Paragould, Arkansas

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| During the early part of 1947 it was my privilege to attend a religious discussion, in Birmingham, Alabama. My good friend and brother, W. Curtis Porter, debated Glen V. Tingley, who represented the Christian-Missionary Alliance. Both were able men, and favorably known among their respective brethren. The first three nights of the debate were conducted in the building of the Central church of Christ and the last three at the "Birmingham Gospel Tabernacle," which had been started by Mr. Tingley and where he was the very popular preacher. The debate had been well-planned and well-advertised; twelve to fifteen hundred people attended every session at both places, crowding into every available space. The conduct of the audience and speakers was excellent; good order and a fine, congenial attitude prevailed throughout.Both debaters were able men; nevertheless, there were marked contrasts distinguishing the two. Mr. Tingley was an outgoing, articulate man and with an evident ability to communicate ideas and influence people. In a word which has seen considerable use in recent years, he had charisma, a personal magic of leadership that aroused popular loyalty and enthusiasm. He had built a large following for himself in Birmingham; was well-known and influential in that city. He seemed not to lack for self-confidence; in fact, his air of self-assurance was such that there seemed to be more than a trace of conceit, cocksureness. Yet, he was a likeable person. While brother Porter had superior abilities and knowledge of the Scriptures, there was no showiness about him. He was a quiet, God-fearing man who loved the truth; always meek and humble. He "put on no airs." He did not fluff. He did not bluster. But when a defense of the truth of God was called for, he was ready, willing and able. It was then that his true worth and abilities were made evident. Tingley and Porter met each other for the first time during this debate. It is my personal opinion that the humility of Porter, the complete absence of display on his part, plus the fact that he was known to come from a little country town in Arkansas (Monette), was disarming to a man of Tingley's disposition, and hence, caused him to under estimate the task before him. If he had deceived himself about this he was soon undeceived. He soon learned that the had met more than his match, as the errors Tingley espoused were exposed and refuted through six sessions of debating.On the third and fourth nights the subject for discussion was baptism. Porter affirmed: "The Scriptures teach that water baptism to a penitent believer of the gospel is essential to salvation from alien sins." In his first affirmative speech, his third argument presented was based on the commission given by Jesus, as recorded in Mark 16:15,16: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." After quoting this he then proceeded to make his argument based on the simplicity, the understandableness, of Jesus' statement, pointing out that it does not say, "He that believeth and is saved can then be baptized if he wants to." That is not, first believe; second, baptism; and third salvation. Rather, it is first believe; second baptism; and third salvation. He argued that the Lord stated it that way, and that if the passage makes belief necessary to salvation, it also makes baptism necessary to salvation; that, according to Jesus, salvation is dependent upon those conditions.Continuing this argument, brother Porter, in his characteristic ability to make matters plain, said: "Remember that no amount of reasoning can make that read, 'He that believeth, and is saved can then be baptized,' because that is not what the Lord said. Suppose, for example, that when you go home from this discussion you turn on your radio and hear the Presidenttonight in Birmingham before daylight you ever heard of. You would not be able to keep people knocked out of the river or the creeks with a club; and among the first to get wet would be my friend, Elder Tingley."At this point, there was some laughter from the audience. And, Tingley joined good-naturedly in the laughter - and then he laughingly nodded and said, loudly and clearly, "I expect that's right."Then, when all was quiet, brother Porter continued his speech, very forcefully saying: "He says he expects that's right! Do you think more of a new Ford than you do salvation? You said you'd do it if it were a Ford involved. You would not try to reason it away; you'd accept it; you'd do it. You'd be one of the first men to get wet; but where the salvation of the soul is involved he tries to reason the thing out and get it entirely out of the way. He knows if,Why quibbling, then, when salvation is the thing involved, and the Lord said, 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved'?"Having said this, Porter went on to his fourth argument. He did not need to say more. Tingley saw it. The audience saw it. And, although Tingley tried hard to put on a bold front, he never regained the aplomb he had shown earlier. Throughout the remaining sessions of the debate, Tingley had a difficult time, although he made determined effort. He had shown that although he could understand the teaching of Jesus, he was determined to try to get around it.More than forty years have come and gone since this occurred. During these years I have thought about it many times - not only about Glen V. Tingley, but about countless other preachers of the various denominations, who can understand what Jesus said, and meant, but who, nevertheless, try to deny, try to get around, this plain teaching of Jesus, and who work so hard at trying to keep other people from believing and obeying what Jesus taught. If the President of the Ford Motor Company were to make the proposition in our day as was suggested by brother Porter in this debate in Birmingham, these preachers could understand it, and they would not quibble about it, nor hesitate to comply with it - they'd head for the water, and soon be seen proudly driving their new Ford cars! But when it comes to the matter of salvation, their denominational dogmas, stubbornness and/or pride causes them to try to get around this teaching of Jesus - and to prevent others from understanding, believing and obeying it. Think about it! In all candor, I say, I would not stand in the shoes of such a preacher for a million worlds like this one.Guardian of Truth XXXII: 1, pp. 12-13January 7, 1988 |
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| The Birmingham News, May 26, 1974  |

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|   | Notes for Iverson Warner Doles:      Except for a brief period when his family lived in Dothan, Iverson lived in Birmingham.       When he was about 18 years old, Ivey went to work, along with his brothers, Curtis and Herschell, in his father's coal contracting business. His job was to run the horse, which was used to pull the coal cars up the track to their dumping point.       He was paid well -- $300 a month. With his first money he went out and bought a suit for $50 and a pair of Stacy Adam shoes for $20. The suit wore well for many years and the shoes were very stylish.       Ivey worked in Maxine, AL, a small mining town a few miles east of Birmingham. He lived in a small apartment above the Daniel family. Luther Daniel had been a miner himself but was incapacitated by silicosis ("black lung," a miner's disease). Luther's wife May ran a concession selling sold cold drinks, sandwiches, peanuts, and snacks to all the miners as they went to and from work.       Their daughter, Sarah Edna Daniel, caught Ivey's eye. Within a short time he decided on her to be his bride. Ivey and Sarah were married on May 2, 1926 at Birmingham, although he admitted that was never very good about remembering their anniversaries. They had four children.       In 1928, at the age of 23, Ivey began hearing the Rev. Glenn Tingley preach a revival crusade on the radio. Rev. Tingley was holding tent meetings in Birmingham, and Ivey decided to attend. There, Ivey decided to make a Christian profession. Out of those meetings was formed the Birmingham Gospel Tabernacle, a church of the Christian and Missionary Alliance. Ivey and Sarah were founding members of the church and remained with it all of their lives. Even in his last days, Ivey participated regularly in the life of the church, at worship, in the Bible classes and at the weekly men's prayer breakfast. He loved to sing gospel songs and hymns. His favorite was How Great Thou Art.       Ivey was a hard working man. About the time he married Sarah, he began work for Acipco (American Cast Iron and Pipe Company) and retired as the Assistant Superintendent of Maintainence. While with Acipco, he took advantage of the opportunity to better himself by enrolling in a number of courses in the ICS (International Correspondance School) which were being offered through the company.       Always a devoted family man, in his later years Ivey took care of his parents, as well as Sarah's mother, and later Sarah's uncle, Brack C. Daniel.       Sarah died on May 24, 1974 at Birmingham. That evening, Ivey consoled himself with a hymnal. Beginning on the first page, he sang his way through hymn after hymn until he exhausted himself, and then he retired to his room to mourn in silence.  |