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BULLETIN HARDING COLLEGE

Harper's fight against  
Harding College

July 1941  
v. 17, no.2

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## Harper's Fight Against Harding College

*(Published in Defense of the College and in the Interest  
of Justice—That all may know the Truth)*

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## FOREWORD

This bulletin has been made necessary because of Brother E. R. Harper's continuous attacks against the college, and because of his recent challenge which has been printed and is being generally circulated.

There is so much constructive work to be done that we regret the necessity of taking time to correct Brother Harper's misrepresentations and we do so only because friends of Harding College feel it should be done.

This reply has been authorized by the Board and has been read and approved both by members of the Board and by the faculty committee.

We do not want to injure Brother Harper in this reply. We have had to be plain and emphatic, but we have tried to be kind and fair. We only want him and the good friends of both him and the college to see the futile mistake of his wasting his time and theirs fighting his own brethren. The Lord has called us, as Paul says, for building up and not for tearing down the kingdom of God. Let us therefore, encourage Brother Harper to spend his time and energy to build up and not to destroy God's Church.

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## J. N. ARMSTRONG ON "PREMILLENNIALISM"

(From the *Firm Foundation*, 1934)

### Some Things I Do Not Believe

1. Though many Bible students believe in the return of the Jews to Palestine—Bible students far superior to me—I do not believe it; I see no indication of it.
2. I do not believe Jesus will ever reign in earthly Jerusalem on a material throne and thus establish a material kingdom.
3. I do not believe that Christ will ever sit on the literal throne of David, but I believe he is now sitting and reigning on all the throne on which he shall ever sit.
4. I do not believe that the Roman Empire will ever come back and be again the world power that it once was. Surely there is no Bible proof of this. I think nobody would have ever thought of such a thing had it not been needed to complete a theory.
5. I do not believe that, because Christ was rejected by the Jews, the Lord turned from his original purpose and gave the church as a "substitute"; and that at his coming again he will carry out his original plan and will restore, or establish, a kingdom with Christ on David's throne in Jerusalem.

For the complete statement see Pages 35-36 of this Bulletin. This excerpt is taken from the article by J. N. Armstrong "For Good Understanding," which was published in the *Firm Foundation* in 1934, and later republished as a Bulletin of Harding College in 1935.

## PART ONE

# Harper's Fight Against Harding College

### PURPOSE AND AUTHENTICITY

For five long years Ernest R. Harper, minister of the Fourth and State Street Church in Little Rock, has waged a bitter, relentless fight against Harding College. During these years the college has borne with patience every type of misrepresentation. We have refrained from replying, hoping that natural decency and sense of shame would finally lead him to discontinue his one-sided fight. But friends have continually urged that our failure to answer would lead many not acquainted with the facts to believe his accusations.

Recently Brother Harper has brought out another booklet under the title "Ye Shall Know the Truth," in which he challenges the college to meet him on his charges. At long last it has been decided to give him what he has been asking for, and to reveal the facts concerning his ungodly fight against the school.

It is not our intention to injure or ridicule, but to give honest readers those facts that can be authenticated before any court of law. For J. N. Armstrong and his teaching at Harding College we have the testimony of his own statements, of Dean L. C. Sears, who has worked intimately with him for thirty years, of President George S. Benson, who has been associated with him for about nineteen years, and of scores of students who have sat in his classes.

As for E. R. Harper and his fight, we have his own statements and the testimony of many who have known him and the course of his fight most intimately for many years. Every statement, therefore, can be proved by

either personal or documentary evidence.

### TEACHING PREMILLENNIALISM NO LONGER AN ISSUE

The fight against Harding College has, since its beginning, gone through various changes as Brother Harper, attacking on one front after another, has had to retreat and try new tactics, turn about-face, and bring up new charges.

At one time he charged that the school taught "Premillennialism". Without referring to Brother Harper we published a bulletin "On Premillennialism," setting forth just what was being taught and done at the college. This bulletin is still available and may be had on request. It crushed Brother Harper's plan of attack. No longer could he substantiate his charge that the college taught "Premillennialism." His last attempt of this kind was in a conference at Fort Smith in 1939. Here after a heated discussion lasting for hours, the final criticism simmered down to the contention that the school *did not teach enough against it*. On this point Judson Woodbridge, chairman of the meeting, states in a letter to Brother Armstrong, April 27, 1939:

"In the meeting here at Fort Smith the greatest criticism offered against you was that you *would not teach against the theory and prepare the boys to go out and meet this false doctrine that is in the world*. All said that there was not a better teacher in the brotherhood to instill Christian principles in the hearts of young people."

We believe that any fair-minded man who reads the bulletin "On Premillennialism" will agree that even

this charge is unjustified. But the important fact is that the chairman of the Fort Smith meeting admits that Brother Harper's charge had not been proved.

In the face of the testimony of all the students who know the school no man can successfully contend that Harding College teaches "Premillennialism." *That issue is as dead as a dodo!*

### THE FIGHT IS NOT OVER DOCTRINAL DIFFERENCES

Brother Harper has, therefore, had to find new ground for his last attack. This time in his booklet, "Ye Shall Know the Truth," he no longer charges that the college, or any of its faculty, teaches "Premillennialism." He merely marshals all his skill at endless repetition and misinterpretation to prove that Brother Armstrong, head of the Bible Department, *believes it*.

But again Brother Harper fails. We are not going to be led aside from a direct review of his fight by an examination of this matter here. That will be done fully in the Appendix at the close of this bulletin for all who care to go into it. It is sufficient here to say that *every statement which he quotes from Armstrong as proof of "Premillennial" views can be found as strong or stronger in David Lipscomb, John T. Hinds, or Paul or John*. If Harper would endorse these men as "sound", he must of very necessity accept Armstrong also. If he rejects one he must reject all.

But Brother Harper's fight against Harding College and J. N. Armstrong is not over doctrinal differences—even if such differences could be shown to exist. This is proved once and for all by his Agreement of Peace and Cooperation with the college just before Thanksgiving, 1939.

This Agreement, which will be explained in detail on pages 9, 10, is

the most significant and revealing step in the entire fight. In this document Brother Harper agreed (1) to cease his fight against the school, (2) to forget the past, (3) to give the college his endorsement and cooperation—all merely in view of the fact that the college was trying to add Brother West to the faculty as "professor of Ancient Languages and Associate Professor of Bible." We shall show later that Harding College kept this agreement fully.

But the significant point is that this Agreement completely nullifies and kills forever Brother Harper's last booklet—his latest attack. Every idea which Harper quotes from Armstrong in this booklet, *he had known and quoted before his "peace agreement."* He includes only one additional statement—from a *Living Message* many years old—but this excerpt is merely a repetition of ideas in the other quotations. When, therefore, Harper made his agreement with Harding College, gave it his endorsement and promised it his cooperation, he was admitting in effect to all the world that even in his eyes, *there was nothing seriously wrong either with the school or with Brother Armstrong. He was accepting them as they were and are. If there was no doctrinal difference to prevent his "endorsement and cooperation" then, there is certainly none now.*

THIS AGREEMENT OF HARPER'S PROVES CONCLUSIVELY, THEN, THAT THE FIGHT AGAINST HARDING COLLEGE AND J. N. ARMSTRONG IS NOT A DOCTRINAL ISSUE, NOR HAS IT EVER BEEN A DOCTRINAL ISSUE. THOSE WHO KNOW THE INSIDE FACTS HAVE ALWAYS UNDERSTOOD THIS.

### WHY HARPER'S FIGHT?

What then was, and is, the motive

behind Brother Harper's ruthless persecution? Why has he sought with all the power of speech and pen, backed by endless political maneuvering, to oust from the school a man who has sacrificed for the Master more than Brother Harper ever dreamed of, and whose life of purity and unselfishness has been an inspiration for good, and only good, to literally thousands of young men and women?

Many who know the facts say without reservation that the motive behind Brother Harper's fight is an ambition to control and dominate. From Oklahoma, from a man who has been closely connected with him, comes the information that Harper's real desire is to be president of the college and to make one of his friends head of the Bible Department.

After the acquisition of the present college plant at Searcy, Brother Harper visited the campus in company with some friends. As he came on the grounds and saw the buildings and the possibilities of the school, he exclaimed, "My, if I had charge of this place, what a college I could make of it!"

"If I had charge. . ." Merely an exclamation. But straws show the way of the wind. To understand Brother Harper—or any man—you must know his background. A very significant thing in Brother Harper's background is that he was reared in a strong political environment, engaging with relatives and friends in hotly contested campaigns. From boyhood he learned the tactics used by many politicians to dominate and control. These include lining up personal supporters by excess of courtesy, back-slapping, and flattery, buying additional support by patronage and other means, putting pressure on those who might be opposed so as to intimidate or bring them around, and ostracizing those who refuse to submit. All expected in politics, per-

haps, but in the church, how pitiable!

Yet those who know this background have recognized how completely it colors and influences Harper's thinking and methods. He has the ambition of the politician to "have charge of things"—to dominate. He has the skill of the politician in organizing and manipulating men, often without their recognizing it. He has the subtilty to plan far in advance and to use others to accomplish his purposes. He can treat adherents like a prince with an excess of courtesy. He can profess the greatest friendship for an enemy and at the same time be working behind the scenes against him. It is apparently this craving for personal power and the politician's method of attaining it which has largely determined his fight against Harding College.

#### HAS HARPER SOUGHT DICTATORIAL CONTROL?

The first maneuver of a political dictator is to strengthen his own power—to build up a strong personal following. Brother Harper's first act when he took the work at Little Rock was of this kind. He stated to several that if they would give him the right eldership he would make Little Rock the "hub" of the church in Arkansas. He pressed the matter until he eliminated the men he did not want and put in over the protest of others the men he had selected. But the purpose of the change is extremely significant. Brother Harper wanted to make Little Rock the "hub of the church"! This desire to be "hub" of something is characteristic of the man.

Brother Harper's next step was to begin a daily broadcast to all the churches in the state. There is no criticism of course for this. The radio has become recognized as the most effective means of reaching and influencing large groups of people. But it can be equally effective as an in-

strument of propaganda to build personal power. In this abuse of the radio Brother Harper has disgraced and reproached the entire church. In his first ambition he seriously advocated that congregations install radios in their buildings so that he could broadcast his sermons to them each Sunday morning at eleven. This would save them the expense of regular preaching, and they could of course contribute to his broadcasting. This plan never got beyond discussion with some level-headed men.

But he next assumed the role of champion of the Truth in Arkansas and launched an aerial fight against the college. With the characteristic egoism of the trained politician he made appeal after appeal for men to "stand behind me and I'll clean up the church in Arkansas." Never were they urged to stand for truth, right, or justice, but "me" as the leader, the fuhrer. In this attack Brother Harper has violated, not only the ethics of the radio code but all Christian decency and fairness. The radio company itself finally had to demand that he write the speeches in advance so that they could be censored. It is a pity when a preacher of the Church has to be taught common decency, fairness, and right by a commercial organization. It is a pity too when a preacher makes the church a laughing stock to the whole sectarian world. Yet after Harper had finished one of his customary attacks, one prominent sectarian preacher exclaimed over the radio: "Let Harper and his crowd keep the fuss up! While they are fighting, we'll be saving souls!"

But, finally, Brother Harper not only posed as the Champion of Truth but has now assumed the role as spokesman for all the churches in Arkansas. In his regular broadcasts, ignoring the fact that other congregations have similar programs, he uses the grandiloquent slogan "Back-to-the-Gospel Broadcast of the

Churches of Christ in Arkansas, Directed by E. R. Harper, of Little Rock." As a matter of fact, so far as we can learn, only Fourth and State Street sponsors his broadcasts. Many churches are ashamed of them. But to feature himself as the official broadcaster for all the churches in Arkansas builds his political prestige, and realizes his announced ambition—to become "the hub" of the State!

#### LINING UP OR MARKING CONGREGATIONS AND MEN

Furthermore in his ambition for power Brother Harper has used the second device of political dictators—pressure and threat. He has attempted strenuously to line up congregations and men for himself and against others. In one or two instances, where a congregation has been pressed, but has kept its independence, it has been threatened with the name of "pre-millennialist," though hardly a one in the congregation had ever heard of premillennialism or knew what it meant. He has tried to influence independent congregations in their choice of preachers in order to prevent friends of Harding College from preaching in them. He has visited congregations over the state attempting to prejudice them against the college.

#### USING THREATS AND COERCION

But even more ruthless have been his threats and coercion against the school. Three instances among many will be sufficient. In his radio broadcasts Brother Harper quite often uses—or at least has used—phonograph records made previously by his church quartet. (Incidentally one member of this "church quartet" for a long time was a Baptist.) While it is the ethical requirement of radio that such music be announced as "transcribed,"

Brother Harper seldom mentioned transcription. But he frequently even "thanked" the singers as if they were present with him in the studio! Some who knew this wrote Bro. Armstrong to ask if such "transcribed" phonograph music was acceptable to the Lord as worship. Since the writer seemed sincerely seeking for the truth, Brother Armstrong announced that he would answer the question the next Sunday. Brother Harper, who claimed to have received many requests for his records for use by other preachers, feared that Brother Armstrong might condemn transcribed music in worship and thus injure his business. He immediately wrote Brother Benson, threatening to bring a fight against the entire school if Brother Armstrong condemned phonograph music in worship.

"Now you just do as you please," he wrote, "But I am just asking you if you want an open fight to start. I do not know that he will even criticize it but it is understood here that he is going to do that. If not, all right and if so, all right, but I intend to defend myself and I am afraid you do not want it to begin.... Now Brother Benson, use your OWN JUDGMENT about the matter. I am ready if that is the game and I will take his move Sunday as your desire and act accordingly."

Except for the lack of dignity this sounds like an ultimatum from Adolph Hitler. People have a right to ask sincerely about the use of phonograph music in worship, and Brother Armstrong had a perfect right to answer. If Brother Harper thought his answer wrong, he was free to give his views also. But why should this bring a fight against an entire school? Such threats are the methods of dictators.

#### CHARLIE NICHOL CONDEMNS HARPER'S COERCION

A second attempt to coerce was the letter which Brother Harper asked

preachers and church leaders to sign, demanding a change in the management of the college. This was following a big "preachers' meeting" which he arranged at Little Rock. The plan of the meeting, as those realize who attended it, was to build up such opposition to the school that it would have to change its present management. The program was planned specifically to this end. Brother Armstrong of Harding College and President James F. Cox of Abilene were subjected to an examination after the order of the old Spanish Inquisition. A list of questions was read, which Brother Harper and his assistants had previously prepared. The effort was to convict these men, or the colleges they represented, of teaching premillennialism. Needless to say, the examination failed in its purpose, and Brother Rue Porter arose at the close of the meeting and very warmly praised the faithfulness and long service of Brother Armstrong. Brother Harper was visibly nettled and disappointed. He could not permit the meeting to close on such a note of harmony and good fellowship. So he arose and said, "These brethren have left the load all on me." He then launched into a direct attack on Harding College, pouring out all the backdoor gossip which he had been so busily collecting--and creating.

Brother Harper then followed up the meeting with a petition demanding a change in the management of the college. Among others he sent his letter to C. R. Nichol, who had been present at the meeting and who wrote Brother Armstrong the following condemnation of it:

"Dear Brother Armstrong:

"As I now recall there was a council in the second century of the Christian era, and since then there have been many more. To attempt to recount the harm which has followed such meetings would require a tome of no small proportions. Some meetings have been called when the very purpose for which

they were convened was wrong when proposed. Other meetings have been had that had in view legitimate ends, but degenerated and became harmful. A meeting of Christians is not wrong within itself, but a group of disciples of Christ may become parties to a meeting from which they should have absented themselves, by reason of the purpose for which it was called; and then sometimes a meeting which was called for a legitimate purpose has become a corrupt meeting. I think there is ever some danger attending a meeting; even a necessary meeting may degenerate. I think I am right in saying that young men are more inclined to go astray than older men; usually, I think, by reason of not being able to properly adjudicate matters, and not infrequently by reason of a lack of information...."

Brother Nichol then goes on to mention the document sent out by Brother Harper in his effort to coerce the policies of the Board. With characteristic independence he not only refused to become a party with Brother Harper, but with inimitable sarcasm condemned those who did seek to coerce an institution for whose support they had never contributed a dime, and for whose financial obligations they had never assumed any responsibility:

"I had no part in starting the school. I have never been advised with about its policies. I am not responsible for its debts. No man, no set of men can hold me responsible for the actions of the school, or any of its teachers. I am unable, under such conditions, to see how—or why I should think it within my province to tacitly make demands, and a petition such as I thought was contemplated, being presented, to me seemed to be a demand. Possibly if some of us were called on by the *creditors* of Harding College to pay some debt the college owes it would serve to wake some of us up to the fact that we may make some demands where we have no voice!"

A stinging rebuke! For with no right, or color like to right, Harper has made demand after demand upon the college and its Board.

#### HARPER'S DEMAND IN THE FORT SMITH MEETING

A third instance of coercion was the meeting held at Fort Smith between representatives of the school and a group Harper had helped to select. The meeting was a determined attempt to oust Brother Armstrong from the faculty. But after he had failed in his desperate efforts to convict Armstrong of teaching "premillennialism," Harper finally agreed, at the suggestion of others, to withdraw his fight if the college would try to secure someone to assist Brother Armstrong in the Bible Department. The difficulty was pointed out of finding a man with the proper qualifications who would accept the salary and fit into the organization. But upon our promise that we would try to find such a man Brother Harper pledged himself to cease his fight.

#### HARPER'S PEACE PACT AND BREACH OF FAITH

This agreement at Fort Smith was kept by Brother Harper for barely three months! Then the war started again. More articles! More aerial bombings!

In the meantime the college was trying to fulfill its part of the agreement. We had been in correspondence with Brother W. B. West of Los Angeles, who was seriously considering our invitation to join us as "head of the department of Ancient Languages and Associate Professor of Bible."

Then during the meeting of Glenn E. Green at Fourth and State in Little Rock Brother Harper suddenly sent a letter by him again offering peace on terms of the Fort Smith agreement. Brother Benson replied as follows:

Dear Brother Harper:

I appreciate the spirit of the letter which you sent to me by Brother Green this morning and it is certainly our

earnest desire to direct the problems of Harding College in such a way as to merit and enjoy the confidence of all the Lord's people.

We are attempting to add W. Ben West Jr. to our faculty for the coming year as Professor of Ancient Languages and Associate Professor of Bible. Of course, Brother West will have absolute freedom to teach on all subjects as his own judgment might dictate, in harmony with the Word of the Lord.

If you can give your endorsement and your cooperation with Harding College in view of this plan, of course, it will be greatly appreciated.

I think you would find F. B. Srygley and others who know Ben West commending him heartily for this position, and personally I consider him the most fully equipped man for the position that I know of in the brotherhood. I understand he has completed all work for his Ph. D. Degree in the field of Religions with the exception of his thesis.

If you could see fit to make this above arrangement a basis for discontinuing the fight against Harding College I will be glad to extend my hand to you on that basis.

No doubt we have all made our mistakes and the best policy is to recognize this fact, forgive and forget, and let the past be past, while we struggle forward in peace and harmony for the advancement of the cause of Christ.

We are conscious of what you are capable of doing for Harding College and we would be deeply appreciative of your influence in behalf of the college in every way.

If this is satisfactory to you we would like to have Brother Copeland and Brother Brewer of the 4th and State and Brother Glenn Green as witnesses to the understanding.

Sincerely yours,  
George S. Benson  
President

This letter was accepted by Brother Harper, and represents the entire terms of the agreement, and accordingly was signed by Brother Harper, with Jas. H. Brewer, elder at Fourth and State Street Church in Little Rock, Glenn E. Green, Minister of the Church at Altus, Oklahoma, and L. C. Sears, Dean of Harding College, as witnesses.

On the strength of this agreement Brother Harper invited Brother Benson to speak at Fourth and State, and he in turn was invited to speak at the college on Thanksgiving Day. In both the meetings, at Little Rock and at the college, Brother Harper expressed in the most sincere manner his complete cooperation with and support of the school. At Little Rock his statement was made to fully *five hundred men and women*. At Searcy he pledged his support before *more than five hundred* from twenty-six different states who had assembled to witness the burning of the mortgage against the college. *He declared that the fight, as far as he was concerned, was over forever. He appealed for the unity and good fellowship of all, and he pledged his own support to the school a hundred per cent.* He told some privately that he wanted nothing more than to move to Searcy, buy a place here, and have his children in the school.

**YET IN A FEW SHORT WEEKS HE HAD AGAIN BROKEN HIS PLEDGE AND ANOTHER SOLEMN AGREEMENT HAD BECOME A MERE "SCRAP OF PAPER."**

What was the reason for Harper's breach of faith? He reported that Harding College failed to keep its part of the agreement, and therefore he was released from his. Let us examine the facts.

#### DID HARDING COLLEGE KEEP FAITH?

Most emphatically, yes! The agreement at Fort Smith was that the college would "attempt" to secure a "qualified man" to assist in the Bible Department. Since no specific man was mentioned, or could have been mentioned at that time, the agreement admitted of any qualified man the college could secure.

In harmony with this agreement we tried to secure Brother West. We even paid part of his way from Los Angeles to visit the school and to talk over plans. He was at the point of accepting, but he wanted first to visit Brother Harper in Little Rock. After returning from this visit he declined to come.

What happened to change Brother West? Brother Harper discouraged his coming! He made it clear that in spite of his former written agreement he still intended to fight the school if Brother West came in keeping with that Agreement. If Brother West did not wish to become involved with a man who can sign an agreement and then completely ignore it, he cannot be censured.

So we had the strange contradiction of Brother Harper's agreeing to cease his fight if we could get an "associate," of his even endorsing the particular associate in writing, and then definitely blocking his coming. What was the reason? He was already getting cold feet about his Agreement. What he wanted was to get a man into the faculty whom he could control and through whom he could dominate the school. While he had endorsed Brother West for the place, and had made peace on that basis, he apparently changed his mind and decided he would not be able to dominate the school with Brother Armstrong as head of the Bible Department and Brother West as his associate. And Brother Harper's plan was to control! That we are not misjudging him in this, you may read his own acknowledgment on pages 12 and 13.

#### OUR AGREEMENT FULFILLED

Though we had been prevented by Harper himself from securing Brother West, we had faithfully fulfilled the letter of the agreement in "attempting" to do so. By rare good fortune about this time we learned that Broth-

er Batsell Baxter might be available. Brother Baxter had been president for many years of Abilene Christian College, of David Lipscomb College, and of George Pepperdine College, and was a regular staff writer for the "Gospel Advocate." He was eminently qualified for the Bible work, and had a far richer background of experience than Brother West had. Ultimately we reached an agreement with Brother Baxter, and he accepted the position. His coming, we felt, fulfilled the agreement with Harper perfectly. In "attempting" to get Brother West we kept the letter of the agreement. In actually securing Brother Baxter we kept the purpose and spirit of the agreement.

But we were glad to know that this was not only our own judgment, but also that of Glen E. Green, through whom Brother Harper had proposed his agreement. When Brother Green learned of Baxter's coming and that Harper had again taken up his fight, he stated in an article in the *Christian Leader*, June 15, 1940:

#### HARDING COLLEGE FACULTY CHANGES

I notice in recent issue of the *Firm Foundation* and *Gospel Advocate*, the announcement by Brother Benson that Batsell Baxter has been engaged as a member of Harding's faculty as associate professor of Bible, etc.

I understand this transaction on Harding's part is Brother Benson's effort to keep his part of the agreement entered into with Brother E. R. Harper last fall, in an attempt to settle the differences between him and the school.

While in Little Rock in a meeting, I acted as a mediator in bringing about this understanding. It was not my agreement but theirs; I signed it as a witness only. As such, I conceive it to be my duty to be fair and impartial to both parties.

The agreement specified Brother Ben West Jr. as the man to be placed in the faculty as associate professor of Bible. Brother West failed to come. Brother Harper contends this ends the agreement so far as he is concerned,



as there is no specific provision in the agreement binding him in advance to accept just anyone else who might be selected. So far as the letter of the agreement reaches, this would be at his discretion. On the other hand, Brother Benson committed himself to secure a man for the Bible Department, "sound in the Faith" and known to be against premillennialism in all of its forms, in my opinion, could not likely secure a better qualified man in the brotherhood than Brother Baxter. For my part, I join with Brother Showalter in heartily commending this action for the future good of Harding College, and the interests of the Truth.

So far as the purpose and intent of this agreement is concerned, I think Brother Benson has to the limit of circumstances, sincerely and faithfully executed it. The employment of Brother Baxter is the earnest of that fact.

Glenn E. Green

WE BELIEVE THAT ANY FAIR-MINDED MAN WILL AGREE WITH BROTHER GREEN THAT HARDING COLLEGE HAS COMPLETELY FULFILLED ITS AGREEMENT WITH BROTHER HARPER. WHY HAS HARPER BROKEN HIS?

#### WHY HARPER BROKE FAITH

We will let Brother Harper himself tell you. It is needless to say that after his long and bitter fight against the college—over what he alleged to be doctrinal differences—his sudden "Agreement," and his promise of permanent peace and full endorsement, came as a shock to some. They had apparently been using Brother Harper as a front-line shock trooper to carry on their fight against the school, and he had now failed them. Others had trusted his sincerity of motive, and they now saw that his fight had not been over doctrinal differences at all.

Immediately a storm of condemnation broke upon him from a handful of his former supporters. At a preachers' meeting at Freed-Harde-

man College shortly afterward, Brother Harper was severely criticized and found it necessary to defend himself against those who had been his friends. He pleaded with them to wait and give him time to work things out. He wrote the "Firm Foundation," "Brethren, please don't crucify me!"

This attack was a shock to him. It meant loss of prestige and "face." Friends were growing chilly. Something had to be done.

Hard upon this came a scathing denunciation from Foy E. Wallace Jr. in the "Bible Banner." Brother Wallace had opened the columns of the "Banner" to Brother Harper's former attacks on the school. He did not like a traitor in his camp. He declared he would never again turn the columns of his paper "over to someone who hits and runs." He accused Harper of "surrendering to save your scalp," of "compromise and whitewash." Under Foy's master lash Harper writhed.

This was definitely the end for him. To be kicked out of Tennessee and then to be kicked out of Texas, to lose face with some of his old supporters, was more than he could well stand. Should he honor his agreement and suffer the consequences, or should he explain it away in an effort to satisfy his critics? He decided on the latter.

#### HARPER'S STRANGE EXPLANATION

Harper's astounding explanation appeared in the "Bible Banner" for September 1940. Why Brother Wallace permitted it to appear is hard to say unless he was willing for Brother Harper to crucify himself. Surely any one would have warned a friend against such open suicide.

Brother Harper's article reflects almost an abject submission before Brother Wallace. He seems almost

ready to kiss the hand that had lashed him so severely. It is filled, as usual, with misrepresentations of the school. But the chief point in the article, the explanation of his agreement of peace with Harding College, is contained in the second paragraph. Speaking of Wallace's former attack upon him, he says:

"In his article he suggested that it (my agreement) had every appearance of a compromise, a mere whitewash, and to those who did not understand, I can see how that it might have looked that way; and for that there is no objection to be offered. However, it was not a compromise nor was it a 'whitewash'. It was but a 'shifting of battle grounds' to carry on the fight. We were hoping to get 'inside the camp' where the fighting could be at 'close range' and the 'buli's eye' more easily hit. It might have been a mistake, but it was an honest one, not a 'compromise nor white-wash'".

#### THIS IS BROTHER HARPER'S OWN STATEMENT!

How could a man with any understanding of Christian honesty and integrity have written it! Did not Brother Harper realize how he was convicting himself?

When he made his Agreement of peace and cooperation with Harding College, he seemed perfectly sincere. He declared that as far as he was concerned *the fight was over forever*. His expressions of love and cooperation in the public meetings both before his own congregation and at the college seemed perfectly frank. WE THOUGHT HE MEANT WHAT HE PROMISED!

Then in this statement in the "Banner" he says that he really had no intention of ever stopping the fight! He was promising peace only to get on the inside where he could FIGHT AT CLOSE RANGE! He was merely *shifting the battle ground!* Would you, honest reader, have believed such a thing possible in a gospel preacher? Or if so, that he

would so shamelessly boast of it? We are used to such treachery in Adolph Hitler. He promised Czechoslovakia peace and protection. He promised Belgium and Holland peace and protection. It was his strategy to disarm their suspicions and get "inside the camp" where he could fight at "close range." To Hitler the most solemn promises are mere tricks of war. But would you ever have dreamed that any gospel preacher could hold his promises no better than Hitler's? Or, if he did, that he would actually boast of his treachery?

Yet this is exactly what Brother Harper says of himself. Even when he pledged his word before a thousand people, even when he signed his solemn written promise, he had no intention of keeping it! It was merely a trick to "get inside the camp," merely a "shifting of battle grounds." Further down in his article he says he was hoping that "*we could work our way into the Bible Department.*" From the inside, then, he was hoping to knife Brother Armstrong and win the fight which he had not been able to win from without.

#### A WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING

Jesus described this kind of thing. When two great audiences—over a thousand in all—heard Harper pledge his own support of the school one hundred per cent, appeal for unity and good fellowship for all, and declare, as far as he was concerned, the fight was over forever, they thought that they were listening to one who had been washed in the blood of the Lamb. But according to his own statement they were listening to a wolf in sheep's clothing. One who hoped, by his false words, to gain entrance; one who used the voice of the sheep to disguise the killer; but "once inside," he says, "the fighting could be

at close range and the bull's eye more easily hit."

In present day terms, this is Nazi treachery outright. We thought it belonged only to the unscrupulous dictator who feels himself above all moral law. Has Harper's familiarity with political trickery so permeated his whole moral fibre that he can boast of such treachery? His admission convicts him, not of an impulsive mistake, but of carefully planned, deliberate hypocrisy! It is unthinkable that any gospel preacher could fall so low! It is unthinkable also that any church for which a man of that character preaches should not blush with shame when he occupies the pulpit and attempts to tell good men how to live! When a man convicts himself of such brazen, deliberate falsehood, how can one depend upon anything he has ever said, or will ever say?

Such duplicity is like another Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. Harper, by his own statements, has changed so often from the gentleman to the monster that it is almost like plucking the petals from a daisy and saying, "I love you, I love you not; I love you, I love you not."

First to all outward appearances, he loves Brother Armstrong and the College; then he writes that if you want a fight on your hands, just say something over the radio about my electrically transcribed gospel songs being used in worship. Then later on he signs a Peace Agreement and appears before two audiences, a thousand people, telling the world that his fight is over forever; then later he changes again and says the fight is on—it always was on—that he merely pretended that it was over just so that he could get inside, because, as you know, a wolf can kill far more sheep inside the fold than outside!

We are not trying to make Brother Harper appear ridiculous. He has al-

ready done that himself, and because he serves a congregation of the church of Christ as its minister, we seriously regret that he has made himself the laughing-stock of the State of Arkansas and is often referred to as "Harper, the chameleon." What color will he change to next, for the purpose, as Foy Wallace says, of saving his scalp?

But this is Harper's own explanation. It is sad beyond words! And this is the kind of man who has been leading the fight against Harding College and J. N. Armstrong! What a contrast between two men!

#### ARMSTRONG A MAN OF PRINCIPLE AND INTEGRITY

The Bible says ye shall know a tree by its fruit. Brother Harper's fruits, by his own admissions, have been duplicity, insincerity, the wormy ways of the politician. What are the fruits of J. N. Armstrong? He holds the love and esteem of practically every student who has sat in his classes. Those who know him respect his integrity. His word is his bond. His life has been as pure and unselfish as a life can well be. This may account for the fact that, during the time he has headed the Bible Department of Harding College, more foreign missionaries have gone out from his classes than from all the other schools put together during the same period. The children of his former students have come back to school by the scores because their parents prized his teaching and influence and wanted their children to enjoy the same blessing they had known. He has stood with courage for peace and fellowship and the constructive upbuilding of the church. To know him well has been to love him. This is the kind of man against whom Brother Harper has played the wolf in sheep's clothing!

#### WHAT PEOPLE THINK OF HARPER!

We cannot know what you may think who read this. But those who heard Brother Harper's solemn pledge on Thanksgiving 1939, and have seen him so deliberately break it, have lost all faith in him, not merely as a Christian but as a man. Repeated expressions like the following letter have come to us:

Dear Brother Benson:

I thought I would write you a few lines in regard to the tract that E. R. Harper has got out on Brother Armstrong and Harding College. The first thing I would like to know is how Brother Harper can handle the truth so recklessly and still think he is a sound preacher, without saying anything about trying to be a Christian. Some one sent his tract up here for us to read, but I never read it all for the reason that I was at Harding College at Thanksgiving time in 1939 when Harper spent about 15 or 20 minutes trying to get the Brethren to believe that he was sincere in that he was 100% for Harding. Brother Benson, everything that he refers to about Brother Armstrong dates back beyond 1939.

It seems sad to me to think that some of the Churches of Christ are fed by such men as E. R. Harper. Also to think that a lot of Christians think, or at least they say, that men of that type are the backbone of the Church.

When the tract came I thought of writing to Harper to really let him know that I heard his speech at Harding and also to tell him what I thought of such men, but after thinking it over I thought it wasn't worth while. For I knew that if he didn't respect his word anymore than that, he surely is not a man, say nothing of a Christian.

I wonder, Brother Benson, if it wouldn't be wise for Harding College to put out a tract in defense of itself and to expose Harper to the brotherhood. I know Christians are not to "bite back" but it looks like to me that if Harper is going to continue to bring it up, the people ought to know the whole truth. You know what people run up against when they talk against Harding College to a Maple. I know what Harding College is and what it has meant to me. I don't know but I

think that this kind of fighting against Harding will do more for Harding than will hurt it.

I just wanted to let you know that we are standing wholeheartedly with you and Brother Armstrong against such fighting as Harper is doing.

Yours truly,  
John H. Maple Jr.

#### HARPER A TROUBLER OF CHURCHES

It is this kind of man who claims to be broadcasting for the Churches of Christ in Arkansas! It is also this kind of man who has for nearly five years been troubling the churches in Arkansas. The responsibility is his and his alone.

One fact proves this. For twelve years the college had been running with the same policies and ideals as at present. Yet there was peace through all the churches of the state. Neither the school nor any teacher in it had ever caused disturbance in any congregation. Its work had been constructive and upbuilding.

Then Brother Harper began his fight against the school. For five years the school has never replied to him either by radio or press. We have let him talk. We issued one bulletin not as a reply to him, but merely telling what is believed and done at the college. But we have made no agitation, sown no discord. We have gone our way, trying to heal the strife and discord Brother Harper has created. The responsibility therefore, for any trouble in the state can be laid absolutely on Brother Harper's shoulders.

#### HARPER'S DISTURBANCE AT PINE BLUFF

Only one example is necessary to show Brother Harper's ability as a trouble-maker. This occurred during his meeting at Pine Bluff in the summer of 1939. He gives an account of it in "The Gospel Light" of August

17, 1939. Even from his own account it must have been an ugly and regrettable incident for any preacher to let himself in for. But in his account Brother Harper—characteristically—lays all the blame upon one of the “finest of young ladies” and some of her girl friends. He claims that this girl, who is a very sweet and loyal young woman, started the disturbance by “assailing” him and “bitterly” condemning him. When Brother Harper’s account with its misrepresentation of this young woman was published throughout the state, the officials of the church at Pine Bluff prepared the following statement to correct it.

#### STATEMENT OF THE CHURCH AT PINE BLUFF

In Brother Harper’s article in the August 17 edition of the *Gospel Light*, he quoted part of a speech given before the elders here on the afternoon of July 13. We, the elders of the church here, feel that readers of this article may arrive at an erroneous conclusion and we feel that Brother Harper has made some mis-statements that we should correct in order to give the people who read this article a correct opinion of the church here.

To begin with, Brother Harper said that the discussion on premillennialism all began because of some remarks which a young lady made about him to the lady at whose house he was staying. He said that hitherto this he had made no remarks about Brother Armstrong or premillennialism. The truth of the matter is that Brother Harper had told the lady at whose house he stayed, that he had definite proof that a certain one of our missionaries and Brother Armstrong both were believers in premillennialism. So it is hardly fair for Brother Harper to state that the whole thing was caused by this conversation and not by him, when in reality the conversation between him and the two ladies occurred as a result of Brother Harper’s accusations against Brother Armstrong and one of our missionaries.

Second, Harper said that the crowd of people who gathered around to read the letters that he had from Brother Armstrong and others were uninvited.

In reality he had in his sermon that very night remarked that he had letters which definitely proved that the head of the Bible Department of one of our schools was a premillennialist, “dyed in the wool” and that he would be glad to show these letters to any who cared to see them. It is then a misrepresentation when Harper says that the people were uninvited to read the letters.

After his speech that afternoon his attention was called to this fallacy and he finally admitted he had made a mistake at this point. He was then told that he should make a public correction of this, which he never did and now we see that he still continues to leave this misrepresentation in the copy of this speech that he sent to the *Gospel Light*. We cannot understand why Brother Harper did this.

Third, Brother Harper made the remark that some evidenced by their lack of interest in the meeting, etc., that they were against him and he left the impression that some in the church here were sympathizers with premillennialism. So far as we have been able to find out there is no one in this congregation who supports premillennialism or ever has and as for our not liking Brother Harper, we asked him for this meeting because we considered him well able to preach the gospel and we had no thought of any confusion arising because of his coming. We cannot understand his attitude toward the meeting here nor why he wished to publish that speech in the *Gospel Light* and we just wanted to make these remarks so that the readers of this paper may have a fair statement of what took place during our recent meeting here.

The above document was signed by:

D. C. Elliott  
E. A. Montgomery  
W. J. Bell  
Elders of Church of Christ  
Pine Bluff, Arkansas

#### WHAT THE PINE BLUFF INCIDENT SHOWS

The above concise statement reveals much about Brother Harper’s method of work.

1. It is clear that the disturbance at Pine Bluff started from Brother Harper’s talking to the lady at whose house he stayed about Brother Arm-

strong and a certain missionary, whom he condemned as a “premillennialist.” Brother Harper was making these charges privately when one of the victims of his attack (the missionary) was thousands of miles away. He tried to ruin the man’s reputation, cut off his support, and the man himself knew nothing of the undercover campaign against him, nor would ever have opportunity to clear himself. Such subtle whispering campaigns have long been common in corrupt politics, but when they begin to creep into the church, some one needs the courage to stand up and condemn them. As it happened a young woman who knew Brother Armstrong and the missionary personally, and was convinced of their faithfulness, asked Brother Harper what evidence he had for his accusations. The courage and fairness of this girl deserves nothing but praise.

2. Brother Harper was not content, however, with talking to people privately, but in a public sermon made the same accusation and invited all who would to come up and see certain letters which he said proved his accusations. When the young lady and some friends came among the others, he says in his own article that he turned on them and accused them of “breaking into a private conversation where they were not wanted!” Gentlemanly, what? Certainly they were not wanted, for Brother Harper wanted no one to question his “evidence.” But it was hardly the act of a gentleman to turn upon them so rudely when the conversation was being held in a public meeting house at his own public invitation. When reminded of this, and reluctantly admitting it, he nevertheless did not have the grace to apologize for his rebuff or to correct it. On the other hand, he published abroad throughout the state that the young ladies forced themselves into the conversation uninvited. What honesty for a preacher!

3. Brother Harper continued to press the charges, and insisted on using one service in the meeting to read publicly all his precious “evidence.” The leaders, however, had invited him to hold a meeting, not to raise a fuss in the church. They felt it out of the question to parade internal differences in a meeting to which the whole city was invited. But to pacify Brother Harper they finally arranged for a special meeting for those who were interested. At this meeting Brother Harper read all his “letters” and interpreted them (in the absence of the accused) in such a way as to support his accusations.

4. Brother Harper then wrote an article misrepresenting the entire incident and implying that some in the church there were “sympathizers with premillennialism.” This again is part of his method. Whenever any church does not line up satisfactorily with Brother Harper, it is accused of “premillennialism.”

5. Finally this incident reveals with the utmost force who is responsible for such trouble as exists in the state. Here was a congregation at peace and in perfect fellowship and harmony—not troubled over premillennialism or any other question—until Brother Harper began to press these matters. Then when disturbance arose, with astonishing disregard for both truth and chivalry, he falsely placed the blame entirely on a girl!

#### APPEAL FOR PEACE AND UNITY

How long will the churches of Christ permit such disturbances among us? If Pine Bluff were the only church he had troubled, the state could be happy. Their wise leadership has prevented any serious results. But Brother Harper has become so crazed over his feud against Harding College that he wants to talk it and preach it wherever he

goes. He can hardly speak over the radio without injecting some of it. He cannot hold a meeting without talking it privately, and if possible publicly. He writes or sends his lieutenants to arrange appointments with congregations where he may speak on it. Churches are beginning to put him down as a nuisance and a trouble-maker. One or two congregations have cancelled his meetings because they have found out what he is, and they prefer peace and harmony in the church. A wise elder said recently to one of his lieutenants who was trying to arrange an appointment for him, "Why pick on us? We are at peace. We don't want Harper coming and starting trouble among us."

How long will it be before other elders take this same sensible view?

#### THE RESPONSIBILITY OF FOURTH AND STATE

When Brother Harper started his bitter fight five years ago the elders of Fourth and State Street were appealed to then to restrain his divisive course. A congregation is responsible for the activities of their preacher. If they permit him to carry on a program that sows discord among the brethren they are responsible with him for the evil that results. This whole disturbance could be controlled by the wise leadership of Fourth and State.

We want to appeal therefore, to all the sane and balanced men and women, the fair-minded and devoted Christians in Brother Harper's congregation and throughout the state to see that this ungodly fight against Harding College shall cease. Brother Harper is only injuring himself, wasting the time and energy he should be giving to the saving of men, and troubling congregations that are at peace. In spite of his childish but bitter fight, Harding College is go-

ing on with her constructive work, increasing in enrollment and in strength, and blessing the lives of its hundreds of young people, and, through them, the many congregations and communities from which they come. But we are anxious that these congregations be no longer troubled by his misrepresentations.

#### APPEAL TO BROTHER HARPER HIMSELF

Finally we want to appeal to Brother Harper himself. He has sinned deeply against the peace and harmony of the church and against the truth. He has revealed in his own statement a depth of hypocrisy almost unthinkable. He has shocked even his former friends, and has lost the confidence of many who once supported him. We would not add to the injury which he has done himself. We are anxious only that he see his wrong. Every man makes his mistakes. But for his own sake Brother Harper must recognize his wrongs and make them right. If he is ready to do this, we will rejoice and bury the past. We have no malice toward him. But we are concerned that truth and right may prevail, and that the churches may have rest. May God give us peace!

#### SUMMARY OF PART I

We have shown clearly, concerning Harper's fight, the following positive facts which cannot be denied:

1. That the issue is no longer that Harding College teaches "Premillennialism." See pp. 4-5.
2. That his signed Agreement proves that the differences are not doctrinal. See p. 5.
3. That multiplied facts bear out the conclusion of many that his aim is to dominate and control:

a. He uses the methods of politicians to strengthen his personal following and intimidate and threaten. See pp. 7-9.

b. He forced a change in eldership at Little Rock that he might become the "hub" of the state. See p. 6.

c. He abused the radio and became the laughing-stock of sectarian churches, and was required to write his speeches out to be censored by the station. See p. 7.

d. He threatens those who do not bow to him with the name of "Premillennialists." See pp. 7, 8, 16, 17.

e. He threatened Harding College with a fight if Armstrong let the cat out of the bag about his transcribed gospel songs in worship. See pp. 7, 8.

f. He is condemned by Charlie Nichol for attempts to coerce without right. See pp. 8, 9.

g. He makes "demands" on the college at Fort Smith, but fails. See p. 9.

4. That after all these failures he signs a Peace Pact. See p. 9.

5. That before two large audiences he declares the fight is over forever. See p. 10.

6. That he breaks his pledge within a few weeks. See p. 10

7. That Glenn E. Green, who served as mediator, publishes statement that Harding College kept the Agreement. See pp. 11, 12.

8. That Harper writhes under the contempt of Foy E. Wallace Jr. and some of his former friends. See pp. 12.

9. That in his "Explanation" he convicts himself of the basest, grossest hypocrisy and falsehood. See pp. 12, 13.

10. That he makes himself a "wolf in sheep's clothing." See pp. 13, 14.

11. That many have lost all faith in him as a man. See p. 15.

12. That he has been a trouble-maker among the churches. See p. 15.

13. That elders at Pine Bluff had to defend the church against his false charges, and straighten out his disturbances. See pp. 15, 16, 17.

## PART II APPENDIX

### HARPER'S CHARGES AGAINST ARMSTRONG

Since Brother Harper's recent booklet was a direct attack upon Brother Armstrong's teaching and faith, it is necessary that his charges be squarely met on this issue. The facts in Part I about his fight against Armstrong and the College are only a few. Others can, and if necessary, will be published. These, however, are sufficient to reveal the supreme Fact—that his fight is not a doctrinal but a personal matter.

Yet since Armstrong's teaching has been called in question, the following section will take up all four arguments and pieces of "evidence" on which Harper bases his charges.

#### WHAT DOES ARMSTRONG TEACH?

Since Brother Harper has used every device to convict Brother Armstrong of being a "Premillennialist," the reader may wish to know just what Brother Armstrong's teaching is on the millennium. We answer quite frankly he has never taught on it. The subject is indefinite even at best. Faithful preachers have differed so radically in the past that some have taught that the millennium is yet to come, others that it began with Jesus, others that it began with Martin Luther, others that it is now going on, and others that there is no such thing and never will be. All these views have been supported by much speculation and argument. No matter what you and I may think of it privately, all our argument will never change the matter.

Because of these difficulties and because the subject is not vital to our

daily Christian living Brother Armstrong has always preferred to teach on other subjects. In a long lifetime as a preacher, teacher, and editor of a religious journal he has not preached, written, or taught on the subject. This is why Brother Harper has been so hard put to find anything he has ever written or said which would express any view. He has therefore been forced to take statements about the "church" or the "kingdom of God" and strain them to include a belief in "premillennialism."

This attitude of Brother Armstrong's has proved his safety and soundness as a Bible teacher. He has never taught speculations. What views he has expressed have been those he can read clearly from the scriptures. In this respect he is quite in harmony with the policy of the late F. B. Srygley, who was an accepted leader among our brethren until his recent death, and who, on October 28, 1936, wrote: "I do not know what the Millennium is and therefore could not tell whether it has passed, or we are living in it, or that it is yet to come. Not knowing what it is, how could I tell when it will be?"

For those, however, who honestly want to know what Brother Armstrong does believe we need only cite his definite and positive article which appeared in the *Firm Foundation* of 1934. Here, speaking of the theory of an earthly, material reign of the Christ, which Harper says is "the heart of Premillennialism," Brother Armstrong states:

#### SOME THINGS I DO NOT BELIEVE

1. Though many Bible students believe in the return of the Jews to Palestine—Bible students far superior to me—I do not believe it: I see no indication of it.

2. I do not believe Jesus will ever reign in earthly Jerusalem on a material throne and thus establish a material kingdom.

3. I do not believe that Christ will ever sit on the literal throne of David, but I believe he is now sitting and reigning on all the throne on which he will ever sit.

4. I do not believe that the Roman Empire will ever come back and be again the world power that it once was. Surely there is no Bible proof of this. I think nobody would have ever thought of such a thing had it not been needed to complete a theory.

5. I do not believe that because Christ was rejected by the Jews, the Lord turned from his original purposes and gave the church as a "substitute"; and that at his coming again he will carry out his original plan and will restore, or establish, a kingdom with Christ on David's throne in Jerusalem.

#### SOME THINGS I DO BELIEVE

1. I believe the kingdom spoken of by Daniel was the kingdom established by Jehovah on the first Pentecost after the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

2. I believe that this kingdom, spoken of by Daniel, preached by John the Baptist and by the seventy, and that was established on Pentecost, is the only kingdom that God and Christ will ever have on earth.

3. I believe that through the reign now going on, all earthly rule is now being undermined and destroyed to the extent that the principles of this kingdom of Christ take root in the hearts and lives of its citizens; that, to that extent, swords are being beaten into plowshares, and the citizens of this kingdom refuse to learn war any more.

4. I believe that Christ now has all power and all authority in heaven and on earth; that when he was crowned King of kings and Lord of lords he was made "to sit at his right hand" "far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come."....

Such is Armstrong's emphatic denial of a belief in an earthly, material reign of the Christ. This has been his conviction for a life-time.

#### WHAT IS ARMSTRONG'S TEACHING ON THE KINGDOM?

After all the crux of the whole matter lies just here. The one point which is always urged in the fight against "premillennialism" is that it invalidates the Kingdom of God. What then is Armstrong's teaching on the Kingdom? On this he has taught clearly and positively, because this subject is immediately connected with our obedience to the Lord. It is impossible and unnecessary to produce all his writings here. It is sufficient to say that every idea he has taught about the kingdom can be found also in the writings of David Lipscomb, John T. Hinds, and practically all those men who have been recognized as sound and safe teachers.

Below we are merely giving those excerpts which Brother Harper tries to construe as proof of "Premillennialism." Following each we are also giving the same idea from one of these other men, or from the scriptures. This ought to be sufficient answer to Brother Harper's accusation of unsound teaching. If Armstrong's is unsound, then these other men were equally unsound.

#### THE SWORD THAT SMITES

In answer to a pointed question Brother Armstrong wrote in 1938: "I do not believe that the whole world will become subject to Christ just through the preaching of the gospel, for we are expressly told that as Jesus comes back again a sword will proceed out of His mouth and with it he will smite the nations. Rev. 19:11."

Brother Harper seizes this statement, which is a simple quotation from Revelations with no attempt at interpretation, and declares that Brother Armstrong believes that Je-

sus will use a material sword, that he will *conquer* the nations and *rule over them* as an earthly king rules over subject nations. Brother Armstrong did not say this, nor has he ever held such a view. It is emphatically what he has said again and again he does not believe! He has always felt that the sword was God's word, and that the smiting of the nations means their eternal destruction from the presence of the Lord. There would therefore be no nations left for the Lord to rule over. And to indicate their utter destruction he cited Rev. 19:21 which says that "the rest were killed with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, even the sword which came forth out of his mouth; and all the birds were filled with their flesh."

Brother Harper goes into hysterics about Brother Armstrong's "BIRD-VULCHER-BUZZARD EATING THEORY," as something utterly brutal and unthinkable! Yet Brother Armstrong had simply repeated the scriptural statement with no attempt at interpreting it. The words in his statement meant only whatever they mean in the scriptural passage. This places Brother Harper in the strange position of denouncing the Apostle John's "BIRD-VULCHER-BUZZARD EATING THEORY." Where John says "the birds were filled with their flesh" Harper evidently thinks they are not. But where does this place Harper? The people who give this passage a merely figurative meaning are the Russellites. They cannot think of the Lord's being so cruel as to slay men. Is this Brother Harper's view also? In his extreme urge to find something wrong with Brother Armstrong, has he allowed himself to be driven to Russellism? Brother Harper needs to clear up his own position. Does he not know what Russell teaches? If he does not know the difference between Russellism and the scriptures, he himself is certainly no safe teacher.

But that the reader may know that Brother Armstrong is not alone in accepting the Apostle John's "bird-vulcher-buzzard-eating theory" just as John gives it, without attempting to explain it away, let us quote no less an authority than the late John T. Hinds, editor of the *Gospel Advocate*. In his commentary in Revelation 19:11-16, Brother Hinds says:

"In this paragraph John is allowed to see a vision describing the Lord's victorious army in this last struggle.... Many diadems indicate the universal nature of his rule, and the complete victory he was to win over all in the last conflict.... Without doubt the passage refers to the coming of the Christ and the last struggle between sin and righteousness.... The almighty power of Jesus when he comes, will destroy Satan's army—a victory sudden and complete.... The thing that proceeds from the mouth (the sword) means words.... As the worlds were created by the word of Christ wickedness will be banished.. This text shows that wicked nations will be here when Jesus comes, else there would be none for the Lord to smite.. This symbol (King of kings and Lord of lords) represents him as still having that authority when he comes to execute God's wrath upon the wicked."

Again under the heading "Results of the Conflict Described," Brother Hinds says:

"The fowls here mean birds of prey—those that eat flesh.... John sees in the symbol the birds assembled to the battlefield to consume leaders, common men, and even animals. This means that the wicked of all classes will suffer the final banishment from God's presence."

Thus Brother Hinds' statement is even more emphatic than Brother Armstrong's. Yet Harper has never questioned Brother Hinds. If Hinds is sound on this point, so also is Armstrong. But if Harper does not agree with these two and with John, there is nowhere for us to class him except with Charles Russell and Judge Rutherford, who make all of this merely figurative, as Harper seems to do.

Quite seriously, *is* Harper sound, and does he know what he is condemning and what he himself believes? Or is this just another of his tricks?

### THE TRIUMPH OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The second statement about which Brother Harper becomes greatly excited is the following:

"Then the other passage (I Cor. 15:24-28) says Christ must reign until he has abolished all rule, etc., till he hath put all his enemies under his feet. If Christ does this, and Paul says Christ must reign till this is done, then when it is accomplished there can be no authority on the earth but Christ's. Thus he will have conquered the whole earth and re-established the divine authority over the whole earth. Then he will deliver the kingdom up to the Father, according to Paul's teaching. If my position should agree with "premillennialism" I certainly will rejoice that they preach the truth at that point."

Brother Harper says, "It is Premillennialism, brethren," and he quotes another excerpt from an old "Living Message," which is too long to give here but which contains merely the same idea. What! Can Harper have so little regard for a man's language as to force into it meanings he has never intended? Brother Armstrong has here said nothing about a millennium—pre-, post-, or non-. The devout postmillennialist or nonmillennialist believes everything Brother Armstrong has stated here.

What is wrong with Brother Harper? Is he so anxious to convict Brother Armstrong that he is catching at every straw? Worse than that. He is denouncing Paul himself. For Armstrong's statement above is merely a paraphrase of Paul's language in I Cor. 15:24-28. Get your Bible and compare it. Is Paul then a "premillennialist"? Either Brother Harper does not know what "premillennial-

ism" is, or he willfully forces into another man's statement a meaning it does not have.

Furthermore this statement which he condemns in Brother Armstrong has been made just as emphatically by other great teachers of the church. John T. Hinds, who was outstanding as a postmillennialist, says the "Many diadems (mentioned in Rev. 19:12) indicate the universal nature of his rule, and the *complete victory he was to gain over all* in the last conflict."

David Lipscomb, whose soundness Brother Harper would hardly dare question, is really Brother Armstrong's great teacher regarding the church and its ultimate triumph. Lipscomb makes it even more emphatic than Armstrong. In commenting on Daniel 2:44, which foretells the establishment of the church, or Kingdom of God, Lipscomb says:

"God will recover the earth by establishing a kingdom of his own founding and build that shall never be destroyed, but it shall *break in pieces and consume all the kingdoms of earth*..... The kingdom from a small beginning, even a 'mustard seed' as the saviour said, should gradually grow and spread, extending its rule and authority until it should become a great mountain, fill the whole earth and in its growth *break in pieces, crush, and grind into powder all these earthly kingdoms*, until they, like the chaff of the summer threshing floor, shall be driven before the wind and no place on earth be found for them. The kingdom of God must spread and cover the earth as the waters cover the sea."

Again in commenting on I Cor. 15:24-28, David Lipscomb says:

"This earth in the *material, moral, and spiritual world* must become again a garden of God's own planting. Not a brier or thistle, or thorn can grow in the *material, moral or spiritual world*. Only those plants planted by the Father's hand and nurtured by his love will grow in that redeemed and rescued Eden of God."

"This proclaims that everything that exercises rule, authority, or power in the world, save as it is exercised in the kingdom of God under his rule, for

his glory and honor, is an enemy of God and that Jesus Christ must reign in and through his own divine Kingdom until all these shall be destroyed... Then shall Jesus deliver up the kingdom to God the Father, that he may be all in all. This is the final end to which all things are directed."

"The final result of all will be the complete and utter destruction of all opposing powers and the final and full establishment of the kingdom and authority of God over the whole earth." ("Salvation from Sin" pp. 133-137)

This is the voice of David Lipscomb. Armstrong affirmed nothing regarding this passage which Lipscomb does not also affirm. What is Harper to do with Lipscomb? Is he a "Premillennialist?" Would he shut Lipscomb out of the Bible departments of our Christian schools? What then would he do with Paul? For both Armstrong and Lipscomb are merely echoing Paul and Daniel. Are they "Premillennialists?" Would he forbid their teaching in a Christian school? Or is Harper alone the only "sound" and qualified man to head a Bible department?

#### THE MEANING OF "THEN"

The third statement of Brother Armstrong to which Brother Harper objects is about the meaning of the two "then's" in I Cor. 15:23-24. Armstrong said in a letter to B. G. Hoper, April 29, 1939:

"In commenting on the fact of the 'then's' in the passage meaning 'afterwards' or 'later,' I often say that the space of 'time' between the resurrection of the saints and the end could be 'a few hours or a thousand years, even two thousand years'.... As we all know the first 'then' has already covered two thousand years, and still the 'then' goes on. How much the second 'then' may cover none of us know."

Brother Harper cries out that in this statement Brother Armstrong has "convicted himself of being a 'pre-millennialist'!" How so? What is wrong with the statement? Armstrong was merely explaining the meaning

of "then." He was following Thayer's "Greek Lexicon," as to the identical meaning of the two 'then's,' and all scholars recognize its authority in the Greek.

John T. Hinds in an article in the *Gospel Advocate* of July 25, 1935, makes substantially the same point in regard to the second 'then.' While Hinds admits that no one can know the lapse of time indicated, he himself is of the opinion that it might be a "few hours" or even a "few months." Brother Armstrong, however, with that caution to avoid speculation which has always characterized his teaching expresses no "opinion" at all. As far as the word "then" itself is concerned it might mean a "few hours" or even the "two thousand years," which the first "then" has already covered. In a statement to Brother Pool, which Harper knew but ignored, Armstrong said it might even be "a few minutes." He further declares that if it be only a "few minutes" it will fulfill any theory he has about it.

With this statement how can Brother Harper charge him with a position which would not merely permit, but would demand a thousand years for completion? Certainly any position that would be satisfied with "then" as "a few minutes" should be just as safe as Brother Hinds' "few hours or months." What differences is there between Armstrong and Hinds on this point?

But as a matter of fact can any mortal man, can Brother Harper himself know exactly the lapse of time indicated by "then" any more than the distance skyward indicated by "up"? Jesus warns us about speculating on just when he will return and what will happen at his coming. Only God knows some things, and it is much more modest to say with Armstrong and Hinds "We do not know," than to assume a knowledge which God alone possesses.

#### SUMMARY

These are the three statements on which Harper tries to convict Armstrong of believing "Premillennialism". In each case Armstrong's statement is duplicated by almost exact statements from John T. Hinds or David Lipscomb. We could point out scores of other godly men who have stated themselves in the same way. As a matter of fact Brother Armstrong's views on the church, or the kingdom are as identical with those of Lipscomb as two men's could possibly be. What, then, is the cause of all Brother Harper's fuss and fighting?

In this Part II we have met Harper's charges frankly. We have established conclusively the following points:

1. That Armstrong, during a long lifetime, has never taught on, or speculated about, the millennium. See p. 21.

2. That he is as positive as Harper or any one else could be about condemning the belief in an earthly material reign of the Christ, which is "the heart of Premillennialism." See p. 22.

3. That every statement Brother Harper quotes from him is duplicated by almost exact statements from John T. Hinds, or David Lipscomb. We could point out scores of godly men who have taught the same things. See pp. 22, 23, 24.

4. That Armstrong's views about the kingdom are as identical with those of David Lipscomb's as two men's could well be. See pp. 24, 25.

5. That Harper's assertions arouse question about the soundness of his own faith. Is he conscious that he ridicules plain Biblical statements, that he misrepresents another man's views, that he comes dangerously close to Russellism himself? Or has

the bitterness of his fight against Brother Armstrong led him to deliberately misrepresent him as well as Lipscomb, Hinds, and the Bible?

6. That, since every statement Harper quotes from Armstrong can be duplicated from John T. Hinds, Lipscomb, or Paul, or John, Harper must accept Armstrong as sound or reject all these as unsound.

But finally, in Part I Harper's Agreement shows positively that his fight was never over doctrinal issues at all. What then are we to conclude? These doctrinal charges are evidently a part of his blitzkrieg technique—to bewilder and confuse. A part of the sheep's clothing by which the wolf can get at the sheep to estrange and tear. And the end in view—through his long and bitter war—is to oust those in the management of Harding College that he may dominate and control, or as he himself says, "get into the Bible department."

#### NOTE ON HARPER'S "PLANNED ATTACK"

In the June issue of the *Bible Banner* Brother Harper has another article seeking to soften the blow of this reply and to arouse sympathy for himself as a martyr. In reply we would mention briefly only the following facts:

1. Harding College did not seek this fight and has made no reply to Harper's repeated attacks for five long years. If Harper is a "martyr" he has crucified himself through his own wrong course.

2. His charges in this article that Benson and Sears admitted privately and at Fort Smith that Armstrong was a "Premillennialist" and should be retired are the grossest misrepresentation. In the Fort Smith meeting both Benson and Sears replied publicly to Harper's charges, and both opposed absolutely and with no qualification Harper's attempt to "retire" him.

3. The reference to Armstrong's age has also been cruelly misrepresented. No one has wished "he would die," unless it should be Brother Harper and his supporters. But we do not believe even that. Brother Harper would far rather see him humiliated and disgraced by being dismissed from the institution which he has served so long and faithfully. The reference to age was made only to show how ruthless and unjust Brother Harper's fight has been. To demand the dismissal and disgrace of a man *against the soundness and purity of whose teaching and life no charge has been, or can be, proved*, a man who has given a long life time of unselfish service to Christian education, who for years taught with almost no salary that he might pay the other teachers and keep the college running, whose one fault is that he has kept his independence of soul and refused to bow down before the idol of Brother Harper's Greatness—to oust such a man would be an act of unspeakable injustice. In the Fort Smith meeting Brother Benson asked, "Are you men ready to say 'Armstrong, you have given your life to the school; you have carried it through the dark years when you had to go without salary to pay the other teachers; you have given it your life-blood; but now since it has become a great school, the enrollment increased, safety and permanence assured, and you can begin to enjoy the fruit of your long sacrifice, we intend to kick you out and take the school over ourselves. We didn't sacrifice to make it, but now since it is going well we want it.' Is this what you men mean?" When faced with the facts so bluntly stated even Harper was silent. It was then that the compromise of an "assistant" was suggested, to which Harper also agreed.

This only has been the reference to "age." But the fact that after a long life-time of rich, unselfish, and truly glorious service Brother Harper would crush him in his later years and oust him from the work which he has built up by his own blood and sacrifice makes Harper's fight the more inglorious and despicable.

4. Brother Harper's statements to the effect that the college has tried so hard to get him to its meetings, and that "Brother Benson has asked me several times to appear on their lecture courses" and even "tried to get me to teach Bible this year, that is the past term at Har-

ding" and "It has even been discussed at times of my being a member of the board," are strange jargon.

We are not surprised that he has "discussed" my being a member of the board," probably with the few who may likewise be interested in "getting control". But the President and Dean of the college haven't given that subject any discussion, and they do not know of any friends of the college who have.

Brother Harper may have been invited to appear on some lecture program some years back. That would have been in keeping with the friendly policy of the college. But he hasn't been invited very recently except during the brief period in 1939 while he was respecting his "peace agreement".

When he had, contrary to his written agreement, advised Brother W. B. West not to come to the college, and when he was threatening to break that agreement, and when he was apparently "feeling about" to see how big a prize he could get if he would continue to keep his agreement, he himself "discussed" the possibility of his teaching Bible in the college. But Brother Harper's price was too high, even as much as the college would have liked for him to have honorably kept his agreement. But Brother Benson made him no offer, did not "try" to get him as a Bible teacher, doesn't consider him qualified for such a position. Harper's own suggestion that he might teach some Bible courses with West does however, indicate further the drift of his ambition, and his disappointment.

5. In reference to Harper's challenge to public discussion, we have chosen the written form of discussion only because it is more permanent and can reach more people.

6. Finally, we have never had any desire to injure Brother Harper and do not now. But after five years we have felt it necessary to defend ourselves for once against his repeated misrepresentations. If he should be injured in any way it is through his own persistent fight, the contradictions in his own course, and his own revelation of his inner character.

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