flurry always went on after the last meeting to make sure each “Mother in Israel” was able to find everything she had taken along that morning.

Those were the days when there were three meetings just like a day at convention. And then the workers decided two were enough, and it would enable people from a distance to get home before it was too late. So much time was being saved now with having only two meetings that the idea was introduced that each family would simply supply its own “picnic basket” and save all the fuss of

sorting, and passing, and sorting, and packing. Even more time was saved by the family picnic arrangement, and now it was decided the afternoon meeting could be at 1:00 p.m.

So much time was saved, and so much fellowship was wasted.

The family picnic cut down on friends sitting around talking to other friends unless one were invited to join a little clique of worker-approved “saints” who just might be sufficiently patronizing for the sake of outward appearances or if they hadn’t heard that one was being talked about from Moncton to North Bay. With so little time now between meetings, and with so many attendees having to leave as soon as the afternoon meeting is over in order to get home before nightfall, time to talk about anything to anyone is very limited, and thus, rather subtly it might seem, the only reflection almost everyone has on the day just past is that of the workers’ messages which are in and of themselves a further subliminal means of indoctrination, intimidation, and out-and-out influence peddling.

The “Special Meetings Round” has become a great time for the workers. Maybe it always was, but in the days of sleighs, horses, and blocked roads and even up into the old, heaterless car era, it certainly seemed to consist less of a party atmosphere and more of personal contact on both a spiritual and a human dimension. They would write ahead (telephones were a rare commodity in my young days), and someone would be sure to meet the train and take them “home.” Rarely did they arrive any other way, and rarely did they spend their time prowling around on their own throughout the community. Someone might be asked to take them here or there to visit some less-privileged soul who had no facility at all to accommodate anyone, but the friends who “helped them on their way” felt useful, felt part of something, and felt as if they were playing a role in the overall routine.

Time has eroded that closeness, that need for assistance, that feeling of fellowship and the human bond that comes of inter-dependency, and, as I said, “Special Meetings Round” has become a great time for the workers. The head worker in the field or, better still, the one for the whole province or state, with access to the biggest, fanciest automobile on the market, darts around here and there from airport to bus terminal to train depot picking up the arriving “dignitaries” and whisking them off to all the “approved” homes with the largest bedrooms with two double beds and *en suite* bathrooms with padded toilet seats, homes where the good lady of the manor has both the longest skirt and the biggest bun of hair, and where the man of the house comes in from work with all the right compliments, none of the wrong questions, and can be trusted with an extra bank account where the workers can stash their surplus scrip for use when preaching by faith proves to be a little bit impractical and a whole lot inconvenient. (After all, who knows just when one might have to make a quick visit to the mid-West or the far-East to pay a call on a sister worker under the weather with a bad back or a sore throat and is in dire need of some personal attention and a lot of T.L.C.?) Or, perhaps, these visiting guest speakers are billeted in the home where the head worker of the area has his “office” which is all fitted out with his own telephone and the latest version of fax machines.

I can assure you they were not brought to my humble dwelling which, when I purchased it, I had every hope that it could be used “for the work.” I went shopping and chose specially a set of twin beds with matching dresser and desk, thinking all the while how wonderful it would feel to be able to have the workers to *my own place* where they could rest, write, read, play the piano and generally put their feet up and feel at home, but not one of them ever came to spend a night with me. I guess what happened was that word had got around that I was “mouthing off” too much—asking too many pointed questions, you know, or questioning too closely “the Apostles’ doctrine”—and so the shunning had begun, and I was left off the list which would have been composed by the head worker’s deputy or one of his lieutenants.

In the early winter of 1981 I wrote a letter to Peter Zimmerman, one of the workers who had entered the ministry the year I left and who had spent several days in Ottawa during the “Special Meetings Round” without even bothering to acknowledge me with even as much as a telephone call because, as one kindly old sister worker explained, “I think someone just forgot to put your name on the list, or perhaps they didn’t think you wanted anyone.”

Lists, indeed!

Lists! Lists! And more lists!

“What is the ‘truth’ coming to,” I wrote, “that we are reduced to being visited if and when our name happens to be placed on a list? Where is the love . . . that would prompt an individual to call on an old friend? Where is the love that would abandon lists . . . or even would cause one to wonder why certain names were not on a list?”

“They ignore some people,” I added, “and favour others who already seem to have all the privileges.” I explained that they were a comparatively recent innovation in the evolving scheme of “The Truth,” and that I felt it was time “someone had the guts to stick them where they belonged.”

The letter was never answered as you can imagine. I gave it a month, and when I knew there was no remorse for the treatment I had received, I stopped going to meetings as fast and as finally as if it were the most natural thing in the world for me to do. Two weeks later when George Poole came, kicking and screaming, to visit me, he took special pains to reprimand me for writing such a “nasty letter to poor Peter who was undergoing such stress of his own at the time.”

I have often wondered just how his lawsuit did turn out!

I am not going to try to condemn Special Meetings by showing that there is not a scrap of scriptural support for the custom. They provide great times for the Workers to get together to carry on their little affairs and tête-à-têtes and even in one or two cases to get themselves pregnant although not always by either a brother worker or even a faithful virile saint. The improbity in what they have become is so self-evident that one is left feeling how unjustifiable even the original practice was for it to spawn such deceit and favouritism and to be such a total waste of everyone’s energy, effort, and resources.

For about four months of the year these workers—these “neo-apostles”—take themselves completely away from their mission fields and live “the life of Riley” riding around in groups in the best cars, sleeping in the best beds in the best homes, and dining sumptuously on the best food while the perishing world out there—the world they tell us in their sermons they were called to save—continues to languish and, if the workers are to be believed, go to a lost eternity. Add those months to the three months the young workers take for conventions, and the eight months the senior brothers take, and you’ll have very few months and very few workers left to show “how beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel, and bring glad tidings of good things” to a destitute and perishing world.

Pardon the mixed metaphor, but Special Meetings are a loophole big enough to sink another Titanic!

WEDNESDAY EVENING MEETINGS

Before I begin to look at any loophole that is presented by the Wednesday evening meeting phenomenon, I feel I should explain to the uninitiated what it is.

It is, in fact, very similar to the Sunday morning meeting. It must be held in a private home even though not in an upper room or even “in the best room in the house”—at least at Cornelius Jaenen’s residence where we gathered in the family room. (To be fair, we assembled in that room on some Sundays, too, but not for Union Meetings.) It is almost “regulation” that the meeting not be much longer than an hour, but no one will get up to leave and no one will be excommunicated if the singing of the last hymn “goes a bit over.” The man of the house, to which some of the workers refer as “deacons,” conducts the service, and the pattern is identical to the Sunday morning meeting with hymn singing, audible prayers and testimonies by both men and women alike. Depending upon the ego of the deacon—as with the Sunday morning bishop—the members of the group get to choose more or fewer of the hymns. (One such elder in Ottawa, a man named Hans Mestern, took it upon himself for a while to choose ALL the hymns. When I could stand the situation no longer, I invited him over to my apartment one evening and expressed my feelings about his doing that and explained that apart from the fact that it was not his duty to do so, he was also robbing us as members of the group of the privilege of singing a hymn that had been on our minds as well. He did very kindly change his pattern, and I like to think everyone benefited from my private suggestion.)

The first difference is, of course, that there is no emblem-taking on Wednesday evening as that is done every Sunday in the home of the *elder* who just might have a smidgeon more authority than the *deacon*. (It can get a bit confusing when both meetings are in the same home and the deacon then becomes his own elder!) Perhaps we could say that is a loophole within a loophole!

The second disparity is noted in the testimonies. While on Sunday one is free to read any scripture at all to produce a homily to edify the group, on Wednesday night there is a set study list often produced by the workers at convention time and sent out to all “churches” in each field. (In Germany the list is nationwide.) Before the list fetish, each church could study the Bible, book by book, in whatever order the group chose, but then when a poor worker would drop in on one of his “flying trips,” he just wouldn’t know what the study was, and surely one would not want to catch a worker unprepared! Thus the list was born providing not only unanimity but also ensuring a whole lot more power and control by the workers over the flock, providing even more guaranties that the topics to be studied emphasized and underscored over and over again the aspects of the cult’s dogma and philosophy.

The third obvious variance is that the meeting is at night, an aspect that I have already mentioned comes closer to scriptural teaching than does the Sunday morning get-together.

Do you remember away back at the end of Chapter One I wrote: “In the beginning (or so they said) everyone decided that a Wednesday evening Bible study would be held. . .”? Of course you knew, as you read that, that I was being facetious for nowhere in the scriptures from Genesis to The Book of the Revelations does any such edict exist. But, strangely enough, on one level I was being quite serious.

In the beginning . . .

This is an extremely relative phrase, and the only time I have ever read that there is no beginning to anything is in reference to the Son of God in Hebrews 7: 3. Wednesday evening meetings, therefore, must, of necessity, have a beginning. So when do you suppose that was? Jesus didn’t legislate them. Abraham and the prophets didn’t predict them. Neither Paul nor the authors of the gospels wrote of them, and I do not read that they are going to be a part of “the new heaven and the new earth.”

Is it just possible then that, as far as this Two-By-Two cult is concerned, they could have had their beginning with the first workers who “brain-stormed” the whole movement into existence?

That is, in fact, exactly what happened, and there is a fair amount of well-researched literature extant to help us arrive at this conclusion. I have in my possession a wonderfully informative pamphlet entitled “GO-PREACHERS” which quotes newspaper articles, court records, and personal eyewitness reports from Ireland at the turn of the century and puts the first house meetings, both Sunday and mid-week, in the year 1908. Mind you, there may be some who just might argue that after Peter was miraculously released from prison that night in Acts 12, it was a Wednesday evening bible study that he went to at the home of Mary the mother of John!

We have only to look around us, however, at the vast number of “worldly” groups that follow the mid-week custom for us to have ample proof that it was concocted and is maintained by church leaders whose emphasis is on “works” and who need to exert all the control they can over their members. The fact is, however, other denominations are not nearly as dogmatic about it as are the Two-By-Two’s for many others can often be found gathering on a Thursday or perhaps a Tuesday or, if they’re really zealous, on all three or any given two. I believe there is one sect that encourages its “-ites” to meet on five or six.

Did you notice that I used the word “dogmatic”?

I remember many years ago when I was working on my university degree at night school and needed a course that was offered only on Wednesday evening. The deacon where I attended “meeting” thought it would be quite suitable for a switch to be made so that we could have the bible study on Thursday for the duration of my course. He remembered that such an arrangement had been made a few years previously by the workers in a near-by rural “field” for a group of farmers who had to attend a cattle auction as part of their livelihood. Ottawa, however, was a different “field,” and we were in a different “jurisdiction” at a different time, and certainly taking a course, according to the workers, was not my bread and butter. “No,” they directed the deacon, “the meeting *must not be changed from Wednesday* just in case any friends or workers travelling through town had planned their trip around the meeting schedule.” Thus, that year I missed meeting for several months, and I still recall the feelings of guilt I had because I was putting worldly things ahead of God. Oh, if I’d only known then what I know now!

I was serious when I used the word “dogmatic.”

I also made the statement that these meetings “must be held in a man’s home.”

That certainly was the law when I grew up, but in all of my “professing” years and in all of the hundreds of Wednesday evening meetings I have attended throughout the world, only one is more memorable than all the others and that is for reasons that may now be very difficult for me to explain, and, having done so, it may be even harder for me to justify my emotions both then and now. Then: because I was so devout and so spiritually exercised by what I felt was “right”; and now: because I see the emptiness in the “law” and the futility and fruitlessness of it all.

An older worker had come into the city.

I not only had heard about him all my life from my parents and grandparents, but, from an early age, I had begun writing to him, and, over the years, I like to think my letters had become more mature and meaningful from a spiritual standpoint. After all, I had professed and had grown up and was now away from home on my own working in my chosen career, and, for the first time, I was to meet this lifetime “idol” face to face. For some reason he arrived on a Monday, and I went to the home where he was staying to see him.

His hair and eyebrows were snow-white, and they tended to emphasize the red-brown tan of his skin for, although he was a native of Ireland, he had spent about thirty years preaching in the Caribbean.

His name was Tom Law.

Our friendship was instant and forever, but I had only a rented room in those days and had no place to show him the hospitality I felt he deserved. But I felt I could not do enough for him or drive him enough places to help him see how welcome he was. *And he was going to be in town for Wednesday night and wanted to see everyone at once if that could be arranged!*

That sort of thing had often been done before, and, besides, we did have Union Meetings in the city so surely there could be no problem with having a Union Wednesday Night Meeting at any one of those houses.

But there was a problem!

For reasons that I have never understood, one of the elder/deacon types, a man named Keith Jackson, himself an ex-worker, deciding there was no point in upsetting any household for such a minor cause, took it upon himself to rent the hall that the workers usually used for their gospel meetings, and there, at no physical disruption to anyone, all the friends from all the churches gathered to welcome and to hear a man who had, in my opinion at the time, sacrificed many years in the harvest field. I felt then, and I think I still do feel, that there seemed to be “no room in the inn.”

That was a singularly strange experience for me to try to “take part” from somewhere down in one of the rows of seats and to listen and concentrate as my fellow-members did the same when we were all used to sitting around in a circle in someone’s living room. Perhaps I am being hypocritical, contradictory, and judgmental on an issue that I have described as being one great loophole in the first place, but I still feel that as long as we believed “the lie,” and as long as we did not know that it was a lie, we all had a duty to uphold and defend that belief. And, truly, back in 1957, had the Apostle Paul still been around, he could have written of me as he did of the Israelites in Romans 10: 2 “. . . that [I had] a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.”

As I recall and recount that experience now, however, it only serves the more to show me how really brainwashed I was, for, instead of recalling anything edifying that was preached in that “meeting” by someone I felt was so special, I was caught up in the *sin of the setting*, and that is the only memory that remains.

For me, that makes this universal loophole all the more tragic and gives it a sin all its own.

LONG HAIR STYLES FOR WOMEN

This loophole presents a universal ordinance, and, in all of my thirty-six years of service to the workers and, as I supposed, to God, I can recall only two established “Professing” Two-by-Two-type Christian women who had the intestinal fortitude to cut their hair *short* and proceed to come to meetings *and take part!*

One of those women is memorable in my mind for I cannot recall her ever coming to a meeting without *real bread* in her testimony. I used to think how strange and contradictory it was that God would speak to her and through her so helpfully if she were all the while defying his “law” that some suppose is outlined by Paul in I Corinthians 11:5–15. I spoke to some of the other “girls” in our meeting about this phenomenon, but apart from being very sure that “it was a sin for a woman to cut her hair” they really had no suitable explanations for the reasons that God would continue to use such a “sinner” in such a helpful way.

And, typically, I even tried to iron out this problem with some of the workers, the last of my serious efforts being with a sister worker named Lois McKnight from Louisiana who sojourned for a few years in the Ottawa area before she was asked to go to preach in Haiti. I liked her manner, really, for, although one didn't have much success in changing her mind about very many things, she did have the ability to sit and talk and listen.

"But if a woman have long hair," I quoted from Paul's writing, "it is a glory to her: for her hair is given to her for a covering. But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God."

Turning to the New English Bible, I pursued our conversation farther. ". . . Does not Nature herself teach you that while flowing locks disgrace a man, they are a woman's glory? For her locks were given for covering. However, if you insist on arguing, let me tell you, there is no such custom among us, or in any of the congregations of God's people . . ."

I tried, as would any English teacher worth his salt, to direct attention to the key words and phrases in the passages:

. . . *if* a woman have . . .

. . . if any man seem to be contentious . . .

. . . however . . . *there is no such custom among us, or in ANY of the churches of God* . . .

To me at that time—and to this very day—I cannot believe how Paul's words are misconstrued to create such a glaring loophole.

"He meant that we have no such custom of being contentious," my old friend Lois insisted, and she made it very clear to me that that is exactly what I was being at that moment and that further discussion on the topic would prove fruitless and vain. I was never able to get her (or anyone else, for that matter) to reconcile Paul's words in those verses with 1 Samuel 16: 7: ". . . for the Lord seeth not as man seeth: for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart . . ." or, for that matter, with Paul's own words in Romans 2: 28 and 29 where he wrote those words to which I earlier referred: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly . . . but he is a Jew which is one inwardly . . ."

Thus, the loophole is ignored, and the myth that God wants all of his female Christians to let their hair grow long is taught as a "commandment of men" the world over even though it has no biblical support and bears not even the slightest resemblance to the doctrine of Jesus Christ.

You may recall that, much earlier on, I wrote that the words "long" and "short" are extremely relative entities in the cult, and that, while a man would be considered to have long hair if he just didn't have it trimmed properly and regularly, and it appeared to be down the back of his neck a little and perhaps curled somewhat around the ears, a woman with the selfsame length would be forbidden any part or privileges in meeting since hers surely would be short! When one reads I Corinthians 11 again *very carefully*, the words *short* and *long* seem not to be at all relative.

Look at verses 4 and 5, and I direct you to the New English Translation: "A man who keeps his head *covered* when he prays or prophesies brings shame on his head; a woman, on the contrary, brings shame on her head if she prays or prophesies *bareheaded*; it is as bad as if her head were *shaved*. . ."

Now, take a peek at verse 6: "If a woman is not to wear a veil she might as well have her hair *cut off*, but if it is a disgrace for her to be *cropped and shaved*, then she should wear a veil."

My English training certainly teaches me that the expressions "bareheaded", "cut off" and "cropped and shaved" are a far cry from the present relative terms of "long" and "short"!

I would like to re-examine these passages now by going one layer deeper.

In verse 2 we read: "I commend you for. . . maintaining the *tradition* I handed on to you . . ." Verse 3 states: ". . . while every man has Christ for his Head, a woman's head is man . . . for," say verses 8 and 9, "man did not originally spring from woman, but woman was made out of man; and man was not created for woman's sake, but woman for the sake of man; and therefore," according to verse 10, "it is a woman's duty to have a sign of authority on her head. . ."

But here comes the clincher!

"And yet," according to verses 11 and 12, "in Christ's fellowship woman is as essential to man as man to woman, and it is through woman that man now comes to be. . ."

I finally am able to see so clearly what Paul meant when he said, "We have no such custom [of long hair for women], and neither the churches of God," because he was without question saying only that it was simply a *tradition* he had brought (and taught) them from his Pharisee days, and it rather pleased him to see that they were maintaining it although without any basis in the fellowship—or doctrine—of Jesus Christ.

There can be no question that he would have concurred fully with Jesus' words in Matthew 15:6 when the latter chided the Pharisees by saying, "You have made God's law null and void out of respect for your tradition." In fact, I believe Paul's own words in Galatians 1:13 and 14 prove the veracity of my assumption when he wrote rather humbly, I think: "You have heard what my manner of life was when I was still a practising Jew: how savagely I persecuted the church of God, and tried to destroy it; and how in the practice of our national religion I was outstripping many of my Jewish contemporaries in my boundless devotion to the *traditions of my ancestors*."

Finally, dear reader, does not the fallacy of this "long-haired loophole" fall into place?

I believe it bears repeating. . .

“There is no such custom in any of the congregations of God’s people.”

A HOMELESS, CELIBATE MINISTRY

Before I begin to examine this loophole from a biblical standpoint, I would like to say that celibacy in both the Roman Catholic Church and the Two-by-Two cult was not always either a practice or a requirement.

Until the twelfth century, for example, Roman Catholic priests, like their present Greek and “other” Orthodox brothers, could—and did—marry, settle down, and maintain a conventional family-type life. However, when the Church saw that it would lose a lot of its wealth to the wives and children of deceased priests, and, indeed, even to the maintenance of living priests’ families, the “powers that [were]” decided that the only way to solve such erosion of riches was to require its priesthood to remain celibate. (Or should we just leave it as unmarried?)

Likewise, when the Two-by-Two “movement” was invented in the late nineteenth century, there was no doctrinal restriction on marriage and many of the first workers were, in fact, wedded couples. The founder, a man named William Irvine, while, perhaps not exactly *married* himself, or, for that matter celibate, certainly was the father of at least one son.

Since I am now in my early sixties, and since this undenominational non-sect is yet not quite a hundred, it was only around forty years old when I was born. Thus, it has been my privilege (for want of a better word) to have known, known *of*, and/or to have met personally or listened to many of the original propounders of the hoax, and, even within my sphere of experience, I have known many married couples who were “sacrificing their lives in the *harvest field*.”

Just to name a very few there were Tom and “Mrs.” Betty, Joe and Ella Brown, George and Maggie Walker (who are not to be confused with *the* George Walker!), Murdo and Dolly MacLeod, Verdun and Anna Batstone, George and Ella Johnson, Lars and Olga Bye, Otto and Manny Hartmann (of Germany and Switzerland), Tom and Shirley Dennison, and William and Millie McIlwrath. Although I did not know him personally, the overseeing worker in Italy around twenty-five years ago was also married. The gossip which circulated at the time—and it is only gossip since I cannot corroborate it presently—was that he was discouraged from marrying, but that he presented a very persuasive argument to his “chief of staff” and was finally allowed to have his own way.

Of course, none of these couples was allowed to maintain a household, and they, too, had to live like un-muzzled oxen, as did their supposedly single counterparts.

Over the years and around the globe there have been many other “man and wife” teams, but in the late 1960’s and early seventies there began to be what I can only call a “clamp-down,” and, one by one, the couples within my own personal purview were gradually encouraged to leave the Work, and, if they didn’t do so quietly and willingly, they were subjected to many sorts of pressures, not the least of which were accusations of unfaithfulness, wrong-spiritedness, drunkenness, preaching false doctrine, and—perish the thought—collusion with the “weaker saints.”

It has, as I have explained, been many years since I made my exit from the group, and I can neither confirm nor deny the existence of any couples yet in the ministry. I do know for a certainty, however, that in all of eastern Canada no such practice is carried on or allowed.

“Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord.”

I had to smile as I copied this quotation from Proverbs 18: 22 as I almost could not resist the temptation to transcribe it to read, “He that findeth a *good wife* findeth a *good thing* . . .” I think you will better understand my reasons for this urge when you read my next chapter on “A Worker in Waiting.”

But it’s time to be serious.

In Matthew 8:14 we read (in the New English Bible): “Jesus then went to Peter’s house and found Peter’s mother-in-law in bed with fever . . .” This would not be such a strange statement if that’s all there were to it, and if we didn’t know who Peter was. Four chapters before, however, in Matthew 4:18 we find Jesus “. . . walking by the Sea of Galilee when he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew; for they were fishermen. Jesus said unto them, ‘Come with me and I will make you fishers of men.’ And at once they left their nets and followed him.”

So who was Peter? *He was the first disciple whom Jesus chose*, and there he was, the terrible man (!), with a home, a wife, and, horror of all horrors, a live-in mother-in-law who was in poor health, no less, and yet all Jesus had said to him initially was: “Follow me.”

If a wife were so wrong for a disciple of Jesus to have, don’t you suppose his first question to Peter would have been “Are you married?” The answer would surely have been “Yes,” and I can see the next sentence being something like, “That’s too bad, really. I would love to have asked you to follow me so that I could have made you a fisher of men, but since you’re married, that just isn’t going to be possible. Maybe you should profess and become one of the saints, and then we’ll tie you down with a meeting in your home instead.”

Just briefly, I would like to take one more peek at the Roman Catholic Dogma. Not too many months ago the present Pope in all his supposed infallibility has come down again most strongly against a married priesthood within his jurisdiction, and yet that same Pope hypocritically accepts and fully believes that the Apostle Peter was the first Pope of the Church.

Do you know the Peter I mean? The one with a wife? A home? And a mother-in-law who “lay sick of a fever”? It would be almost cute and laughable to poke fun at these loopholes in any of these churches or “doctrines of men”— or cults, if you will—if they were not, in

fact, pretending and purporting to be leading humankind straight to the right hand of God the Father.

There are so many varieties, and there are so many variations on the same theme!

In this so-called undenominational variety the terms celibacy and homeless are, if not synonymous, very intertwined, and either one can mean both, or both of them can mean either one. I was born, bred, weaned, and grew fat on the philosophy that “the church **in** the home and the preacher **out of** the home” was the pivotal plank of the doctrine of Jesus Christ as well as one’s only hope of salvation and the direct ticket to the very throne of God. So, as I have already mentioned, even those married couples I knew who were in the work had to leave behind their homes and, in some cases, their own children, and “go out in faith,” living, not like “the birds of the air [which] have nests [or] the foxes [which] have holes, but like the Son of Man [who had] nowhere to lay his head.”

Celibacy for the truly celibate seems almost to be a minor sacrifice to make in comparison to that which would be made by a couple who had to say good bye to their little children every year after convention and watch them go home many miles with friends or relatives knowing full well they would not see them for perhaps another year. What a tear that would be at any mother’s heartstrings! And I stood at a distance and watched that very scenario unfold before my very eyes at Almonte convention on more than one occasion. (I always felt that those married couples really deserved the privilege of being able to sleep with each other as a couple if for no other reason than that their “celibacy” from their children was a whole lot harder to endure than that imposed on any other man or woman who had chosen to remain single and childless anyway.)

This line of reasoning, of course, leads me to my next quotation from John 19:26 and 27. “. . . [Jesus] saith unto his mother, ‘Woman, behold thy son!’ Then saith he to the disciple, ‘Behold thy mother!’ And from that hour that disciple took her *unto his own home*.”

If that disciple was John, and I believe it is common consensus that it was, there is no question that he *had his own home*, and, while scripture does not record any further information about his personal life, I would be very surprised indeed if he did not have a wife and family in that home with him. (Who knows? Maybe he had a sick mother-in-law, too!)

I often wonder what those cynical old bachelors who are in control of the doctrine of the movement as well as the dried-up, clucking old maids who run around after them in perfectly good hand-maiden fashion swooning and crooning over their every turn of phrase think when they read that passage in I Corinthians 9:3–6.

“To those that put me in the dock this is my answer: Have I no right to eat and drink? Have I no right to take a Christian wife about with me, *like the **rest** of the Apostles **and** the Lord’s brothers, **and** Cephas? Or are Barnabas and I alone bound to work for our living?*”

It seems very clear to me that Paul knew full well that *the rest of the Apostles* had Christian wives, so where in the world would the idea come from that Jesus had instituted and sent out a celibate ministry? And does it not seem just a little bit likely to you that Paul really did mean that he and Barnabas *were working for their living* and were not sponging around from house to house eating the fatted calf, sleeping in the best guest room, and borrowing the family’s fittest donkey or camel to get them to their next gospel meeting or perhaps up to Jerusalem to attend the Feast of Tabernacles?

Isn’t it a shame really that those first workers back in Ireland could not, in fact, have proven apostolic succession of their sect? For, if they had, they surely would not have been able to so blithely institute a method of ministry and worship that contained so many glaring loopholes and that bore so little resemblance to the doctrine of Jesus Christ.

For this reason I am going to direct your attention to the words Paul wrote in I Timothy 4: 1–3. (N.E.B.).

“The spirit says expressly that in after times some *will desert from the faith* and give their minds to subversive *doctrines inspired by devils*, through the *specious falsehoods of men* whose own conscience is branded with the devil’s sign. *They forbid marriage* and inculcate abstinence from certain foods, though God created them to be *enjoyed with thanksgiving by believers who have inward knowledge of the truth*.” As you can imagine, I grew up listening to these verses being used to condemn the Roman Catholic Church, which, as I have already said, *now* forbids marriage in the priesthood. But, likewise, the Two-By-Two cult also *now* disallows the same practice for its Workers, so, in all likelihood, Paul was not referring only to any one such “subversive doctrine” which he felt would be “inspired by devils.”

I must leave further interpretation and speculation to you, the reader, but surely we all agree that those of us who have spent over half of our lifetimes in such a false—yes, even corrupt—way of worship and have become aware of how many times we have listened to people “speaking lies in hypocrisy” (K.J.V.), we can pretty well conclude that the Apostle Paul did not have even the Roman Catholics in mind.

“And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came to him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things *which concern the Lord Jesus Christ*, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.” (K.J.V.)

“He stayed there two full years *at his own expense*, with a welcome for all who came to him, *proclaiming the kingdom and teaching the **facts** about the Lord Jesus Christ quite openly and without hindrance*.” (N.E.B.)

These verses from Acts 28:30 and 31 simply provide more proof than ever for me that the celibate, homeless theory that the workers preach as a means of salvation for their followers is one of the biggest loopholes there is in the whole set-up, and that almost more people can be deceived and led astray by it than by many of the other man-made doctrines which are purported to be the will of God.

THE ISSUE OF DIVORCE

This has not become just a loophole as seen from the biblical “contradictions”—or, if you prefer, *variations*—but it seems to be far from a universal ordinance among the cult’s top leaders.

Some of them—workers, that is—allow it.

Some don’t.

Some workers preach against it.

Some don’t.

Some ex-workers have married a spouse who was divorced, and they were allowed to maintain their full status in the meetings.

Some couldn’t.

Some workers have given their permission to some friends caught in bad marriages to divorce and remarry, and then they have changed their minds and denied their own echo on the subject.

Some haven’t even done that much.

Workers . . . workers . . . workers . . . workers!

Did the name of God ever come up? Did the doctrine of the love of Jesus Christ ever get mentioned?

Not yet, it didn’t, for the workers make the rules and run the show *according to whatever whim of fate and preference each one is moved by*, and the followers either go along with them or get shunned out of spiritual existence by them and “fall by the wayside” as prey to those nasty worldly “birds of the air”!

Don’t those workers feel just ever so good and ever so proud and self-righteous when they can chalk up to their credit even one more “dead Christian” who was “just not *willing for* all that it takes to become a child of God”?

“Tsk! Tsk! What a shame that poor old Tom and Alice (or John and Mary, or Henry and Bertha or . . .) had such bad spirits!”

You will recall that, back in Chapter III, I wrote that the fourth part of the Marriage Mandate covers the problems and dilemmas encountered by the **divorce issue**, and that it is a real can of worms. I wrote briefly then about a case history or two that showed the inconsistencies in the various teachings among the workers and mentioned that some genuine confusion could, in fact, arise from the scripture itself.

I promised you that I would attempt to address this confusion in a “later chapter,” and I guess that time has come.

In Matthew 5:31 and 32 (in the New English Bible) we read: “They were told, [according to Deuteronomy 24:1] ‘A man who divorces his wife must give her a note of dismissal.’ But what I tell you is this: if a man divorces his wife for any cause *other than unchastity he involves her in adultery*; and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.”

Let us look now to Mark 10:11 where the biblical loophole comes into real play: “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her: so too, if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.”

H-mm! Is that a loophole, or is it just that can of worms I was talking about?

Let me now stretch the loophole a bit larger and ask you to look with me, if you will, at I Corinthians 7.

“To the married,” we read in verses 10 and 11, “I give this ruling, which is not mine but the Lord’s: a wife must not separate herself from her husband; if she does, she must remain unmarried or reconciled to her husband; and the husband must not divorce his wife.”

“. . . *which is not mine but the Lord’s*. . .”

But something in those words seems to be somewhat abrogated in verses 12 to 15 where the selfsame Paul continued to write, “*To the rest* I say this, as my own word, not as the Lord’s: if a Christian has a heathen wife, and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her; and a woman who has a heathen husband willing to live with her must not divorce her husband . . . If on the other hand the heathen partner wishes for a *separation*, let him have it. In such cases *the Christian husband or wife is under no compulsion*; but God’s call is a call to live in peace.”

“. . . as my own words, not as the Lord’s . . .”

Do you see what I mean? Do you remember my first paragraph in Chapter II where I made reference to “Pauline Doctrine”? When Paul writes here, “. . . as my own words, not the Lord’s . . .” is he, in fact, propounding his own doctrine, or does he have authority of God to literally discount what he admitted to earlier as the Lord’s word and not his own?

If we are to believe and accept that the Bible in its entirety is the word of a God “that cannot lie” and that every jot and title of it has been written by men who were inspired by that Creator who, himself, “is the same yesterday, today, and forever,” then we have no choice but to espouse the words of Paul as part of that very truth and inspiration and to accept that the “Christian husband or wife is under no compulsion” when he or she grants the separation to the heathen partner who wished for it.

Let us then, for clarity’s sake, just go back and review those words that Paul was inspired to write.

Does it sound very much to you as if *the rest* are every bit as married as are *the married*? And, if such be the case, is it not just a trifle confusing as to what would allow *the rest* to separate without any compulsion to the spouse, whereas the *married* can be neither

separated nor divorced under any circumstances?

To give those “workers. . . workers. . . workers. . .” their due, is it any wonder really that some preach against divorce while some don’t? Or that some have allowed it to occur while some haven’t? And that some have even been allowed to marry a divorced person and to retain their status in the meetings while others have been summarily excommunicated without a hearing or a trial or even as much as a “by your leave”?

I wonder if we could try to derive any logical conclusions from all of these various passages or references.

To begin with it seems abundantly clear that, regardless of the text or the context, the outstanding problem or snag is remarriage after a divorce, a practice which seems to cause the sin of adultery. But, when we’re on this touchy topic of adultery, I’d like to review what we read in Matthew 5:28: “If a man looks on a woman with a lustful eye, he has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”

I would like (at the risk of being chauvinistic and perhaps being accused of harassment of some sort) to ask all my readers in general—and the male readers in particular—how it could ever be possible for a man and a woman to meet, to appeal to each other, to entertain thoughts of dating and eventual marriage without even a trace of that lust in the heart or—to put it bluntly in the vernacular—to have some sense of that well-known emotion called sex-appeal.

Who among us, then, has not by such lusting, committed adultery in our hearts?

Have we then not broken a commandment of God? Have we then not all sinned and come short. . .? Are we then not all destined to an eternity in outer darkness for if we sin in one area are we not as guilty as sinning in all?

And is the sin of adultery worse for those who re-marry after a divorce than for the rest of us who feel so pure because we lust after someone only in our hearts?

Or (and I’m really pressing my luck with this one!) is adultery in the heart any different or better—or, for that matter, any less sinful—than adultery practiced with any other organ of the body?

I believe it’s time now to look carefully at Romans 13:7–10.

“Discharge your obligations to all men; pay tax and toll, reverence and respect, to those to whom they are due. Leave no claim outstanding against you, except that of mutual love. *He who loves his neighbor has satisfied every claim of the law.* For the commandments, ‘*thou shalt not commit adultery*, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not covet,’ and any other commandment there may be, are all summed up in the one rule, *love your neighbor as yourself.*’ Love cannot wrong a neighbor; therefore *the whole law is summed up in love.*”

I am left absolutely baffled by the attitude of those workers. . . workers. . . workers who dare to deny fellowship to anyone married, unmarried, divorced, re-married, or in any other combination of such complicated circumstances as might present itself from time to time when they have such explicit direction in the word of God that love is all that has ever counted when it comes to the doctrine of Jesus Christ.

I firmly believe, and I state it again unequivocally, that the workers like the Pharisees they are and whom they represent “have made the law of God of none effect by [their] tradition” and by the commandments of men that were—and are—the basis for this cult’s movement from its inception until the present day.

DRESS RESTRICTIONS FOR WOMEN

Back in Chapter III entitled “The Outward Jew” I chose the CLOTHING CODE as my first classification of taboos for the “outer man,” and you will recall that I wrote that the “Code” applies to both men and women, but that, over the years, the men have had an unfair advantage over their female counterparts. I deliberately left out one major ban in order that I could elaborate on it here and discuss it more thoroughly as the fairly extensive and universal loophole that it is and has always been.

I am referring, of course, as you have already guessed, to the fact that women in the group are not allowed to wear slacks or jeans or pants suits or any other form of apparel which could be categorized as “pertaining to a man.”

And when I say, “Not allowed,” I mean, “NOT ALLOWED!”

“Why, no,” say the workers one and all—male and female—with one accord, “we have no rules and laws within the group, and we place no restrictions on our people beyond what God lays on their hearts to do.”

Sure! And they have a bridge or two in Brooklyn that they’d like to sell you, too!

But, before I attempt to discredit this loophole by examining the Testaments—Old and New—I would like to present one anecdote that shows you how foolish the ordinance is and then to mention two or three situations where it is absolutely and blatantly asinine—if not shamefully immodest—for a woman to have to clad herself in a skirt or a dress.

A few years ago one of my father’s cousins was living in Montreal in what I believe was a third-floor, walk-up flat. Out at the back there was an outside porch from which was installed a pulley-type clothes line that ran to a high pole behind the building. You can imagine what it would be like to go out onto that porch on any given day in the sub-zero temperatures of a Canadian winter to hang or retrieve the laundry.

On one such occasion she pulled on a pair of her husband's trousers to protect herself from the elements, and as she was hanging out her clothes, her door bell rang, and in came Horace Click, who was the Head Worker in the province of Quebec at that time. Of course, she went immediately to change her "outfit," but a week or so later she was left in tears when she received a letter from the silly old man telling her how disappointed he was to have found her "dressed in man's apparel" and warning her of the inevitable dire consequences to which her sinful action could lead.

Can you believe such stupidity, such lack of understanding, and such inability to assess a given situation? Even if it were wrong for a woman to be clothed in man's apparel—and I will be discussing this at greater length momentarily—would you not suppose that any "fellow human being" with an ounce of the milk of human kindness would have summed it all up and would have seen how sensible and practical it was for anyone in that situation to be as comfortable as possible?

Of course, no one ever said that the prerequisite for being a worker was wisdom or compassion, or having a sense of thoughtfulness and caring or, for that matter, even being terribly bright. With a few isolated and hard-to-find exceptions they're a bunch of self-appointed demagogues who fancy themselves as therapists and counselors and who see their primary role as police rather than the feeders and shepherds of a worldwide group of people who believe and are persuaded they are the only true adherents to God's eternal plan of salvation.

(I must tell you here that it was this same Horace Click whose surprise arrival at my parents' home one evening was the cause of our having to hastily cancel that perfectly innocuous "slide show" that I have already written about in Chapter III, and which we were about to enjoy along with one of the senior sister workers!

(He has, of course, long since passed on to his "reward" wherever or whatever that may be!)

What man among men would be comfortable going out to the barn and doing his chores around the cows or horses or other animals while being required to wear a skirt? How would that skirt suit him when he would go out on his tractor, or with a horse, to plough his fields and prepare them for spring planting? Do you think he'd be any happier in that same garb when it came time for "seed time and harvest"?

I doubt it, and I believe every one of you agrees with me.

But many and many a time I have seen the poor farmers' wives and daughters who felt it necessary to bear their share of the work around the business having to go out—so what if it was winter!—dressed only in attire "appropriate for a mother and daughter of Israel."

Berry picking, to me, is a time when, if it were ever appropriate for a woman to wear "something sensible," it would be then. But I am sure there are horror tales stacked upon horror tales of poor country girls and women having to go out in a skirt and dress and a pair of nylons (or black lisle in my early days) and a five-gallon pail to pick strawberries, blueberries, and—I am coming to them!—BLACKBERRIES. What foolishness it is for any worker, male or female, old or young, to sit in judgment on anyone who chooses to exercise comfort, common sense and decency when they are deliberately going into a situation where all three of those aspects are threatened.

We could go on and on, of course, and include snow-sledding or tobogganing or skiing, fishing or boating, and mountain-climbing or hiking, but, as we all very well know, we are entering one of the very gray areas called "sports," and, since *the yare* nearly all taboo at all times, and pretty well completely banned on Sundays, we have really left the "Clothing Code" behind and have touched again on that old topic called the "Entertainment Ethic," and I really think you have a fairly clear picture of all that *that entails*!

"No woman shall wear an article of man's clothing, nor shall a man put on woman's dress; for those who do these things are abominable to the Lord your God."

You will find that passage if you read Deuteronomy 22: 5.

And, while you're there, please turn back a page or two to chapter 12, and read the words in verse one: "These are the statutes and laws that you shall be careful to observe in the land which the Lord the God of your fathers is giving you to occupy as long as you live on earth."

Now, with these latter words as an introduction to material that is included in at least fourteen chapters of our modern Bible, let us take a look at just a very few of the other ordinances that are contained within those parameters.

"Year by year you shall set aside a tithe of all the produce of your seed, of everything that grows on the land."(14:22). [When was the last time you heard of a good Two-by-Two doing that? Or when did you ever hear the workers preach that all good Two-by-Two's were *required* to do it? In fact, I heard John Cook preaching from Hebrews 7 and using verses 12 and 26–28 to show that Jesus, by fulfilling all the old law and becoming the new testament in himself, had actually *abolished* the tithe.]

"When a fellow-Hebrew, man or woman, sells himself to you as a slave, he shall serve you for six years and in the seventh year you shall set him free." (15:12). [Do Two-by-Two's do this today? I can't recall a worker ever telling me anything about what I should do with *my slaves*! However, Arthur Benton may have had that thought in mind when, after I met him in Washington, D.C. in 1961 and asked him if he knew a certain worker whose homeland was Jamaica, he replied, "No, I don't, but, of course, there are a lot of colored workers around that we don't meet with."]

“Observe the month of Bib and keep the Passover to the Lord your God. . .” (16:1). [In all of my thirty-six professing years I never once observed the month of Bib, I never knew of any other Two-by-Two who did, and I can tell you quite confidently that I never heard a worker telling any of us even when it was, let alone that we were supposed to “keep it.” In fact, I heard many sermons preached about the “stupid Alsations” who had “turned back to the mean and beggarly spirits of the elements” and were condemned by Paul for keeping again “special days and *months* and seasons and years.”]

“When you wage war against your enemy and the Lord your God delivers them into your hands and you take some of them captive, then if you see a comely woman among the captives and take a liking to her, you may marry her. You shall bring her into your house, where she shall shave her head, pare her nails, and discard the clothes which she had when captured. Then she shall stay in your house and mourn her father and mother for a full month. After that you may have intercourse with her; you shall be her husband and she shall be your wife. But if you no longer find her pleasing let her go free. . .” (21:10–14). [I just hope all the good, self-righteous Two-by-Two’s remember to do this the next time they go to war! When was the last time you heard George Walker or Andrew Abernathy or Barry Barclay or Ontario’s very own Carson Co wan and John Richards—he of spy and axe man fame—preach long and laborious homilies about this aspect of “the faith,” especially the part about paring the nails and discarding the clothing. . .? Oh, yes, and where did the poor woman’s rights come into play?]

“When a man has a son who is disobedient and out of control, and will not obey his father or his mother, or pay attention when they punish him, then his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of the town, ‘This son of ours is disobedient and out of control; he will not obey us, he is a wastrel and a drunkard.’ Then all the men of the town shall stone him to death, and you will thereby rid yourself of this wickedness. . .” [And how!] (21:18–21). [I can tell you right now that I am glad the workers didn’t enforce *this law* in the days when my mother used to drag me out of many a convention meeting to beat me within an inch of my life because I had got bored with the two-hour-long session and had started “acting up”—or so I was told. In fact, I can’t recall any set of parents being told by the workers to take their unruly son down to the town hall to have him stoned to death by the local mayor and town councilors. I suppose the workers would have happily done it for them themselves if they’d been asked to, but it just never seemed to come up, somehow!]

“No man whose testicles have been crushed or whose organ has been severed shall become a member of the assembly of the Lord.” (23:1). [If this rule had been enforced, every man who “raised his hand” or “stood to his feet” during the singing of the last verse of “Just as I Am, Without One Plea—so, okay, there is a pun intended!—to indicate his desire to “walk in the lowly way that Jesus trod while here on the earth before us” 1 would have either to have brought a doctor’s certificate with him to that gospel meeting to prove his wholeness, so to speak, or else allowed himself to be subjected to a strip search at the door on his way out. And what would happen today with our modern medical technology? Do you suppose poor old John Babbitt would not be allowed to profess? After all, is it not true that Jesus came “not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance”?]

“*No woman shall wear an article of man’s clothing . . .*” [Why, why, oh, why have the workers in all their high-handed “wisdom (?)” and from their pulpits at conventions, special meetings, and every other possible site on every possible occasion chosen to isolate *this one*, drag it from one testament to another and through the temple’s torn veil and set it up as such an important “commandment of men” alongside the wearing of long hair, the ban on make-up and jewelry, the Wednesday evening meeting, the convention, and all the other infinite number of loopholes that are too numerous to write about in one short document? For one thing, it surely is an easy way for the male hierarchy to keep their women in subjection as well as fear and trembling lest they “lose out to the world.”]

I know that, by now, you have all got the picture, but I will still press on!

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” (Gal. 5:1) (K.P.). [How often I was preached to by others from this verse—and how often have I been guilty of preaching *to others* from this verse?—with great admonition about falling again into the “bondage” from which Christ had set us free, having delivered us from Catholicism, from Protestantism, from drinking beer, from dancing and going to “shows,” from smoking, *and from* “committing adultery”—in our *hearts*, that is! But, as I have already written, when Jesus said that his yoke was easy and his burden, light, he was surely comparing his law of love not to the never-ending list of life’s temptations and so-called man-made churches and methods of worship but to that great litany of laws and ordinances that we just read about back there in the book of Deuteronomy.]

“For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, *and have no confidence in the flesh.*” (Phil. 3:3) (K.P.). [What more need be argued here on behalf of the old law—every jot and title of it—being fulfilled and replaced with the new law of the doctrine of the love of the Son of God?]

“Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace. For we through the spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith but . . . faith worker by love.” (Gal. 5:4–6). [Connect this to my next passage.]

“For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor [Remember? Thy “fellow human being”?] as thyself.’” (Gal. 5:14). “But if ye be led of the spirit, *ye are not under the law.*” (Gal. 5:18).

“And you . . . hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you *all* trespasses; blotting out the *handwriting of ordinances* that was against us . . . and took it out of the way *nailing it to the cross* . . . Let no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, [There goes the observance of that old month Bib again!] or of the Sabbath days which are a shadow of things to come; *but the body is Christ.*” (Col. 2:13–17). [And here’s the loophole! All those laws—divers and sundry

though they were—were all intended to point mankind to Christ in some way or other even though our present mind may not fully comprehend just how. But what we do know of a surety is that they were ALL blotted out and nailed to that one cross, and it is only a mark of false doctrine and a superficial show of mock holiness to go back into ANY PART of it and try to bring it forward as a method of condemning people today for not agreeing with the neo-Pharisees in their desire to “teach for doctrine commandments of men.”

There is not one New Testament verse that supports the premise that women should not wear man's apparel, and it's just as well, too, for a quick trip to the Holy Land and the Middle East today (where time has virtually stood still on so many cultural levels) will reveal to all that while men go about wearing a long, loose, skirt-type garment, the womenfolk clad themselves in a more pant-suit sort of robe which is then over-draped from head to toe by a long, flowing, scarf-like piece of cloth which is more often than not used to cover the face as well the neck, shoulders, and arms.

How very wise it would be for every worker pretending to preach the word of God to follow Paul's instruction to Timothy in II Timothy 2:15: “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that neediest not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” (K JV).

ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

I realize that I already alluded to this loophole and its complete lack of universality when I discussed the Food Fetish back in Chapter III. I wrote then, and I repeat here, that there is not one dotted *i* or one crossed *t* from the book of Genesis to The Revelation of St. John the Divine that condemns the temperate use of alcoholic beverages by any child of God apart from either one's being a priest serving actively at the altar of the tabernacle (Leviticus 19:9) or one's being under the Azurite vow which, it seems, could be of almost any duration from a few days to a lifetime, depending upon the spiritual conviction of the person, male or female, volunteering for it. (Numbers 6 and Acts 21:23–26).

When the terms “alcoholic beverages” and “drinking” are used, our minds rush to think beer, rye, whiskey, rum, schnapps, gin, “screech”, “toddy” and myriads of other terms used locally or internationally, but, for reasons beyond my limited ability to comprehend, not one of these sinful potations is ever named, discussed, or condemned in any book of the Bible.

Wine, on the other hand is mentioned throughout the entire scripture probably because water was a very scanty commodity, and since there were many excellent vineyards all over the Palestinian countryside, as well as numerous herds of goats, “milk and wine” became the common man's drink. It would not have dawned on anyone that it was sinful to drink it, and, certainly, Jesus must not have thought ill of it when, in his first recorded miracle at Canal, he complied with his mother's request for more and turned six water pots containing two or three firkins apiece into the best “stuff” the governor of the feast had tasted throughout the whole marriage ceremony!

You have noted without a doubt, I am sure, that I have always concentrated my efforts to expose each of my chosen loopholes—or *weaknesses*, as some folks may prefer—by examining New Testament scripture and to try to understand what Jesus would have done or said about it, or what true Christian Doctrine supports or condemns. That is why, here again, I will try to avoid too much reference to the old law, which, in its entirety, was only a foreshadow of things that were to be fulfilled with the coming of the Lamb of God, and will concentrate on the gospels and the epistles for support for my postulations.

We know of a certainty that Jesus not only turned water into wine, but that he also drank wine. Both Matthew and Luke tell us so, and, in fact, Luke is quite specific about his information. “For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, ‘He is possessed.’ The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Look at him! A glutton and a drinker, a friend of tax-gatherers and sinners!’” The King James translation puts it very bluntly. “Behold a gluttonous man and a wine bibber . . .” I am sure none of us believes for a moment that had Jesus been drinking only water and milk, he would have been called a “drinker” or a “wine bibber”!

It is interesting to note that when Jesus spoke those words, he was talking to the Pharisees. Can't we all picture his saying the same thing to the Workers and all the faithful old souls in the Two-by-Two cult today? There they are, all preaching about—and pointing to—the *second coming* of the Messiah, and nary a one of them has an inkling of what that Messiah stood for, what his doctrine and philosophy were, or who and what he will be looking for when he returns to establish his kingdom on the earth.

I wonder, too, what inference we are to draw from Acts 2:1–15. As you will recall, it was the occasion that we have all come to think of as The Day of Pentecost,” and there they were, *those few faithful followers of the faith and doctrine of Jesus Christ*—good and obedient Christians all—caught up in the spirit of ecstasy, talking in tongues or practicing *glossolalia*, as the Greek interpretation calls it, being accused by many Jews around them of “having (been) drinking.” Did you ever stop to examine Peter's defence of them when he stood before the crowd to argue their case?

“*Fellow Jews*,” he said, “and *all you who live in Jerusalem . . .*”

“These men,” he continued, “are not drunk as you imagine; for it is only nine in the morning . . .”

Now let us look back at the logic presented in those two quotations.

Surely, among those “fellow Jews and all who [lived] in Jerusalem,” there must have been a Pharisee or so as well as one or two scribes, and we all know by now who *their* Two-by-Two counterparts are. And, not surprisingly, like the workers and “friends” today,

they were right there on their toes ready to point their fingers in accusation at either something or someone they didn't like or just couldn't bother to take the time to try to understand.

If the drinking of wine had been condemned, I have a notion that Peter might have said something like, "These men are not drunk as you imagine; for all they've had to drink all morning is grape juice or perhaps some hot water with a little milk in it." But Peter did not say that because he knew very well that there wasn't a thing wrong with having wine and that the *only* reason he *knew* they were not drunk was because it was *only nine o'clock in the morning*.

If I could be allowed to be somewhat sardonic here, I would let my imagination run wild and picture Peter saying perhaps, "No, they're not drunk as you suppose, for I have personally inspected the suitcases of every one of them, and there wasn't a "mickey" or flask to be found anywhere."

(That inspection might not come up so "dry" in this present time if every handbag, every piece of luggage, or every household "china cabinet" were to be laid bare for all to see.)

When Paul wrote to the Ephesians, he certainly did not tell them that they couldn't "have a drink." What he did say, however, in chapter five and verse 18 was: "Do not *give way* to drunkenness and the dissipation that goes with it, but let the Holy Spirit fill you . . ." In my opinion, not "[giving] way" is a far cry from complete abstinence and is very close, indeed, to the admonition that we should be "moderate in all things" and "temperate in all our ways."

Moderation and temperance seem also to be two of the leading requirements or qualifications of one aspiring to the office of bishop, or, in other words, a position of leadership in the church. In 1 Timothy 3:2 and 3 the New English translation quotes Paul as writing: "Our leader . . . or bishop must be above reproach, . . . sober, temperate . . . [and] not *given to drink* . . ." I noticed, too, as does everyone else, I'm sure, that Paul did not direct Timothy to seek out and choose only those who could be classified as abstainers or, as present-day semantics would have it, teetotalers.

Although by now I'm positive we've all got the point about the silliness of the "alcohol consumption" loophole, I'll use as my final clincher the words quoting Paul in 1 Timothy 5:23 from the New English Translation:

"Stop drinking nothing but water; take *a little wine* for your digestion, for your frequent ailments."

These words and all the other passages I have cited have been preserved for us to read and to use as a model for our lives as Christians today. As their echo reaches down to us through the great long tunnel of the ages, of space, and of time, they provide us with unprecedented support and "ammunition" as we seek to free ourselves and others from the fanaticism espoused by the Two-by-Two's and other similar cult-like factions which are all variations on a theme in the world around us in this present day.

MISSION WORK

"Have you heard who'll be coming to the Philippi area this year?"

"No, not yet, but I sure' hope it'll be Paul and Silas. At least *they can* keep you awake in their *mission meetings!*"

"I heard it could be Tryphena and Tryphosa."

"Oh, no! I wanted to ask Samuel and Joanna to come to a mission with me, but I don't think they'd go to listen to *women* preaching. Oh, I hope it'll be 'the boys.'"

"Well, Tryphosa's pretty good, but poor old Tryphena drones on and on, and it's all I can do to keep from falling asleep when she's preaching."

Did you ever hear a conversation even vaguely similar to that one at any convention *you* ever attended?

Did *you ever* have those thoughts, but you were too afraid to say the words right out loud?

Now 'fess up! Haven't you said almost the same thing—with other names replaced, of course—and weren't you always just a bit disappointed at the thought of sitting through many a *long mission listening* to someone with poor delivery or who always sang every hymn off-key and about two octaves too high?

Furthermore, can you imagine those early followers of the faith—those who were first called "Christians" in Antioch—hanging around the wall of a convention dining shed or the convention meeting tent engaging themselves in such worthless drivel as that?

At the outset let me tell you that they couldn't have had such talks because there were no conventions for them to be at, no workers' lists to be "prayerfully" prepared by the head worker and his henchmen, and no concerns whatever about workers blowing in and out of this or that community within their field, and flitting about from Gog to Magog, from Antioch to Berea, or from Jerusalem to Jericho holding *one-night missions in each place as they came and went*.

And would you like to know one more reason why such a conversation could not have taken place?

The word "*mission*" does not exist within the covers of the Holy Bible .

"It doesn't? Are you sure?" you ask.

Yes, I'm sure. It does not appear in any context at any time, ever.

Thus the next questions fall logically and sequentially into place . . .

Who started to use the word “mission”?

How did it get so embedded in the Two-by-Two vocabulary, and why has it not become an integral part of all other sects and Christian denominations?

How did its usage become so prevalent, and why did it ever become such a condition of salvation to attend every mission that every pair of workers held within a two hundred-kilometre radius from one’s home?

But, we’re discussing loopholes or weaknesses here, and this “mission business”—and it is a business, believe me—is one of the biggest loopholes that exists in the doctrine of the Two-by-Two cult.

And let me tell you, *it is universal*.

I am able now to tell you, too, that it is an irrefutable fact that the Two-by-Two movement was either invented or very ably spearheaded by a man named William Irvine in the year 1897. He seems to have done that through his association with the Govan Faith **Mission which** was founded by John Govan back in 1886. We don’t have to subject our imaginations to a lot of stretching, therefore, in order to see that the word **mission** came neither from the Bible nor from the doctrine of Jesus Christ, but, rather, it must have come directly from those first fiery and inflammatory sermons delivered by Irvine himself when he was sent to Ireland by the Faith Mission to propagate its message and to expand its own personal dogma.

It is indeed not a very difficult task to debunk the theory propounded by the “workers” and “friends”—the *only true saints and servants living according to God’s plan of salvation*, you know—that this “way of Truth” comes to us today not only through William Irvine or George Walker or, for that matter, through Eddie Cooney or Jimmy Patrick, but that it also has survived the ravages of time since the days of Jesus Christ—yea, and Adam, Abraham, Job, and David, too—and appeared pure, unsullied, and unadulterated and, without hitch or glitch, through apostolic succession to one man, William Irvine—and he not a very righteous or morally-inclined man, at that.

It is just a little hard to swallow the idea that if God deemed the catechism of the Two-by-Two’s to be the only true plan of salvation, he would have chosen a man who *professed* and obtained his own redemption through the Presbyterian Church which has always admitted to a human founder and has never pretended to have stepped directly out of the last chapter of the Book of the Revelations. Isn’t it small wonder, then, that the Reverend Irvine himself, with such delusions of grandeur and a sense of his own importance, soon came to abhor and denounce the Presbyterians as one of the “worldly churches” that were doomed to Hell and damnation unless THEY now repented of their evil ways and embraced HIM as the only true envoy of God and His son Jesus Christ?

The transition is so logical, therefore, and the steps are so short that take us directly from the Keswick *Convention*, to *professing in the Presbyterian Church*, to the Faith **Mission**, and then straight to the concocted sect of “Irvinites”—or Two-by-Two’s as we know them to be—with its own vocabulary or set of clichés which has become woven into the very fabric of their belief and which bears so little resemblance to the Bible or to the true doctrine of Jesus Christ.

You may not feel that I have adequately answered the second question with which I began this chapter:

“What is a loophole?”

I stated that it was a means of escape or an evasion, and I believe also that it is a weakness which eats away at an idea or a theory or doctrine and which, ultimately, upon close examination or scrutinizing, causes that doctrine to lose its impact and its whole sense of veracity in the world.

By choosing only ten such loopholes or weaknesses, I feel I have barely scratched the surface of the mammoth mountain of lies and deceit that has been built up around—and by—the workers for almost one whole century. I hope, however, that in some small way, at least, I have helped to shred the shroud of secrecy and silence that has surrounded and imprisoned many representatives of at least three generations of mankind in almost every country on this, our planet Earth.

Go to **Chapter 7**