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The Words C Truth

"I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speal
Words of Truth and soberness." -- Acts

Brother Guy N. Woods: 1908-1993

Flavil H. Nichols

Born September 26, 1908, in Vardeman, Mississippi, brother Guy N. Woods died Wednesday night, December 8, 1993, in Nashville, Tennessee, at the age of 85. He is survived by one sister, Annie Mae Bawcum, of Idabell, Oklahoma; one brother, G. Earl Woods, minister of the Lilly May church, Nashville; and by 2 nieces and 2 nephews.

I understand he was under medication for flu-like symptoms and for a kidney infection; and (possibly as a consequence thereof) he failed to turn off the engine of his car when he drove into his garage one night the weekend before Thanksgiving. Failing the next morning to reach him by telephone, brother Neil W. Anderson (publisher of the Gospel Advocate) investigated. He found brother Woods in bed, unconscious, and immediately summoned help. In the hospital Tuesday night, brother Woods was able for at least a short time to communicate rationally with his sister at his bedside. However she told me that he never fully regained consciousness, although I heard that he was moved into a nursing facility, where he died Wednesday night the week after Thanksgiving.

In the casket his body looked as it did 15 or 20 years ago! His body lay in state four hours Friday night at the Stockdale-

Malin Funeral parlor in Camden, Tennessee, and at the church building from nine until ten-thirty on Saturday morning. When Lazarus died, "many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary to comfort them concerning their brother" (John 11:19) -- and Jesus was among those consoling friends, traveling some distance to be with them! I do not know who, nor how many, admirers spoke words of comfort and encouragement Friday night to brother Woods' brother and sister, "paying their respects" to this great soldier of the cross.

Brother Woods had written instructions for his funeral, which was held in the beautiful building of the church where he grew up, at Holladay, Tennessee. At his request, brethren Neal W. Anderson and Richard England spoke at his service. As the casket was closed, they were seated on the podium. Brother Lamar Nichols (the local song-leader) with four other vocalists beautifully rendered three stanzas of Each Step I Take, and (immediately -- without a pause) two stanzas of I Walk With My King.

As a young man brother Anderson often led the singing in gospel meetings where brother Woods preached. Now he is the publisher of The Gospel Advocate, for which journal

brother Woods has been a contributor for perhaps fifty years. He stated that brother Woods had lived "eighty-five wonderful years, sharing the problems common to man, and finding Bible solutions for them." Over the past fourteen years, their business relationship made it possible for them to be together daily, except when one of them was out of town.



Guy N. Woods - 1908-1993

He recalled the last time he and brother Woods drove to Holladay. Brother Woods showed him his old homeplace, and his parents' graves in the cemetery where he would be buried. He related that in his boyhood when he and six of his cousins "played church," Earl (G. E., his brother) would lead the singing, his cousin Will Holladay (who is now an Elder of the Holladay church, and was present for the funeral) would lead the prayer, and he, Guy N. Woods, would preach! Showing brother Anderson

the old "baptizing place," he explained that, when these loving cousins reached accountability, it seemed perfectly natural that all seven of them should go down to Sycamore Creek, where, on September 24, 1924, they together were "baptized into Jesus Christ" (Romans 6:3) by brother J. W. Grant.

Brother Anderson reminded brother Woods' sister that she had given up a brother whose very last words to her were: "I love you too, Annie Mae." What a precious memory this must be for her to cherish! He reminded brother G. E. Woods that he had lost, not only a brother in the flesh --and in the Lord -- but also a fellow gospel preacher!

In the death of Guy N. Woods, all of us have lost a true "Friend;" but brother Anderson stated that he felt as if he had lost a "Leaning-Post"! He regarded brother Woods as his "mentor," recalling that as they rode together brother Woods might comment on some Bible text, expound on some given situation, pay him a compliment -- or even rebuke him! Whatever was said, it was crystal clear that brother Guy N. Woods always wanted the truth to be taught and practiced. He loved the Cause of Christ, and with his whole heart he wanted the church of our Lord to be pure and "unspotted from the world" (James 1:27).

Like millions of others, including Guy N. Woods, brother Anderson derived comfort from the beautiful twenty-third Psalm, which he read. He then read Revelation 22:14 which speaks of the "Blessed" dead -- whose ranks we believe brother Woods has now joined. Stating that the following text applies to all of us, he then read: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

The same quintet of singers next expressed our Bible-based hope in the beautiful song, In The Sweet Bye And Bye, after which brother Richard England spoke.

He and brother Woods had become especially close friends during the past fifteen years, and brother Woods requested him to speak. Brother England referred to the fact that when brother Woods was baptized, he was baptized "by faith," trusting in the grace of God to save him when he obeyed the Lord who said: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). The salvation here offered by the Lord is salvation "by grace" and "through faith" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Brother England stated that

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From The Editor

Glenn Colley

Some Remembrances Of Brother Woods

Glenn Colley

Because of his tremendous work and influence for good in his generation, I have devoted this entire issue of WORDS OF TRUTH to Guy Woods. I hope you will enjoy the reading and will want to tuck it under the cover of one of his books in your library to save.

While I realize that my relationship with brother Woods was one enjoyed by hundreds of other young preachers, please humor me as I reminisce.

While I preached for the East Hill church in Pulaski, Tennessee, brother Woods held a couple of Gospel meetings. The twenty-five minute sermons were rich and practical. One evening, before the worship began, he and I were sitting together in the church's library visiting when I told him we should be making our way to the auditorium. As we walked I said, "Brother Woods, I will be

introducing you tonight. Tell me your topic so I can announce it at the opening of the service." He calmly responded, "Brother Colley, I never decide my topic until I see my audience." You can imagine the impression that statement made on a twenty-five year old preacher!

Although people who kept their distance might not realize it, brother Woods had a healthy sense of humor. During the last "Open Forum" in which he answered difficult Bible questions at the Freed-Hardeman University Lectureship, he concluded his remarks at the end of an answer by saying "... and anyone who can't see that is a pin-head!" He also told a good joke that day and brought the house down with laughter.

I understand from my father that one of brother Wood's favorite television shows was Gunsmoke, and

his favorite character was Festus.

I understand from my mother that she and brother Wood's used the same sour-dough bread recipe. He enjoyed baking bread.

Brother Woods was so useful in the kingdom because his mind was so keen in confronting error. Three years ago, as we sat eating lunch with one of my elders, he bemoaned the new liberal movement and its proponents. He said, "Their one redeeming value is that they will wax worse and worse until ANYONE can see them for what they really are." He grieved over the recent splitting of churches and the false doctrines which were so often to blame.

Brother Woods was a gracious gentleman, a fine Christian, and a mighty defender of the truth. I will miss him.

Brother Guy N. Woods: His Greatness

Robert R. Taylor, Jr.

Brother H. Leo Boles frequently said that "brother N. B. Hardeman is no ordinary man." The same can be said of brother Hardeman's illustrious student. "Brother Guy N. Woods was no ordinary man." Words like average, ordinary or mediocre would be misplaced if attached to the noble name of the wise and wonderful Woods. He was great and extraordinary in the truest meaning of these tremendous terms.

HE WAS GREAT
IN DEDICATION

He grew up in a strong Christian family where dedication was prized. Early in youth he remembered God, obeying the gospel as a teenager. He preached his first sermon a few days after he was born into the family of God. From that day onward the dye was cast. The strong current of developing dedication grew deeper as the years came and went. He was dedicated to study, preaching,

debating, writing, editing, helping people and seeking answers for every question men might ask him relative to the Bible.

HE WAS GREAT
IN TALENTS

Some men are efficient in one field. Brother Woods was efficient in many fields. Few men have ever filled the pulpit with the power and dignity he wielded. His choice of words and flawless usage of the King's language were

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A Great Soldier Goes Home

September 26, 1908 - December 8, 1993

Gary Colley

Our beloved brother and friend, Guy N. Woods, passed on to his reward on Wednesday, December 8, 1993, following a few weeks of a comatose condition induced by monoxide poisoning. Memorial services were conducted on Saturday, December 11, at Holladay, Tennessee, where he had begun his work of preaching sixty-seven years previously.

Brother Woods was born in Vardeman, MS, September 26, 1908. He was baptized into Christ by brother J. W. Grant, in August 1926. He attended Freed-Hardeman University, where he returned in later years to conduct the "Open Forum" for many years. This highly popular Forum was of great help to the school and the church through the faithful stand always taken by brother Woods. The books of his answers given in these forums will continue to live in the lives of faithful Gospel preachers for as many years as the Lord delays to come!

Brother Woods was a highly talented speaker, writer, debater, and helper of many. To say he conducted himself as a gentleman is an understatement. In local work, as the staff writer for many brotherhood papers, as editor of the Gospel Advocate for many years, as writer of

commentaries, or as debater (conducting over 100) and preacher, his talent shined brightly. Few men have been his equal and none his superior in these areas. So much of his time was devoted to Gospel meeting work. He conducted about 35-40 per year. All were saddened to learn that he was having to curtail his meeting work as he approached his eighty-fifth year.

Truly a prince and great man has taken his leave from us. But we rejoice for him that he finished the course, having kept the faith, and will now enjoy the rest promised to the faithful!

To each member of his family we offer our sincere sympathy. We are thankful to our Heavenly Father for allowing us to have known such a valiant soldier, and pray that others will rise to the challenge of taking the torch and filling the huge void our friend has left in the church on earth!

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Guy Woods Comments On John 3:16

--From his commentary on John

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life. -- This wonderful verse has often been called, and not without reason, the *Golden Text* of the Bible. The blessings it offers are all superlative. In it we are told of the greatest giver (God), of the greatest gift (his only begotten Son), of the greatest measure (the world) and the greatest future blessing (eternal life). It is a refutation of Atheism (it begins with God); of agnosticism (it reveals God), of Calvinism (it extends God's provisions to all the world, and not to an arbitrarily selected few), of Unitarianism (it establishes the deity of Jesus and shows him to be of the same nature as God), of Oneness Pentecostalism (it demonstrates God and Christ to be separate and distinct persons), of Universalism (it reveals that men will perish who refuse the way of escape) and the doctrine of denominational creeds which allege that Jesus died that God might love us whereas this teaches that Jesus came to the earth and made salvation possible *because* God loved us (Romans 5:8, 9).

It is often said by those who reject the doctrine of baptism for (in order to) the remission of sins that this passage does not mention baptism, and instead offers salvation merely and solely on the basis of believing. But neither does the passage mention repentance. If because John 3:16 does not mention water baptism it is to be rejected as a condition of pardon, by the same token we must reject repentance as well because there is as much said about baptism in it as there is of repentance. If to this the objection is offered that repentance is elsewhere made essential to salvation, as indeed it is (Acts 17:30), so also is water baptism in water (Mark 16:15, 16; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; Romans 6:3, 4; I

Peter 3:20, 21). We have seen that it is the *positioned* believer (the believer *in him*, v. 15), that is promised eternal life and we are "in him," only if we have been baptized *into* him (Romans 6:3).

For a discussion of the significance of the phrase, "only begotten Son," see comments on John 1:14. See comments on John 5:24 for the phrase "eternal life."

The "world" which God

loved and so loved as to give his only begotten Son, is the world of mankind, often rebellious, full of iniquity, wicked and cruel, lost and without God and without hope apart from the gospel. It is the wondrous marvel of the ages that this world God is said to have loved, and to have given his Son to die for rather than to have annihilated it in one stroke of destruction.

Salvation is for all; the offer

in the word "whosoever" is unlimited; God's part is wholly sufficient; and that all men will not finally be saved will be due to no failure on the

part of God but because some men simply will not accept his marvelous offer (Matthew 13:14, 15).

*Faithfully yours
Guy N. Woods*

Brother Guy N. Woods: His Greatness

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breath-takingly beautiful to hear. He graced the pulpit like a prince and with kingly demeanor. He was peerless on the polemic platform. He gave a new dimension to debating. He was fair with his opponents and fearless in his dynamic defense of truth when it was under attack. He had no peer with a pen. He could paint pictures with his marvelous mastery of words. He wrote with wonder and wisdom punctuating each well chosen word. He had a reservoir of words that captivated his avid readers. The English language became his servant in writing on topics stately and sublime. He had no close peer in answering questions. He fit an Open Forum situation better than any glove ever fit a human hand. His expertise was evident to every beholder.

HE WAS GREAT IN REPUTATION AND CHARACTER

Like Paul commanded Timothy to be, brother Woods was an example of believers in word, manner of life, love, spirit, faith and moral purity (I Timothy 4:12). He was well reported of among all Theophiluses - lovers of friends of God (Acts 16:2; 1:1; Luke 1:1-4). He was a pattern of good works; in doctrine or teaching he exhibited uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity and sound speech (Titus 2:7,8).

He was great in character. Reputation is what men deem us to be; character is what God knows us to be. Out of the abundance of the heart

flows the great issues of life. His life was an open door of an inward character of sobriety, righteousness and holiness. He was a modern Nathanael - "An Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" (John 1:47). He was as great in character as he was in intellect and talents.

HE WAS GREAT IN SCHOLARSHIP

Had he lived in Campbell's day President James Madison surely would have classed both of them as the ablest expositors of scriptures of their day. Had he been a preaching and writing contemporary of J. W. McGarvey, surely the London Times would have classed both of them the ripest Bible scholars of their era. I know of no one in this century that had his grasp of Biblical knowledge. Superb describes his scriptural scholarship.

HE WAS GREAT IN SERVICE RENDERED

A modern computer would be heavily taxed to do justice to the numerous ways he rendered service to his peers. He went where duty called whether the salary was commensurate with what he conferred or not. It is doubtful he was EVER overpaid. What he performed with a pen, in a pulpit, on a polemic platform or in an Open Forum setting could not be squared with silver or compensated with a check. He once told me of traveling to a distant point to render a service. He was paid \$300.00 for the week. His plane fare was \$297.00! The thousands of letters he wrote

in answering difficult Bible questions were labors of love. No checks of compensation accompanied such and were by him never expected. He was as selfless in service to God and man as ANY man I ever knew.

HE WAS GREAT IN HUMILITY

An avid admirer once said of the princely Hardeman, "He is great without realizing it." The same was true with the beloved Woods - great without realizing it. After a very lavish introduction of him on one occasion he arose and said something like this, "Introductions like this are like sweet-smelling perfume - good to smell but not to be swallowed!" Humility marked this marvelous man with a precious plus.

HE WAS GREAT IN FAITH

A weak, doubting or little

The following is from an interview with Guy N. Woods, FHU Today, March 1992

Q. Please give a brief biographical sketch.

A. I was born on September 26, 1908, in Vardeman, Mississippi, a lumber mill community in the north central part of the state, where my father, who worked for a large lumber company, had been temporarily transferred. When I was five months old, my parents returned to Holladay, in West Tennessee, about fifty miles from Henderson, their permanent place of residence, where I grew up and completed my high school work.

Q. When did you obey the gospel and by whom were you baptized?

A. I was baptized on August 24, 1926, in the clear and limpid waters of Sycamore Creek, a lazy little stream which flowed

faith did not mark the brand of vibrant, victorious and valiant faith he marvelously maintained for sixty-seven years of Christianity lived, breathed and proclaimed. Great was his faith in the Glorious Godhead and its precious product - the Holy Bible.

HE WAS GREAT IN FRIENDSHIP

He loved his friends and knew how to be a true friend to each of them. Like lovely Jonathan toward David he strengthened the hands of his friends in God (I Samuel 23:16). It was easy to be good when in his presence. He was the type of friend before whom one could think aloud.

CONCLUSION

He has given us all an elevated dimension of true greatness. He personified in fine fashion Mark 10:43, 44.

alongside the community of Holladay, during a meeting conducted by an aged, beloved and venerable preacher and professor -- brother J. W. Grant retired, at that time, so I recall, from the Nashville Bible School. A number of others were also baptized on that occasion.

Q. Where, and under what circumstances, did you preach your first sermon?

A. On September 26, 1926, my 18th birthday, and one month and two days following my obedience to the gospel, in a small rural congregation a few miles from Holladay, Tennessee,

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Brother Guy N. Woods: 1908-1993

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our deceased brother was characterized by a fervent love of truth, and by a driving quest for the knowledge of all the truth he could grasp. Throughout his life, he wanted to share with others as much as possible of that truth which he learned. Hence, not only orally, but also with the pen, he sought to pass on to others the vast storehouse of information which he had so painstakingly gleaned.

Perhaps no contemporary man in the Lord's church has written as many books as brother Woods wrote. For more than a third of a century he wrote the Adult Gospel Quarterly in the Gospel Advocate Sunday School series. Many years he wrote also the Annual Lesson Commentary for that series. Brother England revealed that shortly before brother Woods died he completed a revision of the ever-popular People's New Testament With Notes, originally written by B. W. Johnson, and popularly referred to as "Johnson's Notes." He wrote several volumes in the Gospel Advocate Commentaries On The New Testament. For many years he conducted an "Open Forum" in the annual lectureships at Freed-Hardeman University; and in two volumes entitled "Open Forum" he summarized the most important questions covered. Many of his sermons also have been published.

Brother England related that wherever brother Woods went, for meetings, or other engagements, he took with him, not only his own typewriter, but also his own table, and his own chair. In the most unfamiliar surroundings detract his attention from what he was writing! Thus in motels, or in private homes where he was a house-guest, he was in familiar circumstances, sitting "at his own desk," writing books of sermons, Sunday School lessons, and commentaries.

As an evangelist, brother Guy N. Woods was one of the most highly visible preachers

among us. For nearly two-thirds of a century he was in great demand. His revivals across America took him from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico, and from coast to coast. In many congregations he repeatedly was invited back.

Perhaps no other gospel preacher of his time engaged in more public religious discussions [debates] than did Guy N. Woods. He upheld what the Bible teaches, and relentlessly opposed and exposed the doctrines and commandments of men. "Without an ounce of personal animosity," said brother England, "he could forcefully and with intensity press his points most effectively." Several of brother Woods' debates were put in book form, and continue to do good.

His lack of personal ill-will toward the men he debated was illustrated by brother England with an incident which occurred during his 1946 debate with Nunnery, a Baptist, right there in Holladay, Tennessee. After one session, brother Woods in his car overtook his opponent as he walked home. Stopping

his car beside the pedestrian, brother Woods offered him a ride. But when Mr. Nunnery saw it was brother Woods, he refused to ride with him! Brother England revealed that some with whom brother Woods debated the "Orphan Home" and "Church Cooperation" questions have in recent years come by his office to visit with him.

Brother Woods wanted brother England to relate how some other men have influenced his life. He said brother N. B. Hardeman wielded one of the greatest influences on him. Brother Hardeman demonstrated a most unusual speaking ability. He took simple Bible truths, simple gospel sermons like those in the Hardeman Tabernacle Sermons, and presented them with such clarity and power that even the secular newspapers took

notice of them.

He regarded brother G. C. Brewer as a "genius" at giving an explanation of a Biblical text.

Foy E. Wallace, Jr., who also influenced brother Woods in his studies, was described by him as an "original thinker." He spear-headed the fight to keep the fanciful theories of premillennialism out of the church.

Brother Woods admired and highly esteemed Alexander Campbell, who, in the early nineteenth century overcame much prejudice to arrive at truth which most people then had not discovered.

He praised Moses E. Lard as one of the greatest scholars in the American "Restoration" movement.

Brother Woods thought that perhaps no man in America had a better grasp of Bible truth than did J. W. McGarvey. His "Original Commentary On Acts," as well as other books, had tremendous influence on the growth of the churches of Christ.

"But of all men, past and present," said brother England, "brother Woods loved brother Gus Nichols." They could (and did!) disagree on some Bible teachings [such as, the present abode of the dead and how the Holy Spirit dwells in us, FHN], but were still the closest personal friends. He preached in numerous revivals at Jasper where Gus Nichols lived for forty-three years, and where he served as one of the Elders for a long time.

Brother England referred to a recent series of sermons brother Woods delivered at Obion, Tennessee. He preached sermons which he thought to be most significant, and heading the list was a discussion of the Bible as the word of God. He drew practical lessons for today from The Rich Young Ruler, and presented other sermons he deemed to be vital in our world today.

"The death of Guy N. Woods

leaves a great void in the church," said brother England. Another -- or others -- must now rise up to lead the fight against ignorance and sin. Another -- or others -- must be able and willing to take a firm stand for God's eternal truth. In this brother Woods set an example for all to imitate.

After reading I Thessalonians 4:13-18, brother England dismissed the assembly with prayer. He and brother Anderson preceded the casket down the aisle, followed by the family, and then the audience, as the quintet sang: "God Be With You Till We Meet Again."

At the grave in the nearby cemetery, brother Anderson stated that brother Woods read his Bible every day, right up to the end. "Let us continue that today" -- and he read to us I Corinthians 15:51-58.

Next, brother England referred to the many years brother Woods conducted the Open Forum at Freed-Hardeman's annual Lectureship. He stated that brother Alan Highers has ably succeeded brother Woods in that capacity; and it is fitting that brother Highers dismiss us with prayer -- which he did.

I have no way of knowing either who, or how many, called on the family at the Funeral Home. But in addition to his fleshly brother (G. Earl Woods) I recall seeing the following preachers at the funeral: Neal Anderson, Paul Brown, Curtis Cates, Charles Chumley, Cecil Corkren, Bobby Duncan, Garland Elkins, Richard England, E. Claude Gardner, Sam Hester, Alan Highers, Malcolm Hill, W. D. Jeffcoat, Earnest Laws, Keith Mosher, Sr., Flavil Nichols, Tim Rice, Milton Sewell, Robert Taylor, Jr., M. H. Tucker, Paul Wilmeth, plus about ten students enrolled in the Memphis School of Preaching.

As a Bible student, evangelist, author, editor, and debater, the name of Guy N. Woods ranks among the greatest of this century.

Brother Neal Anderson told me before the funeral that, after he was 75 years old, brother Woods 'upgraded' his computer three times! Our vast brotherhood is bereft of a valiant and effective servant of the Lord. Guy N. Woods was also a "gentleman" of the old school. We mourn his passing in the faith that he has joined the ranks of the "blessed" dead (Revelation 22:14).

The love that he had for my father was reciprocated by the entire Nichols family! At a banquet celebrating brother Woods' eightieth birthday, one of my brothers wrote a page-long poem praising him. When brother Woods' spirit arrived at the portals of glory, I like to think that both Daddy and Mother were on the 'Welcoming Committee' if they have such things up there!

--Route 9, Box 541, Jasper, AL 35501.

The following is from an interview with Guy N. Woods, FHU Today, March 1992

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where I had secured an appointment, I preached my first sermon. It was, of course, a juvenile effort, and with but little edification - I think it lasted about 15 minutes or so -- but as a journey of a thousand miles begins with one step, so this was a humble and inconsequential beginning of a commitment from which I never wavered, and that would continue for nearly two thirds of a century throughout the land. In the ever circling years which have come and gone since that to me, at least, historic occasion, many events of similar character have necessarily moved in and out of my mind as others came in and replaced them but, as a maid never forgets her ornaments nor a bride her attire, a preacher never forgets his first attempt, so deeply etched forever in my memory are those dear and distant days of initial effort, the extent of which I could not at that time have possibly foreseen.