THE

LA COSTE - JACKSON

DEBATE

THE PROPOSITIONS AND THE DISPUTANTS

"THE SCRIPTURES TEACH THAT A CONGREGATION, IN ITS BENEVOLENT WORK AND FROM ITS CHURCH FUNDS, MAY RENDER AID TO ONE NOT A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH."

AFFIRM - BILL JACKSON, SOUTHWEST CHURCH OF CHRIST IN AUSTIN, TEXAS

DENY - ROBERT WAYNE LA COSTE, WONSLEY DR. CHURCH OF CHRIST IN AUSTIN, TEXAS.

"THE SCRIPTURES TEACH THAT A CONGREGATION, IN ITS BENEVOLENT WORK AND FROM ITS CHURCH FUNDS, MAY RENDER AID ONLY TO THOSE WHO ARE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH."

AFFIRM - ROBERT WAYNE LA COSTE

DENY - BILL JACKSON

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SOUTHWEST CHURCH OF CHRIST
8900 MANCHACA ROAD
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78748

512/282-2438 512/282-2486

March 28, 1984

Mr. Bob Lacost
7300 S. Ute Trail
Austin, TX 78729

Dear Bob:

Glad to talk with you, and I enclose suggested propositions for a written discussion which, by agreement with Jerry Moffitt, also would constitute an issue of THRUST magazine. Following the written discussion, and on toward the Fall, perhaps there can also be a public discussion.

I am submitting that which, in my view, fairly states the matter for us, but will also see what you submit to me - we can agree on what is fair to both.

I suggest: " The Scriptures teach that a congregation, in its benevolent work, may render aid to one not a member of the church."

Affirm: Jackson Deny: Lacost

" The Scriptures teach that a congregation, in its benevolent work, may render aid only to those who are members of the church."

Affirm: Lacost Deny: Jackson

Let me know what you think.

Jerry states that we need, on each proposition, three articles each, 4 pages in length, double-spaced, large type, with 1 " margins. That amounts to 48 pages over the entire discussion. Whoever has the affirmative in the 1st proposition would then switch to have the negative in the last proposition.

I have worked to keep the propositions as simple as possible, and feel that this expedites our agreeing. If we can do so very soon, we can get to writing, and I can participate, even when in meetings and away from Austin.

Looking forward to hearing from you,

Bill

Bill Jackson

Church of Christ

507 WONSLEY DRIVE Phone 836-8532 AUSTIN, TEXAS 78753

Mr. Bill Jackson
8900 Manchaca Rd.
Austin, Texas 78748

March 30, 1984

Dear Brother Jackson,
Appreciated hearing from you and the propositions you sent. I'm looking forward to both discussions with much interest. Thank brother Moffitt for me if you will, for the use of THRUST for these matters.

The propositions in my judgement can be agreed upon if you will allow a brief "alteration." By "congregation" I assume you mean the collective church from its treasury. I would feel more comfortable if it read thusly, and in my estimation would make for the debate "clash" to be seen by the respective readers more easily. After all, I know each of us agree that the church distributively or individually can help anyone in most instances. May I humbly suggest:

"The Scriptures teach that a congregation, in its benevolent work, and from its church funds, may render aid to one not a member of the church." Affirm: Jackson Deny: La Coste

"The Scriptures teach that a congregation, in its benevolent work and from its church funds, may render aid only to those who are members of the church." Affirm: La Coste Deny: Jackson

As you see Bill, I only added to your propositions, "and from its church funds." Again, I feel this makes it clearer. However, if this is not acceptable with you, I will go with your's as long as this is understood and stated in the actual discussion.

I'm looking forward to this one and the one in the fall. From all I've read and heard Bill you are an honorable debater and Christian, and you may rest assured I will always try to conduct myself likewise. I too have meetings in the summer. The elders have suggested ANYTIME in September for the public one. What do you think? Oh yes, please be sure and let me know where this debate is with the Primitive Baptist. I would like to attend and become more acquainted with you and listen to you defend the truth. Anxious to hear from you.

Because of Calvary,

Robert W. LaCoste

Robert Wayne La Coste

SOUTHWEST CHURCH OF CHRIST
8900 MANCHACA ROAD
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78748

512/280-3438 512/282-2486

April 3, 1984

Mr. Bob La Coste
7300 S. Ute Trail
Austin, TX 78729

Dear Bob:

Glad to receive your letter. On the proposition wording, it suits me to change, although it seems superfluous; we each know that we are not speaking of benevolence as the individual may render it in day-to-day life. And by "congregation," I'm sure all would know that we mean "congregation," and not the individual.

It may be for us to develop, in our discussion, as to the narrowing down of this to church "funds," and whether or not the church, the collective, can render aid to any non-member, whether in the form of "funds," or food, furniture, etc. that has been brought to the building and thus becomes a part of the collective's gathering. But, we'll see.

On another sheet, I am wording the propositions for our signing, and the matters of rule and procedure. In your submitting, I presumed, by the order, that you were approving my going in the affirmative. If that is so, then I will begin to work on the first affirmative immediately.

We will see about the Fall dates just a little later; I have a Georgia meeting in early Sept., but looks like the latter part is fine and clear for me.

I, too, look forward to a gentlemanly discussion, in the Christian spirit, and I hope we can focus clearly on the issues, and refrain from getting into matters that have hindered other discussions.

The debate with Cooper, Primitive Baptist, is set for May 28, 29, and 31 and June 1st. Hope you can be with us.

And, why not attend some of our lectures! The door is opened, and I don't think your attending those of your choosing will be taken by your brethren as a surrender to us.

Let me have the signed copies back right away, and I'll proceed.

Sincerely,

Bill

Bill Jackson

PROPOSITIONS AND RULES

(1) " The Scriptures teach that a congregation, in its benevolent work and from its church funds, may render aid to one not a member of the church. "

SIGNED: Bill Jackson - Affirm 4/3/84

Bob La Coste - Deny 4/4/84

(2) " The Scriptures teach that a congregation, in its benevolent work and from its church funds, may render aid only to those who are members of the church. "

SIGNED: Bob La Coste - Affirm 4/4/84

Bill Jackson - Deny 4/3/84

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(1) Jerry Moffitt has offered to run this discussion, when completed, in THRUST magazine.

(2) On each proposition, each writer will be allowed three articles each, 4 pages in length, double-spaced, large type, with 1-inch margins.

(3) Each writer will labor to have his reply in the hands of the other within ten (10) days receipt of each article.

(4) Each writer is free to print and publish, and advertise for distribution, the completed discussion, so long as it is published in its entirety.

Agreed: Bill Jackson 4/3/84

Bob La Coste 4/4/84

JACKSON'S FIRST AFFIRMATIVE

It is with great pleasure that I enter into this discussion with brother La Coste, and I want to express my thanks to brother Jerry Moffitt, editor of THRUST, for his kindness in permitting this discussion as an issue of his fine journal. I want brother La Coste, and all others, to know that my interest is in truth, with great loyalty to the Word of God, and at the same time holding to every liberty the Lord allows. It is our intention to examine the issue openly, honestly and fairly in the light of the Scriptures.

My proposition reads, "The Scriptures teach that a congregation, in its benevolent work and from its church funds, may render aid to one not a member of the church." By "the Scriptures" I mean, of course, the 66 books of the Bible; by "teach" I mean the imparting of knowledge from the Scriptures, by command, example or inference; by "a congregation" I mean a local body of saints, in a given location, as "the congregation at Ephesus"; by "benevolent work" I mean assistance given to one truly in need, such as the need for food, clothing and shelter, etc.; by "church funds" I mean those monies on hand through the authorized contribution; by "rendering aid" I mean the benevolent assistance just defined; and by "one not a member of the church" I mean one who is not a Christian. I believe that brother La Coste and I will agree on those definitions, and they are stated merely that all readers may be together with us in this discussion.

In the affirmative, it is my duty to prove the proposition true. We propose to move now to clear and unmistakable proof, and this is found in 2 Corinthians 9:13. The context speaks of the benevolence Paul spoke of continually, and that in which he had a part in collecting. The fact that there were needs, and that men were impoverished, had special appeal because brethren were involved. This is why, in numerous places, the point is made, *"relief unto the brethren"* (Acts 11:29), *"the poor among the saints"* (Rom. 15:26), and *"ministering to the saints"* (2 Cor. 9:1). But, that is not the point at issue. Granted, the saints were in need, and this motivated the brethren, but the question is this: Did the saints, in this practice of their Christianity, render aid ONLY to fellow-saints, or did they, as opportunities, resources and priorities occasioned, give aid to any who had not obeyed the gospel?

The context of 2 Corinthians 9 deals with that benevolence, and Paul here commends the liberality of those doing the giving (v. 11). He pointed to the meeting of the needs of the saints, and of offering of thanks unto God (v. 12). He then adds, *"Seeing that through the proving of you by this ministration they glorify God for the obedience of your confession unto the gospel of Christ, and for the liberality of your contribution unto THEM and unto ALL"* (v. 13, emphasis mine, BJ). The King James, in this verse, has it *"unto THEM and unto ALL MEN"*, and that is the sense of the American Standard's *"UNTO ALL."*

Some of brother La Coste's brethren have Paul engaged in some kind of double-talk where the passage says *"unto saints"* and *"unto all saints only"*. The passage clearly shows us that in the benevolent work of the church, aid was naturally given to brethren - and I think we could all see, upon first priority (Gal 6:10) - but that also aid was given to relieve the affliction of some who were not members of the church. Because of the view that some have of the expression "unto all", it will be good for us to see the phrase as it is used elsewhere. The Greek word is "pantas", and we find it: the word of obedience come to all men (pantas) - Rom. 16:19, abounding love toward one another and toward all men (pantas) - 1 Thess. 3:12; the servant of the Lord, gentle unto all men (pantas) - 2 Tim. 2:24, following peace with all men (panton, same word) - Heb. 12:14; and honoring all men (pantas) - 1 Pet. 2:17. We wonder then, brother La Coste, is God saying that the word is to come to saints ONLY, that we are to love saints ONLY, that we are to be gentle to

saints ONLY, follow peace with saints ONLY, and honor saints ONLY??? More than that, we very obviously have a distinction made, in 2 Cor 9:13, between "them", the saints and "all", other than the saints.

Now, we expect to hear no charge that the church is put in the business of supporting the world, for even benevolence to saints is not be be the major work of the church (Acts 6.2-4). Nor is anyone advocating support of the lazy, for Paul has forbidden that (2 Thess. 3:10), as well as forbidding fellowship with the false teacher (Rom. 16:17 and 2 John 9-11).

We are saying that the church, in its benevolent work, will naturally be motivated by knowing their brethren are in need. We are saying also that in the benevolent work of the church there are some occasions wherein aid is rendered to one who is not a Christian, and that this in itself has opened doors of evangelism. We believe this is in keeping with the principle existing even in ancient Israel, where we have a closed fellowship of the highest order, and yet the stranger was provided benevolence repeatedly. It is in keeping with the command to *"do good unto all men, and especially unto them who are of the household of faith* "(Gal. 6:10).

But there is a larger principle here, and we'd like to see brother La Coste deal with it. Inasmuch as the New Testament does not provide either for a church building, or for funds deposited in a bank account, then the church funds must exist from the time the individuals place monies in a collective. We want brother La Coste to tell us if the same rule applies for other items placed in a collective - furniture in a shed or storage room, clothes and food items in a benevolent room, etc.? If the church, as a body, is forbidden any aid to a non-saint, surely the principle involves more than money.

We wonder where the money rules are found, and relating only to money? And, how is it that we can provide the drinking fountain and pay the water bill, provide rest room facilities, tissue and paper towels, etc., and pay for it all out of church funds, giving this aid to a non-saint just for his comfort, and yet if he slips and falls in services, and breaks his arm, and is penniless, we would not provide any church funds in his time of hardship? We would like for the real Christianity of the system to be spelled out.

All New Testament readers know that famine occasioned the urgency whereby brethren knew their fellow-saints were in need. But, does a famine only affect the saints? What of the case, in Judea, when in dire circumstances benevolent aid came to them, and in the distribution the saints' needs were met - did the brethren turn a cold shoulder when those around them were in need? What of that household, made up of saints, but also having a third cousin visiting from Pontus and also affected? Did the brethren give aid to the saints, but ignore the non-member visiting that household? Or, is it simply the manipulating of funds, passing to one who in turn can then pass to another?

Let us close with this posed for brother La Coste. A non-member visits the services, and gives a $20 contribution. As he is leaving the services, he is struck by a car. May the elders pay the ambulance driver $10 from church funds?

LA COSTE'S FIRST NEGATIVE

It is only appropriate that I mention how I share brother Jackson's sentiments about the discussion. My interest too lies in truth. And truth is no respector of persons; it crushes with equal force the false positions of both friends and enemies, brothers and aliens, relatives and strangers, members of the same congregation and those of different congregations. This is said to let each reader know this is not a matter of personalities. Brother Jackson and I are brethren and in this discussion, and in a public discussion being planned, each of us must therefore conduct ourselves accordingly.

Before I proceed in responding to brother Jackson's first affirmative (all terms and definitions being acceptable), I want to impress upon you what this and future debates are NOT about! We are not debating that Christians shouldn't be benevolent, compassionate, and helpful in every day of life to all peoples. I'm well aware of what our Lord taught about "loving thy neighbor". There is not anyone who can go to heaven without so doing. I have yet to meet anyone who calls himself a Christian who does not so believe. In this regard I believe I love my fellow man as much as Bill Jackson.

What we are discussing is this: where is the Bible authority for the congregation (church) to open up the church funds (treasury) to just anyone and everyone in the name of benevolence? Does God want saints and people of the world cared for from this source, or just saints? That is the issue. Let us proceed with open Bibles and minds.

Brother Jackson's "clear and unmistakable proof" that the church may help anyone, saint or sinner alike, is not found in 2 Cor. 9:13, as he might like to think. I was glad to see him concede, however, that such relief was made unto saints (Acts 11:29, Rom. 15:26, 2 Cor. 9:1).

Since brother Jackson mentions Rom. 15, look also at verse 27: whoever received the benefit in these carnal things were the same ones who were "partakers" (koinonia-fellowship) of their spiritual things also. According to brother Jackson, the saints in Macedonia and Achaia had fellowship with unbelievers! Who can believe it? Back to 2 Cor. 9:13 - It was these same people who were *"thanking God..."* (verse 11) and praying to God (verse 14) for what the Gentile Christians had done for them, though they were Jews. But the Gentile Christians of Asia did not send to them because they were Jews, but because they were Christians! Is brother Jackson telling us that alien sinners thanked God and prayed to God and were so encouraged to do so? Prayer is a privilege of God's people.

Nine different Bible scholars (Lipscomb, Lang, Lenski, Filson, Bernard, Plummer, Meyer, Lard, Abingdon) concur and render the passage: "For by the beneficences toward the Jews, the Corinthians showed in point of fact that they excluded no Christian from the sincere fellowship of love..."

The Greek word "pantas" means ALL - not all men, as brother Jackson seems to think. Its proper usage is determined by the context. In the King James Version "men" is italicized. That means it was not in the original manuscript, but was later added by the translators. That's significant when we realize, even as we have proven, that Paul is discussing in 2 Cor. 9:13 a class WITHIN a class and not two separate, totally different classes.

All those passages you listed where "pantas" is mentioned have absolutely nothing to do with your proposition, brother Jackson. Sure, the word of obedience came to all and not just saints, sure every Christian must be gentle and peaceable with all, etc. You are affirming what THE CHURCH may do unto what you classify as ALL MEN in benevolence, not what the Christian does toward all in daily godly

living. Look at how "pantas" is used in other places: *"And ALL that believed were together and had ALL things common, and parted them to ALL men, as every man had need"* (Acts 2:44-45). Will brother Jackson tell us that the Jerusalem disciples had every last thing in this world in common? Will he tell us they parted their goods unto saint and sinner alike in view of the fact the text is considering *"all that believed"*? We shall see. Consider 1 Tim. 5:20. *"Them that sin, rebuke before ALL, that others may fear."* Will brother Jackson tell us we are to rebuke those who sin before saint and sinner alike? Who did Paul want to "fear" (see Acts 5:11)? Consider Heb. 4:4, *"...that God did rest the seventh day from ALL His works."* Was God totally finished and he never created or brought anything else to man? It says all! No, God rested from His creating the world. Later, he sent the church, etc. See what I mean? The context must determine if the ALL means EVERY LAST THING, or simply means EVERY LAST THING OF A PARTICULAR THING, OR PEOPLE, OR CLASS.

Then he said, "we surely can't have fellowship with the false teacher." Is brother Jackson saying he can't, but the Corinthians could? If those resources went from the Corinthians to saint and sinner alike, as you say it did, you have those Christians giving to apostate Jews in Jersusalem, many who did not even believe Jesus was the Christ. A glaring inconsistency. Which do you believe, brother Jackson?

As for benevolence being used to open doors, that wasn't its purpose in the first century. Its purpose was to help indigent saints. The gospel needs no calling card, as some must think. The way to a man's heart might be "through his stomach" but not to his soul. Shades of social gospel.

Brother Jackson's "larger principle" that he would have us see causes him to contradict himself again. In his terms of the proposition, he admitted the New Testament teaches by command, example, and inference. He even defined funds as the "authorized" contribution. Then he turns around and says the New Testament does not provide for such. Amazing! Surely there is authority for an assembling place and for bank accounts (treasury). It's unfortunate brother Jackson can't say the same for his position on benevolence.

Does any honest reader really equate taking money out of the Lord's treasure with common courtesy as in areas of bathrooms and a water fountain? Do you let the false teacher drink from your fountain, brother Jackson? Would you let the lazy bum go to the restroom? I agree, we can't help the bum or false teacher from the treasury of the church, but who would be so ugly as to not allow them these facilities? Quit clouding the issue, brother! Finally, I'm glad brother Jackson gave all those examples he gave so "the real Christianity of the system can be spelled out." The indication is that we are not Christians because we would help a saint, but not their family if they were not saints. The inference was that the poor man who falls and hurts himself or is injured by a car is out of luck, because "those people would not help these." How christian is it, brother Jackson, to so accuse your brethren? Just what do you think we would do for these injured folks (not saints)? Can anyone believe we would let them suffer with no assistance in the least? How cruel and unfair to so infer. I'll tell you what we would do. Whatever good Christian of the Wonsley congregation was there at the time would in mercy help them, and not wait on a check from the elders. Brother Jackson - which is "pure and undefiled religion?"

JACKSON'S SECOND AFFIRMATIVE

Brother La Coste and I certainly stand in full agreement on the application of Christian principles in all of life - loving neighbor, etc. - but our differences naturally center on whether a group of individuals, called a congregation, can work together in abiding by those principles. I have a sneaking suspicion that he thinks the group can apply those principles, except when it comes to the church treasury. More directly to the point of our discussion, can that same group of individuals, now called a congregation, render benevolent aid to one not a member of the church?

Now, we want to urge brother La Coste not to engage in misrepresentations. He has already done so, on his very first page, in stating that the point of our discussion was whether the church treasury was to be opened to "just anyone and everyone." Now, where did I say that, brother La Coste? In fact, if he would bother to read my article, carefully, he would see that I spelled out that we were not speaking of granting aid to the lazy, or to the false teacher, etc. Why engage in misrepresentation, brother La Coste? Brother La Coste's position is that benevolent aid can be given to saints, and only to saints. I readily agreed that it was the fact that saints were in need that prompted their brethren to act in this benevolent aid, as noted in the passages from Romans 15, Acts 11, and 2 Corinthians 9. The question remains: when the church engaged in relieving the saints, were there occasions when some benevolent aid went to those who were NOT saints? We showed, in 2 Cor. 9:12, 13, that such aid was given.

Brother La Coste states that if this was the case, there was fellowship with UNBELIEVERS, and "who can believe it"? Perhaps he needs to be reminded that while unbelievers are not IN the fellowship (in the kingdom), and we can never fellowship (jointly participate) in evil and sinful things, we nevertheless do have fellowship with unbelievers constantly, as Paul declares in 1 Cor. 5:10. More than that, don't you imagine that where brother La Coste preaches an unbeliever sometimes arrives at services, is comforted by the drinking fountain and restroom facilities, welcomed into the assembly, and then even allowed to make a contribution INTO THE TREASURY OF THE SAINTS? For shame, brother La Coste, FELLOWSHIP WITH UNBELIEVERS, and regarding money at that!

We urge that brother La Coste not be so hasty in citing his sources, for Lipscomb said, on 2 Cor. 9:13, "...and their beneficence to ALL MEN (emphasis mine, BJ), for their liberality showed that they excluded no Christian from their fellowship" (Commentary, 2 Cor. - Gal., p. 125). This benevolence was such that help was granted to all men, and in it no saint was excluded. I hope that brother La Coste will note that I made the point that PANTAS meant, in the texts I cited, "all men", and did not say that the word meant "all men" in every place. The context most certainly will let one know, and we ask him to look at 2 Cor. 9:13 and tell us if "all" means horses, plows, cows, or men. He, and all others, certainly know that it means "all men". His "class within a class" argument is an invention made by his brethren of late to cling to the "saints only" hobby. He then proceeds, in speaking of it being "a class within a class", to tell us that it is still a group of MEN within a group of MEN. Then, brother La Coste, in 2 Cor. 9:13 PANTAS does mean "all men", doesn't it?

While brother La Coste states that the passages I used, wherein PANTAS is found, has nothing to do with the proposition, I think the reader can see clearer than that. My point was that PANTAS is used to refer to "all men" and is not limited to saints. It thus has everything to do with the point I was making, and with the point brother La Coste denies. Once more a misrepresentation, for I am not affirming what the church may do to ALL MEN, meaning the shiftless, the false teacher, and those withdrawn from fellowship. I made that plain. I am advocating that in the life and work of a congregation, there are opportunities placed before the saints wherein benevolent aid may be granted to non-saints. I have never

advocated such without some discernment and common sense applied.

Brother La Coste turns to such passages as Acts 2:44-45 and 1 Tim. 5:20, and tries to force the non-saint into those verses as my tactic. No, brother La Coste, but in 2 Cor. 9:13 we have TWO groups mentioned, TWO groups spelled out, TWO groups set down in contrast - them (the saints) AND a second group, ALL MEN. But to humor him, if 1 Tim. 5:20 is carried out in our assemblies, I just imagine that the rebuking would be before some non-saints. In fact, just about all we do in our meetings is done before some non-saints, brother La Coste! But remember that such reasoning does not change 2 Cor. 9:12, 13.

Brother La Coste then tries to escape the force of the passage by stating that the Corinthians then gave to the false teacher, or the apostate Jews, as though the Corinthians didn't have any scriptural sense or discernment at all in the distribution of funds. Why could not they use the same good judgement I have mentioned - no aid to the false teacher, the lazy, and those out of fellowship? Our brother jumps too far, stating that if the Corinthians gave to any non-saints, then they had to give to the undeserving. Does that follow, brethren? NO!

I had stated the truth that benevolence by brethren has on occasion opened the door to evangelism. I did not state that this was THE purpose, or the sole purpose, of benevolence, brother La Coste! He stated that the gospel needs no calling card, and cries, "social gospel", and then he will provide the sinner "common courtesy" of a drinking fountain, restrooms, cooling and heating, etc. - shades of the SOCIAL GOSPEL, brother La Coste! And all of those "common courtesies" paid for by the treasury; isn't it amazing that a benevolent penny cannot be given to a non-saint, and scripture for the penny is demanded, but when other expenditures are made, it is called "common courtesy" and no scripture is needed! It is Biblical procedure if La Coste is questioning me, and it is "clouding the issue" if I question his practice. Ah, equity!

Brother La Coste knows that I did not accuse his brethren of being unwilling, individually, to help the man hit by an automobile. I was asking if the elders could authorize the treasurer to pay the ambulance driver $10 for transportation. He will not answer, will he?

Now, let us be reminded that God's people have never "taken on the world" as to benevolence, but it has been within the daily life of God's people, as occasion and expediencies occur, to grant aid to the non-saint. It was so in Israel, it was so by the Lord's "Golden Rule", it was so in the early church (2 Cor. 9:13), and it is demanded by such verses as James 1:27 and Galatians 6:10. What did brother La Coste say about Gal. 6:10, and about whether the same rules apply as regards furniture and canned goods? Nothing. These brethren have invented a church treasury doctrine, and virtually all of their arguments will center on money, funds, the contribution and the treasury. My affirmative stands.

LA COSTE'S SECOND NEGATIVE

Does Bill Jackson's affirmative really stand? Let each reader remember what he's affirming. He's affirming the church treasury may be used for general benevolence. General benevolence includes saint and sinner alike. That's what he is for. He rebukes me for misrepresenting him, but where is the misrepresentation, except in bro. Jackson's mind? He "limits" benevolence only in the sense of using "good judgement" but the fact remains he opens the Lord's funds to "all men", an expression he is fond of and feels proves his position. Over the years I have learned that when a man is in trouble with his position and all else fails, he will cry "misrepresentation". Indeed, the "hit dog howls".

Now, has he proven this affirmation? Well, let's see. The only passatge he uses is one that substantiates my position! It is 2 Cor. 9:13. Did bro. Jackson say anything about verses 11 or 14? Did he respond to my questions on concerning WHO is praying and thanking God for this gift? Maybe he'll do that in his next article. However, don't hold your breath. Bill, you amaze me. You will agree the funds were collected for saints (1 Cor. 16:1), were sent to saints (Acts 11:29), were shared among the saints (Rom. 15:27), and supported the saints (2 Cor. 8:4, 9:1). Then you cling yet to your interpretation that the "all men" of 2 Cor. 9:13 is more than saints. Every reader can see your problem here, and that's the problem of not determining the ALL in context. Did you notice that bro. Jackson even agreed with the Greek scholars? No wonder he wants to urge me not to mention them too hastily. The Greek scholars don't have the problem Bill Jackson has. They keep the ALL in context and render it as a "class within a class." That is, the Christians of Asia Minor showed by this benevolence they excluded no Christian, even Jews! This was appropriate. For Paul writes that *"if the Gentiles have shared in their spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things"* (Rom. 15:27). It doesn't take a Solomon to see that saints and ONLY saints had fellowship with the saints of Achaia and Macedonia. I knew sooner or later bro. Jackson would tell us he doesn't know either the meaning of the word or relationship called in the Bible "fellowship". Bill Jackson says we have "fellowship" with unbelievers. You read it yourself. However, Bill should have done a little research before abusing 1 Cor. 5:10 as he did. Paul is not writing about fellowshipping sinners. He's writing about ASSOCIATION with sinners. That's the word translated in verse 9 in the New American Sta;ndard version. Does bro. Jackson believe that association and fellowship are the same? We must associate with sinners (also verse 11), otherwise we would have to leave this world, but Paul wrote in 2 Cor. 6:14, *"what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?"* Is Paul saying in his first letter to the Corinthians, "Fellowship unbelievers", and then in the second letter, tells them "NOT to fellowship unbelievers"? No, Paul is not confused. Bill Jackson is. We have to deal with sinners everyday, but we don't "partake" of their lifestyles in any way. Fellowship is "joint participation" and this is exactly what transpired between the Christians of Asia and those of Judea. But that's a new one. Never did I think I would hear a man who is supposed to be a gospel preacher saying we have "fellowship with unbelievers constantly".

Bro. Jackson then gets back to his drinking fountain quibble. He says through his erroneous thinking on fellowship that when we let a non-saint drink out of the water fountain, we therefore have fellowship with him. See how he concluded that? Apparently Bill doesn't know that the *"kingdom of God is not meat and drink"* (Rom. 14:17). Many brethren feel that eating and drinking is fellowship. NO, NO! Bill Jackson has told us he believes this. So, you goofed again, Bill. We don't have fellowship with the non-saint when he takes a drink of that water, for that water has absolutely nothing to do with that which the Bible defines as a spiritual relationship between God and His people (1 John 1:7). If bro. Jackson wants to take back what he said about fellowship, we'll certainly let him. You see,

dear reader, herein lies the problem. Bro. Jackson and his brethren do not understand the nature and purpose of the Lord's spiritual kingdom and as a result have turned it over to many materialistic practices. Then he tells me, "for shame" May I humbly suggest he be ashamed and turn from *"walking as men"* (1 Cor 3:3)?

SO. Yes, there are TWO groups being talked about in 2 Cor. 9:13. One group is the saints in Judea and the other was other saints who had been helped by the saints of Asia. But this benevolence to saints in Judea was significant because they were JEWS and for Gentile Christians to help Jewish Christians indeed was a token of the fact that now there "was neither Jew nor Greek" but ONE BODY. Bro. Jackson has me saying that if the Corinthians gave to non-saints they didn't use any good discernment. That's quite a tactic, but it won't work. Those Corinthians were not only benevolent, they were obedient concerning every aspect of this action. Good judgement is important, yea, obedience is better. Did I jump too far? If those brethren gave to non-saints, they did give to the non-deserving, for in order for a sinner to be deserving, God must authorize the action of giving to them! It is not up to Robert La Coste or Bill Jackson to decide who is deserving and should be "partakers" of the Lord's treasury. God does that. God says saints! Brother Jackson had stated that benevolence to non-saints had opened up doors to evangelism. I replied that this was not a purpose in it and neither should it be. To so use it with that thought or goal in mind is wrong. That's what the social gospel does and Bill knows that. You see, Bill is telling us, "Oh, look at the good - the doors opened." The ole "end justifies the means" argument. An end result, though it may appear good, is no way to justify anything. Then he uses that "reasoning" to get back to his water fountain quibble and says, "La Coste's common courtesy is also social gospel". Come on, Bill, these readers expect you to do better than this. These incidentals in the meeting house in no way, shape, or form is a 32nd cousin to what you want to do with the Lord's money. We ask again, and maybe this time Bill will answer, Do you let the false teacher have a drink? If you do, don't get on our case for letting him.

The readers know I answered the "poor man injured on the parking lot" argument (?). I didn't answer it the way he wanted me to, for I don't intend to fall into his little trap of answering it with a yes or no. I may as well ask Bill, "Say, Bill, have you quit beating your wife?"

Bill's repetition insisting that they are "not taking on the world in benevolence" seems strange in view of all the benevolent societies these brethren have in the church budget. It appears they are doing a pretty good job of at least trying to take it on. You see, this is not just a debate on "saints or non-saints". These folks want their human institutions in the church budget and this is their way of trying to get them. Oh, yes, I said nothing about Gal. 6:10 for no argument was made on it. More on that later though, FOR SURE!

JACKSON'S THIRD AFFIRMATIVE

Brother La Coste asks a good question: "Did Bill Jackson's affirmative really stand?" I submit that it has stood, by 2 Corinthians 9:13. Squirm though he may, brother La Coste cannot escape the fact that the benevolent work met the needs of the saints - those giving thanks and praying, v. 11 and 14 - and that in such work those who were non-saints were also aided. Verse 13 says so, and it's only in recent times that brother La Coste's brethren have initiated Paul's "double talk", wherein "saints" means "saints" and then "all men" refers to "all of the saints". This is typical of all sectarian efforts - create the doctrine, and then alter the Lord's will to fit it.

Surely brother La Coste can see the misrepresentation, wherein he charged that the point was whether the treasure was to be opened to "just anyone and everyone". I pointed out that I had not stated that, nor did I believe it. Then, he denies that he has misrepresented. But he is not through with the misrepresenting, for he states that I would limit benevolence "only in the sense of using good judgement", when I had stated the scriptural limitations regarding the lazy, those withdrawn from, and the false teacher. Does the reader wonder why brother La Coste insists in these misrepresentations? Can he not read well?

I hope you will also note what I am affirming, and that is that the church, as the people of God, does not close up compassion when there are opportunities presented wherein benevolent aid can be rendered to one, even though that person has not obeyed the gospel. The fact remains that brother La Coste and those who stand with him will provide for the non-saint, as long as it is done indirectly - but also through the church treasury. When these matters are pointed out to them, as regards the drinking fountain, or use of the rest rooms, etc., then it becomes "quibbles". It is great argumentation when it is from their side, but the same type thing is a quibble when we present it.

Now, the La Coste course in lexicography begins to inform us of the differences in "association" and "fellowship". But his point is that, somehow, if money is involved, that is "fellowship". But that was the very matter we had mentioned: Church funds were provided for the drinking fountain, rest rooms, etc., and brother La Coste believes in "indirect fellowship" while he has "direct association". Maybe with just a little more experience even brother La Coste will recognize that even in our worship services, and in much day-to-day activity, we do have fellowship with unbelievers. We do not have SPIRITUAL fellowship together, but we do jointly participate with them in many things.

But all of this is away from the main point; it is good that we have clarified that brother La Coste believes in "indirect" benevolence to non-saints, while I believe it may be direct. In setting my affirmative before him, I used 2 Cor. 9:13, and then he chides me for using just the one passage. Now, where have we heard that? Quote Acts 2:38 to a Baptist, and ignoring the truth taught in the passage, he takes the view that it is only one verse! Amazingly, brother La Coste and those who stand with him can work wonders in self-serving "interpretation", are not the least bit ashamed of the hundreds of churches they have divided as they formed the "Church Treasury Church of Christ", and do not feel anything is out of place in holding a doctrine that almost entirely rests on money, money, and more money. A few years ago, who would have thought that any brethren could embrace such a doctrine to so elevate the church treasury?

Again crying "Quibble!", brother La Coste states that incidentals in the meeting house is a remote thing to what I am advocating with the Lord's money. I wonder if he doesn't know that it was the Lord's money that paid for the parking lot, the pews, the air conditioning and heating, the drinking fountain and the rest rooms? These can be provided for the non-saint - but as what, brother La Coste,

"association" or "fellowship"?

Brother La Coste wants to know if the false teacher - or anyone else - can drink of the water fountain at Southwest. Anyone can, brother La Coste, but, after all, we haven't made all the rules about the use of church treasury money. With your view, I don't see how you can consistently let a non-saint drink from the fountain paid for by treasury money, but if he breaks his back on the parking lot, and has placed his last cent in the collection plate, treasury money can't be taken to pay the ambulance driver. There, brethren and friends, is anti-ism in all its selfish, unspiritual, and covetous glory! Does anyone really think the Lord invented this system? These men are so sold on their creed that they think in terms of the treasury being a separate entity - something to be held, opened up, guarded and protected - and they have far more to say about the treasury than they do about the church itself. The treasury becomes virtually the whole of the gospel to them.

Surely brother La Coste doesn't think he answered me on the man injured on the parking lot. It in no way relates to the "Have you stopped beating your wife?" question. It can be answered "yes" or "no". Why will he not tell us? I frankly state, "Yes, before I would give aid to the lazy man of 2 Thess. 3:10, I'd let him starve!" But, brother La Coste can't - or won't - tell us about the man injured on the parking lot, will he? And his silence says a very great deal!

One more misrepresentation from brother La Coste, in charging that we are trying to take on the world in benevolence. He knows better, and the saints-only position is so embarrassing to them, they always try to get the discussion to involve "institutions". Another sugar-stick for them, you know.

Does the reader wonder why (1) Brother La Coste avoided deaing with "pantas" in those contexts where it is clearly shown to be "all men", and not "all saints"?; (2) Brother La Coste avoided telling us if collected food and clothing is also restricted when it comes to providing for non-saints?; (3) Brother La Coste did not make their usual pitch on Gal 6:10? He well knows that he does not fulfill verse 6 in keeping with their doctrine!; and (4) Brother La Coste did not tell us about the saints who had non-saint visitors in their dwellings, and just how that benevolence was handled? We know why he is so silent. He loves the doctrines they've invented, but can't bear the consequences.

Once more, my affirmative stands. These brethren have invented a doctrine just as surely as did John Calvin, and they are wedded to it, even if the curch is torn into a thousand pieces. But they cannot show the Christianity in their system, cannot show that 2 Cor. 9:13 means "saints" and then "saints among the saints", and cannot show their consistency in how they deal with church treasury funds. When pressed they cry, "Quibble!" and won't answer. Note once more how the "Lord's treasury" is elevated in their minds and language - a materialistic concept if there ever was one! The whole of the Christian system lives in the treasury, and just about every monster hurling the saints happens to come out of the treasury as well. They've invented a sectarian system!

LA COSTE'S THIRD NEGATIVE

Wow! Brother Bill's last affirmative reminds me of a passage in Acts 7:54, *"When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth."* Never in twenty-four years in the Lord's church have I read more of a prejudicial, slanted and just basically confusing article than his. All the while I kept wondering, "Where's the beef?", i.e., where's the scripture? There hasn't been any! I say again, the only passage he uses is one that supports my position, not his. The rest of his efforts are concentrated in "slanderously reporting" his brethren (Rom. 3:8). He seems to think by grouping me with "them" and "they" (whoever "they" and "them" are) that he'll show me just to be another "anti" (or is it "ante"?) who couldn't care less about the church or my fellow man. He has me interested only in "money". The reader can see Bro. Bill's sad condition of heart. Bitterness has settled. I have no such feelings toward him and pray he doesn't toward me. I have tried to refrain from prejudicial terms. Did you notice his? "Sectarian", "Baptist", "Church Treasury Church of Christ", "anti-ism", "selfish, unspritual , and covetous", "John Calvin", and "monster". Then, after using such terms, Bro. Bill has the nerve to accuse others of being the trouble makers and church splitters. Let the words from his own pen tell the reader who it is that "troubleth Israel". Bill, as Nathan once told David, "Thou art the man" . I pray you will cease this, as the readers arent' interested in seeing how many names you can call me. Let's stick to the scriptures. But that's the very point, dear reader. When you have no scriptures, what else can you do but try to make your opponent sound like a creature with two heads and horns?

Now, back to the passage that shows saints in Jerusalem as well as other saints were helped by the saints of Macedonia and Achaia. Bill mentioned finally verses 11 and 14 and admitted saints were praying, but seems to think the men of verse 13 is a different group of men. In verse 14 Paul writes, *"And by THEIR* (emphasis mine - RWL) *prayer for you..."* Who are these people? The antecedent of their is ALL. Don't take my word for it. Any English teacher will tell you this! Only saints have the privilege of prayer. Dear reader, bro. Bill's affirmation has fallen and great has been the fall of it, for we have proven from this context and from corresponding passages who this ALL is. Am I misrepresenting Bill? He wants to open the treasury to saint and sinner alike, and that's how I was using the general term, "everyone". He strains at a gnat and swallows a camel. I'm convinced he wouldn't open the treasury to a lazy bum. However, he will open it to other alien sinners. Now when one opens the treasury to saint and sinner, judging only if he is a lazy bum or false teacher, what do you call that? 'Nuff said. Bro. Jackson finally surrendered his position! I knew he would! He says, "Can't support the false teacher." Then he says, "you support him when he drinks from your water fountain" (indirectly, of course). Then he said in this last affirmative, "we let them drink - anyone can". So, according to his own reasoning, he is supporting the false teacher! Bro. Jackson has met himself coming back. False doctrine always has that happen to it. And can you believe the rhetoric we have been reading on fellowship? And did you notice how Bill answered my thoughts on it? He labeled it as "La Coste course in lexicography." Some answer! Such an "answer" concedes the point on association from 1 Cor. 5 and fellowship from 2 Cor. 6. Bro. Jackson wishes he hadn't brought it up, so he retorts with more slanderous terminology. Speaking of misrepresentation, where did I say that when money is involved, that is fellowship? I said what fellowship was and gave the passages to prove it (Rom. 14:17, 1 John 1:7).' We wish bro. Jackson would take up this habit. Can you believe this statement? I'm quoting it directly, "With just a little more experience, even bro. La Coste will recognize that even in our WORSHIP SERVICES (emphasis mine-RWL) we do have fellowship with UNBELIEVERS." Did I tell you he didn't know what fellowship is? I did, and that proves it. He may "jointly participate" with unbelievers, but I don't. There has never been a time since the Lord's church

began that it worshipped with, neither had fellowship with, unbelievers! NEVER! Sure, they might be in our assembling place, as they are with us in the world, but in neither instance are we "*walking with them*"(again, I John 1:7). Then, bro Bill calls me a sectarian! We wonder if he knows what that is. We will say this. GOSPEL PREACHERS don't preach what he preaches. I want bro. Bill to tell our readers what churches I have divided over these things! He says, 'they have divided hundreds of churches..." Name the place, congregation, and people involved, bro. Jackson! It's time to put up or shut up on this, dear brother. I deny the charge! This was part of his grouping effort again. I expect an apology for this, unless he comes up with the proof, of which there is none! Don't look for an apology, dear reader. It is humble men who practice this. If he will apologize, and he should, I will surely apologize for saying he lacks humility. Fair enough? I love Bill Jackson, but I fear for his soul and for obvious reasons. I want to close out this last negative by dealing with basically his quibbles. He says the alien sinner uses the parking lot, fountain, and rest rooms and they are bought with money from the treasury. So what? They were built to accomodate the saints. Again, doesn't he let the false teacher? Does he support the false teacher when he lets them? How ludicrous! Now, let us suppose I answered a yes or no on the poor man on the parking lot example. If I said yes, the elders could, he would have said I conceded my position. If I had said no, he would have turned me into that man who starves orphan children. My response was and is, "the child of God on the scene would (as the good Samaritan) help him." He doesn't like that response and says therefore I didn't respond. You know again I have responded. I asked him, "which one is pure and undefiled religion", waiting on a check from the elders or the answer I gave? DID BILL RESPOND TO THIS? He says the institutions are my "sugar stick". Not hardly. We support none via the church and shall not. We know what home God wants children in and we can read about it in Genesis 2 and Ephesians 6. That was a cute way for him to avoid my charge though, wasn't it? Now to his itemized points. (1) I dealt with "pantas" in those passages he mentioned and showed him "pantas" has to be determined by the context. He makes no contextual difference. He used it in places relating to the individual; not the collective church. (2) If and when we collect food for sinners, we don't lean to the church treasury for help! This too has been made clear. Again we ask, "which is pure and undefiled religion" for the Christian, according to the "oneself-himself" of James 1:27? (3) I didn't say anything about Gal. 6:10, for no argument was made on it. I'm in the negative right now, and will not make affirmative arguments. That was his job! Bro. Jackson has no idea what I believe on Gal. 6:6, 10, but as I go into the affirmative he's about to find out! (4) Was this mentioned? Surely saints must help saints. What they do with those goods is their business. They could help family members not saints or others. "Where's the beef?" Did bro. Bill answer Rom. 15:27? Who are those people? SAINTS!

LA COSTE'S FIRST AFFIRMATIVE

It is with great eagerness that I enter this part of the discussion where I am in the affirmative. The affirmative's task is to prove the proposition he is affirming to be true. I am now affirming, "The Scriptures teach that a congregation, in its benevolent work and from its church funds, may render aid only to those who are members of the church." By the Scriptures I mean the word of God, particularly the New Testament of God's word, the law that we are under today. By teach I mean to authorize, either by command, example, or inference. By congregation I mean a local body of Christians in a distinct location, as the church or congregation at Antioch, etc. By benevolent work I mean assistance in helping due to need. By church funds I mean those monies that comprise the treasury of the local church. By render aid I mean the benevolent assistance defined. By only to those who are members of the church I mean Christians, saints, and not alien sinners! With the exception of the last definition bro. Jackson's and mine basically agree. I remind you again what this is NOT about. We are NOT debating that Christians should not be benevolent people. Neither are we debating that Christians do not have a responsibility to those round about them in the world. WHAT WE ARE DEBATING IS: Where is the scripture for saint and sinner alike to be cared for from church funds, i.e., the Lord's money? It is called the Lord's for it is authorized by Him to be collected and it is His authority which dictates the usage of it. The book of Acts is replete with passage after passage establishing my affirmative. From Pentecost onward (Acts 2:44-45) the disciples help provide for one another. In Acts 4:32-37 we find needy believers being assisted. In Acts 6:1-6 we read about some neglected saints who were cared for. Later, because of a famine that Agabus proclaimed would come (Acts 11:27-30), the disciples determined to send relief unto *"the brethren which dwelt in Judea."* What do we have in these passages? Read each of them carefully. Do we have saint and sinner alike being partakers of the church monies? NO! In Acts 2 - SAINTS. IN Acts 4 - SAINTS. In Acts 6 - SAINTS, and in Acts 11 - SAINTS. It's the Bible versus Bill Jackson's doctrine. I've already proven my affirmative and I'm not even half-way through it yet! Now bro. Bill had a lot to say about 2 Cor. 9:13. Let him deal with these passages. Remember, he's in the negative now and must respond to me, as I did to him. I proved who the people were in 2 Cor. 9. They are the same people in 2 Cor. 8:1-4 and Rom. 15:25-31 and here in the book of Acts! Now let us hope bro. Bill doesn't make the mistake so many do. Many reply, "but it doesn't say saints only." No, it doesn't. That's because when the Lord specifies who or what He wants, everything else is eliminated! That's true with singing. God doesn't say "sing only". He didn't have to. God doesn't say for the Lord's supper, "unleavened bread and fruit of the vine only". He doesn't have to. We trust Bro. Jackson agrees with this principle and will utilize the intellect I know he possesses to apply the principle here. Dear reader, God has specified who he wants cared for in the name of benevolence from church funds. I ask Bro. Jackson and we expect an answer to this very important question: IF WE CANNOT ADD INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC TO THE WORSHIP, BY WHAT AUTHORITY MAY WE ADD THE ALIEN SINNER TO THE BENEVOLENT WORK OF THE CHURCH? We shall see what he says! Now, here's something to think on: In Acts 3, Peter stands before the lame beggar who asks him for benevolent help. Peter responds, *"Silver and gold have I none"* (3:6). Bear in mind these apostles had at their disposal monies given by disciples on and after Pentecost for distribution to the needy, even as we have mentioned. Yet Peter said he couldn't help him. Peter had no personal funds, but the church had plenty. The money at the apostles feet was NOT for general distribution to the indigent of the community, but was solely for the needy among the believers. If it were NOT so, Peter would have given to him from church funds. We ask bro. Jackson, WHY DIDN'T PETER GIVE TO THIS MAN?? I suggest to you Peter knew who these funds were for. We pray Bill Jackson and his brethren will learn it! The church of our Lord is not charged with general benevolence, as many think. I can even go further than that! The church of our Lord is not even responsible for all saints, let alone "all men" as bro. Jackson understands that expression and uses it. To Timothy, Paul wrote, *"If any man or woman that*

believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed" (1 Tim 5:16). According to this passage, the church had not the authority to care for all of its own widows! If I have a mother who is widowed, Robert La Coste is to care for her, not the church. Now another question for bro. Jackson: If the church was not chargable, obligated, neither therefore authorized to care for even all of its own widows, HOW PRAY TELL CAN IT BE AUTHORIZED TO CARE FOR THOSE WHO ARE NOT EVEN SAINTS? Now, try that! Truly, benevolence from the treasury is limited. Not only is it limited to the saints, but it is limited as far as widows are concerned to CERTAIN widows. Obviously, if my mother has no one to care for her, and meets the other spiritual requirements, she is to be cared for completely from the treasury of the church; otherwise, I must discharge my duty, so the church is not burdened with it. Bro. Jackson's position on benevolence takes away personal incentive. Why should the individual Christian be concerned about their own personal benevolence when the church will care for those I'M responsible for in this world? He talks long and loud about a "selfish, Church Treasury Church of Christ", but who is it that is selfish? Who is it that would rather turn responsibility to the church treasury, rather than administer such from one's own treasury? Who is it that wants to utilize the church funds for more than there is authority for? In view of the fact that Bro. Jackson wants to use the church funds for saint and sinner alike, using the treasury for MORE people and MORE money, it appears he is the one "hung up" on the treasury. You be the judge.

Dear reader, the scripture is so plain concerning the duty and responsibility of both the individual Christian and the local church. The Bible teaches that the responsibility of the individual is toward all members of the human family who he has both the opportunity and ability to help and who is worthy of it. The Bible teaches uniformly that when the church was involved in benevolent work the recipients of that benevolence were always destitute saints. Both the individual and the church must perform their God-given responsibility, and if both will there is no needy person (either Christian or non-Christian) that cannot be cared for by this plan of God's! Why will bro. Jackson and others not be content with God's arrangement? Why will he insist upon charging the church with more than saints? Bro. Jackson, I call upon you in humility to repudiate this false position and let us be united on what the Bible says and what it only says. One may as well as look for where they baptized babies as to look for where they took care of alien sinners in benevolence. God says NOTHING about EITHER, and where I labor and preach we do NOTHING about EITHER. My earnest and sincere desire is to be one in all things with Bill Jackson, but we cannot be united on what ISN'T in the Bible, but what IS!

JACKSON'S FIRST NEGATIVE

Prior to noticing brother La Coste's first affirmative, there are a few matters needing attention from his last negative. I want the readers to see how he needs the admonition, "Physician, heal thyself." (1) He is offended at my terms, and then he shows us what "nice" language is, accusing me of "prejudice, slanting, confusion, slander, and bitterness". Ah, physician! (2) When I spoke of "you brethren", he took it personally that I was stating that he had split a church; yet he points to "troubling Israel" and states "Bill is the man!" Ah, physician! (3) He said I used just one passage - the old sectarian dodge that "one verse isn't good enough." (4) And look at the hobbyistic flavor - "opening the treasure...lean on the treasury", etc. I think "Church Treasury Church of Christ" is an apt description, don't you? (5) He asked, "Where did I say that when money is involved, that is fellowship?" Brother La Coste, in your 1st Negative you made the argument on carnal and spiritual things, with the point being, "fellowship with unbelievers" - YOUR OWN WORDS! Ah, physician! (6) He hedges on the unbeliever in the building and in the assembly, stating that it is NOT fellowship but ASSOCIATION, and yet he "jointly-participates" (that IS fellowship) with the non-member in attending, singing, use of facilities, giving, and even in permitting the non-saint to partake of the Lord's Supper. True, we do not have fellowship in CHRIST with unbelievers, but we do have fellowship, participation and association - let him have his favorite word. He does the same. Ah, physician! (7) Notice how he faces the injured man on the parking lot example. He does not answer plainly from conviction, but says "If I say this Bill will say that, and if I say the other, Bill will answer this way," etc. You can find an example of that kind of thing among the Jewish leaders in Matt. 21:23-27. Ah, physician! (8) As to the parking lot, drinking fountain, rest rooms, etc. being paid for by the church treasury money, and allowing the non-saint to use such, he states "So what? They were built to accomodate saints." Yet he allows their use to comfort the unbeliever. Well, be consistent, brother La Coste. So what - n funds in the treasury and benevolence? By your view, the funds are there to comodate the saints, but allow some use also for the non-saint! Ah, physician, you ve trapped yourself! (9) He and his brethren have taken the view that the urch of the Lord, pillar and ground of the truth, cannot practice pure and defiled religion. (10) He correctly says that "pantas" will show its application in e context. True. But note the context (2 Cor. 9:13), and "all" there refers to ALL MEN - not all donkeys, all roads, all buildings and all rivers - ALL MEN in contrast with the other group mentioned, "them" - the saints. I know a physician, saver of the church, who needs to heal himself in several areas.

Now, to the points in his affirmative. I agree with his definition of the terms in his proposition, and with his statement as to what our discussion is NOT about. I readily see the verses he cites, and I have already declared, time and again, that it was indeed the fact that the saints - their brethren - were in need that prompted their action. But his proposition has to do with what he calls "church funds" and then he jumps to speak of the "treasury". I had asked him if this refers to more than just money, and if "any collected goods" likewise are involved. Has he answered? For example, in Acts 4:32, was everything they possessed in the "treasury"? Then, it would involve more than money, wouldn't it? By his view, no member of the Jerusalem congregation could take any individual benevolent action, though it would be their duty, because they had all things "common" - everything was IN THE TREASURY! He uses Acts 6:1-6, but he will never get CHURCH FUNDS there, will he? Who knows that it wasn't simply food (serving tables, v. 2), clothing and medicine that these widows needed? By his view, then, all these items must be a part of the treasury, since he is arguing treasury, and if what the Christians possessed was IN THE TREASURY, then no individual could render aid to any non-saint. Ah physician. PROVE that CHURCH FUNDS are involved in Acts 6:1-6.

Brother La Coste and his brethren make great use of Acts 11:27-30, but do you,

reader, think he can PROVE that TREASURY funds are involved? It says the *"disciples, every MAN according to HIS ability..."* (v. 29). Maybe it was the disciples, individually, brother La Coste, and if so, you will agree that the individuals could give to non-saints - right? You see how much they assume, friends? Their whole doctrine is assumption, with a determination to bind their will on others, to the extent that they have split the church over it, with just such assumptions as we have noticed.

In 2 Corinthians 9:13 these brethren find their most troublesome context, with the Holy Spirit declaring the very opposite to that which they believe, and it hangs in the craw! He argues "saints", and how they pray and give thanks, etc., and that is true - saints are in v. 13, and beyond "them" - the "saints" - the Holy Spirit adds "all men". Now, all the squirming, twisting, bending, etc. will not change it, brother La Coste, and all the inventing of some new interpretive rules will not change it, either. And, what Paul has said fits in exactly with what is declared in James 1:27 and Galatians 6:10 - do good to ALL men.

Brother La Coste does not think that he and his brethren are "hung up" on the "treasury", yet in some of their favored passages they INSERT "treasury" into it. For example, in Acts 11:27-30, they INSERT "treasury funds". In Acts 6:1-3, they INSERT "money". Who's hung up on money, brother La Coste?

Friends, we need to bear in mind that all of this, from brother La Coste and his brethren, is of fairly recent origin as a force in the kingdom. Men invented these points regarding detailed use of the "treasury", and then divided the kingdom over it. To press their points, and to try to be consistent, they have worked new interpretive "twists". We have seen the truth in 2 Cor. 9:13. The very fact that the views of these brethren have had to change and undergo modification in a number of ways through the years is proof that their system resides in men, and not in God. They sincerity is questioned when they make all the distinctions on benevolent money, evangelistic money, and the different uses, and then the preachers will justify their salaries in citing 1 Cor. 16:1, 2 - a BENEVOLENCE passage. They will do this, despite the instruction that the contribution mentioned over and over again was for the POOR saints. Indeed, manipulation of funds, and manipulation of verses, to suit a man-made hobby!

There is reason to question any man's position when he shows himself to be in violation of his own "rules". For example, they declare Galatians 6 to be INDIVIDUAL ACTION, and thus the collective cannot act, and yet verse 6 gives instruction that the one taught is to "communicate" - give, support - to the one doing the teaching. INDIVIDUAL ACTION, La Coste would say, and yet he will allow the COLLECTIVE to act and be given one check from the TREASURY! If that can be done for YOU, then why cannot it be done for others? Tell us!

LA COSTE'S SECOND AFFIRMATIVE

Brother Jackson needs to be reminded that the duty of the negative is to answer the affirmative's arguments. Did he answer my first affirmative? He made the mistake of staying in the affirmative himself and wasted half of his negative. As a result, what did he say about Acts 3 and the argument I made on the alien sinner, the lame man? NOTHING. What did he say about my points from 1 Timothy 5:16 concerning benevolence being limited to even certain widows? NOTHING What did he say concerning the principle of authority that forbids benevolence to non-saints, as it forbids instrumental music, etc.? NOTHING. The ole passover style of debating is only hurting you and your false position, Bill. Why will Bill not answer? Study what I said in those texts and I think you'll see why he has observed "*the passover*". Bill wants me back in the negative. Oh, no. It's your turn to respond to me. When are you going to start? All of your "ah, physicians" may sound like cute editorializing, but it doesn't answer Acts 3 or 1 Timothy 5:16 for you, does it? I guess Bill feels he did such a terrible job with his affirmative that he wants to stay in it and "patch it up". Understandable. But now he's in the negative, and we insist he deal with these things. I'm not going to waste my time and space, neither yours as a reader, responding to his affirmative, which should have been a negative. I have a whole lot more teaching establishing my affirmative that I desire to do. His ten points are another feeble attempt to cloud the issue and make me look silly. I have never claimed, neither pretended to be, a "physician, saver of the church". I am a sinful man who makes many mistakes and who needs the mercy of a just God. Bill Jackson can say the same. One day we both must stand before the great I AM to give account for all things. He keeps insisting that the "ALL" of 2 Cor. 9:13 refers to sinners or aliens. He says, "They aren't donkeys, etc." No kidding! I believe my three year old could have figured that out. Truly they are humans, and if Bill Jackson will not accept what I have said about it, let us take another approach in this affirmative. I'll be anxious to see how Bill squirms out of this one. He may want to observe "the passover" again, since he's good at doing that. In 2 Cor. 8:14 Paul writes, *"But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want: that there may be equality."* According to the position of Bill Jackson, Paul is saying that should there ever come a time when the saints are in need of benevolence, the sinner should come to their aid, as the saints did for them, so there will be equality. Isn't that amazing? But who had fellowship with these people, and who was praying and thanking God for what had been done for them in Judea? Who by this "experiment" was glorifying God? SINNERS, according to Bill Jackson. Bill has sinners praying, sinners in fellowship with Christians, and sinners in equality with Christians. WHO CAN BELIEVE IT??? Bill may need more than a physician to get himself out of this mess.

Did you notice how he answered (when he finally got around to being the negative) my passages in Acts? He tries to make me appear as a man hung up on the treasury. I never said that Christians didn't retain some funds for personal use in benevolence. MY REASON FOR BRINGING UP THOSE PASSAGES WAS TO SHOW WHO IT WAS that was cared for from those things *"laid at the apostles' feet."* Can he refute it? NO. Rather, he plays cat and mouse by building a straw man and beating him to death. I never said that everything was in that treasury, but surely there was a treasury! (Acts 4:37) WHO was provided for from it? Stick to the argument, Bill. We are not debating whether a church treasury existed or not in the first century, as both of us agreed in our definition of terms that there was and is one. Now, tell us, Bill, WHO received the funds (money or otherwise) in Acts 6 and Acts 11. WHO?? That's what this debate is all about and when you show us that just one alien sinner received any of these funds *"laid at the apostles' feet"* we will concede this debate and I'll start preaching at Wonsley Drive we should take funds from the church treasury and give it to sinners. Dear reader, he can't do it. Then he has nerve to say that I have invented a man made doctrine. I have proven who were the recipients of these things and if I were him I guess I wouldn't answer Acts

3 either!

Brother Jackson deems himself as quite the professor of church history. He says that what I preach is of fairly recent origin and that it has divided the kingdom. There you go again, Bill. Both are misrepresentations. He's still grouping me with people and places and dates of yesteryear. He says, "they have had to change...is proof that their system resides in men." Goofed again, Bill. I have preached this gospel I am defending for nearly twenty years. I have never changed and haven't split any churches over anything! Even if I had of changed, is change wrong? Dear reader, do you suppose Bill Jackson has ever changed on anything? Just more smoke! His biggest cloud of smoke comes at the end relative to 1st Corinthians 16 and Galatians 6. He says concerning 1st Corinthians 16 that we use a benevolent passage to justify our salary as preachers. I certainly do not use this passage for any such thing. This passage is showing how saints collected funds, and when. I use 2 Corinthians 11:8 and Phillipians 4:16 to justify my salary, along with 1 Corinthians 9:13-14. What passages do you use to justify your salary, Bill, and from what treasury? You know as well as I do there were not TWO separate treasuries. "Where's the beef?" Then he says I'm in violation of my own rule of Galatians 6. Folks, Bill Jackson has no more of an idea as to what I believe on Galatians 6 than he knows how many hairs are on my head! "Individual action, La Coste would say", he says. How do you know, Bill, for I haven't said? Indeed, presumptousness is folly. In my final affirmative I intend to deal with Gal. 6 and James 1:27, and then you will know. But you don't know yet and stop pretending you do. What my salary and the support of the gospel has to do with our propositions, I haven't the faintest. Do you? Smoke, smoke, and more smoke. But keep the issue and the proposition before you, dear reader. WHERE IS THE AUTHORITY TO SUPPORT SAINT AND SINNER ALIKE IN BENEVOLENCE? He has no such authority and so has to stoop to meandering around and around. These readers are waiting on you, Bill, to answer the arguments, especially on Acts 3 and 1 Timothy 5. We hope you will in the next paper instead of bringing up things that have nothing to do with the issue. To this point in the debate we ask each one to reflect seriously on what has been said. Who is it that's using the scriptures and the Lord's treasury as he desires? Which one of us has proven his position from the scriptures? Clearly God has revealed what He wants done in benevolence.

JACKSON'S SECOND NEGATIVE

Naturally, it would have suited brother La Coste's purpose to load his last negative with matters to which I would not reply. But, we really are dealing with just one proposition, simply inverted in this last half. It was certainly not a waste of time, since we were able to point out TEN instances of his inconsistencies and contradictions. He stated that I want to "cloud the issue" and make him look silly. No, brother La Coste, your position will make you look silly enough; I have very little to do. Besides, it doesn't take much time nor space to reply to such arguments as: "Peter told the beggar he didn't have any money on him, and thus that proves it is wrong to take it out of the treasury." And, what was his point on 1 Tim. 5:16? I long ago pointed out that we dare not aid some - the lazy, the person withdrawn from, etc. Note his argument: "The church is not to aid any such widow; therefore, the needy person next door to the building cannot be aided." Such reasoning (?) is always typical of the hobbyist among us.

He rushes then to the instrumental music issue, but there is no parallel. The verses authorizing singing rule out the addition of the instrument; but, in 2 Cor. 9:13 we are told that beyond just aid to the saints, aid was rendered to others - to all men.

Brother La Coste accuses me of observing the "passover", which is exactly what he did in the ten instances I gave him of his contraditions and inconsistencies. He accuses me of "cuteness", and then note that he addresses me as "professor of church history". Apparently there is enough "cuteness" to go around, brother La Coste! One of the most flagrant abuses of context is in his running from 2 Cor. 9:13, and then seeking refuge in 2 Cor. 8:14. In that latter verse Paul is dealing with saints in Macedonia and in Achaia, for we have often said that it was saints-in-need that prompted the benevolence in the first place. We have said that throughout. But, in 2 Cor. 9:13, now the subject has to do with how the church responded in rendering aid to the needy: (1) Aid was given to the saints - those mentioned as praying and offering thanks to God, etc. - and (2) UNTO ALL MEN. And we earlier saw that this "all men" - pantas - whenever it is used does not refer to SAINTS ONLY but indeed unto ALL MEN!

Brother La Coste wants it shown him that any alien sinner received aid from the church, and yet we have it in broad command in Gal. 6:10 and James 1:27, and we have it fulfilled by action in 2 Cor. 9:13. He wants to reserve the first two passages until the last affirmative, no doubt to "load up" with the hope that I can't reply to all he says. Ah, we've seen the tactic before! Brother La Coste now has plenty to do in dealing with the treasury, seeing as how he makes arguments on the treasury using passages speaking nothing of treasury; he wants out from under by saing, "Surely there was a treasury!" In other words, he makes his arguments, assuming a treasury in those instances where he wants to find support for his "use of the treasury" doctrines.

He states his doctrine isn't new, for he has preached for twenty years! Well, the doctrine IS older than that, but not much more. His declaration is about like that of the Mormon who states that he has preached for forty years in the Mormon church, and therefore Mormonism is APOSTOLIC! Any one doing any research can trace their doctrines to the '50's, and can see the sectarian nature of it all in that the doctrine has undergone repeated changes through the years, with the "saints only" doctrine being just the last step in doctrinal development.

He wants to know, "Where's the beef?" on 1 Cor. 16:2 and the preacher's salary, declaring that we all know that there are not two separate treasuries. We certainly DO know that, brother La Coste, and it poses no problem to me, for I have not made up a set of rules on "benevolent funds" and "evangelistic funds". But YOU

BRETHREN made up the rules, and here is an instance wherein man-made rules come back to slap you in the face. And is he so naive as to think that none of us have read what he and his brethren have said about Gal. 6 and "individual action"? Or, is he going to be different from his brethren? Maybe he's going to give us a new doctrinal twist on this, and remember he promises this in his final affirmative If he's going to leave his brethren, then it may indeed be time for a new "anti revelation". That's how they got the "saints only" doctrine, remember.

It is amazing that, in making his affirmative, he falls on Acts 3, which has no reference to "a congregation", or "benevolent work of a congregation", or "church funds", or "aid to members only". All of those terms are within the promise of his proposition, and where does he go? He goes to an individual member of the church, without any funds, entering into the temple and running upon a beggar. Now, that's argumentation, isn't it?

Notice also that brother La Coste, in seeking to avoid Galatians 6 and how it will be used against him, states that "Jackson has no idea what I believe on it." Is he really that naive, as to think brethren do not know these men and their positions? Is he thus promising that he has something new to offer, and that his position is NOT that this is an "individual action" context? Remember that now, friends, when he has finally explained it, let's see if his view is "individual action". Since "no one can know his view", it will be most enlightening!

He wonders what his salary and support of the preacher has to do with his proposition. Brother La Coste, it has everything to do with showing that, for all the money rules you brethren have made, you don't really believe it - you will freely violate it all when it suits your purpose. That reflects on the person's position.

He accuses me of wandering around and creating smoke, smoke, smoke Notice the "smoke" enters in it when there's a contradiction and inconsistency on his part. The wandering he didn't like was when I "wandered" to James 1:27 and Galatians 6:10 to see the benevolence demanded of the saints, and then "wandered" to 2 Cor. 9:13 and found PROOF that benevolence was not limited to saints only. In other words, I "wandered" away from the standard hobbyist's texts. No hobbyist has ever liked that, be he Judaizer, Gnostic, or anti-cooperation!

Please notice, reader, that he has not dealt with the man who lost all by tornado, has not dealt with how he obtains a check from the collective, based on a verse in an "individual application" passage, has not shown us how a portion of the Lord's money can go to non-saints by use of the fountain, rest rooms, etc., when all was provided by the Lord's funds, and he has not answered the question, "Can the congregation practice pure and undefiled religion as per James 1:27?" We anxiously await his answers, especially on this last, since he said he was misrepresented when I stated his view.

We have shown, repeatedly, that the saints of God, in any testament, were to be benevolent people. We noted in the New Testament age such verses as James 1:27 and Galatians 6:10, where the benevolence is demanded; we saw, in 2 Cor. 9:13 that when the aid was given, it was NOT restricted to saints. That we have seen, and his purpose is to "get around it some way" He tries and will try, but he'll be unable to deal with it. We welcome his next effort.

LA COSTE'S THIRD AFFIRMATIVE

If my position by itself is suppose to make me look silly, then perhaps you readers are wondering with me: Why all the prejudicial terms and attaching of labels throughout the discussion? We have Bill's latest in the form of "anti-revelation". He loves the terms "anti" and "hobbyist", doesn't he? I think we can safely say Bill is "anti-antis", if nothing else One might even think he's a "hobbyist" on them. How sad. Perhaps one day men of his persuasion will be able to openly and fairly debate the things that divide brethren without all the rhetoric that obviously reveals true feeling and character.

Well, what do you know? Finally, Brother Jackson has decided it is wise to wait and see just what Bob La Coste believes on Galatians 6 and James 1. I guess wisdom is better late than never. Before I do, however, we need to respond to Brother Jackson's "response" of Acts 3 and 1 Tim. 5. He said it doesn't take much time nor space to reply to Acts 3. Do you suppose that's why he didn't answer it when he was suppose to, in his first negative? And now that he finally mentions it, he doesn't deal AT ALL with what I said. Therefore it stands! Possessions had been sold and parted (Acts 2:45). Such was laid *"at the apostles' feet"* (Acts 4:37) in those days to be used as the Lord willed. The lame man received NOTHING. Why? Bill Jackson knows why, so his only response is to mock me and make fun of this argument. I guess that's easier to do than ANSWER it. Come on, Bill. You're suppose to be an experienced debater. Get with it! Peter didn't give to him, but not because he couldn't have. He had no silver and gold, but the church did! Obviously those funds were NOT for general benevolence, a doctrine Bill Jackson believes and is seeking vainly in this debate to defend. And what of 1 Timothy 5:16? Our readers are waiting still to know how you consider the church to have the liberty or responsibility for helping those who are not even Christians when she is forbidden to care for most of her own widows? This passage commands individual Christians to relieve widows so the church will not be expected to. Yet, you and your brethren deny it is proper to draw a distinction between individual and church action, and you, Bill, have been chawing at the bits to work me over on Galatians 6 because of it. If 1 Timothy 5:16 does not draw such a distinction, please tell us what it would have to say in order to do so! We are waiting, Bill! 1 Timothy 5:16 will stand as well. Bill Jackson knows it does so all he can retort with is, "Such reasoning is always typical of the hobbyist among us." What a response! Come on, Bill, explain the passage to us! If it doesn't teach limited church benevolence <u>to saints</u> and individual responsibility, what does it teach? 'Nuff said.

Wow - can you believe he'll cling to 2 Cor. 9:13, though from every angle his "all men" has been proven not to be just any "Tom, Dick or Harry" as he thinks? In Romans 15:25-31, 1 Cor. 16:1-2, and 2 Cor. 8 & 9, Paul said SEVEN TIMES that the collection was for SAINTS. Bill Jackson says, "Oh, no, more than saints." It's Paul or Bill. But Bill loses his own argument when he himself admits, "It's not really for all men; not the false teacher, nor the lazy." So -- what is for "all men" really isn't, so he denies his own argument. I would too -- it's foolishness! Brother Jackson -- it's all or none! If Paul by the word "ALL" meant saint and sinner, what sinner shall we include or exclude? Can we or can't we? Shall we or shan't we, will we or won't we? Bill would rather leave it to the judgement of men to decide which sinner, rather than stay with the Word which says SAINTS. There you have it -- the gospel of Christ or the judgement of men?

Sure, Galatians 6 and James 1 are individual responsibility and anyone who can read English can see that. Bill has been waiting anxiously to let me have it on this statement, but let him deal with the teaching rather than try to look for ways to work me over. Paul states in that context in Galatians 6, *"If any man..."* (vs. 1), *"For if a man..."* (vs. 3), *"But let every man..."* (vs. 4), *"For every man..."* (vs. 5), *"Let him..."* (vs. 6), *"For whatsoever a man..."* (vs. 7) *"For he..."* (vs. 8) whose reaping the reward in verse 9? Will Bill Jackson tell us churches are

going to be judged, or individuals (Gal. 1:4)? And in verse 10, the verse he thinks proves his position, who is the "us" there? Bill has two things to prove, which he couldn't if they were going to hang him at sunset! 1) WHERE IS THE CHURCH TREASURY IN VERSE 10? You know he cried long and loud for me to show one in those Acts passages. We did (Acts 4:37, etc.) Now, what's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. Where's your church treasury in Galatians, Bill? 2) Prove benevolence is under consideration in Galatians 6! This whole context refers to spiritual good, aiding another with spiritual burdens. The word "burden" (phortion) in verse 5 appears five times in the Greek New Testament, and NONE of its usages is in connection with the needs of the body. W.E. Vine (not Bob La Coste, Bill!) says of the good in verse 6 and 10, "The neuter of the adjective with the definite article signifies that which is morally honorable, to work it...to follow after...to overcome evil with it..." This is a good rendered to all, especially to fellow believers. Brother Jackson will cry, "church benevolence from the church treasury". PROVE IT! We are waiting, Bill. It's clear he's talking to the Christian about spiritual goodness. In James 1, we have the only passage in the entire New Testament which mentions orphans and the Bible says concerning them, *"let himself..."* i.e. the individual is to care for them. And if James 1:27 is the church, why won't these brethren let the church they insist is in that passage do it? They change it from "himself" to the church, then they build and maintain orphan asylums, for they say, "because the church can't do it", changing it from church to human institution. Incredible. If James 1:27 is church rather than individual action, then let the church! I strive to practice James 1:27 as it is written! Bill Jackson has shown us how confused he is throughout. He doesn't know what benevolence is, nor what fellowship is. He considers that letting the alien sinner use the parking lot, drink from the water fountain, sit in the pew, join in the singing, making a contribution and eating the Lord's supper (through ignorance) benevolence and fellowship. I believe our readers are more intelligent than that, Bill! Brother Jackson thinks change can be equated with ineptitude. I wonder if that applies to the change of heart in conversion? We once did not have "Christian" colleges supported by the church. Who changed there? We once did not have human benevolent institutions supported by the church. Who changed there? We once did not have kitchens, "fellowship" halls, gymnasiums and the such in church buildings. Who changed there? Men of Bill's cut brought in these innovations and then created doctrine to justify them. In so doing they provided the occasion for the controversy and splits which he so loudly decries. Let there be no mistake about who changed and caused the splits! Don't put that guilt trip on me, Bill. Rather, heal thyself! Brother Jackson now has the last paper. He will need it. I call on him again to meet me on the polemic platform on these things and PUBLICLY debate them and in an honorable fashion. The elders here are ready, the church is ready, and I am ready. Is Bill Jackson ready? *"Let God be true, and every man a liar..."* (Romans 3:4).

JACKSON'S THIRD NEGATIVE

This discussion has been a pleasure for me, and I hope it will be of benefit to all who may read it. Brother La Coste doesn't want to be known as a "hobbyist", then, we ask him, why act like one? Notice our proposition - benevolence - and in his last speech he dealt with kitchen, gymnasium, and fellowship halls. The true mark of a hobbyist, to take an expediency such as a building, and to make all manner of laws on whether you can have a large room therein, and take a bit of food on the premises! For all of that, he then wants men to take him seriously and not look upon him as a hobbyist.

Look at his great argumentation on Acts 3. Peter had no funds, and since he didn't call for the church to aid the man, that is La Coste "proof" that church funds could not be so used! How does that go, now? If a missionary friend of mine called on me for support, and I had none to give him, since I didn't call for the church to help him, that proves the church cannot support missionaries! Great argumentation, brother La Coste! And look at the next, 1 Timothy 5:16. I am sorry brother La Coste missed it when I earlier said that the Lord had limited benevolence even to some saints. La Coste takes the view: "If Bill admits that benevolence can be limited, then that proves it is limited in the way La Coste claims." Not so! That likens itself to the Baptist preacher who says, "If I can get Bob to admit we are saved by faith, then that proves we are saved by what I say about faith." What argumentation La Coste resorts to!

Once more, I had earlier stated that 2 Corinthians 9:13 does not mean aid to "just any Tom, Dick, and Harry". I wonder how La Coste missed that? If brother La Coste can see that benevolence to "saints" can be limited to those withdrawn from, the lazy, the young widow, etc., wonder why he can't see that a congregation can use good judgement and limit benevolence to "all men", aiding the truly needy, and not handing out to "just any Tom, Dick, or Harry"? He knows better than to say "all men" means without discretion, judgment, and sense. Why would one make such argumentation, unless he is desperate?

All of his arguments are laughable when we remember that he will also give aid to the non-saint by manipulation (the non-saint in a member's family), or if he can get the non-saint into a church building, he can be aided indirectly by use of facilities -- heating, cooling, drinking fountains, rest rooms, etc. He has the view, "We can manipulate it, so long as no money goes to him directly to relieve needs he has."

Brother La Coste does want to plow new ground, and to labor to be "original" regarding Galatians 6. He promised that, didn't he, since "I couldn't possible know his view of the context." If there is any merit to the new "twist" he puts on the chapter (and I think his brethren will "perk" up at his views) it is that money, and certainly money from the treasury, cannot then be given the preacher/teacher (v. 6). Through the years his own brethren have admitted that this includes financial support for the teacher, but have said the context is "individual" application. Getting into difficulty, La Coste now has some new words for his brethren! I told the readers, time and again, that a mark of sectarianism is that the doctrine will be altered and changed as time goes on. Now, La Coste has it that the one taught can only communicate to the teacher in some spiritual way and not in a material way at all. Oh well, "any port in a storm". Anything to get out from under at the moment!

Then, to some hobbyistic applications regarding James 1:27, where the church is not acting as a church if it gives to an orphan child, depending on the type dwelling he lives in! He insists the context is "individual" action, and thus has it that the church cannot remain unspotted from the world, and cannot practice pure and undefiled religion! By common sense, one would think, in the work of the Lord,

that what one person can do within the Lord's will, a group of persons - making up a congregation - can do the same. We are sure this is so, by Jesus' will, though it is not so by the hobbyistic will.

Now brother La Coste wants it made clear that permitting the sinner to use facilities obtained by the Lord's money is not fellowship and is not benevolence; then, it puts his doctrine in the peculiar position of providing funds for the sinner's use and comfort, but you can't provide any for emergency needs! The doctrine gets more peculiar, and hence shows itself to be more sectarian, all the time.

Brother La Coste then proceeds to give us another "bent history" lesson; well, he does a little better in stating that we brethren provided the "occasion" for the controversy and split. The truth is that brethren were at peace and each congregation, under its elders, was doing the work of the Lord and certain men decided they would dictate the HOW to do it. In the absence of a bound pattern in the Bible, these men decided they would bind upon us the HOW. Hence, the division. A number of our readers are old enough to remember this, being in those very congregations assaulted by the "church treasury experts" who then began to bind their own opinions on others, even to the splitting of the church!

Now, at the end of this discussion, we want to keep some things before us all as we study the proposition. We will list them by number: (1) Brother La Coste has not been able to show us that James 1:27 and Galatians 6:10 cannot be fulfilled by a congregation of God's people. (2) He has not been able to overthrow the "all men" - pantas - in 2 Cor. 9:13. There, Paul states benevolence to saints and to all men. (3) He has not been able to escape his contradiction in his providing all manner of comfort for the sinner, with the comforts paid for by church money, provided the sinner is at the building. But, not a dime can be taken from the church money to provide for the sinner when in dire emergency! (4) He has not been able to escape his contradiction in the distinctions between benevolent passages and evangelistic passages (and they have a detailed plan regarding these), and yet his own salary (evangelism) he allows to be taken from the funds authorized in 1 Cor. 16:2, which was to meet a BENEVOLENT need! Hence, the break-down of their "clear rules" on pattern. (5) He has not been able to escape his contradiction in stating that Galatians 6 is an "individual action" context, and yet in v. 6, where the one taught is to give to the teacher, he allows the "collective" (the church) to do this rather than each individual handing his portion of the salary to him! To escape his problem here, now he states that material goods aren't even included!

Every form of sectarianism is noted by its constant changes, and these men have changed constantly; their "saints only" points were not made by them when they began their divisive work. If brother La Coste has no more to bring to an oral debate than he had in this written one, why bother? Why are they deserving of any more attention than the one-cup, anti-class factions? We urge that these brethren cease making laws where God did not, and to give up their hobbies, and to come and unite with us and teach only those things set forth in the Word!

SOUTHWEST CHURCH OF CHRIST
8900 MANCHACA ROAD
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78748
512/282-3438 512/282-3488

July 23, 1984

Mr. Bob La Coste
7300 S. Ute Trail
Austin, TX 78729

Dear Bob:

Thanks for your last affirmative; I hope to send my final to you before this week is out.

In every discussion, there are readers (or hearers) who feel the men went after one another "too hard," and yet these do not understand debate, I guess. The men are supposed to press the point upon the opposition - else, why have the discussion?

There is a change I supposed that you knew about, but guess you didn't. Jerry Moffitt is moving to work with a San Antonio congregation, and THRUST will go with him. The congregation there did not promise to publish it, but that they would "look at it if the work picks up." Hence, THRUST will be suspended for a few months, anyway. Jerry still will publish it, and will publish our discussion, at such time as it resumes. Sorry about this, and it has developed since we began our articles.

It is our considered opinion that a public debate on these matters would be an exercise not worth the time involved. You have only a half-dozen passages on which some assumptions are based, and I have about three points in reply - I think we exhausted the field in our articles. It is not the same as if some kind of sectarian error could be met, but rather it would be about like our publicly debating those of the one-cup, anti-class, anti-literature persuasion...to what profit, and it might serve to hurt the Cause of Christ more than aid it.

So, there we stand, on the public discussion; and there we have to stand, on the matter of THRUST - and this matter, not in our control.

The discussion has been profitable to me, in the discipline of it, and in the exchange back-and-forth.

Perhaps we can still meet sometimes and talk - and maybe over lunch somewhere?

Best wishes,
Bill Jackson

Church of Christ

507 WONSLEY DRIVE Phone 836-8532 AUSTIN, TEXAS 78753

August 7, 1984

Mr. Bill Jackson/Southwest Church of Christ
8900 Manchaca Rd.
Austin, Texas
78748

Dear Bill,
I am saddened that the public exchange will not take place. Ever since I was a little fella, I was taught that anything worth believing and preaching was certainly worth defending. You must have thought this at least somewhat yourself or why would you have engaged in written debate with me and have had recent debates with Terry Starling in Yoakum and Jack Holt in Corpus Christi? You say it is the considered opinion that a public debate would be an exercise not worth the time involved. The notion that it is worth the time to refute sectarian error but not worth the time to refute error within the church is a new doctrine to us. Apparently, the Holy Spirit forgot to inform Paul of that! Consider his scathing letters to the false teachers in the church. It seems that the Holy Spirit also forgot to inform Paul that defending truth and exposing error in the church will "do more harm than good." The apostle Peter didn't subscribe to such either. He wrote, "....be ready always to answer every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." (I Peter 3:15) But this is par for the course for you guys. You versus the apostles. Strange that no one at the Southwest congregation thought that way about a sermon you preached entitled, "The Dangers of Anti-ism" at your recent lectureship. Of course, no one was allowed to answer your many misrepresentations and out and out lies against your brethren and the Lord's kingdom. Bill, that's cowardly and you-know it. Whenever I preach on what you men believe I ALWAYS add that the pulpit is open for any reply. That's the difference between a gospel preacher and a "church of Christ preacher." One defends truth (even relative to the one cup, class issue) at all times because our Father has demanded such. I suggest you start listening to him instead of spineless members. Our elders are willing to have the entire discussion in our building if the elders will not allow it there.

This refusal to debate truth reminds me of what a Christian church preacher told us several years ago, "We used to debate instrumental music but we don't do that anymore, as it is not worth the time involved, besides, the last time we did, we lost members left and right." Birds of a feather, wouldn't you say Bill? Denominational preachers don't defend truth for they have no truth to defend. This is what you have told us and the readers of this written debate can see that and why you hide behind your typewriter. You can hide from men and facing up to these things publicly Bill, but you can't hide from God. He sees you for what you are, just another denominational preacher.

TWICE you said you would meet us publicly. (check your own letters!) Now who is it that has changed? In your words, "ah physician," heal thyself.

I realize that our written debate is over, but a point of order should be brought to our attention. Hedges rules of honorable controversy forbid introduction of new material in the last negative. In your last negative you alleged that, "by common sense, one would think, in the work of the Lord, that what one person can do within the Lord's will, a group of persons-making up a congregation can do the same." That is an assumption. The scriptures do not so teach. When you make any assumption, it is needful to test that assumption with all possible conditions. It is a part of the Lord's work for a Christian man to have a wife and rear children in the nurture and truth of the Lord. It is within the Lord's will for me to sleep with my wife, but I can assure you the whole church can not sleep with her. Still want to contend for this assumption? What an absurdity!

It is all so sad and I know now how Jeremiah must have felt when he penned these words so long ago, "But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride and mine eye shall weep sore and run down with tears because the Lord's flock is carried away captive." (Jeremiah 13:17)

In Defence Of Truth Against All Error,

Robert W. La Coste

Robert Wayne La Coste